

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2006/7 – Progress Report on Key Action Plan
(As at 1 January 2007)**

Action	Corporate Housing Objective	Responsibility for Achievement	Target Date	Progress Report
Housing General				
1. Undertake a census of Council tenants	HO 2	Principal Housing Officer (Information/Strategy)	Dec 2006	<p>In Progress</p> <p>The arrangements for the census are in place and is due to be undertaken in January 2007 – it was purposefully delayed to avoid it being undertaken too close to the Tenant Satisfaction Survey</p>
2. Undertake the tri-annual Tenants Satisfaction Survey	HO 1 / 2	Principal Housing Officer (Information/Strategy)	Dec 2006	<p>Achieved</p> <p>The survey has been completed, with the detailed results being considered by the Housing Scrutiny Panel in January 2007</p>
3. Complete the implementation of the Service Development Plan, formulated following the Best Value Service Review of Housing Services	HO 1	Head of Housing Services	Sept 2006	<p>In Progress</p> <p>Only 15% of the 104 tasks are outstanding.</p>
Housing Management				
4. Introduce the Leasehold Services module of the integrated housing IT system	HO 2 / 6	Housing Resources Manager	April 2007	<p>Delayed</p> <p>The implementation has had to be delayed once again, due to the capacity of the ICT Service being insufficient to undertake the implementation in 2006/7. However, it is hoped that the project can be implemented in 2007/8.</p>
5. Introduce the Estate Management module for the housing IT system	HO 2	Asst Head of Housing Services (Operations)	April 2007	<p>Delayed</p> <p>Due to a corporate wish to have an IT system that various agencies could access to monitor anti-social behaviour, this proposal was not pursued. However, it has recently been established that the Anite Estate Management system would probably serve the best purpose. It is therefore planned to implement the system in 2007/8</p>

6. Introduce a Harassment Policy for dealing with residents experiencing harassment from Council tenants	HO 2	Asst Head of Housing Services (Operations)	Sept 2006	Achieved The Harassment Policy was adopted by the Housing Portfolio Holder in October 2006.
7. Implement a joint choice based lettings scheme, in conjunction with the five neighbouring councils.	HO 2	Asst Head of Housing Services (Operations) / Housing Needs Manager	April 2007	In Progress Good progress has been made, and the point has been reached where the Consortium is ready to invite tenders from choice based lettings agencies to provide the service. However, there has been a delay due to the uncertainty of Uttlesford DC about whether they want to remain a member of the Consortium. Concerns are also emerging about the ability of some of the other Consortium members to be ready to implement the system at the same time as those councils most prepared (e.g. Epping Forest)
8. Implement the Introductory Tenancy Scheme, giving new tenants a non-secure tenancy for 12 months.	HO 2	Asst Head of Housing Services (Operations)	July 2006	Achieved The Introductory Tenancy Scheme was implemented as planned in April 2006.
9. Place the Housing Mutual Exchange Register on the Council's internet, with photos and search facilities	HO 2	Principal Housing Officer (Information/Strategy)	Sept 2006	Delayed Difficulties have been experienced with placing the Mutual Exchange Register on the website. However, other alternatives are being explored, including greater use of the national HOMES website
10. Introduce a facility for tenants to apply for the Housing Register on-line	HO 2	Housing Needs Manager	April 2007	Partly Achieved Applicants are now able to download housing applications, to complete manually and return by post. Development work is in progress to enable applicants to complete and transmit application forms on line
Tenant Participation				
11. Facilitate the formation of two additional recognised tenants associations within the District	HO 5	Tenant Participation Officer	April 2007	In Progress The Tenant Participation Officer is working with residents on the formation of new tenants associations in:

				Ninefields, Waltham Abbey Debden, Loughton Hornbeam Road, Buckhurst Hill
12. Introduce a Rural Tenants Forum comprising representatives in rural locations that have no recognisable estates and where formal associations are difficult to establish.	HO 5	Tenant Participation Officer	April 2007	In Progress A lot of work has been undertaken by the Tenant Participation Officer to form the Forum. He has visited a number of parish councils and other fora and has established a steering group of interested tenants from a number of villages. It is envisaged that the Forum will be properly launched in early 2007, with the Forum having representation on the district-wide Tenants and Leaseholders Federation
Supporting People and Supported Housing				
13. Transfer the Council's sheltered housing scheme at Wickfields, Chigwell to Warden Housing, to facilitate an improvement scheme to convert existing bedsits into self contained flats	HO 1 / 2 / 3	Head of Housing Services	July 2006	Achieved Wickfields was transferred to Home Housing (previously known as Warden Housing Association) in October 2006.
14. Submit at least one tender for the monitoring of alarm systems for other authorities and housing associations by the Council's own Careline Service.	HO 1 / 2	Asst Head of Housing Services (Management)	April 2007	No Progress No opportunities have arisen to tender for the provision of a Careline Service in 2006. However, officers are engaging with the Telecare initiative being promoted by Essex County Council, with funding from the Government, in order to seek to use the Careline Service to operate Telecare in 2007. Telecare is the use of technology to monitor the health and wellbeing of clients in their own home, to avoid the need for residential accommodation or hospital admission.
Housing Repairs and Maintenance				
15. Timetable at least one meeting each year with the Tenants Federation to discuss the repairs and maintenance expenditure programme.	HO 3	Asst Head of Housing Services (Prop & Resources) / Housing Assets Manager	April 2007	In Progress This is undertaken in April each year as part of the Repairs and Maintenance Business Planning process.

16. Implement electronic mobile working for the Housing Repairs Section	HO 3	Housing Repairs Manager	April 2007	<p>Partly Achieved</p> <p>The software has been installed and tested. However, as part of the test period, the Portable Digital Appliances (PDAs), which are used by Officers in the field to log repairs, proved to be inadequate and alternative equipment is being sourced to support the application.</p>
17. Recommend to the Housing Portfolio Holder that the target time for routine works be reduced from 8 weeks to 6 weeks.	HO 3	Asst Head of Housing Services (Prop & Resources)	April 2007	<p>Delayed – Now in Progress</p> <p>This has been delayed due to the difficulties experienced by the Works Unit in recruiting tradesmen. However, since the Works Unit joined the Job Evaluation Scheme in 2006, together with the introduction of apprentice posts, many of the vacant posts have now or are in the process of being filled. A report is soon to be submitted to the Housing Portfolio Holder recommending that the target time for routine works be reduced from 8 weeks to 6 weeks and formally launched in April 2007.</p>
18. Investigate further ways of using the accompanied viewing process to help let difficult-to-let properties.	HO 3	Asst Head of Housing Services (Prop & Resources)	April 2007	<p>Partly Achieved</p> <p>The impending introduction of Choice Based Lettings is the long-term initiative to deal with difficult-to-let properties. However, in the short term, initiatives such as multiple accompanied viewings have been considered to help with difficult-to-let properties.</p>
19. Make more information available about disabled adaptations to residents, setting out the responsibilities of the Council, procedures, targets, contacts in the form of a leaflet.	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	April 2007	<p>In Progress</p> <p>A leaflet, setting out the responsibilities of the Council, procedures, targets, contacts etc is due to be introduced in April 2007</p>
20. Explore the feasibility of an OT being jointly employed between Housing Services, Environmental Services and Social Services to oversee all disabled adaptation and DFG requests within the District, subject to the approval of funding	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	April 2007	<p>In Progress</p> <p>Initial discussions have taken place with Essex County Council Social Care, who in principle supports the approach. More detailed discussions are due to take place to explore funding options.</p> <p>Separately, the Head of Housing Services has been asked to lead a project group covering the whole of the London Commuter Belt</p>

				Housing Sub Region (15 local authorities) to investigate common problems with adaptation and DFGs. He is currently undertaking a survey of all local authorities and RSLs within the Sub-Region to obtain a position statement. One of the outcomes of this project may be a greater acceptance to jointly-funded OTs across the Sub-Region
21. Set up partner frameworks with the voluntary sector organisations and the EFPCT to widen the scope of benefits for residents.	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	April 2007	Partly Achieved Partner frameworks have been set up through the Council's Energy Efficiency Programme in conjunction with British Gas through their Home Essentials for Life Programme (HELP), which will assist older residents and those in fuel poverty. Partner agencies include Help the Aged, SCOPE, RNIB, Family Welfare Association, National Debt Line and Save the Children.
22. Implement upgrade to latest version of Codeman system	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	April 2007	In Progress This is currently in the process of being implemented.
23. Apply partnering to external repair and redecoration work	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	April 2007	Achieved Introduced for the 2006/7 programme of external repairs and redecorations. The contract is for a 5-year term with two contractors, which runs through until 2010/11.
24. Reconsider the incorporation of the Building Maintenance Section (of the Works Unit) within Housing Services	HO 3	Management Board	April 2007	In Progress Discussions have held been between the Joint Chief Executive (Community), Head of Housing Services and Chief Works Officer. Following further financial information being obtained relating to the costs of incorporation, Management Board will consider whether or not to recommend to the Cabinet that the incorporation takes place. This may also be considered as part of the Top Management Structure
25. Consider the issue of adopting generic repairs and voids officers either as part of, or following, the required restructuring of the proposed combined Housing Services and Building Maintenance Works Unit.	HO 3	Housing Repairs Manager	April 2007	Delayed The introduction of generic repairs and voids officers is delayed, pending a decision on the Building Maintenance Works Unit being incorporated within Housing Services (See Action 24 above)

26. Implement a Tenants' Repairs Scheme after the application of job evaluation to the Building Maintenance Section, but that the scheme be suspended (or eligibility restricted to just elderly and disabled people) at any time when the scheme would detrimentally affect the Council's Repairs Service.	HO 3	Chief Works Officer	April 2007	<p>No Progress</p> <p>Although job evaluation has been introduced within the Works Unit, the priority for the Works Unit now is to work towards the reduced improved target times for routine repairs (referred to at Action 17 above). The capacity of the Works Unit to implement a Tenants Repairs Scheme will then be reviewed after the introduction of the new target times</p>
27. Consider extending the Tenants' Repairs Scheme to cover leaseholders at a later date.	HO 3	Chief Works Officer	April 2007	<p>Not yet Possible</p>

Key to Corporate Housing Objectives

- HO 1 - Best Value
- HO 2 - Housing Management
- HO 3 - Repairs and Maintenance
- HO 4 - Energy Efficiency
- HO 5 - Tenant Participation
- HO 6 - Housing Finance

