

**Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2012-13
12-Month Progress Report – October 2013**

| No | Category | Action | Responsibility | Timescale | Progress Report (as at 1 st October 2013) |
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| 1 | General | Review the Housing Strategy 2009-2012 and produce an updated Housing Strategy for 2013-2016, following a consultation exercise on a Draft Housing Strategy | Director of Housing | Sept 2013 2014 | Deferred – The Housing Portfolio Holder has decided that the review and formulation of a new Housing Strategy should be deferred until the Preferred Options Stage of the Council's Local Plan preparations has been reached. |
| 2 | Housing Market | Undertake an extensive Public Consultation Exercise on the Issues and Options Paper for the Council's Local Plan, to assist with the production of the new Local Plan | Asst. Director of Planning (Policy & Conservation) | October 2012 | Achieved – October 2012 |
| 3 | Housing Market | Undertake a review and refresh of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), to inform the Draft Local Plan and the target number of new homes required for the District to 2031 | Principal Planning Officer (Forward Planning) | Sept 2012 Jan 2014 | Achieved – Although later than expected, the final version of the main SHMA was received from the Council's consultants in early July 2013. A supplementary report on the accommodation needs of older people has also been drafted by the Council's consultants, and issued in early July 2013. This is currently being checked and discussed with the other Council partners. Pending finalisation of the report, it will be presented via a Portfolio Holder Report for adoption into the Local Plan Evidence Base. |
| 4 | Housing Market | Produce a Draft Local Plan, taking account of the responses to the Issues and Options Paper, including a proposed target for the delivery of new homes to 2031. | Asst. Director of Planning (Policy & Conservation) | May 2013 April 2014 | In Progress – A report on the key points arising from the Issues & Options consultation responses was received by Cabinet in June 2013. A revised Local Development Scheme, with a revised timeline, was adopted by the Cabinet on 22 July 2013. This assumes that a Cabinet/Council decision on a Draft Plan will be made in April 2014. |

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| | | | | | The Council must determine its own Objectively Assessed Housing Need, and Cabinet will receive a report in October 2013 which identifies a range of figures for further testing through the Local Plan process. |
| 5 | Housing Market | Undertake a Consultation Exercise on the Draft Local Plan and process the responses | Asst. Director of Planning (Policy & Conservation) | August 2013 May 2014 | Delayed – The revised Local Development Scheme adopted by the Cabinet on 22 July 2013 states that consultation on the Draft Plan will take place between May and September 2014 |
| 6 | Housing Market | Submit the final version of the Local Plan for an Examination in Public | Asst. Director of Planning (Policy & Conservation) | March 2014 Oct 2015 | Not yet due - Following consultation on the Draft Plan, there will be further work to be undertaken to take account of the responses to the Draft Plan and preparation of the Plan to be submitted for examination. Prior to submission there is a requirement under the regulations for pre-submission publication and representations to be sought on soundness for a minimum of 6 weeks. This is currently scheduled for April-May 2015 with submission to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination scheduled for October 2015. |
| 7 | Regeneration | Adopt a Design and Development Brief for the St Johns Area of Epping, including the provision of market and affordable housing, following analysis of the results of the public consultation exercise completed in July 2012 | Director of Corporate Support Services | Sept 2012 | Achieved – October 2012 |
| 8 | Regeneration | Produce and agree an Action Plan for the regeneration of the Council's assets at The Broadway, Loughton, in accordance with the approved Development and Design Brief, including the provision of significant levels of affordable housing | Director of Housing | Sept 2012 | Achieved – September 2012 |

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| 9 | Affordable Housing | <p>Work with housing associations and developers to provide 76 new affordable homes for rent and shared ownership in 2013/14 and around a further 69 new affordable homes by March 2015, at the following sites with planning permission:</p> <p>(a) Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey – 67 new homes (b) 12-30 Church Hill, Loughton – 5 new homes (c) Millfield, High Ongar – 4 new homes (d) Jennikings Nursery, Chigwell – 52 new homes (e) Manor Road Garden Centre, Chigwell – 17 new homes</p> | Director of Housing | <p>March 2013</p> <p>March 2014</p> | <p>Good Progress:</p> <p>(a) Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey – Completed (b) 12-30 Church Hill, Loughton – Completed (c) Millfield, High Ongar – Completed (d) Jennikings Nursery, Chigwell – On-site (Completion due – March 2015) (e) Manor Road Garden Centre, Chigwell – On-site (Completion due – May 2014)</p> |
| 10 | Affordable Housing | Review the possible re-introduction of the Home Ownership Grant Scheme (enabling existing Council tenants to purchase in the private sector) in 2013/14. | Housing Resources Manager | Sept 2012 | <p>Achieved – September 2012</p> <p>On review, the Cabinet agreed to discontinue the Scheme permanently.</p> |
| 11 | Affordable Housing | Complete Phase 1 of the 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 – and consider whether to undertake Phase 2 | Director of Housing | <p>Sept 2012</p> <p>Feb 2013</p> | <p>Achieved – Phase 1 has been completed.</p> <p>The Housing Portfolio Holder made a decision to implement Phase 2 in October 2012.</p> |

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| 12 | Affordable Housing | Seek and obtain planning permission for residential development at the Council's Pyrls Lane Nursery site, Loughton, including the provision of at least 40% affordable housing | Chief Estates Officer | Nov 2012 Jan 2014 | Delayed – An outline planning application was refused earlier in the year. Consideration is being given to addressing the issues identified. |
| 13 | Affordable Housing | Ensure commencement of the residential housing element of the development of the St Johns School site, Epping, in accordance with the signed Section 106 (Planning) Agreement, including the provision of affordable housing | Director of Housing | Oct 2013 | Good Progress – The new school has been constructed. The residential development, including the affordable housing, is due to commence in October 2013. |
| 14 | Council Housebuilding Programme | Appoint a Development Agent to manage and deliver the Council's Housebuilding Programme, including the provision of all building consultants and the procurement of works contractors | Director of Housing | Jan 2013 | Achieved – East Thames Group has been appointed, following a robust, EU-compliant tender exercise. |
| 15 | Council Housebuilding Programme | Formulate and adopt a Development Strategy for the Council Housebuilding Programme | Director of Housing | April 2013 | Achieved – The Development Strategy, produced by East Thames - in consultation with officers - was adopted by the Cabinet in September 2013, following detailed consideration and recommendation by the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee in July 2013. |
| 16 | Council Housebuilding Programme | Undertake initial development assessments for a further list of small garage sites and garage sites with vacancies and no waiting list, and recommend to the Cabinet that detailed Development and Financial Appraisals be undertaken for those sites that have development potential | Director of Housing | Dec 2013 | Alternative approach agreed – These initial assessments will now be undertaken by the appointed Development Agent. |

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| 17 | Council Housebuilding Programme | Seek Development Partner status for the Council with the Homes and Communities Agency, to enable the Council to bid for HCA funding and charge affordable rents for its new developments, instead of social rents | Director of Housing | Sept 2013 Mar 2014 | In Progress – 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. |
| 18 | Council Housebuilding Programme | Complete the first batch of Development and Financial Appraisals for potential development sites, for consideration by the Cabinet | Director of Housing | June 2013 | Achieved – The Development and Financial Appraisals for the proposed first year of the Council's Housebuilding Programme were considered by the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee on 10 th July 2013. |
| 19 | Council Housebuilding Programme | Obtain planning permissions for the first sites under the Council Housebuilding Programme | Director of Housing | Nov 2013 | Not yet due – Planning applications for the developments in Year 1 of the Housebuilding Programme will be submitted in Oct/Nov 2013. |
| 20 | Affordable Housing | Work with Trust for London and Chigwell Parish Council to agree an appropriate way forward for the development or conversion of the 20 unpopular bedsits for older people at Marden Close, Chigwell Row to provide good quality, self-contained rented accommodation for Housing Register applicants | Director of Housing | Oct 2012 Feb 2013 | Achieved – The Cabinet agreed in February 2013 that the Council should undertake the proposed conversion scheme itself, funded from the HRA's Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Budget. Trust for London has entered into a Deed of Variation with the Council for the lease of the land, to enable the Council to undertake the proposed improvements. |
| 21 | Affordable Housing | Update the existing District-wide Nominations Agreements with each of the Council's Preferred Housing Association Partners for new rented housing developments - to take account of the new Affordable Rents Framework - and formulate new District-wide Nominations Agreements for shared ownership properties with the same partners. | Director of Housing | Dec 2012 Nov 2013 | No Progress - Due to other workload commitments. |

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| 22 | Affordable Housing | Adopt a West Essex Tenancy Strategy to meet the requirements of the Localism Act, setting out the Council's requirements for the forms of tenure offered to new tenants, to which the Council and housing associations must have regard. | Director of Housing | Oct 2012 | Achieved – The Cabinet adopted the West Essex Tenancy Strategy in October 2012. |
| 23 | Affordable Housing | Formulate a Tenancy Policy, setting out the form(s) of tenure that the Council will provide in the future, including the possible use of flexible (fixed term) tenancies in appropriate cases, for detailed consideration by the Housing Scrutiny Panel and subsequent adoption by the Cabinet. | Asst. Director of Housing (Operations) | April 2013 | Achieved – 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 |
| 24 | Affordable Housing | Undertake a major review of the Council's Allocations Scheme, in the light of the flexibilities offered by the Localism Act, and adopt a revised Allocations Scheme by the Council by the Cabinet – including a local Eligibility Criteria – following detailed consideration by the Housing Scrutiny Panel and consultation with stakeholders and housing applicants. | Asst. Director of Housing (Operations) | April 2013 | Achieved – 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 1 st September 2013 |
| 25 | Affordable Housing | Undertake a review of the success of the Council's expanded Social Housing Fraud Scheme, around 1 year after the appointment to the new post of Senior Housing Officer (Social Housing Fraud) | Asst. Director of Housing (Operations) | July 2013 | Achieved – The Housing Scrutiny Panel reviewed the success of the Scheme in July 2013. |

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| 26 | Affordable Housing | Recruit to the new post of Housing Underoccupation Officer and formulate an action plan to reduce the amount of under-occupation within the Council's housing stock and to assist older people with practical support to move to smaller accommodation. | Asst. Director of Housing (Operations) | Oct 2012 Mar 2013 | Achieved – The appointment was delayed due to a suspension of the Council's Job Evaluation Scheme. However, the post was filled in July 2013. |
| 27 | Affordable Housing | Produce and submit to the Housing Scrutiny Panel a progress report on the success of the new Housing Underoccupation Officer post, around 12 months after appointment | Asst. Director of Housing (Operations) | Oct 2013 July 2014 | Not yet due |
| 28 | Affordable Housing | Consider the findings of the Chartered Institute of Housing's study (commissioned by the Council with full funding from Improvement East) on the implications of the welfare reforms - in relation to the introduction of universal credit, under-occupation, increased rent arrears and increased transaction costs - and identify and implement an appropriate package of measures to mitigate the effects | Director of Housing | Mar 2013 Mar 2014 | Good Progress – The CIH's Study was presented to all members in October 2012 and the Cabinet agreed a resultant Welfare Reform Mitigation Action Plan in October 2012. Three Quarterly Progress Reports on the Action Plan have been by the Housing Scrutiny Panel between January 2013 and June 2013. Around two thirds of all the actions have been achieved to date. Most of the remaining third of actions cannot yet be progressed. |
| 29 | Affordable Housing | Introduce an on-line housing registration system | Asst. Director of Housing (Operations) | April 2013 | Achieved – Following the decision of the Housing Portfolio Holder to enter into a "hosting arrangement" for the Housing Register by Locata, which includes the provision of an on-line housing registration system, the new system went live in June 2013. |
| 30 | Homelessness | Adopt a revised Homelessness Strategy for a further three-year period, following review by the Housing Scrutiny Panel and consultation exercise with stakeholders | Asst. Director of Housing (Operations) | Sept 2012 | Achieved – The Housing Portfolio Holder adopted the revised Homelessness Strategy in September 2012, following detailed consideration by the Housing Scrutiny Panel in July 2012. |

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| 31 | Homelessness | Decide whether or not to use the flexibilities offered by the Localism Act to place homeless families in private rented accommodation without their agreement | Asst. Director of Housing (Operations) | Oct 2012 Apr 2013 | Achieved – The new Housing Allocations Scheme adopted by the Cabinet in April 2013, and introduced from September 2013, includes a provision to place homeless families with less than 3 years' residence in the District into private rented accommodation. |
| 32 | Homelessness | Consider the findings of the Chartered Institute of Housing's study on the implications of the welfare reforms, in relation to homelessness, and implement an appropriate package of measures to mitigate the effects | Asst. Director of Housing (Operations) | March 2013 Mar 2014 | Good Progress – See Action (28) |
| 33 | Homelessness | Complete the programme of conversion works to provide designated bathrooms for each room at Norway House, the Council's Homeless Persons Hostel | Housing Options Manager | March 2013 Dec 2014 | Good Progress – Most rooms now have self-contained designated bathrooms, only 4 rooms in the main building are not designated to specific rooms. It is planned to undertake conversion works for these in 2014/15. |
| 34 | Diversity | Compare the ethnicity of applicants provided with Council accommodation with the ethnicity of Housing Register applicants | Housing Options Manager | July 2013 | Achieved – At its meeting in June 2013, the Housing Scrutiny Panel undertook this annual comparison exercise. The outcome led the Scrutiny Panel to conclude that no changes were required to the Allocations Scheme as a result. |
| 35 | Diversity | Review and update the Customer (Equality) Impact Assessments of the Housing Strategy & Development, HomeOption Scheme, Homelessness, and Private Sector Housing functions | Director of Housing | July 2013 Mar 2014 | Delayed – Due to other workload commitments. |
| 36 | Diversity | Implement the Council's new Equality Monitoring Policy and Guidance for appropriate housing services | Director of Housing | Mar 2013 Oct 2013 | In Progress – The Cabinet agreed the new policy and guidance in December 2012. The best way to implement the new guidance corporately is currently under consideration. |

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| 37 | Diversity | Complete an Accommodation Assessment for Gypsy Roma and Travellers (GRT), in order to inform the Local Plan in respect of the accommodation requirements for the GRT community | Asst. Director of Planning (Policy & Conservation) | Nov 2012 Mar 2014 | Good Progress – The Essex Planning Officers Association has agreed the methodology for undertaking the Accommodation Assessment and has appointed consultants, Opinion Research Services (ORS), to undertake the Assessment. Face to face interviews with the travelling community were held between June - July 2013. Contact has been established with all local authorities adjoining Essex to satisfy Duty to Co-operate requirements. The draft report is anticipated in November 2013, which will be presented to an EPOA/EHOG meeting, and another involving Members and Planning/Housing officers from throughout Essex. The date for final report will depend on changes needed following presentations, but is expected by the end of March 2014. |
| 38 | Diversity | Undertake an audit of the Council's compliance with the Human Right's Commission's Code of Practice in Rented Housing and undertake any required actions as a result | Assistant Director of Housing (Private Sector and Resources) | July 2013 Dec 2013 | Delayed – Due to other workload commitments. |
| 39 | Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People | Following the Issues and Options Exercise, include a requirement in the Draft Local Plan that all new housing developments in the District should meet the Lifetime Homes Standard | Principal Planning Officer (Forward Planning) | May 2013 May 2014 | In Progress – Existing Local Plan policy requires that a proportion of new dwellings are constructed to the Lifetime Homes Standard, and any revised policy will consider whether this proportion should be increased. |
| 40 | Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People | Agree the Council's approach for the delivery of its Careline Service, following the County Council's proposed introduction of a new county-wide Telecare Contract from April 2013 | Asst. Director of Housing (Operations) | June 2013 Dec 2013 | In Progress – In November 2012, the Essex County Council Housing Related Support (HRS) Team confirmed its intention to tender a contract for the county-wide provision of telecare services. Following a meeting of Essex local authority control centre providers, a meeting was held between local authority representatives and the County Council's Head of HRS, proposing a negotiated arrangement for existing Essex local authority control centre providers |

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| | | | | | <p>to continue to provide the service to a common specification, charges and HRS funding across Essex.</p> <p>Essex CC officers responded by confirming their intention to recommend to Essex CC members to tender a county-wide contract although, following representations by a number of Essex councils (including Epping Forest), Essex CC is currently reviewing the way forward.</p> |
| 41 | Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People | Introduce a new, in-house, free Handyperson Scheme for all the Council's sheltered housing schemes, and commission a similar free Handyperson Scheme for other older Council tenants from Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF) | Asst. Director of Housing (Property) | Oct 2012 | Achieved – November 2012 |
| 42 | Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People | Review the success of the in-house Handyperson Scheme and VAEF Handyperson Scheme around 12 months after their introduction | Asst. Director of Housing (Property) | Jan 2014 | Not yet due |
| 43 | Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People | Provide a grant of £10,000 to the proposed Home2Home Furniture Recycling Scheme, provided that there is surety and evidence that the Scheme will become operational. | Director of Housing | Oct 2012 Feb 2013 | Partially Achieved – The Scheme is now called Epping Forest Re-use, which has leased a warehouse in Epping. The Scheme was launched in Spring 2013, and quarterly payments of £2,500 have commenced. |
| 44 | Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People | Install key safes outside all properties within the Council sheltered housing schemes, free of charge | Housing Manager (Older People's Services) | Dec 2012 | Achieved – December 2012 |

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| 45 | Empty Homes | Bring at least 20 long-term empty properties back into use by Council intervention, including the continued use of the PLACE Scheme | Private Housing Manager (Technical) | March 2013 | Achieved – 115 long term empty properties were brought back into use in 2012/13. |
| 46 | 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 | July 2013 July 2014 | In Progress – In particular, the Council has been working with Hastoe and Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish Council to provide a rural housing scheme in this Parish. However, this is currently held in abeyance, pending the outcome of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish. |
| 47 | Decent Homes – Public Sector | Undertake programmes of work to ensure that all the Council's homes continue to meet the Decent Homes Standard and also meet a full, modern maintenance standard, utilising the additional funding available as a result of HRA self financing | Housing Assets Manager | July 2013 Dec 2014 | In Progress – The Council continues to have no non-decent homes. The Council has now agreed the definition of its "Modern Home Standard" and programmes of work are being put into place to meet the new standard. A KPI has also been introduced from 2013/14 to monitor the progress with meeting the new standard across the whole of the housing stock. |
| 48 | Decent Homes – Private Sector | Produce for the Housing Scrutiny Panel a Progress Report on the new Private Sector Housing Strategy, around 1 year after adoption, to identify if any refinements are required | Assistant Director of Housing (Private Sector and Resources) | July 2013 | Good progress – A presentation is due to be given to the Housing Scrutiny Panel at its meeting in October 2013. |
| 49 | Decent Homes – Private Sector | Introduce new licences for existing residential park home sites in the District | Private Housing Manager (Technical) | Dec 2012 | Achieved – All new licences, with the agreed new licence conditions, were issued by December 2012 - together with a list of tolerated and unauthorised contraventions of the new conditions |
| 50 | Decent Homes – Private Sector | Introduce new licence conditions for existing and new holiday park home sites in the District, following consultation with site owners, park home residents association and statutory agencies | Private Housing Manager (Technical) | Dec 2013 April 2014 | Not yet due – However, it is likely that new licence conditions for gypsy and traveller sites will be formulated and issued before holiday park home sites, although completion of this action is likely to be delayed beyond December 2013, due to other commitments. |

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| 51 | Decent Homes – Private Sector | Prepare the Council's CARE Service for the retendering of the Essex Home Improvement Agency contract(s), due to be introduced in July 2013. | Private Housing Manager (Grants & CARE) | April 2013 | No longer required – Following consultation with Essex local authorities and HIA providers, Essex CC is extending the existing HIA tenders for up to two years. |
| 52 | Decent Homes – Private Sector | Report to the Housing Portfolio Holder on a proposal to increase CARE's project management fees for non-Disabled Facilities Grant work to 15%, in line with the fees now charged for Disabled Facilities Grant work | Private Housing Manager (Grants & CARE) | Dec 2012 | Achieved – The Housing Portfolio Holder agreed the increased fees in October 2012, following consideration by the CARE Advisory Panel. |
| 53 | Decent Homes – Private Sector | Review the charging policy for the CARE Handyperson Service, including a consultation exercise with service users | Private Housing Manager (Grants & CARE) | Dec 2012 Sept 2013 | Achieved – Following a Discussion Paper being considered by the CARE Advisory Panel, the Cabinet agreed a new charging regime in September 2013. |
| 54 | Decent Homes – Private Sector | Seek to introduce a Hospital to Home Scheme for West Essex, in partnership with the Papworth Housing Trust | Private Housing Manager (Grants & CARE) | Mar 2013 | Achieved – The new scheme commenced in January 2013. |
| 55 | Energy Efficiency | Work with Hastoe Housing Association to complete the first affordable housing development by a housing association in the country constructed from straw bales at Millfield, High Ongar, significantly improving energy efficiency | Director of Housing | Mar 2013 | Achieved – The development was completed in June 2013, and officially opened by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in September 2013. |
| 56 | Energy Efficiency | Identify and implement the role that the Council can play with the roll-out of the Green Deal, once the final arrangements have been confirmed by the Government | Environmental Co-ordinator | Mar 2013 Dec 2013 | In Progress – The Management Board has considered the issue and has tasked the Green Working Group, chaired by the Director of Planning and Economic Development, to consider the Council's response. Separately, the Housing Directorate has established its own officer Project Team, chaired by the Asst. Director of Housing, to consider and oversee the detailed housing response. |