

Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2013-14
(October 2014)

No	Category	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress Report (as at October 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 Communities	Sept 2014 June 2015	Delayed – The Housing Portfolio Holder has decided that that production of the next Housing Strategy should be deferred until the completion of the Local Plan’s Preferred Options, since much of the Housing Strategy is dependent on the Local Plan. (Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)
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	Asst. Director (Planning Policy)	Sept 2013 March 2014	Achieved – The final version was received in Spring 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 Neighbourhoods	Oct 2013 March 2014	Achieved – Following discussions with neighbouring local authorities, an officer “Co-operative Group” has been established and is working well. In addition, EFDC members have been meeting informally with members from Harlow DC and East Herts DC to discuss cross-border issues.
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 (Planning Policy)	April 2014 Under Review	In Progress – The Council is currently determining its Objectively Assessed Housing Need. (Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)

5	Housing Market	Undertake a Consultation Exercise on the Draft Local Plan and process the responses	Asst. Director (Planning Policy)	May 2014 Under Review	Not yet due – The Consultation Exercise will commence in 2015, following which the responses will need to be processed and then reported to Cabinet. (Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)
6	Housing Market	Submit the final version of the Local Plan for an Examination in Public	Asst. Director (Planning Policy)	Oct 2015 Under Review	Not yet due - 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. (Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)
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 Communities / Asst. Director (Planning Policy)	Oct 2013 Apr 2015	No progress – Due to other priorities within both the Communities and Neighbourhoods Directorates, this Service has not yet been evaluated (Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)
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)	Asst. Director (Planning Policy)	May 2014 Mar 2015	In Progress – Consultants have been appointed to formulate the required District-wide Viability Assessment for the Local Plan. This will determine whether or not the introduction of a CIL would be viable, whilst also ensuring the adequate provision of affordable housing on large sites. The early signs are that a CIL would be viable in some parts of the District. Once this has been established, further work will be undertaken on the formulation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan. (Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)

9	Regeneration	Work in partnership with Essex County Council, Epping Town Council and other partners to develop a sustainable regeneration scheme for 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	Interim Asst. Director (Estates and Economic Devt.)	Sept 2014	<p>In Progress – Expressions of interest from potential developers to undertake a comprehensive redevelopment of the site were received in Autumn 2013, and a preferred partner has been selected.</p> <p>At its meeting on 6th October 2014, the Cabinet is due to consider the next steps for the regeneration proposals.</p> <p>(Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)</p>
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 Communities	March 2014 Feb 2014	<p>Alternative action being pursued – The Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee has agreed that, subject to planning permission, the Council should now develop the land itself to provide 52 new affordable rented homes, as Phase 2 of the Council Housebuilding Programme</p>
11	Affordable Housing Provision	<p>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:</p> <p>(a) Jennikings Nursery, Chigwell – 52 new homes</p> <p>(b) Manor Road Garden Centre, Chigwell – 17 new homes</p> <p>(c) St. Johns School – 38 new homes</p>	Director of Communities	March 2015 Feb 2015	<p>In progress – The two developments in Chigwell commenced on site in March and April 2013, and are due for completion in late 2014 and February 2015.</p> <p>Phase 1 of the development at St Johns School, Epping commenced in Feb 2014.</p> <p>(Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)</p>

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 jointly by the Council, B3Living and the applicant	Director of Communities	March 2014 March 2015	<p>In Progress – 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, selected properties and are waiting to exchange contracts.</p> <p>(Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)</p>
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 Communities	Jan 2014 April 2015	<p>Not yet due – Consideration will be given to whether or not to undertake a Phase 3, once all purchases under Phase 2 have been processed.</p> <p>(Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)</p>
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	Interim Asst. Director (Estates and Economic Devt.)	Dec 2013 Jan 2015	<p>In Progress - An outline planning application was refused in 2013. The private property adjacent to the site has been purchased by the Council, which will assist with the provision of a better access to the site.</p> <p>Consideration is being given to addressing the other issues identified, in order for a revised planning application to be submitted.</p> <p>(Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)</p>
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 Communities	July 2014 July 2015	<p>Delayed – Although the Parish has appointed Hastoe Housing Association as its preferred development partner to undertake an assessment of each of the sites to provide indicative layouts to the Parish's Development Adviser for consideration, progress by the Church has been very slow.</p>

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 (c) Applying to renegotiate previously agreed planning obligations on the grounds of viability	Director of Communities	Dec 2013 April 2015	No Progress – Due to other workload and priorities. (Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)
17	Council Housebuilding Programme	Adopt a Development Strategy for the Council Housebuilding Programme	Asst. Director (Property & Devt.)	Sept 2013	Achieved – The Development Strategy was adopted by the Cabinet in September 2013. It is due to be updated by February 2015.
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 (Property & Devt.)	March 2014 April 2014	In Progress – Planning permission has been obtained for all of the Year 1 sites (now comprising 23 new homes) and the start on site is planned for November 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 (Property & Devt.)	Dec 2013 Dec 2014	In Progress – The Council was successful with its £0.5 million bid to the HCA for Phase 2 of the Housebuilding Programme. East Thames (the Council's development agent) is now in the process of seeking Investment Partner status for the Council with 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	Asst. Director (Property & Devt.)	July 2014 Dec 2014	In Progress – The Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee will be meeting monthly between October and December 2015, to consider appraisals for many potential development sites.

		of developments for at least Years 2-4 of the Programme			
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 (Housing Operations)	Sept 2013	Achieved – 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 (Housing Operations)	Oct 2014	In Progress - The 12-Month Review of the Allocations Scheme is being considered by the Housing Scrutiny Panel at its meeting in October 2014.
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 Communities	Nov 2013 March 2015	No Progress – Due to other workload and priorities. (Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)
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 (Property & Devt.)	Mar 2014	Achieved – The scheme commence on site in September 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 (Housing Operations)	Sept 2013	Achieved – 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 (Housing Operations)	March 2014	Achieved – A report on the outcome of the consultation was considered by the Cabinet in February 2014, and the new tenancy agreement was 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 (Housing Operations)	Oct 2014	In Progress - The 12-Month Review of the Tenancy Policy is being considered by the Housing Scrutiny Panel at its meeting in October 2014.
28	Council Housing	Introduce and publicise a new Social Housing Fraud Hotline to obtain leads on potential social housing fraud.	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	Oct 2013 Dec 2014	In Progress – Preparations are underway. The campaign will now be led by the Council's Chief Internal Officer, who will shortly be responsible for the new Corporate Fraud Team (see (16) below) (Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)
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	Oct 2013 Dec 2014	In Progress – The Chief Internal Auditor has nearly formulated his proposals, which he intends to report to the Cabinet meeting in November 2014. (Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)
30	Council Housing	Produce and submit to the Housing Scrutiny Panel a progress report on the success of the new Housing	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	July 2014	Achieved – The Housing Scrutiny Panel received a report on progress in July 2014.

		Under-occupation Officer post, and the assistance provided to under-occupying older tenants to transfer to smaller accommodation			
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 Communities	July 2014 Dec 2015	<p>In Progress – 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.</p> <p>There are now no further actions that can be progressed, until the Government progresses its plans for the introduction of Universal Credit.</p> <p>(Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)</p>
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	Achieved – The programme of work to achieve the Council's new Modern Home Standard has been formulated, and is now being implemented.
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 (Housing Operations)	Sept 2013 Mar 2015	Limited Progress – Very few private rented properties have been able to be sourced from local landlords, to effectively deliver this policy objective. However, officers continue to secure private lets when they can.
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 (Housing Operations)	Oct 2013	No longer required – 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 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	Housing Options Manager	Dec 2013 Jan 2014	Achieved – Letters were sent to all tenants of flats informing them of the provisions of the new Scheme.
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 (Private Housing and Communities Support)	March 2014	Achieved – The Census has been completed, with an exceptional return rate of over 50% from tenants achieved. The results were reported to the Housing Scrutiny Panel in July 2014.
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 (Private Housing and Communities Support)	Oct 2013	Achieved - 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 Oct 2014	In Progress – A report comparing the protected characteristics of housing applicants provided with Council accommodation with the protected characteristics of all Housing Register applicants is due to be considered by the Housing Scrutiny Panel in October 2014. (Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)

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 (Planning Policy)	Dec 2013 June 2014	<p>Achieved – The Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) commissioned consultants, ORS, to undertake a county-wide assessment.</p> <p>The report by ORS was considered by the Cabinet in September 2014, and accepted into the Evidence Base for the Local Plan.</p>
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	Asst. Director (Planning Policy)	Under Review	<p>In Progress – 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.</p> <p>(Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)</p>
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 (Housing Operations)	Dec 2013 Apr 2015	<p>No Progress – 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.</p> <p>However, it is understood that Essex CC officers intend to meet with Essex telecare providers to discuss the possibility of new negotiated arrangements with all providers which, if successful, would obviate the need for Essex CC to procure a County-wide contract in the short term.</p>
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 (Housing Property & Devt.)	Oct 2013 Jan 2014	<p>Achieved – A report on the success of the Handyperson Scheme was considered by the Housing Scrutiny Panel at its January 2014 meeting.</p>

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 Communities	May 2014	Achieved – 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 (Housing Operations)	Dec 2013 Mar 2014	Achieved – Officers have worked with the County Council on the liaison arrangements between the Council and the 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 (Private Housing and Communities Support)	July 2014	No longer required – 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	Achieved – 55 long-term empty properties were brought back into use by Council intervention in 2013/14. (Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)
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 Communities	July 2014 Dec 2015	Little Progress – 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. (Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action 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	Asst. Director (Private Housing and Communities Support)	Oct 2013	Achieved – 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. A further progress report is due to be considered by the Housing Scrutiny Panel in October 2014
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 conditions and determine a charging regime if appropriate	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	July 2014	Achieved – Following a consultation exercise being undertaken with all park home residents, the Cabinet agreed a proposal to charge for park home licensing at its meeting in March 2014.
50	Decent Homes – Private Sector	Introduce new licence conditions for existing and new gypsy roma and traveller sites in the District, following consultation with site residents and statutory agencies	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	July 2014	Achieved – The Cabinet approved new licence conditions for all gypsy roma and traveller sites in the District, following consultation with site residents and statutory agencies.
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	Achieved – 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 Sept 2015	No Progress – Due to other workload and other priorities. (Carry forward to the 2015-16 Action Plan)

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	Achieved – The Housing Portfolio Holder has introduced a new charging policy, on the recommendation of the CARE Advisory Group.
----	----------------------------------	---	--	--------------	--