

**Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2010-11
12-Month Progress Report
(July 2011)**

No	Category	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Current Position – July 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 consultant'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. Carry forward to Action Plan 2011/12
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. Carry forward to Action Plan 2011/12

4	Housing Market	Progress the Local Development Framework's Core Strategy to the Issues and Options Stage	Principal Planning Officer (Forward Planning)	April 2011	<p>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.</p> <p>Carry forward to Action Plan 2011/12</p>
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	<p>Delayed – Due to the number of parties involved, and the need to undertake further traffic/highways assessments, it has taken longer to finalise the options for consultation. However, it is envisaged that the consultation exercise will be undertaken in Summer 2011.</p> <p>Carry forward to Action Plan 2011/12</p>
6	Affordable Housing	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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	<p>On Target and expected to be exceeded – 151 new affordable homes were completed on 6 sites in 2010/11.</p> <p>A further 98 affordable homes are currently on site and are due to be completed in 2011/12, and another 126 affordable homes have planning permission and are expected to complete within the following 2 years, of which 12 are currently on site.</p> <p>Therefore, 354 new affordable homes are expected to be completed over the whole Housing Strategy period, exceeding the target by around 35 homes.</p> <p>In addition to this, developers are known to be currently considering the development of around 215 more affordable homes on 6 sites in the District, including Council-owned sites. However, it is unlikely that all of these will receive planning permission.</p> <p>Update and carry forward to Action Plan 2011/12</p>

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	<p>In Progress – The Cabinet agreed to reduce the amount of Home Ownership Grant from £34,000 to £28,000 in 2010/11, but to increase the number of grants available from 5 to 6.</p> <p>Funding for a further 1 grant was carried forward from last year, totalling 7 grants available this year. 26 applications were received 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>6 grants have been completed. The remaining applicant has identified a property and is awaiting to complete the 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, which will be added to the Action Plan for 2011/12.</p>
8	Affordable Housing	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	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. Formal applications have also been invited. Housing applicants are now being invited to apply. The legal documentation with BHA is close to completion. It is anticipated that the first purchases will take place by the end of the 2011.</p> <p><i>Carry forward to Action Plan 2011/12</i></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> <p>(a) Chequers Rd, Loughton (b) Millfield, High Ongar (c) Thatchers Close, Loughton (d) Kirby Close, Loughton (e) Langley Meadow, Loughton (f) Harveyfields, Waltham Abbey</p>	Director of Housing	March 2011	<p>In Progress – The accounting difficulty that made Council House-building previously unviable will be overcome with the introduction of HRA self-financing in April 2012.</p> <p>The development potential of a number of difficult-to-let Council garage sites is therefore currently in progress.</p> <p>A report on the implementation of the Council's Treasury Strategy is due to be considered by the Cabinet in July 2011, which will identify an indicative borrowing requirement for a Council House-building Programme. A report of the proposed approach to undertaking a House-building Programme will be considered by the Cabinet by the end of 2011.</p> <p><i>Carry forward to Action Plan 2011/12</i></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	<p>In Progress – See (9) above</p> <p><i>Carry forward to Action Plan 2011/12</i></p>
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	<p>In Progress – Management Board has asked the Director of Housing to lead a team of officers from across Directorates to consider and report on the issues involved with taking forward the Development and Design Brief for the Council's land-holdings.</p> <p><i>Carry forward to Action Plan 2011/12</i></p>
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	<p>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.</p> <p><i>Update and carry forward to Action Plan 2011/12</i></p>

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	<p>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.</p> <p>However, it is still 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.</p>
14	Affordable Housing	<p>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:</p> <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>	Asst. Director of Housing (Operations)	Sept 2011	<p>In Progress – The Consortium has been considering and progressing 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.</p> <p>Further details on progress will be provided in the Annual Report on the Homeoptions Scheme to the Housing Scrutiny Panel at its July meeting.</p> <p>Update and carry forward to Action Plan 2011/12</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>			
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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

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	Achieved – The annual report will be made 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, the minimum 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 the DoH deciding not to fund the PFI Bid, ECC withdrew its commitment for joint funding and the Strategic Review will now not be 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	Not achieved – Due to the reduction in public spending from the Comprehensive Spending Review, the DoH has recently announced that it will not be funding Essex CC’s PFI funding bid.
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.
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	Achieved – The development has been completed, and is due to be let in July 2011.

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 re-tendered 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 re-tendering exercise. 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	Deferred – The installation of the new equipment is a requirement if the Council is to have a partnering arrangement with another local authority control centre. However, officers are revising all the available options for business continuity, since a suitable partner has not yet been found. In the meantime, the Council continues to have an effective and tested business continuity arrangement in place, with Tunstall Telecom.

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	Achieved – All of the alarm systems have been upgraded.
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	Achieved - EFDC's Director of Housing 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 cut the SP Budget by around 33% per annum from April 2011 - 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 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	Achieved – Information on empty properties has been updated on the website.
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 – 45 empty properties were brought back into use due to intervention by the Council in 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 (EDMO) by the Council	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	October 2011	<p>In Progress – It was originally envisaged that Pathmeads would enter into one standard agreement with the group of councils within the PLACE Scheme. However, was not possible.</p> <p>Nevertheless EFDC officers are currently pursuing the use of the Council's first EDMO in the District, in partnership with Pathmeads, for which a management agreement will be required. This agreement will also be used as a framework for any other EDMOs in the future.</p> <p>Carry forward to Action Plan 2011/12</p>
38	Under-occupation	Write to all under-occupying Council tenants, encouraging them to transfer to smaller accommodation	Housing Options Manager	March 2011	<p>Delayed – Due to workload and other commitments no progress has been made to date.</p>
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	<p>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.</p> <p>Carry forward to Action Plan 2011/12</p>
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	<p>Achieved – The scheme was completed in February 2011, and was officially opened by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in May 2011.</p>
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	<p>Achieved – Further works have been undertaken to the Council's housing stock to ensure that none became non-decent.</p> <p>Carry forward to Action Plan 2011/12</p>

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 – Consultants have been appointed to undertake a targeted Private Sector House Condition Survey for the Council, which commenced in June 2011.
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, and reported to the Housing Scrutiny Panel. Carry forward to Action Plan 2011/12
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	Achieved – This was delayed due to significant extra consultation being undertaken. However, following consultation with all residents and site owners, the Cabinet approved the new licence conditions in May 2011. Detailed inspections of all site park home sites are currently underway to identify any non-conformities, following which, new licences will be issued.
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 (See (3) and (4) above). Carry forward to Action Plan 2011/12
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 3 districts	Deputy Chief Executive	Dec 2010	Achieved – The LIP has been produced, which the full Council adopted 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	<p>In Progress – Cabinet has agreed in principle the sale of land at Millfield to Hastoe to develop 4 houses from straw bales.</p> <p>Hastoe has undertaken a consultation exercise with local residents and the Parish Council, and is currently preparing its planning application.</p> <p><i>Carry forward to Action Plan 2011/12</i></p>
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.