

**HRA Business Plan 2013/14  
ACTION PLAN**

Action	Corporate Housing Objectives	Responsibility for Achievement	Target Date	6-Month Progress Report <i>(As at 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013)</i>
<b>Housing General</b>				
1) Review the HRA Financial Plan, through formal officer reviews on a quarterly basis and reviews by the Housing Scrutiny Panel on a half-yearly basis.	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5	Director of Finance / Director of Housing	Mar 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – The Financial Plan was reviewed by officers at the end of Quarter 1, following a report by the Council's HRA business planning consultants. The Quarter 2 Review Report is due to be considered by the Housing Scrutiny Panel in October 2013.
2) <i>(Subject to Cabinet approval)</i> Consider additional appropriate housing improvements and service enhancements - funded from additional resources available to the HRA from April 2014 - once the available additional funding is known.	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5	Director of Housing	Jan 2014	<b>Not yet required</b>
3) Successfully complete the implementation of the electronic records system (Information @Work) within the Housing Directorate with the scanning of Housing Options files	HO 1 / 2 / 3	Asst Director of Housing (Private Sector & Resources)	July 2013	<b>In Progress</b> – A number of files have been scanned and it is anticipated that the task will be completed by the end of the financial year.
4) Seek re-accreditation of the Cabinet Office's Customer Service Excellence Award for a further three years	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4	Asst Director of Housing (Operations)	Nov 2013	<b>Achieved</b> – Following an independent assessment by an external assessor, the Council was re-accredited with the Customer Service Excellence Award for a further three years
5) Complete the implementation of the Council's Welfare Reform Mitigation Action Plan	HO 2 / 5	Director of Housing	Mar 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – Around 2/3 of all the actions have been completed. Most of the remaining actions are dependent

				on announcements by the Government on the roll-out of Universal Credit
<b>Council Housebuilding Programme</b>				
6) <i>(Subject to Cabinet approval)</i> Formulate and adopt a Development Strategy for the Council's Housebuilding Programme	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5	Asst Director of Housing (Property)	July 2013	<b>Achieved</b> – The Development Strategy was adopted by the Cabinet in September 2013, on the recommendation of the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee.
7) <i>(Subject to Cabinet Committee approval)</i> Seek and obtain Investment Partner status with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), to enable the Council to potentially obtain grant funding from the HCA	HO 1 / 5	Asst Director of Housing (Property)	Nov 2013	<b>In Progress</b> – East Thames has had initial discussions with the HCA. However, now that the Government has confirmed in its Spending Review that further funding for affordable housing will be available beyond the current funding programme (that ends in 2015), East Thames will now commence a formal dialogue with the HCA on the Council's behalf.
8) <i>(Subject to Cabinet Committee approval)</i> Commence the first development for the Council's new Housebuilding Programme, with the provision of rented housing at affordable rents.	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5	Director of Housing	Mar 2014	<b>In Progress</b> - The Development and Financial Appraisals for the proposed first year of the Council's Housebuilding Programme were considered and approved by the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee on 10th July 2013. It was agreed to seek planning permission for the development of 25 new homes on three sites in Waltham Abbey.
9) <i>(Subject to Cabinet Committee approval)</i> Commence an improvement scheme at Marden Close, Chigwell Row, to convert the 20 existing bedsits into 10 one bedroom flats	HO 1 / 2 / 3	Asst Director of Housing (Property)	Oct 2013	<b>In Progress</b> - The Development and Financial Appraisals for the conversion scheme were considered and approved by the Council Housebuilding Cabinet

				Committee on 10th July 2013. A planning application has since been submitted and the outcome is awaited.
10) Undertake development and financial appraisals of all the Council's sites with development potential and, through the Council's Housebuilding Cabinet Committee, determine which sites planning permission for development should be sought.	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5	Director of Housing	Mar 2014	<b>In Progress</b> - The Council's Development Agent is in the process of undertaking development and financial appraisals of all the identified potential sites.
<b>Housing Management</b>				
11) <i>(Subject to Cabinet approval)</i> Implement the Council's new Tenancy Policy as a pilot scheme, including the use of 10-year fixed term flexible tenancies for all new lettings of Council properties with 3 or more bedrooms.	HO 2	Asst Director of Housing (Operations)	Sept 2013	<b>Achieved</b> – The Tenancy Policy was adopted by the Cabinet in April 2013, on the recommendation of the Housing Scrutiny Panel and following a consultation exercise.  The introduction of flexible (fixed term) tenancies for all new tenants of Council properties with 3 or more bedrooms took effect from 1st September 2013
12) Implement a new Housing Register “hosting” arrangement with Locata Housing Services, including the introduction of a new on-line Housing Registration Form that automatically uploads new applicants’ details without manual input	HO 2	Asst Director of Housing (Operations)	July 2013	<b>Achieved</b> – Following the decision of the Housing Portfolio Holder to enter into a “hosting arrangement” for the Council's Housing Register by Locata Housing Services, which includes the provision of an on-line housing registration system, the new system went live in June 2013.
13) <i>(Subject to Cabinet approval)</i> Implement the Council's new Housing Allocations Scheme, including a new Local Eligibility Criteria and a new approach to the provision of choice to homeless households.	HO2	Asst Director of Housing (Operations)	Sept 2013	<b>Achieved</b> – The new Housing Allocations Scheme was adopted by the Cabinet in April 2013, on the recommendation of the Housing

				Scrutiny Panel and following a consultation exercise. The new Scheme was implemented with effect from 1st September 2013
14) Undertake a high profile publicity campaign to receive information from residents about social housing fraud	HO 1 / 2	Asst Director of Housing (Operations)	Mar 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – The best way to promote the Council’s Social Housing Fraud initiative is under consideration
15) Seek additional funding from the Government to expand further the Council’s Social Housing Fraud Scheme, through the introduction of new intelligence and other initiatives	HO 1 / 2	Asst Director of Housing (Operations)	June 2013	<b>Completed</b> – Additional funding was sought from the Government, but the bid was unsuccessful.
16) Commence the first transfers of vulnerable under-occupying tenants to smaller accommodation, assisted by the new Under-occupation Officer post	HO 1 / 2	Housing Manager (Older People’s Services)	Aug 2013	<b>Delayed</b> – Due to the necessity for the Housing Under-occupation Officer to assist vulnerable housing applicants to complete their on-line housing applications, this initiative has been delayed. However, the Officer is now able to focus on this as a priority.
<b>Tenant Participation</b>				
17) Complete the first Service Review (handling housing complaints) by the new Tenants Scrutiny Panel, to scrutinise the performance of the Housing Service	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4	Principal Housing Officer (Strategy & Information)	Mar 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – The Tenant Scrutiny Panel is undertaking its review, with the support of officers, and it is anticipated that the Scrutiny Panel’s report should be available by the end of the financial year.
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 2014	<b>No Progress</b> – Due to other priorities.

### Supporting People and Supported Housing

19) Review the future of the Council's Careline Service, in the light of the County Council's decision to procure a county-wide telecare contract from one provider	HO 1 / 2	Asst Director of Housing (Operations)	Mar 2014	<b>Held in abeyance</b> – The intentions of Essex County Council are awaited, before the future of the service can be reviewed.
20) Complete the first schemes under the programme of providing scooter stores at sheltered housing schemes	HO 2	Housing Assets Manager	Mar 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – A range of options have been developed and costed for the sheltered schemes at Buckhurst Court, Chapel Road, Hedgers Close and Parsonage Court. Design options are being also being developed for Leonard Davis House, Frank Bretton House, Pelly Court, Jubilee Court and Jessop Court.
21) Commence a Furniture Replacement Programme for communal lounges at the Council's sheltered housing schemes	HO 2	Housing Manager (Older People's Services)	July 2013	<b>In Progress</b> – Following the allocation of funding from the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund, the Replacement Programme is in progress.

### Housing Repairs and Maintenance

22) Implement a programme for repairs and maintenance over 5 and 30 years.	HO 3	Asst Director of Housing (Property) / Housing Assets Manager	March 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – Framework Agreements have been let for kitchens, bathrooms, heating installations, electrical testing and rewiring during 2013. Contracts for external wall insulation, roofing and electrical heating installations are due to be tendered and let.
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				Works are well under way towards achieving the “Modern Home Standard” with the number of “key building components” being replaced in Q1 & 2 exceeding the targets.
23) 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 (Also relates to NI14 – Avoidable Contact Action Plan).	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	July 2013	<b>In Progress</b> – With the appointment of each Framework Contractor, it is a requirement that they each prepare an information leaflet for tenants - to explain how the work will be undertaken and what tenants and leaseholders can expect.
24) Install mains operated smoke detectors in all Council owned properties over the next 5-years	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	March 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – Around 35% of the Council’s housing stock has mains-installed smoke and heat detectors installed. Changes in the IEE Wiring Regulations now mean that a full electrical test is required to the property if new electrical circuits are installed.  Therefore, smoke detectors are now being incorporated in a whole range of other electrical works to ensure value for money. However, this approach has elongated the programme over a 5-year period and not a one year programme as first envisaged.
25) 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	March 2014	<b>Achieved</b> – This is undertaken around March each year, as part of the Business Planning cycle.

<p>26) Identify a new depot site from which to relocate the Housing Repairs Service to free up the existing Epping Depot for redevelopment.</p>	<p>HO 1 / 3</p>	<p>Asst Director of Housing (Property)</p>	<p>March 2014</p>	<p><b>In Progress</b> – Whilst no alternative depot site has been identified yet, a full evaluation of need has been carried out, against which any prospective site can be assessed against.</p> <p>The Council's Estates and Valuation Section are actively searching for alternative sites on the Council's behalf.</p>
<p>27) Implement the new materials supply contract with Grafton Buildbase, including the integration with MCM.</p>	<p>HO 1 / 3</p>	<p>Housing Assets Manager</p>	<p>June 2013</p>	<p><b>Delayed but In Progress</b> – The supply contract with Buildbase is now in place. The Council's own materials stock is now being phased out as the integration with Mears' computer system is developed. The revised target for full implementation is November 2014.</p>
<p>28) Undertake a tender to appoint at least two Framework contractors to undertake void works for voids in excess of £1,500.</p>	<p>HO 1 / 3</p>	<p>Asst Director of Housing (Property)</p>	<p>July 2013</p>	<p><b>Achieved</b> – Two contracts were let in July, with 3-year terms with an optional 1 year extension.</p>
<p>29) Migrate from the Council's existing bespoke Schedule of Rates to the industry standard National Housing Federation Schedule of Rates (NHF SoR)</p>	<p>HO 3</p>	<p>Housing Assets Manager</p>	<p>May 2013</p>	<p><b>In Progress</b> – The NHF SoR's are now in use for all void works. Training is scheduled for staff in advance of the SoR's being rolled out for repairs in November 2013.</p>
<p>30) Renew at least 4,426 key components during 2013/14, including an element of catch-up, to work towards achieving the Council's Modern Home Standard for the whole of its housing stock.</p>	<p>HO 3</p>	<p>Housing Assets Manager supported by Mears through voids works.</p>	<p>March 2013</p>	<p><b>In Progress</b> – Ongoing progress towards this target is measured as a quarterly KPI. The KPI targets for Q1 &amp; 2 have been achieved so far.</p>

<p>31) Continue with the Repairs Focus Group once set up, and create an action plan for inclusion in the Repairs Refresh Programme</p>	<p>HO 3 / 4</p>	<p>Asst Director of Housing (Property)</p>	<p>March 2014</p>	<p><b>Achieved</b> – The Repairs Focus Group continues to meet on a quarterly basis. The latest meeting in September 2013 saw the Group review the range of kitchen and bathroom suites available that is offered to tenants to select as part of the on-going Planned Replacement Programme.</p>
<p>32) Continue to undertake feasibility studies into alternative fuel sources for properties in rural communities where mains gas is not available.</p>	<p>HO 3</p>	<p>Housing Assets Manager</p>	<p>March 2014</p>	<p><b>In Progress</b> – Air source heat pumps are being rolled out as an alternative heating type for residents in rural communities, which has proved very popular amongst residents due to the lower heating costs.</p> <p>The Council is also in the early stages of exploring the option of installing Solar PV panels on the roofs of some sheltered housing schemes.</p>
<p>33) Seek around 75% ECO grant funding to support the installation of external wall insulation for electrically heated solid wall constructed properties.</p>	<p>HO 1 / 3</p>	<p>Housing Assets Manager</p>	<p>August 2013</p>	<p><b>In Progress</b> – Tenders have been invited for provision of external wall insulation to around 12 rural solid wall properties. Subject to tender, it is anticipated that around 85-90% of the costs of the works will be funded from ECO grant funding.</p>
<p>34) Review all projects with a contract value in excess of £1m on completion to identify any lessons learnt.</p>	<p>HO 3 / 5</p>	<p>Housing Assets Manager / Mears</p>	<p>March 2014</p>	<p><b>Not Yet Required</b> – Since the Council is letting annual contracts with extensions, this value not usually reached. The Springfields Refurbishment Contract was the last contract that this applied to.</p>



<p>35) Seek to reduce the target response times as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake all repairs in under 7 working days</li> <li>• Attend to at least 99% of all Emergency repairs within 4 working hours</li> <li>• To attend to at least 98% of all appointments within the appointed time.</li> <li>• To maintain a tenant satisfaction rate of at least 98% of tenants satisfied with the repairs service they received, including the work undertaken.</li> <li>• Complete voids with works under £1,500 within 15 days</li> <li>• Complete voids with works over £1,500 within 22 days</li> </ul>	HO 3	Mears	March 2014	<p><b>Achieved</b> – Each of these targets are monitored on a monthly basis through the KPI monitoring regime. In Quarters 1 and 2, each of these targets was achieved.</p>
<p>36) Implement the second set of “key deliverables” as agreed by the Repairs Advisory Group and the Housing Portfolio Holder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To introduce an on-line repairs diagnosis and reporting service with access to book appointments on-line</li> <li>• To develop and introduce a mobile phone App for smartphones for tenants to report repairs and book appointments.</li> <li>• To introduce electronic electrical test certification in conjunction with the existing mobile platform in use within the Repairs Service</li> <li>• To introduce materials product warranty notification software to warn of any warranty in existence</li> <li>• To undertake an HQN Repairs Self-Assessment.</li> </ul>	HO 1 / 3	Mears	Dec 2013	<p><b>In Progress</b> –The implementation of the electrical digital certification has been achieved.</p> <p>Development of the other “Key Deliverables” is in hand, with the Mears IT Team planning to launch the on-line diagnosis system, on-line repairs reporting module, product warranty capture software and the smart-phone app later in the year (around March 2014).</p> <p>The HQN Self-Assessment is being planned for around February 2014.</p>

37) Seek to include at least one local business on the list of tenderers for all future contracts.	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager / Mears	March 2014	<b>Achieved</b> – A local supplier / contractor has been included on all tender lists, with the exception of contracts tendered to comply with EU regulations, where selection of tenderers is based on their ability to deliver.
38) Implement Codeman as the Housing Assets Planned Maintenance Asset Management database	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	Nov 2013	<b>Delayed</b> – This has been delayed due to a lack of staffing resources in the Housing IT Team available to develop and deliver the database.
39) Following the implementation of Codeman, devise a meaningful KPI around achieving the new Modern Homes Standard	HO 3	Asst Director of Housing (Property) / Housing Assets Manager	Dec 2013	<b>Delayed</b> – Due to the delay in implementing the Codeman software, an interim KPI definition has been developed and adopted to monitor deliver towards the “Modern Home Standard”

### 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