

## HRA Business Plan 2010/11 12-MONTH REPORT ON KEY ACTION PLAN (March 2011)

Action	Corporate Housing Objectives	Responsibility for Achievement	Original Target Date	Progress (as at 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2011)
<b>Housing General</b>				
1) Undertake a survey of all tenants and leaseholders to collect and record details on their diversity profile, covering the "six strands of diversity"	HO 2	Principal Housing Officer (Information/Strategy)	March 2011	<b>Research being undertaken</b> – Diversity profiling is a relatively new concept and officers are currently researching the subject.
2) Seek the Government's new Customer Excellence Award for the whole of the Housing Directorate, to replace the Council's existing Charter Mark Award	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4	Asst. Director of Housing (Operations)	Sept 2010	<b>Achieved</b> – September 2010
3) Respond to the CLG's "offer" to withdraw from the housing subsidy system in return for taking on a proportion of the national housing debt	HO 1 / 5	Director of Housing	Sept 2010	<b>Achieved</b> – The Director of Finance and ICT responded on behalf of EFDC, explaining that the Council did not support the proposals, due to the significant effect they would have on the General Fund and the proposed amount of debt the Council's HRA would have to take on, which is currently debt-free. In February 2011, the current Government's Housing Minister announced that the arrangements for a <b>statutory</b> scheme to replace the current housing subsidy system, and <b>require</b> local authorities to take on specific amounts of debt, from April 2012 .
4) Produce a Housing Value for Money Strategy, to complement the Council's corporate Value for Money Strategy	HO 1	Asst. Director of Housing (Property)	Sept 2010	<b>No Progress</b> – This has been delayed due to other commitments. However, following the TSA's review of its approach to its Regulatory Framework and its "lighter touch" to inspection, this is no longer as important as previously.

5) Produce a Continuous Housing Improvement Strategy and Action Plan, setting out the approach the Council takes to continuously improving its services for tenants and other housing customers	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5	Director of Housing	Sept 2010	<b>No progress</b> - This has also been delayed due to other commitments. However, following the TSA's review of its approach to its Regulatory Framework and its "lighter touch" to inspection, this is no longer as important as previously.
6) Formulate and implement a Housing Excellence Plan, assessing how well the Housing Service compares with an "excellent housing service", and identifying required actions to achieve excellence, all be reference to the current and new Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) produced by the Tenant Services Authority and the Audit Commission	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5	Asst. Director of Housing (Operations)	July 2010	<b>In Progress</b> – A number of individual Housing Excellence Plans have been produced. However, following the TSA's review of its approach to its Regulatory Framework and its "lighter touch" to inspection, this is no longer as important as previously. A difficulty has also arisen since there is currently a hiatus with the Key Lines of Enquiries (KLOEs).
7) Introduce an electronic records and document management system (Information@Work) for housing files	HO 1 / 2 / 3	Asst. Director of Housing (Private Sector & Resources)	March 2011	<b>Achieved</b> – The new system went live on 25 <sup>th</sup> November 2010. However, there are major resourcing issues related to the backscanning of hard-copy files and the daily scanning/indexing of incoming post. The former issue is exacerbated by the freeze on the appointment of temporary/agency staff beyond 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2011; it is intended to discuss this issue at the next Cabinet meeting. A solution to the latter problem, using existing staff resources in another Directorate is being explored.
<b>Housing Management</b>				
8) Continue the Home Ownership Grants Scheme in 2010/11, enabling 6-12 tenants to purchase their own home and vacate their Council property for occupation by a housing applicant	HO 1	Housing Resources Manager	March 2011	<b>In Progress</b> – 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.

				<p>26 applications were received this year and a shortlist of 7 applicants was compiled, in accordance with the agreed 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>
<p>9) Investigate the potential for enhancing the Council's HomeOption Choice Based Lettings Scheme (in partnership with the Council's five local authority partners), including:</p> <p>(a) Production of a common application form for all HomeOption local authority partners;</p> <p>(b) Introduction of a facility for tenants to apply for housing on-line;</p> <p>(c) Advertising vacant properties available for private rent.</p>	HO 2	Housing Options Manager	March 2011	<p><b>Partially Achieved</b> - The Housing Scrutiny Panel has reviewed and considered options for the development of the HomeOption Scheme. Following discussions with the other 5 local authority partners within the Consortium, the majority (including EFDC) have agreed to introduce a facility for tenants to apply for housing on-line, using the services of the choice based lettings agency (Locata) and to produce a common application form. This will be implemented during 2011/12.</p> <p>The Consortium is yet to consider the issue of advertising vacant private rented properties.</p> <p><b>Carry forward to 2011/12 Action Plan</b></p>
<p>10) Undertake a 1-year pilot scheme to identify and tackle "social housing fraud, through the creation of a new post of Housing Officer (Fraud), part-funded from funding provided by the CLG</p>	HO 2	Director of Housing	March 2011	<p><b>Delayed</b> – An appointment of an existing member of staff was made to the new post, however, it was not possible to proceed with the appointment, since she was dismissed from her previous post. A subsequent appointment has been affected by the External Recruitment Freeze. The post is currently being re-advertised internally. If unsuccessful, approval will be sought to recruit externally, under the external funding exemption.</p>

<p>11) Transfer the lease of land and properties at Marden Close, Chigwell Row, to one of the Council's Preferred RSL Partners – following a competitive exercise – for the 20 existing bedsits to be converted into 10 one bedroom flats</p>	<p>HO 1 / 2 / 3</p>	<p>Director of Housing</p>	<p>Dec 2010</p>	<p><b>Delayed</b> – Protracted negotiations with the freeholder of the site (a charity) over the terms of its proposed lease to the selected housing association are still ongoing. The current position is that the charity has appointed a planning agent to advise it on its long term options for the adjacent land that is also owned by the charity. <b>Carry forward to 2011/12 Action Plan</b></p>
<p>12) Undertake a feasibility exercise – in partnership with an appointed development agent - for the development of Council-owned land by the Council, to provide additional affordable housing (subject to the Government changing the housing finance accounting regulations, to avoid the General Fund having to meet loan costs)</p>	<p>HO 1 / 2 / 3</p>	<p>Director of Housing</p>	<p>March 2011</p>	<p><b>Delayed</b> – It is not currently viable for the Council to develop new affordable housing itself, due to complex accounting regulations that currently require the General Fund to meet a significant amount of the loan repayments of any loan taken out by the Council. The Leader of Council wrote to the Secretary of State last year, asking for the regulations to be changed. The response explained that the CLG is aware of the problem, and was seeking to overcome the problem. No change has yet been made, even though the arrangements for the proposed introduction of HRA Self Financing has been issued (see (3) above). It is hoped that this can be resolved through new CIPFA Guidance, which is currently under consultation. <b>Carry forward to 2011/12 Action Plan</b></p>
<p><b>Tenant Participation</b></p>				
<p>13) Comply with the various requirements of the Tenant Services Authority's new Housing Regulatory Framework from April 2010, including:  (a) Provision of a new Annual Report to all tenants, including performance against tenant-selected indicators</p>	<p>HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4</p>	<p>Director of Housing</p>	<p>Sept 2010</p>	<p><b>Achieved</b> – September 2010. The Council's first Annual Report to Tenants under the new Housing Regulatory Framework was published just ahead of the 1<sup>st</sup> October deadline. This included details of performance</p>

in 2009/10  (b) Details of how the Council will meet the new National Housing Standards and proposed changes to the Council's existing Housing Service Standards				against the 21 tenant-selected indicators in 2009/10, details of how the Council meets the new National Standards and a leaflet setting out all the Council's own Housing Service Standards, including revised ones following the Housing Scrutiny Panel's annual review of performance against the Housing Service Standards.
14) Provide quarterly performance reports to the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation on performance indicators selected by the Federation	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4	Principal Housing Officer (Strategy & Information)	May 2010	<b>Achieved</b> – These have been provided to the Federation since July 2010.
15) Introduce and maintain four "Tenant Talkback Panels", providing fora to provide qualitative feedback on the following housing services:  (a) Disabilities (b) Repairs and maintenance (c) Housing information (d) Housing allocations	HO 2 / 3 / 4	Tenant Participation Officer	Sept 2010	<b>Achieved</b> – In consultation with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, it has been agreed that there should be just one "Talkback Panel", comprising a pool of interested tenants who can attend meetings on specific issues. The Talkback Panel has been convened on a few occasions to discuss repairs and maintenance issues, and once to review the draft Annual Report to Tenants (see (13) above).
16) Produce a Tenant Participation Impact Assessment, documenting how tenants have participated in decision-making in 2009/10, and the impact of their participation, and proposals for tenants to participate in 2010/11	HO 4	Tenant Participation Officer	June 2010	<b>Achieved</b> – June 2010
17) Train tenants of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation and recognised tenants associations to undertake periodic "mystery shopping" exercises on the Council's housing services, and for other social housing providers	HO 2 / 3 / 4	Tenant Participation Officer	Dec 2010	<b>No Progress</b> – This has not yet been undertaken, due to other commitments
<b>Supporting People and Supported Housing</b>				
18) Submit a competitive tender for the provision of the Council's Careline Service to neighbouring Harlow DC	HO 1 / 2	Asst Director of Housing (Operations)	Sept 2010	<b>Not Achieved</b> – It was not possible to submit a tender, since EFDC was not accredited with the Telecare Services Association (TSA). However, it should be noted that TSA accreditation has now been achieved.

19) Utilise the 24-hour staffing facility at Careline to actively monitor CCTV cameras around the District	HO 2	Housing Manager (Older People's Services)	March 2011	<b>In Progress</b> – Now that the extension to the Careline Control Centre has been completed (September 2010), arrangements are being made, where possible, for Careline to monitor EFDC's CCTV activity from live feeds.
20) Seek accreditation of the Council's Careline Service from the Telecare Services Association (TSA)	HO 2	Housing Manager (Older People's Services)	Dec 2010	<b>Achieved</b> – February 2011
21) Undertake a Strategic Review of the Council's Older People's Accommodation	HO 1 / 2 / 3	Asst Director of Housing (Operations)	Dec 2010	<p><b>Limited Progress</b> – The catalyst for the Strategic Review was EFDC's support for the PFI Bid by Essex CC to the Department of Health (DoH) for the development of an Extra-Care Housing Scheme in Epping Forest.</p> <p>The Council agreed in principle to the provision of free land for the proposed scheme and, because one potential source of a site for re-development would be an existing EFDC sheltered housing scheme, it was agreed to undertake a Strategic Review of the Council's Older People's Accommodation, jointly-funded by Essex CC.</p> <p>Essex CC's expression of Interest was accepted, and it was invited to submit an Outline Business Case for the PFI proposal.</p> <p>A consultant was jointly-selected by EFDC and Essex CC to undertake the review, but has not yet been appointed; this is due to the DoH's PFI programme being re-evaluated by the DoH.</p> <p>In the meantime, Essex CC has stated that it will only jointly-fund the Strategic Review if the DoH proceeds with the PFI Scheme.</p> <p>The Director of Housing has informed Essex CC that EFDC will only undertake the Strategic Review if it is jointly funded by Essex CC.</p>

22) Work in partnership with Essex County Council to assess the outline business case for the provision of a new Extra Care Housing Scheme in the District, on Council-owned land, through the Private Finance Initiative funded by the Department of Health	HO 1 / 2	Asst Director of Housing (Operations)	March 2010	<b>Not Achieved</b> – See (21) above.
23) Expand the provision of supported housing for older people by the Council's Scheme Managers into the community, including for owner occupiers	HO 1 / 2	Housing Manager (Older People's Services)	March 2010	<b>In Progress</b> – This initiative (referred to as the "Hub and Spoke") follows a review by the Essex Supporting People (SP) Team, and discussions have been held with the SP Team on its implementation. However, following the backdated withdrawal of Government funding for the SP Team, the Team's activities have had to be significantly cut-back, and no further work is being undertaken on the Hub and Spoke initiative. Notwithstanding this, it is still Housing's intention to introduce the Hub and Spoke approach in Epping Forest. <b>Carry forward to 2011/12 Action Plan</b>
<b>Housing Repairs and Maintenance</b>				
24) Implement a programme for repairs and maintenance expenditure over 5 and 30 years.	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager / Asst. Director of Housing (Property)	Ongoing	<b>Achieved</b> - The programmes for repairs and maintenance, which are linked to 5 and 30 year Business Plans, are progressing well. The Council has let around 16 Framework Agreements that specialise in areas of work such as Kitchens, Bathrooms, Heating, Rewires, Front Entrance Doors, Upvc Windows, and External Repairs and Redecorations amongst others. These are all focused on preventing homes from becoming non-decent.
25) Implement an upgrade to latest version of Codeman software	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	Sept 2011	<b>No Longer Required</b> - Due to the cost of the software and its ongoing maintenance, it has been decided that a combination of the existing OHMS software and Excel is used, which is pre-

				loaded and updated on a continuous basis with remaining-life and condition data and collected from the ongoing Repairs and Redecoration Programme.
26) Publish clear service standards for planned maintenance, Decent Homes, repairs, Right to Repairs Scheme and leaseholder responsibilities, which are available in printed leaflet form and on the web site	HO 3 / 4	Housing Assets Manager	Dec 2010	<b>In Progress</b> – A number of service standards have been agreed and published, as part of the Housing Service Standards, but more detailed standards are proposed. Some of the more detailed have been drafted; some are to be completed. Once completed, these leaflets will go to the Talkback Panel for comments, before being published. On target for completion in December 2010.
27) Publish the Voids Standards on the Council's website and issue a copy to all tenants in advance of them undertaking a viewing of a void property or accepting a new tenancy.	HO 3 / 4	Customer Repairs Manager	Dec 2010	<b>No Progress</b> - This is planned to be reviewed as part of the training programme for the new "generic" Housing Repairs Officers, introduced as part of the Repairs Refresh Programme, prior to them starting to working generically from 1 November 2010. The Voids Standard is to be discussed with the Talkback Panel, when it next meets to discuss repairs & maintenance issues. <b>Revised Target Date – April 2011</b>
28) Undertake a review of the repairs responsibilities to ensure they dovetail with other service strategies ie ASBO, introductory tenancies, demoted tenancies	HO 3	Customer Repairs Manager	Dec 2010	<b>Achieved</b> -The review has revealed the need to apply a more consistent approach to recharging tenants for aspects of work that are their responsibility as set out in the Tenancy Agreement. A report has been presented to and agreed by the Talkback Panel for repairs & maintenance.
29) Timetable at least one meeting each year with the Tenants Federation to discuss the repairs and maintenance expenditure programme.	HO 3 / 4	Asst. Director of Housing (Property)/ Housing Assets Manager	Ongoing	<b>Not Yet Required</b> - This is undertaken annually prior to the publication of the Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan; the meeting will be held in March



				2010. <b>Revised Target Date – April 2011</b>
30) Introduce Asbestos Record Cards in all properties, and maintain the records for contractors' and tenants' use.	HO 3	Customer Repairs Manager	April 2011	<b>In Progress</b> - This will be included in the specification for the contract for the new Private Repairs Management Contractor to implement once appointed. <b>Revised Target Date – April 2012</b>
31) Undertake closer partnership working with ECC Social Care Occupational Therapists to better forward plan the budget required to meet the ongoing and future demand for disabled adaptations.	HO 1 / 3	Housing Assets Manager	April 2011	<b>In Progress</b> –Essex CC Social Care is currently undergoing a Service Review, which has resulted in some concerns over the delivery of OT assessments for Council Tenants and other private sector residents. EFDC, along with other councils across Essex, have expressed concerns over the backlog of referrals and the lack of clarity over the future of the OT Service.
32) Explore options whereby emphasis is put on “fix first time” for responsive repairs.	HO 1 / 3	Customer Repairs Manager	Dec 2010	<b>In Progress</b> - This is included in the specification for the contract for the new Private Repairs Management Contractor, to implement once appointed. <b>Revised Target Date – April 2012</b>
33) Seek, through the Essex Hub, a framework agreement with specialist contractors for asbestos removal, door entry installations and maintenance, drainage clearance, as well as ad-hoc repairs where necessary	HO 1 / 3	Housing Assets Manager	March 2011	<b>Partially Achieved</b> - Contracts are now in place for door entry installations and maintenance. Framework Agreements for asbestos removal and off-street parking construction are currently out to tender. Tenders for other works are currently in the process of being drawn up.
34) Hold the first meeting of the Repairs Focus Group, consisting of tenants wanting to participate in shaping the way repairs and maintenance is carried out in the future.	HO 3 / 4	Asst. Director of Housing (Property)	March 2010	<b>Achieved</b> - This new group, known as the Repairs and Maintenance Customer Focus Group (part of the Talkback Panel) has been formed.
35) To continue with the Repairs Focus Group once set up, and create an action plan for inclusion in the Repairs Refresh Programme	HO 3	Asst. Director of Housing (Property)	On going following first meeting	<b>In Progress</b> - The Repairs and Maintenance Customer Focus Group has met on two occasions, with some very positive feedback and suggestions for improvement. The group now meets

				quarterly.
36) Continue feasibility studies into alternative fuel sources for properties in rural communities where mains gas is not available.	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	April 2011	<b>In Progress</b> - Solar power has been trialled on two properties in rural areas. The benefits of the schemes are to be formally captured and reported to the Repairs and Maintenance Customer Focus Group, Tenant and Leaseholder Federation and the Housing Portfolio Holder. On target for completion by April 2011. The next system to be trialled is air-source heat pumps.
37) Explore the provision of external wall insulation for solid wall constructed properties, and seek grant funding to support future programmes	HO 1 / 3	Housing Assets Manager	April 2011	<b>Achieved</b> – This has been explored. However, funding is not currently generous enough for EFDC to pursue this option, as the costs are disproportionately high. Officers are constantly searching for grant options, which may lead to external wall insulation in the future.
38) To review all projects with a contract value in excess of £1m on completion to identify any lessons learnt.	HO 1 / 3 / 4	Housing Assets Manager / Housing Repairs Managers	On-going	<b>Not Applicable to Date</b> - This is undertaken on an on-going basis and any lessons learnt are incorporated in any future contracts. However, the majority of housing contracts are long-term contracts over 5 or more years. The next contract to be reviewed is the Springfields Improvement Scheme.
39) Seek to reduce the target response times for routine non-urgent repairs from 6-weeks to 4-weeks	HO 3	Housing Repairs Managers	April 2011	<b>In Progress</b> - This requirement is included in the specification for the contract for the new Private Repairs Management Contractor to implement once appointed. The target specified is much more challenging, requiring 98% of all non-urgent repairs to be undertaken in 2-weeks. <b>Revised Target Date – April 2012</b>

40) Introduce generic repairs and voids officers.	HO 3	Housing Repairs Managers	April 2010	<b>In Progress</b> - This initiative will be introduced on 1 November 2010. <b>Revised Target Date - November 2010</b>
41) Hold site visits at blocks of flats with tenant representatives to monitor repairs to, and the condition of, communal areas	HO 3	Housing Repairs Managers	Apr 2011	<b>In Progress</b> - Following the recruitment of the three new Housing Repairs Manager posts within the Housing Repairs Service, this is to be rolled out by April 2011.
42) Appoint an External Repairs Management Contractor to oversee the combined Building Maintenance Works Unit and Repairs Team as agreed by the Cabinet in March 2008.	HO 1 / 3	Asst. Director of Housing (Property)	Aug 2010	<b>In Progress</b> - The consultant appointed to undertake this innovative and unique tender exercise on EFDC's behalf has prepared the third draft of the Invitation To Tender, which incorporates the Service Agreement. Once agreed by the Repairs Advisory Group, the tender will be sent out in early November 2010. <b>Revised Target Date – April 2011</b>
43) Implement a range of initiatives, as defined in the Repairs Refresh Programme:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop better supply chain arrangements with suppliers and sub-contractors to ensure value for money. This is to include a review of the current stores systems</li> <li>• To develop better pricing models for works undertaken and where necessary recharged to ensure value for money.</li> <li>• Building the team to ensure excellent HR practices are used, which will build a skilled, high performance, customer focused and motivated team.</li> <li>• Introduce an IT system for developing an effective R&amp;M service from the point of order to completion and post inspection actions.</li> <li>• To deliver a quality R&amp;M service, taking account of the TSA Regulatory Framework.</li> </ul>	HO 1 / 3 / 4	External Repairs Management Contractor	Over a 3 year period after appointment.	<b>In Progress</b> - Each of these targets have been included in the contract as "Key Deliverables" for the new Private Repairs Management Contractor to implement, once appointed. Some are linked to stage payments, based on their performance.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To build the experience, competencies and knowledge to be able to take on new work streams in the future and to be commercially able to market services outside of the Council.</li> <li>• To implement a customer focused service by implementing a full appointment system, extended opening hours and to operate a discretionary service to undertake tenants responsibility repairs.</li> <li>• To reduce the number of jobs carried out as emergencies and urgent and bring the ratio of jobs to the recommended 10:20:70 for emergency, urgent and routine respectively.</li> </ul>				
44) To develop a Value for Money Strategy	HO 3	Asst. Director of Housing (Property)	March 2010	<b>No Progress</b> - This has been delayed, due to other commitments. <b>Revised Target Date – April 2011</b>
45) To develop a separate Repairs and Maintenance Service Strategy	HO 3	Asst. Director of Housing (Property)	July 2010	<b>No progress</b> - This has also been delayed, due to other commitments <b>Revised Target Date – February 2011</b>
46) To seek to include at least one local business on the list of tenderers for all future contracts.	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager / Housing Repairs Managers	On-going	<b>Achieved</b> - This is now a requirement of the Council's Contract Standing Orders, and is being complied with.

#### Key to Corporate Housing Objectives

HO 1 - Value for Money

HO 2 - Housing Management

HO 3 - Repairs and Maintenance

HO 4 - Tenant Participation

HO 5 - Housing Finance