

**Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2010-11
6-Month Progress Report
(March 2011)**

No	Category	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Current Position – March 2011
1	Housing Market	Following the completion and analysis of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), produce with partner local authorities a Viability Assessment for the SHMA's area of coverage, to assess the amount of housing required in the District.	Principal Planning Officer (Forward Planning)	October 2010	Achieved – The Council's Levells have produced the Viability Assessment and it has been adopted by the LDF Cabinet Committee
2	Housing Market	Produce a Strategic Housing Land Assessment (SHLA), to provide an assessment of the potential capacity for new house-building in the District	Principal Planning Officer (Forward Planning)	March 2011	In Progress – Due to the workload and other commitments of the Forward Planning Division, the SHLA has not yet been completed.
3	Housing Market	Review the target for the number of new homes to be provided within the District between 2011-2031, following the revocation of the East of England Plan	Principal Planning Officer (Forward Planning)	March 2011	In Progress – Following a legal challenge, the East of England Plan is in effect once again; however, the Government has announced that it intends to revoke regional spatial strategies through the Decentralisation and Localism Bill. Completion of the Issues and Options Stage of the LDF (see below) is the next stage in agreeing a target for the number of homes to be built in the District.
4	Housing Market	Progress the Local Development Framework's Core Strategy to the Issues and Options Stage	Principal Planning Officer (Forward Planning)	April 2011	In Progress - The Council's Forward Planning Division has completed a Community Visioning Exercise, which will inform the Issues and Options Paper for the LDF.

5	Regeneration	Undertake a public consultation on a proposed Development and Design Brief for the St Johns Area of Epping, including market and affordable housing	Asst. Director of Planning & Economic Development	March 2011	Delayed – Due to the number of parties involved, it has taken longer to agree the options for consultation. However, it is envisaged that the consultation exercise will be undertaken in Spring 2011.
6	Affordable Housing	Work with RSLs and developers to provide 319 affordable homes for rent and shared ownership between April 2010 and March 2012, at the following sites with detailed planning permission: (a) Epping Forest College, Loughton (b) St Margarets Hospital, Epping (c) White Lodge/The Limes, Waltham Abbey (d) Ongar Station, Ongar (e) Merlin Way, North Weald (f) Jennikings Nursery, Chigwell (g) Acres Avenue, Ongar (h) Theatre Resource, Ongar (i) School Lane, Abbess Roding (j) Manor Road Garden Centre, Chigwell	Director of Housing	March 2012	On Target - Around 135 new affordable homes on 8 development sites will be built by housing associations this year (2010/11). A further 195 affordable homes have planning permission, and are expected to be built within the next 2 years. In addition to this, developers are known to be currently considering the development of almost 200 more affordable homes on 4 sites in the District. However, it is unlikely that all of these will receive planning permission.
7	Affordable Housing	Provide 6 Home Ownership Grants of £28,000 to existing Council tenants to purchase in the private sector and review the success of the scheme and the take-up to consider whether the scheme should be continued into 20011/12	Housing Resources Manager	March 2011	In Progress – The Cabinet agreed to reduce the amount of Home Ownership Grant from £34,000 to £28,000 this year, but to increase the number of grants available from 5 to 6. Funding for a further 1 grant was carried forward from last year, totalling 7 grants available this year. 26 applications were received this year and a shortlist of 7 applicants was compiled, in accordance with the agreed

					<p>criteria, with a further 8 applications placed on a Reserve List.</p> <p>4 grants have been completed. The remaining 3 applicants have identified properties and are awaiting to complete their purchases.</p> <p>The Cabinet agreed to suspend the scheme for one year, and undertake a review in 2011/12 to consider its possible re-introduction in 2012/13.</p>
8	Affordable Housing	<p>Introduce an innovative and unique Open Market Home Ownership Scheme with Broxbourne Housing Association (BHA), to enable first time buyers in the District to purchase a property of their choice from the open market through shared ownership, funded jointly by the Council, BHA and the applicant</p>	Director of Housing	March 2011	<p>In Progress – The Cabinet has agreed the Scheme and letters have been sent to all Council tenants, in the first instance, to promote the scheme and to invite expressions of interest.</p> <p>The legal documentation with BHA is close to completion. It is anticipated that formal applications will be invited in Spring 2011.</p>
9	Affordable Housing	<p>Investigate the feasibility and viability of the Council building social housing for rent itself, including the possible development of the following 6 Council-owned sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Chequers Rd, Loughton (b) Millfield, High Ongar (c) Thatchers Close, Loughton (d) Kirby Close, Loughton (e) Langley Meadow, Loughton (f) Harveyfields, Waltham Abbey 	Director of Housing	March 2011	<p>No Progress – The outcome of CIPFA’s consultation on technical accounting issues relating to HRA Self-financing is awaited, which should determine whether or not there would be any costs to the General Fund if the Council built new properties for the HRA.</p>

10	Affordable Housing	Investigate the development potential of difficult-to-let Council-owned garage sites, where more than 20% of garages are vacant	Director of Housing	March 2011	In Progress – The development potential of such sites continues to be explored, but this is not a priority action, due to the uncertainty of the Council’s ability to build new housing (see 10 above)
11	Affordable Housing	Implement the proposals of the Development and Design Brief for The Broadway, Loughton relating to the Council’s land-holdings, to provide significant levels of affordable housing	Director of Housing	December 2011	No Progress – Due to the workload and other commitments of the Director of Housing, and the need to wait for guidance on the Government’s new Affordable Rent Scheme, which has only recently been received.
12	Affordable Housing	Review the options for the development/conversion of Council-owned Leader Lodge, North Weald and select one of the Council’s Preferred RSL Partners through a competitive process to implement the agreed option	Director of Housing	March 2011	In Progress – At its meeting in March 2011, the Cabinet agreed to work in partnership with Hastoe Housing Association to undertake a “Planning for Real” exercise for Leader Lodge, with the local community – which will consider a range of options, with the outcome reported to the Cabinet later in the year.
13	Affordable Housing	Work in partnership with one of the Council’s Preferred RSL Partners to convert 20 unpopular bedsits for older people at Marden Close, Chigwell Row into 10 self-contained rented flats for families	Director of Housing	Sept 2011	Delayed – The charity that owns the freehold is seeking professional planning advice to safeguard its options for the future use of adjacent land in its ownership, which has delayed progress. However, it is hoped that agreement can be reached with the charity on terms for the assignment of the Council’s lease to a housing association to enable the conversion scheme to go ahead.
14	Affordable Housing	Review HomeOption, the Council’s Choice Based Lettings Scheme, in partnership with the other local authorities in the Herts and Essex Housing Options Consortium, to consider:	Asst. Director of Housing (Operations)	Sept 2011	In Progress – The Consortium has been considering these issues. EFDC will shortly start charging housing associations for advertisements; the Freesheet has been discontinued; an on-line housing application system is being developed. The other initiatives are at various stages of progress. It is intended that further details on progress will be provided to the Housing Scrutiny Panel at its July meeting.

		<p>(a) Charging housing associations for advertisements of vacant properties, to share the costs;</p> <p>(b) Discontinuing the production of a glossy Freesheet, advertising vacancies, to reduce/redirect costs;</p> <p>(c) Some level of cross-border nominations, to assist mobility</p> <p>(d) Adding a consultation module to the HomeOption Website, to seek the views of users</p> <p>(e) Producing a single housing application form for all HEHOC member authorities, to streamline the application process</p> <p>(f) Providing an on-line housing application registration, to ease and improve access to the Housing Options Service</p> <p>(g) Offering the service to private landlords, to bring additional income and increase the housing options available to applicants</p> <p>(h) Adding a link to the HomeSwapper national mutual exchange scheme on the HomeOption website</p>			
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15	Affordable Housing	Introduce a policy of disallowing housing applicants to express interest in vacant properties through the HomeOption Scheme for six months, if they have refused two tenancy offers of vacant Council or housing association homes for which they had expressed an interest	Assistant Director of Housing (Operations)	October 2011	Achieved – This change to the Housing Allocations Scheme was agreed by the Cabinet on the recommendation of the Housing Scrutiny Panel, and has now been implemented.
16	Homelessness	Review the funding for the continuation of the Council's Homelessness Prevention Service, in the light of the homelessness grant funding from Communities and Local Government being channelled through Essex CC's Area Based Grant from April 2011	Assistant Director of Housing (Operations)	February 2011	Achieved – In the event, the CLG provided more funding to the Council for homelessness prevention than previously, and the Cabinet agreed that all of this un-ringfenced funding should be spent on homelessness prevention. In addition to the continuation of funding the salaries of the Homelessness Prevention Officers, the Cabinet also agreed to provide additional grant funding to Epping Forest Housing Aid's Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme and to increase the amount available for the Council's Rental Loan Scheme.
17	Homelessness	Investigate with the North Essex Mental Health Foundation Trust the possibility of providing dedicated accommodation for vulnerable homeless adults with mental health problems, supported by community psychiatric nurses.	Housing Options Manager	March 2011	Achieved – Dedicated Council accommodation for vulnerable homeless adults with mental health problems, supported by community psychiatric nurses, is now being provided, in partnership with the North Essex Mental Health Foundation Trust.
18	Diversity	Compare the ethnicity of applicants provided with Council accommodation with the ethnicity of Housing Register applicants	Housing Options Manager	July 2011	On Target – This will be undertaken in May/June 2011, and reported to the Housing Scrutiny Panel in July 2011.

19	Diversity	Review all customer satisfaction monitoring conducted by the Council's Housing Service to ensure the diversity of customers is monitored in relation to satisfaction	Principal Housing Officer (Information / Strategy)	July 2011	No Progress – Due to the workload and other commitments of the Principal Housing Officer (Information / Strategy)
20	Diversity	Review and update the Customer (Equality) Impact Assessments of the Housing Strategy & Development, Homelessness, Private Sector Housing functions	Director of Housing	March 2011	In Progress – A number of the CIAs are awaiting sign-off, and the remainder are in progress.
21	Gypsies & Travellers	Consider the appropriate number of new pitches required for gypsies and travellers in the district in future, having regard to the County-wide Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation Assessment	Director of Planning and Economic Development	Sept 2011	Limited Progress – Following the lifting of the Ministerial Direction to produce a Development Plan Document on the numbers of pitches to be provided within the District within specific timescales, little work has been undertaken by the Forward Planning Division, due to workload and other commitments. However, at least the number of pitches required by the East of England Plan have been provided to date, through the provision of planning permission through normal planning processes.
22	Supported Housing – Older People & Other Vulnerables	Undertake a Strategic Review of Older People's Accommodation within the District, and formulate a resultant strategy for future provision of older people's accommodation	Asst Director of Housing (Operations)	March 2011	Not Undertaken – This was to be jointly-funded by Essex County Council (ECC) to assist with ECC's bid for PFI funding from the Department of Health (see 23 below). However, due to delays by the DoH to confirm whether or not funding will be provided, ECC withdrew its commitment for joint funding and the Strategic Review has not been undertaken.
23	Supported Housing – Older People & Other Vulnerables	Work with Essex CC to submit an Outline Business Case to the Department of Health for funding from the Private Finance Initiative to provide a new Extra Care Scheme within the District	Asst Director of Housing (Operations)	March 2011	No Progress – Due to the reduction in public spending from the Comprehensive Spending Review, it is understood that the DoH is still reviewing which PFI funding bids it will fund (if any).

24	Supported Housing – Older People & Other Vulnerables	Obtain TSA accreditation for the Council's Careline Service	Housing Manager (Older People)	April 2011	Achieved – Following a rigorous external assessment, TSA accreditation has been received.
25	Supported Housing – Older People & Other Vulnerables	In partnership with East Thames Housing Group, complete a Young Parents Scheme at Ongar Station, in partnership with Brentwood and Uttlesford Councils, to provide 13 self contained flats with adequate support for young parents	Director of Housing	Nov 2010	Achieved – The scheme was completed and fully occupied in February 2011, with EFDC receiving nomination rights to 8 flats, instead of the 4 previously envisaged. The Scheme is due to be officially opened by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in March 2011.
26	Supported Housing – Older People & Other Vulnerables	Work with East Thames Housing Group to complete a development of 9 affordable homes for people with learning disabilities, with associated drama therapy from the Theatre Resource Project, at Gt Stony, Ongar	Director of Housing	May 2011	On Target – The development is on site and due for completion on time.
27	Supported Housing – Older People & Other Vulnerables	Through the LDF Core Strategy, seek to introduce a requirement that all new housing developments in the District should meet the Lifetime Homes Standard	Principal Planning Officer (Forward Planning)	March 2012	In Progress – See (4) above.
28	Supported Housing – Older People & Other Vulnerables	Contribute towards the production of the Essex Strategy for Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs), setting out the approach to be taken to HIA's in Essex beyond 2011	Private Housing Manager (Grants & C.A.R.E.)	March 2011	Achieved – Essex CC is re-tendering HIA contracts across Essex, effective from June 2011, with a new specification. However, since EFDC's HIA (CARE) is provided in-house, it has been excluded from the retendering exercises. Negotiations with ECC have resulted in a 12% reduction in funding from ECC for CARE in 2011/12.

29	Supported Housing – Older People & Other Vulnerables	Liaise with the North Essex Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust to assess the housing need in the District for people with mental health problems and the level of funding available from mental health sources	Director of Housing	March 2011	Achieved – Following discussions with the Trust, information on the housing need in the District for people with mental health problems has now been received, which will be incorporated within the Housing Strategy when it is next updated.
30	Supported Housing – Older People & Other Vulnerables	Work with other councils and housing associations to investigate the feasibility of other councils connecting its emergency alarms into the Council's Careline Control Centre	Asst Director of Housing (Operations)	October 2011	No Progress – No councils or housing associations have invited tenders for the provision of this service, to the knowledge of EFDC.
31	Supported Housing – Older People & Other Vulnerables	Install the latest version of the Careline Control Centre monitoring equipment, to improve the Careline Service further and to enable a partnering arrangement to be introduced with another control centre with compatible equipment for business continuity.	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	March 2011	Achieved – The new equipment has been installed and attempts to identify a suitable control centre to partner are being undertaken.
32	Supported Housing – Older People & Other Vulnerables	Update the Council's obsolete Piper Haven speech alarm equipment in its sheltered housing schemes and designated homes for older people, with the newer Piper Communicall equipment	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	March 2012	In Progress – Funding has been included within the Capital Programme and the upgrade is due in 2011.

33	Supported Housing – Older People & Other Vulnerables	Work with Essex CC and other Essex councils to minimise the effect of the Government's withdrawal of Supporting People Administration Grant and the likely significant reduction in the Supporting People Programme Grant on vulnerable people within Essex in need of supported housing	Director of Housing	March 2011	Completed – EFDC's Director of Housing has chaired the Essex Supporting People Core Strategy Group, which has worked with the Head of Supporting People (SP) to assist with the implementation of reductions to the SP Budget. However, Essex CC has cut the SP Budget by around 33% per annum - much more than the 12% envisaged. Significant reductions have been made to the funding of other Council sheltered housing providers in Essex (between 40% - 60%). However, the reduction to EFDC's funding has only been only 6%, due to EFDC's efficient working practices.
34	Supported Housing – Older People & Other Vulnerables	Introduce the "Hub and Spoke" arrangement to extend the provision of support to older people in the community, including owner occupiers, by the Council's Scheme Managers	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	March 2011	Delayed – Due to the total withdrawal of Essex CC's Administration Grant for Supporting People, the SP Team is being reduced in size. Therefore, it has not had the required staffing resources to take forward this initiative.
35	Empty Homes	Develop the Council's web-site to provide further information and advice to the owners of empty properties	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	March 2011	In Progress – Information on empty properties has been updated on the website, but further development is required.
36	Empty Homes	Bring at least 5 long-term empty properties back into use by Council intervention, including the continued use of the PLACE Scheme	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	March 2011	Achieved – 43 empty properties were been brought back into use due to intervention by the Council in the first 9 months of 2010/11.
37	Empty Homes	Enter into an agreement with Pathmeads Housing Association to manage vacant properties in the District served with an Empty Dwelling Management Order by the Council	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	October 2011	Not Achieved – Pathmeads was not prepared to enter into different agreements with different councils. Therefore, it has not been possible to enter into an agreement for EDMOs.

38	Under-occupation	Write to all under-occupying Council tenants, encouraging them to transfer to smaller accommodation	Housing Options Manager	March 2011	Delayed – Due to workload and other commitments no progress has been made to date.
39	Rural Housing	Continue to work with Hastoe Housing Association and Parish Councils to investigate the development potential for rural housing schemes in villages, through the Council's Rural Planning Exceptions Policy	Director of Housing	October 2012	In Progress – Hastoe has been working with a number of parish councils, notably Moreton Bobbingworth & The Lavers, to develop further rural housing schemes in the District.
40	Rural Housing	Work with Hastoe Housing Association to complete the provision of 6 affordable homes at School Lane, Abbess Roding, through the Council's Rural Planning Exceptions Policy	Director of Housing	March 2011	Achieved – The scheme was completed in February 2011, and will be officially opened by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in May 2011.
41	Decent Homes – Public Sector	Undertake programmes of work to ensure that all the Council's homes continue to meet the Decent Homes Standard	Housing Assets Manager	October 2012	Achieved – Further works have been undertaken to the Council's housing stock to ensure that none became non-decent.
42	Decent Homes – Private Sector	Undertake a Private Sector House Condition Survey, to provide information on the most up-to-date estimate of the number and location of non-decent homes in the private sector.	Assistant Director of Housing (Private Sector and Resources)	March 2011	In Progress – The BRE has been appointed to undertake a targeted Private Sector House Condition Survey for the Council, which is due for completion later in the year.
43	Decent Homes – Private Sector	After completion of the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey, produce a new Private Sector Housing Strategy	Assistant Director of Housing (Private Sector and Resources)	Dec 2011	Not yet required – This will be completed after the Survey has been undertaken.

44	Decent Homes – Private Sector	Introduce new licence conditions for new and existing park home sites in the District, following consultation with site owners, representatives of known park home residents association and statutory agencies	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	March 2011	In Progress – This has been delayed due to significant extra consultation being undertaken. However, consultation with all residents and site owners has now been completed and the Cabinet will be approving the new licence conditions at its meeting in May 2011.
45	Housing Growth	Reconsider the Council’s position with regard to the allocation of land for housing within the Epping Forest District to contribute towards the growth of Harlow, in the light of the revocation of East of England Plan	Director of Planning and Economic Development	March 2011	No Progress – This will dependent on the outcome of the LDF Issues and Options Stage.
46	Housing Growth	In partnership with Harlow DC, Uttlesford DC and the Homes and Communities Agency, produce a West Essex Local Investment Plan (LIP), setting out the proposed approach and resources required for development and regeneration within the three districts	Deputy Chief Executive	Dec 2010	Almost Achieved – The LIP has been produced and the Cabinet has recommended its adoption to the full Council at its meeting on 29 th March 2011.
47	Energy Efficiency	Seek funding for a small pilot scheme using renewable energy sources to a group of Council properties	Housing Assets Manager	Dec 2011	Partly Achieved – Although no funding has been secured, a small pilot renewable energy scheme is in progress.
48	Energy Efficiency	Set up a Fuel Poverty Referral System in the District.	Environmental Co-ordinator	Dec 2011	No Progress – Due to workload and other commitments of the Environmental Co-ordinator

49	Energy Efficiency	Investigate with Hastoe Housing Association the feasibility of developing the second (known) affordable housing development in the country constructed from straw bales at Millfield, High Ongar, significantly reducing thermal efficiency and CO2 emissions	Director of Housing	March 2011	In Progress – Cabinet has agreed in principle the sale of land at Millfield to Hastoe to develop 4 houses from straw bales. Hastoe has undertaken a consultation exercise with local residents and the Parish Council, and is currently preparing its planning application.
50	Respect & Anti-Social Behaviour	Produce an updated leaflet for the public on the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy	Asst. Director of Housing (Operations)	Sep 2011	No Progress – To date.