

Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2007 – 2009 Action Plan

Objective	Priority	Links to Other Strategies / Legislation	Work to be Done	Resources Required	Target Date	Indicator(s) of Outcome Achieved/Performance Measure
INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT						
1. Adequate levels of appropriately trained staff.	High	Corporate BVPP Private Sector Housing Strategy	Recruitment and training to be carried out. All staff to be competent in new Housing Act 2004 procedures.	Time input from Principal Team Leader. Provision for the cost of additional post (s).	July 2007 Training in Housing Act 2004 duties to be on going	Satisfactory performance of the Council's private sector housing responsibilities (enforcement and delivery of financial assistance) Unit staffed to new establishment. Staff effectively trained.
2. Review of licensing system for high risk HMOs	High	National Housing Act 2004, Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation Regulations 2006 Corporate Housing Strategy	Licensing system in place. Review after three months and six months to ensure effective operation, and thereafter annually. Advertise again after six months to ensure that all potential licensable properties are covered.	Time input from Principal Team Leader Residential Control Unit	June 2007 September 2007 December 2007	All higher risk HMOs are licensed and all statutory obligations met Licensable HMOs regularly monitored
3. A new systematic approach to inspection and enforcement in the private sector	Medium	National Housing Act 2004 Regional Housing Policy Corporate Housing Strategy	Introduce proactive inspections in addition to reactive inspections, focusing first on high risk HMOs and park home sites. Introduce procedures to ensure rigorous response to complaints on private sector housing issues.	Time input from Residential Control Unit	April 2007	Inspection regime established and operating including planned inspection programme park home sites

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4. Introduce Landlords Forum	Medium	National Housing Act 2004 Corporate Housing Strategy Homelessness Strategy	Contact known landlords and representatives, advertise intention to set up Landlords Forum, hold initial meeting to agree aims & objectives and constitution.	Time input from Principal Team Leader Residential Control Unit. Servicing costs.	April 2007	Landlords Forum established and operating satisfactorily
5. An accreditation system in partnership with local landlords linked with Deposit Guarantee Scheme	Medium	National DCLG Guidance Corporate Housing Strategy Homelessness Strategy	Formalise links with Epping Forest Housing Aid. Discuss with representatives of local landlords and voluntary agencies agreed standards of accommodation and management. Establish procedures for self assessment/inspection. Publish advice to landlords and prospective tenants. Link with Deposit Guarantee Scheme.	Time input from Principal Team Leader & Residential Control Unit. Servicing costs	Consult & develop scheme July 2007 Implement September 2007	Launch. Advice leaflets available for prospective tenants. Standards for HMO and non-HMO accommodation established and agreed. Procedures in place for inspection / assessment, advising prospective tenants and links with Deposit Guarantee Scheme.
6. Adopt Empty Homes Strategy	High	National Housing Act 2004, DCLG Guidance Regional Housing Strategy Corporate Corporate plan Homelessness Strategy BVPI 64	Format for Strategy has already been approved. Formal Strategy to be approved and all measures implemented	Time input from Principal Team Leader & Residential Control Unit. Continuing commitment from capital programme to Empty Homes Loans (included in allocation in 9 below.)	Adoption - December 2006 Majority of measures impl'd - March 2007	Empty Homes Strategy published and working procedures developed. Target number of properties identified for first year.

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FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE						
7. Changes to Home Repair Assistance, Renovation Grants and Discretionary DFGs	High	National DCLG Guidance Regional Regional Housing Strategy Corporate Housing Strategy	Amend existing grant procedures and documentation to implement revised grant system.	Increased capital allocation of £100k. Time input from Principal Team Leader & Residential Control Unit.	April 2007	Grant procedures, documentation and leaflets adapted to reflect revised grants. Changes notified publicly.
8. Introduce Thermal Comfort Grants, Empty Homes Grants and Conversion Grants	High	National Housing Act 2004 Regional Regional Housing Strategy Corporate BVPP, Community Strategy Housing Strategy Homelessness Strategy	Introduce procedures and documentation to implement new grant structure	Annual capital allocation of £150k. Input of time from Principal Team Leader Residential Control Unit.	April 2007	Grant procedures, documentation and leaflets introduced. Changes notified publicly.
9. Formulate an agreement with a specialist financial provider to offer a range of equity release and similar financial packages.	Medium	National DCLG Guidance, Foundations Review Regional Regional Housing Strategy Sub regional Housing Strategy Supporting People Strategy Corporate Housing Strategy	To be developed with other London Commuter Belt Sub Region authorities or other partner authorities. Undertake negotiations with specialist agencies over financial product availability and investment required. Negotiate and finalise agreement.	Resources to be identified in future capital programmes for Council contribution to financial provider. Time input from Principal Team Leader.	Mid 2008	Resources identified in capital programmes. Agreement with specialist financial provider in place.

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10. Develop and bring into use procedures for facilitating equity release.	Medium	National DCLG Guidance Regional Regional Housing Strategy Supporting People Strategy Corporate Housing Strategy Epping Forest Local Supporting People Strategy	Development of principles and procedures for the new approach to giving financial assistance undertaken in consultation with all stakeholders.	Resources to be identified in future capital programmes for Council contribution to equity release scheme. Time input from Principal Team Leader	Late 2008	Resources identified in capital programmes. Principles and procedures for equity release scheme established and service agreements in place with all agencies. Working procedures, documentation and leaflets for equity release scheme completed. Changes notified publicly.
GENERAL						
11. Increase awareness of both new approaches to enforcement and to offering financial assistance.	High	National DCLG Guidance Regional Regional Housing Strategy Corporate Housing Strategy BVPP	Prepare new information leaflets and distribute to Council offices and to voluntary agencies. Update website. Advise Landlords Forum. Make press release.	Time input from Principal Team Leader & Residential Control Unit Cost of publicity materials.	June 2007	New leaflets distributed, website updated, press release made and Landlords Forum advised.