

**Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2013-14  
(January 2014)**

No	Category	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress Report (as at January 2014)
1	General	Review the Housing Strategy 2009-2012 and produce an updated Housing Strategy for 2014-2017, following a consultation exercise on a Draft Housing Strategy	Director of Housing	Sept 2014	<b>Not yet due</b> – A Draft Housing Strategy will be formulated during 2014.
2	Housing Market	Complete the supplementary report on the accommodation needs of older people, for the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), to inform the Draft Local Plan	Principal Planning Officer (Forward Planning)	<del>Sept 2013</del> March 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – A further draft has been received from the consultants. The final version is expected by March 2014.
3	Housing Market	Consider the formation of a Harlow and Epping Forest Joint Strategic Housing and Infrastructure Delivery Board, comprising elected members from Harlow DC and Epping Forest DC, to oversee the strategic delivery of housing and associated infrastructure affecting the two local authorities, in order to ensure the proper planning of the area and fulfilment of the “Duty to Co-operate”	Director of Planning and Economic Development	<del>Oct 2013</del> March 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – An initial officer/member meeting has been held between the Council and Harlow DC to discuss and agree the membership and arrangements for the group going forward.
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)	<del>April 2014</del> July 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – A report on the key points arising from the Issues & Options consultation responses was received by Cabinet in June 2013. The Council must next determine its own Objectively Assessed Housing Need and, following a number of workshops for members and local councils, the Cabinet will receive a

					report in Spring 2014 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)	<del>May 2014</del> Feb 2015	<b>Not yet due</b> – The Consultation Exercise is expected to commence in September 2014, following which the responses will need to be processed and then reported to the Cabinet.
6	Housing Market	Submit the final version of the Local Plan for an Examination in Public	Asst. Director of Planning (Policy & Conservation)	<del>Oct 2015</del> Spring 2016	<b>Not yet due</b> - Following consultation on the Draft Plan, further work will need 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 the end of 2015, with submission to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination in Spring 2016.
7	Housing Market	Consider subscribing to the Hometrack Service, in partnership with neighbouring councils, to provide ongoing housing market intelligence for planning and housing purposes	Director of Housing / Prin. Planning Officer (F/ward Planning)	<del>Oct 2013</del> Apr 2014	<b>No progress</b> – Due to other priorities within both the Housing and Planning Directorates, and vacancies arising within the Planning Directorate, this Service has not yet been evaluated
8	Housing Market	Work with partners to produce an Infrastructure Delivery Plan in preparation for the Council's proposals for the introduction of Community Infrastructure Levies (CILs)	Director of Housing / Prin. Planning Officer (F/ward Planning)	May 2014	<b>Under consideration</b> – A decision first needs to be made on whether or not to introduce a CIL. A report will be considered by members on this issue during.  In any event, work has already commenced on the formulation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which will be required whether or not the Council introduces a CIL.
9	Regeneration	Work in partnership with Essex County Council, Epping Town Council and other partners to develop a sustainable regeneration scheme for	Director of Corporate Support Services	Sept 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – Expressions of interest from potential developers to undertake a comprehensive redevelopment of the site were received in Autumn 2013, which are under consideration.

		the St Johns Area of Epping, in accordance with the adopted Design and Development Brief, which includes an appropriate amount of market and affordable housing			Epping Town Council has now appointed its own consultants to advise them on its interests, and the three councils are now working together to appoint a preferred development partner(s) from those expressing interest. A report on the appointment of the preferred development partner(s) will be considered by the Cabinet in Spring 2014.
10	Regeneration	Appoint one of the Council's Preferred Housing Association Partners to develop the Council's land at The Broadway, Loughton, in accordance with the approved Broadway Regeneration Action Plan and Development and Design Brief, including the provision of significant levels of affordable housing	Director of Housing	<del>March 2014</del> Feb 2014	<b>Alternative action being pursued</b> – Following the introduction of the Council's own Housebuilding Programme, consideration is being given to undertaking this development as Year 2 of this Programme, rather than by a housing association.  A report on this proposal is due to be considered by the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee, at its meeting on 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2014.
11	Affordable Housing Provision	Work with housing associations and developers to provide 80 new affordable homes for rent and shared ownership by March 2015 and a further 27 new affordable homes by March 2016, at the following sites with planning permission:  (a) Jennikings Nursery, Chigwell – 52 new homes (b) Manor Road Garden Centre, Chigwell – 17 new homes (c) St. Johns School – 38 new homes	Director of Housing	March 2015	<b>In progress</b> – The two developments in Chigwell commenced on site in March and April 2013, and are due for completion in May 2014 and February 2015.  Phase 1 of the development at St Johns School, Epping is due to commence in Feb 2014 - with Phase 2 commencing in Sept 2014
12	Affordable Housing Provision	Complete Phase 2 of the Open Market Home Ownership Scheme with B3Living 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	Director of Housing	<del>March 2014</del> May 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – Following the successful completion of Phase 1 - which assisted 8 local residents into low cost home ownership - a further 2 local residents have purchased properties from the open market for shared ownership under Phase 2. A further 2 applicants have been approved, and are currently selecting properties, and a further application is being processed.

		jointly by the Council, B3Living and the applicant			
13	Affordable Housing Provision	Prior to completion of Phase 2 of the Open Market Shared Ownership Scheme, consider whether to provide additional resources to assist more first-time buyers by undertaking a Phase 3 of the Scheme	Director of Housing	<del>Jan 2014</del> May 2014	<b>Not yet due</b> – Consideration will be given to whether or not to undertake a Phase 3, once all purchases under Phase 2 have been processed.
14	Affordable Housing Provision	Seek planning permission for residential development at the Council's Pyrles Lane Nursery site, Loughton, including the provision of at least 40% affordable housing, by addressing the issues resulting in the previous planning permission refusal	Chief Estates Officer	<del>Dec 2013</del> Apr 2014	<b>In Progress</b> - An outline planning application was refused in 2013. The purchase of a private property adjacent to the site by the Council is due to be completed in January 2014, which will assist with the provision of a better access to the site.  Consideration is being given to addressing the other issues identified, in order for a revised planning application to be submitted.
15	Affordable Housing Provision	Work with the Parish of Loughton to facilitate its strategic review of its landholdings, with a view to new affordable housing being provided on surplus Church land	Director of Housing	July 2014	<b>In progress</b> – The Parish has appointed Hastoe Housing Association as its preferred development partner, which is undertaking an assessment of each of the sites and will provide indicative layouts to the Parish's Development Adviser for consideration.
16	Affordable Housing Provision	Undertake a competitive exercise to appoint an affordable housing viability consultant for a 3-year period in order to provide specialist advice and undertake the validation of viability appraisals submitted by developers: (a) Asserting that the Council's expected level of affordable housing provision is unviable; (b) Proposing a financial contribution in lieu of the provision of on-site affordable housing; or	Director of Housing	<del>Dec 2013</del> April 2014	<b>No Progress</b> – Due to other workload and priorities.

		(c) Applying to renegotiate previously agreed planning obligations on the grounds of viability			
17	Council Housebuilding Programme	Adopt a Development Strategy for the Council Housebuilding Programme	Asst. Director of Housing (Property)	Sept 2013	<b>Achieved</b> – The Development Strategy was adopted by the Cabinet in September 2013.
18	Council Housebuilding Programme	Obtain planning permission, procure a works contractor and start on site with the Year 1 Development Package of sites, comprising around 25 new affordable rented homes	Asst. Director of Housing (Property)	<del>March 2014</del> April 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – Planning permission has been obtained for one of the Year 1 sites, with planning applications submitted for the remaining Year 1, which are awaiting determination.  Subject to the sites receiving planning permission, a works contractor will be procured, with a start on site planned for April 2014.
19	Council Housebuilding Programme	Seek Development Partner status for the Council with the Homes and Communities Agency, to enable the Council to bid for future HCA funding	Asst. Director of Housing (Property)	<del>Dec 2013</del> March 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – Although publication of the HCA's Prospectus for its next National Affordable Housing Programme is still awaited, East Thames (the Council's development agent) is already preparing to both seek Investment Partner status for the Council with the HCA and to submit a bid for funding from the HCA.
20	Council Housebuilding Programme	Complete development and financial appraisals for around 50% of the identified potential development sites and formulate a Pipeline Programme of developments for at least Years 2-4 of the Programme	Asst. Director of Housing (Property)	<del>July 2014</del> Sept 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – Priority is being given to appraise the sites being recommended for Year 2 of the Programme, with appraisals for the remaining sites to follow.
21	Council and Housing Association Accommodation	Implement the Council's new Allocations Scheme, including the introduction of a Local Eligibility Criteria and new Banding Criteria	Asst. Director of Housing (Operations)	Sept 2013	<b>Achieved</b> – The new Allocations Scheme was successfully introduced in September 2013, as planned.

22	Council and Housing Association Accommodation	Review the new Housing Allocations Scheme and make any required revisions to the Scheme in the light of the first year's experience	Asst. Director of Housing (Operations)	Oct 2014	<b>Not yet due.</b>
23	Council and Housing Association Accommodation	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	<del>Nov 2013</del> May 2014	<b>No Progress</b> – Due to other workload and priorities.
24	Council Housing	Commence a major conversion scheme to convert 20 unpopular bedsits at Marden Close, Chigwell Row to provide 10 self-contained one-bedroomed rented flats for Housing Register applicants	Asst. Director of Housing (Property)	Mar 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – Planning permission has been received and the scheme is planned to commence on site in March 2014, together with the conversion of the ground floor of Faversham Hall to provide an additional two self-contained flats.
25	Council Housing	Implement the Council's new Tenancy Policy, through the introduction of flexible (fixed term) tenancies for 10 year periods (including an introductory tenancy period) for all Council properties with 3 or more bedrooms	Asst. Director of Housing (Operations)	Sept 2013	<b>Achieved</b> – The new Tenancy Policy was successfully introduced in September 2013, as planned.
26	Council Housing	Consult all existing Council tenants on proposed changes to their new tenancy conditions - to bring them up to date to reflect current legislation, Council policies and good practice – and issue new tenancy conditions to all tenants, having regard to the outcome of the consultation exercise.	Asst. Director of Housing (Operations)	March 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – The consultation exercise has been completed. A report on the outcome of the consultation will be considered by the Cabinet in February 2014, with the new tenancy agreement due to be introduced in April 2014.

27	Council Housing	Review the Council's new Tenancy Policy to consider: (a) Whether flexible (fixed term) tenancies should be provided for 2 bedroomed properties; (b) Whether to introduce a means test as part of the Assessment Criteria at the prior to the end of the tenancy; and (c) Any required revisions to the Policy in the light of the first year's experience	Asst. Director of Housing (Operations)	Oct 2014	<b>Not yet due.</b>
28	Council Housing	Introduce and publicise a new Social Housing Fraud Hotline to obtain leads on potential social housing fraud.	Asst. Director of Housing (Operations)	<del>Oct 2013</del> May 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – A number of initiatives to combat social housing fraud are being considered.
29	Council Housing	Bring together all the Council's fraud functions, including social housing fraud into one corporate team, to provide synergy, consistent working practices and shared intelligence	Chief Internal Auditor	<del>Oct 2013</del> April 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – The Chief Internal Auditor is planning the introduction of the one team from April 2014.
30	Council Housing	Produce and submit to the Housing Scrutiny Panel a progress report on the success of the new Housing Under-occupation Officer post, and the assistance provided to under-occupying older tenants to transfer to smaller accommodation	Asst. Director of Housing (Operations)	July 2014	<b>Not yet due.</b>
31	Council Housing	Deliver the remaining actions within the Council's Welfare Reform Mitigation Action Plan, particularly the preparations for the Government's introduction of direct payments of Universal Credit, including the housing element, to claimants	Director of Housing	July 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – 70% of all the 59 tasks on the Action Plan have now been achieved, with only one other task that is able to be undertaken now, not yet achieved.  The outstanding task relates to a longer-term ambition to work with the Council's Preferred Housing

					Association Partners to secure and provide private-rented housing as part of the non-affordable housing provision on new developments or through acquisition from the open market. Although the Director of Housing has raised this issue with the Council's Preferred Partners, due to the long lead-in times for such projects, it will be some time until this task will be able to be achieved.
32	Council Housing	Implement the Council's new Modern Home Standard through programmes of work to the Council's housing stock, whilst ensuring that the Decent Homes Standard continues to be met for all properties.	Housing Assets Manager	March 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – Completion of the first year's programme of works towards all Council properties meeting the Modern Home Standard is on target.
33	Homelessness	Implement the provisions within the new Housing Allocations Scheme to place homeless families with less than 3 years' residence in the District in private rented accommodation	Asst. Director of Housing (Operations)	<del>Sept 2013</del> Apr 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – This is a major policy shift for the Council that needs to be carefully planned and implemented, and requires resources to assist homeless families in receipt of housing benefit to access the private rented sector.  The best way to implement and resource the policy is currently being considered by officers.
34	Homelessness	To consider whether to work in partnership with a third party to lease private rented properties to let at market rents to homeless families with less than 3 years' residence in the District, for a management fee, in order to increase the number of such properties available to the this client group.	Asst. Director of Housing (Operations)	Oct 2013	<b>No longer required</b> – Officers have determined that the required management fee for such an arrangement would be too high, and cannot be justified.
35	Homelessness	Undertake a promotion campaign to inform existing tenants of flats that they can seek transfers to houses under the new Housing Allocations	Housing Options Manager	<del>Dec 2013</del> Jan 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – Letters are being sent to all tenants of flats in batches, informing them of the provisions of the new Scheme. This process will be completed by the end of January 2014.



		Scheme, in order to increase the number of suitable vacant flats available to offer to homeless families temporarily accommodated in the Council's Homeless Persons Hostel			
36	Diversity	Undertake a Census of all Council tenants in order to collect information about the protected characteristics (as defined by the Equality Act) and their household members, and undertake an analysis of the results to understand the profile of the Council's tenants, for presentation to the Housing Scrutiny Panel	Asst. Director of Housing (Private Sector and Resources)	March 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – The Census has been completed, with an exceptional return rate of over 50% from tenants achieved.  The information from most of the returned forms has now been input onto the Housing IT system, and a consultant has been appointed to analyse the results and produce a report for consideration by the Housing Scrutiny Panel.
37	Diversity	Collect information from all housing applicants about their protected characteristics in order to understand the profile of the Council's housing applicants	Asst. Director of Housing (Private Sector and Resources)	Oct 2013	<b>Achieved</b> - This information was collected as part of the on-line re-application process for all housing applicants.
38	Diversity	Compare the protected characteristics of housing applicants provided with Council accommodation with the protected characteristics of all Housing Register applicants, to ensure that the Housing Allocation Scheme does not materially discriminate against any groups of local residents	Housing Options Manager	Sept 2014	<b>Not yet due.</b>
39	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)	<del>Dec 2013</del> June 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – The Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) has commissioned consultants, ORS, to undertake a county-wide assessment.  A draft report has been received, which is currently under consideration by EPOA. Once finalised, ORS will present its report to officers and members across

					Essex, and the final report will be considered for adoption by the Cabinet.
40	Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People	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)	Under Review	<b>In Progress</b> – The 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.
41	Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People	Agree the Council's approach for the delivery of its Careline Service, following the outcome of the County Council's considerations of the possible introduction of a new county-wide Telecare Contract	Asst. Director of Housing (Operations)	<del>Dec 2013</del> Apr 2014	<b>No Progress</b> – The Council is awaiting the intentions of Essex County Council, which has been delayed due to the introduction of the County Council's new officer structure.
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)	<del>Oct 2013</del> Jan 2014	<b>Nearly Achieved</b> – A report on the success of the Handyperson Scheme will be considered by the Housing Scrutiny Panel at its January 2014 meeting.
43	Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People	Provide the remainder of the £30,000 General Fund and HRA grants allocated to Epping Forest Re-Use, to assist residents on low incomes purchase good quality second hand furniture at affordable prices.	Director of Housing	May 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – Quarterly payments for the grants from both the General Fund and HRA have been paid to Epping Forest Re-Use.
44	Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People	Work in partnership with other organisations to introduce a multi-agency Family Solutions Team for Harlow and Brentwood, to identify and meet the needs of "troubled" families with complex needs	Asst. Director of Housing (Operations)	<del>Dec 2013</del> Mar 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – Officers are working with the County Council on the liaison arrangements between the Council and the proposed new Team.

45	Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People	Investigate the feasibility of the Council itself undertaking occupational therapy assessments for disabled adaptations to Council properties and required adaptations to private sector homes (through the provision of disabled facilities grants), in order to reduce the waiting time for assessments.	Asst. Director of Housing (Private Sector and Resources)	July 2014	<b>No longer required</b> – Following the introduction of a new approach by the County Council to undertaking OT assessments, using private OTs to supplement the work of its own OTs, there is no longer any backlog of assessments, which are now being undertaken within 28 days.  There is therefore no need to investigate the feasibility of the Council itself undertaking occupational therapy assessments.
46	Empty Homes	Bring at least 40 long-term empty properties back into use by Council intervention, including the continued use of the PLACE Scheme	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	March 2014	<b>On Target</b> – 34 long-term empty properties were brought back into use by Council intervention in the first three quarters of 2013/14. It is expected that the target for the year will therefore be achieved.
47	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 2014	<b>Little Progress</b> – Although Hastoe is willing to work with parish councils to investigate the development potential for rural housing schemes in villages, very little interest has been shown by parish councils.  The most recent interest was shown by Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish Council, but this project is being held in abeyance, pending the Parish Council undertaking its proposed new Neighbourhood Plan.
48	Decent Homes – Private Sector	Review the implementation of the new Private Sector Housing Strategy 2012, to identify if any required refinements, and report to the Housing Scrutiny Panel on the outcome	Assistant Director of Housing (Private Sector and Resources)	Oct 2013	<b>Achieved</b> – A presentation on the implementation of the new Private Sector Housing Strategy was given to the Housing Scrutiny Panel in October 2013, when it was identified that no changes were required.
49	Decent Homes – Private Sector	Consider and consult upon whether or not charges should be made for the licensing of permanent residential and holiday park home sites in the District, and the enforcement of licence	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	July 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – The Housing Portfolio Holder has agreed to a consultation exercise being undertaken with all park home residents on a proposal to charge for park home licensing.

		conditions and determine a charging regime if appropriate			A report on the outcome of the consultation exercise will be considered by the Cabinet in March 2014.
50	Decent Homes – Private Sector	Introduce new licence conditions for existing and new gypsy and traveller sites in the District, following consultation with site residents and statutory agencies	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	July 2014	<b>In Progress</b> – Although draft licence conditions have been produced, officers are currently considering recent guidance on this issue, prior to undertaking the consultation exercise.
51	Decent Homes – Private Sector	Introduce a Landlords Accreditation Scheme to promote good practice for the management of privately rented homes and the provision of good quality homes	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	Oct 2014	<b>Achieved</b> – The Landlords Accreditation Scheme has been successfully introduced.
52	Decent Homes – Private Sector	Consider and adopt a corporate protocol for dealing with unsuitable living conditions within agricultural and nursery accommodation, from a housing, planning, legal and economic development perspective	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	March 2014	<b>Not yet due.</b>
53	Decent Homes – Private Sector	Review the charging policy for the CARE Handyperson Service, to safeguard the future viability of the Service and to ensure that it is appropriately targeted at those in need of the Service	Private Housing Manager (Grants & CARE)	Sept 2013	<b>Achieved</b> – The Housing Portfolio Holder has introduced a new charging policy, on the recommendation of the CARE Advisory Group.