



Epping Forest District Council

Director of Housing
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Housing Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan

2009 - 2010

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Page



Housing Services

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Purpose of the Plan

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan has been prepared under the guidelines of the HRA Resource Accounting regime, whose main objective is to promote more efficient use of housing assets. This covers all housing services in detail. Given that repairs and maintenance is the biggest single area of expenditure, and in line with a District Audit recommendation, this separate Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan has been produced to detail the Council's strategic approach to this work.

Both Plans have been produced annually since 2000. The Council already has set standards for most of its service provision, which can be found in various documents such as the Tenant's Handbook, Housing Strategy and Contract Conditions etc. However, it was felt that these documents should be brought together into a single Business Plan, which would assist the Council in planning and monitoring the delivery of the repairs and maintenance service. This Plan is therefore comprehensive in its coverage.

The plan includes a detailed analysis of the Authority's response to the Government's decent homes initiative, which is then updated annually. The latest position is included in this version, with the Council on target to meet the Decent Homes target by 2010.

An updated Housing Services Risk Register, which identifies the strategic and operations risks, including a section which discusses the risks and how these are managed through risk management is also included in this years plan.

This version of the Plan also covers the way in which the Governments targets for efficiency gains are being addressed following Sir Peter Gershon's review of public sector efficiency, which identified the need to achieve value for money savings through better procurement in order to release resources to support the key policy objectives of the Government.

Over the last 12 months, significant changes to the Housing Directorate have occurred as a result of the recent top management restructure. These including incorporating Private Sector Housing, the Council's Architectural Services and the Building Maintenance Division (formally the DSO Works Unit).

In pursuit of excellence, the Housing Directorate is currently reviewing all of its front line services, including looking the the service we provide from a customer perspective and using the Audit Commission Key Lines Of Enquiries (KLOEs), which prompts us to differentiate between what is a "fair" service and what is an "excellent" service, to produce a "Housing Excellence Plan". The Housing Excellence Plan will set out a number of actions, which will focus attention and activity on areas where there is room for improvement.

In preparing this Plan the Council's Tenants and Leaseholders Federation have been consulted in the same way as with the main HRA Business Plan and they have approved both Plans ***[Add any comments from the Federation here]***.

The Plan is updated each year taking into account the latest Government Guidance, revised Council policies, updated financial information, the latest stock condition information and the views of tenants and leaseholders. The Action Plan will be monitored on a bi-monthly basis to ensure appropriate progression of the initiatives included.

2. Introduction to the Repairs & Maintenance Business Plan

Epping Forest District Council is a major provider of housing. As at 1st April 2008, the Council owned and managed 6,525 properties, 2,839 garages, 1 homeless hostel and leased 940 properties. A number of these properties were transferred to the Council from the former Greater London Council (GLC) in 1980. There has been a general rate of decline in the number of properties owned by the Council over the years due to tenants purchasing their homes under the Right to Buy scheme. Since 1977, 6,140 properties have been sold. The rate at which properties have been sold has varied over the years. However, over the last five years, an average of 54 properties per annum have been sold, which equates to approximately 0.83% of the stock.

2.1 The Housing Directorate within the context of other strategic Plans

Housing has a major impact on the quality of the people's lives, influencing health, educational achievement, employment opportunities and social cohesion.

The main responsibility for managing and maintaining the Council's housing stock is undertaken by the Council's Housing Directorate.

The Housing Directorate strives to provide the highest quality advice, assistance and equality of opportunity to its customers in housing matters. It aims to be a responsible landlord, managing and maintaining the housing stock effectively, whilst continuing to charge reasonable rents.

The Housing Directorate also works within a number of specific strategies. The main strategies influencing the direction of the Repairs and Maintenance Service include:

Tenant Participation Agreement – An agreement with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation on consultation, provision of information and support for tenant organisations. The agreement has led to improved tenant consultation on repairs and maintenance programmes.

Home Energy Conservation Act and Fuel Poverty Strategies – Strategies designed to conserve energy use particularly for those on low incomes. This has for some time been targeting energy saving measures to those on low incomes through the Warm Front Scheme (previously known as the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (HEES)).

Crime Reduction – The Council has a local Crime Reduction Partnership comprising representatives from Police, Social Services Probation Service, which has produced a Crime Reduction Strategy which have influenced programmes for the installation of CCTV and door entry security systems. The Partnership has a number of sub groups, which have influenced programmes for the installation of secure double-glazing, CCTV, door entry systems and has recently introduced a sanctuary scheme for those fleeing domestic violence. This strategy complies with Home Office guidelines.

HRA Business Plan - the HRA Business Plan is a broad document, which covers the whole of the Housing Directorate. Given that repairs and maintenance is the biggest single area of expenditure, this Business Plan has been developed to provide more detail on the strategic approach to the repairs and maintenance.

Housing Directorate Risk Strategy – A Risk Register, which identifies the strategic and operations risks affecting the Housing Directorate.

2.2 Housing Directorate

The Housing Directorate as a whole, since the Senior Management Restructure, is divided into three main headings; Private Sector Housing, Property and Operations, each with its own Assistant Director. The Housing Directorate is responsible for all housing matters. Since the Building Maintenance Works Unit joined the Housing Directorate in May 2008, this additional service falls under the responsibility of the Assistant Director (Property) The current responsibilities of each Assistant Director are listed out below.

(a) *Private Sector Housing*

The Private Sector Division is responsible for issues relating to housing in the private sector, including decent homes, empty properties, house condition surveys, HMO's, Disabled Facilities Grants, Home Improvement Grants, Home Improvement Agency as well as the Resources functions with Housing, including Budget Monitoring, Rent Accounting, Leasehold Services, House Sales, Information and Administration

(b) Property

The Property Division of the Housing Directorate is responsible for the responsive repairs and planned maintenance functions to council housing as well as the Building Maintenance Division, who undertake the majority of all responsive repairs and work to void properties.

(c) Operations

The Operations Division of Housing Services is responsible for issues such as Housing Needs, Special Needs, Supporting People and Housing Management.

3. Repairs & Maintenance – Lines of Responsibility

There is a significant amount of maintenance work needed to keep the average home in good condition. Some occurs at short notice, some can be planned in advance, some is the responsibility of the Council and other work is the responsibility of the tenant. In order to clarify who is responsible for various maintenance items, the Council has produced within its 'Tenants Handbook' a leaflet entitled "Repairs And Improvements To Your Home".

The Tenants Handbook also includes information on programmed maintenance, day to day repairs, emergency repairs and gas leaks, adaptations for the disabled, making improvements to the home, asbestos in the home, the right to repair, home improvements compensation scheme and mutual exchange repairs.

The main sections of the Council's Housing Directorate with responsibility for repairs and maintenance are:

Housing Repairs Section
Building Maintenance Division (Formally referred to as the Works Unit, or Building Maintenance DSO)
Housing Assets Section

3.1 Housing Repairs

The Housing Repairs Section is managed by the Housing Repairs Manager and is responsible for the day to day management of the repairs service, including:

- The supervision of the responsive repairs service.
- Testing customer satisfaction within the repairs service.
- Monitoring contractor compliance with published response times.
- Managing and monitoring the void property process and ensuring satisfactory turnaround times.

3.1.1 *The work of the Housing Repairs Section*

Housing Repairs can be broken down into two main areas of work:

- Responsive Repairs, and
- Voids (Empty properties)

(a) *Responsive repairs*

Responsive repairs are received in a number of different ways, these are:

- By telephone from tenants
- By letter or fax from tenants
- In person at any one of the Council's offices or surgeries
- By electronic mail from tenants
- From observations made by Housing Services staff during visits.
- From Members on behalf of tenants
- Through the Council's web site

The Housing Directorate has a web site, which allows tenants to report repairs directly to the Council on-line 24 hours a day. The facility includes graphical information to assist tenants make specific repairs requests, which in turn helps officers to diagnose the problems reported. The Repairs Call Centre receives calls from all over the District. Whilst most repair requests are received during normal working hours, the Council operates an Out Of Hours Emergency Service. For out of hour's emergencies, a Duty Officer is on call, who authorises repairs for the Building Maintenance Division to deal with. Tenants who report a repair that is of a non-emergency nature are generally offered an appointment for the works contractor to visit and complete the repair. Similarly, appointments are made for inspectors to visit to assess the work required for more complex repairs.

The Council issues around 19,000 works orders relating to responsive repairs (and voids) every year. The vast majority of these works orders are undertaken by the Building Maintenance Division. Both responsive repairs and void maintenance work is largely undertaken by the Council's Building Maintenance Division. This is discussed in more detail in relation to the Works Unit.

(b) Void Property Maintenance

When a tenant moves out of a property the keys are returned for re-letting, the property undergoes a basic safety and cleaning process before being re-let. In November 2007, the Council introduced a new mechanism by which tenants bid for vacant properties rather than them be selected and offered a property. This new initiative is known as "Choice Based Lettings" and is regarded as a much more transparent process using the existing bandings system to priorities new tenancies based on bids received by those on the Council's waiting list. The benefits are expected to be significant, particularly with difficult to let properties.

Between 450-600 dwellings go through the void process every year.

In November 2007, a Voids Working Group was set up, led by the Assistant Director of Operations, with the view of improving the performance of the whole void process, taking into account the newly introduced Choice Based Lettings initiative.

While the working group are looking at the whole process, changes that were introduced in late November 2007 included the re-introduction of the pre-vacation inspection, where a Repairs Officer (previously a Housing Management Officer) visits the outgoing tenant prior to them moving out to advise them on the condition the Council expects the property to be handed back. The intension being to improve the condition that properties are handed back so that they can be re-let more quickly and at a lower cost.

New tenants continue to be offered decoration vouchers for materials at local DIY stores to enable them to redecorate to their own taste once they move in to their new property.

In October 2008, the Government introduced Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) to help improve the energy efficiency of buildings. This means that by law, all properties built, sold or rented out requires an EPC, which rates each property from A (most energy efficient) to G (least energy efficient). The EPC certificate is accompanied with an associated report which suggests improvements to make the building more energy efficient. This means that all void properties now have to be surveyed and issued with a certificate and report prior to being let.

3.1.2 Mobile Working

The option to introduce mobile working has been set aside for the time being, despite numerous advantages to its introduction. This is due to the recent sale of the Anite OHMS IT system to an alternative IT provider Northgate, who have announced they are no longer supporting the mobile working platform. This means that until an alternative system can be investigated, this function will not be developed.

3.1.3 Generic Officers

Again, as part of the Housing Service Best Value Review in 2004, the Council explored the benefits of bringing together the roles of both repairs and voids inspectors, and creating generic posts and allocating each post to a specific area of the district to deal with both repairs and voids. The main benefit of generic working is that one officer deals with all aspects of responsive repairs and void properties within a smaller area. The officer becomes familiar with the property types and tenants and internal staff has one point of contact on all repairs and voids issues. This is due to be reviewed as part of the on-going Repairs and Building Maintenance Works Unit review.

3.2 Building Maintenance

Historically, Building Maintenance Works Unit (BMWU) undertakes the majority of day-to-day ad hoc repairs to the Councils housing stock, including those to void properties, issued by the Housing Directorate. The Building Maintenance DSO, as it was formally known, was originally within the previous Housing Service, but was separated on 1st January 1999 to form part of the Council's Works Unit. As part of the current Top Management Restructure in 2007, the Council's Works Unit once again joined the Housing Directorate in May 2008.

The BMWU is currently located at its own depot site in Epping, employs between 44 and 54 craft employees at any one time and a fleet of 31 vehicles, covering a wide variety of building trade activities including plumbing, carpentry, brickwork, plastering, paving, electrical, decorating and miscellaneous works and has its own small joinery workshop. The Unit is supported by 8 FTE management, supervisory and administrative staff. The service is supported by a range of specialist sub-contractors to ensure the work is completed within target completion periods. The annual turnover for the Works Unit relating to housing functions in respect of 2008/09 is expected to be in the region of £3M.

Since the BMWU undertakes electrical work on Council dwellings, it is a member of the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC)

For many years, the BMWU have struggled to recruit skilled craft workers, despite adopting various recruitment strategies, including reintroducing trainee grade positions. This has meant that Housing Repairs and the BMWU have had to rely on the support of various sub-contractors to undertake works that cannot be undertaken by the in-house BMWU. This, in itself, presents a resource issue, from procuring the work to post inspection and invoicing. Currently, around 48% of all responsive repairs are undertaken by the BMWU with the remainder undertaken by a number of different sub-contractors.

Perhaps as a result of recruitment difficulties, the BMWU have also struggled to reach the performance targets set within BVPI's and LPI's associated with the completion of a range of responsive repairs and voids works. Set out below is the current performance data, which is captured locally:

Indicator	EFDC Target	Previous Performance		Current Performance		
				Period	Quarter	Cumulative
Average time to complete urgent repairs	5 wd	05/06	7	June	9	9
		06/07	6	Sept	6	7
		07/08	7	Dec	5	6
Average time to complete non-urgent repairs	56 wd	03/04	43	June	34	34
		04/05	38	Sept	32	33
		05/06	32	Dec	25	31
		06/07	28			
		07/08	33			
% of urgent repairs completed within target time (5 working days)	95%	03/04	79%	June	84%	84%
		04/05	85%	Sept	88%	86%
		05/06	81%	Dec	92%	88%
		06/07	89%			
		07/08	89%			
% of non-urgent repairs completed within target time (8 weeks)	95%	03/04	78%	June	82%	82%
		04/05	82%	Sept	86%	84%
		05/06	86%	Dec	89%	86%
		06/07	90%			
		07/08	84%			

The above statistics show that whilst the average time to complete urgent is within target, the number of jobs completed outside of the target time is far to high. In addition, the target that the Council sets for non-urgent jobs to be completed is too long, far longer in fact than other Housing organisations.

The National Housing Federation undertook an independent tenant satisfaction survey on behalf of the Council in November 2008, 86% of tenants said that they were satisfied with the Council's repairs and maintenance service (up 2% compared to 2006), which was significantly higher than any other landlord in the peer group. In fact,

- 86% rated the time taken for work to start was good (up 3% compared to 2006);
- 92% said the speed with which the work was completed was good (no change since 2006);
- 93% rated the attitude of the workers was good (down 2% compared to 2006);
- 91% were pleased with the way dirt and mess were kept to a minimum (down 1% compared to 2006),
- 88% said the overall quality of the work was good (no change since 2006).

At its meeting in March 2008, the Cabinet agreed to two major changes to the way the repairs function is undertaken. The first is that the Repairs team and the BMWU combine and operate from the same site and

the second is the appointment of an external management contractor to oversee the day to day management functions of the combined Repairs and BMWU Service. An officer working party has been set up to explore the issues that come from these changes.

3.3 Housing Assets

Whilst the Council continues to provide housing, its stock has to be managed and maintained. The purpose of the Housing Assets Section is to continue to keep the Council's Housing Stock in good condition by planning its maintenance based on condition, need, efficiency and value.

There are significant value for money opportunities that have both direct financial and management implications that ultimately lead to a more efficient use of resources. The framework of strategies laid out in this document, defines the way in which Housing Services will plan the future repairs and maintenance of the stock.

The introduction in April 1999 of the fully integrated housing computer system (referred to as OHMS) has already gone a long way towards a more effective management of repairs and maintenance works. For example, the Housing Repairs Section is automatically provided with earlier warning of planned contracts at the time of issuing works orders. This enables more control of repair work.

3.3.1 Legislative requirements and working practices

Although the provision of housing is not a statutory service, the Council has a statutory duty to maintain the stock it provides.

(a) Legislation

The work of the Housing Assets Section is guided by a complex set of legislation. To this end, housing assets working practices have to be both flexible, to accommodate multiple legislative requirements and any on-going changes to these requirements, and precise in following specific codes of practice, legal and contractual requirements. This includes procurement rules, including EU Regulations, consultation with Leaseholders and Contract Standing Orders.

(b) Housing Policies

In addition to legislative and contractual requirements, the Council has developed a number of housing policies that are set out in the Housing Policy Manual maintained by Housing Services.

(c) Working Practices

As a local authority, the Council is required to undertake its duties and conduct itself in a manner that is both fair and proper. Accountability in working practices is therefore important. In order to ensure this, Officers must also work in accordance with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and CIPFA Guidelines.

To manage this complex set of legislation, working practices and housing policies, the Housing Directorate has developed in-depth procedures. The procedures and works instructions cover all aspects of the work of the Housing Directorate including Housing Needs, Housing Management, Housing Repairs and Assets as well as customer care issues. The procedures are stored on the Council's Intranet, and are accessible to all Housing staff.

In addition, a Contractor's Code of Conduct has been developed to allow proper conduct and safe working by all contractors working for the Council.

Since 2002, Housing Services has been accredited the ISO 9001/2000 Quality Award for all services. Housing Assets was one of the first two sections to be awarded ISO 9001/2000 status in May 2002. An intensive re-assessment was carried out by an external auditor in June 2008, which resulted in the ISO 9001/2000 status being renewed for a further 3 years. A further re-assessment is due to take place in 2011.

3.3.2 Specific work of the Housing Maintenance Section

i) Reinstatement of Pre-cast Reinforced Concrete (PRC) properties.

Works under the Council's PRC Reinstatement Programme, to properties designated as defective under the Housing Act 1985, commenced in April 1992 and was completed in 2003. During this time, the Council at a cost of around £10m reinstated a total of 255 properties.

ii) Refurbishment of houses and flats

In addition to the reinstatement of PRC properties, the Council also undertakes other major refurbishment works to Council properties. These can range from large improvement contracts such as the £4 million Springfields Improvement Scheme, which started on site in November 2007, to other works such as bathroom and kitchen refurbishments under the Decent Homes programme.

iii) External Repairs and Maintenance Contracts

In order to prolong the useful life of the external building components, the Council carries out regular inspections to identify and then carry out both repairs and preventative maintenance on sub-components. Every Council property is surveyed externally, and included on a planned cyclical maintenance contract for external repairs and redecoration, every 6-7 years.

The external repairs and redecoration contracts are prepared in conjunction with window and door replacement, energy efficiency, asbestos removal and re-roofing contracts in order to prevent different contractors returning to the same properties to erect scaffolding etc. This increases the value for money of such contracts.

In an attempt to achieve efficiency savings and added value through the use of alternative procurement methods, the Council introduced a partnership framework agreement based on a schedule of rates contract linked to a performance specification and guaranteed maximum cost. Through performance monitoring, figures show significant improvements in tenant satisfaction and in the quality of the finished product.

Added benefits of long-term partnering agreements and tendering on a schedule of rates basis, based on preliminaries, overheads and profits only include:

- Fewer visits to properties by the contractors and Council Officers, therefore efficiency savings can be made, with less duplication in the work undertaken by each party.
- Less disruption to tenants.
- Increases in performance monitoring of the contractors.
- Early warning of poor contractor performance.
- Increased budget control, through the use of measured works and quantities against a tendered schedule of rates.
- Accurate records of decorating quantities, which will assist in any future Business Planning process.

In 2007/08, around 1,051 properties were included in the External Repairs and Maintenance programme.

iv) Replacement of Double Glazed Windows and Front Entrance Doors

The target set within previous editions of the Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan has been to install PVCu double-glazing in all council homes by 2008/09. However, by increasing the budget provision for replacement PVCu double-glazed windows between 2004-2006, this target was achieved early. As a result, every council dwelling that is capable of having replacement PVCu windows has had replacement double glazed windows installed. However, there are a very small number of properties where either the tenant refused to be included in previous programmes or for value for money reasons, some properties will need to be identified and completed in future years.

The PVCu double-glazing programme has been included in the Capital Works programme since the mid eighties. Whilst these frames are PVCu, and regarded as low-maintenance, the raw materials and components were not to the same quality as newer modern materials and are proving to be difficult to repair and maintain. These windows will form the next priority group for replacement.

There are also properties that have double-glazing, but in timber frames, such those installed in the

sheltered housing schemes when they were extended and refurbished. As they are relatively new installations, they can be maintained at a reasonable cost, and will therefore be retained until these frames are no longer economical to maintain.

In 2007/08 a programme to upgrade and replace existing timber front entrance doors with 'Homesafe Composite' doors, which meet "Secure By Design" standards set by the Home Office, to properties occupied by venerable and elderly tenants commenced. The advantages of installing this type of door are that they are low maintenance self coloured doors and frames, they have a wheelchair accessible low threshold, they can have suited ironmongery with a master key for emergency access and extended lever handles for easy operation. The priority by which properties were selected for replacement front entrance doors is based on the following criteria.

- Sheltered accommodation
- Groups of dwellings 'designated' for occupation by the elderly
- Blocks of flats with exposed balconies
- Ad-hoc properties recommended by Repairs Officers.

Around 262 properties had 'Homesafe' Composite doors installed in 2007/08. However, during 2008/09, it is anticipated that 350 front entrance doors will be replaced of which 145 are as a result of a Repairs Officer recommendation.

v) *Energy efficiency measures*

There are a number of objectives included within the Housing Strategy and the Council Plan, which relate to improving the energy efficiency of our stock. This aspect is also included as a Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI). Improving energy efficiency is not limited to a single programme, but a range of measures, which include:

- Cavity wall insulation
- Overcladding
- Loft, pipework and tank insulation
- PVCu double glazing
- Boiler replacement works
- New heating installation and heating upgrades
- Ventilation extract fans with heat recovery units
- Draught proofing

On an annual basis, an Energy Audit is undertaken to establish the change in Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP). The Council has performed well against targets, which has seen the average SAP rating increase from 38.5 in 2004 to 66 in 2006/07. The target is to achieve an average SAP rating of 68 by 2010.

There are currently 38 properties that fail the Decent Homes Standard under the Thermal Comfort criteria and 74 properties that fail under the heating criteria. Left unchecked, this will rise to 476 failures by 2010, therefore through direct capital investment and grant funding from British Gas and other partnership working on a range of energy efficiency measures, it is anticipated that all properties will meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2011.

Since the withdrawal of funding for energy efficiency measures under the "Here To Help Programme" (HELP), the Council has sourced and secured funding for the next three-years under the new Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) scheme. An Agreement has been drawn up between the Council and British Gas Trading Ltd under the new CERT scheme, which reduces the Council's costs in carrying out energy efficiency measures until 2010.

The level of grant funding available from British Gas under the CERT scheme is considerable, with up to a maximum of 50% off the cost of energy efficiency measures met by British Gas. This means that during 2009/10 if the Council spends £100,000, on energy efficiency measures British Gas could contribute up to an additional £100,000.

The funding Agreement allows the Council to manage the energy efficiency measures carried out under the CERT scheme. Therefore in addition to the funding commitment, on properties, which have energy efficiency measures carried out the Council, will receive a management fee from British Gas Trading Ltd of £10.00 per

property. Also on properties where energy efficiency measures have been carried out, British Gas Trading Ltd will contribute the sum of £5.00 per property for inclusion in a community projects fund.

Baring Insulation Ltd is carrying out the Energy Efficiency Programme of work, until the end of the CERT funding Agreement in 2011. The range of energy efficiency measures available under the scheme include cavity wall insulation, loft insulation up to 250mm thickness, pipe and tank insulation, low energy light bulbs, hot water cylinder jackets, thermostatic radiator valves and draught proofing.

During 2007/08, 536 properties had cavity wall insulation installed and 339 properties benefited from having loft insulation up to 250mm thickness.

Two staff within Housing Assets have completed NHER training and are qualified to collect energy efficiency data that once it is entered into the NHER software it enables the Council to produce SAP Profile Reports on the housing stock.

There is a separate Housing Services Strategy on Energy Efficiency, which has recently been updated and published. This strategy sets out the Council's aims and objectives in relation to the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000, examines the Council stock profile, and identifies potential energy efficiency measures, particularly to those older rural properties that have no mains gas or have solid brick walls without cavities. The key targets from the Strategy on Energy Efficiency are included in the action plan in section 10 of this Business Plan.

vi) Central heating installation

There has been an ongoing programme to install central heating in all Council-owned properties since the 1980's. As of March 2001, central heating was installed within all the Council's remaining properties, which have access to a gas supply. The current position is that 5,911 homes (89.2%) now have gas central heating installed. All other properties have some form of central heating, mainly via electric storage radiators, although through advances in technology new efficient electric boilers are being installed on a trial basis, to replace old electric storage heaters, which operate in the same way as traditional gas boiler and radiators.

In addition to new installations, the Housing Assets Section programmes and undertakes the following other types of heating contracts:

- Replacing old defective and obsolete warm air heating systems, (due to be completed by 2009/10)
- Replacing old defective and obsolete Open Flue boilers including back boilers units,
- Replacing boilers that are no longer economical to repair
- Upgrading older/partial central heating systems.

All of the central heating systems replaced or upgraded are carried out using energy efficient, room sealed, gas boilers and traditional radiators. This increases the thermal efficiency of the property, reducing fuel costs and reducing the risks associated with open flue appliances.

Due to the specialist nature, new installation contracts are let in the form of design and build, based on a comprehensive performance design specification. These contracts were programmed and managed by external consultants through the Partnered Consultants initiative, however during 2008/09 the Housing Assets Section has programmed and managed the new installation contracts. This has resulted in better value for money and significant cost savings, as more heating installations are being completed with the budget available.

Since 2004, the Heating Programme has concentrated on the replacement of old defective and obsolete warm air heating systems with traditional radiator systems. During 2007/08 around 374 old defective and obsolete warm air heating systems were replaced with traditional radiator systems and 170 old boilers were replaced that were no longer economical to repair. It is anticipated that the programme for replacing old defective and obsolete warm air heating systems with traditional radiator systems will be completed by 2009/10, unless the tenant refuses to have the work carried out.

The budget for replacement heating and boilers in 2008/09 is around £720,000. Within the 5-year capital programme, this level of funding is maintained at between £700,000 - £750,000 per annum until 20012/13. This is to ensure the Decent Homes targets are met.

vii) Welfare heating installation

Welfare heating is a programme for installing heating in Council properties based on applications from tenants on medical grounds. In the past this has provided new heating where no heating previously existed, as well as changing warm air heating to traditional radiator systems, and upgrading partial heating systems to full systems.

Until 1999/00, the annual budget for Welfare Heating was £150,000. However, once the Council achieved its target to install full central heating into all of the Council's properties, and upgrade all partial heating systems to full central heating, the Welfare Heating programme has now been reduced to £50,000 per annum and is now limited to mainly replacement of warm air heating with traditional radiator systems where medical conditions dictate.

During the 2007/08, 6 new heating systems were installed and 4 heating system upgrades were carried out.

viii) Adaptations for the disabled

The Council has a duty to endeavor to adapt its properties to meet the need of disabled users, which is reflected by Council policy. The Council does not employ Occupational Therapists (OT's) itself to assess the needs of tenants and make recommendations accordingly. This service is provided by Essex County Council Social Services OT's.

Adaptations include both minor and major works and include the following types of work:

- Extensions to properties
- Through floor lifts
- Level access showers
- Over-bath showers
- Ramps
- Kitchens
- Stairlifts
- Hardstandings
- Minor adaptations inc. hand rails, half steps, grab rails etc.

Depending on the type of adaptation, target times have been introduced for processing applications. These target times vary depending on the work involved and current performance is within the target figures set. However, due to increases in the demand for disabled adaptations and the implementation of a waiting list for adaptations the overall waiting time from application to completion is expected to rise.

Where adaptations are estimated to cost in excess of £5,000 these cases are referred to a Disabled Needs Panel. This consists of both Council Officers and Social Services Occupational Therapists. The Panel discusses the individual needs of the tenants to establish if there are more cost effective options available, such as re-housing into more suitable accommodation.

The Council's approach to disabled adaptations was reviewed in 2004/05 under the Best Value Service Review. The main outcomes were to increase the annual budget to £300,000 and apply a ceiling for any one application equivalent to the maximum disabled facilities grant (currently £30,000). The Council has had concerns over its ability to fund all necessary adaptations and as a result Members again reviewed the annual budget for major adaptations at the Cabinet meeting in April 2006, where an additional 5% per annum was agreed. This means the budget for adaptations in 2009/10 is now £380,000.

In 2007/08 the Council received 356 recommendations for adaptations from Social Services in addition to 99 recommendations held over from the previous year. Of those, the Council was able to undertake and complete works to 381 properties. This meant 74 adaptations were held on the waiting list and carried forward for 2008/09.

The number of adaptation recommendations received each year has steadily increased from 87 minor adaptations and 27 major adaptations in 1998/99 rising to an estimated 240 minor adaptations and 120 major adaptations in 2008/09.

ix) Servicing and repair of gas appliances

The Council has a statutory duty under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1996 to service and maintain all Council-owned gas appliances, and to inspect all non-Council owned gas appliances within Council properties on an annual basis. The service and maintenance of non Council-owned appliances

remains the responsibility of the tenant.

Gas safety is one of, if not the most important issue in Housing Assets, and as such a Gas Safety Strategy was produced in April 2004, and is due to be updated in 2008/09.

The performance of the Gas Servicing contractor is subject to close monitoring and supervision by Council Officers. If the Contractors performance does not meet with the Councils expectations, then action is taken against that contractor, as was the case in 2003/4 when the Council determined the contract due to breaches in the Contractors contractual and legal obligations.

Following the determination of the gas contract in 2004 the Council split the district into two areas north and south, and appointed two contractors through a new 10-year Gas Servicing and Maintenance Term Partnering Agreement in July 2005. The tender was awarded on the basis of both quality and price.

The Council has been closely monitoring and benchmarking the performance of the two gas contractors in a number of key performance areas. Both contractors have recorded excellent performance and tenant satisfaction figures. More importantly the Council monitor the percentage of properties that have a current CP12 certificate and during 2007/08 the contractors achieved a 97.6% access success rate, this is an increase of 0.57% from the 2006/07 figures.

There are currently around 5,911 Council properties included on the gas service contract. Some properties have more than one gas appliance, and as such there are around 7,625 gas appliances in total. During 2007/08 the gas contractors responded to 431 emergency call outs and 6,341 breakdowns.

x) Communal Cold-water Storage Tank Replacement.

In October 2003 the Council commissioned a condition survey of the communal and individual cold-water storage tanks installed in 300 various blocks of flats and individual properties throughout the district. The condition survey prioritised the replacement of the cold-water storage tanks based on which year they would need to be replaced.

As a result, an ongoing renewal programme has been included in the Capital Programme since 2004/05. This has resulted in 343 communal storage tanks being replaced and upgraded in 105 blocks, including the 100 communal and individual cold-water storage tanks fitted during 2007/08.

The communal and individual cold-water storage tank replacement programme identifies 376 tanks are in need of replacement in 195 blocks. Of which 80 communal and individual cold-water storage tanks installed in 14 blocks of flats are planned for renewal in 2008/09.

During 2008/09 the Council introduced a 5-year framework agreement based on a schedule of rates for the installation of individual cold-water storage tanks, linked to contractor performance and a guaranteed maximum cost. The installation programme will be based around the new heating works programme and any adhoc installations identified as an urgent repair. Performance monitoring during the works will measure and record the quality of the finished product and if Tenant Satisfaction targets are being met.

xi) Re-roofing contracts

Re-roofing has, in the past, comprised a combination of the replacement of old flat or pitched roof coverings with new coverings, and the elimination of flat roofs in favour of more traditional pitched roofs.

Between 1993 and 2000/01, re-roofing was limited to just responsive repairs to flat roofs as a result of leaks or replacement as part of more major improvement schemes such as the PRC programme.

In 2000/01 the re-roofing programme was re-introduced, with financial resources allocated in the Capital Programme. Priorities are derived from the ongoing annual stock condition surveys. Based on the stock condition survey data collected in 2007/08, 146 roofs were identified as being in need of renewal before 2010 under the decent homes definition.

As a result of the 2007/08 re-roofing programme, a mix of flat and pitched roofs were renewed or refurbished on a number of blocks of flats containing 122 individual properties at a cost of £193,000, with additional roofs undergoing less expensive repairs. This meant that the number of roofs in need of renewal before 2010 has

been reduced, leaving 188 properties in need of renewal before 2010 under the decent homes definition.

During 2008/09 the Council introduced two 5-year framework agreements based on a schedule of rates, one for the renewal of flat roof coverings and the other for the renewal of tiled roof coverings, both linked to contractor performance and a guaranteed maximum cost.

The 2008/09 roofing programme is based around the ongoing stock condition surveys and the Decent Homes data, plus any adhoc replacements or urgent repairs identified by Housing Officers. Performance monitoring during the works will measure and record the quality of the finished product and ensure Tenant Satisfaction targets are being met. It is estimated that during 2008/09, 133 properties will have the flat roof covering renewed and 25 properties will have the tiled roof covering renewed, along with any emergency or routine repairs.

xii) Rewiring contracts

Electrical installations deteriorate with usage and age, and as such it is important that the Council ensures that the installations continue to be safe and in a serviceable condition. There are currently no statutory requirements for electrical testing or the inspecting of electrical installations in tenanted properties. However, this may change in the future.

Currently, when properties become void or works are carried out to the existing electrical installations the current electrical installation is tested and inspected for safety in accordance with the relevant British Standards and Regulations. The electrical test report identifies what works are necessary to bring the electrical installation up to the current electrical standards, and when the installation will next need to be inspected.

During 2006/07 the Council introduced a programme of planned electrical testing with contractors on long-term contracts who are able to carry out and certify this type of work.

Tenants have not in the past welcomed re-wiring works in their homes due to the high level of disruption it causes. In response to this, it was decided to link this unpopular, but essential, programme of work with other works, such as new heating installations, or kitchen and bathroom renewals, which are more acceptable to tenants. These linked works programmes and the length of time since the property was last inspected identifies prioritises which properties are included on the planned electrical testing programme.

Since 2004 around 2,428-properties have had electrical installation testing carried out. Any work identified is categorised as being, a full rewire, or urgent remedial work or corrective action to certain identified items. Some of the properties tested did not require any remedial works.

During 2007/08 around 430-properties have received electrical installation tests during the kitchen and bathroom, heating and rewiring and electrical testing programs resulting in full re-wires or electrical upgrading works being completed.

At the start of 2008/09, the stock condition survey identified around 476-properties were in need of rewiring or electrical upgrades. It is estimated that during 2008/09, around 300 electrical tests will be completed with around 50-properties requiring full rewires and 250-properties being upgraded at an estimated cost of £130,000. However, the majority of the properties completed are as a result of the linked programmes of work. Around 400-properties have been identified as in need of an electrical test during 2009/10 to ensure the Council meets its Decent Homes Targets by 2010, with a further 2,221-properties prioritised as in need of an electrical test.

All new electrical installations have to be carried out to the current IEE Regulations as appropriate at the time, and in accordance with Part P of the Building Regulations.

The Requirements for Electrical Installations BS 7671:2008 include the periodic inspection and testing of every electrical installation shall be carried out therefore in August 2007 the Council commenced an electrical testing programme of the landlord electrical supplies installed in Council owned blocks of flats.

Historically, the electrical testing of these areas has been on an adhoc basis however, linking the testing of the landlords supply with other works, such as door entry installations or the communal water-tank replacement programme all of the Councils 434-blocks of flats can be included on a planned programme of landlords supply electrical testing.

During 2007/08 the Council commenced the testing of the landlords supply and an estimated 77-blocks of flats have had electrical tests carried out. As a result of the testing 5-blocks have had remedial electrical upgrade works completed during the door entry and water tank installations. The remaining 72-blocks tested are planned for electrical upgrades during 2009/10 at a cost of around £25,000.

It is planned to continue the electrical testing programme on the remaining 357-blocks annually with an estimated 75-blocks identified for testing during 2009/10.

xiii) Door entry system installation

In order to protect both Council property and afford tenants with the confidence of security, the Council has introduced a policy to install door entry security systems, where appropriate, in blocks of flats and to replace older door entry systems where it is no longer economically viable to repair them. Where blocks contain leaseholders the Council will consider the blocks for inclusion in programmes of work subject to leaseholders paying a proportion of the costs.

The order in which door entry security is installed in blocks is determined by reference to the current priority criteria, as agreed by the Council, which is as follows:

- The number of reported incidents of crime
- The number of reported nuisance complaints
- The level of damage / vandalism to Council and residents' property, and
- Appropriate housing management considerations.

Following an extensive consultation process with the Police and Management Officers, the Housing Portfolio Holder agreed an updated 7-year programme in April 2005. As a result, new door entry systems were fitted to a further 7 blocks containing 121 individual dwellings during 2007/08 at a cost of £110,000.

Expenditure of around £80,000 is planned for 2008/09, which will provide improved security to a further 4 blocks.

There are still around 40 blocks throughout the district without the benefit of a door entry security system. With the current level of funding, it is anticipated that the installation programme of new security door entry systems will be completed in 2011/12. After 2012 a modernisation and improvement programme will need to be implemented to tackle those installations that are no longer economical to maintain.

In terms of repairs to existing door entry systems, a specialist maintenance contract has to be prepared to ensure the existing systems are repaired in the most cost effective manner.

xiv) Internal redecorations for elderly and disabled tenants

Generally, internal redecorations are the tenant's responsibility, as listed in the Conditions of Tenancy and the Tenants Handbook. However, a limited budget of around £75,000 is allocated each year to offer a redecoration service to certain qualifying tenants (mainly elderly). This permits one room of the tenant's choice to be decorated no more than every five years, where properties are either designated for use by the elderly or one bedroomed accommodation occupied by an elderly person. The rationale behind this is to target the services for those elderly people living in properties deemed especially suitable for them. The Council wants to encourage older tenants who are under occupying larger properties to transfer to properties, which better meet their housing needs.

Following the Council's decision to only undertake the decoration service to elderly residents living in sheltered accommodation or 1-bed flats, during 2007/08, the Council received 89 requests for help under the redecoration service. The Council regrettably has declined 21 applications however, a total of 68 internal redecoration requests were completed at a cost of £32,227.

During 2008/09, the level of applications for the decoration service has declined to around 70 applications, despite several promotions advertising the service.

xv) Structural repairs

The Council does not insure against damage to property caused by subsidence, heave or landslip following a risk assessment that established the cost of premiums would be higher than the likely cost of works. Most properties in the district are built on clay, which is the underlying stratum in this area. In addition to this, the Epping Forest District is a very green area with a large number of trees. Exceptions occur where

leaseholders exist in the block, then subsidence cover is included in the policy.

Most of the Council's stock was built at a time when foundation depths did not take account of tree roots or even clay heave and shrinkage. This does, from time to time, result in structural movement to properties, which must be monitored and remedied.

The monitoring process lasts for at least twelve-months, to take account of ground movement in all four seasons. Any properties that show signs of movement or distress will require the appointment of specialist structural engineer. The structural engineer will identify the cause of the structural movement, specify a repairs scheme, and in some cases supervise the works and monitor the recovery.

During 2008/09 the Council introduced a 5-year framework agreement based on a schedule of rates for structural repairs and maintenance, linked to contractor performance and a guaranteed maximum cost. The structural works programme will be based around the work identified from the structural register and urgent repairs reported by Housing Officers throughout the year. Performance monitoring during the works will measure and record the quality of the finished product and ensure Tenant Satisfaction targets are being met.

At the start of 2008/09, Housing Assets had 39 properties included on the structural register, which were being monitored. During the year it is estimated that 75 structural repairs will have been carried out, mainly through the structural repairs framework agreement with expenditure estimated at £95,500.

The structural register for 2009/10 includes, 4 properties being identified for further structural investigations and 8 properties being monitored.

xvi) Any other maintenance works in excess of £5,000

All major repairs, which cost in excess of £5,000, should be dealt with by the Housing Assets Section rather than the Repairs Section. This could cover any type of building maintenance work in a Council property. However, in a number of cases, the Housing Repairs Section will undertake works in excess of £5,000 on behalf of the Housing Assets Section.

xvii) Asbestos Removal

The Council treats the issue of asbestos extremely seriously. An Asbestos Control Project Team has been established to develop the Council's strategy and this has overseen the introduction of an asbestos survey, database and Asbestos Protocol. The database was established during 2002/03 and is useful in informing the Council and residents of asbestos hazards in properties. The information also helps the Council determine priorities in the removal of asbestos and an annual asbestos removal budget of £115,000 has been created for this purpose.

One outcome of the Asbestos Project Team was to produce a comprehensive Asbestos booklet, which gives advice to tenants on what to do if they suspect there may be asbestos in their home, and what measures to take when carrying out DIY in their homes. The leaflet was issued to all tenants in April 2006, and is designed to be inserted into their tenants handbook. In addition, during 2007/08, a detailed asbestos record is to be produced and held at each property, giving detailed information relating to known or suspected asbestos in each dwelling. This, in conjunction with the asbestos booklet, will help residents when undertaking DIY, or warn contractors of where asbestos is or suspected to be located.

Until 2003/04, any suspected asbestos containing materials were removed and analysed by specialist contractors. The annual budget for asbestos sampling was around £60,000. However, in March 2004, a number of Repairs and Assets Officers received training on how to remove samples for analysis. Since April 2004, all samples have been taken by Officers and then sent away for analysis. This has resulted in savings of around £50,000 per annum.

xviii) Estate Enhancements

The Estate Enhancement programme was introduced in 2005/06 specifically to carry out remedial works to around 100 prioritised schemes to footpaths, garage forecourts, drives, communal and recreation areas of housing owned land.

A list of estate enhancements based on recommendations from a number of sources is maintained, with works identified on the list in priority order based on risk taking account of the urgency of the repair, the potential hazard and condition of the existing area. A new schedule of rates contract for the estate

environmental repair works was tendered and let in 2007 for a maximum 5-year contact, on an annual renewal basis. The Housing Assets team manages this work.

During 2006/07 a total of 51 priority 1 schemes were completed along with 9 priority 2 schemes and 6 priority 3 schemes, leaving 34 schemes carried over into 2007/08.

During 2007/08, the 34 carried over schemes and a further 36 new schemes were identified by Housing Officers and added to the priority list. A total of 21 priority 1 schemes were completed along with 15 priority 2 schemes and 2 priority 3 schemes, leaving 26 schemes to be carried over into 2008/09.

During 2008/09, the 26 carried over schemes and a further 59 new schemes have been identified by Housing Officers and added to the priority list. It is estimated that during 2008/09 a total of 24 priority 1 schemes will be completed along with 49 priority 2 schemes no priority 3 schemes have been identified, leaving around 12 schemes to be carried over into 2009/10.

In 2009/10 the budget for estate environment works is £150,000, with £50,000 funded from the Housing Repairs Fund and £100,000 from the Housing Capital Programme depending on the type of work that is identified and carried out.

xix) Off Street Parking

With the Highways Agency returning to Essex County Council in April 2005, it has been necessary to set out some new procedures for logging, assessing, prioritising and recommending all future off street parking provision on Council estates where there are particular parking difficulties. As a result, Housing Assets have completed a priority list for off street parking schemes, which has identified sites throughout the District.

Feasibility studies have been completed on 10 of the highest scoring off street parking schemes identified on the priority list. The feasibility studies considered the suitability of each sites and prepared up to 3-design options for consideration and budget estimates. Housing Assts have completed a consultation exercise with residents affected by new off street parking schemes with results of the consultation exercise reported to Cabinet in September 2008.

The annual budget for off street parking has been increased to around £629,000, which is funded in part from the Housing Revenue Account £341,000 and General Fund contributions of £288,000 per annum for the next 3-years.

It is anticipated that a tendering exercise will be undertaken and a report submitted to the Cabinet in June 2009, with recommendations on the appointment of Consultants to undertake the detailed design process, preparing contract documents, contract administration and implementation of the works.

A further report on the results of the tendering exercise for the construction of the off street parking schemes listing the sites to be included in the 2-year programme of works will be submitted to the Cabinet late this year.

xx) Digital TV

For some time now, the Government has set out its intention to withdraw the analogue frequencies used for the distribution of terrestrial television channels in 2012. Over the past 3 years, the Council has been exploring the options available for the digital conversion. The Council maintains approximately 88 communal aerial distribution systems, the largest being on the Roundhills, Parklands, Ninefields and Springfields Housing Estates with the total number of outlets being approximately 2,500.

The cost of converting the television aerials is estimated to be around £150,000. However, television services are not included in the Government's Decent Homes Standard. The Cabinet, at its meeting in April 2005 agreed to the introduction a "Freeview" TV system to the blocks of flats. However, with advances in technology, it is now possible to extend the system to incorporate a full IRS system, giving residents a "Sky" option for no extra cost to the Council (subject to individual subscription).

Tenders were sought during 2008/09, and works to complete Phase 1 of the installation programme estimated at £100,000 has commenced. The following phases of the installation programme, planned for 2009/10 are as follows:

4. Stock Condition Survey

4.1 Stock Condition Survey

An effective plan for the repairs and improvement works to the Council's stock is dependent on the outputs of a stock condition survey. The Council's previous stock condition survey was carried out in 2000/2001, and was based on a 100% external survey and a 20% internal sample. Data collected was then cloned based on types and ages of properties to present a full assessment of the condition of the Council's stock.

In summary:

a) the total level of catch up repairs identified by the survey amounted to £33,334,274.

b) The total cost of maintenance over the next 30 years was calculated at £144,366,887.

The Council has undertaken a stock options appraisal and the information obtained from the survey was used to inform the recommendations resulting from this exercise.

The information has also been used as the baseline for the calculation of the number of non-decent homes and the resulting investment strategy is devised around the findings of the survey.

The stock condition survey has been updated with work undertaken by the Council since the survey was undertaken, with additional surveys being undertaken to reduce the number of cloned surveys to ensure that it is current and accurate. The Council purchased the "Codeman" Asset Management System from Anite, which is the main source of data on stock condition.

The Codeman system is very versatile, and is being utilised to capture a variety of stock information, which is used for the following purposes:

- Decent Homes
- Stock Condition and future asset management
- Asbestos Register
- Energy Efficiency
- Housing Health & Safety Rating Scheme (HHSRS)

Currently officers are capturing enough information to complete the Decent Homes Surveys, including the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme, which replaced the Fitness Standards in April 2006 used by Environmental Health Officers, and information on any asbestos containing material. Any property that fails the Decent Homes Survey is included on the appropriate works programme to bring the property up to the required standard.

The Housing Health & Safety Rating System, which replaced the fitness standard used by Environmental Health Officers to assess the condition of dwellings in April 2006, relates to the condition of the property and the risks associated with the individual occupants living in the dwelling will be collected as part of the on-going stock condition survey. This change had a minimal impact on the Councils ability to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

Using a Partnering form of contract for the External Repairs and Redecorations, efficiency savings in staffing resources have been realised amounting to 1.5 FTE Officers, which is allowing more time to collect stock condition survey information amongst other duties.

To date, the Council has undertaken a full and detailed internal and external stock condition survey of around 3,583 properties, making up over 54% of the housing stock. This ensures accurate and up to date Stock Condition Records are maintained and Capital Works Programmes are directed at those properties in the most need.

4.2 Integrated Housing Database

The introduction of the Anite Open Housing Management System (OHMS) integrated computer database in 1998/9, and its ongoing development, has enabled a comprehensive property database to be compiled, including basic information such as unique property reference number (UPRN), dwelling type, age, size. In addition it provides details on design features, built form characteristics, repairs history and works undertaken.

4.3. Codeman

The Housing Assets team use “Codeman”, which is a specialist module linked to the OHMS database. Codeman is not only a stock condition database, but also an asset management tool that reports on future maintenance investment. The software is currently in the process of being upgraded.

5. Quality Repairs and Maintenance Service

5.1 Tenant Satisfaction

In November 2008, an independent tenant satisfaction survey was undertaken by the National Housing Federation (NHF). The main headlines of the findings are listed below.

A standard questionnaire and survey process called “STATUS” was used, which is endorsed by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Housing Corporation (HC).

Around 1,563 tenants (22% of all Council tenants) were randomly selected by the NHF to be surveyed. An exceptionally high response of 829 surveys were returned (53%).

In conclusion, the tenants were very pleased with the service they received across the whole of the housing directorate, but in particular, they were exceptionally pleased with the Council's repairs and maintenance services, and with the contact they have with the Council's staff.

It was recorded that 86% of tenants were satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service (compared with the national average of 73%), which is up 2% compared to 2006. The Council ranked a strong first in its peer group for all aspects of the repairs and maintenance service measured.

5.2 Customer Perspective Programme

In pursuit of customer excellence, in spring 2007, Housing Services initiated a “Customer Perspective Programme”, which looks at how housing services are provided to customers from a customer perspective. This includes the repairs and maintenance service. A group of Officers from each section of the Housing Directorate, along with tenant representatives will analyse all aspects of the “interface” that Housing Services have with customers with a view to finding out how services can be improved further.

A Customer Perspective Action Plan will be compiled as part of the review, with actions relating to repairs and maintenance appearing in future editions of this Business Plan.

5.3 Housing Excellence Plan

The Audit Commission has produced a number of key lines of enquiry (KLOEs) relating to the provision of housing services, which represent a set of questions and statements around either service or judgment of specific issues, which provide a consistent approach to assessing and measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of housing services. Descriptors of fair and excellent services are intended to help organizations to understand how the quality of service is judged against KLOEs.

In pursuit of excellence, the repairs and maintenance service (along with all other aspects of the Housing Directorate) is currently reviewing the KLOE's that relate to repairs and maintenance, and identifying actions that need to be introduced in order to attain the “excellent” level in each category. The Action Plan in Section 11 of this Business Plan includes a number of new initiatives, which lead to an “excellent” service.

6. Expected trends

This section is a summary of the major issues taken into consideration when framing the investment programme for the Council's housing stock.

6.1 Expenditure

Expected expenditure trends over can be summarised as follows:

Decent Homes – The Government's Decent Homes initiative is now the key factor in planning the investment programme for the Council's stock. A separate section of this Business Plan is devoted to how the Council will meet the challenge.

Declining levels of stock by approximately 1.4% per annum – The Council has sold 26 houses and flats during 2007/8. However, this has been much higher in previous years with an average of 54 properties sold each year over the last 5 years. This has the effect of reducing the need for maintenance expenditure (although for leasehold properties the Council retains responsibility for structural issues) and reducing income into the HRA.

Increases in building maintenance costs – Building costs are increasing by approximately 5-6% per annum, which is more than double the GDP inflation rate. However, given the effect of investment through planned maintenance, expenditure has been falling on an annual basis. The current economic down-turn has not resulted in tender price decreases.

Uncertain levels of demand for responsive repairs and voids expenditure – Between 1997/8 and 2003/4 responsive repairs and voids expenditure decreased by around 38%. Generally, adequate investment in planned maintenance should lead to a reduction in responsive repairs and voids expenditure. However, these are always the most difficult areas within the Housing Repairs Fund (HRF) to estimate given they are responsive to demand. The District has experienced relatively mild winters in recent times and a harsh winter would increase expenditure significantly beyond current budgeted levels.

Continued demand for structural repairs – Expenditure on structural repairs has increased significantly in recent years. A number of Council properties were constructed using non-traditional building methods during the 1960's and now require additional levels of maintenance above traditional properties. A number of structural repairs have been completed and there are likely to be other parts of the Council's stock also requiring similar levels of investment.

The Council is not insured for subsidence, heave and landslip as estimates showed that premiums were likely to be higher than expenditure.

Increasing costs for servicing and improvement/replacement of existing central heating – All Council tenants requesting central heating now have heating installed. Likely resultant trends include: increasing servicing and repair costs; increased costs to replace existing systems when beyond repair; the need to upgrade partial central heating systems; reduction in demand for welfare heating; and the ongoing need to replace warm air heating systems with 'wet' central heating systems.

Continued demand for planned maintenance expenditure – An ageing stock will require increased levels of repairs although this can be offset by a planned maintenance programme. Nationally there is a trend for higher standards in social housing (as demonstrated by the decent homes initiative) and the Council must ensure that the requirements of decent homes are balanced against the need for ongoing investment in its stock to protect its value and long-term let-ability.

Need to adapt communal aerial schemes to the requirements of digital television – Existing communal television systems will become redundant unless they can be converted to meet the requirements of digital television. This will affect approximately 5,700 tenants and private residents. Provision has been made within the investment programme to upgrade the aerials in Council blocks to receive digital signals, with works commenced during 2008..

Need to tackle anti-social behavior through the use of CCTV – With an increase in anti-social behavior,

which results in an increase in the amount of expenditure on repairing damage caused through vandalism, consideration needs to be given to combating this growing problem. Work is on-going between the Council and the Police Service, which has resulted in a CCTV Policy being drawn up by the Head of Environmental Services. A small on-going budget for the installation of CCTV surveillance systems has been included within the investment programme.

Recruitment of skilled craft workers – With the Olympics coming to East London in 2012, there is a real possibility that contractors and sub-contractors will be pulling resources to more lucrative development sites in and around London in the years leading up to the London Olympics. This could lead to higher building costs and a shortage of skilled labour.

Economic downturn – Much has been reported about the current economic downturn, with the construction industry being hit hard. Whilst this is mainly affecting new build, general maintenance work is less affected. In order to help local businesses through these difficult financial times, all Council tenders will seek to include at least one local business on the list of tenderers.

6.2 Investment Needs

This section provides a summary of the main areas of investment identified by the stock condition survey. A separate section deals with needs arising from the decent homes initiative. These are broken into the same categories used in Appendices A (summary of expenditure over a 5 year period) and B (summary of expenditure over the next 30 years).

(a) Future Planned Maintenance

There are a number of major works that can be identified from the stock condition survey, other major improvement schemes or development opportunities. These have been prioritised taking into account the decent homes criteria and Appendix A details the investment strategy over the next five years. Appendix B shows this same information over the next 30 years.

(b) Structural Repairs

This heading covers the work undertaken to preserve the structural integrity of buildings such as underpinning. The authority has regularly had to undertake structural work to properties to control problems such as subsidence and around £2.65 million has been set-aside over the next five years for this purpose.

(c) Cyclical Maintenance

In order to prolong the useful life of components, it is necessary to carry out regular inspections, instigate repairs and undertake preventative maintenance on sub-components e.g. replacement boiler parts.

It is likely that further inspections will be required to building components not currently covered by cyclical maintenance. This is most likely to affect the inspection of all electrical systems in Council properties on an annual basis. However, until this happens the Council will continue to inspect the electrical systems as part of the void inspections and the stock condition survey.

Included in the Housing Repairs Fund around £2.18 million is spent per year on cyclical maintenance, which includes: the repair and redecoration of every property and garage every 5 years; the maintenance, service and repair of all Council owned gas appliances and the inspection and service of all Council owned hydro-mechanical lifts on an annual basis.

(d) Responsive Repairs

The current ratio of maintenance to repair expenditure is 69:31 (taking account of HRF and Capital expenditure). However, the Audit Commission's recommended balance is 70:30 (based on HRF expenditure only).

This is maintained by monitoring the expenditure for day-to-day repairs by types of work and then developing maintenance programmes which would obtain better value for money. This process is currently being carried out at 6 monthly intervals, in September and March each year.

The Housing Repairs Fund makes allowance for around £6 million in 2009/10 and then £5.6 million per year

over the next four years, taking into account a 5% increase per annum in Building Cost Indices and a reduction of 0.8% for the rate of decline in stock numbers as a result of the Right to Buy scheme. The Capital programme includes around £1.8 million over the next 5 years for small capital repairs.

(e) Voids Refurbishment

This area of expenditure is also mainly funded from revenue and as such the comments regarding the split between capital and revenue apply. It is expected that the authority will spend approximately £4.16 million over the next five years on void refurbishment.

(f) Cost Reflective Improvements

Until the introduction of the Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan "Cost reflective" improvements had not previously been considered a separate category of works, since the Council's rent structure was not based on a points system which takes account of individual attributes. Cost reflective improvements, such as kitchen and bathroom modernisations, have in the past not previously been considered as essential.

Feedback from tenants has established that they feel the Council should make its properties more attractive and desirable by introducing programmes such as kitchen and bathroom replacements. This has since been supported by the decent homes guidance, which requires authorities to have reasonable modern kitchen and bathroom facilities. In order to meet the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard, substantial investment is required in this area. The Council is using this opportunity to offer tenants a choice on the type and layout to suit individuals' tastes and needs.

The table in Appendix A makes allowances for approximately £5.579 million over the next 5 years for kitchen and bathroom replacements.

(g) Non-Cost Reflective Improvements

Under this heading, the Council provides an environmental improvement scheme for improving parking provision on its estates by carrying out a jointly funded initiative between the HRA and the General Fund to provide off street parking.

The table in Appendix A makes allowances for £2.833 million over the next 5 years. This has been allocated towards improvements to estate footpaths, communal refuse facilities, off street parking and new and enhanced external lighting.

(h) Disabled Adaptations

The Council endeavors to carry out adaptations to properties to meet the reasonable needs of disabled tenants. This is based on assessments and recommendations from Social Services Occupational Therapists.

The Best Value Review examined the Disabled Adaptations Service and concluded that current levels of investment were inadequate.

The Council's previous commitment was to spend at least £300,000 per annum over the next 5 years on disabled adaptations. However, this was recently reviewed, which led to the budget being increased by 5% annually. Appendix A shows a budget of £400,000 in 2008/9.

(i) Other Maintenance and Repairs

Other types of maintenance and repairs include: decoration allowances for new tenants when they move into a home; internal decorations for elderly and disabled tenants; internal decorations to the common areas within the Council's sheltered housing schemes; and compensation payments to tenants who undertake improvements to their homes themselves and subsequently move out leaving behind the improvements they have carried out.

7. Decent Homes Initiative

7.1 Background

In July 2000, following its spending review the Government announced a significant increase in resources for housing, especially social housing. This was on top of substantial increases announced in 1998. As part of its desire to link increased spending to better outcomes, the Government has established a target to:

“ensure that all social housing meets standards of decency by 2010, by reducing the number of households living in social housing that does not meet these standards by a third between 2001 and 2004 with most of the improvement taking place in the most deprived local authority areas.”

Under the Government’s Decent homes initiative a decent home meets the following criteria:

a) Any residential premises should have a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor (Formally the statutory minimum standard for housing)

b) It is in a reasonable state of repair

Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those where either:

- One or more key building components are old and because of their condition need replacing or major repairs: or
- Two or more of the other building components are old and because of their condition need replacing or major repair.

c) It has reasonable modern facilities and services

- Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those which lack three or more of the following:
- A reasonably modern kitchen (less than 20 years old)
- A kitchen with adequate space and layout
- A reasonably modern bathroom (30 years old or less)
- An appropriately located bathroom and WC
- Adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem)
- Adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats.

d) It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

This criterion requires dwellings to have both effective insulation and efficient heating. To deliver against the targets the Council needs to:

- quantify the level of non decent housing both now and arising by 2010, in its stock;
- develop an investment strategy to tackle this; and
- measure progress towards its elimination.

7.2 Quantifying the level of non-decent homes

Since the start of 2002 the Council has been able to begin the process of analysing the data contained within the stock condition survey. The process used to extract the relevant information has been as follows:

- 1) Confirm the validity of the information contained within the stock condition survey using separate consultants to undertake a sample survey of the results.
- 2) Define the characteristics that render a property non-decent using the criteria set out above.

- 3) Develop a suite of programs to interrogate the database to collect information on the number of properties with the identified characteristics.
- 4) Interrogate the database to reveal the number of non-decent homes on an annual basis.
- 5) Calculate the average rate of properties becoming non-decent each year using these two figures.

This exercise was first conducted in 2001, which revealed a total number of 1,627 homes, which were non-decent. This equated to 22% of all the Council's housing stock. If the Council were not to have undertaken any further investment in the stock this number would have increased to 4,127 (67%) by the year 2010. There were therefore 2,500 properties that were potentially non-decent in addition to those non-decent at the time.

Based on this information it was anticipated that there would have been 2,480 non-decent homes in 2004 if the Council did not adopt an investment programme. In fact, as a result of the Council's strategies, the actual number was 590, which represented 8.6% of the housing stock. This meant that between 2001 and 2004, the percentage change in the number of non-decent homes was a reduced by 64%, which was well within the government's target of a one third reduction. The level of non-decent homes as at 1 April 2008 is 3.58% of the Council's housing stock, which amounts to 237 homes.

One area, which requires significant investment to achieve the decent homes standard, relates to kitchens and bathrooms under the 'Reasonably Modern Facilities' category. Since 2002, the Council has already invested £2.9 million to improve the quality and layout of bathrooms and kitchens in properties where facilities are seen as being in the worst condition, and around £5.5 million is planned to be invested over the next 5-years

The main area for investment arising from the decent homes standard concerns the Reasonable State of Repair category. Properties failing under the Reasonable State of Repair criteria will generally be addressed as part of the existing cyclical maintenance programme which already covers most of the repairs identified, such as re-pointing, repairs to chimneystacks, doors and windows etc. However, there is a significant requirement to invest in replacement heating systems and electrical re-wiring, where around £4.4 million has been spent on replacement heating and boiler replacement, and around £3.1 million on electrical rewiring since 2002.

The Council also acknowledges that the thermal comfort of some properties needs to be addressed. Generally, the Council has a good track record in improving heating in properties and 5,911 already have gas central heating installed. There are however, some properties (particularly in the rural areas) which do not have access to mains gas and which require heating and insulation improvements. These have been identified within the non-decent homes figures and will be addressed over the next 3 years. Appendix C of this Business Plan sets out the Council's position regarding the Decent Homes Targets.

7.3 Investment Strategy

The stock condition database can be interrogated in such a way that lists of all the properties that fail or potentially fail the criteria can be produced. Using this information a programme of work has been developed without having to undertake additional survey work.

The key strategy which has been employed to develop programmes of work is to look at where properties are failing and then only undertake work which will ensure that they are not caught by the criteria. For example, where properties fail on three or more categories under the Reasonably Modern Facilities heading just one category of work will be improved so that they no longer become non decent. Under this heading the standard says that properties must fail on three or more of the categories listed to become non-decent. In this way, although additional investment would still be required, the number of non-decent homes can be reduced.

Using this approach, as of 2001 a total of £14 million was required to eliminate non-decent homes by 2010. However, this does not include the resources necessary to prevent properties becoming non-decent, although Appendix C shows the expenditure required taking into account properties likely to fail the standard before 2010. The first column in the table shows all the failures against the standard in 2001. Some properties may fail on several different criteria and as such totals cannot be cross-referenced with the total number of non-decent homes, because properties can only fail the standard once. The final column of Appendix C shows where expenditure will be programmed to meet decent homes target and this expenditure

is contained within Appendix B.

Using this approach, together with current funding forecasts, it is expected that the decent homes targets can be reached through the capital investment already available. (See the next section for details of the Council's short and longer-term investment plans.) The next section also discusses the funding gap between the full level of maintenance work required under the stock condition survey and the Council's ability to fund improvements.

7.4 Measuring progress

The stock condition database is amended to include work already undertaken to the Council's stock. In future this task will be done on the new Codeman4 system, which can be interrogated to provide information on the number of non-decent homes.

The ongoing stock condition survey work will also clarify some of the data on the numbers on non-decent homes and it is possible that the numbers of non-decent homes will change as the quality of data improves.

8. Resources & Expenditure Proposals

8.1 Financial

As highlighted earlier, there are a number of uncertainties over future projections of the financial resources likely to be made available. Repairs and Maintenance expenditure is currently funded through;

- Contributions from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to the Housing Repairs Fund (HRF)
- Transitional Capital Receipts
- Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay (RCCO).
- Major Repairs Reserve (MRR)

The following issues are worthy of note at this stage:

The contribution from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) has been set at approximately £6.00 million for 2008/9 and £5.6 million each year after that next 4-years.

Funding is provided from the MRR at £5.265 million for 2009/10, although this varies for the next 5 years as laid out in the table below.

The following table indicates an assessment of the use of capital resources, which are forecast to become available over the next five years. The Capital programme is updated annually in June.

FUNDING SOURCE	2009/10 £000's	2010/11 £000's	2011/12 £000's	2012/13 £000's	2013/14 £000's
MRR	5,265	3,608	3,921	4,373	4,321
RCCO	1,525	1,763	1,450	700	750
Leaseholder Contributions	50	50	50	50	50
Total	6,840	5,421	5,421	5,123	5,121

At the conclusion of the five-year period that the Council is forecast to have balances of approximately £8.8 million on the Major Repairs Reserve, which are not being allocated at this stage.

8.1.1 Overall Investment Strategy – 5 Year

Based on the income projections shown in the above table, a detailed programme of expenditure has been prepared which can be found at Appendix A demonstrating how the Council currently intends to spend the resources available for repairs and maintenance. This is based on two main priorities:

- a) Achievement of government targets to reduce the number of non decent homes; and
- b) The need to invest in the stock to improve its condition as determined by the on-going stock condition survey.

Appendix A adds together all anticipated capital expenditure for a 5-year period up to and including 2012/13.

SUMMARY OF THE HOUSING CAPITAL FIVE YEAR PROGRAMME

Detail	FORECAST SPENDING				
	2009/10 £000's	2010/11 £000's	2011/12 £000's	2012/13 £000's	2013/14 £000's
Future Planned Maintenance	2,473	2,410	2,410	2,410	2,410
Structural Schemes	405	635	635	635	635
Cyclical Maintenance	23	5	5	5	5
Small Capital Repairs (inc voids)	400	350	350	350	350
Cost Reflective Repairs	2,067	878	878	878	878
Non-cost Reflective Repairs	919	628	628	330	328
Disabled Adaptations	430	450	450	450	450
Others, including contingencies	123	65	65	65	65
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	6,840	5,421	5,421	5,123	5,121
TOTAL FUNDING, including M.R.R and Capital Receipts (excluding carry forwards)	6,840	5,421	5,421	5,123	5,121

The table compares the planned expenditure against the anticipated funding position and does not include the total expenditure or investment which is required for the stock, it simply shows how much can be funded. The achievement of decent homes targets, the priorities established by the stock condition survey and existing expenditure already approved and contained within housing budgets would require capital funding of approximately £40 million in total over the next five years. Current estimates show that around £29.5 million is likely to become available over the same time period through capital funding.

Revenue expenditure covering repairs, voids, cyclical maintenance and disabled adaptations is estimated at £5.8 million per annum. HRA contributions to the HRF will be able to support this expenditure.

8.1.2 Overall Investment Strategy – 30 years

Appendix B provides an analysis of capital, or investment expenditure, over a 30-year period. There are a considerable number of doubts over the validity of some of the projected figures over this period of time but nonetheless this table provides the best estimate given the information currently available. Using this information the available funding will not meet all requirements identified in the stock condition survey by approximately £28.2 million over the 30-year period. Five years ago, the Business Plan identified a funding gap of approximately £60m. This has reduced as a result of anticipated increased investment through capital receipts and the MRA. Again the funding gap is discussed more in the HRA Business Plan, which refers to the Stock Options Appraisal exercise.

The current revenue expenditure on repairs and maintenance can be maintained for a further 22 years before the HRA falls into deficit. This is covered within the HRA Business Plan.

8.1.3 Maximising Value

It is essential that the Council adopts a value for money approach so that resources can be used to maximum efficiency. To this end a strategy has been adopted which seeks the replacement of building components just before they break down. This is known as a 'just in time' strategy and is based on industry standard assessments for the lifetime of components. At the same time the lifespan of building components such as heating appliances are extended by the replacement of sub components where possible. The investment strategy outlined in this section is based in part on these strategies.

Another issue is the use of option appraisals for all redevelopment and refurbishment schemes. This approach has already been used for the redevelopment of a sheltered scheme, major refurbishment at Springfields, Waltham Abbey and has been applied to assess the best option for the future of the Council's homeless hostel. This approach is clearly not appropriate for every maintenance project but where significant expenditure is required for a contained number of properties it can be a useful guide to the most

cost effective route.

8.1.4 Gershon Savings

Following Sir Peter Gershon's review of public sector efficiency, which identified the need to achieve value for money savings through better procurement in order to release resources to support the key policy objectives of the Government, an annual efficiency statement is completed by the Council as a whole. As a result all areas of the service are being examined to identify ways in which the way in which repairs and maintenance can become more efficient.

Significant savings have been identified as a result of the use of partnering contracts, undertaking work in-house through training that was previously undertaken by specialist contractors, generating income by using a sole utility provider as part of the void process, negotiating with contractors over price increases below DTI indices wherever possible and investing in alternative technology to reduce long-term costs.

8.2 Staffing

At the beginning of 2007/8, the Housing Assets Section comprised 12 FTE members of staff, including one FTE Trainee Surveyor post. However, the use of consultants will always be necessary because they provide specialist skills, which could not be economically provided by permanent members of staff. The Council has access to a multi-disciplinary firm of consultants appointed through the Essex Procurement Hub, who can be called upon at any time to provide additional support including:

- Mechanical and engineering work
- Drainage work
- Architectural and Structural Engineering
- Structural Engineering
- Building Surveying
- Structural work
- Feasibility studies.

8.3 Partnering – The Egan Approach

One difficulty experienced by the Council was finding reliable consultants to support the work of the Maintenance Section. New methods of appointment were explored and the Council has approved the use of a partnering arrangement following the principles of the Egan Report. Two consultants were selected, which provided greater flexibility in the resourcing of maintenance projects as well as accessing a wider range of skills than could be provided through in-house staff. It would be difficult for the Council to recruit enough members of staff with suitable skills to oversee the diversity of work included in the 5 or 30 year plan.

Full project partnering has also now been applied to embrace contractors and suppliers for the kitchen and bathroom programme, new heating installations, rewiring external repair and redecoration work and Gas Servicing. Framework agreements are also widely used for specialist areas of work where the frequency cannot be predicted with any accuracy. This has resulted in significant efficiency savings, which are included in the Council's annual efficiency statement.

8.4 Value for Money

8.4.1 Essex Hub – Essex wide procurement

In October 2006, the Council joined the "Essex Procurement Hub", which brings new opportunities to deliver greater value for money for the procurement of goods and services. The Hub works in two ways, one by combining the buying power of many Local Authorities across Essex to get lower costs through the economies of scale, and another by utilizing the expert knowledge and skills of the procurement team who prepare contracts, mainly as framework agreements and tender the works on behalf of the Council. This is a corporate initiative, which Housing Services intend to make use of whenever future contracts are to be let.

8.4.2 Benchmarking

In January 2007, a bi-annual benchmarking exercise took place of the Building Maintenance Works Unit to review the current schedule of rates against a range of 20 comparison organizations within the Home Counties and to look at organization overheads in comparison to private repairs contractors.

It was clear that of the 20 Local Authorities that were compared, only 2 undertake the majority of their responsive repairs through a Building Maintenance Works Unit, whereas 5 operate their own Building Maintenance Works Unit alongside external contractors. There were 8 Local Authorities that outsourced their whole contracting element of the repairs service

Based on the Schedule of Rates comparison, it was suggested that on average, the Building Maintenance Works Unit were securing keen material prices. However, on average the Schedule of rates were 1.64% higher than average. It was suggested that this was due to the relatively small scale of the Building Maintenance Works Unit in comparison to the other organisations included in the study.

When comparing wage rates, it was suggested that in general, the salary rates were in line with national averages with the exception of carpenters, which are slightly higher than average.

There were some areas of concern expressed as part of the benchmarking exercise.

The existing schedule of rates are lengthy and cumbersome, with many rarely or never used. It was recommended that the schedule of rates be reviewed and simplified, but more importantly brought in line with actual works that are carried out on a regular basis.

The existing salary system should be more performance based, taking account of output or targets, quality, completion of jobs on time, fix first time and tenant satisfaction. However, this works against the principles of the recent Job Evaluation exercise implemented in 2005/6.

Further benchmarking exercise of the whole of the Housing Service was undertaken using "Housemark", which is a national housing benchmarking organisation in Autumn 2006, and again in November 2008. These benchmarking exercise enabled us to compare our service based on detailed performance and cost data. In the main, the comparison organisations were housing associations rather than Local Authorities. However the results give a good indication of the level of performance and cost by comparison to others. A further benchmark exercise is due to take place in January 2010/11.

The outcome of the benchmark exercise illustrated areas for improvement in relation to all aspects of the repairs and maintenance service, particularly in relation to target completion times and appointments.

9. Risk Management

9.1 Introduction

Risk management can be defined as the consideration of the social, economic, political and other factors involved in risk analysis to determine both the acceptability of damage that could result from an event or exposure and what, if any, action should be taken with regard to the risk of that damage.

9.2 Corporate Risk Register

A Corporate Risk Management & Assurance Group has been established, made up of Officers from each Council Service, to produce and regularly review a Corporate Risk Register, and to collate service based risk assessments. The Asst. Director (Private Sector Housing) is the representative of the Housing Directorate.

9.3 Housing Risk Register

In early 2005, the former Housing Services produced its own Housing Risk Register, which identified the strategic and operations risks affecting Housing Services. Strategic risks are those that have an effect on the Council as a whole, where individuals, sections or even Housing Services has a whole have no total control over the outcome of risk management. Operational risks are those that affect individuals or sections of Housing Services, or the Housing Service as a whole, and will have little or no impact on the Council as a whole. The Risk Register is updated 6-monthly, and an action plan created and monitored for those risks that are above the “critical line”. All risks associated with the Building Maintenance Works Unit, Housing Repairs and Housing Assets are included within the Housing Risk Register,

The Housing Risk Register has been developed by applying a risk analysis, whereby each of the identified risks are assessed in terms of likelihood and impact. “Likelihood” ranges from “very high” to “almost impossible” and “Impact” ranges from “catastrophic” to “negligible”.

Risk management is applied to each of the identified risks, through exploring the best options to reduce either likelihood or impact or both. Not all risks can be reduced, but they can be managed.

The action plan for “critical” risks relating to Repairs and Maintenance are included in Section 10 of this Business Plan.

9.4 Key Housing Operational Risks – Repairs and Maintenance

The following have been identified as the Key Housing Repairs and Maintenance Operational Risks within the Housing Risk Register:

- Failure to meet the Government’s Decent Homes Standard by 2010
- The HRA falling into deficit
- Disaster at a sheltered housing scheme or Homeless Persons Hostel
- Disaster at the Civic Offices or The Broadway Area Housing Office
- Major failure of the integrated housing IT system
- Loss or insolvency of, or poor performance by, a major contractor/supplier
- Major incident, involving death or serious injury, due to poor health and safety procedures, or breach of health and safety legislation
- Significant overspend on a major housing maintenance contract
- Fraud, corruption and theft
- Loss of important paper records
- Failure to comply with Government or legislative requirements
- Physical or verbal attacks on staff
- Uninsured losses, especially through subsidence, heave or landslip
- Catastrophic budget overspends

10. Strategies

This section of the document lists the main strategies, which flow from firstly, the objectives, strategies and policies previously agreed by the authority and secondly, the issues discussed in this plan. Where these have clear links with corporate objectives or Best Value/Business Plan Guidance this is identified. There may not be current funding available to achieve all targets, but the effect of these strategies will be to focus available resources.

	Strategy	Link with Corporate Objective/Guidance
A	Maintenance and Repair Programmes	
1	<p>To develop ongoing programmes of maintenance and repairs expenditure for a period, of five and 30 years based on:</p> <p>Projections of the amount of funding likely to be available for repairs and maintenance;</p> <p>The findings of the stock condition survey;</p> <p>The number of non decent homes and reasons for them being non decent;</p> <p>The need to eliminate non decent homes by 2010;</p> <p>Patterns of demand for responsive repairs;</p> <p>Key targets (see below);</p>	<p>ODPM Guidance on Business Plans</p> <p>EFDC Council Plan</p> <p>EFDC Performance Plan</p> <p>EFDC HECA Strategy</p> <p>EFDC Fuel Poverty Strategy</p> <p>Decent Homes Guidance</p> <p>Housing Services Risk Strategy</p> <p>Equalities Impact Assessments</p>
2.	<p>To achieve the following key targets:</p> <p>Upgrade all partial heating systems previously installed under the Welfare Heating Programme to full central heating by 2010</p> <p>Replace all existing warm air heating systems by 2010.</p> <p>Identify hard to heat properties and carry out additional insulation measures to improve the energy efficiency of the property.</p> <p>Average SAP rating of 69 by end of 2010</p> <p>Explore alternative fuel sources for properties in the rural communities where properties are harder to insulate and affordably heat.</p>	<p>EFDC Council Plan</p> <p>EFDC Performance Plan</p> <p>Housing Services Strategy on Energy Efficiency</p> <p>HECA Strategy</p> <p>EFDC Fuel Poverty Strategy</p>
3.	<p>To ensure maximum value for money from maintenance expenditure by:</p> <p>Extending the life cycle of building components as long a possible so that they are replaced 'just in time.'</p> <p>Using criteria for the replacement of sub</p>	<p>ODPM Guidance on Business Plans</p>

	<p>components to extend the lifetime of heating systems, door entry systems, window units and other building components.</p> <p>Employing option appraisals where significant maintenance expenditure is required on a limited number of properties.</p>	
B.	Responsive Repairs and Voids Work	
1.	To continue to reduce expenditure on voids in line with the recommendations of the Voids and Lettings Study by ensuring as much work takes place as possible through planned maintenance contracts.	Voids and Lettings Study
2.	To aim to spend the HRF allocation from the HRA each year whilst acknowledging the fluctuating nature of repairs and maintenance programmes.	EFDC Housing Strategy Housing Services Risk Strategy
C.	Resources	
1.	<p>To maximise funding on maintenance expenditure by:</p> <p>Making use of available capital receipts where possible.</p> <p>Using RCCO where possible.</p> <p>Transferring approximately £6 million from the HRA into the HRF in 2008/9 and £5.6 million each year for a further 4-years.</p>	Housing Services Risk Strategy Capital Strategy
2.	To review the level of staffing resources annually against the planned level of expenditure.	
3.	Monitor repairs and voids expenditure every six months to identify patterns in expenditure, which could be incorporated into a planned maintenance programme through the use of new or existing framework agreements.	
D.	Tenant Consultation and Participation	
1.	To discuss expenditure plans and programmes of work with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation at least annually.	EFDC Tenant Participation Agreement
2.	To involve representatives of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation in discussions on new policies relating to the Repairs and Maintenance Services.	EFDC Tenant Participation Agreement Housing Services Risk Strategy
3.	To consult tenants affected by major improvement schemes over the proposals.	
4.	To consult leaseholders on all planned	

	improvements in line with Leasehold legislation	
5.	To undertake a "Customer Perspective" review of the Repairs Service	Customer Perspective Programme
E.	Contract Strategy	
1.	To roll out the use of either framework agreements in the form of Partnering contracts to new areas of work.	Housing Services Risk Strategy
2.	To utilize the Essex Hub wherever possible to enter into framework agreements with (sub) contractors or suppliers.	

11. Action plan

11.1 List of main actions flowing from the plan

This table lists the main areas of action required within the Building Maintenance Works Unit, Housing Repairs and Assets Sections to achieve the strategies detailed in the previous sections. The Action Plan also contains all actions arising from the Best Value Service Review

	Action	Officer responsible	Target date	Progress
1.	Implement programme for repairs and maintenance expenditure over 5 and 30 years as per Strategies A) (1) and (2).	HAM ADoH(P)	Ongoing	Included in this plan
2.	Implement upgrade to latest version of Codeman software	HAM	July 2009	PID agreed and order placed. Servers in place.
3.	To publish clear service standards for planned maintenance, Decent Homes, repairs, Right to Repairs and Leaseholder responsibilities, which are available in printed leaflet form and on the web site. To publish the Voids standards on the Web site and to issue a copy to all tenants in advance of them undertaking an accompanied viewing or a void offer. Undertake a review of the repairs responsibilities to ensure they dovetail with other service strategies ie ASBO, introductory tenancies, demoted tenancies	HAM HRM HRM	July 2010 July 2009 Dec 2009	To follow the outcome of the Customer Perspective programme. (b) To follow the outcome of the Voids Working Group (c) To be undertaken in conjunction with the Repairs / Building Maintenance Review.
4.	To relocate Housing Repairs from the Civic Offices to the Epping Depot to operate alongside and in conjunction with the Building Maintenance Works Unit	ADoH(P) HRM BMM	Sept 2009	Communications (IT and telephone) links currently being planned.
5.	Timetable at least one meeting each year with the Tenants Federation to discuss the repairs and maintenance expenditure programme.	ADoH(P) HAM	Ongoing	Tenants Federation meet in April each year to consider the repairs and maintenance expenditure.
6.	Introduce Asbestos record cards in all properties, and maintain the records for contactors and tenants use.	HRM	Sept 2010	Item deferred due to the HRM leaving in 2007.
7.	(a) Undertake periodic reviews of the outcome of difficult to let properties and seek ways of enhancing the services provided to these dwellings. (b) Explore options whereby emphasis is put on "fix first time" for responsive repairs	HRM	Dec 2009	(a) Included in the Voids Working Group. (b) Identified through Repairs / Building Maintenance Review. (c) Identified through Repairs / Building Maintenance Review.

	(c) Seek through the Essex Hub a framework agreement with specialist contractors for asbestos removal, Door entry installations and maintenance, Drainage clearance and renewals, PVCu window installations and maintenance as well as ad-hoc repairs where necessary	HAM	Mar 2010	
8.	Continue feasibility studies into alternative fuel sources for properties in rural communities where mains gas is not available.	HAM	Mar 2010	Trials on replacing old electric storage heating with electric boilers incorporating traditional radiators have been undertaken with positive tenant feedback. Solar heating panels installed in one property to map the benefits.
9.	To review all projects with a contract value in excess of £1m on completion to identify any lessons learnt.	HAM HRM	On-going	On-going
10.	To report on the outcome of future tenant satisfaction surveys for all void properties let.	HRM	Apr 2009	Surveys introduced August 2007, but not included in quarterly monitoring.
11.	Hold training sessions at empty properties to enable officers to gain a common understanding of specification requirements. To be undertaken annually.	HRM	On-going	Undertaken annually
12.	Seek to reduce the target response times for routine non-urgent repairs from 8-weeks to 4-weeks	HWO	Oct 2010	Identified through Repairs / Building Maintenance Review.
13.	To introduce generic repairs and voids officers.	HRM	Dec 2009	Agreed in principle. To be incorporated in Repairs / Building Maintenance Review.
14.	Hold site visits at blocks of flats with Tenant Representatives to monitor repairs to, and condition of, communal areas	HRM	Apr 2010	Agreed in principle. Officer working group set up to agree contract terms.
15.	To appoint an external Management Contractor to oversee the combined Building Maintenance Works Unit and Repairs team as agreed by the Cabinet in March 2008.	ADoH(P)	Oct 2009	To be incorporated in Repairs / Building Maintenance Review.

Appendix A – Five Year Capital Programme

HOUSING (HRA) PORTFOLIO CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009/10 to 2013/14 5-YEAR FORECAST EXCLUDING CARRY FORWARDS

	2009/10 Forecast £000	2010/11 Forecast £000	2011/12 Forecast £000	2012/13 Forecast £000	2013/14 Forecast £000	5 Year Total £000
Housing Revenue Account						
<i>Springfields, Waltham Abbey (Works & Fees)</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Norway House Improvements</i>	50	50	50	50	50	250
<i>Communal TV Upgrade/Other</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Planned Maintenance	50	50	50	50	50	250
<i>Boiler Replacements</i>	300	300	300	300	300	1,500
<i>MVHR / Ventilation Installations</i>	20	40	40	40	40	180
<i>New Heating Upgrades</i>	450	400	400	400	400	2,050
<i>Rewiring - (Kitchens & Bathrooms)</i>	150	150	150	150	150	750
<i>Rewiring - (Heating)</i>	150	150	150	150	150	750
Central Heating/Rewiring Sub Total	1,070	1,040	1,040	1,040	1,040	5,260
<i>PVCu Double Glazing / Door replacement</i>	150	150	150	150	150	750
<i>Roofing</i>	500	600	600	600	600	2,900
<i>Drainage Works</i>	100	100	100	100	100	500
<i>Asbestos Removal</i>	95	115	115	115	115	555
<i>Door Entry</i>	143	80	80	80	80	463
<i>Energy Efficiency Works</i>	200	200	200	200	200	1,000
<i>Communal water tank renewals</i>	165	75	75	75	75	465
Total Other Planned Maintenance	2,423	2,360	2,360	2,360	2,360	11,863
<i>Balcony Resurfacing</i>	25	25	25	25	25	125
<i>Structural Watercourse Improvements</i>	10	10	10	10	10	50
<i>Parsonage Court - Conversion of Warden Accom.</i>	120	0	0	0	0	120
<i>Miscellaneous Structural Works</i>	250	600	600	600	600	2,650
Total Structural Schemes	405	635	635	635	635	2,945
<i>External Lighting Schemes</i>	23	5	5	5	5	43
Total Cyclical Maintenance	23	5	5	5	5	43
Small Capital Repairs	400	350	350	350	350	1,800
<i>Kitchen & Bathroom Replacements</i>	2,067	878	878	878	878	5,579
Total Cost Reflective Repairs	2,067	878	878	878	878	5,579
<i>Fencing</i>	15	15	15	15	15	75
<i>Environmental Improvements - Shops</i>	312	120	120	120	120	792
<i>Off Street Parking</i>	460	341	341	43	43	1,228
<i>Estate Environment</i>	102	102	102	102	100	508
<i>CCTV</i>	30	50	50	50	50	230
Total Non-Cost Reflective Repairs	919	628	628	330	328	2,833
<i>Welfare Heating</i>	50	50	50	50	50	250
<i>Other Disabled</i>	380	400	400	400	400	1,980
Disabled Adaptations	430	450	450	450	450	2,230
<i>Norway House Fire Alarm</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Careline Equipment Upgrade</i>	50	0	0	0	0	50
<i>Other (New Roof Covering Loughton Way)</i>	8	0	0	0	0	8
Other Repairs & Maintenance	58	0	0	0	0	58
Feasibilities	15	15	15	15	15	75
Housing DLO vehicles	50	50	50	50	50	250
TOTAL HRA	6,840	5,421	5,421	5,123	5,121	27,926

Appendix B – 30 Year Capital Programme

HOUSING (HRA) PORTFOLIO 30 YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME						
	Years 1-5 £000	Years 6-10 £000	Years 11-15 £000	Years 16-20 £000	Years 21-25 £000	Years 26-30 £000
1 Future Planned Maintenance	15,401	13,038	12,273	11,286	11,483	11,063
Roofing	2,750	4,151	3,778	2,544	1,012	1,778
Rewiring	1,500	1,498	768	996	1,482	1,888
Window & door replacement	750	900	748	2,293	3,779	2,274
Heating and boiler replacement	3,570	2,141	2,729	1,228	985	1,398
Asbestos removal	575	575	575	575	575	575
Drainage	500	500	500	500	500	500
Energy efficiency	1,000	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,000
General Improvements	3,723	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Door Entry Security	438	148	125	100	100	100
Ventilation	220	250	250	250	250	250
Communal water tank replacement	375	375	300	300	300	300
2 Structural Schemes	2,475	500	500	500	500	500
3 Cyclical Maintenance	35	75	75	75	75	75
4 Small Capital Works	1,850	1,750	1,750	1,750	1,750	1,750
5 Cost reflective improvements	5,586	1,800	2,250	3,550	2,020	1,650
Kitchen & bathroom renewals	5,586	1,800	2,250	3,550	2,020	1,650
6 Non-cost-reflective repairs	1,693	1,500	1,500	1,250	1,000	1,504
7 Disabled Adaptations	2,190	2,321	2,962	3,780	4,825	6,158
8 Other repairs and maintenance	0	500	500	500	500	500
9 Feasibilities	75	75	75	75	75	75
10 Housing DLO Vehicles	250	290	290	290	290	290
11 Less income						
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	29,555	21,849	22,175	23,056	22,518	23,565

Appendix C – Decent Homes Summary

	Base Year Failures 2001 (Business Plan)		*Current Failures 2008/09		All Current and Potential Failures 2010	
Fails Decent Homes	1627		237		703	
Stock	7088		6624		6624	
Non-Decent homes as a % of total stock	22.95%		3.58%		10.61%	
Min. Fitness Standard	No. 8	£ 8,000	No. 0	£ -	No. 0	£ -
Key Building Components	688	1,140,100	340	925,700	1042	2,818,600
Walls	6	1,500	37	92,500	85	£212,500
Roof Cover	28	56,000	38	76,000	146	£292,000
Chimneys	1	400	6	2,400	8	£3,200
Heating	210	462,000	74	199,800	327	£882,900
Electrics	443	620,200	185	555,000	476	£1,428,000
Modern Facilities	1180	1,657,100	147	370,000	414	908,000
Kitchens	513	923,400	38	152,000	40	£160,000
Bathrooms	667	733,700	109	218,000	374	£748,000
Thermal Comfort	459	573,750	38	38,000	38	38,000
TOTALS	2,327	3,378,950	525	1,333,700	1,494	3,764,600



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