



Epping Forest District Council

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Housing Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan

2007 - 2008

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Page

Housing Services

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Purpose of the Plan

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan has been prepared under the guidelines of the HRA Resource Accounting regime, whose main objective is to promote more efficient use of housing assets. This covers all housing services in detail. Given that repairs and maintenance is the biggest single area of expenditure, and in line with a District Audit recommendation, this separate Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan has been produced to detail the Council's strategic approach to this work.

Both Plans have been produced annually since 2000. The Council already has set standards for most of its service provision, which can be found in various documents such as the Tenant's Handbook, Housing Strategy and Contract Conditions etc. However, it was felt that these documents should be brought together into a single Business Plan, which would assist the Council in planning and monitoring the delivery of the repairs and maintenance service. This Plan is therefore comprehensive in its coverage.

The 2002 Plan included a detailed analysis of the Authority's response to the Government's decent homes initiative, which is then updated annually. The latest position is included in this version, with the Council on target to meet the Decent Homes target by 2010.

In February 2004, a report on the outcome of the Best Value Service Review of Housing Services was produced. The report was considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee (1) in March 2004 and later approved by the Cabinet in April 2004. This report also formed part of the Council's Comprehensive Performance Review in February 2004. This Plan includes an update of the action plan within the Review relating to Repairs and Maintenance activities.

In early 2005, Housing Services produced its Housing Risk Register, which identifies the strategic and operations risks affecting Housing Services. An additional section has been included in this year's Plan, which discusses the risks and how these are managed through risk management.

This version of the Plan also covers the way in which the Government's targets for efficiency gains are being addressed following Sir Peter Gershon's review of public sector efficiency, which identified the need to achieve value for money savings through better procurement in order to release resources to support the key policy objectives of the Government.

Over the last 12 months, there have been various benchmarking exercises undertaken, one looks at the cost effectiveness and value for money of the Works Unit, and another compares performance and value for money for a range of housing functions, including repairs and maintenance. In addition, an independent and comprehensive customer satisfaction survey has been undertaken by The National Housing Federation. A summary of the outcome of each of these benchmarking exercises is included in this Business Plan.

In pursuit of excellence, Housing Services is currently reviewing all of its housing services, using the Audit Commission Key Lines Of Enquiries (KLOEs), which prompts us to differentiate between what is a "fair" service and what is an "excellent" service, to produce a "Housing Excellence Plan". The Housing Excellence Plan will set out a number of actions, which will focus attention and activity on areas where there is room for improvement.

In preparing this Plan the Council's Tenants and Leaseholders Federation have been consulted in the same way as with the main HRA Business Plan and they have approved both Plans ***[Add any comments from the Federation here]***.

The Plan is updated each year taking into account the latest Government Guidance, revised Council policies, updated financial information, the latest stock condition information and the views of tenants and leaseholders. The Action Plan will be monitored on a bi-monthly level to ensure appropriate progression of the initiatives included.

2. Introduction to the Repairs & Maintenance Business Plan

Epping Forest District Council is a major provider of housing. As at 1st April 2007, the Council owned and managed 6,549 properties, 2,839 garages, 1 homeless hostel and leased 914 properties. A number of these properties were transferred to the Council from the former Greater London Council (GLC) in 1980. There has been a general rate of decline in the number of properties owned by the Council over the years due to tenants purchasing their homes under the Right to Buy scheme. Since 1977, 6,112 properties have been sold. The rate at which properties have been sold has varied over the years. However, over the last five years, an average of 77 per annum have been sold, which equates to approximately 1.18 % of the stock.

2.1 Housing Services within the context of other strategic Plans

Housing has a major impact on the quality of the people's lives, influencing health, educational achievement, employment opportunities and social cohesion.

The main responsibility for managing and maintaining the Council's housing stock is undertaken by the Council's Housing Services.

Housing Services strives to provide the highest quality advice, assistance and equality of opportunity to its customers in housing matters. It aims to be a responsible landlord, managing and maintaining the housing stock effectively, whilst continuing to charge reasonable rents.

Housing Services also works within a number of specific strategies. The main strategies influencing the direction of the Repairs and Maintenance Service include:

Tenant Participation Agreement – An agreement with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation on consultation, provision of information and support for tenant organisations. The agreement has led to improved tenant consultation on repairs and maintenance programmes.

Home Energy Conservation Act and Fuel Poverty Strategies – Strategies designed to conserve energy use particularly for those on low incomes. This has for some time been targeting energy saving measures to those on low incomes through the Warm Front Scheme (previously known as the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (HEES)) and the PVCu replacement window programme.

Crime Reduction – The Council has a local Crime Reduction Partnership comprising representatives from Police, Social Services Probation Service, which has produced a Crime Reduction Strategy 2005 - 2008 which have influenced programmes for the installation of CCTV and door entry security systems. The Partnership has a number of sub groups, which have influenced programmes for the installation of secure double-glazing, CCTV, door entry systems and has recently introduced a sanctuary scheme for those fleeing domestic violence. This strategy complies with Home Office guidelines.

HRA Business Plan - the HRA Business Plan is a broad document, which covers the whole of the Housing Service. Given that repairs and maintenance is the biggest single area of expenditure, this Business Plan has been developed to provide more detail on the strategic approach to the repairs and maintenance.

Housing Services Best Value Review – The review was completed in February 2004 and contained a number of key improvements to repairs and maintenance functions as well as other housing services.

Housing Services Risk Strategy – A Risk Register, which identifies the strategic and operations risks affecting Housing Services.

2.2 Housing Services

Housing Services as a whole is divided into two main headings; Property & Resources and Operations, each with its own Assistant Head. The Head of Housing Services is responsible for all housing matters. Until 2004, the responsibilities of each of the two Assistant Heads reflected the need to split the client / contractor responsibilities in line with CCT. However, since CCT was abolished in 2001, for efficiency reasons it was appropriate to bring together all property and resource related functions under one Division and all management functions under another. At that time, the Maintenance Section was re-branded as Housing

Assets to better reflect the differences between the day-to-day repairs of the Councils properties and the long-term planned improvements to these assets. The new responsibilities of each Assistant Head are listed out below.

(a) Property & Resources

The Property & Resources Division of Housing Services is responsible for issues such as, Budget Monitoring, Rent Accounting, Leasehold Services, House Sales, Information and Administration. Both Housing Repairs and Housing Assets now fall within the Property & Resources Division.

(b) Operations

The Operations Division of Housing Services is responsible for issues such as Housing Needs, Special Needs, Supporting People and Housing Management.

3. Repairs & Maintenance – Lines of Responsibility

There is a significant amount of maintenance work needed to keep the average home in good condition. Some occurs at short notice, some can be planned in advance, some is the responsibility of the Council and other work is the responsibility of the tenant. In order to clarify who is responsible for various maintenance items, the Council has produced within its 'Tenants Handbook' a leaflet entitled "Repairs And Improvements To Your Home".

The Tenants Handbook also includes information on programmed maintenance, day to day repairs, emergency repairs and gas leaks, adaptations for the disabled, making improvements to the home, asbestos in the home, the right to repair, home improvements compensation scheme and mutual exchange repairs.

The main sections of the Council's Housing Services with responsibility for repairs and maintenance are:

Housing Repairs Section
Building Maintenance (Formally referred to as the Works Unit, or Building Maintenance DSO)
Housing Assets Section

3.1 Housing Repairs

The Housing Repairs Section is managed by the Housing Repairs Manager and is responsible for the day to day management of the repairs service, including:

- § The supervision of the responsive repairs service.
- § Testing customer satisfaction within the repairs service.
- § Monitoring contractor compliance with published response times.
- § Managing and monitoring the void property process and ensuring satisfactory turnaround times.

3.1.1 *The work of the Housing Repairs Section*

Housing Repairs can be broken down into two main areas of work:

- § Responsive Repairs, and
- § Voids (Empty properties)

(a) ***Responsive repairs***

Responsive repairs are received in a number of different ways, these are:

- § By telephone from tenants
- § By letter or fax from tenants
- § In person at any one of the Council's offices or surgeries
- § By electronic mail from tenants
- § From observations made by Housing Services staff during visits.
- § From Members on behalf of tenants
- § Through the Council's web site

Housing Services has a web site, which allows tenants to report repairs directly to the Council on-line 24 hours a day. The facility includes graphical information to assist tenants make specific repairs requests, which in turn helps officers to diagnose the problems reported. The Repairs Call Centre receives calls from all over the District. Whilst most repair requests are received during normal working hours, the Council operates an Out Of Hours Emergency Service. For out of hour's emergencies, a Duty Officer is on call, who authorises repairs for the Works Unit to deal with. Tenants who report a repair that is of a non-emergency nature are generally offered an appointment for the works contractor to visit and complete the repair. Similarly, appointments are made for inspectors to visit to assess the work required for more complex repairs.

Both responsive repairs and void maintenance work is largely undertaken by the Council's Building Maintenance Works Unit. This was subject to CCT, whereby the Works Unit were awarded the contract, which commenced in 1997. The contract was based on a Schedule of Rates, which was updated every 12 months in line with the Dti National Statistics for Public Sector Construction Works using the Quarterly Building Price & Cost Indices. The arrangements for undertaking the work were reviewed following the Government's dissolution of CCT legislation and as part of the Housing Services Best Value Review. This is discussed in more detail in relation to the Works Unit.

(b) Void Property Maintenance

Following a detailed study into the voids and lettings process in 2001 voids works are now classified into to areas.

- Normal voids
- Accompanied viewing voids

When a tenant moves out of a property the keys are returned for re-letting, the property undergoes a basic safety and cleaning process before being re-let. During this process the Housing Needs Section identifies new tenants for the property.

The accompanied viewing process begins when prospective new tenants are advised that they can view a property before signing the tenancy agreement. This is also the first time that officers from the Housing Repairs Section view the property.

Accompanied viewings take place at most voids but properties that do not go through the process are treated as normal voids. A void officer will inspect the property, after the five basic checks have been completed, ascertain if any urgent repairs are required before re-letting and raise orders with the Building Maintenance Works Unit. On completion of the works, the keys are returned to Housing Needs for the property to be re-let, either by accompanied viewing or a direct re-let.

At an accompanied viewing, the void officer will show the prospective tenant around the property, inform them of repairs that are required and the priority given to those repairs. Only urgent works are completed prior to occupation, all other non-urgent works are carried out in occupation. The benefit is that at the viewing the tenant is able to express a preference for installing their own fixture and fittings. This reduces the amount of work required and the void costs.

As a result of the void study it was found that a large part of the voids repair work and time was taken up with decorating the property. To reduce the works period a system of offering an incentive to tenants to carry out their own decorating was implemented. New tenants are offered decoration vouchers for materials at local DIY stores.

Since the implementation of the findings of the voids study the number of visits to properties by an officer has been reduced to one and works carried out prior to occupation has been drastically reduced. As a result, the overall void period has been reduced from approx 12 ½ weeks to approx 6 ½ weeks, expenditure on voids has been halved, although additional expenditure has been incurred in responsive repairs costs.

In the Autumn of 2007, the Council is introducing "choice based lettings", which allows housing applicants to choose the property that is let to them, rather than allocate them. This will have a limited effect on the void process itself, but will mean more properties are let quicker, particularly those that are difficult to let.

3.1.2 Mobile Working

Having explored the options of improving its Repairs Service as part of the Housing Service Best Value Review through the introduction of a mobile working, the Council is working with Anite, who are the provider for IT solutions associated with the Integrated Housing Management System, in reviewing its working practices to get the most out of the software. The introduction of mobile working has been delayed due to the limited function of the personal digital assistant (PDA), and alternative portable IT hardware solutions are being explored.

The benefits of mobile working is that it provides Officers with better and constant communications with the office, improving productivity and keeping mobile workers better informed and better able to respond to changes.

3.1.3 Generic Officers

Again, as part of the Housing Service Best Value Review, the Council explored the benefits of bringing together the roles of both repairs and voids inspectors, and creating generic posts and allocating each post to a specific area of the district to deal with both repairs and voids. The main benefit of generic working is that one officer deals with all aspects of responsive repairs and void properties within a smaller area. The officer becomes familiar with the property types and tenants and internal staff has one point of contact on all repairs and voids issues. This is due to be implemented in 2007/8.

3.2 Building Maintenance

Historically, Building Maintenance undertakes the majority of day-to-day ad hoc repairs to the Council's housing stock, including those to void properties, issued by Housing Services. The Building Maintenance DSO, as it was formally known, was originally within Housing Services but was separated on 1st January 1999 to form part of the Council's Works Unit.

Building Maintenance, located at its own depot site in Epping, employs between 44 and 54 craft employees at any one time and a fleet of 31 vehicles, covering a wide variety of building trade activities including plumbing, carpentry, brickwork, plastering, paving, electrical, decorating and miscellaneous works and has its own small joinery workshop. The Unit is supported by 8 FTE management, supervisory and administrative staff. The service is supported by a range of specialist sub-contractors to ensure the work is completed within target completion periods. The annual turnover for the Works Unit relating to housing functions in respect of 2007/08 is expected to be in the region of £3M with the Housing Repairs Section being the major client.

The need for Local Authority Direct Service Organisations (DSO's) to comply with the Compulsory Competitive Tendering Regulations (CCT) ceased on 2nd January 2000. Following this the Service Review of Housing Services considered the implications and decided that the DSO Trading Account should be closed, and the client/contractor split should cease. As a consequence of this, the need to operate a Trading Account as opposed to a Budget ceased. Accordingly the Building Maintenance Works Unit no longer operates a Trading Account but is now directly funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). There is no longer a legal requirement for the service to be subject to Compulsory Competitive Tendering.

The future of the Building Maintenance was one of the key issues covered by the Best Value Review. Whilst the conclusion of the review was that the DSO should be re-incorporated into Housing Services, the decision has been taken by the Council's Management Board to retain the DSO as a stand-alone Service, in view of the possible creation of a Corporate Contact Centre. Now that the Customer Contact Centre is being considered, the roles undertaken by the Works Unit, Housing Repairs and Housing Assets are currently under review. The outcome of the review could see many of the management, supervisory and administrative functions reallocated to bring about efficiency savings and improvements in service.

Being a Service in its own right, The Building Maintenance Works Unit produces its own Business Plan, which sets out its own performance targets, strategies and action plans within the context of Corporate objectives.

In January 2007, a bi-annual benchmarking exercise took place of the Building Maintenance Works Unit to review the current schedule of rates against a range of 20 comparison organizations within the Home Counties and to look at organization overheads in comparison to private repairs contractors. The outcome of the benchmark exercise is discussed in more detail in Section 8.

3.3 Housing Assets

Whilst the Council continues to provide housing, its stock has to be managed and maintained. The purpose of the Housing Assets Section is to continue to keep the Council's Housing Stock in good condition by planning its maintenance based on condition, need, efficiency and value.

There are significant value for money opportunities that have both direct financial and management implications that ultimately lead to a more efficient use of resources. The framework of strategies laid out in this document, defines the way in which Housing Services will plan the future repairs and maintenance of the stock.

The introduction in April 1999 of the fully integrated housing computer system (referred to as OHMS) has already gone a long way towards a more effective management of repairs and maintenance works. For example, the Housing Repairs Section is automatically provided with earlier warning of planned contracts at the time of issuing works orders. This enables more control of repair work.

3.3.1 Legislative requirements and working practices

Although the provision of housing is not a statutory service, the Council has a statutory duty to maintain the stock it provides.

(a) Legislation

The work of the Housing Assets Section is guided by a complex set of legislation. To this end, housing assets working practices have to be both flexible, to accommodate multiple legislative requirements and any on-going changes to these requirements, and precise in following specific codes of practice, legal and contractual requirements.

(b) Housing Policies

In addition to legislative and contractual requirements, the Council has developed a number of housing policies that are set out in the Housing Policy Manual maintained by Housing Services.

(c) Working Practices

As a local authority, the Council is required to undertake its duties and conduct itself in a manner that is both fair and proper. Accountability in working practices is therefore important. In order to ensure this, Officers must also work in accordance with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and CIPFA Guidelines.

To manage this complex set of legislation, working practices and housing policies, Housing Services have developed in-depth procedures. The procedures cover all aspects of the work of Housing Services including Housing Needs, Housing Management, Housing Repairs and Assets as well as customer care issues. The procedures are stored on the Council's Intranet, and are accessible to all Housing staff.

In addition, a Contractor's Code of Conduct has been developed to allow proper conduct and safe working by all contractors working for the Council.

Since 2002, Housing Services has been accredited the ISO 9001/2000 Quality Award for all services. Housing Assets was one of the first two sections to be awarded ISO 9001/2000 status in May 2002. An intensive re-assessment was carried out by an external auditor in May 2005, which resulted in the ISO 9001/2000 status being renewed for a further 3 years.

3.3.2 Specific work of the Housing Maintenance Section

i) Reinstatement of Pre-cast Reinforced Concrete (PRC) properties.

Works under the Council's PRC Reinstatement Programme, to properties designated as defective under the Housing Act 1985, commenced in April 1992 and was completed in 2003. During this time, the Council at a cost of around £10m reinstated a total of 255 properties.

ii) Refurbishment of houses and flats

In addition to the reinstatement of PRC properties, the Council also undertakes other major refurbishment works to Council properties. These can range from large improvement contracts such as the £4 million Springfields Improvement Scheme due to start on site later in 2007/08 to other works such as bathroom and kitchen refurbishments under the Decent Homes programme.

iii) External Repairs and Maintenance Contracts

In order to prolong the useful life of the external building components, the Council carries out regular inspections to identify and then carry out both repairs and preventative maintenance on sub-components. Every Council property is surveyed externally, and included on a planned maintenance contract for external repairs and redecoration, every 5 years.

The external repairs and redecoration contracts are prepared in conjunction with window and door replacement, energy efficiency, asbestos removal and re-roofing contracts in order to prevent different contractors returning to the same properties to erect scaffolding etc. This increases the value for money of such contracts.

In an attempt to achieve efficiency savings and added value through the use of alternative procurement methods, the Council piloted a partnership contract based on a schedule of rates contract linked to a performance specification and guaranteed maximum cost. Initial performance figures show improvements in tenant satisfaction and improvements in the quality of the finished product.

Added benefits of long-term partnering agreements and tendering on a schedule of rates basis, based on preliminaries, overheads and profits only include:

- Fewer visits to properties by the contractors and Council Officers, therefore efficiency savings can be made, with less duplication in the work undertaken by each party.
- Less disruption to tenants.
- Increases in performance monitoring of the contractors.
- Early warning of poor contractor performance.
- Increased budget control, through the use of measured works and quantities against a tendered schedule of rates.
- Accurate records of decorating quantities, which will assist in any future Business Planning process.

iv) Replacement of Double Glazed Windows and Front Entrance Doors

The target set within previous editions of the Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan has been to install PVCu double-glazing in all council homes by 2008/9. However, by increasing the budget provision for replacement PVCu double-glazed windows between 2004-2006, this target was achieved early. As a result, every council dwelling that is capable of having replacement PVCu windows has had replacement double glazed windows installed. However, there are a very small number of properties where either the tenant refused to be included in previous programmes or for value for money reasons, some properties will need to be identified and completed in future years.

The PVCu double-glazing programme has been included in the Capital Works programme since the mid eighties. Whilst these frames are PVCu, and regarded as low-maintenance, the raw materials and components were not to the same quality as newer modern materials and are proving to be difficult to repair and maintain. These windows will form the next priority group for replacement.

There are also properties that have double-glazing, but in timber frames, such those installed in the sheltered housing schemes when they were extended and refurbished. As they are relatively new installations, they can be maintained at a reasonable cost, and will therefore be retained until these frames are no longer economical to maintain.

In 2005/06 a number of new front entrance doors were replaced with 'Homesafe Composite' doors, which meet "Secure By Design" standards set by the Home Office, to properties occupied by venerable and elderly tenants. The advantages of installing this type of door are that they are low maintenance self coloured doors and frames, they have a wheelchair accessible low threshold, they can have suited ironmongery with a master key for emergency access and extended lever handles for easy operation. The priority by which properties were selected for replacement front entrance doors was based on the following criteria.

- § Sheltered accommodation
- § Groups of dwellings 'designated' for occupation by the elderly

Around 155 properties had 'Homesafe' Composite doors installed in 2006/07.

v) Energy efficiency measures

There are a number of objectives included within the Housing Strategy and the Council Plan, which relate to improving the energy efficiency of our stock. This aspect is also included as a Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI). Improving energy efficiency is not limited to a single programme, but a range of measures, which include:

- Cavity wall insulation

- Overcladding
- Loft, pipework and tank insulation
- PVCu double glazing
- Boiler replacement works
- New heating installation and heating upgrades
- Ventilation extract fans with heat recovery units
- Draught proofing

On an annual basis, an Energy Audit is undertaken to establish the change in Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP). The Council has performed well against targets, which has seen the average SAP rating increase from 38.5 in 2004 to 66 in 2006/7. The target is to achieve an average SAP rating of 68 by 2010.

There are currently 119 properties that fail the Decent Homes Standard under the Thermal Comfort criteria and 132 properties that fail under the heating criteria. Left unchecked, this will rise to 606 failures by 2010, therefore through direct capital investment and grant funding from British Gas and other partnership working on a range of energy efficiency measures, it is anticipated that all properties will meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

The Council is currently working in partnership with British Gas on a "Here To Help Programme" (HELP), which is bringing in additional funding for energy efficiency measures such as cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, pipe and tank insulation, low energy light bulbs, hot water cylinder jackets, thermostatic radiator valves and draught proofing. The grant available from British Gas is considerable, with up to 50% of the costs met by British Gas. This means that during 2007/8 if the Council commits to spend £400,000, British Gas could contribute up to an additional £200,000.

Two staff within Housing Assets have completed NHER training and are qualified to collect energy efficiency data that once it is entered into the NHER software it will enable the council to produce NHER Certificated Energy Ratings on individual properties.

There is a separate Housing Services Strategy on Energy Efficiency, which is shortly due to be updated and published. This strategy sets out the Council's aims and objectives in relation to the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000, examines the Council stock profile, and identifies potential energy efficiency measures, particularly to those older rural properties that have no mains gas or have solid brick walls without cavities. The key targets from the Strategy on Energy Efficiency are included in the action plan in section 10 of this Business Plan.

vi) Central heating installation

There has been an ongoing programme to install central heating in all Council-owned properties since the 1980's. As of March 2001, central heating was installed within all the Council's remaining properties, which have access to a gas supply. The current position is that 5,876 homes (88.7%) now have gas central heating installed. All other properties have some form of central heating, mainly via electric storage radiators, although through advances in technology new efficient electric boilers are being installed on a trial basis, to replace old electric storage heaters, which operate in the same way as traditional gas boilers.

In addition to new installations, the Housing Assets Section programmes and undertakes the following other types of heating contracts:

- § Replacing old defective and obsolete warm air heating systems with traditional radiator systems
- § Replacing old defective and obsolete boilers or boilers that are no longer economical to repair
- § Upgrading older/partial central heating systems.

Due to the specialist nature, new installation contracts are let in the form of design and build, based on a comprehensive performance design specification. These contracts are programmed and managed by external consultants through the Partnered Consultants initiative.

Since 2004, the Heating Programme has concentrated on the replacement of old defective and obsolete warm air heating systems with traditional radiator systems. During the 2006/07 around 91 old defective and obsolete warm air heating systems were replaced with traditional radiator systems and 285 old boilers were replaced that were no longer economical to repair. It is anticipated that the programme for replacing old defective and obsolete warm air heating systems with traditional radiator systems will be completed by 2010/11.

The budget for replacement heating and boilers in 2006/07 was around £800,000. Within the 5-year capital programme, this level of funding is maintained at between £700,000 - £800,000 per annum until 2011/12. This is to ensure the Decent Homes targets are met.

vii) *Welfare heating installation*

Welfare heating is a programme for installing heating in Council properties based on applications from tenants on medical grounds. In the past this has provided new heating where no heating previously existed, as well as changing warm air heating to traditional radiator systems, and upgrading partial heating systems to full systems.

Until 1999/00, the annual budget for Welfare Heating was £150,000. However, once the Council achieved its target to install full central heating into all of the Council's properties, and upgrade all partial heating systems to full central heating, the Welfare Heating programme has now been reduced to £50,000 per annum and is now limited to mainly replacement of warm air heating with traditional radiator systems where medical conditions dictate.

During the 2006/07 9 new heating systems and 2 heating upgrades were carried out.

viii) *Adaptations for the disabled*

The Council has a duty to endeavor to adapt its properties to meet the need of disabled users, which is reflected by Council policy. The Council does not employ Occupational Therapists (OT's) itself to assess the needs of tenants and make recommendations accordingly. This service is provided by Essex County Council Social Services OT's.

Adaptations include both minor and major works and include the following types of work:

- Extensions to properties
- Through floor lifts
- Level access showers
- Over-bath showers
- Ramps
- Kitchens
- Stairlifts
- Hardstandings
- Minor adaptations inc. hand rails, half steps, grab rails etc.

Depending on the type of adaptation, target times have been introduced for processing applications. These target times vary depending on the work involved but current performance is well within target.

Where adaptations are estimated to cost in excess of £5,000 these cases are referred to a Disabled Needs Panel. This consists of both Council Officers and Social Services Occupational Therapists. The Panel discusses the individual needs of the tenants to establish if there are more cost effective options available, such as re-housing into more suitable accommodation.

The Council's approach to disabled adaptations was reviewed in 2004/05 under the Best Value Service Review. The main outcomes were to increase the annual budget to £300,000 and apply a ceiling for any one application equivalent to the maximum disabled facilities grant (currently £30,000). The Council has had concerns over its ability to fund all necessary adaptations and as a result Members again reviewed the annual budget for major adaptations at the Cabinet meeting in April 2006, where an additional 5% per annum was agreed. This means the budget for adaptations in 2007/8 is now £330,000.

In 2006/7 the Council received 455 recommendations for adaptations from Social Services in addition to 116 recommendations held over from the previous year where there was insufficient budget. Of those, the Council was able to undertake works to 478 properties. This means 93 adaptations are currently held on a waiting list for 2007/8.

The number of adaptation recommendations received each year has steadily increased from 87 minor adaptations and 27 major adaptations in 1998/99 rising to 307 minor adaptations and 148 major adaptations in 2006/07.

ix) *Servicing and repair of gas appliances*

The Council has a statutory duty under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1996 to service and maintain all Council-owned gas appliances, and to inspect all non-Council owned gas appliances within Council properties on an annual basis. The service and maintenance of non Council-owned appliances remains the responsibility of the tenant.

Gas safety is one of, if not the most important issue in Housing Assets, and as such a Gas Safety Strategy was produced in April 2004, and is due to be updated on 2007.

The performance of the Gas Servicing contractor is subject to close monitoring and supervision by Council Officers. If the Contractors performance does not meet with the Councils expectations, then action is taken against that contractor, as was the case in 2003/4 when the Council determined the contract due to breaches in the Contractors contractual and legal obligations.

Following the determination of the gas contract in 2004 the Council split the district into two areas north and south, and appointed two contractors through a new 10-year Gas Servicing and Maintenance Term Partnering Agreement in July 2005. The tender was awarded on the basis of both quality and price.

The Council has been closely monitoring and benchmarking the performance of the two gas contractors in a number of areas. Both contractors have recorded excellent performance and tenant satisfaction figures. More importantly the Council monitor the percentage of properties that have a current CP12 certificate and during 2006/7 the contractors achieved a 97.03% access success rate.

There are currently around 5,876 Council properties included on the gas service contract. Some properties have more than one gas appliance, and as such there are around 7,658 gas appliances in total.

x) Communal Cold-water Storage Tank Replacement.

In October 2003 the Council commissioned a condition survey of the communal and individual cold-water storage tanks installed in 300 various blocks of flats and individual properties throughout the district. The condition survey prioritised the replacement of the cold-water storage tanks based on which year they would need to be replaced.

As a result, an ongoing renewal programme has been included in the Capital Programme since 2004/05. This has resulted in 251 communal storage tanks being replaced and upgraded in 78 blocks, up to and including 2006/7, and around 30 communal and individual cold-water storage tanks planned for 2007/8.

xi) Re-roofing contracts

Re-roofing has, in the past, comprised a combination of the replacement of old flat or pitched roof coverings with new coverings, and the elimination of flat roofs in favour of more traditional pitched roofs.

Between 1993 and 2000/01, re-roofing was limited to just responsive repairs to flat roofs as a result of leaks or replacement as part of more major improvement schemes such as the PRC programme.

In 2000/01 the re-roofing programme was re-introduced, with financial resources allocated in the Capital Programme. Priorities are derived from the ongoing annual stock condition surveys. Based on the stock condition survey data collected in 2005/06, 592 roofs were identified as being in need of renewal before 2010 under the decent homes definition.

As a result of the 2006/07 re-roofing programme, pitched roofs were renewed or refurbished to around 74 properties at a cost of around £245,000, with additional roofs undergoing less expensive repairs. This meant that the number of roofs in need of renewal before 2010 was reduced by 254 properties, leaving 338 properties in need of renewal before 2010 under the decent homes definition.

xii) Rewiring contracts

Electrical installations deteriorate with usage and age, and as such it is important that the Council ensures that the installations continue to be safe and in a serviceable condition. There are currently no statutory requirements for electrical testing or the inspecting of electrical installations in tenanted properties. However, this may change in the future.

Currently, when properties become void the electrical installations are tested and inspected for safety in accordance with the relevant British Standards and Regulations. This regime of inspection is now extended to all properties inspected as part of the Stock Condition Survey. The survey report identifies what works are

necessary to bring the electrical installation up to the current electrical standards, and when the installation will next need to be inspected. Since 2004 around 1,250 properties have had electrical installation testing carried out. Any work identified is categorised as being in need of a full rewire, urgent remedial work or corrective action to certain identified items.

All new electrical installations have to be carried out to the current IEE Regulations as appropriate at the time, and in accordance with Part P of the Building Regulations.

Tenants have not in the past welcomed re-wiring works in their homes due to the high level of disruption it causes. In response to this, it was decided to link this unpopular, but essential, programme of work with other works, such as new heating installations, or kitchen and bathroom renewals, which are more acceptable to tenants.

At the start of the 2006/07 the stock condition survey identified around 684 properties were in need of rewiring or electrical upgrades. In completing the Heating and Rewiring programme and the Kitchen, Bathroom and Rewiring programmes for 2006/07 during electrical testing, additional properties to those identified on the stock condition survey have been identified as requiring electrical works to bring the electrical installation up to the current electrical standards. A total of 123 properties had full electrical rewiring and 96 properties had electrical upgrades carried out at a cost of around £245,000, which leaves around 600 properties in need of electrical works as of 2007/8.

xiii) Door entry system installation

In order to protect both Council property and afford tenants with the confidence of security, the Council has introduced a policy to install door entry security systems, where appropriate, in blocks of flats and to replace older door entry systems where it is no longer economically viable to repair them. Where blocks contain leaseholders the Council will consider the blocks for inclusion in programmes of work subject to leaseholders paying a proportion of the costs.

The order in which door entry security is installed in blocks is determined by reference to the current priority criteria, as agreed by the Council, which is as follows:

- The number of reported incidents of crime
- The number of reported nuisance complaints
- The level of damage / vandalism to Council and residents' property, and
- Appropriate housing management considerations.

Following an extensive consultation process with the Police and Management Officers, the Housing Portfolio Holder agreed an updated 7-year programme in April 2005. As a result, new door entry systems were fitted to a further 7 blocks containing 111 individual dwellings during 2006/07 at a cost of around £75,000.

There are still around 40 blocks throughout the district without the benefit of a door entry security system. With the current level of funding, it is anticipated that the installation programme of new security door entry systems will be completed in 2010/11. After 2011 a modernisation and improvement programme will need to be implemented to tackle those installations that are no longer economical to maintain.

In terms of repairs to existing door entry systems, a specialist maintenance contract has been prepared to ensure the existing systems are repaired in the most cost effective manner.

xiv) Internal redecorations for elderly and disabled tenants

Generally, internal redecorations are the tenant's responsibility, as listed in the Conditions of Tenancy and the Tenants Handbook. However, a limited budget of around £75,000 is allocated each year to offer a redecoration service to certain qualifying tenants (mainly elderly). This permits one room of the tenant's choice to be decorated no more than every four years, where properties are either designated for use by the elderly or one bedroomed accommodation occupied by an elderly person. The rationale behind this is to target the services for those elderly people living in properties deemed especially suitable for them. The Council wants to encourage older tenants who are under occupying larger properties to transfer to properties, which better meet their housing needs.

Following the Council's decision to only undertake the decoration service to elderly residents living in sheltered accommodation or 1-bed flats, the Council has declined around 35 requests for help under the redecoration service. However, a total of 79 internal redecorating requests were completed at a cost of

£38,500 in 2006/7.

The works for future years will be issued with priority given to the length of time the resident has been on the waiting list, in line with policy.

xv) Structural repairs

The Council does not insure against damage to property caused by subsidence, heave or landslip following a risk assessment that established the cost of premiums would be higher than the likely cost of works. Most properties in the district are built on clay, which is the underlying stratum in this area. In addition to this, the Epping Forest District is a very green area with a large number of trees.

Most of the Council's stock was built at a time when foundation depths did not take account of tree roots or even clay heave and shrinkage. This does, from time to time, result in structural movement to properties, which must be monitored and remedied. Housing assets currently have 33 properties included on the structural register, which are being monitored.

The monitoring process lasts for at least twelve-months, to take account of ground movement in all four seasons. Any properties that show signs of movement or distress will require the appointment of specialist structural engineer. The structural engineer will identify the cause of the structural movement, specify a repairs scheme, and in some cases supervise the works and monitor the recovery.

Until 2003/4, the structural monitoring service was carried out by consultant Structural Engineers, which cost around £100 per property, per visit. With visits required every 3 months, this was costing around £10,000 in fees per annum. Officers have subsequently received training, and are now monitoring the structural movement themselves, which has generated savings in external consultants fees. Since monitoring structural movement has been carried out in house, 37 properties have been monitored, with 33 properties being identified for further structural investigations, 4 properties have shown no further signs of movement (these properties will continue to be monitored annually), and 7 properties where works have been completed in accordance with the recommendations of a structural report.

xvi) Any other maintenance works in excess of £5,000

All major repairs, which cost in excess of £5,000, should be dealt with by the Housing Assets Section rather than the Repairs Section. This could cover any type of building maintenance work in a Council property. However, in a number of cases, the Housing Repairs Section will undertake works in excess of £5,000 on behalf of the Housing Assets Section.

xvii) Asbestos Removal

The Council treats the issue of asbestos extremely seriously. An Asbestos Control Project Team has been established to develop the Council's strategy and this has overseen the introduction of an asbestos survey, database and Asbestos Protocol. The database was established during 2002/3 and is useful in informing the Council and residents of asbestos hazards in properties. The information also helps the Council determine priorities in the removal of asbestos and an annual asbestos removal budget of £115,000 has been created for this purpose.

One outcome of the Asbestos Project Team was to produce a comprehensive Asbestos booklet, which gives advice to tenants on what to do if they suspect there may be asbestos in their home, and what measures to take when carrying out DIY in their homes. The leaflet was issued to all tenants in April 2006, and is designed to be inserted into their tenants handbook. In addition, during 2007/8, a detailed asbestos record is to be produced and held at each property, giving detailed information relating to known or suspected asbestos in each dwelling. This, in conjunction with the asbestos booklet, will help residents when undertaking DIY, or warn contractors of where asbestos is or suspected to be located.

Until 2003/4, any suspected asbestos containing materials were removed and analysed by specialist contractors. The annual budget for asbestos sampling was around £60,000. However, in March 2004, a number of Repairs and Assets Officers received training on how to remove samples for analysis. Since April 2004, all samples have been taken by Officers and then sent away for analysis. This has resulted in savings of around £50,000 per annum.

xviii) Estate Enhancements

The Estate Enhancement programme was introduced in 2005/6 specifically to carry out remedial works to

around 100 prioritised schemes to footpaths, garage forecourts, drives, communal and recreation areas of housing owned land. During 2005-06 a total of 51 priority 1 schemes were completed along with 9 priority 2 schemes and 6 priority 3 schemes, leaving 34 schemes carried over into 2007/08.

In 2007/8 the budget for estate environment works is £150,000, with £50,000 funded from the Housing Repairs Fund and £100,000 from the Housing Capital Programme depending on the type of work that is identified and carried out. A list of estate enhancements based on recommendations from a number of sources is maintained, with works identified on the list in priority order based on risk taking account of the urgency of the repair, the potential hazard and condition of the existing area.

A new schedule of rates contract for the estate environmental repair works is due to be tendered and let in 2007 for a maximum 5-year contract, based on an annual basis. The Housing Assets team manages this work.

xix) Off Street Parking

With the Highways Agency returning to Essex County Council in April 2005, it has been necessary to set out some new procedures for logging, assessing, prioritising and recommending all future off street parking provision on Council estates where there are particular parking difficulties. As a result, Housing Assets now maintain the list of sites for new off street parking, and undertake the consultation exercise, while Consultants are to be appointed to undertake the technical feasibility, design and implementation works. The annual budget for off street parking is £80,000, which is funded in part from the Housing Capital Programme and the Civil Engineering & Maintenance Capital Programme.

It is anticipated that a report will be submitted to the Cabinet in October 2007, listing the sites to be included in a 2-year programme of works.

xx) Digital TV

For some time now, the Government has set out its intention to withdraw the analogue frequencies used for the distribution of terrestrial television channels during 2010 to 2012. Over the past 3 years, the Council has been exploring the options available for the digital conversion. The Council maintains approximately 88 communal aerial distribution systems, the largest being on the Roundhills, Parklands, Ninefields and Springfields Housing Estates with the total number of outlets being approximately 2,500.

The cost of converting the television aerials is estimated to be around £150,000. However, television services are not included in the Government's Decent Homes Standard. The Cabinet, at its meeting in April 2005 agreed to the introduction a "Freeview" TV system to the blocks of flats. However, with advances in technology, it is now possible to extend the system to incorporate a full IRS system, giving residents a "Sky" option for no extra cost to the Council (subject to individual subscription). Tenders are due to be sought during 2007/8, with a view to completing the programme on a phased basis.

4. Stock Condition Survey

4.1 Stock Condition Survey

An effective plan for the repairs and improvement works to the Council's stock is dependent on the outputs of a stock condition survey. The Council's previous stock condition survey was carried out in 2000/2001, and was based on a 100% external survey and a 20% internal sample. Data collected was then cloned based on types and ages of properties to present a full assessment of the condition of the Council's stock.

In summary:

a) the total level of catch up repairs identified by the survey amounted to £33,334,274.

b) The total cost of maintenance over the next 30 years was calculated at £144,366,887.

The Council has undertaken a stock options appraisal and the information obtained from the survey was used to inform the recommendations resulting from this exercise.

The information has also been used as the baseline for the calculation of the number of non-decent homes and the resulting investment strategy is devised around the findings of the survey.

The stock condition survey has been updated with work undertaken by the Council since the survey was undertaken to ensure that it is currently accurate. However, the process of interrogating the stock condition database to ascertain the information on non-decent homes has been very time consuming. For this reason the Council purchased the "Codeman" system from Anite, which is the main source of data on stock condition. Officers are now issued with handheld PCs to undertake surveys on an ongoing basis as part of their normal visits to properties. The main advantage of this is that the accuracy of the database is enhanced because officers are undertaking regular internal inspections over and above the 20% covered by the previous stock condition survey.

The Codeman system is very versatile, and is being utilised to capture a variety of stock information, which is used for the following purposes:

- Decent Homes
- Stock Condition and future asset management
- Asbestos Register
- Energy Efficiency
- Housing Health & Safety Rating Scheme (HHSRS)

Currently officers are capturing enough information to complete the Decent Homes Surveys, including the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme, which replaced the Fitness Standards in April 2006 used by Environmental Health Officers, and information on any asbestos containing material. Any property that fails the Decent Homes Survey is included on the appropriate works programme to bring the property up to the required standard. During 2006/7 around 980 properties were surveyed, with 1,000 properties planned to be surveyed on an annual basis each year.

The new Housing Health & Safety Rating System, which replaced the fitness standard used by Environmental Health Officers to assess the condition of dwellings in April 2006, relates to the condition of the property and the risks associated with the individual tenants living in the dwelling will be collected as part of the on-going stock condition survey. This change had a minimal impact on the Council's ability to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

As a result of using a partnering contract for the External Repairs and Redecorations efficiency savings in staffing resources have been realised amounting to 1.5 FTE Officers, which is allowing more time to collect stock condition survey information amongst other duties.

4.2 Integrated Housing Database

The introduction of the Anite Open Housing Management System (OHMS) integrated computer database in 1998/9, and its ongoing development, has enabled a comprehensive property database to be compiled,

including basic information such as unique property reference number (UPRN), dwelling type, age, size. In addition it provides details on design features, built form characteristics, repairs history and works undertaken.

4.3. Codeman

The Housing Assets team use “Codeman”, which is a specialist module linked to the OHMS database. Codeman is not only a stock condition database, but also an asset management tool that reports on future maintenance investment. The software is currently in the process of being upgraded to incorporate the HHSRS

5. Quality Repairs and Maintenance Service

5.1 Tenant Satisfaction

In January 2007, an independent tenant satisfaction survey was undertaken by the National Housing Federation (NHF). The main headlines of the findings are listed below.

A standard questionnaire and survey process called "STATUS" was used, which is endorsed by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Housing Corporation (HC).

Around 1,400 tenants (22% of all Council tenants) were randomly selected by the NHF to be surveyed. An exceptionally high response of 72% was received.

In conclusion, the tenants were very pleased with the service they received across the whole of the housing service, but in particular, they were exceptionally pleased with the Council's repairs and maintenance services, and with the contact they have with the Council's staff.

It was recorded that 85% of tenants were satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service (compared with the national average of 73%). The Council ranked a strong first in its peer group for all aspects of the repairs and maintenance service measured.

5.2 Customer Perspective Programme

In pursuit of customer excellence, in spring 2007, Housing Services initiated a "Customer Perspective Programme", which looks at how housing services are provided to customers from a customer perspective. This includes the repairs and maintenance service. A group of Officers from each section of Housing Services, along with tenant representatives will analyse all aspects of the "interface" that Housing Services have with customers with a view to finding out how services can be improved further.

A Customer Perspective Action Plan will be compiled as part of the review, with actions relating to repairs and maintenance appearing in future editions of this Business Plan.

5.3 Housing Excellence Plan

The Audit Commission has produced a number of key lines of enquiry (KLOEs) relating to the provision of housing services, which represent a set of questions and statements around either service or judgment of specific issues, which provide a consistent approach to assessing and measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of housing services. Descriptors of fair and excellent services are intended to help organizations to understand how the quality of service is judged against KLOEs.

In pursuit of excellence, the repairs and maintenance service (along with all other aspects of Housing Services) is currently reviewing the KLOE's that relate to repairs and maintenance, and identifying actions that need to be introduced in order to attain the "excellent" level in each category. The Action Plan in Section 11 of this Business Plan includes a number of new initiatives which lead to an "excellent" service.

6. Expected trends

This section is a summary of the major issues taken into consideration when framing the investment programme for the Council's housing stock.

6.1 Expenditure

Expected expenditure trends over can be summarised as follows:

Decent Homes – The Government's Decent Homes initiative is now the key factor in planning the investment programme for the Council's stock. A separate section of this Business Plan is devoted to how the Council will meet the challenge set down by the new requirements.

Declining levels of stock by approximately 1.4% per annum – The Council has sold approximately 44 houses and flats during 2006/7. However, this has been much higher in previous years with an average of 110 properties sold each year over the last 5 years. This has the effect of reducing the need for maintenance expenditure (although for leasehold properties the Council retains responsibility for structural issues) and reducing income into the HRA.

Increases in building maintenance costs – Building costs are increasing by approximately 5-6% per annum, which is more than double the GDP inflation rate. However, given the effect of investment through planned maintenance, expenditure has been falling on an annual basis.

Uncertain levels of demand for responsive repairs and voids expenditure – Between 1997/8 and 2003/4 responsive repairs and voids expenditure decreased by around 38%. Generally, adequate investment in planned maintenance should lead to a reduction in responsive repairs and voids expenditure. However, these are always the most difficult areas within the Housing Repairs Fund (HRF) to estimate given they are responsive to demand. The District has experienced relatively mild winters in recent times and a harsh winter would increase expenditure significantly beyond current budgeted levels.

Continued demand for structural repairs – Expenditure on structural repairs has increased significantly in recent years. A number of Council properties were constructed using non-traditional building methods during the 1960's and now require additional levels of maintenance above traditional properties. A number of structural repairs have been completed and there are likely to be other parts of the Council's stock also requiring similar levels of investment.

The Council is not insured for subsidence, heave and landslip as estimates showed that premiums were likely to be higher than expenditure.

Increasing costs for servicing and improvement/replacement of existing central heating – All Council tenants requesting central heating now have heating installed. Likely resultant trends include: increasing servicing and repair costs; increased costs to replace existing systems when beyond repair; the need to upgrade partial central heating systems; reduction in demand for welfare heating; and the ongoing need to replace warm air heating systems with 'wet' central heating systems.

Continued demand for planned maintenance expenditure – An ageing stock will require increased levels of repairs although this can be offset by a planned maintenance programme. Nationally there is a trend for higher standards in social housing (as demonstrated by the decent homes initiative) and the Council must ensure that the requirements of decent homes are balanced against the need for ongoing investment in its stock to protect its value and long-term let-ability.

Need to adapt communal aerial schemes to the requirements of digital television – Existing communal television systems will become redundant unless they can be converted to meet the requirements of digital television. This will affect approximately 5,700 tenants and private residents. Provision has been made within the investment programme to upgrade the aerials in Council blocks to receive digital signals. No allowance has been made for the introduction of High Definition TV, which is soon to be launched.

Need to tackle anti-social behavior through the use of CCTV – With an increase in anti-social behavior, which results in an increase in the amount of expenditure on repairing damage caused through vandalism,

consideration needs to be given to combating this growing problem. Work is on-going between the Council and the Police Service, which has resulted in a CCTV Policy being drawn up by the Head of Environmental Services. A small on-going budget for the installation of CCTV surveillance systems has been included within the investment programme.

Recruitment of skilled craftworkers – With the Olympics coming to East London in 2012, there is a real possibility that contractors and sub-contractors will be pulling resources to more lucrative development sites in and around London in the years leading up to the London Olympics. This could lead to higher building costs and a shortage of skilled labour.

6.2 Investment Needs

This section provides a summary of the main areas of investment identified by the stock condition survey. A separate section deals with needs arising from the decent homes initiative. These are broken into the same categories used in Appendices A (summary of expenditure over a 5 year period) and B (summary of expenditure over the next 30 years).

(a) Future Planned Maintenance

There are a number of major works that can be identified from the stock condition survey, other major improvement schemes or development opportunities. These have been prioritised taking into account the decent homes criteria and Appendix A details the investment strategy over the next five years. Appendix B shows this same information over the next 30 years.

(b) Structural Repairs

This heading covers the work undertaken to preserve the structural integrity of buildings such as underpinning. The authority has regularly had to undertake structural work to properties to control problems such as subsidence and around £2.9 million has been set-aside over the next five years for this purpose.

(c) Cyclical Maintenance

In order to prolong the useful life of components, it is necessary to carry out regular inspections, instigate repairs and undertake preventative maintenance on sub-components e.g. replacement boiler parts.

It is likely that further inspections will be required to building components not currently covered by cyclical maintenance. This is most likely to affect the inspection of all electrical systems in Council properties on an annual basis. However, until this happens the Council will continue to inspect the electrical systems as part of the void inspections and the stock condition survey.

Around £2.8 million is spent per year on cyclical maintenance, which includes: the repair and redecoration of every property and garage every 5 years; the maintenance, service and repair of all Council owned gas appliances; the replacement of old inefficient boilers every 25 years; the annual inspection and service of all Council owned hydro-mechanical lifts.

(d) Responsive Repairs

The current ratio of maintenance to repair expenditure is approximately **70:30** (taking account of HRF and Capital expenditure), which is the Audit Commission's recommended balance.

This is maintained by monitoring the expenditure for day-to-day repairs by types of work and then developing maintenance programmes which would obtain better value for money. This process is currently being carried out at 6 monthly intervals, in September and March each year.

The Housing Repairs Fund makes allowance for around £13.5 million over the next five years, taking into account a 5% increase per annum in Building Cost Indices and a reduction of 1.4% for the rate of decline in stock numbers as a result of the Right to Buy scheme. The Capital programme includes around £1.75m over the next 5 years for small capital repairs.

(e) Voids Refurbishment

This area of expenditure is also mainly funded from revenue and as such the comments regarding the split between capital and revenue apply. It is expected that the authority will spend approximately £2.25m over the next five years on void refurbishment, although the introduction of Choice Based Lettings may have an effect on this.

(f) Cost Reflective Improvements

Until the introduction of the Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan “Cost reflective” improvements had not previously been considered a separate category of works, since the Council’s rent structure was not based on a points system which takes account of individual attributes. Cost reflective improvements, such as kitchen and bathroom modernisations, have in the past not previously been considered as essential.

Feedback from tenants has established that they feel the Council should make its properties more attractive and desirable by introducing programmes such as kitchen and bathroom replacements. This has since been supported by the decent homes guidance, which requires authorities to have reasonable modern kitchen and bathroom facilities. In order to meet the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard, substantial investment is required in this area. The Council is using this opportunity to offer tenants a choice on the type and layout to suit individuals’ tastes and needs.

The table in Appendix A makes allowances for approximately £4.725 million over the next 5 years for kitchen and bathroom replacements.

(g) Non-Cost Reflective Improvements

Under this heading, the Council provides an environmental improvement scheme for improving parking provision on its estates by carrying out a jointly funded initiative between the HRA and the General Fund to provide off street parking.

The table in Appendix A makes allowances for £1.8 million over the next 5 years. This has been allocated towards improvements to estate footpaths, communal refuse facilities, off street parking and new and enhanced external lighting.

(h) Disabled Adaptations

The Council endeavours to carry out adaptations to properties to meet the reasonable needs of disabled tenants. This is based on assessments and recommendations from Social Services Occupational Therapists.

The Best Value Review examined the Disabled Adaptations Service and concluded that current levels of investment were inadequate.

The Council’s previous commitment was to spend at least £300,000 per annum over the next 5 years on disabled adaptations. However, this was recently reviewed, which led to the budget being increased by 5% annually. Appendix A shows a budget of £330,000 in 2007/8.

(i) Other Maintenance and Repairs

Other types of maintenance and repairs include: decoration allowances for new tenants when they move into a home; internal decorations for elderly and disabled tenants; internal decorations to the common areas within the Council’s sheltered housing schemes; and compensation payments to tenants who undertake improvements to their homes themselves and subsequently move out leaving behind the improvements they have carried out.

7. Decent Homes Initiative

7.1 Background

In July 2000, following its spending review the Government announced a significant increase in resources for housing, especially social housing. This was on top of substantial increases announced in 1998. As part of its desire to link increased spending to better outcomes, the Government has established a target to:

“ensure that all social housing meets standards of decency by 2010, by reducing the number of households living in social housing that does not meet these standards by a third between 2001 and 2004 with most of the improvement taking place in the most deprived local authority areas.”

Under the Government’s Decent homes initiative a decent home meets the following criteria:

a) *Any residential premises should have a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor (Formally the statutory minimum standard for housing)*

b) *It is in a reasonable state of repair*

Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those where either:

One or more key building components are old and because of their condition need replacing or major repairs: or

Two or more of the other building components are old and because of their condition need replacing or major repair.

c) *It has reasonable modern facilities and services*

Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those which lack three or more of the following:

A reasonably modern kitchen (less than 20 years old)

A kitchen with adequate space and layout

A reasonably modern bathroom (30 years old or less)

An appropriately located bathroom and WC

Adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem)

Adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats.

d) *It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort*

This criterion requires dwellings to have both effective insulation and efficient heating.

To deliver against the targets the Council needs to:

quantify the level of non decent housing both now and arising by 2010, in its stock;

develop an investment strategy to tackle this; and

measure progress towards its elimination.

7.2 Quantifying the level of non-decent homes

Since the start of 2002 the Council has been able to begin the process of analysing the data contained within the stock condition survey. The process used to extract the relevant information has been as follows:

- 1) Confirm the validity of the information contained within the stock condition survey using separate consultants to undertake a sample survey of the results.
- 2) Define the characteristics that render a property non-decent using the criteria set out above.
- 3) Develop a suite of programs to interrogate the database to collect information on the number of properties with the identified characteristics.
- 4) Interrogate the database to reveal the number of non-decent homes on an annual basis.
- 5) Calculate the average rate of properties becoming non-decent each year using these two figures.

This exercise was first conducted in 2001, which revealed a total number of 1,627 homes, which were non-decent. This equated to 22% of all the Council's housing stock. If the Council were not to have undertaken any further investment in the stock this number would have increased to 4,127 (67%) by the year 2010. There were therefore 2,500 properties that were potentially non-decent in addition to those non-decent at the time.

Based on this information it was anticipated that there could be 2,480 non-decent homes by 2004 if the Council did not adopt an investment programme. In fact, as a result of the Council's strategies, the actual number was 590, which represented 8.6% of the housing stock. This meant that between 2001 and 2004, the percentage change in the number of non-decent homes was a reduced by 64%, which was well within the government's target of a one third reduction. The level of non-decent homes as at 1 April 2007 is 5.28% of the Council's housing stock, which amounts to 350 homes.

One area, which requires significant investment to achieve the decent homes standard, relates to kitchens and bathrooms under the 'Reasonably Modern Facilities' category. Since 2002, the Council has already invested £1.5m to improve the quality and layout of bathrooms and kitchens in properties where facilities are seen as being in the worst condition, and around £4.725 million planned to be invested over the next 5 years

The main area for investment arising from the decent homes standard concerns the Reasonable State of Repair category. Properties failing under the Reasonable State of Repair criteria will generally be addressed as part of the existing cyclical maintenance programme which already covers most of the repairs identified, such as re-pointing, repairs to chimneystacks, doors and windows etc. However, there is a significant requirement to invest in replacement heating systems and electrical re-wiring, where around £3.7m has been spent on replacement heating and boiler replacement, and around £2.8m on electrical rewiring since 2002.

The Council also acknowledges that the thermal comfort of some properties needs to be addressed. Generally, the Council has a good track record in improving heating in properties and 5,876 already have gas central heating installed. There are however, some properties (particularly in the rural areas) which do not have access to mains gas and which require heating and insulation improvements. These have been identified within the non-decent homes figures and will be addressed over the next 3 years. Appendix C of this Business Plan sets out the Council's position regarding the Decent Homes Targets.

7.3 Investment Strategy

The stock condition database can be interrogated in such a way that lists of all the properties that fail or potentially fail the criteria can be produced. Using this information a programme of work has been developed without having to undertake additional survey work.

The key strategy which has been employed to develop programmes of work is to look at where properties are failing and then only undertake work which will ensure that they are not caught by the criteria. For example, where properties fail on three or more categories under the Reasonably Modern Facilities heading just one category of work will be improved so that they no longer become non decent. Under this heading the standard says that properties must fail on three or more of the categories listed to become non-decent. In this way, although additional investment would still be required, the number of non-decent homes can be reduced.

Using this approach, as of 2001 a total of £14m was required to eliminate non-decent homes by 2010.

However, this does not include the resources necessary to prevent properties becoming non-decent, although Appendix C shows the expenditure required taking into account properties likely to fail the standard before 2010. The first column in the table shows all the failures against the standard in 2001. Some properties may fail on several different criteria and as such totals cannot be cross-referenced with the total number of non-decent homes, because properties can only fail the standard once. The final column of Appendix C shows where expenditure will be programmed to meet decent homes target and this expenditure is contained within Appendix B.

Using this approach, together with current funding forecasts, it is expected that the decent homes targets can be reached through the capital investment already available. (See the next section for details of the Council's short and longer-term investment plans.) The next section also discusses the funding gap between the full level of maintenance work required under the stock condition survey and the Council's ability to fund improvements.

7.4 Measuring progress

The stock condition database is amended to include work already undertaken to the Council's stock. In future this task will be done on the new Codeman4 system, which can be interrogated to provide information on the number of non-decent homes.

The ongoing stock condition survey work will also clarify some of the data on the numbers on non-decent homes and it is possible that the numbers of non-decent homes will change as the quality of data improves.

8. Resources & Expenditure Proposals

8.1 Financial

As highlighted earlier, there are a number of uncertainties over future projections of the financial resources likely to be made available. Repairs and Maintenance expenditure is currently funded through;

- § Contributions from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to the Housing Repairs Fund (HRF)
- § Transitional Capital Receipts
- § Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay (RCCO).
- § Major Repairs Allowance (MRA)

The following issues are worthy of note at this stage:

The contribution from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) has been set at approximately £5.7M for 2007/8 and each year for the next 5-years.

In the light of the current HRA forecast, substantial RCCO will be available over the five-year period.

MRA has been provided at £4.239M for 2007/08, although this varies for the next 5 years as laid out in the table below.

The following table indicates an assessment of the use of capital resources, which are forecast to become available over the next five years. The Capital programme is updated annually in June.

FUNDING SOURCE	2007/08 £000's	2008/09 £000's	2009/10 £000's	2010/11 £000's	2011/12 £000's
MRA	4,239	5,373	3,648	3,628	3,520
Transitional Capital Receipts	0	0	0	0	0
RCCO	2,535	946	1,570	1,274	1,237
Leaseholder Contributions	30	30	30	30	30
Total	6,804	6,349	5,248	4,932	4,787

At the conclusion of the five-year period that the Council is forecast to have balances of approximately £3.811M on the Major Repairs Reserve, which are not being allocated at this stage.

8.1.1 Overall Investment Strategy – 5 Year

Based on the income projections shown in the above table, a detailed programme of expenditure has been prepared which can be found at Appendix A demonstrating how the Council currently intends to spend the resources available for repairs and maintenance. This is based on two main priorities:

- a) Achievement of government targets to reduce the number of non decent homes; and
- b) The need to invest in the stock to improve its condition as determined by the on-going stock condition survey.

Appendix A adds together all anticipated capital expenditure for a 5-year period up to and including 2011/12.

SUMMARY OF THE HOUSING CAPITAL FIVE YEAR PROGRAMME

Detail	FORECAST SPENDING				
	2007/08 £000's	2008/09 £000's	2009/10 £000's	2010/11 £000's	2011/12 £000's
Future Planned Maintenance	5,285	4,171	2,520	2,470	2,530
Structural Schemes	734	362	435	435	435
Cyclical Maintenance	18	5	5	5	5
Responsive Repairs (inc voids)	350	350	350	350	350
Cost Reflective Repairs	1,225	1,000	1,000	1,000	500
Non-cost Reflective Repairs	494	328	328	328	328
Disabled Adaptations	460	396	413	431	450
Others, including contingencies	115	115	115	115	115
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	8,681	6,727	5,166	5,134	4,713
TOTAL FUNDING, inc. M.R.A and Capital Receipts (inc' carry forwards)	8,681	6,727	5,166	5,134	4,713

The table compares the planned expenditure against the anticipated funding position and does not include the total expenditure or investment which is required for the stock, it simply shows how much can be funded. The achievement of decent homes targets, the priorities established by the stock condition survey and existing expenditure already approved and contained within housing budgets would require capital funding of approximately £40m in total over the next five years. Current estimates show that around £31m is likely to become available over the same time period through capital funding.

Revenue expenditure covering repairs, voids, cyclical maintenance and disabled adaptations is estimated at £5.7M per annum. HRA contributions to the HRF will be able to support this expenditure.

8.1.2 Overall Investment Strategy – 30 years

Appendix B provides an analysis of capital, or investment expenditure, over a 30-year period. There are a considerable number of doubts over the validity of some of the projected figures over this period of time but nonetheless this table provides the best estimate given the information currently available. Using this information the available funding will not meet all requirements identified in the stock condition survey by approximately £30.2m over the 30-year period. Five years ago, the Business Plan identified a funding gap of approximately £60m. This has reduced as a result of anticipated increased investment through capital receipts and the MRA. Again the funding gap is discussed more in the HRA Business Plan, which refers to the Stock Options Appraisal exercise.

The current revenue expenditure on repairs and maintenance can be maintained for a further 27 years before the HRA falls into deficit. This is covered within the HRA Business Plan.

8.1.3 Maximising Value

It is essential that the Council adopts a value for money approach so that resources can be used to maximum efficiency. To this end a strategy has been adopted which seeks the replacement of building components just before they break down. This is known as a 'just in time' strategy and is based on industry standard assessments for the lifetime of components. At the same time the lifespan of building components such as heating appliances are extended by the replacement of sub components where possible. The investment strategy outlined in this section is based in part on these strategies.

Another issue is the use of option appraisals for all redevelopment and refurbishment schemes. This approach has already been used for the redevelopment of a sheltered scheme, major refurbishment at Springfields, Waltham Abbey and has been applied to assess the best option for the future of the Council's homeless hostel. This approach is clearly not appropriate for every maintenance project but where

significant expenditure is required for a contained number of properties it can be a useful guide to the most cost effective route.

8.1.4 Gershon Savings

Following Sir Peter Gershon's review of public sector efficiency, which identified the need to achieve value for money savings through better procurement in order to release resources to support the key policy objectives of the Government, an annual efficiency statement is completed by the Council as a whole. As a result all areas of the service are being examined to identify ways in which the way in which repairs and maintenance can become more efficient.

Significant savings have been identified as a result of the use of partnering contracts, undertaking work in-house through training that was previously undertaken by specialist contractors, generating income by using a sole utility provider as part of the void process, negotiating with contractors over price increases below DTI indices wherever possible and investing in alternative technology to reduce long-term costs. During 2006/7 it is estimated that savings of around £39,000 have been achieved, made up of one off savings and long-term on going savings. This equates to savings of over £200,000 since 2004/5

8.2 Staffing

At the beginning of 2006/7, the Housing Assets Section comprised 12 FTE members of staff, including one FTE Trainee Surveyor post. However, the use of consultants will always be necessary because they provide specialist skills, which could not be economically provided by permanent members of staff. The Council has access to two multi-disciplinary firms of consultants, who provide additional support including:

- Mechanical and engineering work
- Drainage work
- Architectural drawings
- Building Surveying
- Structural work
- Feasibility studies.

8.3 Partnering – The Egan Approach

One difficulty experienced by the Council was finding reliable consultants to support the work of the Maintenance Section. New methods of appointment were explored and the Council has approved the use of a partnering arrangement following the principles of the Egan Report. Two consultants were selected under a pilot scheme which has provided greater flexibility in the resourcing of maintenance projects as well as accessing a wider range of skills than could be provided through in-house staff. It would be difficult for the Council to recruit enough members of staff with suitable skills to oversee the diversity of work included in the 5 or 30 year plan.

Full project partnering has also now been applied to embrace contractors and suppliers for the kitchen and bathroom programme, new heating installations, rewiring external repair and redecoration work and Gas Servicing. This has resulted in significant efficiency savings, which are included in the Council's annual efficiency statement.

8.4 Value for Money

8.4.1 Essex Hub – Essex wide procurement

In October 2006, the Council joined the "Essex Hub", which brings a new opportunity to deliver greater value for money for the procurement of goods and services. The Hub works in two ways, one by combining the buying power of many Local Authorities across Essex to get lower costs through the economies of scale, and another by utilizing the expert knowledge and skills of the procurement team who prepare contracts, mainly as framework agreements and tender the works on behalf of the Council. This is a corporate initiative, which Housing Services intend to make use of whenever future contracts are to be let.

8.4.2 Benchmarking

In January 2007, a bi-annual benchmarking exercise took place of the Building Maintenance Works Unit to review the current schedule of rates against a range of 20 comparison organizations within the Home Counties and to look at organization overheads in comparison to private repairs contractors.

It was clear that of **the 20** Local Authorities that were compared, only 2 undertake the majority of their responsive repairs through a Building Maintenance Works Unit, whereas 5 operate their own Building Maintenance Works Unit alongside external contractors. There were 8 Local Authorities that outsourced their whole contracting element of the repairs service

Based on the Schedule of Rates comparison, it was suggested that on average, the Building Maintenance Works Unit were securing keen material prices. However, on average the Schedule of rates were 1.64% higher than average. It was suggested that this was due to the relatively small scale of the Building Maintenance Works Unit in comparison to the other organisations included in the study.

When comparing wage rates, it was suggested that in general, the salary rates were in line with national averages with the exception of carpenters, which are slightly higher than average.

There were some areas of concern expressed as part of the benchmarking exercise.

1. The existing schedule of rates are lengthy and cumbersome, with many rarely or never used. It was recommended that the schedule of rates be reviewed and simplified, but more importantly brought in line with actual works that are carried out on a regular basis.
2. The existing salary system should be more performance based, taking account of output or targets, quality, completion of jobs on time, fix first time and tenant satisfaction. However, this works against the principles of the recent Job Evaluation exercise implemented in 2005/6.

A further benchmarking exercise of the whole of the Housing Service was undertaken using "Housemark", which is a national housing benchmarking organisation in Autumn 2006. This benchmarking exercise enabled us to compare our service based on detailed performance and cost data. In the main, the comparison organisations were housing associations rather than Local Authorities. However the results give a good indication of the level of performance and cost by comparison to others.

The outcome of the benchmark exercise illustrated areas for improvement in relation to all aspects of the repairs and maintenance service, particularly in relation to target completion times and appointments.

9. Risk Management

9.1 Introduction

Risk management can be defined as the consideration of the social, economic, political and other factors involved in risk analysis to determine both the acceptability of damage that could result from an event or exposure and what, if any, action should be taken with regard to the risk of that damage.

9.2 Corporate Risk Register

A Corporate Risk Management & Assurance Group has been established, made up of Officers from each Council Service, to produce and regularly review a Corporate Risk Register, and to collate service based risk assessments. The Asst. Head of Housing Services (Property & Resources) is the representative of Housing Services.

9.3 Housing Risk Register

In early 2005, Housing Services produced its Housing Risk Register, which identifies the strategic and operations risks affecting Housing Services. Strategic risks are those that have an effect on the Council as a whole, where individuals, sections or even Housing Services as a whole have no total control over the outcome of risk management. Operational risks are those that affect individuals or sections of Housing Services, or the Housing Service as a whole, and will have little or no impact on the Council as a whole. The Risk Register is updated 6-monthly, and an action plan created and monitored for those risks that are above the "critical line". All risks associated with Housing Repairs and Housing Assets are included within the Housing Risk Register, whereas the risks identified by the Building Maintenance Works Unit are captured within the Building Maintenance Works Unit Business Plan.

The Housing Risk Register has been developed by applying a risk analysis, whereby each of the identified risks are assessed in terms of likelihood and impact. "Likelihood" ranges from "very high" to "almost impossible" and "Impact" ranges from "catastrophic" to "negligible".

Risk management is applied to each of the identified risks, through exploring the best options to reduce either likelihood or impact or both. Not all risks can be reduced, but they can be managed.

The action plan for "critical" risks relating to Repairs and Maintenance are included in Section 10 of this Business Plan.

9.4 Key Housing Operational Risks – Repairs and Maintenance

The following have been identified as the Key Housing Repairs and Maintenance Operational Risks within the Housing Risk Register:

- Failure to meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard by 2010
- The HRA falling into deficit
- Disaster at a sheltered housing scheme or Homeless Persons Hostel
- Disaster at the Civic Offices or The Broadway Area Housing Office
- Major failure of the integrated housing IT system
- Loss or insolvency of, or poor performance by, a major contractor/supplier
- Major incident, involving death or serious injury, due to poor health and safety procedures, or breach of health and safety legislation
- Significant overspend on a major housing maintenance contract
- Fraud, corruption and theft
- Loss of important paper records
- Failure to comply with Government or legislative requirements
- Physical or verbal attacks on staff
- Uninsured losses, especially through subsidence, heave or landslip
- Catastrophic budget overspends

10. Strategies

This section of the document lists the main strategies, which flow from firstly, the objectives, strategies and policies previously agreed by the authority and secondly, the issues discussed in this plan. Where these have clear links with corporate objectives or Best Value/Business Plan Guidance this is identified. There may not be current funding available to achieve all targets, but the effect of these strategies will be to focus available resources.

	Strategy	Link with Corporate Objective/Guidance
A	Maintenance and Repair Programmes	
1	<p>To develop ongoing programmes of maintenance and repairs expenditure for a period, of five and 30 years based on:</p> <p>Projections of the amount of funding likely to be available for repairs and maintenance;</p> <p>The findings of the stock condition survey;</p> <p>The number of non decent homes and reasons for them being non decent;</p> <p>The need to eliminate non decent homes by 2010;</p> <p>Patterns of demand for responsive repairs;</p> <p>Key targets (see below);</p>	<p>ODPM Guidance on Business Plans</p> <p>EFDC Council Plan</p> <p>EFDC Performance Plan</p> <p>EFDC HECA Strategy</p> <p>EFDC Fuel Poverty Strategy</p> <p>Decent Homes Guidance - March 2002</p> <p>Housing Services Risk Strategy</p> <p>Equalities Impact Assessments</p>
2.	<p>To achieve the following key targets:</p> <p>Upgrade all partial heating systems previously installed under the Welfare Heating Programme to full central heating by 2010</p> <p>Replace all existing warm air heating systems by 2010.</p> <p>Identify hard to heat properties and carry out additional insulation measures to improve the energy efficiency of the property.</p> <p>Average SAP rating of 68 by end of 2010</p>	<p>EFDC Council Plan</p> <p>EFDC Performance Plan</p> <p>Housing Services Strategy on Energy Efficiency</p> <p>HECA Strategy</p> <p>EFDC Fuel Poverty Strategy</p>
3.	<p>To ensure maximum value for money from maintenance expenditure by:</p> <p>Extending the life cycle of building components as long as possible so that they are replaced 'just in time.'</p> <p>Using criteria for the replacement of sub components to extend the lifetime of heating systems, door entry systems, window units and other building components.</p> <p>Employing option appraisals where significant maintenance expenditure is required on a</p>	<p>ODPM Guidance on Business Plans</p>

	limited number of properties.	
B.	Responsive Repairs and Voids Work	
1.	To continue to reduce expenditure on voids in line with the recommendations of the Voids and Lettings Study by ensuring as much work takes place as possible through planned maintenance contracts.	Voids and Lettings Study
2.	To aim to spend the HRF allocation from the HRA each year whilst acknowledging the fluctuating nature of repairs and maintenance programmes.	EFDC Housing Strategy Housing Services Risk Strategy
C.	Resources	
1.	To maximise funding on maintenance expenditure by: Making use of available capital receipts where possible. Using RCCO where possible. Transferring approximately £5.5m from the HRA into the HRF each year.	Housing Services Risk Strategy Capital Strategy
2.	To review the level of staffing resources annually against the planned level of expenditure.	
3.	To monitor repairs and voids expenditure every six months to identify patterns in expenditure which could be incorporated into a planned maintenance programme.	
D.	Tenant Consultation and Participation	
1.	To discuss expenditure plans and programmes of work with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation at least annually.	EFDC Tenant Participation Agreement
2.	To involve representatives of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation in discussions on new policies relating to the Repairs and Maintenance Services.	EFDC Tenant Participation Agreement Housing Services Risk Strategy
3.	To consult tenants affected by major improvement schemes over the proposals.	
4.	To consult leaseholders on all planned improvements in line with Leasehold legislation	
5.	To undertake a "Customer Perspective" review of the Repairs Service	Customer Perspective Programme
E.	Contract Strategy	
1.	To roll out the use of Partnering to new areas of work.	Housing Services Risk Strategy
2.	To utilize the Essex Hub wherever possible to enter into framework agreements with (sub) contractors or suppliers	

11. Action plan

11.1 List of main actions flowing from the plan

This table lists the main areas of action required within the Housing Repairs and Assets Sections to achieve the strategies detailed in the previous sections. The Action Plan also contains all actions arising from the Best Value Service Review

	Action	Officer responsible	Target date	Progress
1.	Implement programme for repairs and maintenance expenditure over 5 and 30 years as per Strategies A) (1) and (2).	HAM AHoHS(P&R)	Ongoing	Included in this plan
2.	Implement upgrade to latest version of Codeman software	HAM	July 2007	PID agreed and order placed. Servers in place.
3.	(a) To publish clear service standards for planned maintenance, Decent Homes, repairs, Right to Repairs and Leaseholder responsibilities, which are available in printed leaflet form and on the web site. (b) To publish the Voids standards on the Web site and to issue a copy to all tenants in advance of them undertaking an accompanied viewing or a void offer. (c) Undertake a review of the repairs responsibilities to ensure they dovetail with other service strategies ie ASBO, introductory tenancies, demoted tenancies	HAM HRM HRM	July 2007 Dec 2007 Dec 2007	(a) New (b) New (c) New
4.	Timetable at least one meeting each year with the Tenants Federation to discuss the repairs and maintenance expenditure programme.	AHoHS(P&R) HAM	Ongoing	Tenants Federation meet in April each year to consider the repairs and maintenance expenditure.
5.	Investigate option to merge Housing Maintenance Works Unit with Housing Services	HoHS HWU AHoHS(P&R) HAM HRM	April 2008	On hold pending outcome of Senior Management Review.
6.	Introduce Asbestos record cards in all properties, and maintain the records for contactors and tenants use.	HRM	July 2007	New
7.	(a) Undertake periodic reviews of the outcome of difficult to let properties and seek ways of enhancing the services provided to these dwellings. (b) Undertake a review of the repairs responsibilities to ensure they	HRM	Dec 2007	(a) New (b) New

	dovetail with other service strategies ie ASBO, introductory tenancies, demoted tenancies (c) Explore options whereby emphasis is put on "fix first time" for responsive repairs (d) Seek through the Essex Hub a framework agreement with specialist contractors for ad-hoc repairs	HAM	April 2008	(c) New (d) New
8.	Undertake a feasibility study into alternative fuel sources for properties in rural communities where mains gas is not available.	HAM	Oct 2007	New
9.	To review all projects with a contract value in excess of £1m on completion to identify any lessons learnt.	HAM HRM	On-going	New
10.	Undertake tenant satisfaction surveys for all void properties let and all accompanied viewings.	HRM	Apr 2007	New
11.	Hold training sessions at empty properties to enable officers to gain a common understanding of specification requirements. To be undertaken annually.	HRM	On-going	Undertaken annually
12.	Seek to reduce the target response times for routine non-urgent repairs from 8-weeks to 6-weeks	HWO	Oct 2007	On-going target
13.	Identify the need to run training events / DIY courses for residents on issues that fall within their own responsibility.	HRM HWU	Oct 2007	New
14.	To introduce 3-day job ticket	HRM	Dec 2007	
15.	To introduce generic repairs and voids officers.	HRM	Dec 2007	Agreed in principle. Awaiting "Patch change" on OHMS database
16.	Implement mobile working for the Housing Repairs Section	HRM	Apr 2008	Agreement in principle achieved December 2005. Implementation subject to further evaluation of hardware options
17.	Hold site visits at blocks of flats with Tenant Representatives to monitor repairs to, and condition of, communal areas	HRM	Apr 2008	New
18.	Seek to set up a benchmark group for Repairs and Maintenance with other Local Authorities and RSL's, with a view to sharing good practice and exploring collective procurement	AHoHS(P&R)	Oct 2007	New
19.	Explore the benefits of gaining Chartered Construction Client Status	AhoHS(P&R)	Oct 2007	New
20.	Review the Accompanied viewing process in light "Choice Based Lettings"	HRM/HNM	Oct 2007	New
21.	(a) Recommend to the Housing Portfolio Holder that a Tenants' Repairs Scheme be introduced (including the replacement of fluorescent tubes in sheltered schemes) after the application of job evaluation to the	HWU	Dec 2004	(a) Completed August 2004

	<p>Building Maintenance DSO, 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.</p> <p>(b) Produce and publicise a leaflet on the scheme when it is introduced.</p> <p>(c) Consider extending the scheme to cover leaseholders at a later date.</p>		<p>Dec 2007</p> <p>April 2008</p>	<p>(b) To do</p> <p>(c) To do</p>
22.	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.	HAM	May 2007	To do
23.	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	HAM	April 2005	To do
24.	Retain a register of all Council properties receiving substantial major adaptations and where possible allocate them to applicants from the Housing Register with similar disabilities, in order to avoid the removal of the adaptations already provided	HNM	Oct 2007	New

Appendix A – Five Year Capital Programme

HOUSING (HRA) PORTFOLIO CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2001/02 to 2006/07 FORECAST

	2006/07 Outturn £000	2007/08 Forecast £000	2008/09 Forecast £000	2009/10 Forecast £000	2010/11 Forecast £000	2011/12 Forecast £000	5 Year Total £000
Housing Revenue Account							
<i>Springfields, Waltham Abbey (Works & Fees)</i>	136	2,338	1,559	0	0	0	3,897
<i>Springfields, Waltham Abbey (Aquisition)</i>	694	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Wickfields Conversion</i>	789	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Leader Lodge Redevelopment</i>	0	225	0	0	0	0	225
<i>Norway House Improvements</i>	50	111	50	50	50	50	311
<i>Communal TV Upgrade/Other</i>	7	163	120	0	0	0	283
Total Planned Maintenance	1,676	2,837	1,729	50	50	50	4,716
<i>Boiler Replacements</i>	406	300	300	300	300	300	1,500
<i>MVHR / Ventilation Installations</i>	186	40	40	40	40	40	200
<i>New Heating Upgrades</i>	520	360	434	410	410	410	2,024
<i>Rewiring - (Kitchens & Bathrooms)</i>	100	200	175	175	175	175	900
<i>Rewiring - (Heating)</i>	264	150	175	175	175	175	850
Central Heating/Rewiring Sub Total	1,476	1,050	1,124	1,100	1,100	1,100	5,474
<i>PVCu Double Glazing / Door replacement</i>	140	190	150	150	150	150	790
<i>Roofing</i>	245	312	550	650	600	650	2,762
<i>Drainage Works</i>	149	100	100	100	100	100	500
<i>Asbestos Removal</i>	80	165	115	115	115	115	625
<i>Door Entry</i>	60	205	118	80	80	90	573
<i>Energy Efficiency Works</i>	40	300	200	200	200	200	1,100
<i>Communal water tank renewals</i>	60	126	85	75	75	75	436
Total Other Planned Maintenance	2,250	2,448	2,442	2,470	2,420	2,480	12,260
<i>Balcony Resurfacing</i>	9	50	25	25	25	25	150
<i>Structural Watercourse Improvements</i>	10	20	10	10	10	10	60
<i>48 & 49 Jubilee Court - Conversion</i>	17	129	0	0	0	0	129
<i>Parsonage Court - Conversion of Warden Accom.</i>	0	85	45	0	0	0	130
<i>1/1a Buxton Road - Conversion</i>	22	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Storm canopies to Sheltered Unit entrances</i>	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Miscellaneous Structural Works</i>	162	450	282	400	400	400	1,932
Total Structural Schemes	227	734	362	435	435	435	2,401
<i>External Lighting Schemes</i>	5	18	8	8	8	8	50
Total Cyclical Maintenance	5	18	5	5	5	5	38
Small Capital Repairs	230	350	350	350	350	350	1,750
<i>Kitchen & Bathroom Replacements</i>	275	1,225	1,000	1,000	1,000	500	4,725
Total Cost Reflective Repairs	275	1,225	1,000	1,000	1,000	500	4,725
<i>Fencing</i>	6	15	15	15	15	15	75
<i>Environmental Improvements - Shops</i>	66	120	120	120	120	120	600
<i>Off Street Parking</i>	1	139	43	43	43	43	311
<i>Estate Environment</i>	226	100	100	100	100	100	500
<i>CCTV</i>	5	120	50	50	50	50	320
Total Non-Cost Reflective Repairs	304	494	328	328	328	328	1,806
<i>Welfare Heating</i>	56	50	50	50	50	50	250
<i>Other Disabled</i>	420	410	346	363	381	400	1,900
Disabled Adaptations	476	460	396	413	431	450	2,150
<i>Other</i>	1	50	50	50	50	50	250
Other Repairs & Maintenance	1	50	50	50	50	50	250
<i>Feasibilities</i>	17	15	15	15	15	15	75
<i>Housing DLO vehicles</i>	50	50	50	50	50	50	250
TOTAL HRA	5,511	8,681	6,727	5,166	5,134	4,713	30,421

Appendix B – 30 Year Capital Programme

HOUSING (HRA) PORTFOLIO 30 YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME							
	Years 1-5 £000	Years 6-10 £000	Years 11-15 £000	Years 16-20 £000	Years 21-25 £000	Years 26-30 £000	
1 Future Planned Maintenance	16,976	13,038	12,273	11,286	11,483	11,063	
Roofing	2,762	4,151	3,778	2,544	1,012	1,778	
Rewiring	1,750	1,498	768	996	1,482	1,888	
Window & door replacement	790	900	748	2,293	3,779	2,274	
Heating and boiler replacement	3,524	2,141	2,729	1,228	985	1,398	
Asbestos removal	625	575	575	575	575	575	
Drainage	500	500	500	500	500	500	
Energy efficiency	1,100	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,000	
General Improvements	4,716	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	
Door Entry Security	573	148	125	100	100	100	
Ventilation	200	250	250	250	250	250	
Communal water tank replacement	436	375	300	300	300	300	
2 Structural Schemes	2,401	500	500	500	500	500	
3 Cyclical Maintenance	38	75	75	75	75	75	
4 Small Capital Works	1,750	1,750	1,750	1,750	1,750	1,750	
5 Cost reflective improvements	4,725	1,800	2,250	3,550	2,020	1,650	
Kitchen & bathroom renewals	4,725	1,800	2,250	3,550	2,020	1,650	
6 Non-cost-reflective repairs	1,806	1,500	1,500	1,250	1,000	1,504	
7 Disabled Adaptations	2,150	2,321	2,962	3,780	4,825	6,158	
8 Other repairs and maintenance	500	500	500	500	500	500	
9 Feasibilities	75	75	75	75	75	75	
10 Business Premises							
11 Less income							
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	30,421	21,559	21,885	22,766	22,228	23,275	

Appendix C – Decent Homes Summary

	Base Year Failures 2001 (Business Plan)		*Current Failures 2007/08		All Current and Potential Failures 2010	
	Fails Decent Homes	1627		350		1247
Stock	7088		6624		6624	
Non-Decent homes as a % of total stock	22.95%		5.28%		18.83%	
Min. Fitness Standard	No. 8	£ 8,000	No. 0	£ -	No. 0	£ -
Key Building Components	688	1,140,100	488	1,326,000	1797	4,731,700
Walls	6	1,500	55	137,500	201	£502,500
Roof Cover	28	56,000	53	106,000	338	£676,000
Chimneys	1	400	7	2,800	15	£6,000
Heating	210	462,000	131	353,700	606	£1,636,200
Electrics	443	620,200	242	726,000	637	£1,911,000
Modern Facilities	1180	1,657,100	235	614,000	744	1,636,000
Kitchens	513	923,400	72	288,000	74	£296,000
Bathrooms	667	733,700	163	326,000	670	£1,340,000
Thermal Comfort	459	573,750	119	119,000	119	119,000
TOTALS	2,327	3,378,950	842	2,059,000	2,660	6,486,700



**Epping Forest
District Council**

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