

Appendix 1

Review of Private Sector Housing Action Plan (2013/14 update)

Action		Responsibility	Timescale	Progress
C.A.R.E.				
1	To introduce an extended assessment and advice procedure and to train staff in delivery of the procedure	AD (Private Sector Housing & Communities Support)/Private Housing Manager (Grants/C.A.R.E.)	Apr 2014	Delayed. This is considered not to be feasible at present owing to the increase in numbers of applications for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) which, being mandatory, have taken precedence over other types of assistance and help.
Disabled Adaptations				
2	Implement new arrangements to increase customer choice in accessing referrals from vetted O.T.s from C.A.R.E.'s Preferred Contractor List	AD (Private Sector Housing & Communities Support)	Jan 2013	Achieved, however, numbers of referrals increased as a result of alternative arrangements implemented by Essex County Council. Some additional arrangements were put in place by the Grants and C.A.R.E. Teams but as DFG applicants have found it easier to get referrals from ECC there has been little interest in these.
Private Rented Sector				
3	Carry out feasibility study on the potential for fast track procedures for accredited properties	Private Housing Manager (Technical) and Housing Benefits Manager	Jan 2013	Achieved. Processing claims for Housing Benefit are currently being carried out at optimum timescales so there would be no benefits to this approach
4	Introduce Essex Landlord Accreditation Scheme in partnership with other participating Essex Authorities	Private Housing Manager (Technical)		Achieved. The Scheme was launched in September 2014

Action		Responsibility	Timescale	Progress
Empty properties				
5	Bring 40 long term empty homes back into use during 2012/2013	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	March 2013	Achieved. 115 properties brought back into use during 2012/13. 55 brought back into use in 2013/14.
6	Extend PLACE Scheme to include PLACE Loan to Let	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	Dec 2013	Achieved. One loan has been granted and there have been two further expressions of interest.
Financial Assistance				
7	Keep developments with Green Deal under continuous review with a view to maximising Council involvement	AD (Private Sector Housing & Communities Support)	Ongoing. Next review in March 2014	Achieved. While it was agreed that the Council should provide information on the Green Deal, it should not actively promote the Green Deal owing to concerns about the longer term affordability of the scheme.
Park Homes				
8	Revise and introduce new Site Licences with new Site Licence Conditions for authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	Feb 2014	In progress. The Cabinet agreed new site licence conditions for our Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites that are occupied on a permanent residential basis in September 2014 and new licences are being issued.
9	Revise and Introduce new Site Licences with new Site Licence Conditions for holiday homes sites	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	Dec 2014	In progress.
10	Make recommendations to Members on charging for licensing and enforcement activities in the light of the provisions of the Mobile Homes Act 2013	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	March 2014 (dependent on government clarification on legislation)	Achieved. The Cabinet agreed the charging policy at its meeting in July 2014

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C.A.R.E.				
10	Implement new arrangements for technical support to C.A.R.E.	Private Housing Manager (Grants/C.A.R.E.)	Jan 2014	Achieved. A technical officer with the required skills was appointed on a temporary basis but has since left to seek employment elsewhere. 'Preferred contractor' consultants are currently providing the service.
11	Discuss with partners the viability of continuing the Safe and Well Scheme post April 2014	AD (Private Sector Housing & Communities Support)/Private Housing Manager (Grants/C.A.R.E.)	Jan 2014	Achieved. The Scheme is continuing using legacy funding.
12	Make application for Electrical Safety Council Grant for 2014/15	Private Housing Manager (Grants/C.A.R.E.)	May 2014	Not achieved. It was agreed not to make an application as the eligibility criteria were not sufficiently flexible to benefit service users.