

HRA Business Plan 2011/12
ACTION PLAN – 6-MONTH PROGRESS REPORT
(as at 1st March 2012)

Action	Corporate Housing Objectives	Responsibility for Achievement	Target Date	6-Month Progress Report <i>(as at 1st March 2012)</i>
Housing General				
1) Seek re-accreditation of the ISO 9001:2008 Quality Assurance Award for the whole of the Housing Directorate for a further 3 years	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4	Housing Resources Manager	May 2011	Achieved – Re-accreditation was awarded in May 2011
2) Prepare for HRA self-financing and formulate a robust and credible Financial Plan, based on sound treasury management, that meets the housing needs of tenants and the housing stock.	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5	Director of Finance / Director of Housing	Jan 2012	Achieved – The strategic approach to the 30-Year HRA Financial Plan was approved by the Cabinet on 5 th Dec 2011, following consultation with the Housing and Finance & Performance Management Scrutiny Panels and the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation. At its meeting in March 2012, the Cabinet will finalise the Financial Plan and agree the arrangements for funding the self-financing debt.
3) Successfully complete the implementation of the electronic records and document management system (Information @Work) within the Housing Directorate	HO 1 / 2 / 3	Asst Director of Housing (Private Sector & Resources)	Dec 2011	In Progress – This was delayed due to members' decision not to agree sufficient resources to fully implement the project. A scaled-back approach is now being progressed, with different ways of working.
4) Undertake a Tenant Satisfaction Survey using a methodology agreed with HouseMark, whereby the results can be benchmarked with other landlords	HO 2 / 3 / 4	Principal Housing Officer (Strategy & Information)	Dec 2011	In Progress – HouseMark has now adopted a standard methodology (called STAR) and preparations for EFDC's survey during 2012 are underway

Housing Management

<p>5) Consider whether the Council should use the new fixed term tenancies proposed under the Decentralisation and Localism Bill and, if so, formulate a Tenancy Scheme setting out the proposed operation of the scheme</p>	<p>HO 2</p>	<p>Asst Director of Housing (Operations)</p>	<p>March 2012</p>	<p>In Progress – A Members Information Session on the housing aspects of the Localism Act was cancelled due to lack of numbers and is being re-arranged. Following the Information Session, the Cabinet will consider the Council's general approach to this optional scheme, and the Housing Scrutiny Panel will be asked to consider and recommend the detailed Tenancy Policy.</p>
<p>6) Relocate the Limes Farm Estate Office to the newly refurbished Limes Farm Community Centre</p>	<p>HO 2</p>	<p>Area Housing Manager (South)</p>	<p>Feb 2012</p>	<p>Achieved – The new Limes Centre was opened in February 2012, and the Estate Office has re-located to the new building</p>
<p>7) Consider whether or not the Home Ownership Grant Scheme (which enables tenants to purchase their own home and vacate their Council property for occupation by a housing applicant) should be re-introduced in 2012/13</p>	<p>HO 1</p>	<p>Housing Resources Manager</p>	<p>Sept 2011</p>	<p>Achieved – In Sept 2011, the Cabinet reviewed the Scheme and agreed to suspend it for a further year, but to review again in Sept 2012</p>
<p>8) Work with the Council's five local authority partners of the HomeOption Choice Based Lettings Scheme to introduce a facility for tenants to apply for the housing on-line.</p>	<p>HO 1 / 2</p>	<p>Housing Options Manager</p>	<p>March 2012</p>	<p>In Progress – A review of the Locata system established that a better system could be introduced by EFDC, solely, itself. The test system is near completion and it is hoped to be able to go-live before the end of the current financial year</p>
<p>9) Subject to the approval of the Leader of Council, 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>	<p>HO 1 / 2</p>	<p>Director of Housing</p>	<p>March 2012</p>	<p>Achieved – The officer was appointed in May 2011; a review of the Scheme was undertaken by the Housing Scrutiny Panel in Jan 2012. The Scheme has been very successful; the Scrutiny Panel is recommending to the Cabinet in March 2012 that the temporary part-time post be made permanent and full-time. The Panel also agreed to consider the creation of a 2nd post on the list of possible housing improvements and service enhancements.</p>

10) 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	HO 1 / 2 / 3	Director of Housing	March 2012	Revised Approach – The charity that owns the freehold (Trust for London) has not agreed to the proposed approach. However, an alternative way forward has been identified which would enable the whole site to be redeveloped by EFDC, which is currently under discussion with Trust for London and Chigwell PC. It is envisaged that a report will be submitted to the Cabinet in Spring 2012.
11) 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)	HO 1 / 2 / 3	Director of Housing	March 2012	Achieved – The Cabinet agreed its approach to a new Council Housebuilding Programme on 5 th Dec 2011, on the recommendation of the Housing Scrutiny Panel in Oct 2011. The process of appointing a Development Agent through EU procurement procedures is currently underway.
12) Introduce the Leasehold Services module of the OHMS integrated housing system, to improve the efficiency of the leasehold service	HO 1 / 2 / 5	Housing Resources Manager	March 2012	No Progress – Due to other commitments, and key staff vacancies within the Housing Resources Section, no progress has been possible. However, it is hoped to implement the module in 2012/13.
13) Introduce the provision of rent and other Council payments by credit card for tenants	HO 2 / 5	Asst. Director of Finance & ICT (Revenues)	July 2011	Achieved – Cabinet agreed the principle and credit card payments were introduced in late-2012, for a fee.
Tenant Participation				
14) Provide an Annual Report to all tenants, including performance against tenant-selected indicators in 2010/11	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4	Director of Housing	Sept 2011	Achieved – The 2 nd Annual Report was published by the regulatory deadline of 1 st October 2011, and was despatched to all tenants and members.
15) Introduce a new Tenants Scrutiny Panel, to scrutinise the performance of the Housing Service and to undertake service reviews	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4	Principal Housing Officer (Strategy & Information)	Sept 2011	In Progress – The Tenant Participation Officer is researching the subject and discussions have been held with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation.

16) Following consultation with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, make a new "Local Offer" to tenants for 2012/12, setting out the housing service tenants can expect, including the formulation of a new Tenant-Agreed Action Plan	HO 2 / 3 / 4	Principal Housing Officer (Strategy & Information)	Feb 2012	In Progress – The only required update to the Local Offer is an updated Tenant-Agreed Action Plan, which will be discussed with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation in March 2012.
17) Produce an updated Tenant Participation Impact Assessment, documenting how tenants have participated in decision-making in 2010/11, and the impact of their participation, and proposals for tenants to participate in 2011/12	HO 4	Tenant Participation Officer	June 2011	Achieved – The Impact Assessment was produced in June 2011
18) 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	Mar 2012	Delayed – No progress has been made due to other commitments
Supporting People and Supported Housing				
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)	Sept 2011	Achieved – The system has been set up and is operational. It is currently being rolled out across all sheltered schemes
20) Update the remaining sheltered housing schemes with Piper Haven alarm equipment with the latest Piper Communicall equipment	HO 2 / 3	Housing Manager (Older People's Services)	Nov 2011	Achieved – All equipment has now been updated with Piper Communicall
21) Introduce a programme of providing scooter stores at sheltered housing schemes	HO 2	Housing Assets Manager	Jan 2012	In Progress – The Council's architect is currently undertaking the project
22) Investigate and implement a more cost effective business continuity solution for the Careline Service	HO 1 / 2	Housing Manager (Older People's Services)	Dec 2011	Achieved – On review, it has been agreed to retain the current business continuity solution, which is to continue to contract with Tunstall Telecom to provide the service if EFDC's Careline Control Centre goes down.
23) Remodel the support provision at Jessopp Court, Waltham Abbey from a frail older people's scheme to a sheltered housing scheme, including the provision of a new Scheme Manager post provided by the Council	HO 2	Housing Manager (Older People's Services)	Dec 2011	Achieved – Cabinet agreed to remodel Jessopp Ct to a sheltered scheme from Dec 2011, and the new Scheme Manager was appointed in Dec 2011.

24) 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)	Feb 2011	Delayed – Although EFDC already does this to a large extent, no progress has been made on this project by the Essex Supporting People Team, which is leading on this project.
Housing Repairs and Maintenance				
25) Implement a programme for repairs and maintenance expenditure over 5 and 30 years.	HO 1 / 3 / 5	Asst. Director of Housing (Property)	March 2011	Achieved - The planned maintenance programmes are in progress, delivering improvements to Council homes across the district to maintain the Decent Homes Standard.
26) Implement an upgrade to the latest version of the NHER Energy Efficiency software, to capture "Level 1" data	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	Sept 2011	Achieved – The upgrade has been implemented
27) 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	HO 3 / 4	Housing Assets Manager	July 2011	Achieved – a Void Standard and approach to rechargeable works has been agreed and implemented, following consultation with the Repairs and Maintenance Focus Group.
28) Publish the Voids Standards on the EFDC website and issue a copy to all tenants in advance of them undertaking a viewing or a void offer.	HO 3 / 4	Customer Repairs Manager	Dec 2011	Achieved – The Standards have been published, following consultation with the Repairs and Maintenance Customer Focus Group.
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)	Jan 2012	Achieved – The Programme has been discussed with the Federation
30) Introduce Asbestos Record Cards in all properties, and maintain the records for contactors' and tenants' use.	HO 3 / 4	Customer Repairs Manager	April 2012	In Progress – The format for the future production of a "Property Information Pack", which includes the Asbestos Record Card, has been agreed with the Repairs and Maintenance Customer Focus Group. Stationary has been ordered and a roll-out planned, commencing in March 2012.

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 3 / 5	Housing Assets Manager	April 2012	No Progress – Due to uncertainties around the OT Service.
32) Explore options whereby emphasis is put on “fix first time” for responsive repairs.	HO 1 / 3	Mears Direct	Dec 2011	In Progress – This is an integral part of the Repairs Refresh Programme. Ways of integrating a “fix first time” approach to the out of hours emergency service is to be agreed.
33) Seek, through the Essex Procurement Hub, a framework agreement with specialist contractors for, drainage clearance, UPVC window installation and maintenance, external repairs and redecorations, digital TV maintenance, bathroom adaptations, Energy Efficiency as well as ad-hoc repairs where necessary	HO 1 / 3	Housing Assets Manager	March 2012	Partly Achieved – Drainage clearance is no longer required, due to the transfer of responsibility for private shared drains to the water utility companies. Framework Contracts have been let for external repairs and redecorations, UPVC windows and doors replacement and maintenance as well as external repairs and redecorations. Other contract renewals are in hand.
34) Continue to work with the Repairs Focus Group, once set up, and create an action plan for inclusion in the Repairs Refresh Programme	HO 3 / 4	Asst. Director of Housing (Property)	Quarterly	Achieved - The group meet on a quarterly basis, and is proving to be a very positive forum for discussion and new ideas.
35) Continue feasibility studies into alternative fuel sources for properties in rural communities where mains gas is not available.	HO 1 / 3	Housing Assets Manager	April 2012	Achieved – Solar thermal and air source heat pumps are currently being trialled. Since the Government reduced the Feed-in Tariff, the installation of Solar PV Panels on roofs has been suspended.
36) Explore external wall insulation for solid wall constructed properties, and seek grant funding to support future programmes	HO 1 / 3	Housing Assets Manager	April 2012	In Progress – A scheme in Willingale is being considered, subject to CERT funding and tender.
37) Review all projects with a contract value in excess of £1m on completion to identify any lessons learnt.	HO 3 / 5	Housing Assets Manager / Mears Direct	April 2012	Ongoing – This is a process that occurs as part of the contract procedures and Contract Standing Orders

<p>38) Seek to reduce the target response times for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • routine repairs from 6-weeks to 2-weeks • Urgent repairs from 5-days to 3-days • Emergency repairs from 24 hrs to 4 hours • Void turnaround times from 6-weeks to 2-weeks 	HO 1 / 3	Mears Direct	April 2012	<p>In Progress – This is an integral part of the Repairs Refresh Programme, and has now commenced following the introduction of Mears Direct's new IT System in January 2012.</p>
<p>39) Appoint an external Repairs Management Contractor to oversee the Housing Repairs Service as agreed by the Cabinet in March 2008.</p>	HO 1 / 3	Asst. Director of Housing (Property)	May 2011	<p>Achieved – Mears Direct was appointed in May 2011 for an initial three-year period</p>
<p>40) Implement a range of initiatives, as defined in the Repairs Refresh Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Develop better pricing models for works undertaken and where necessary recharged to ensure value for money. • Build the team to ensure excellent HR practices are used, which will build a skilled, high performance, customer focused and motivated team. • Introduce an IT system for developing an effective R&M service from the point of order to completion and post inspection actions. To include mobile working for operatives. • 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. • 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. 	HO 1 / 3	Mears Direct	April 2012	<p>Partly Achieved – This is an integral part of the Repairs Refresh Programme, and has now commenced following the introduction of Mears Direct's IT system in January 2012.</p> <p>A separate supplies tender will be required, which will involve an EU compliant procedure. Expressions of interest have been sought and a shortlist drawn up for invitation to tender.</p>

41) Develop a Value for Money Strategy	HO 1 / 3	Asst. Director of Housing (Property)	March 2012	No Progress – Due to other priorities. However, savings identified and realised are captured as part of the quarterly Continuous Improvement Meetings held by the Director of Housing, Assistant Directors and individual Housing Managers throughout the Housing Directorate, so that value for money initiatives and savings can be identified, captured and reported.
42) Develop a separate Repairs and Maintenance Housing Service Strategy	HO 3	Asst. Director of Housing (Property)	July 2011	No progress - Due to other priorities
43) Seek to include at least one local business on the list of tenderers for all future contracts.	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager / Mears Direct	April 2012	Achieved and Ongoing – However, this process has to be fair and equitable to avoid a legal challenge for failing to allow others to tender.

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