

## Scrutiny Panel Agenda



### **Housing Select Committee Tuesday, 16th June, 2015**

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Housing Select Committee**, which will be held at:

on **Tuesday, 16th June, 2015**  
at **5.30 pm** .

**Glen Chipp**  
Chief Executive

**Democratic Services  
Officer**

**Members: As agreed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 June 2015**

Councillors L Girling, S Murray, C Roberts, D Stallan, J H Whitehouse and J M Whitehouse

**SUBSTITUTE NOMINATION DEADLINE:**

**16:30**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)**

(Director of Governance) To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

**3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

(Director of Governance) To declare interests on any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview and Scrutiny members are asked to pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any matter before an OS Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub-Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an OS meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

**4. TERMS OF REFERENCE/WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 5 - 16)**

(Chairman/Lead Officer) Attached is the draft proposed Terms of Reference and Work Programme for the Select Committee. The Select Committee will receive a brief presentation from the Lead Officer for the Select Committee on identifying the relevant priorities and work areas for 2015/16. These drafts will be recommended to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval.

**5. REVIEW OF THE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY (Pages 17 - 60)**

(Director of Communities) To consider the attached report.

**6. HOUSING SERVICE STANDARDS PERFORMANCE REPORT 2014-15 AND REVIEW (Pages 61 - 96)**

(Director of Communities) To consider the attached report and appendix.

**7. COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE'S HOUSING SERVICE STRATEGY ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY (Pages 97 - 122)**

(Director of Communities) To consider the attached report.

**8. HOUSING SERVICE STRATEGY ON HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT (Pages 123 - 136)**

(Director of Communities) To consider the attached report.

**9. HOUSING SERVICE STRATEGY ON OLDER PEOPLE'S HOUSING SERVICES (Pages 137 - 150)**

(Director of Communities) To consider the attached report.

**10. HOUSING STRATEGY: 6 MONTH PROGRESS REPORT ON KEY ACTION PLAN 2015/16 (Pages 151 - 162)**

(Director of Communities) To consider the attached report and appendix.

**11. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2014/15 - OUTTURN (Q4) PERFORMANCE (Pages 163 - 178)**

(Director of Communities) To consider the attached report.

**12. REPORTS TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

To consider which reports are ready to be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting.

**13. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next scheduled meeting of the Select Committee will be held on Tuesday 8 September 2015 at 5.30p.m. in Committee Room 1, and thereafter on the following Tuesdays at 5.30p.m.:

- (a) 10 November;
- (b) 12 January 2016; and
- (c) 8 March

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## **Report to Housing Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 16 June 2015**



**Subject:** Housing Select Committee - Terms of Reference & Work Programme 2015/16

**Officer contact for further information:** S. Tautz (01992 564180)

**Democratic Services Officer:** M. Jenkins (01992 564607)

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) To receive a brief presentation from the lead officer for the Select Committee, on the identification of relevant priorities and work areas for the year ahead;**
- (2) To consider the proposed terms of reference and work programme for the Select Committee for 2015/16; and**
- (3) To recommend the terms of reference to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for adoption.**

### **Report:**

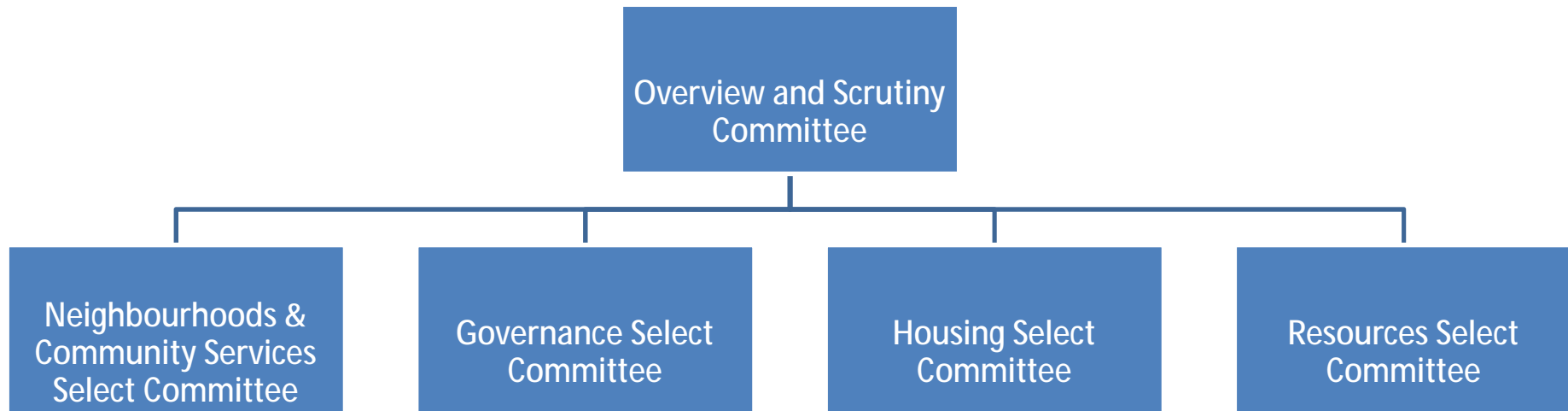
#### **Introduction**

1. The new overview and scrutiny framework, based on a structure of four 'select committees', has been introduced from the start of this municipal year. Details of the new framework are attached (Appendix 1).
2. The select committee framework is intended to improve previous arrangements that resulted in a situation where not all service areas were subject to scrutiny (if required) or allocated to a particular member group for scrutiny purposes. The framework ensures that all services have a 'reporting' route for overview and scrutiny and that there is clear scope to the scrutiny activities of each Committee. The following 'Lead Officers' have been nominated for each select committee:  
  
Governance Select Committee – N. Richardson (Assistant Director (Development Management))  
Housing Select Committee – A. Hall (Director of Communities)  
Neighbourhoods & Community Services Select Committee – D. Macnab (Director of Neighbourhoods)  
Resources Select Committee – P. Maddock (Assistant Director (Accountancy))
3. The respective lead officer will make a brief presentation to members on priorities for the activities of the Select Committee during 2015/16. In adopting the new framework, the Council was keen to stress that it did not wish to place additional burden on service directors in respect of attendance at meetings of the select committees, and meetings of the committees will therefore also be supported by the Assistant Directors relevant to specific topics under consideration.

4. The initial responsibility of the lead officers has been the development of terms of reference and work programmes for each select committee. The terms of reference reflect the scope of each select committee and provide for regular progress reporting on relevant matters to be made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, whilst ensuring consistency of operation across each of the select committees. The terms of reference are required to be considered by each select committee at the first meeting in the municipal year, and then be agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The draft terms of reference for the Select Committee are attached as Appendix 2 to this report.
5. The work programmes for the Select Committee should be relevant and achievable, and be informed by relevant service aims and member priorities. The work programme is similarly required to be considered by each select committee at the first meeting, for subsequent and ongoing review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The draft work programme for the Select Committee is attached as Appendix 3.
6. The select committee framework continues to provide for relevant scrutiny activity to be undertaken by way of the establishment (by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee) of task and finish panels as necessary. The new framework arrangements include provision for enhanced member training, particularly in the use of techniques to improve scrutiny activities.
7. The calendar of meetings for 2015/16 provides for meetings of each select committee to be held before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in each cycle. This approach is intended to allow for meaningful reports of the activities of each select committee to be made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at each meeting.
8. The Select Committee is asked to consider its draft terms of reference and work programme for 2015/16 and to recommend these to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for adoption.

# Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee Framework 2015/16

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All services and functions of the Neighbourhoods Directorate, including environment related matters, waste management, health and wellbeing, leisure management and development plan matters. All community services and community safety functions of the Communities Directorate.

All services and functions of the Governance Directorate, including constitutional matters, election reviews, consultation and engagement, and development management. All governance issues not within remit of the Audit and Governance Committee or the Standards Committee.

All housing related services and functions of the Communities Directorate, including housing business plans, policy and strategy scrutiny/monitoring, public and private sector housing scrutiny, HRA account monitoring and repairs management.

All services and functions of the Resources Directorate, including human resources, fees and charges and ICT (strategy and implementation).

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## SELECT COMMITTEES

### TERMS OF REFERENCE 2015/16

**Title:** Housing Select Committee

**Status:** Select Committee

1. To undertake the overview and scrutiny, utilising appropriate methods and techniques, of the housing related services and functions of the Communities Directorate;
2. To develop a programme of work each year, informed by relevant service aims and member priorities, to ensure that the housing related services and functions of the Communities Directorate are appropriate and responsive to the needs of residents, service users and others;
3. To consider any matter referred to the Select Committee by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
4. To consider the effect of Government actions or initiatives on the housing related services and functions of the Communities Directorate and any implications for the Council's residents, service users and others, and to respond to consultation activities as appropriate;
5. To undertake pre-scrutiny through the review of specific proposals of the Council and its partner organisations or other local service providers, insofar as they relate to the housing related services and functions of the Communities Directorate, to help develop appropriate policy;
6. To undertake performance monitoring in relation to the housing related services and functions of the Communities Directorate, against adopted key performance indicators and identified areas of concern;
7. To identify any matters within the housing related services and functions of the Communities Directorate that require in-depth scrutiny, for referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
8. Where requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to examine and review call-in requests and the implementation of executive decisions;
9. To recommend the establishment of task and finish panels to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as necessary, in order to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;
10. To monitor progress with the Housing Strategy and HRA Business Plan Key Action Plans on a six-monthly basis; and

11. To consider matters relating to the performance of the Council's Repairs Management Contract.

**Chairman:** To be appointed

## Housing Select Committee (Chairman – (To be appointed))

### Work Programme 2015/16

Item	Report Deadline/Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Meetings
<b>Standard (Periodic) Items</b>			16 June 2015 8 September 2015 10 November 2015 12 January 2016 8 March 2016
(1) Performance against Housing Service Standards and Review (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)	June 2015 (Medium)	<b>Scheduled for this meeting</b> – June 2015	
(2) 6-Month Progress Report on Housing Strategy Action Plan 2015/16	June 2015 (Medium)	<b>Scheduled for this meeting</b> – June 2015	
(3) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – 2014/15 Out-Turn	June 2015 (Low)	<b>Scheduled for this meeting</b> – June 2015	
(4) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Quarter 1	September 2015 (Low)		
(5) Six-Month Review of the HRA Financial Plan	September 2015 (High)		
(6) Six-monthly Progress Report on Housing Business Plan Action Plan	September 2015 (Medium)		
(7) Private Sector Housing Strategy Action Plan – Annual Progress Report	November 2015 (Medium)		

(8) Housing Strategy Action Plan 2016/17 <i>(Recommendations to Cabinet)</i>	January 2016 (Medium)		
(9) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Quarter 2	January 2016 (Low)		
(10) Briefing on the proposed Council rent increase for 2016/17	January 2016 (Low)		
(11) Proposed housing service improvements and service enhancements – 2016/17 <i>(Recommendations to Cabinet)</i>	January 2016 (High)		
(12) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Quarter 3	March 2016 (Low)		
(13) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Targets for 2016/17	March 2016 (High)		
(14) 12-monthly Progress report on Housing Business Plan Action Plan 2015/16	March 2016 (Medium)		
(15) HRA Business Plan 2016/17 <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	March 2016 (High)		
<b>Special (Planned) Items</b>			
(16) Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018	June 2015 (High)	<b>Scheduled for this meeting – June 2015</b>	

(17) Housing Service Strategy on Housing and Estate Management (3-Year Review) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	June 2015 (Medium)	<b>Scheduled for this meeting – June 2015</b>
(18) Housing Service Strategy on Energy Efficiency (3-Year Review) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	June 2015 (Medium)	<b>Scheduled for this meeting – June 2015</b>
(19) Housing Service Strategy on Older Peoples Housing (3-Year Review) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	June 2015 (Medium)	<b>Scheduled for this meeting – June 2015</b>
(20) Policy on HMO Licensing	September 2015 (High)	
(21) Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy	September 2015 (High)	
(22) Housing Service Strategy on Empty Properties (3-Year Review) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	September 2015 (Medium)	
(23) Housing Service Strategy on Rent Collection and Administration (3-Year Review) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	September 2015 (Medium)	

(24) Housing Service Strategy on Home Ownership (3-Year Review) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	September 2015 (Medium)		
(25) Housing Service Strategy on Harassment (3-Year Review) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	September 2015 (Medium)		
(26) Review of the approach to the Scheme Management Service to sheltered housing and properties designated for older people <i>(Recommendations to Cabinet / Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	October 2015 (High)		
(27) Report of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel on its Service Review of Tenant Involvement	November 2015 (Medium)		
(28) Results of the STAR Triennial Tenant Satisfaction Survey	November 2015 (High)		
(29) Review of the future use of sheltered/grouped housing scheme sites <i>(Recommendations to Cabinet / Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	March 2016 (High)		
(30) Housing Service Strategy on Housing Advice (3-Year Review) <i>(Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)</i>	March 2016 (Medium)		

(31) Housing Service Strategy on Under-Occupation (3-Year Review) ( <i>Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder</i> )	March 2016 (Medium)		
<b>Planned Items for Future Years</b>			
Interim (soft) review of the success of the pilot scheme to extend the opening hours of the Limes Centre, following 6 months' operation	June 2016 (Low)		
Review of Housing Management Staffing Levels following the introduction of Universal Credit	June 2016 (Medium)		
Housing Strategy 2016 – 2020	September 2016 (High)		
Annual Diversity Report of Housing Applicants ( <i>Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder</i> )	September 2016 (Medium)		
Review of the success of the pilot scheme to extend the opening hours of the Limes Centre, following 12 months' operation	January 2017 (Medium)		
Review of Housing Allocations Scheme and Tenancy Policy after 2 years operation (with any changes effective from April 2018)	October 2017 (High)		

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## **Report to the Housing Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 16 June 2015**

**Portfolio: Housing – Councillor D. Stallan**

**Subject: Review of the Homelessness Strategy**

**Officer contact for further information:  
Roger Wilson extension 4419**

**Committee Secretary:  
Mark Jenkins extension 4607**

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) That the Housing Select Committee considers the Draft Homelessness Strategy attached as an appendix to the report and passes on any comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder;**
- (2) That a consultation exercise be undertaken for a period of 8 weeks with all Stakeholders with an interest in homelessness including Town and Parish Councils, with the outcome of the exercise and any proposed changes being reported to the Housing Portfolio Holder for consideration when adopting the revised Homelessness Strategy; and**
- (3) That the revised Homelessness Strategy becomes effective on 1 September 2015.**

### **Report:**

1. Under the Homelessness Act 2002, Local Authorities have a duty to review and publish their Homelessness Strategy on at least a 5 yearly basis. As this area of work regularly changes, it was agreed that the Council's Homelessness Strategy would be reviewed every three years. The Strategy links with the Council's Housing Strategy, Housing Allocations Scheme and Tenancy Policy. The Strategy sets out achievements since 2012 and incorporates the needs and demands on the service and actions that need to be undertaken over the coming three years.
2. The Housing Select Committee is asked to consider the Draft Homelessness Strategy, which is included in the Panel's Work Programme, and is attached as an appendix, and report any comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder.
3. A consultation exercise on the draft Homelessness Strategy will be undertaken over an 8 week period with all Stakeholders with an interest in homelessness including Town and Parish Councils. The Housing Portfolio Holder will be asked to consider the outcome of the exercise and any resultant changes and to adopt the revised Homelessness Strategy. The Strategy will take effect from 1 September 2015.

**Reason for decision:**

To consider the Council's draft Homelessness Strategy and report any comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder.

**Options considered and rejected:**

Not to consider the draft Homelessness Strategy.

**Consultation undertaken:**

As set out in the report.

**Resource implications:**

Budget provision: None

Personnel: None

Land: None

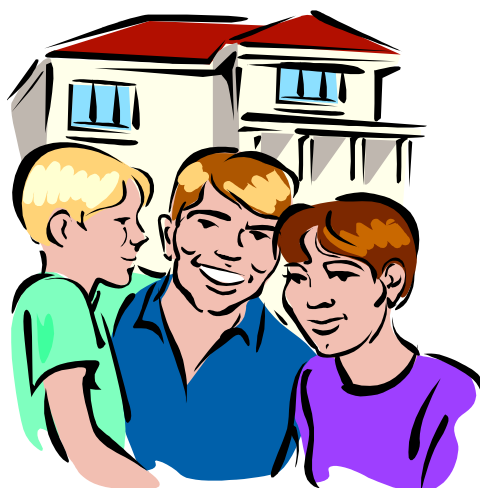
Community Plan/BVPP reference: N/A

Relevant statutory powers: Housing Act 1996

Background papers: None

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: N/A

Key Decision reference: (if required) N/A



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# Homelessness Strategy

**2015/16 to 2017/18**



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# Executive Summary

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## 1. Foreword

- 1.1 Under section 1(3), (4) of the Homelessness Act 2002, local authorities have a duty to review and publish their Homelessness Strategy on at least a 5 yearly basis. As this area of work regularly changes it was agreed that the Council's Strategy would be reviewed every three years. The Strategy links with the Council's Housing Strategy, Allocations Scheme, and the Corporate Plan. The Strategy sets out achievements since 2012/13 and incorporates the needs and demands on the service and actions that need to be undertaken over the coming three years.
- 1.2 The homelessness function is provided through the Community Directorate's Housing Options Section. A staffing structure chart is shown on the final page.
- 1.3 The Housing Service within the Communities Directorate continues to be accredited for the ISO 9001:2008 quality assurance scheme by Lloyds Register Quality Assurance. The Housing Service was also successful in retaining the Customer Service Excellence Award (formerly known as Charter Mark) for the fourth time in August 2013, for a further 3 years.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The last three years have seen a high demand upon the Homelessness Prevention Team. The Service has been very successful in preventing homelessness in many cases. This has been possible due the Team maximising the use of the range of tools set out, in particular, in the Homeless Prevention Section of the Strategy.
- 2.2 At the time of this Strategy being produced, the Country is in process of an economic recovery; however there are still high numbers of people across the Epping Forest District in a Housing Need. This has led to an increase in demand on the Homelessness Prevention Service where people are seeking resolutions to their housing difficulties. This is especially prevalent amongst Households who are having problems sustaining and securing accommodation across the Private Rented Sector.

## 3. Housing Advice

- 3.1 The Council has a rolling Service Level Agreement with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in the District to provide a range of advice and support to those faced with housing difficulties. In addition, a signed protocol has been developed in conjunction with the National Homeless Advice Service.
- 3.2 The Housing Options Section within the Communities Directorate provides advice and information leaflets. General information on Housing Services can be obtained through the Council's website. Housing applicants are able to make an application for housing on line via the Council's Choice Based Lettings administrator's Locata Housing Service's (LHS) Website at HomeOption.org Applicants can also seek information from the Housing Options Section on accessing accommodation in the private rented sector and advice on dealing with difficult issues including domestic abuse etc.

## 4. Homelessness Prevention

- 4.1 The Homeless Prevention Service has been very successful in preventing homelessness during the last 3 years. The objective of reducing the number of households making a homeless application by providing effective prevention measures continues to be met. However, the Council is committed to ensuring that if homelessness cannot be prevented for any reason, it will accept a homeless application in order to decide what statutory duty may be owed to the household.

## **5. Housing Options Initiatives**

- 5.1 Due to the demand on the Housing Options service, the Council has a number of initiatives to assist those who are experiencing housing difficulties and may be faced with losing their homes and are as follows:

### ***Epping Forest Housing Aid Scheme (EFHAS)***

- 5.2 The Epping Forest Housing Aid Scheme (EFHAS) is a registered charity which operates on a voluntary basis to provide damage deposit guarantees (equivalent to one month's rent) to landlords on behalf of applicants to assist them in securing accommodation in the private rented sector.

### ***Rental Loan Scheme***

- 5.3 The Rental Loan Scheme assists applicants in securing accommodation in the private rented sector. Under the scheme, a loan is granted to meet the cost of the first month's rental in advance, repayable by the applicant interest free over a period of 24 months. An applicant can potentially benefit from both a rental loan and a damage deposit guarantee.

### ***Mediation - Parental Exclusions***

- 5.4 Young people can sometimes have volatile relationships with their parents and can be at risk of exclusion from their home. Since 2004, "Relate" have undertaken mediation in a number of cases to attempt to reconcile young people with their parents in order for them to remain at home. The Council also works with Essex County Council's Homelessness Response Team who also mediates with families.

### ***Sanctuary Scheme***

- 5.5 The Council set up a Sanctuary Scheme for victims of domestic violence or hate crime in April 2007. This scheme is an effective tool in the prevention of homelessness for high risk cases of domestic violence or hate crime. The intention of the scheme is to provide a safe room within the victim's home. The Housing Options Section works in partnership with Safer Communities, Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue and Safer Places (formerly known as Harlow Women's Aid). All referrals to the scheme are made through the Homeless Prevention Service. The Scheme is available to people on a tenure neutral basis.

### ***Single Accommodation For Epping Forest (SAFE)***

- 5.6 SAFE is part of NACRO Community Enterprises, a registered housing association and charity, and offers temporary accommodation with support to single homeless people. It works in partnership with the Council, Epping Assessment and Child Protection Team and Essex Probation Service (EPS).
- 5.7 It provides 37 bed spaces across the District in a mix of shared houses and individual units. Around 80% of all referrals are made by the Communities Directorate, Learning and Social Care, and Essex Probation Services. In addition, some self-referrals are made. Applicants must be single and homeless or at risk of homelessness. The target age group is 18 to 25 years, although others are accepted depending on their circumstances.

## **6. The Role of Essex County Council's Social Care**

- 6.1 The majority of children's services are now provided on a 'quadrant basis'. Essex has been split into four geographical areas with each area being a quadrant. Children in the Epping Forest District receive services from the 'West Essex Quadrant'.
- 6.2 The Leaving & After Care Team takes casework responsibility for children up to the age of 15 years and six months. The team provides support whilst the young people are in care. The team also provides aftercare support according to the specific provisions of the Children Act 1989 as amended by the Children Leaving Care Act 2000.
- 6.3 The Council's Homelessness Prevention Team are notified by the Leaving and After Care Team prior to a young person leaving care in order that their housing needs can be assessed. In general, the Council will arrange for the SAFE Scheme through NACRO (a housing association providing specialist housing and support for young people) to accommodate young people leaving care to give them extra preparation for independent living. The Council then re-houses the young person when they move on from SAFE into Council accommodation often with Floating Support.
- 6.4 The Homeless Response Team is a small, centrally based team (located at County Hall, Chelmsford) which seeks to engage with 16 & 17 year olds on the verge of parental eviction and mediates with families to avoid homelessness and the necessity of providing accommodation under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. The team works in partnership with the Council's Homelessness Prevention Team.
- 6.5 The Divisional Based Intervention Team (DBIT) respond to the immediate needs of children and families referred to the Children's and Families Service where an assessment of that need is required and especially in relation to "Safeguarding".
- 6.6 The Family Support and Protection Team responds in the longer term for those children subject to Child Protection Plans, and Child in Need plans.
- 6.7 The Learning Disability and Physical Impairment Team refer people requiring housing and support to schemes in Ongar called Barnes Court, and Tolpuddle House which are owned and managed by East Thames Housing Association.
- 6.8 The Community Assessment Team for Older People assist people aged over 65 years. Initial referrals are received first by a central Essex team (Social Care Direct) and then passed where necessary to Goodman House, Harlow.
- 6.9 The Council has a Corporate Safeguarding Group. Key staff have received training on Safeguarding adults with care and support needs. The Council has a Safeguarding Strategy and a reporting form and has an e-learning package available to all staff.

## **7. Services for People Involved in Drug and Alcohol Abuse**

- 7.1 The Housing Options Section deals mainly with referrals from the Community Drug and Alcohol Services known as "Choices". The service works with clients of all ages with their funding coming predominantly through the Essex Drug and Alcohol Partnership (EDAP) whose commissioning function is managed by the Essex Drug and Alcohol Action Team based at Essex County Council's offices in Chelmsford.
- 7.2 Some referrals are dealt with by the Alcohol and Drugs Advisory Services (ADAS). ADAS clients are assessed and complex alcohol cases are then referred to the Community Drug and Alcohol Team (CDAT) with Choices dealing with drug only cases. Client with Alcohol problems far outnumber those with drug problems.

- 7.3 Choices offer outreach services in Loughton and Waltham Abbey. Clients are referred through a number of sources including hospitals, ADAS, GPs, family members and self-referrals. The service is an all age recovery management service with links and referral routes to more structured treatment interventions where required. Family support is offered which helps young people remain in their own homes, but where necessary they are referred to emergency night shelters across the County.
- 7.4 The aim of Choices is to support clients and families to build recovery and to support them to re-integrate into society and to become free of drugs dependence. The intention is to also develop Alcohol prevention in a similar way in the future.
- 7.5 Homelessness is a common problem with drug and alcohol clients. In order to deal with the problem, the Council has entered into a local protocol with treatment providers to ensure effective working arrangements.

## **8. Applications, Decisions, Notifications and Reviews**

- 8.1 The process of assessing homelessness applications is complex and governed by the provisions of Part VI1 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). Careful attention is given to the Code of Guidance issued by the CLG and homelessness case law. Legislation on immigration is also observed.
- 8.2 All homeless applications are processed by the Homelessness Assessment Officers based within the Housing Options Section. In processing these applications regard is given to the Code of Guidance.
- 8.3 Homelessness enquiries may involve contact with previous landlords (both public and private), mortgage lenders, solicitors, environmental health officers, land registry, social workers, medical practitioners, occupational therapists, hospital workers, victim support groups, police, neighbours, relatives, and the UK Border Agency.
- 8.4 The Council adopts a 'firm but fair' approach to homelessness. The intention is only to secure accommodation when statutorily required to do so. However, applicants have a legal right of review on adverse homelessness decisions. Such reviews are conducted, depending on the nature of the case, by an officer more senior than the one who made the original decision or the Council's Housing Appeals and Reviews Panel, which comprises 5 District Councillors. If the applicant is dissatisfied with the decision made at the statutory review, they are advised they have the right to pursue an appeal, on a point of law, through the County Court.

## **9. Interim and Temporary Accommodation**

- 9.1 The Council uses a variety of interim and temporary accommodation, including self-contained flats at Hemnall House, Epping, a Women's Refuge move-on scheme and rooms at the Homeless Persons' Hostel Norway House, North Weald where housing-related support is provided. Bed and breakfast accommodation for households without children is sometimes provided but is only used in exceptional circumstances, where an applicant has challenging behaviour or on rare occasions when there are no vacancies at Norway House.

## **10. Epping Forest District Council's Allocations Scheme**

- 10.1 The Council operates a HomeOption choice based lettings scheme and has its own Housing Register in accordance with the provisions of the Housing Allocations Scheme, which is reviewed periodically by the Cabinet.



10.2 The Scheme includes vacancies in the Council's own housing stock and housing association properties for which the Council has nomination rights. Applicants are able to "express an interest" in properties advertised on the website and also through a fortnightly Property List.

10.3 The Council has reviewed its Housing Allocations Scheme. The revised Scheme comes into force on 27 July 2015 and can be downloaded from the Council's website at: [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/housing](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/housing)

10.4 Under the Scheme, applicants accepted by the Council as homeless, eligible for assistance, in priority need and not intentionally homeless under the Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended who are living in:

- bed and breakfast accommodation secured by the Council, but excluding those in the process of being referred to another local housing authority under S.198 of the Housing Act 1996
- the Council's Homeless Persons Hostel (Norway House or Hemnall House), or a Women's Refuge
- homeless applicants living in Brookhaven for 6 months and have been served with a S 21 Notice (giving notice of ending the assured tenancy), where the Manager of Brook Haven has notified the Council that the tenant is ready to move on.

will be made one offer of suitable accommodation after receiving their S.184 decision letter, generally in flatted accommodation. If the offer is refused, the applicant will have the right to seek a Review of the suitability of the accommodation. If not successful, the Council's duty under the Homelessness Act 1996 as amended to provide accommodation will be considered to be discharged.

### ***Applicants Living in Supported Housing***

10.5 Homeless applicants to whom the Council does not owe the full homelessness duty, who and have been placed by the Council under its nomination rights or by a recognised Allocations Panel for a least 9 months and are ready to move on, at either the:

- S.A.F.E. (Single Accommodation for Epping Forest "NACRO") Project;
- Young Parent Scheme at Railway Meadow, Ongar
- Supported housing scheme for vulnerable adults at Tolpuddle House, Ongar
- Supported housing scheme at Elm Court, Theydon Bois
- NACRO scheme for those with mental health issues
- Young parent and child scheme at Bartletts, Chelmsford

Such homeless applicants will have a lesser residency criteria of 3 years and be made one offer of suitable accommodation at the end of their stay in supported housing, generally in flatted accommodation. If the offer is refused, the Council will make no further offers of accommodation.

## **11. Consultation**

11.1 A consultation exercise on this Homelessness Strategy has been undertaken with all partner agencies, the DCLG, Town and Parish Councils, and the Council's Housing Select Committee. Following consideration by the Council's Housing Select Committee, the Strategy was approved by the Housing Portfolio Holder in August 2015.

## **12. Action Plans**

12.1 The Action Plan sets out the actions required to implement this Strategy, identifying officers responsible for progressing those actions and setting targets for completion.

# Foreword

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Under section 1(3), (4) of the Homelessness Act 2002, local authorities have a duty to review and publish their Homelessness Strategy on at least a 5 yearly basis. As this area of work regularly changes it was agreed that the Council's Strategy would be reviewed every three years. The Strategy links with the Council's Housing Strategy, Allocations Scheme, and the Corporate Plan. The Strategy sets out achievements since 2012/2013 and incorporates the needs and demands on the service and actions that need to be undertaken over the coming three years.
- 1.2 The homelessness function is provided through the Communities Directorate's Housing Options Section. A staffing structure chart is shown on the final page.
- 1.3 The Housing Service within the Communities Directorate continues to be accredited for the ISO 9001:2008 quality assurance scheme by Lloyds Register Quality Assurance. The Housing Service was also successful in retaining the Customer Service Excellence Award (formerly known as Charter Mark) for the fourth time in August 2013 for a further 3 years.

## 2. Background to the Council's Homelessness Service

- 2.1 The homelessness service is provided by the Communities Directorate's Housing Options Section. The Council works within the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and follows the guidance set out in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Code of Practice in Rented Housing and the requirements of the Council's Equality Impact Assessments.
- 2.2 As at May 2015, the Council has 1,561 home seekers on its Housing Register and 203 home seekers on its Supplementary Waiting List. The Council has a housing stock of 6,391 properties.
- 2.3 The last three years have seen 145 new affordable homes provided within the Epping Forest District, an average of 48 new affordable homes per annum. At the time of writing (June 2015), there are 4 developments that are on site, which will deliver a total of 63 new affordable homes, and a further 3 sites with planning permission, which will deliver a further 22 new affordable homes by 2017. The Council has commenced its own house-building programme, with Phase 1 already on site. This will deliver 23 new homes (included in the number above). The Council's has a target of providing 30 new affordable homes each year for the next 10 years. The Council is in the process of drawing up a new "Local Plan" which will seek to identify a future supply of development sites for the next 10 years. The Plan is expected to be agreed from 2016/2017.

## 3. Tenancy Strategy & Tenancy Policy

- 3.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to publish a Tenancy Strategy which, must set out the matters to which Registered Providers of Housing (including the Council) are to have regard in formulating their policies relating to:
  - The kinds of tenancies they grant;
  - The circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind;
  - Where they grant tenancies for a term certain, the lengths of those terms; and
  - The circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the coming to an end of an existing tenancy

3.2 The West Essex Housing Forum, which comprises three local authorities in West Essex being Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford District Councils have adopted one Tenancy Strategy that covers the three local authorities' areas in West Essex. The Strategy was adopted by the Cabinet on 22 October 2012.

3.3 In addition, all Registered Providers are required to publish and be responsible for their own individual Tenancy Policy. The Council's Tenancy Policy came into force on 1 September 2013. The Cabinet agreed a Review of the Tenancy Policy on 9 March 2015; the revised Policy takes effect from 27 July 2015 and sets out:

- The kinds of tenancies granted;
- Circumstances where a tenancy of a particular type will be granted and the length of the term;
- Circumstances where a term of less than 5 years will be granted;
- Circumstances where another tenancy will be granted on expiry on the same or another property;
- How applicants/tenants can appeal against the length of the Flexible Tenancy or the decision not to grant a further tenancy;
- Taking account of the needs of vulnerable people;
- Provision of Advice and Assistance if another tenancy is not granted at the end of the term; and
- Discretionary succession rights

#### **4. Welfare Reforms**

4.1 Prior to the Welfare Reform Act 2012 coming into force, the Council introduced a number of measures to assist homeless applicants who were affected by the changes to welfare benefits. These included:

- Commissioning the Chartered Institute of Housing to undertake a major study into the implications of the Welfare Reforms on the Council, its tenants, private tenants and homelessness
- The appointment of one additional full-time Homelessness Prevention Officer
- Providing additional funding to the Epping Forest Citizens' Advice Bureau to enable them to employ two full-time debt advisors to provide advice to both homeless applicants and Council tenants who are affected by the welfare reforms
- Undertake pro-active engagement with the Citizens Advice Bureau, to ensure that their advisors are fully aware of the welfare reforms, the implications and who to contact within the Council to discuss clients' queries
- Encourage tenants to set up bank accounts to receive Universal Credit payments
- Ensure appropriate housing and housing benefit staff are briefed on the main elements of the welfare reforms, and trained on how to provide advice to customers
- Publicise the introduction of the welfare reforms and the implications and possible solutions for different categories of tenants in the Council's "Housing News" a periodic newsletter for tenants
- When the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme was reviewed in 2013, the sizes of properties allocated were in line with the size criteria under the Spare Room Subsidy limits to ensure no tenants at the point of allocation would be affected. The same sizes of properties are allocated under the Council's revised Scheme which came into force on 27 July 2015. The sizes of suitable accommodation directly offered to homeless applicants also meet with the same size criteria.

- 4.2 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 provides for the introduction of a “universal credit” to replace a range of existing means-tested benefits and could have a significant impact upon homelessness. Although universal credit has been implemented in some areas, it is not expected to be introduced in the Epping Forest District until sometime during 2016. When introduced all tenants will receive housing benefit direct and be responsible for paying their rent themselves.

## Statistical analysis of homelessness

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### 1. Incidence of Homelessness

- 1.1 Local housing authorities are required by Government to complete quarterly Housing Activity Returns, which include statistical information on homelessness. These include the information given in the table below on homelessness decisions made by the Council in the last 3 years.

Homelessness Information	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Number of applicants to whom a full duty is owed.	61	65	52
Number of applicants found to be intentionally homeless.	12	9	10
Number of applicants found not to be in priority need.	16	11	15
Number of applicants found to be not homeless.	25	18	16
Number of applicants found to be ineligible for assistance.	0	1	2
<b>Total number of homelessness applications</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>95</b>

- 1.2 As can be seen the number of applicants to whom a full homelessness duty is owed reduced from 65 in 2013/2014 to 52 in 2014/2015. It should be noted that the total number of homelessness applications has also reduced by 17% from 114 to 95 over the last three years. This is mainly due to both the positive proactive approach taken by the Homelessness Prevention service in achieving alternative housing solutions prior to a homeless application being received by the Council, and the appointment of one additional full-time Homelessness Prevention Officer in June 2013 as part of the Council's Welfare Reform Mitigation Action Plan.

- 1.3 Information on the ethnicity of all Homeless applicants is set out in the table below. The ethnicity of homeless applicants is recorded and included on quarterly Government returns:

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
White British/Irish	72	59	56
Bangladeshi/Pakistani/Indian	3	8	9
African/Caribbean	0	1	1
Mixed Ethnicity	0	0	1
Other	0	3	0
Not stated	39	33	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>95</b>

- 1.4 Although Gypsies and Travellers are not identified as a group on Housing Activity Returns they do face particularly problems when homeless due to their cultural aversion to 'bricks and mortar'. A number have purchased land within the District on which they have sited caravans and mobile homes for residential purposes without planning permission. Some have exhausted appeals processes, been evicted, and sought homelessness assistance, others have been granted planning permission. There are currently 18 Gypsy and Traveller sites across the District totalling 95 pitches. Eleven of the sites include 75 pitches in Roydon and Nazeing. One site at Stanford Rivers is in the public sector and is owned Essex County Council. The remainder are on privately owned land. National policy requires that there is a significant increase in the number of gypsy and traveller sites in appropriate locations, with a focus on increased provision over the next 3-5 years.

1.5 The breakdown of the ethnicity of the population of the District is set out in the table below for information (source EFDC Census 2011):

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
White: British/Irish	107,836	86.5
White: Other e.g. European etc.	5,033	4.04
Asian: Bangladeshi/Pakistani/Indian/Chinese/Sri Lankan	5,922	4.76
African/Caribbean	2,404	1.93
Mixed: Multiple Ethnic Groups in one household	2,649	2.12
Other non-British	815	0.65
<b>Total</b>	<b>124,659</b>	<b>100</b>

1.6 In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the Council will monitor all of the Protected Characteristics of homeless applicants from April 2016.

## **2. Analysis of Priority Need**

2.1 Priority need is determined by statute and prescribes categories of persons for whom local housing authorities must secure accommodation if they are homeless, provided they have not become intentionally homeless.

2.2 Set out in the table below is an analysis of applicants found to be in priority need, unintentionally homeless and owed a full homelessness duty, taken from the Council's Housing Activity returns. These form part of the Government's PI (E) return (statistical information which is completed by all authorities) confirming those households the Council has accepted as being in a priority need and the reasons:

<b>Priority Need Category</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Applicant homeless because of fire, flood, storm or similar disaster.	1	0	1
Applicants with dependent children (including violent breakdown of relationship (partner))	53	50	37

<b>Priority Need Category</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Applicants in priority need because of pregnancy but no other children.	1	3	0
Applicants aged 16/17 years	1	1	0
Applicants formerly in care and aged 18-20 years.	0	1	1
Applicants vulnerable due to old age.	1	3	1
Applicants vulnerable because of physical disability.	3	0	6
Applicants vulnerable because of mental illness or disability.	1	6	5
Applicants vulnerable due to alcohol dependency.	0	0	0
Applicants who were former asylum seekers.	0	0	1
Vulnerable for other special reason.	0	0	0
Applicant vulnerable having been in custody or remand.	0	0	0
Applicants vulnerable for formerly being in care.	0	0	0



<b>Priority Need Category</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Applicants with care and support needs having served in HM Forces.	0	0	0
Applicants (with no children) vulnerable on account of violence including domestic violence.	0	1	0
<b>Total applicants accepted for a priority need</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>52</b>

- 2.3 The table above shows that households with dependent children (including violent breakdown of relationship (partner) represent the highest number of acceptances in each of the last 3 years. There has been a reduction in acceptances for those in priority need in 2014/15. These statistics again highlight the good success of the prevention service in being successful in identifying a housing solution to those households faced with a housing difficulty.

### **3. Reasons for Homelessness**

- 3.1 Information on reasons for homelessness acceptances in priority need groups is set out in the table below:

<b>Reason for Acceptance</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Parents not willing to accommodate	12	16	8
Other relatives not willing to accommodate.	7	2	6
Non-violent relationship breakdown.	4	1	3
Violent breakdown of relationship (partner)	6	4	6
Violent relationship breakdown (involving associated person i.e. relative)	0	0	0

<b>Reason for Acceptance</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Racially motivated violence.	0	0	0
Other forms of violence.	1	1	0
Racially motivated harassment.	0	0	0
Other forms of harassment.	0	0	0
Mortgage arrears.	1	3	0
Local authority rent arrears.	0	2	0
Housing Association rent arrears.	0	0	1
Private rented rent arrears.	7	4	6
Termination of assured short-hold tenancy.	18	25	11
Reason other than termination of assured short hold tenancy i.e. tied accommodation.	5	5	7
Leaving asylum accommodation.	0	0	1
Leaving prison/remand.	0	0	0
Left hospital.	0	1	0
Left other institution or Care.	0	0	1
Leaving armed forces home.	0	0	0
Other reason.	0	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>52</b>

- 3.2 The figures show the two most common reasons for acceptances of homelessness. Firstly, the Termination of Assured Short-hold Tenancies leading to the loss of private rented accommodation which is mainly due to the above national average rent levels that are being seen across the Epping Forest District. Secondly, on account of parents no longer willing to accommodate their children.

# Housing Advice

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Local housing authorities have a statutory duty to offer housing advice and assistance free of charge on homelessness and the prevention of homelessness. They also have a duty to ensure that a Housing Allocations Scheme for determining priorities for allocating social housing is available for inspection and that a summary of that scheme is available, on request, free of charge.
- 1.2 Landlord authorities have a duty to provide their tenants with information on the express terms of their tenancies, including their statutory rights in respect of assignments, successions and assignments by way of mutual exchange.
- 1.3 Advice and assistance on homelessness and the prevention of homelessness can encompass a wide range of issues, many of which require specialist knowledge. Some cases, for example those involving debt management, are referred to the CAB. The CAB employs 2 full-time (temporary) Debt Advisors who provide advice to homeless people. Both Debt Advisor posts are funded by the Council under its Welfare Reform Mitigation Action Plan until March 2016 (for a period of 2 ½ years) in order to assist those who have been affected by the Welfare Reforms. Some cases may be referred to other agencies including the Council's Benefit Division.
- 1.4 Advice is given on a range of other matters including:
  - Harassment
  - Illegal evictions by private landlords
  - Properties in need of repair, including those which are unfit for habitation
  - Houses in Multiple Occupation
  - Charitable organisations assisting homeless people (including victims of domestic abuse)
  - Securing private rented accommodation
  - Access to shared ownership schemes
  - Property rights in cases of relationship breakdown or other domestic issues
  - Interim and temporary accommodation
  - Nominations to other local housing authorities

## 2. Provision of Information

- 2.1 A range of advice and information leaflets are made available, some produced by the Communities Directorate, others published by the National Homeless Advice Service and the CLG. Where English is not the first language of the client, assistance can be obtained through approved agencies and documents can be translated in appropriate cases. For the visually impaired, literature can be made available either in large print or by CD or Braille. The Council also provides assistance to adults with care and support needs (and those who may not have access to a computer) to make an on-line housing application to apply to join the Council's Housing Register. Where a profoundly deaf client is a sign user, the Council can arrange "signing" through an approved agency. A loop system for people with hearing difficulties is available at the Civic Offices and at the Area Housing Office (South) at The Broadway, Loughton. Home visits will be made in appropriate instances.
- 2.2 Under the HomeOption choice based lettings scheme, fortnightly Property Lists are produced and are available at housing offices and the Council's Information Desks across the District giving details of properties in which home seekers can express an interest.

- 2.3 The Council's tenant's magazine "Housing News" is sent to all tenants 3 times each year, and when appropriate, to all home seekers providing advice on a range of Housing Services.

### **3. Liaison with the Citizens Advice Bureau**

- 3.1 The CAB has offices in the District in Epping, Waltham Abbey and Loughton. The Council has a Service Level Agreement with the CAB to provide a range of advice and to support those who have difficulties expressing their needs effectively. The Council contributed £114,000 from its General Fund in 2014/15 towards CAB running costs.
- 3.2 The Council has formal arrangements for referring cases and, in addition to front-line liaison on a case by case basis, the Council's Assistant Director (Housing Operations), Housing Options Manager, Benefit's Manager and Policy Officer meets with the Bureau's office Managers each quarter.
- 3.3 Where a client is pursuing a review of a homelessness decision made by the Council they are advised in writing to seek assistance from the CAB or Shelter. Often, where applicants seek advice from one of the CAB's, they in turn seek specialist advice from their dedicated solicitor.

# Homelessness Prevention

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Homelessness Prevention Team is an integral part of the Housing Options Service. The team is led by the Assistant Housing Options Manager (Homelessness), assisted by 2 part-time Senior Homelessness Prevention Officers.
- 1.2 The work has proved highly effective which is explained at Section 2 below. As previously reported this has not only seen a huge reduction in the level of acceptances, it has also led to a high number of people being able to remain in their current homes.
- 1.3 The number of cases assisted with through homelessness prevention exceeds the number of homelessness cases to whom a statutory duty is owed. This proactive approach by the Council ensures that any unnecessary homeless applications no longer occur. However, despite this “gate keeping”, approach, the Council ensures that all its statutory duties are met under the Housing Act 1996 PT VII as amended and will always arrange for a homeless application to be received from a person who requires that safety net.

## 2. Statistics

- 2.1 Homelessness Prevention Officers now provide a comprehensive service with a range of initiatives at their disposal to assist them with resolving the housing difficulties of clients they are seeking to serve.
- 2.2 The table below shows the number of cases that presented to the Homelessness Prevention Service in the last 3 years and the preventative actions taken:

Prevention Action	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Mediation	0	2	2
Reconciliation	9	8	3
Financial payments from homelessness prevention fund.	6	3	2
Debt advice.	5	3	4
Resolving housing benefit problem.	10	13	6

<b>Prevention Action</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Sanctuary scheme for victims of domestic violence.	2	5	2
Crisis intervention.	2	4	3
Negotiation to help someone remain in the private rented sector.	3	17	7
Providing other assistance to enable someone to remain in private rented sector.	18	28	30
Mortgage arrears.	4	15	5
Other homelessness prevention measure (where work has commenced but there has been no further contact and resolution is unknown).	167	234	274
Housed in hostel or HMO.	7	6	1
Housed in private rented sector with landlord incentive scheme.	85	91	66
Housed in private rented sector without landlord incentive scheme.	80	53	80
Accommodation arranged with friends or relatives.	22	39	30
Supported accommodation.	18	22	29
Social housing transfer.	7	9	8

<b>Prevention Action</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Social housing: Housing Register offer.	48	41	45
Social housing: Housing Association direct offer.	4	10	13
Low cost home ownership scheme.	0	1	1
Other homelessness relieved.	4	9	4
<b>Total cases prevented</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>615</b>
<b>Total cases</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>710</b>
<b>Percentage of cases prevented</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>87%</b>

2.3 During the period set out in the above table, the Prevention Service dealt with 2,037 cases. The figures do not take into account the many other enquiries made by the general public. This has been a considerable achievement. These results have had a direct impact on the homelessness acceptance rate, which has significantly reduced during the same period.

### **3. Preventing Homelessness Initiatives**

3.1 The Council has a number of initiatives in place to assist those who have either lost their home or are facing eviction. All of these initiatives are set out in this section of the Strategy and form part of the Council's plan to assist homeless applicants through the current financial climate and to prevent re-possession.

### **4. The Epping Forest Housing Aid Scheme (EFHAS)**

4.1 One of the difficulties that homeless and other housing applicants have in accessing the private rented sector (especially those in receipt of housing benefit), is to provide damage deposit guarantees in advance of occupation, which is routinely required by private landlords. Because of this, many homeless applicants have no alternative but to seek accommodation from the Council. If they are in a priority need category, the Council then has a legal duty to provide accommodation.

4.2 The Epping Forest Housing Aid Scheme (EFHAS) is a scheme for helping homeless people to access private rented accommodation. It was set up in 1995 by a specially-created voluntary organisation as a registered charity, with financial support from the National Lottery Charities Board and the District Council, the respective contributions being £20,000 and £5,000. In early 2005, EFHAS learnt that their bid to the Big Lottery Fund for additional capital funding of £20,000 had been successful, which increased their funds to around £40,000 at that time. Furthermore, the Council's Cabinet agreed that £26,500 of additional CLG funding be used to assist the scheme in both 2011/2012 & 2012/13.



- 4.3 EFHAS is able to help homeless people by providing damage deposit guarantees to the landlords of the properties the applicant wishes to rent. All the guarantees are covered by money held in EFHAS's bank account. Furthermore, the Council has an Underwriting Agreement with EFHAS whereby it underwrites up to £40,000 of damage deposit guarantees in order to ensure that the guarantees did not over-commit EFHAS's available resources. Since the scheme has been introduced, the Council has not been called upon to pay out any of the underwritten guarantees.
- 4.4 Between 1995 and June 2015, EFHAS helped over 350 homeless families move into the private-rented sector in this way, who would otherwise probably have been unable to do so. Many of these families would have had to seek accommodation from the Council direct. Currently there are 75 guarantees in place totalling £58,000.
- 4.5 All referrals to EFHAS are made by the Council through the Housing Options Section. Families who are assisted with rental loans have their new accommodation inspected by the Council's Private Sector Housing Team to ensure they are suitable and free from any significant hazards.
- 4.6 Assistance can also be given to applicants who do not have sufficient furniture through the Furniture Re-use Project based in Epping.

## **5. The Rental Loan Scheme**

- 5.1 The Rental Loan Scheme was set up in 2008/2009 following the Council receiving a grant of £10,000 from the CLG in recognition of its excellent performance in preventing homelessness. The scheme complements the EFHAS scheme and provides applicants with a rental loan to meet the costs of the first month's rent in advance when securing accommodation in the private sector. Applicants are required to repay the loan on an interest free basis over 24 months, thereby re-cycling the budget to enable others to benefit from the scheme in the future. In December 2008, the Cabinet agreed that an additional £20,000 would be made available for the scheme in order to assist applicants during the current financial climate. Furthermore, the Council's Cabinet agreed that £26,500 of CLG funding would be used to provide further rental loans in both 2011/12 & 2012/13. At the time of writing, there are funds to provide around a further 10 rental loans. Families who are assisted with rental loans have their new accommodation inspected by the Private Sector Housing Team to ensure they are suitable and free from any significant hazards.

## **6. Housing Association Leasing Direct (HALD)**

- 6.1 The Council set up a Housing Association Leasing Direct (HALD) scheme with Genesis Housing Association in July 2010. The Council has assisted 22 households who would have otherwise been homeless in accessing accommodation under the scheme through nominations made by the Homelessness Prevention Team. Those referred must be eligible for full housing benefit in order to qualify for assistance, with the household being able to remain in the property for 2 years under an assured short-hold tenancy.

## **7. Private Lease Agreements Converting Empty Properties (PLACE)**

- 7.1 The PLACE scheme has been set up by a consortium of 7 Councils including EFDC following a successful bid for DCLG funding. The Scheme offers a capital grant to owners of long-term empty properties to renovate their property to a standard suitable for letting. In return the owner is obliged to lease the property for three years to Genesis Housing Association and the accommodation will be made available to families nominated by the Homelessness Prevention Team. The Council has assisted 4 households in this way that would otherwise have been homeless.

## **8. Parental Exclusions**

- 8.1 Young people can sometimes have volatile relationships with their parents and can be at risk of exclusion from their home. "Relate", who are a charity providing relationship support to people of all ages and backgrounds through its network of counsellors, receive referrals and seek a resolution to family difficulties and have an 80% success rate. In some cases, an exit plan is drawn up for the young person to move on to independent accommodation at the appropriate time. In the past year, the Homelessness Prevention Team has also worked with Essex County Council's Homelessness Response Team who also mediate between young people and families and provides other general support.

## **9. Young Parent Scheme**

- 9.1 Railway Meadow in Ongar is a supported housing scheme built in partnership with Brentwood and Uttlesford Councils for young parents, which provides support to help young people overcome challenges during their pregnancy and the first year of their child's life. The scheme consists of 13 self-contained flats with a communal lounge, activity area, training kitchen and office. The accommodation is offered to young Mothers, Fathers and couples aged between 16 and 25 years of age. The support gives young people essential parenting and life skills to enable them to move on and live independent lives. The scheme is owned and managed by East Thames and referrals are received from the Council, and Brentwood and Uttlesford Councils, with residents being re-housed by their host authority at the appropriate time. Epping Forest District Council has nomination rights to 8 of the flats.

## **10 Epping Forest District "Sanctuary" Scheme.**

- 10.1 The Council's "Sanctuary" Scheme assists victims of domestic violence or Hate Crime on a tenure neutral basis. The scheme provides a safe room within the victim's home. A typical sanctuary room would include a fire door with mortice locks, smoke detectors, fire blanket and two fire extinguishers. The victim would be supplied with a mobile phone to summon emergency assistance. The Council's works Safer Communities Team works in partnership with, Essex Police Hate Crime Unit, Essex Fire and Rescue and Safer Places (formerly known as Harlow Women's Aid) on the provision of the schemes. All referrals are made through the Homelessness Prevention Team. There are currently five "active" sanctuary rooms installed which have prevented homelessness. Since the scheme became operational in 2006 16 Sanctuary schemes have been installed across the Epping Forest District

## **11 Single Accommodation for Epping Forest (SAFE) Project.**

- 11.1 SAFE is managed by NACRO Community Enterprises, a registered housing association and charity, which offers supported accommodation to single people. The scheme works in partnership with Social Care's Divisional Based Intervention Team, the Essex Probation Service, the Youth Offending Team and Family Mosaic Support. The project is used in resolving the housing difficulties of single people across the District who otherwise would become homeless. SAFE was set up in 1993 with funding from the former Housing Corporation, the Council and the Probation Service. The Council provided SAFE with land free of charge for the first of the developments and they now provide 37 Units of accommodation. This is in a mix of accommodation which is either shared or self-contained.

- 11.2 Properties in the scheme are furnished and managed by SAFE, which lets them under a licence or an assured short-hold tenancy. Most residents are at the scheme for around one year. The scheme is managed by a Project Manager and supported by a team of Project Workers. Around 75% of all referrals are made by the Council with the balance being made from other key agencies. The main client group is 16-18 year olds, although people up to the age of 25 years are accepted. Those referred are assessed by the Project Manager with a report on each case being referred to the SAFE Panel (comprising representatives from key agencies) for consideration. Those not accepted onto the scheme can appeal against the decision. On average there are 20 admissions annually to the scheme.
- 11.3 The Council can provide move-on accommodation by providing SAFE residents with a direct offer of accommodation under the terms of the Housing Allocations Scheme. However, other move on options can be considered by SAFE Staff.

## **12 Rough Sleeping**

- 12.1 The Council has only identified a very small number of rough sleepers within the District. Much of this is due to the work of the Homelessness Prevention Team. The CLG awarded a grant of £361,000 to Essex County Council to assist authorities in Essex with the development of services to assist with dealing with rough sleeping. During 2014/15 a contract was awarded to "St Mungo's Broadway" who are now able to provide a proactive service to assist rough sleepers in the Essex area. This will involve workers visiting the rough sleeper and making immediate arrangements to reconnect with the area with which they have an established connection.

## **13. Preventing Repossession Fund**

- 13.1 The Council received a grant of £47,500 from the Communities and Local Government (CLG) at the end of June 2009, to enable the Council to extend small loans to families at risk of homelessness through repossession or evictions. In March 2012, a further grant of £30,000 was received as part of a preventing re-possession national allocation. The Government issued guidance on the use of the grant and is keen that it supports the maximum number of households in need of financial assistance during these difficult times, enabling them to remain in their own homes.
- 13.2 Under the Government's guidance, financial assistance through small interest free loans ranging from £1,000 to £3,000 per household capped to a maximum of £5,000 available interest free is made available. Final decisions on how the money is deployed rest with the Council and are based on individual local need and circumstances. In addition to homeowners, the funding is to be used to assist residents in all forms of tenure that are struggling with their rental payments and face eviction.
- 13.3 Loans are agreed by senior officers and are repayable by the applicant over a period of 1-5 years depending upon the size of the loan and the circumstances of the applicant. This allows the money to be re-cycled to help other households in the future. Only those households who, following investigations, are found to be genuinely unable to pay their rent or mortgage, due to "income shock" caused by loss of earnings where there is no history of previous arrears, are able to benefit.

13.4 Loans are only be agreed, when the recipient is prepared to act on debt advice to make repayments more affordable following the intervention of an advisor. They will be provided where lenders cannot apply forbearance measures due to the level of arrears, but will freeze possession action as a result of the loan, on the basis that all parties are prepared to compromise on the debt owed and should be made to recover the position, (rather than fully clear arrears) where all other options have failed. Loans are not be made where there are other ways to resolve the problem. For example, if the arrears are caused by housing benefit delays, assistance should be given in dealing with the matter. Loans are only made where it would enable a household to remain in place where no other option would lead to this outcome.

#### **14. Discretionary Housing Payment**

14.1 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) are sums of money paid to people who need help with their housing costs. Private sector tenants who have a change of circumstances, such as a loss of employment, may find that their contractual rent is higher than their housing benefit entitlement. DHPs can help private sector tenants meet the shortfall and prevent them going into arrears and subsequently becoming homeless. Payments are made over a short period until the tenant's circumstances improve or they obtain more affordable accommodation.

#### **15. Government's "Gold Standard" for Homelessness Prevention Services**

15.1 The Government launched its "Gold Standard" benchmarking scheme in April 2013. The scheme encourages councils to continuously improve and provide more effective and value for money Homelessness Prevention Services through sector-led diagnostic Peer Reviews. In order to achieve the Gold Standard, each service must demonstrate through the Peer Review that it meets with the Standard's 10 Key Deliverables which includes; restricting the use of bed and breakfast accommodation and providing a comprehensive homelessness prevention service which provides high quality housing advice and support to homeless people.

15.2 Although there is no legal requirement to reach the Government's Gold Standard, the Council is working with Brentwood Borough Council, Harlow District Council, Uttlesford District Council and Chelmsford City Council in order to achieve the Gold Standard. At the time of writing the Council is due to have its Homelessness Prevention Service reviewed by the partner authorities. Any recommendations for improvements made will be considered, and if appropriate actioned, with the intention of achieving the Gold Standard within this financial year.

15.3 Achieving the Gold standard could assist the Council in securing future Government funding for the Homelessness Prevention Service in future years.

## Support schemes, welfare and mediation services

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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 A number of support schemes are in place in the District to support people who have been homeless or may be at risk of being homeless and are as follows:

### 2. Safer Places Floating Support Scheme (Stay Safe)

- 2.1 This is known as the 'Stay Safe' scheme and was launched in January 2003, and can assist up to 14 households at any one time.
- 2.2 The aim of Stay Safe is to assist any person experiencing (or at risk of) domestic abuse to remain safely in their own homes. It can also be used to support any person moving on from a refuge. There is access to a 24-hour emergency help line with contact being made by a Support Worker at least once each week. Risk assessments are undertaken and, if it is safe, meetings take place in clients' homes. Otherwise, local drop-in centres are used. On average, the Support Worker will spend around 3 hours per week on each case. Plans are made, setting out the action required to provide the practical support, information, advice and guidance needed in each case. These are kept under review with risk assessments updated.
- 2.3 Although referrals to Stay Safe may be made by other agencies, many are made through the Council's Homelessness Prevention Team. A number of referrals are also made from the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).
- 2.4 Applicants can visit the drop-in centres and have access to a solicitor, if required. They can also attend various support sessions.
- 2.5 Stay Safe has a full-time Support Worker in the District who reports to an area co-ordinator based in Harlow and is also responsible for managing three Support Workers at similar schemes in East Hertfordshire, Broxbourne and Harlow.

### 3. Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

- 3.1 The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) draws together key agencies in a local forum to co-ordinate actions and resources towards addressing the highest risk victims of domestic violence. The Housing Options Team participates in the MARAC process and attends meetings.

### 4. Family Mosaic

- 4.1 In addition to providing floating support through the Tenancy Support Scheme, Family Mosaic provides floating support to vulnerable people irrespective of tenure across the Epping Forest District.
- 4.2 The service also provides a high level of support to homeless applicants placed in bed and breakfast accommodation.
- 4.3 The Support Worker provides agreed levels of support with the client. This will include acting as a key link with other agencies and preparing the client to acquire the skills needed to sustain a permanent tenancy.
- 4.4 Support Workers also provide a service to people whom the Council does not owe a duty under homelessness legislation. All referrals to the scheme for those living in bed and breakfast accommodation are through the homelessness assessment officers.

- 4.5 The Assistant Housing Options Manager (Homelessness) meets on a monthly basis with Family Mosaic Managers to discuss contact and service delivery matters.

## **5 Epping Re-Use Furniture Project**

- 6.1 The Epping Re-Use Furniture Project, offers good quality second hand furniture and household items at significantly reduced prices, and in some instances free of charge when referred by specific agencies. The Housing Options Section makes referrals in appropriate cases.

## **6. Essex National Probation Service**

- 6.1 The Housing Options Section works with the National Probation Service's Housing Liaison Officer on cases referred by the Service. If a full housing duty is owed to the person referred, then the Council will continue to work with the Probation Service to ensure that they are able to sustain any permanent accommodation offered. A Protocol is in place between the Council and the Probation Service which sets out the way in which the service will be delivered effectively.

## **7. North Essex Mental Health Partnership**

- 7.1 The Housing Options Section works in partnership with the North Essex Mental Health Partnership to ensure that housing advice and assistance is provided to people who are suffering from mental illness. The Council will arrange to visit clients either at their current place of residence or in hospital to discuss their housing situation. Clients may be provided with bed and breakfast accommodation in the first instance with a referral being made to Family Mosaic so that housing related support is provided from the outset. The Mental Health Team carry out their own assessment of the client's ability to live independently. In addition, some clients with low level mental health needs are placed in the Council's short-term accommodation at Hemnall House, Epping. A Protocol is in place between the Council and the Mental Health Partnership which sets out the way in which the service will be delivered effectively.

## **8. Multi-Agency Public Protection Panel Arrangements**

- 8.1 The Council is a member of the Multi-agency Public Protection Panel Arrangements (MAPPA). The Panel is co-ordinated by Essex Police and manages high risk offenders. The Housing Options Manager and the Assistant Housing Options Manager (Homelessness) attends when cases are being considered involving homeless applicants who are seeking assistance from the Council.

# The Role of Essex County Council's Social Care

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 There have been changes to Children's Social Care at Essex County Council. The majority of children's services are now provided on a 'quadrant basis' (Essex has been split into four geographical areas with each area being a quadrant) and children in the Epping Forest District receive services from the 'West Essex Quadrant'. Many staff providing services for Children in the Epping Forest District (under the West Essex Quadrant) are now located at Goodman House in Harlow.

## 2. Leaving and After Care Team

- 2.2 The Leaving & After Care Team is quadrant-based and located at Goodman House, Harlow. The team takes casework responsibility for children up to the age of 15 years and six months. The team provide support whilst the young people are in care, for example: assessing need, creating "Pathway plans" and assisting in the transition process of young people moving on from care. The team also provides aftercare support according to the specific provisions of the Children Act 1989 as amended by the Children Leaving Care Act 2000.
- 2.3 The Council's Homelessness Prevention Team are notified by the Leaving and After Care Team prior to a young person leaving care in order that their housing needs can be assessed. In general, the Council arranges for NACRO (a housing association providing specialist housing and support for young people) to accommodate young people leaving care in the SAFE Scheme to give them extra preparation for independent living. The Council then re-houses the young person when they move on from NACRO into Council accommodation with Floating Support.

## 3. Homeless Response Team

- 3.1 The Homeless Response Team is a small, centrally based team (located at County Hall, Chelmsford) which seeks to engage with 16 & 17 year olds on the verge of parental eviction and mediates with families to avoid homelessness and the necessity of providing accommodation under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989.
- 3.2 The team works in partnership with the Council's Homelessness Prevention Team and carries out joint assessments either through planned sessions or in response to urgent requests (whenever this is possible).

## 4. Assessment & Intervention Team

- 4.1 The Assessment and Intervention Team is also quadrant-based and located in Goodman House, Harlow. The Team respond to the immediate needs of children and families referred to Children's Social Care where an assessment of that need is required and especially in relation to "Safeguarding" (Child Protection) and "Children in Need". Referrals to this service are through the central Initial Response Team, with reference to Essex County Council threshold criteria. The Council will, in accordance with the Essex-wide Intentionally Homeless Families Protocol, alert Children's Social Care where families with dependent children are found to be intentionally homeless and are being required to leave their accommodation.

## 5. Family Support & Protection

- 5.1 The Family Support and Protection Team is Quadrant-based at Goodman House, Harlow responding in the longer term for those children subject to Child Protection Plans, and Child in Need plans, with reference to Essex County Council threshold criteria.

## **6. Learning Disability and Physical Impairment Team**

- 6.1 The Learning Disability and Physical Impairment Team are quadrant-based and located at Goodman House, Harlow. New referrals are initially received by a central Essex team (Social Care Direct) and then forwarded to Goodman House for further assistance. The Learning Disability and Physical Impairment Team refer people requiring housing and support to schemes called Barnes Court, and Tolpuddle House in Ongar which are owned and managed by East Thames Housing Association.

## **7. Community Assessment Team for Older People**

- 7.1 The Community Assessment Team for Older People are quadrant-based and located at Goodman House. The team assist people aged over 65. Initial referrals are received first by a central Essex team (Social Care Direct) and then passed where necessary to Goodman House, Harlow.

## **8. Safeguarding Adults**

- 8.1 The Council employs a full-time Safeguarding Officer who reports to the Safer Communities Manager within the Community Directorate's Community Safety Team. The Homelessness Prevention Team makes a number of referrals to the Safeguarding Officer for investigation. The Council has a Corporate Safeguarding Group Chaired by the Assistant Director (Community Services). Key staff has received training on Safeguarding. The Council has a Safeguarding Strategy and a reporting form and has an e-learning package on the subject available to all staff.



## Services for people involved with drug and alcohol abuse

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1. The Housing Options Section deals mainly with referrals from the Community Drug and Alcohol Services known as “Choices”. The service works with clients of all ages with their funding coming predominantly through the Essex Drug and Alcohol Partnership (EDAP) whose commissioning function is managed by the Essex Drug and Alcohol Action Team based at Essex County Council’s offices in Chelmsford.
2. Some referrals are dealt with by the Alcohol and Drugs Advisory Services (ADAS). ADAS clients are assessed and complex alcohol cases are then referred to the Community Drug and Alcohol Team (CDAT) with Choices dealing with drug only cases. Client with Alcohol problems far outnumber those with drug problems.
3. Choices offer outreach services in Loughton and Waltham Abbey. Clients are referred through a number of sources including hospitals, ADAS, GPs, family members and self-referrals. The service is an all age recovery management service with links and referral routes to more structured treatment interventions where required. Family support is offered which helps young people remain in their own homes, but where necessary they are referred to emergency night shelters across the County.
4. The aim of Choices is to support clients and families to build recovery and to support them to re-integrate into society and to become free of drugs dependence. The intention is to also develop Alcohol prevention in a similar way in the future.
5. Homelessness is a common problem with drug and alcohol clients. In order to deal with the problem, the Council has entered into a local protocol with treatment providers to ensure effective working arrangements.

## Homelessness Assessments, Decisions, Notifications and Reviews

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- 1.1 Around 80% of homelessness interviews are conducted by prior arrangement, helping staff to manage workloads and clients to avoid long waiting times. Home and hospital visits are offered when appropriate. Where English is not the first language of the client, staff are able to call upon interpretation services. A 'point card' can be used to establish which language is required and immediate translation can be effected by telephone. Document translation can also be arranged in appropriate cases.
- 1.2 The process of assessing applications is complex and governed by legislation. As homelessness law is always changing, all staff are kept up to date on any case law that may affect the decision-making process.
- 1.3 The Council adopts a proactive approach to preventing homelessness, placing applicants in accommodation when statutorily required to do so. Although the Council remains committed to meeting its statutory obligations, referrals are only made to Homelessness Assessment Officers if the Homelessness Prevention Team has explored every avenue in preventing homelessness. This approach has brought about a significant drop in homeless referrals.
- 1.4 Investigations include contact with previous landlords (both public and private), mortgage lenders, solicitors, Environmental Health Officers, Land Registry, Social Workers, Medical Practitioners, Occupational Therapists, hospital workers, victim support groups, Police, neighbours, relatives, and the Immigration & Nationality Directorate.
- 1.5 These investigations rest with the Homelessness Assessment Officer, who arranges interim and temporary accommodation as necessary. All homelessness decisions are signed off by the Assistant Housing Options Manager (Homelessness) prior to the applicant being notified of the decision.
- 1.6 Due to the shift in emphasis to prevention, the Homelessness Service was re-structured in 2010. There is now one full time and one part-time Homelessness Assessment Officer and 5.5 FTE Homelessness Prevention Officers being a ratio Homeless Case Workers and Homelessness Prevention Officers which is the national norm.
- 1.7 Progress of homelessness applications is monitored and overseen by the Assistant Housing Options Manager (Homelessness). The Assistant Director (Housing Operations) chairs quarterly Customer Improvement Meetings which the Housing Options Manager attends to discuss performance over a range of indicators including homelessness.

### **2 Out of Hours Service**

- 2.1 The Council provides a 24 hour 365 day per year emergency out-of-hours homeless response service. Members of the Homelessness Team are on call on a duty rota and will respond to cases where a person, for example, could become homeless due to fire or flood.

### **3. Reviews**

- 3.1 Following any homelessness decision, applicants are advised of their legal right to request a review of the decision and agencies that can assist them in the review process including the CAB and Shelter.
- 3.2 Legislation requires that a request for a review of a homelessness decision should be made within 21 days of the notification of the original decision. If the applicant requests a review outside of the deadline, the Council may offer additional time depending upon the circumstances.

- 3.3 Some reviews are carried out by an officer senior to the person who took the original decision and had not been involved in the original decision. Regard is given to the Code of Guidance with all reviews.
- 3.4 However, many decisions on non-homeless and intentionality are considered by the Housing Appeals and Reviews Panel which comprises five District Councillors. Applicants are able to put their case both in writing and in person at Panel meetings. If they prefer, they can appoint a third party to represent them, for instance, a solicitor, friend, Ward Member or a representative from Shelter or the CAB.
- 3.5 All statutory reviews are completed within the statutory 56 days, unless otherwise agreed with the applicant. Ample time is given to applicants to provide documentary evidence prior to any decision being made.
- 3.6 If a homeless applicant is dissatisfied with a decision made at a statutory review, provided their application is made within 21 days of the statutory review decision, they have the right to pursue a further review on a point of law through the County Court. This is explained to applicants in decision letters.
- 3.7 Where a homeless applicant is in priority need and not intentionally homeless but has no local connection with the District, they may be referred to another local authority where they do have a connection. Each authority is required to abide by the Homelessness Code of Guidance on local connection rules. Should there be any dispute between local authorities on who owes the duty; an accredited arbitrator may be appointed by mutual agreement to resolve the matter. The Council has only appointed an arbitrator on one occasion when the case was found in the Council's favour.

# Accommodating Homeless Households

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Where a local housing authority has reason to believe that a homeless applicant has a priority need for accommodation, it has a statutory duty to arrange interim accommodation for the applicant, pending completion of enquiries into the case. This duty arises under Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996 Part VII as amended. If, on completion of enquiries, it is decided that a full housing duty is owed to the applicant, temporary accommodation must be arranged until the full housing duty is discharged. This duty arises under Section 193.
- 1.2 The Council uses a variety of interim and temporary accommodation including its Norway House hostel, and a small block of self-contained flats at Hemnall House, Epping where tenants receive out-reach support from hostel staff. Homeless applicants are rarely placed in the Council's own housing stock. For management reasons, certain single homeless applicants are provided with Bed and Breakfast accommodation.
- 1.3 The table below shows the distribution of households between the different types of temporary accommodation for the past 3 years.

Year	Norway House Hostel	Hemnall House	Council Stock	Brook Haven And Women's Refuge	Bed & Breakfast	Total
2012/13	23	9	5	9	7	53
2013/14	28	4	4	4	7	47
2014/15	39	6	7	6	5	63

## 2. Homeless Persons' Hostel Norway House, North Weald

- 2.1 The Council's hostel, Norway House, North Weald (a Grade II listed building) underwent a major refurbishment and improvement scheme in 2004/05.
- 2.2 The hostel has a number of facilities including an enclosed garden which provides a play area for children under 5 and a play area for older children equipped by a group of volunteers, raising funds mainly through grants from Essex County Council Community Partnership and Essex Youth Development and Child-Care Partnership. In 2014, the Hostel had Wi Fi access installed which enables all residents to access the Internet. The Council works with the Norway House Stakeholder Partnership which comprises representatives from local schools, Churches and Health Service staff. The group aims to generally improve the quality of life for residents.
- 2.3 Norway House has ample parking facilities and a large secure store for residents' furniture, should they be unable to accommodate all their possessions in their rooms. Homeless households in other accommodation can also benefit from the storage.

- 2.4 There are 32 rooms on the ground and first floors which are let individually or as suites, as necessary. Four attic rooms have been refurbished, with their own private facilities. Two additional rooms are reserved for night and week-end emergencies, with beds made-up ready for use. Residents have use of communal kitchens, common rooms and laundry facilities. Over the last three years, the majority of rooms have been provided with their own bathroom facilities with the remainder being converted within the next year. A previously unused area outside of the communal kitchen has recently been converted into a meeting room.
- 2.5 The former Caretaker's accommodation has been converted to provide three separate rooms for 16-17 year olds in order to meet reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for this younger age group. Residents provide their own furniture, but where necessary basic items of equipment such as beds can be supplied from hostel stores.
- 2.6 In 1992, in response to an increase in homelessness at that time, five chalets providing accommodation for 10 families were built in the grounds to the rear of the main hostel, and continue to provide a valuable contribution to the assistance Norway House can provide.
- 2.7 The hostel has 5 staff supervised by the Assistant Housing Options Manager (Homelessness). The hostel team includes the Manager, two Deputy Managers, a Caretaker and a part-time Cleaner. Hostel Management staff have a small office near to the entrance of the main building with a service reception area for residents' enquiries.
- 2.8 The hostel has a door-entry system for the main building and closed circuit television cameras cover external doors, parking areas and some communal areas internally. These systems are controlled from the Manager's office.
- 2.9 Office opening hours are 9 am to 5 pm weekdays. A service is also provided on Saturday mornings for between 2 and 4 hours. In addition, some cover is offered on Bank Holidays. The Manager and Deputy Managers are on call on a 24 hour, 365 day rota basis to deal with emergencies.
- 2.10 On admission to the hostel, residents are given a 'welcome' pack, which includes information about local schools, health services etc. They are helped to apply for housing benefit, if necessary, and a Supporting People Tenant Support Plan is maintained.
- 2.11 Residents have a licence agreement which sets out the conditions by which they live at the hostel.

### **3. Hemnall House, Epping**

- 3.1 Hemnall House comprises 10 units of accommodation on two floors, mainly small studio flats with shared facilities, although there are some larger self-contained units.
- 3.2 The flats are occupied on a non-secure tenancy with the accommodation being carpeted and the kitchens equipped with refrigerators and cookers. Residents have use of a communal laundry room.
- 3.3 Staff offer support to tenants on an out-reach basis and visit the scheme each week. The flats are let to families with no more than 2 children (because of the limited size of the flats) who are able to live more independently than those at the hostel.
- 3.4 Some residents may be referred to Family Mosaic where additional support is needed.

### **4. Bed and Breakfast Accommodation**

- 4.1 Following a competitive tendering exercise, the Council has appointed a number of hotels both within and outside of the District to provide bed and breakfast accommodation. All hotels used have been inspected to ensure that they provide adequate living conditions and meet all health and safety requirements. Fire Safety Risk Assessments are monitored on a six-monthly basis.

4.2 EFDC has on average 10 single people living in bed and breakfast accommodation at any one time who are generally housed there as a last resort for management reasons. The vast majority of occupants receive housing benefit.

## **5 Women's Refuges**

- 5.1 The Council, in partnership with East Living provided the first Women's Refuge in the District, which opened in April 2005. It has a wide range of facilities and is supervised by a Scheme Manager and a part-time assistant.
- 5.2 It comprises 3 x 1 bedroom and 2 x 2 bedroom self-contained flats with their own kitchens and bathrooms. A Health Visitor attends regularly and the Scheme Manager ensures that all the tenants have access to a G.P. Legal advice is provided by a visiting solicitor. The Scheme Manager helps with training residents and assisting with issues such as returning to work with good links with local schools and nurseries being established.
- 5.3 Residents have Assured Short-hold Tenancies that can be renewed if they are not ready to move on. In order to be accepted on the scheme, residents must have been accepted for either the interim or full homelessness duty by the Council.
- 5.4 Safer Places is an independent domestic abuse charity dedicated to supporting adults and children affected by domestic abuse. They have refuges in Harlow, Broxbourne and Southend providing supported accommodation for up to 273 women. They also offer an outreach and floating support service in five Hertfordshire and Essex areas including the Epping Forest District. The outreach service is for persons who either cannot or will not go into a refuge. The Homelessness Prevention Team would refer households fleeing domestic violence for a refuge space. In addition, referrals are also made to Women's Aid a national charity working to end domestic abuse against women and children. They support a network of a range of domestic and sexual abuse services across the UK.

## Consultation

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1. A consultation exercise on the Strategy has been undertaken with all partner agencies, the Housing Select Committee and Town and Parish Councils. The Strategy was approved by the Housing Portfolio Holder in August 2015.
2. The Council undertakes periodic consultations with its customers including customer interview exit surveys. The homelessness service forms part of the three yearly tenant's satisfaction survey with all Housing Services.
3. The Housing Select Committee will review the Action Plan on a regular basis.

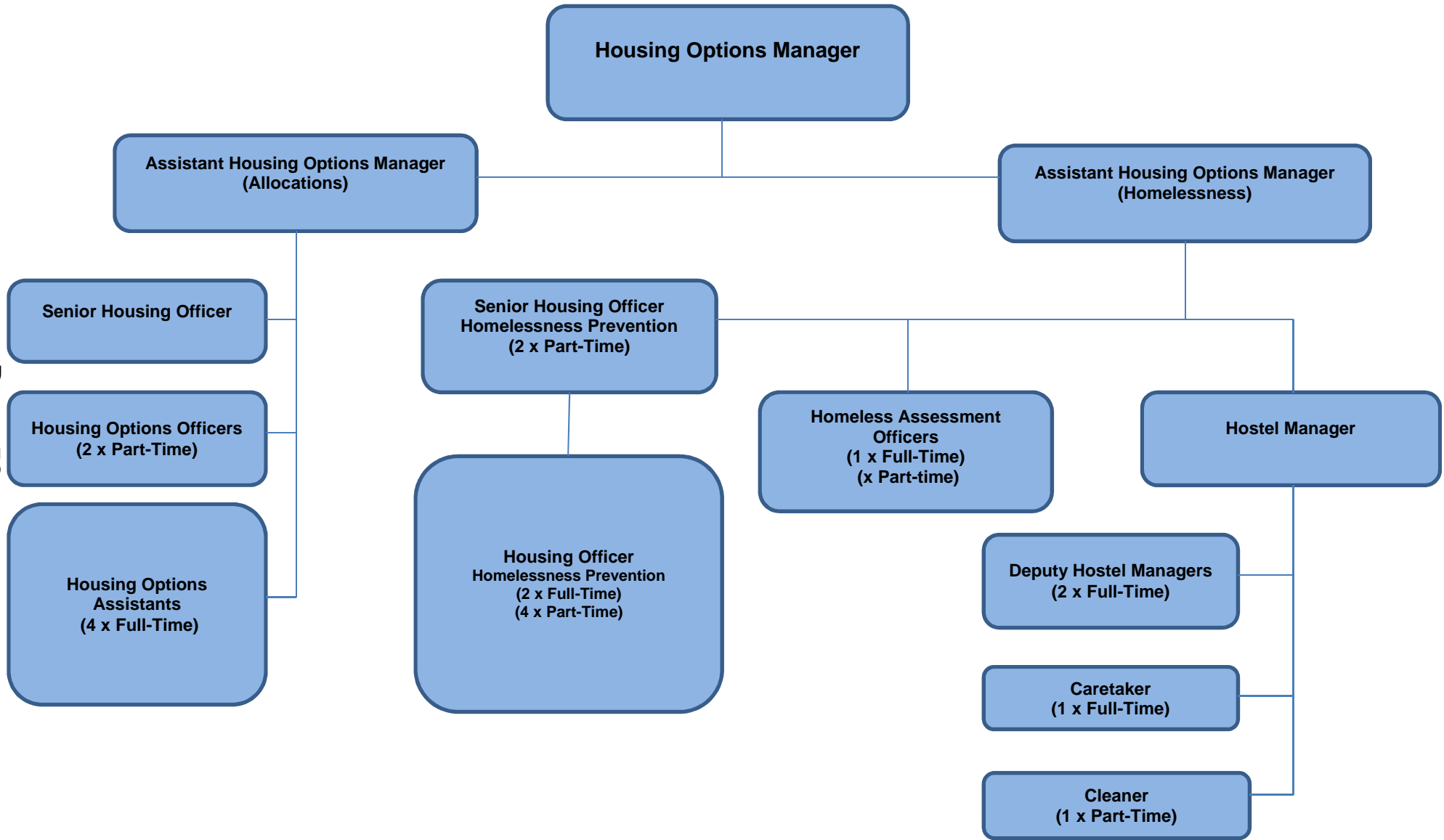
### 3. Action Plan

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Action	Priority	Target Date	Comments	Responsibility
Continue to keep the number of households in temporary accommodation to a minimum and within the Council's Key Performance Indicator target of 65 households	High	On-going		Housing Options Manager
Continue to keep the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for the single homeless to a minimum	High	On-going	Bed and Breakfast accommodation will only be used for the single homeless where there are severe management difficulties	Assistant Housing Options Manager (Homelessness)
Continue to ensure 40% affordable housing on large development sites	High	On-going	This will be achieved through local plan	Assistant Director (Property and Development)
Continuously Review the financial and underwriting support given to the Epping Forest Housing Aid Scheme	High	On-going	This is essential in tackling homelessness	Housing Options Manager
Expand the "Sanctuary" Scheme for victims of domestic violence and hate crime	Medium	On-going	5 active schemes currently in place	Housing Options Manager
Review the budget for Rental Loan Scheme as only funds left for 10 further loans	Medium	September 2015	This is essential in tackling homelessness`	Housing Options Manager



<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Monitor the Protected Characteristics of homeless applicants from April 2016	High	From April 2016	The council already monitors the Protected Characteristics of all home seekers on its Housing Register and makes comparisons with those housed. This should be extended to include Homeless Applicants	Housing Options Manager
Proceed with any actions that may result on account of the Diagnostic Peer Review on the Homeless Service and achieve the Gold Standard	High	March 2016	This is an important objective for the Council's Homelessness Prevention Team	Housing Options Manager
Keep under review the possibility of additional chalets at Norway House	High	March 2016	Survey has been undertaken	Assistant Director (Property and Development)





# Epping Forest District Council

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Communities Directorate

September 2015



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## **Report to Housing Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 16 June 2015**

**Portfolio: Housing – Cllr D. Stallan**

**Subject: Housing Service Standards – Performance Report 2014/15 and Review**



**Officer contact for further information:**

**Alan Hall – Director of Communities (01992 564004)**

**Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (01992 564607)**

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### **Recommendations:**

- (1) That performance against the previously-agreed Housing Service Standards in 2014/15 (where measured), as set out in Appendix 1, be noted;**
- (2) That, subject to the views of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, the proposed changes to the Housing Service Standards (as set out in bold italics within Appendix 1) be recommended to the Housing Portfolio Holder, and that the relevant leaflets be updated at an appropriate time; and**
- (3) That the Housing Service Standards, and performance against the Service Standards in 2015/16, be reviewed again in June 2016.**

### **Background**

1. In 2007, following consultation with the former Housing Scrutiny Panel and the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, the Housing Portfolio Holder agreed a range of Housing Service Standards, covering all of the Housing Service's main areas of activity.
2. It was also agreed that, annually, the Housing Service's performance against the Housing Service Standards should be considered (where possible and appropriate) and whether any changes should be made to the Service Standards.
3. All tenants are provided with a leaflet setting out all of the agreed Housing Service Standards, which is included as part of the Tenants Handbook given to new tenants.

### **Performance against the Housing Service Standards in 2014/15**

4. Performance against the Housing Service Standards - and the Standards themselves - has been reviewed by the former Housing Scrutiny Panel, the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation and the Housing Portfolio Holder annually since their introduction.
5. Appendix 1 provides details of the Housing Service Standards and – where measurable and appropriate – the Housing Service's performance in meeting the standards in 2014/15. As a comparison, Appendix 1 also provides details on the performance in 2013/14 and 2012/13.

6. It is emphasised that it is not possible to measure performance against every Service Standard. In a number of cases, there is nothing that can be measured, since the Standard is a “statement of intent”; in a number of other cases, whilst performance could potentially be measured, it has previously been agreed that the time and resources that would be required to properly record and monitor performance is not warranted.

### **Proposed Changes to the Service Standards**

7. The Director of Communities has reviewed the Housing Service Standards, having regard to performance in 2014/15 and changes in legislation and Council policy. As a result, a small number of changes are proposed. These are set out in bold italics under the description of the relevant standard in the first column of Appendix 1.

8. It is recommended that the proposed changes and additions to the Housing Service Standards - as set out in Appendix 1 - be recommended to the Housing Portfolio Holder for approval, and that the relevant leaflets be updated at an appropriate time. It is also suggested that performance against the Service Standards is reviewed again in June 2016.

### **Consultation Undertaken:**

The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation will be consulted on the performance against the Service Standards and the proposed changes at its next meeting in August. Their views and comments will be reported in the subsequent report to the Housing Portfolio Holder.

**Epping Forest District Council  
Housing Service**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AGAINST HOUSING SERVICE STANDARDS 2014/15**

Service Standard	Officer Responsible	Performance Measure	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	Comments
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# We aim to....

**GENERAL**

<b>(G1)</b> Report on our performance against these Service Standards to your Tenants and Leaseholders Federation every year, and review the Standards in the light of performance	Director of Communities	Whether or not performance is reported	Yes	Yes	Yes	
<b>(G2)</b> Generally satisfy at least 80% of our tenants with the overall housing service provided	Director of Communities	Overall level of tenant satisfaction as surveyed through the national STAR survey	88%	88%	88%	The Satisfaction Survey is undertaken every three years – the next survey will be undertaken in 2015
<b>(G3)</b> Respond to your letters within 10 working days on routine matters, or acknowledge within 5 working days and then provide you with a full response within 28 days on more complex issues	Director of Communities	Not measured.	N/A	N/A	N/A	

**Epping Forest District Council  
Housing Service**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AGAINST HOUSING SERVICE STANDARDS 2014/15**

Service Standard	Officer Responsible	Performance Measure	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	Comments
<b>(G4)</b> Give you an opportunity to appeal within 3 months to a senior officer about any decision made about your housing that affects you, and then (for certain specified types of appeals) <sup>(a)</sup> give you a further opportunity within a further 3 months to appeal to the Housing Appeals and Review Panel of district councillors <sup>(a)</sup>	Director of Communities	(a) Senior Officer appeals	2 appeals	135 appeals	4 appeals	The high number of appeals in 2013/14 was due to the excessive number of appeals from housing applicants removed from the Housing Register as a result of the new Housing Allocations Scheme introduced.
		(b) Panel appeals / reviews heard	6 appeals / reviews	7 appeals / reviews	7 appeals / reviews	
<b>(G5)</b> Give you an opportunity to complain about anything you are unhappy about, fully investigate your complaint, and inform you of the outcome of your complaint within the Council's published timescales.	Director of Communities	(a) No. of Step 2 complaints (to Asst. Directors) received	13 comps	19 comps	15 comps	
		(b) No. of Step 3 complaints (investigated by Complaints Officer)	11 comps	4 comps	5 comps	
<b>(G6)</b> <i>If you are unhappy about the way your complaint has been dealt with by housing officers, arrange to have your complaint heard by a panel of district councillors</i> <u>[Delete]</u>	Director of Communities	No. of Step 4 complaints received	0 comps	0 comps	0 comps	<b><i>The Council has now determined that there will no longer be a Step 4 and that Step 3 will be the last stage in internal complaints process</i></b>



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Housing Service**

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<b>Service Standard</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>(G7)</b> Deliver a copy of the Council's "Housing News" to your home (giving useful information about your housing) at least three times each year	PHO (Information/ Strategy)	No. of issues of Housing News produced	1 issue	2 issues	1 issue	Due to workload, only 1 issue of Housing News was sent to tenants. However, the next issue is in production.
<b>HOMELESSNESS</b>						
<b>(H1)</b> Give you an interview with a Homelessness Prevention Officer within 7 days of initial contact, or on the same day if an emergency	Asst. Housing Options Manager (Homelessness)	Not measured.	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(H2)</b> If necessary, provide you with suitable temporary accommodation, whilst we investigate your homelessness application, until we provide you with a written decision	Asst. Housing Options Manager (Homelessness)	Total no. of applicants in temporary accommodation at end of year	52 apps	53 apps	114 apps	
<b>(H3)</b> If requested by you, review a homelessness decision that you are unhappy with (by either a senior officer or the Housing Appeals and Review Panel of district councillors) within 8 weeks <sup>(b)</sup>	Director of Communities	% Within target time (unless with the permission of the applicant to extend period)	100%	100%	100%	

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<b>Service Standard</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>Comments</b>
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<b>(H4)</b> Advise you of your right of appeal to the County Court within 21 days on a point of law if you are unhappy with the homelessness decision after it has been reviewed <i>(Statutory right and timescale)</i>	Asst. Director of Communities (Operations)	% of applicants notified of their right	100%	100%	100%	
<b>(H5)</b> <i>Keep you in temporary accommodation for at least 3 months after providing you with our written decision, before making you an offer of suitable permanent accommodation.</i>  <u>[ Delete ]</u>	Asst. Housing Options Manager (Homelessness)	Average period in temporary accommodation	29.4 weeks	31.9 weeks	34.5 weeks	<b>The latest Housing Allocations Scheme no longer requires applicants to wait 3 months before they are able to bid for properties; homeless applicants now receive "direct offers" of accommodation.</b>

**HOUSING REGISTER AND ALLOCATIONS**

<b>(HR1)</b> Register your housing application or garage application, and advise you of the level of priority (band) given, within 10 working days of receipt of all the information we need from you and other people.	Asst. Housing Options Manager (Allocations)	(a) Average time to register	3-4 days	3-4 days	3-4 days	
		(b) No. of applications awaiting registration at end of year	0 apps	0 apps	0 apps	

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Service Standard	Officer Responsible	Performance Measure	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	Comments
<b>(HR2)</b> Notify you in writing of any change in your priority banding, within 7 days of the change being made	Asst. Housing Options Manager (Allocations)	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(HR3)</b> Write to you at least every year if you have not expressed any interest in vacant properties under the Home Options Scheme, and ask if you wish to remain on the Housing Register	Asst. Housing Options Manager (Allocations)	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(HR4)</b> Give you at least 5 calendar days notice between offering you a tenancy and the tenancy commencement date	Asst. Housing Options Manager (Allocations)	Not measured.	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(HR5)</b> Unless you are a homeless applicant, allow you to choose the vacant Council or housing association home you would like to be offered (through our HomeOption Scheme), subject to the interest expressed by other applicants with higher priority	Asst. Housing Options Manager (Allocations)	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	

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<b>Service Standard</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>Comments</b>
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<b>(HR6)</b> If you are not a Council tenant already, offer you an Introductory Tenancy initially, followed by either a Secure Tenancy or a Flexible Tenancy automatically after 1 year, if you have not caused any anti-social behaviour, have had any significant rent arrears or broken any other Conditions of Tenancy.	Area Housing Managers	Not measured.	N/A	N/A	N/A	
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<b>(HR7)</b> Give you a decision on your request for a mutual exchange within 5 working days of receiving an application from you and the other party/parties, with all the required information provided.	Asst. Housing Options Manager (Allocations)	Not measured.	N/A	N/A	N/A	
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**HOUSING MANAGEMENT**

<b>(HM1)</b> If you are a new tenant, visit you at home within 10 weeks of your tenancy commencing, to introduce you to your local housing officer and to discuss the main conditions of your tenancy and any queries you may have	Area Housing Managers	(a) No. of new tenant visits undertaken	170 Visits	190 visits	145 visits	
		(b) No. of visits undertaken within 10 weeks	143 visits	170 visits	122 visits	

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Service Standard	Officer Responsible	Performance Measure	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	Comments
<p><b>(HM2)</b> Provide you with the following options to pay your rent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At a Council Cash Office</li> <li>• At any post office</li> <li>• At any "PayPoint" access point</li> <li>• By direct debit / standing order</li> <li>• By credit card</li> <li>• By text</li> <li>• Through the internet</li> <li>• By telephone</li> <li>• By salary deduction</li> </ul>	Communities Support Manager	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<p><b>(HM3)</b> Give you a choice of <b><u>any date</u></b> <del>four dates</del> in the month to pay your rent by direct debit.</p>	Communities Support Manager	No. of direct debit payment dates available as at end of year	4 payment dates	4 payment dates	3 payment dates	<b><i>The revised wording reflects the fact that, from June 2015, tenants will not be restricted to a choice of just 4 direct debit dates, but will be able to choose any date in the month.</i></b>
<p><b>(HM4)</b> Provide you with written confirmation of the balance on your rent account in April/May each year (unless your account is clear or only in credit or arrears by less than <del>£4</del> <b>£10</b>)</p>	Area Housing Managers	Whether or not balance confirmations are sent out by end of May	Yes	Yes	Yes	<b><i>The £1 minimum amount has been in existence for many years now, and it is the view of officers that this minimum amount should now be increased to £10</i></b>

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Service Standard	Officer Responsible	Performance Measure	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	Comments
<b>(HM5)</b> Provide you with a detailed statement of your rent account for the previous 12 months on request or automatically every three months if you are in arrears by more than £1	Area Housing Managers	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(HM6)</b> Make every effort to enter into an agreement with you to clear any rent arrears that you have through reasonable instalments, before we take any legal action to recover the arrears	Area Housing Managers	Not measured.	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(HM7)</b> Make every effort to meet with you to discuss any rent arrears before any court hearing takes place	Area Housing Managers	(a) No. of visits to tenants' homes to discuss rent arrears	1,385 visits	637 visits	574 visits	
		(b) No. of office interviews held to discuss rent arrears	1,722 i/views	984 i/views	982 i/views	
<b>(HM8)</b> If you are an Introductory Tenant or a Demoted Tenant <sup>(c)</sup> , give you an opportunity to appeal to a senior officer against any proposed legal action within 2 weeks of you being advised of the proposed legal action.	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	(a) No of reviews held for introductory tenants	0 reviews	2 reviews	4 reviews	
		(b) No. of reviews held for demoted tenants	0 reviews	0 reviews	0 reviews	

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Service Standard	Officer Responsible	Performance Measure	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	Comments
<b>(HM9)</b> Remove abandoned vehicles from housing estates (after making enquiries of the DVLA on ownership and contacting the owner) within 5 weeks of receiving a complaint	Area Housing Managers	% of abandoned vehicles removed within 5 weeks of EFDC completing enquiries of the DVLA	100%	100%	100%	
<b>(HM10)</b> Remove clearly abandoned and potentially dangerous vehicles from housing estates within 5 working days of receiving a complaint	Area Housing Managers	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(HM11)</b> If you live in a flat with more than four flats in the block, clean the communal area weekly and re-charge you the cost to the Council.	Area Housing Managers	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(HM12)</b> Where we clean communal areas of blocks or flats, inspect the standard of cleaning at least twice a year	Area Housing Managers	Whether or not blocks of flats have been inspected at least twice a year	Yes	Yes	Yes	
<b>(HM13)</b> Undertake a formal inspection of your estate by a housing officer with a representative of any recognised tenant association covering your area and make a note of any required work at least once every year.	Area Housing Managers	No. of estate inspections undertaken	85 inspects	85 inspects	103 inspects	85 inspections = 100% of those due

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Service Standard	Officer Responsible	Performance Measure	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	Comments
<b>(HM14)</b> Give you a decision on your request for permission to carry out improvements to your Council home (or former Council home) within 2 weeks of us receiving your request and all the required information.	Area Housing Managers	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(HM15)</b> When you vacate your Council home, inform you of your right to compensation for certain improvements you have undertaken within 7 days of you informing us of your vacation and give you a decision on your request for compensation to your Council home within 2 weeks of us receiving your application and all the required information.	Area Housing Managers	No. of compensation claims agreed	1 claim	4 claims	6 claims	
<b>(HM16)</b> If you are unable to succeed <sup>(d)</sup> to a tenancy because there has already been one succession, we will offer you a new tenancy of the property in which you are currently living or, if you are not a spouse and are under-occupying the property, the tenancy of another property.	Area Housing Managers	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	



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<b>(HM17) Comply with the Government's Respect Standard for Housing Management in dealing with anti-social behaviour on housing estates</b> <i>[Delete]</i>	Area Housing Managers	Date of self-certification for compliance with the Standard	June 2007	June 2007	June 2007	<b><i>The Respect Standard long longer applies, so this Service Standard can be deleted</i></b>
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**REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS**

<b>(R1)</b> Continue to ensure that your home meets the Government's Decent Home Standard	Housing Assets Manager	% of non- decent homes at the end of the financial year	0	0	0	
<b>(R2)</b> Attend all emergency repairs within 4 hours (including out of hours)	Housing Repairs Manager (Mears)	% emergency repairs completed within target time  (Target – 99%)	99%	100%	100%	
<b>(R3)</b> Carry out all repairs within 7 working days	Housing Repairs Manager (Mears)	Average time to complete urgent repairs	6.5 days	7.8 days	6.2 days	

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Service Standard	Officer Responsible	Performance Measure	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	Comments
<b>(R4)</b> Provide you with, and keep, an appointment to undertake repairs, within the Council's target times, at the time you report a repair – with a choice of three periods on any day, including a "School Times" option	Housing Repairs Manager (Mears)	% of all repairs, for which an appointment is made and kept  (Target – 98%)	98.5%	98.1%	98.6%	
<b>(R5)</b> Remind you of your repairs appointment by text the day before, and give you an estimated time of arrival on the day of appointment	Housing Repairs Manager (Mears)	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(R6)</b> Satisfy at least 97% of tenants with the general standard of the repairs service we provide <sup>(e)</sup> .	Housing Repairs Manager (Mears)	% tenant satisfaction	100%	99%	100%	
<b>(R7)</b> If a repair needs to be inspected first, give you an appointment for a Housing Inspector to visit your home for a morning or afternoon within 10 working days of your request.	Housing Repairs Manager (Mears)	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(R8)</b> Arrange for Repairs Inspectors to randomly inspect the quality of work of a sample of repairs carried out by our Housing Repairs Service and contractors	Housing Repairs Manager (Mears)	Average number of properties visited per week to inspect repairs	9 props/ week	9 props/ week	9 props / week	

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Service Standard	Officer Responsible	Performance Measure	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	Comments
<p><b>(R9)</b> If you are dissatisfied with a repair, arrange for a Supervisor to telephone or visit you within 5 working days of you telling us of your dissatisfaction.</p>	<p>Housing Repairs Manager (Mears)</p>	(a) No. of repair requests completed	16,026 repairs	14,213 repairs	12,488 repairs	
		(b) No. of dissatisfied tenants	0 tenants	0 tenants	0 tenants	
		(c) No. of dissatisfied tenants considered justifiable	0 tenants	0 tenants	0 tenants	
		(d) No. of dissatisfied tenants considered due to minor problem	0 tenants	0 tenants	0 tenants	
		(f) No. of cases where dissatisfaction was considered to be not due to the Repairs Service	0 cases	0 cases	0 cases	
		(g) No. unable to gain access	0 tenants	0 tenants	0 tenants	

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Service Standard	Officer Responsible	Performance Measure	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	Comments
<b>(R10)</b> If we do not complete certain specified repairs within specific timescales, arrange for another repairs contractor to carry out the repair within the same timescale on request <sup>(f)</sup> <i>(Statutory requirement)</i>	Housing Repairs Manager (Mears)	No. of tenants exercising their "Right to Repair"	0 tenants	0 tenants	0 tenants	
<b>(R11)</b> If a second contractor does not complete certain specified repairs within specific timescales, pay you compensation of £10 + £2 per day until the repair is carried out (upto a maximum of £50) <sup>(f)</sup> <i>(Statutory requirement/amounts)</i>	Housing Repairs Manager (Mears)	Amount of compensation paid	£ Nil	£ Nil	£ Nil	
<b>(R12)</b> Service all the gas appliances in your home (or undertake a safety check if you have installed the appliance yourself), and provide you with a copy of the associated safety certificate, once a year	Housing Assets Manager	% of properties where servicing not undertaken within 12 months (due to no access provided)	North – 0 %	North – 0 %	North – 0.06 %	
			South – 0.1%	South – 0 %	South – 0.18 %	
<b>(R13)</b> Arrange for a gas contractor to visit your home to attend to a gas appliance that is required as an emergency (e.g. a water/gas leak) within 2 hours	Housing Assets Manager	% attended within 2 hours	North – 100 %	North – 100 %	North – 100 %	
			South – 100 %	South – 100 %	South – 100 %	

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		% attended within 1 hour	North – 100 %	North – 100 %	North – 99.8 %	
			South – 100 %	South – 100 %	South – 99.6 %	
<b>(R14)</b> Arrange for a gas contractor to visit your home and carry out a non- emergency repair to your heating or hot water system (if no part is required):	Housing Assets Manager	% attended within 24 hours (or on the following Monday (if not an older person and reported over the weekend))	North – 100 %	North – 100 %	North – 100 %	
(a) Within 24 hours (if during the week, or if you are an older person); or (b) On the following Monday (if reported over the weekend and you are not an older person)			South – 100 %	South – 100 %	South – 100 %	
<b>(R15)</b> Arrange for a gas contractor to visit your home to repair a gas appliance within 5 working days (when a part is required)	Housing Assets Manager	% attended within 5 working days	North – 100 %	North – 100 %	North – 100 %	
			South – 100 %	South – 100 %	South – 100 %	

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<b>(R16)</b> If you are over 60 years of age and live in a 1 or 2 bed property, redecorate 1 room in your home, on request, every 5 years and within 13 weeks of your request	Housing Assets Manager	(a) No. of internal decorations completed	67 decs.	78 decs.	71 decs.	
		(b) Average time from request to completion	5.6 weeks	3.2 weeks	6.8 weeks	
		(c) No. of internal decorations outstanding at end of year, not completed within target timescale	0 decs.	0 decs.	0 decs.	

**DISABLED ADAPTATIONS**

<b>(D1)</b> Advise you in writing about whether or not you are eligible for specific adaptations to your Council home within one week of us receiving a request from the Occupational Therapy Service	Housing Assets Manager	(a) Minor adaptations	1.0 days	1.0 days	1.0 days	
		(b) Major adaptations	1.0 days	1.1 days	1.0 days	

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<b>(D2)</b> Carry out minor adaptations to your home within 4 weeks of receiving details of the required work from the Occupational Therapy service	Housing Assets Manager	(a) Average time from decision to completion of work	2.2 weeks	2.2 weeks	3.0 weeks	
		(b) No. of minor adaptations at end of the year not completed within the target time	3 adapts.	7 adapts.	0 adapts.	
<b>(D3)</b> Carry out non-minor adaptations to your Council home within 13 weeks of receiving details of the required work from the Occupational Therapy Service	Housing Assets Manager	(a) Average time from decision to completion of work	15.0 weeks	13.2 weeks	14.8 weeks	
		(b) No. of non-minor adaptations at end of the year not completed within the target time	8 adapts	24 adapts	7 adapts.	
<b>SHELTERED HOUSING &amp; CARELINE</b>						
<b>(S1)</b> Test your Careline alarm in sheltered accommodation every 3 months and in non-sheltered accommodation every 6 months	Senior Scheme Manager	(a) % of tenants' alarms tested in sheltered schemes within 3 months of the previous test	97%	100%	94.7%	

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		(b) % of tenants' alarms tested in sheltered schemes within 6 months of the previous test	100%	100%	100%	
<b>(S2) Install:</b> (a) 90% of urgent basic telecare packages within 2 working days and 100% within 5 working days; and (b) 100% of non-urgent telecare packages within 15 working days <i>(Telecare Services Assn. Standards)</i>	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	(a) % of urgent basic telecare packages installed within 2 w/days	94%	100%	92.3%	
		(b) % of urgent basic telecare packages installed within 5 w/days	100%	100%	96.9%	
		(c) Average time to install a telecare package	5.6 days	7.7 days	8.9 days	
		(d) % of non-urgent basic telecare packages installed within 15 working days	100%	96.9%	100%	
<b>(S3) Renew mains batteries in individual (dispersed) alarms every 5 years</b>	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	



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<b>(S4)</b> Treat all your alarm calls to Careline as potential emergencies, until proved otherwise	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(S5)</b> Answer your alarm calls to Careline, on average, within 10 seconds	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	Average time to respond to calls (including non urgent, routine calls from scheme managers and test calls)	5.5 seconds	5.6 seconds	6.0 Seconds	
<b>(S6)</b> Answer 97.5 % of all alarm calls to Careline within 60 seconds  <i>(Telecare Services Association Standard)</i>	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	% of calls answered within 30 seconds	99.8%	99.7%	99.7 %	
<b>(S7)</b> Liaise with other agencies and nominated contacts to ensure the wellbeing of our Careline customers	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(S8)</b> Record and monitor all alarm calls to Careline, to help train our staff and look at how we can improve our service	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	Whether all calls have been recorded and monitored	Yes	Yes	Yes	

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<b>(S9) Repair:</b> (a) 90% of critical faults to telecare equipment within 2 working days, and 100% within 4 working days (b) Repair 100% of non-urgent faults to telecare equipment within 15 working days ( <i>Telecare Services Association Standards</i> )	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	(a) No. of critical repairs completed within 2 days	95.2%	95%	95.5%	
		(b) No. of critical repairs undertaken in 4 days	81%	76.3%	85.6%	
		(c) No. of non-critical repairs undertaken within 15 working days	100%	100%	98.5%	
<b>(S10)</b> Visit you annually to test the back-up batteries in your Careline alarm and to review your personal details held on our records	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	% of visits undertaken	100%	100%	100%	
<b>(S11)</b> Record, maintain and update your Careline records in a confidential and secure manner	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(S12)</b> Train all our Careline staff to a high standard	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	

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<b>(S13)</b> If you live in sheltered accommodation, ensure that your Scheme Manager gives you a home visit (or accounts for you) every day (Monday to Friday – subject to holidays and sickness)	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	Not measured (but monthly records from Scheme Managers are required and checked)	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(S14)</b> If you live in sheltered accommodation and your Scheme Manager is on holiday or sick, arrange for another Scheme Manager to visit you 3 times a week	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	Whether 3 visits per week have been arranged for absent scheme managers	Yes	Yes	Yes	
<b>(S15)</b> If you do not live in sheltered accommodation, but are visited by a Scheme Manager, ensure that you receive a visit every week, fortnight or month, as appropriate (as determined by a risk assessment)	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	Average no. of visits per week	182 visits	118 visits	140 visits	The no. of visits has increased in 2014/15 due to more people receiving weekly visits
<b>(S16)</b> If you live in sheltered or non-sheltered accommodation for older people and have high support needs, provide you with a Tenant Support Plan – explaining the type and level of support that we will give you - and review the Tenant Support Plan every 12 months (or sooner if requested by you)	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	No. of Residents provided with a support plan	104 residents	135 residents	164 residents	

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<b>(S17)</b> Carry out fire drills at sheltered accommodation every six months	Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services)	% of required fire drills undertaken every six months	100%	100%	100%	
<b>HOUSE SALES</b>						
<b>(HS1)</b> Confirm whether or not you are eligible for the Right to Buy within 2 weeks of receiving a properly completed application  <i>(Statutory requirement, but the statutory timescale is 4 weeks)</i>	Principal Housing Officer (Sales/Leases)	(a) Average periods	F/Hold – 18 days	F/hold 13 days	F/hold – 22 days	Although the Housing Service Standards have not been met for the last 3 years (due to increasing workloads as a result of increased RTB applications) legislative time limits are generally met.
		(b) % within statutory timescale (4 weeks)	L/Hold – 21 days	L/hold 16 days	L/hold 21 days	
			F/Hold – 100%	F/hold 100%	F/hold – 100%	
			L/Hold – 100%	L/hold 100%	L/hold – 100%	

**Epping Forest District Council  
Housing Service**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AGAINST HOUSING SERVICE STANDARDS 2014/15**

Service Standard	Officer Responsible	Performance Measure	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	Comments
<p><b>(HS2)</b> Advise you of the valuation, discount and purchase price for the property you wish to purchase within 8 weeks of us confirming the Right to Buy if your property is a house or bungalow or 12 weeks if your property is a flat or maisonette</p> <p><i>(Statutory requirement/timescales)</i></p>	Principal Housing Officer (Sales/Leases)	(a) Average time to provide information	F/Hold – 7.4 weeks L/Hold – 10.4 weeks	F/hold – 5.6 weeks L/hold – 7.7 weeks	F/hold – 4.8 weeks L/hold – 8.7 weeks	
		(b) % within statutory timescale	F/Hold – 71.8% L/Hold – 91.7%	F/hold – 95.9% L/hold – 100%	F/hold – 94.38% L/hold – 92.8%	
<p><b>(HS3)</b> Give you an opportunity to appeal against our valuation of your home, and to obtain an independent valuation (free of charge) from the District Valuer, within 3 months of you receiving our valuation</p> <p><i>(Statutory requirement/timescale)</i></p>	Principal Housing Officer (Sales/Leases)	No of appeals to DV	3 appeals	9 appeals	5 appeals	

Epping Forest District Council  
Housing Service

ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AGAINST HOUSING SERVICE STANDARDS 2014/15

Service Standard	Officer Responsible	Performance Measure	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	Comments
<p><b>(HS4)</b> Complete the purchase of your property within <del>10 weeks</del> <b>25 weeks</b> of you confirming that you wish to proceed, provided that you and your solicitor deal with all required matters promptly</p>	<p>Principal Housing Officer (Sales/Leases)</p>	<p>Average time taken to complete a purchase</p>	<p>25.4 weeks – (46 sales)</p>	<p>25.5 weeks (53 sales)</p>	<p>23 weeks (13 sales)</p>	<p><b><i>As can be seen, the Standard has not been met for the last 3 years. To a large extent, completions are outside the control of the Council and dependent on the applicants and their solicitors progressing sales in good time. To ensure the Standard is realistic, it is suggested that the period be increased to 25 weeks</i></b></p>
<p><b>(HS5)</b> If you do not proceed with your purchase, give you two formal notices of 8 weeks each before cancelling your Right to Buy application  <i>(Statutory requirement/timescale)</i></p>	<p>Principal Housing Officer (Sales/Leases)</p>	<p>Not measured</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	

**Epping Forest District Council  
Housing Service**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AGAINST HOUSING SERVICE STANDARDS 2014/15**

<b>Service Standard</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>Comments</b>
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**LEASEHOLD SERVICES**

<b>(L1)</b> Provide you with a detailed breakdown of your <u>estimated</u> annual service charge at least 4 weeks before the beginning of the financial year	Principal Housing Officer (Sales/Leases)	No. of weeks before the beginning of the reference year when all estimated service charge accounts were issued for the reference year	4 Weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	
<b>(L2)</b> Provide you with a detailed breakdown of your <u>actual</u> annual service charge within 6 months after the end of the financial year	Principal Housing Officer (Sales/Leases)	No. of months after the end of the reference year when all actual service charge accounts were issued for the reference year	5.5 months	5.5 months	5.5 months	
<b>(L3)</b> If you fall into arrears with your actual service charge, give you an appropriate amount of time to clear the arrear in accordance with the Council's Sundry Income and Dept Policy <sup>(9)</sup>	Principal Housing Officer (Sales/Leases)	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	

**Epping Forest District Council  
Housing Service**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AGAINST HOUSING SERVICE STANDARDS 2014/15**

Service Standard	Officer Responsible	Performance Measure	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	Comments
<p><b>(L4)</b> Consult you on proposed major repairs and improvements (over £250) and give you the opportunity to nominate a contractor to provide a tender for the work at least 30 days before seeking tenders</p> <p><i>(Statutory requirement and timescale)</i></p>	Principal Housing Officer (Sales/Leases)	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<p><b>(L5)</b> Consult you on the estimated cost of major repairs and improvements and advise you of the selected contractor before commencing the work, and give you at least 30 days to provide any comments you may have, which we will take into account</p> <p><i>(Statutory requirement and timescale)</i></p>	Principal Housing Officer (Sales/Leases)	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<p><b>(L6)</b> Provide you, on request, with a copy of your current service charge account and other relevant information (perhaps if you wish to sell on the leasehold), for a fee, within 2 weeks of your request</p>	Principal Housing Officer (Sales/Leases)	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	



**Epping Forest District Council  
Housing Service**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AGAINST HOUSING SERVICE STANDARDS 2014/15**

<b>Service Standard</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>(L7)</b> Support a District-wide Leaseholders Association and ensure that it meets at least three times each year	Tenant Participation Officer	No. of meetings held	1 meeting	3 meetings	3 meetings	
<b>PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING</b>						
<b>(PS1)</b> Visit 95% of applicants for our (CARE) Service within 3 weeks of the initial enquiry	Private Housing Manager (CARE & Grants)	% of visits undertaken within 3 weeks	100%	100%	100 %	
<b>(PS2)</b> Undertake jobs through our Handyperson Service within 2 weeks of request	Private Housing Manager (CARE & Grants)	Average time for jobs to be completed	3.0 Weeks	3.0 weeks	3.0 weeks	
<b>(PS3)</b> Generally satisfy at least 95% of our customers for both CARE's core service and Handyperson Service	Private Housing Manager (CARE & Grants)	% satisfied with CARE's core service and the H/person Service	100%	100%	100%	
<b>(PS4)</b> Respond to applicants for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) within 10 working days of receiving a referral from an occupational therapist (OT)	Private Housing Manager (CARE & Grants)	Average time to respond to referrals	10 working days	10 working days	10 working days	

**Epping Forest District Council  
Housing Service**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AGAINST HOUSING SERVICE STANDARDS 2014/15**

<b>Service Standard</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>Comments</b>
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<b>(PS5)</b> Issue a decision on a formal application for a DFG within 5 working days of receipt	Private Housing Manager (CARE & Grants)	Average time to issue a decision	10 working days	4 working days	4 working days	
<b>(PS6)</b> Respond to applicants for other types of financial assistance for private occupiers within 5 working days of receiving a request	Private Housing Manager (CARE & Grants)	Average time to respond to requests	5 working days	5 working days	5 working days	
<b>(PS7)</b> Issue a decision on a formal application for other types of financial assistance for private occupiers within 5 working days of receipt	Private Housing Manager (CARE & Grants)	Average time to issue a decision	9.7 working days	5 working days	5 working days	The high increase in mandatory DFG applications impacted upon the timely administration of financial assistance. Staff resources were redirected periodically throughout the year to process the upturn in mandatory applications.
<b>(PS8)</b> Respond to requests for assistance from private tenants allegedly being harassed by landlords within 24 hours	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	% of responses within 24 hours	100%	100%	100%	
<b>(PS9)</b> Respond to initial enquiries for other private sector housing services (e.g nuisance, filthy / verminous properties, mobile homes, HMOs) within 5 working days	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	% of responses within 5 working days	100%	100%	100%	

**Epping Forest District Council  
Housing Service**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AGAINST HOUSING SERVICE STANDARDS 2014/15**

<b>Service Standard</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>(PS10)</b> Issue licences for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) within 6 months of receiving a properly completed application	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	% of licences issued within 6 months	100%	100%	100%	
<b>TENANT PARTICIPATION</b>						
<b>(TP1)</b> Consult you on any significant matters relating to your tenancy and take your views into account when making decisions	PHO (Information/ Strategy)	No. of major consultations undertaken, that affect all tenants	0 consults	2 consults	1 consult	
<b>(TP2)</b> Consult you on major issues that affect your estate (such as improvement schemes) and offer individual choices where appropriate.	PHO (Information/ Strategy)	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(TP3)</b> Agree our approach to tenant involvement with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation and maintain a written Tenant Participation Agreement which we review every 3 years.	Tenant Participation Officer	Whether or not the Agreement was reviewed	Yes	Not required	Yes	

**Epping Forest District Council  
Housing Service**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AGAINST HOUSING SERVICE STANDARDS 2014/15**

Service Standard	Officer Responsible	Performance Measure	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	Comments
<b>(TP4)</b> Invite 2 representatives of all the recognised tenants associations in the District to become members of the Epping Forest Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, which will have a written constitution explaining how it will operate.	Tenant Participation Officer	Whether or not 2 representatives from recognised tenants associations have been invited	Yes	Yes	Yes	
<b>(TP5)</b> Consult the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation on proposed new, or changed, housing plans, strategies and policies, and take their views into account before making decisions.	Director of Communities	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(TP6)</b> Look for opportunities to form new tenants associations, and support these groups by providing practical or financial support.	Tenant Participation Officer	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(TP7)</b> Provide start-up funding of £100 to any recognised steering group wishing to form a recognised tenants association, and a further grant of £200 when formally recognised.	Tenant Participation Officer	(a) No. of new groups provided with start-up funding	0 groups	1 group	0 groups	
		(b) No. of new groups provided with further grant	0 groups	1 group	0 groups	

**Epping Forest District Council  
Housing Service**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AGAINST HOUSING SERVICE STANDARDS 2014/15**

<b>Service Standard</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>(TP8)</b> Make premises available for meetings of tenants groups or meet any reasonable costs of hall bookings.	Tenant Participation Officer	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(TP9)</b> Consider the training requirements of tenants and leaseholders who are members of the Federation or other tenants associations, and assist in arranging suitable training.	Tenant Participation Officer	Not measured	2 Training sessions held	N/A	N/A	
<b>(TP10)</b> Provide a variety of ways to involve residents, for those that prefer not to attend meetings, including surveys, panels and public events.	Tenant Participation Officer	Not measured	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>(TP11)</b> Review the success of the Council's Tenant Participation Strategy through consultation with the Federation and by conducting a survey once every three years.	PHO (Information/ Strategy)	% of tenants that feel that the landlord listens to their views and acts upon them as recorded by the bi-annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey	Not required this year	Not required this year	61%	

**Epping Forest District Council  
Housing Service**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AGAINST HOUSING SERVICE STANDARDS 2014/15**

<b>Service Standard</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>Comments</b>
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**Notes:**

(a) The Housing Appeals and Review Panel will consider appeals on the following issues:

- (1) All homelessness reviews, with the exception of the following types of reviews that are already only undertaken by officers;
  - (i) whether or not single applicants are “homeless” or have a “priority need”;
  - (ii) whether or not an allocation of either temporary or permanent accommodation is suitable for the applicant and his/her family; and
  - (iii) whether or not a homeless applicant should be referred to another local authority, due to their local connection with that local authority;
- (2) Housing succession cases, where the successor is under-occupying Council accommodation, and has been required to transfer to smaller accommodation;
- (3) Non-provision of discretionary home improvement grants;
- (4) Refusal of requests for disabled adaptations to Council properties requested by the tenant;
- (5) Refusal to sell Council owned-land under 50 square metres to occupiers for garden use;
- (6) Refusal of requests from housing applicants for “priority moves” (i.e. those very urgent and rare cases, dealt with outside of the usual Allocations Scheme); and
- (7) Disagreements with tenants and former tenants on the level or liability for current or former rent arrears;

(b) Decisions relating to the priority need of single people, suitability of accommodation and referrals to other councils are considered by a senior officer. All other reviews of homelessness decisions are considered by the Housing Appeals and Review Panel of district councillors.

(c) A demoted tenant is someone who held a secure tenancy but whose secure tenancy rights have been taken away by a court and has therefore become a (demoted) tenant - who is allowed to live at the property but with limited rights.

(d) Succession takes place when, in specified circumstances, someone legally takes over the tenancy from their spouse or another family member, following the previous tenant’s death. In law, there can only be one succession. A person (spouse or family member) who would otherwise be a successor tenant, but cannot in law because there has already been one succession, will be offered a new tenancy of either the property they are living in or another one, depending on whether or not they under-occupy the property.

(e) Measured through the Council’s ongoing repairs satisfaction survey from satisfaction forms provided to tenants for all repairs requested.

Epping Forest District Council  
Housing Service

ANNUAL REPORT ON PERFORMANCE AGAINST HOUSING SERVICE STANDARDS 2014/15

Service Standard	Officer Responsible	Performance Measure	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	Comments
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(f) Under the Right to Repair legislation, defined repairs must be undertaken within either 1, 3 or 7 days as specified by the legislation.

(g) Under the Council's Sundry Income and Debt Policy, people are given the following time periods to repay the following levels of debts:

Debts below £500      Upto 3 months  
Debts below £1,500    Upto 6 months

Debts below £2,500    Upto 9 months  
Debts above £2,500    Upto 12 months

Produced – June 2015

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## **Report to Housing Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

**Portfolio: Housing – Cllr David Stallan**

**Subject: Communities Directorate's Housing Service Strategy on Energy Efficiency**

**Officer contact for further information: Haydn Thorpe (01992 564162)**

**Alan Hall – Director of Communities (01992 564004)**

**Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (01992 564607)**



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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

That the Housing Scrutiny Select Committee considers and endorses the Communities Directorate's Housing Service Strategy on Energy Efficiency, attached as an appendix, and provides any comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder for incorporation.

### **Report:**

1. The Communities Directorate's Housing Service Strategies were originally produced more than 15 years ago in accordance with an agreed standard framework, and have since been updated. The Strategies give more detail than the Council's main Housing Strategy on the various housing services provided. In total, 17 Housing Service Strategies have been produced to date, covering:

Equality and Diversity	House Sales and Leasehold Services
Rent Arrears	Rent Collection and Administration
Homelessness	Under-occupation
Housing Information	Tenant Participation
Private Rented Sector	Older Peoples' Housing Services
Housing Allocations	Housing Advice
Empty Council Properties	Energy Efficiency
Anti-Social Behaviour	Harassment
Housing and Neighbourhood Management	

2. The Strategies are produced to a common format that sets out how individual housing services will be delivered. They assisted the Housing Directorate in achieving the Customer Service Excellence award and ISO 9001:2008 Quality Accreditation, and have been important to meeting the minimum requirement for Housing Related Support (formerly Supporting People) funding under the conditions of the contract.

3. The Housing Select Committee is asked to consider and endorse the updated Communities Directorate's Housing Service Strategy on Energy Efficiency attached as an appendix to the report, and provide any comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder for incorporation.

**Reason for decision:**

The former Housing Scrutiny Panel reviewed all Housing Directorate Service Strategies on a three-yearly basis. They assisted the Housing Directorate in achieving the Customer Service Excellence award and ISO 9001:2008 Quality Accreditation, and have been important to meeting the minimum requirement for Housing Related Support funding under the conditions of the contract.

**Options considered and rejected:**

Not to review the Housing Service Strategy on Energy Efficiency.

**Consultation undertaken:**

The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation were consulted on the Strategy at their meeting on 22<sup>th</sup> April 2015 and stated their support for the Directorate's approach of maximising the external funding available to provide energy efficiency measures for the benefit of Council tenants and leaseholders.

**Resource implications:**

Budget provision: N/A

Personnel: N/A

Land: N/A

Community Plan/BVPP reference: N/A

Relevant statutory powers: As set out in the Strategy

Background papers: N/A

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: As set out in the Strategy

Key Decision reference: (if required) N/A None



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**Epping Forest District Council**  
**HOUSING SERVICE STRATEGY on**  
**ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This Housing Service Strategy on Efficiency Strategy relates to the provision of energy efficiency advice and measures in residential properties across the Epping Forest District. The principal aim is to satisfy the requirements of the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995, the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000 and Modern Homes Standards although several other acts, regulations and guidelines also impact on the requirements details of which are set out in Section 6 below. The Strategy covers the Council's housing stock and private sector housing properties.
- 1.2. With regard to its own stock, having met the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard by 2012, the Council agreed to extend the Standard and look at the key components of each home and base the future planned maintenance programme on a more modern standard whereby components are assessed against condition and industry standard average life cycles rather than extended life cycles.
- 1.3. Most of the services identified will be provided by staff in the Communities Directorate although key staff in other Directorates, particularly the Environmental Co-ordinator in the Neighbourhoods Directorate, also have a part to play. The Strategy was formulated in consultation with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation and approved by the Portfolio Holder for Housing on XX Xxxxxxx 2015.

## **2. Background to the Service**

- 2.1. Several service areas within the Communities Directorate are involved in energy efficiency in one way or another. These include, in particular, Housing Assets, Housing Repairs and Private Sector Housing teams (both 'Grants and C.A.R.E.' and 'Technical'). The various roles within the teams cover the following:
  - a) Providing energy advice (both practical and on available sources of funding) to our tenants and leaseholders and to owner occupiers, private tenants and landlords.
  - b) Maintaining and improving (including providing energy efficiency measures) our own stock.
  - c) Providing funding for energy efficiency measures for residents in the private sector through Housing Assistance and our Handyperson Service.
  - d) Engaging proactively with private landlords to bring their properties up to the required standards but carrying out enforcement against them if they fail to do so.
  - e) Liaising with other services within the Council that carry out work related to energy efficiency (such as refuse collection).
  - f) Developing initiatives in partnership with others for the benefit of our residents (such as the Energy Switch).
  - g) Constructing new Council homes that meet the Code for Sustainable Homes Code 4.

### 3. Coverage

- 3.1. There are around 55,000 homes within the District across all tenures with:
- Epping Forest District Council providing approximately 6,500 homes.
  - Epping Forest District Council managing about 970 leasehold properties.
  - Approximately 3,700 other publicly rented homes (Housing Association).
  - Approximately 45,000 privately-owned homes, just under 37,000 owner-occupied and approximately 8,000 privately tenanted.

### 4. Relationships with other documents

- 4.1. This Strategy works within the Council's Corporate Plan setting out how the Housing Service within the Communities Directorate will deliver and develop energy efficiency services. It forms part of the authority's overall approach to strategic housing set out in the Housing Strategy. It complements the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and associated Repairs and Maintenance Business Plan. The policies and procedures within the Private Sector Housing Strategy, Private Sector Business Plan and Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy are also relevant.
- 4.2. The Council has adopted a Housing Charter which sets out in simple, clear and precise terms its general approach to all its housing services.
- 4.3. The following strategies, policies and procedures, delivered in partnership with other agencies, are also relevant to this Strategy:
- Essex Landlord Accreditation Scheme (ELAS) delivered jointly with 6 other Essex authorities and Blue Watch (the Chief Fire Officers Association);
  - Landlord Accreditation Scheme for students of the E15 Acting School (joint initiative with Essex University);
  - Caring and Repairing in Epping Forest (C.A.R.E.), the Council's in-house Home Improvement Agency; and,
  - Housing Repairs Service (managed by Mears using EFDC employees).
- 4.4. The Government's 2012 Energy Efficiency Strategy set out four key benefits of energy efficiency:
- It saves households and businesses money on their bills;
  - It promotes economic growth;
  - It supports activity to revitalise infrastructure; and,
  - It is often the most cost-effective way to decarbonise.
- 4.5. The 2013 update of the 2012 Strategy set out actions being taken by the Government to achieve the Strategy's original objectives:
- The introduction and expansion of schemes such as the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation;
  - Simplifying and extending support for businesses and the public sector by removing overlaps between the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme and Climate Change arrangements;
  - Encouraging increased use of the Renewable Heat Incentive;
  - Encouraging greater use of smart meters where appropriate;
  - Setting up the UK Green Investment Bank;
  - Expanding the Energy Entrepreneurs Fund;
  - Publishing the brochure 'Helping Consumers with their Energy'; and,
  - Developing the Low Energy Company Initiative.

## 5. Aims and objectives

- 5.1. The Council's aims and objectives with regard to energy efficiency are to:
- Significantly reduce the total amount of household energy consumption and improve the average Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) of housing stock;
  - Reduce levels of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions;
  - Increase awareness of the key issues and options available to residents to reduce energy consumption and alleviate fuel poverty;
  - Deliver specific and achievable Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) objectives on an ongoing basis;
  - Increase the average SAP rating of Council housing stock from the current SAP 69 to SAP 75 by the end of 2019-20;
  - Target energy efficiency measures on hard to treat properties, improving the standard of all the least energy efficient Council housing stock (those in energy efficiency Bands F and G) and reducing by 50% the number of properties in Band E by 2019-20; and,
  - Eliminate property design features in the Council's housing stock where these contribute to condensation and mould growth.
- 5.2. To achieve the above aims the Council will: -
- Ensure the Council continues to benefit from current funding opportunities such as the Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) and the Green Deal Home Improvement Fund.
  - Continue exploring new and developing funding opportunities for renewable energy technologies.
  - Develop partnerships to improve the energy efficiency of its housing stock.
  - Collect data through the use of energy efficiency surveys to monitor and undertake an annual assessment of SAP ratings of Council properties to ensure energy efficiency programmes are working towards the targets set.
  - Actively target properties with poor levels of thermal comfort.
  - Deliver periodic marketing campaigns to raise awareness of energy efficiency.
  - Continue with the installation of energy efficient SEDBUK (Seasonal Efficiency of Domestic Boilers in the UK) 'A'-rated boilers and fully controllable heating systems in Council properties under the replacement heating programmes.
  - Continue with the installation of renewable heating technologies in Council properties.
  - Continue with the installation of PVCu double-glazing to Council properties.
  - Continue with the installation of energy efficient composite, front entrance doors to Council properties.
  - Carry out insulation measures to Council properties to improve energy efficiency.
  - Build new Council homes to stringent energy efficiency standards.
  - Engage proactively with private landlords to bring their properties up to the required standards but carry out enforcement against them if they fail to do so.
  - Provide owner/occupiers and private tenants with advice and, where possible, financial assistance.
  - Participate in the Council's Green Working Party in order to share information and good practice relating to environmental and green issues.

## 6. Statutory requirements

6.1. The following current legislation has particular implications for services delivered by the Housing Service within the Communities Directorate, in relation to energy efficiency.

a) The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA)

This requires Local authorities to prepare, publish and submit details of its energy conservation measures.

b) Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000

This requires;

- The production of a strategy, which describes the households to which it applies.
- A comprehensive package of measures for ensuring the efficient use of energy, such as the installation of appropriate equipment or insulation.
- Specific interim objectives and target dates for objectives to be achieved.
- Arrangements to ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, residents do not live in fuel poverty.

c) The Building Regulations

- Part L Conservation of Fuel and Power
- The Code for Sustainable Homes

d) The Energy Performance of Buildings Directive 2002

This requires that:

- All properties (homes, commercial and public buildings) must have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) when sold, built or rented.
- Larger public buildings over 500m<sup>2</sup> must display a Display Energy Certificate (DEC).
- all air-conditioning systems over 12kW must be regularly inspected by an Energy Assessor.

e) The Housing Act 2004

- Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme

f) The Home Information Pack

g) The Climate Change Act

- Levels of thermal insulation.
- Types and efficiency of the heating system, including controls.
- Ventilation of the property.

h) The Energy Acts 2011 and 2013

i) The Fuel Poverty (England) Regulations 2014

j) The Electricity and Gas (Energy Companies Obligation) Order 2014

- This updated the Energy Companies Obligation (ECO) limits originally set in 2012.



## **7. Client consultation, information and involvement**

- 7.1 The Communities Directorate consults by seeking feedback from users and non-users e.g. customer satisfaction surveys and the website, to assist in developing services.
- 7.2 The Directorate consults with a number of groups that represent service users such as:
- Recognised residents' associations.
  - The Leaseholders' Association is consulted on matters affecting all Council residential leaseholders.
  - The Sheltered Housing Forum is consulted on matters affecting all residents in sheltered schemes.
  - The C.A.R.E. Service User Forum.
  - The Repairs and Maintenance Focus Group is consulted on matters specifically relating to the repair and maintenance of Council homes.
  - The Tenants' and Leaseholders' Federation is consulted on matters affecting all Council Tenants and Leaseholders.
  - Residents from different sectors of the community are actively encouraged to become involved and participate in these bodies so that feedback is from as wide a cross-section of the community as possible.
  - A Tenant Scrutiny Panel has been set up to provide an independent check and, if necessary, to challenge service delivery and performance.
  - All Council partners are consulted on Housing Strategies, policies and procedures affecting them, through the most appropriate means (e.g. organisations such as Shelter and the Citizens Advice Bureau are consulted on changes to the Housing Allocations Scheme).
  - Surveys are carried out on all housing services in place to measure customers' satisfaction with the services they have received.
  - Surveys are undertaken from time to time on individual service areas such as the Tenant Census carried out on all tenants during 2013.
  - The Essex Landlords Accreditation Scheme (ELAS) provides a forum through which the Council can engage proactively with landlords via a web-site and through newsletters and forums.
- 7.3 All surveys undertaken collect monitoring data which is used appropriately to improve the service.
- 7.4 People likely to be affected by this Housing Service Strategy on Energy Efficiency and those who will be involved in implementing its actions have been consulted prior to the Strategy's implementation. This includes the following:
- Epping Forest Tenants' and Leaseholders' Federation;
  - Operational Managers and key staff responsible for each relevant service area; and,
  - The Council's Housing Select Committee and the Housing Portfolio Holder.
- 7.4 Articles will be included from time to time in the tenants' magazine 'Housing News' and the Council's website. Publications can be made available in large print and other formats.
- 7.5 In addition to the consultations carried out with services users, the Council is consulted by the government on any current relevant issues. There has been

a number of recent consultations by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) as follows:

- a) In July 2014, as a result of the review of Fuel Poverty carried out by Professor Sir John Hills in 2012, DECC consulted on proposed legislation which is likely to lead to new legislation on Fuel Poverty in 2015 which will include a new definition of fuel poverty (currently a family that has to spend more than 10% of their average weekly income to attain a reasonable level of heating) and targets designed to reduce poverty. The review suggested a new definition whereby fuel poverty occurs when households required fuel costs are above the median level and if they were to spend what is required the household would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.
- b) A fuel poverty target has been recommended, which measures how far into fuel poverty families are, not simply whether they are in poverty or not. The previous fuel poverty target proposed making sure no one was living in fuel poverty 'where practically possible'. The new statutory target will be to ensure as many fuel homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency standard of Band C by 2030. Two similarly worded interim targets are the achievement of Band E by 2020 and Band D by 2025.
- c) DECC also consulted in July 2014 on Private Rented Sector Energy Efficiency Regulations (Domestic) England and Wales which will bring into effect provisions contained within the Energy Act 2011. These will have the following effect:
  - Private domestic tenants will be able to request energy efficiency measures which may not be unreasonably refused by their landlord (to be in force by 1 April 2016); and,
  - Minimum energy efficiency standard regulations will require eligible properties in the sector to be improved to a minimum standard (to be in force by 1 April 2018).
- d) Additionally, in July 2014, DECC issued a 'call for evidence on energy issues affecting park homes'. Owing to their construction and, generally, limitations on the types of fuel they can use, park homes tend to be much less energy efficient than traditionally-built dwellings. As there are approximately 650 privately-owned park homes in the District, one of the highest numbers in Essex, any legislation resulting from the call for evidence is likely to impact on private sector housing teams.

## **8. General principles**

- 8.1 The guiding principles behind this strategy are to reduce fuel bills, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the incidence of condensation and mould growth, as cost effectively as possible, thereby providing homes that are affordable to heat and help to alleviate fuel poverty by:
- Increasing the energy efficiency rating of the Council's housing stock through by providing the energy efficiency measures referred to in this strategy;
  - Providing advice to residents; and,
  - Providing financial assistance and enforcement where appropriate in the private housing sector.

- 8.2 By following this strategy the Housing Service aims to not only set targets matching those of the Government, but more demanding ones wherever possible.
- 8.3 The following 'SWOT' analysis identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the areas covered by this strategy:-

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private Sector Stock Condition Survey and Housing Needs Survey provide solid information.</li> <li>• ‘Homes and neighbourhoods’ a corporate priority.</li> <li>• Good relationships between Housing services, Genesis, local letting agencies and EFHAS.</li> <li>• Quality homelessness prevention service with well trained staff.</li> <li>• ‘User friendly’ housing advice provided by qualified staff .</li> <li>• Performance monitoring.</li> <li>• Student Accommodation Accreditation Scheme (SAAS).</li> <li>• The Council has a Green Working Party that works across all Directorates and includes the relevant Portfolio Holder.</li> <li>• Established 5-year framework agreements for the provision of EWI, Renewable Energy Heating Installations, Energy Efficiency Installations and Gas Heating Installations for use as part of planned maintenance contracts for Council properties.</li> <li>• Experience of dealing with Domestic Renewable Heating Incentive and Green Deal Cash Back funding.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weakness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No large portfolios of privately rented accommodation.</li> <li>• Existing resources do not allow consistent, proactive engagement with private landlords.</li> <li>• Level of information on Energy Efficiency measures on some properties is cloned from other similar archetype properties.</li> <li>• Relatively high number of rural properties with no mains gas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empty Properties initiative being undertaken.</li> <li>• Continuation of rental loan scheme.</li> <li>• Development of Housing Allocations Leasing Scheme (HALS) with Genesis.</li> <li>• Additional financial support offered to EFHAS.</li> <li>• Development of Essex-wide Landlord Accreditation Scheme (ELAS).</li> <li>• Future funding opportunities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alienation of private landlords by possible compulsory leasing of properties empty for more than 6 months.</li> <li>• Retaliatory evictions following tenants complaints.</li> <li>• Increase in property values may reduce attractiveness of letting accommodation to tenants on Housing Benefit.</li> <li>• Council not able to issue any more rental loans.</li> <li>• Payment of Housing Benefit directly to tenants discourages landlords from accepting benefit claimants as tenants.</li> <li>• Stringent timeframe and rules that apply to grant funding.</li> <li>• Grant funding released in small financial packages.</li> <li>• Applying insulation is resulting in more internal condensation forming. This requires more ventilation to counter the effects.</li> </ul>

## 9. Key Targets and Performance Monitoring

9.1 Progress on this strategy will be monitored as follows:

- a) At Directorate level the activities that will deliver the aims and objectives of this strategy will be monitored through quarterly Continuous Improvement Meetings between the relevant Assistant Director and service area manager and also at quarterly meetings of the Communities Energy Issues Group.
- b) At Corporate level the elements of the Action Plan to this Service Strategy which are common to the Work Plan of the Corporate Green Working Party are reviewed by the Working Party at its quarterly meetings. The Working Party also provides minutes of its meetings to the Council's Management Board.
- c) At strategic level progress will be monitored by the Safer, Cleaner, Greener Scrutiny Panel. The Local Strategic Partnership may also receive reports on individual projects.

### Current Position on Energy Efficiency

9.2 The energy efficiency rating of a property is assessed with reference to the following:

- d) The SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) rating is based on each dwelling's energy costs per square metre taking into account the cost of space and water heating, ventilation, and lighting, less any cost savings from energy generation technologies. The rating is expressed on a scale of 1-120 where a dwelling with a rating of 1 has poor energy efficiency (high costs) and a dwelling with a rating of 120 represents a completely energy efficient dwelling (zero net energy costs per year).
- e) The energy efficiency rating is presented in a simplified Banding system from A+ to G for energy performance, where Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) Band A+ represents low energy costs (i.e. the most efficient band) and EER Band G represents high energy costs (i.e. the least energy efficient band).
- f) Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions are estimated from the amounts considered to have been produced as a result of fuel use less any emissions saved by energy generation and are measured in tonnes per year. Unlike the SAP rating, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are not standardised for the size of the dwelling and are therefore likely to be higher for larger homes.

9.3 Nationally, across England, the average SAP rating for all dwellings has increased from SAP 47 in 2001 to SAP 59 in 2012 although this varies by tenure and dwelling characteristics. For most dwelling types and for all ages of homes, the average SAP rating was higher for social sector homes. Similarly, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were generally lower for all categories of dwelling age in the social sector.

9.4 The age profile of the privately-owned stock in the District shows a similar age profile to that of the Council's own stock with the largest number of properties being built between 1945 and 1964. The 2011 Private Sector House

Condition Survey found the average SAP rating for the owner occupied stock to be 54 and 51 for the privately-rented stock.

- 9.5 With regard to its own residential properties the Council has an ageing stock profile with the majority of the Council's housing stock built between 1945 and 1980. When these were built the baseline SAP ratings were 50 and 54 respectively. A number of energy efficiency improvements undertaken as part of the Council's Decent Homes programme has increased the energy efficiency of its housing stock to 69.

## 10. Improving Energy Efficiency in the Council's own Stock

- 10.1 The Council undertook an energy audit of around 10% of its own residential properties as part of the Stock Condition Survey in 2001. The energy data obtained was loaded into the Councils' National Home Energy Rating (NHER) software which calculates information on energy efficiency, annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and annual running costs. Since that time the Council has continued to build on this database and now holds information on approximately 77% of its residential properties. The property survey schedule is planned to be completed on all Council housing stock by 2018.
- 10.2 As part of this strategy, all Council-owned residential properties with low SAP ratings that have been identified will be reviewed to see which energy efficiency measures are available and can be installed in the property.
- 10.3 With regard to its own stock the Council has installed the following energy efficiency measures:

<b>Statistics of energy efficiency measures installed in Council housing stock (NHER database January 2015)</b>			
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>	<b>Influencing Factors</b>
Properties with insulated lofts	4,498	90.1	A total of 1,324 properties are lower level flats or maisonettes with a habitable heated space above.
Lofts with >250mm loft insulation	2,167	68.3	
Lofts with >150mm loft insulation	660	20.8	
Lofts with <100mm loft insulation	348	10.9	
Homes with renewable energy technologies Solar thermal 5-properties. Air source heat pump 65-properties	70	35.5	Less a total of 4,727 properties are connected to National Gas Network. A total of 127 properties are other mainly electric storage heating.
Cavity walls filled	3,597	80.0	Less solid wall property total 493.
Solid wall externally insulated	493	35.4	Less cavity wall property total 3,597
Homes with full programmable gas central heating system.	4,727	94.8	A total of 6,093 properties are included on the Gas Service programme.
Homes with 'A' rated heating systems	3,122	51.2	

- 10.4 The Council has implemented a programme of replacing inefficient, old and defective gas and electric heating systems with efficient heating systems with appropriate controls. Between 2006 and 2014 the Council has replaced over 51% of gas heating boilers with 'A' rated boilers that are considered to be over 90% efficient. The Council aims to upgrade all of its poorest performing boilers (Bands E, F and G) by 2020.
- 10.5 As at January 2015 there were still over 200 properties with inefficient electric storage heating. The Council's Renewable Heating Replacement Programme is focused on improving these properties, starting with the most energy inefficient properties, and aims to have replaced these inefficient systems by 2022.
- 10.6 The table above shows that the vast majority of lofts (90%) and cavity walls (80%) in the Council's own residential properties have been insulated. Therefore it is no longer necessary to have large scale area-based programmes of this type of work. However, a limited amount of full loft insulation and cavity wall insulation is still required for some properties (such as installing a top-up layer to bring the property up to the standards required under the current Building Regulations of a depth of at least 250mm). The Council aims to achieve 100% for both measures wherever possible by 2020.

#### Renewable Energy Technologies:

- 10.7 Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) is a government financial incentive to promote the use of renewable energy. The level of grant funding is based on the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and once a property is registered on the scheme the Council receive quarterly payments for seven years for the amount of renewable heat their system produces.
- 10.8 Retrofitting renewable energy technology to existing Council housing stock is financially expensive and therefore obtaining grant funding under the Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (Domestic RHI) for this type of work is essential. The Council currently has 70 properties incorporating renewable energy technology with solar water heating (5) and air source heat pumps (65) being the most common systems installed.
- 10.9 Based on the 31 Domestic RHI agreements already in place the Council has obtained a potential payment schedule over the next 7-years of £86,455. The total averages out at £2,800 per property which is around 50% of the cost of installing air source heating. The recycling of grant funding will allow for around 30 air source heat pumps to be installed each year resulting in increasing the SAP rating of these properties 42 to 63.

#### External Wall Insulation (EWI):

- 10.10 Carrying out retrofitting EWI programmes of work is expensive, costing around £14,000 per property although residents can see as much as a £443 saving in energy costs per year. Currently, grant funding for this type of work is obtainable under the Green Deal Cash-back Scheme, although funding is capped at £160,000 per authority per annum. Under its EWI programme in 2014/15 the Council has currently £108,000 of Green Deal finance and completed EWI on 31 properties.

#### Double Glazing:

- 10.11 The Council has already installed PVCu double-glazed windows and doors to almost 100% of its housing stock. The only properties left with single glazed

windows are a small of number properties situated within Conservation areas. The first generation PVCu double-glazed windows installed in Council properties are coming to the end of the building elements lifecycle and a programme is underway to replace them with ones that are around 40% more thermally efficient.

#### LED Lighting:

- 10.12 There are a number of benefits in upgrading traditional incandescent light bulbs and fittings with Light-Emitting Diode (LED) bulbs and fittings especially in communal areas. The benefits include:
- a) Increased operational life.
  - b) Increased energy efficiency of 80%-90% when compared to traditional lighting and conventional light bulbs.
  - c) LED bulbs are 100% recyclable and free of toxic chemicals.
- 10.13 The Council have programmed the electrical testing of the landlord's supplies to around 60-blocks of flats which will include the upgrading the communal lighting with LED lighting during 2015-16. This work is planned to be completed by 2020.

#### New Build Council-owned Properties:

- 10.14 The Code for Sustainable Homes is a national standard to guide the construction industry in the design and construction of sustainable homes.
- 10.15 The Code uses a rating system to indicate the overall 'sustainability performance' of a home. A home can achieve a sustainability rating from one to six stars with one star being the entry level, above the level of the Building Regulations. Six stars is the highest level, reflecting exemplar development in sustainability terms.
- 10.16 All the homes built under the House Building Programme will meet level 3 of the Code or higher. This means that the home will have to be at least 25% more energy efficient than one built to the standards of the 2006 Building Regulations.

### **11. Improving Energy Efficiency in the Private Sector**

- 11.1 The Council works proactively with residents in the private sector to improve the energy efficiency of their homes in the following ways:

#### Landlord Accreditation

- 11.2 The Essex Landlords Accreditation Scheme (ELAS) is a consortium of 8 Local Authorities including Epping Forest District Council. Landlords in participant authority areas are able to access information that is relevant to them through the on-line site and also through newsletters and forums. This includes information on energy efficiency schemes and incentives and forthcoming changes in legislation.

#### Enforcement

- 11.3 In certain cases the Council can take enforcement action to ensure that landlords carry out essential improvements to increase the energy efficiency of their properties. Landlords are directed to the Green Deal and ECO to assist in funding qualifying works. Where the landlord fails to carry out the



work they will be liable for prosecution and in some instances the Council may carry out the work and recover their reasonable expenses from them.

#### Housing Assistance

- 11.4 The Council no longer gives grants specifically for energy efficiency. Provision for this is provided to qualifying home owners through Decent Homes Repayable Assistance (up to £10,000) and Small Works Repayable Assistance (up to £3,000) towards work to bring the property up to the Decent Homes Standard. The energy efficiency of about 15 properties will be improved through private sector housing assistance in 2015/16.

#### Advice and Signposting

- 11.5 The Council's Private Sector Housing Teams provide advice to owner occupiers and landlords on energy efficiency including being able to signpost to sources of financial assistance. Key officers are qualified to City and Guilds level in Energy Awareness.
- 11.6 The Green Deal was introduced in 2012 to provide funding for energy efficiency measures in homes and replaced the previous grant-based scheme, Warm Front. Under the Green Deal energy efficiency measures are provided at no up-front cost with their cost being recovered over a period of time through the resident's electricity bills. The Green Deal is supported by additional, 'Energy Company Obligation' (ECO), funding where the work that needs to be carried out is likely to be costly, for instance in properties that have solid walls or no mains gas.
- 11.7 Residents are provided with detailed information about the Green Deal from officers in the Private Sector Housing teams and detailed information is also available on the Council's web-site.

#### Energy Switch

- 11.8 Where appropriate the Council works in conjunction with national and local schemes in order to provide beneficial outcomes for its residents. In 2014 the Council has been working with the County Council and other local authorities in Essex to provide a simple mechanism through which residents can switch energy providers. Officers will monitor the outcome of this in terms of estimated cost savings to residents.

## **12. Resourcing the Strategy**

- 12.1 As energy efficiency is delivered through a number of different service areas it is not possible to calculate the total time spent on its delivery. The staff delivering the service as part of their duties are as follows:

Housing Revenue Account-funded:

- Housing Assets Manager
- Assistant Housing Assets Manager
- Senior Housing Officer
- Housing Officers
- Housing Assistants

Funded from the General Fund:

- Private Sector Housing Manager (Grants and C.A.R.E.)
- Private Sector Housing Officer

- C.A.R.E. Case Workers
- Private Sector Housing Manager (Technical)
- Environmental Health Officers
- Environmental Health Technical Assistants
- C.A.R.E. Case Workers
- Environmental Co-ordinator

### **13. Reviewing the Strategy**

- 13.1 This Housing Service Strategy on Energy Efficiency will be reviewed by the Housing Scrutiny Panel in consultation with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation no later than February 2018.

## 14. Action Plan

14.1 The following key tasks will be continued and undertaken in the future by the Housing Service within the Communities Directorate:

Aim	Key tasks / activities	Resources	Timescale	Financial implications	Progress / Measure
1. Establish the baseline level of energy efficiency in all Council-owned housing stock.	1.1 Analyse and report the SAP rating results of the National Home Energy Rating (NHER) software programme annually.	Housing Assets Manager	Annually	None	KPI produced annually.
	1.2 Continue to develop and populate the NHER database with data from stock condition and property survey schedules.	Housing Assets Manager	Ongoing	None contained within existing staff budgets.	Quarterly review of the number of property surveys undertaken and included on NHER database. All Council housing stock planned to be surveyed by 2018.
	1.3 Identify properties that require energy efficiency measures and undertake the work on Capital programme.	Housing Assets Manager	Ongoing	None contained within existing staff budgets.	The average SAP rating of housing stock on NHER database will increase and this is monitored annual as a KPI target.
	1.4 Continue to prioritise and undertake energy efficiency measures on low SAP rating hard to treat properties.	Housing Assets Manager	Ongoing	None contained within existing staff budgets.	No properties in Energy Efficiency Bands E and F and an annual reduction of properties in Band D.

Aim	Key tasks / activities	Resources	Timescale	Financial implications	Progress / Measure
2. Increase the average energy efficiency rating of all Council-owned housing stock through Capital works programmes.	2.1 Continue with the programme of installing gas central heating systems based around SEDBUK 'A'-rated boilers.	Housing Assets Manager / External Contractors.	Ongoing	Estimated to cost in the region of £1,000,000 annually provision contained within current Capital Works programme.	No properties with heating systems in SEDBUK Bands E, F and G by 2020.
	2.2 Continue with the programme of installing loft, cavity and external wall insulation along with loft insulation top ups where required. Wherever possible ensure that standards of insulation are compliant with current Building Regulations.	Housing Assets Manager / External Contractors. Green Deal funding.	Ongoing	Estimated to cost in the region of £1,000,000 annually provision contained within current Capital Works programme.	Replace all inefficient electric storage heating with renewable heating by 2022  Ensure all Council housing stock has loft or cavity wall insulation installed wherever possible by 2020.
	2.3 Continue with the provision of renewable heating technologies prioritising properties in areas that are not connected to the National Gas Network and when inefficient electric storage heating needs to be replaced.	Housing Assets Manager / External Contractors RHI funding	Ongoing	Estimated to cost in the region of £200,000 annually provision contained within current Capital Works programme.	The average SAP rating of housing stock on NHER database will increase and this is monitored annually as a KPI target.
	2.4 Continue to install and upgrade defective windows and rear doors with PVCu low emissivity double-glazed units.	Housing Assets Manager / External Contractors	Ongoing	Estimated to cost in the region of £900,000 annually provision contained within current Capital Works programme.	No properties in Energy Efficiency Bands F and G and a 50% reduction of properties in Energy Efficiency Band E.

Aim	Key tasks / activities	Resources	Timescale	Financial implications	Progress / Measure
3. Increased use of renewable technologies for heating Council-owned properties.	3.1 Continue with obtaining grant funding under the Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) and the Green Deal Home Improvement Fund.	Housing Assets Manager / External Consultants / RHI	Ongoing	None. Grant funding is recycled back into the energy efficiency Capital works programmes.	The maximum grant funding possible is claimed for energy improvement measures.
	3.2 Continue to explore grant funding opportunities for renewable energy technologies	Housing Assets Manager / External Consultants	Ongoing	None. Contained within existing staff budgets.	More properties receiving energy efficiency works and more residents benefiting from fuel savings.
	3.3 Continue to monitor opportunities to trial and utilise renewable heating technologies.	Housing Assets Manager	Ongoing	None. Contained within existing staff budgets.	
	3.4 Continue to provide residents who receive a new air source heating system with an Energy Advice pack containing system specific information.	Housing Assets Manager / External Contractors	Ongoing	None. Contained within existing staff budgets.	Residents benefitting from lower energy costs.
	3.5 Actively explore renewable heating technologies for communal heating systems in Sheltered Housing schemes.	Facilities Management / Housing Assets Manager	Ongoing	None. Contained within existing staff budgets.	More Council properties utilising renewable energy technologies.

Aim	Key tasks / activities	Resources	Timescale	Financial implications	Progress / Measure
4. Elimination of property design features that contribute to condensation and mould growth in Council-owned properties.	4.1 Continue to provide Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) solutions for properties suffering from severe condensation.	Housing Assets Manager	Ongoing.	Estimated to cost in the region of £40,000 annually provision contained within current Capital Works programme.	Decrease in number of complaints about condensation and damp housing conditions.
	4.2 Continue to identify and carry out insulation works on properties to eliminate areas of cold bridging.	Housing Assets Manager	Ongoing.	Estimated to cost in the region of £10,000 annually provision contained within current Capital Works programme.	
	4.3 Continue to provide advice to residents on measures to reduce and eliminate condensation through advice visits, leaflets and articles.	Housing Repairs and Assets	Ongoing	None contained within existing staff budgets.	
5. Energy efficiency standards' of new homes built under the Council's House Building Programme	5.1 Ensure all new homes, from phase 2 onwards, built under the House Building Programme are built to the Code for Sustainable Homes Code 4 or higher.	Housing Assets / External Consultants.	Ongoing	Will increase the costs of development. To be allowed for when carrying out financial viability of development projects.	All new homes built by the Council are built to Code 4 or higher.

Aim	Key tasks / activities	Resources	Timescale	Financial implications	Progress / Measure
6. Private Sector Housing	6.1 Actively encourage eligible owner occupiers to apply for Housing Assistance to eliminate qualifying hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), such as excess cold and damp and mould growth.	Private Housing Managers, EHOs, Private Sector Housing Officer	2015/16 with review in Sept 2015	Included within allocated budget of £110,000 in 2015/16.	Owners occupiers that are eligible take-up Housing Assistance
	6.2 Develop a Fuel Poverty Strategy for the Council in the light of DECC's Fuel Poverty Strategy for England' published in March 2015.	AD (Private Housing & Communities Support), relevant Housing Managers	Sept 2015	Within existing budgets	A realistic and achievable Fuel Poverty Strategy is developed and adopted by Members
	6.3 Review opportunities to participate with Housing Assets in an area-based project for the installation of energy efficiency measures in privately-owned hard-to-treat homes	Private Housing Manager (Grants & C.A.R.E.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor outcome of Phase I and II - July 2015</li> <li>• Agree how to progress by Aug 2015</li> </ul>	Within existing budgets	Private property owners benefit from the Council's external wall insulation project

7. Private Rented Sector	7.1 Work proactively with landlords where possible to improve their understanding of good practice.	Private Housing Manager (Technical), EHOs	Ongoing Review ELAS outcomes Sept 2015	Within existing budgets	Privately rented properties meet required standards without recourse to local authority enforcement
	7.2 Enforce housing standards in privately-rented accommodation	Private Housing Manager (Technical), EHOs	Ongoing	Within existing budgets Landlords that fail to meet required standards now have to meet the Council's costs (of enforcement)	Privately rented properties meet required standards



## 15. Key Targets and Performance Monitoring

15.1 Key Targets and Performance									
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target	Target	Target	Target	Target
Percentage of Council housing stock on NHER database.	55.6	62.4	67.5	75.1	81.0	87.3	93.6	100.0	
Average SAP Rating of Council housing stock.	61	64	66	69	70	71	72	73	74
Number of Council properties in SAP Band F and E.	1,025	847	742	500	400	300	200	100	0
Number of Council properties in SAP Band D.	1,774	1,770	1,665	1,400	1,200	1,000	800	600	400

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## **Report to the Housing Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 16 June 2015**

**Portfolio: Housing – Councillor D Stallan**

**Subject: Housing Service Strategy on Housing and Neighbourhood Management**



**Officer to contact for further information: Roger Wilson extension 4419**

**Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins extension 4607**

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**1. That the Housing Select Committee considers and endorses the Housing Service Strategy on Housing and Neighbourhood Management, attached as an appendix, and provides any comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder for incorporation.**

### **Report:**

1. The Housing Service Strategies were originally produced around 15 years ago in accordance with an agreed standard framework, and have since been updated. The Strategies give more detail than the Council's main Housing Strategy on the various housing services provided. In total, 16 Housing Service Strategies have been produced to date, covering:

Equality and Diversity	House Sales & Leasehold Services
Rent Arrears	Rent Collection and Administration
Under-occupation	Harassment
Housing Information	Tenant Participation
Private Rented Sector	Older Peoples' Housing Services
Housing Advice	Empty Council Properties
Energy Efficiency	Prevention of Social Housing Fraud
Anti-Social Behaviour	
Housing and Neighbourhood Management	

2. The Strategies are produced to a common format that set out how individual housing services will be delivered. They have assisted the Housing Service in achieving the Customer Service Excellence award and ISO 9001:2008 Quality Accreditation, and have been important to meeting the minimum requirement for Housing Related Support funding from Essex County Council under the conditions of the contract.

3. The Housing Select Committee is asked to consider and endorse the Housing Service Strategy on Housing and Neighbourhood Management attached as an appendix to the report and provide any comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder for incorporation.

**Reason for decision:**

In order for the Committee to agree the updated Housing Service Strategy on Housing and Neighbourhood Management. The Service Strategies have assisted the Housing Service in achieving the Customer Service Excellence award and ISO 9001:2008 Quality Accreditation, and have been important to meeting the minimum requirement for Housing Related Support funding from Essex County Council under the conditions of the contract.

**Options considered and rejected:**

Not to consider and agree the updated Housing Service Strategy on Housing and Neighbourhood Management.

**Consultation undertaken:**

The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation will be consulted on the Strategy at their next meeting.

**Resource implications:**

Budget provision: As set out in the Strategy

Personnel: As set out in the Strategy

Land: N/A

Community Plan/BVPP reference: N/A

Relevant statutory powers: As set out in the Strategy

Background papers: N/A

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: As set out in the Strategy

Key Decision reference: (if required) N/A

**Epping Forest District Council**

**HOUSING SERVICE STRATEGY ON  
HOUSING & NEIGHBOURHOOD  
MANAGEMENT**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Housing Service Strategy relates to the Council's approach to the provision of Housing & Neighbourhood Management Services. The Strategy sets out how this element of the service is delivered by the Communities Directorate and includes links with other services both internally and externally.
- 1.2 Housing & Neighbourhood Management is an important front-line service which covers a wide range of activities and is delivered through the Area Housing Offices. It ensures, perhaps more than any other part of the service that good landlord and tenant relationships exist so that tenants' rights and responsibilities in respect of their Conditions of Tenancy are clearly communicated and understood.
- 1.3 The recovery of rent arrears and dealing with anti-social behaviour is undertaken by the Area Housing Offices. These areas of work are not covered by this Strategy as it is covered in two separate Housing Services Strategies approved by the Housing Portfolio Holder.
- 1.4 This Housing & Neighbourhood Service Strategy together with the Strategy and Statement on Anti-Social Behaviour Policies and Procedures complies with the Homes and Communities Agency's Regulatory Framework's Neighbourhood and Community Standard.
- 1.5 This Strategy has been formulated in consultation with representatives of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, and includes information contained in the Communities Directorate's Policy & Procedures. The Strategy has been considered by the Housing Select Committee and was approved by the Housing Portfolio Holder in July 2015.

**2. Background to Housing Management**

- 2.1 The Housing Management Service is delivered through two Area Housing Offices (north and south), and the Limes Centre, Chigwell which is a sub-office of the Area Housing Office (South).
- 2.2 At each of the Area Housing Offices the Area Housing Managers have Section meetings at least every two months to ensure staff communication on policy, procedural, and performance matters etc. The Assistant Director (Housing Operations) is a member of the Communities Management Team, also comprising the Director of Communities, Assistant Director (Property & Development) the Assistant Director (Private Sector Housing and Resources) and the Assistant Director

(Community Services).

- 2.3 Comprehensive systems are in place and are detailed later in the Strategy. The efficiency of these systems are confirmed by the Housing Service being accredited with both the international quality standard of ISO 9001:2008 and the Customer Service Excellence Award for all of its services including Housing and Neighbourhood Management.

### **3. Aims and Objectives**

- 3.1 The aim of the Council's Housing Service Strategy on Housing and Neighbourhood Management is:

“To ensure that tenants are advised in all matters relating to their tenancies whilst actively seeking to maximise the use of the Council's housing stock, improve housing estates and deal with breaches in tenancy conditions through good landlord & tenant relationships.”

- 3.2 This aim will be met by:

(a) Ensuring that all tenants are advised of their and the Council's responsibilities under the Tenancy Agreement at its commencement and throughout the period of the tenancy;

(b) Keeping close links between tenants and their Housing Management Officer to reduce the likelihood of breaches of the Tenancy Agreement;

(c) Acting in accordance with Part IV of the Housing Act 1985 (Section 87-89), the Localism Act 2011 and the Council's discretionary policy on under-occupation and succession.

(d) Consulting with tenants on issues regarding their home or local community which may affect them;

(e) Encouraging tenants to set up their own Residents Association;

(f) Taking appropriate actions to deal with breaches of tenancy conditions;

(g) Ensuring the Council's housing estates are properly maintained; and

(h) Dealing with breaches of covenants by people occupying former Council homes;

### **4. Statutory Requirements**

- 4.1 The relevant key statutory requirements for housing management are as follows:

a) Localism Act 2011

- Requirement to publish a Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy
- Powers to grant Flexible (fixed-term) Tenancies
- Protection for Pre-Act Secure (lifetime) Tenants

b) Housing and Regeneration Act 2008

- Family Intervention Tenancies
- Changes relating to tolerated trespassers

c) Housing Act 1985

- Notice of proceedings for possession or termination
- Grounds and orders for possession
- Extended discretion of Court in certain possession proceedings
- Succession
- Assignment, lodgers, and subletting
- Repairs and improvements
- Variation of terms of tenancy
- Variation of rent
- Provision of information and consultation
- Consultation on matters of housing management

**5. Client Consultation, Information & Involvement (Statutory Requirement)**

5.1 The way in which tenants will be consulted, informed and involved with regard to the Council's policy on housing and neighbourhood management is as follows;

- a) Consultation with the Tenants' and Leaseholders Federation;
- b) Consultation with recognised tenants' associations;
- c) Information to tenants in publications e.g. Housing News, Annual Report;
- d) Posters on services displayed throughout the District;
- e) Liaison with the Citizens Advice Bureau;
- f) One-to-one consultation with tenants;
- g) Changes in policy;
- h) Changes under Part IV, Section 102/3 of the Housing Act 1985 to amend the Standard Tenancy Agreement; and
- i) Consultation on matters of housing management under Part IV, Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985.

**6. General Principles**

6.1 Section 3 of the Strategy sets out the aims and objectives of housing and neighbourhood management. This Section details the general approach taken on the delivery of the service under the following headings:

**7.2 Changes in Tenancy**

Changes in tenancy will be managed in accordance with legislation and the Council's discretionary policies. The main types of changes are as follows:

*a) Succession*

***Pre- April 2012 Tenancies***

All of the Council's secure tenants who signed up to their tenancy prior to 1 April 2012 enjoy many rights under the Housing Act 1985 Part IV ("Tenants Charter"). One of these is the right of succession to a tenancy which takes place upon the death of the tenant. Any successor tenant who is either a spouse or a Civil Partner is able to remain at the accommodation regardless of any under-occupation. Under the legislation, in the case of succession by a family member who meets all of the rules, if the accommodation afforded by the dwelling-house is more extensive than is reasonably required by the tenant then the Council can serve a notice of seeking possession more than six months but less than twelve months after becoming aware of the tenant's death requiring them to vacate and move to smaller accommodation unless the Council's under-occupation policy applies.

***Post April 2012 Tenancies – Lesser succession rights for family members***

Under the Localism Act 2011, for all tenancies (including Flexible Tenancies) commencing after 1 April 2012, the right to succeed was repealed for family members. However, from 1 April 2012, all of the Council's secure tenants have been granted additional contractual succession rights within their Tenancy Agreement, in addition to those set out in the Localism Act. If at the time of the tenant's death, the dwelling-house is occupied by a family member (as defined by Section 113 of the Housing Act 1985) and not occupied by a spouse or a civil partner of the tenant as his only or principal home, the following additional rights will apply through the terms of the Tenancy Agreement;

- Provided there is no under-occupation, a family member will be allowed to succeed to the tenancy provided they meet all of the succession rules set out under the Housing Act 1985 Part IV and has been residing at the property as their only or principal home for over three years
- Where the property is under-occupied by a family member, if the family member meets all of the succession rules set out under the Housing Act 1985 Part IV and has been residing at the property as their only or principal home for over three years, they will be made one offer of suitable alternative accommodation. If the successor tenant refuses to move, then the Council will take Court action to seek possession under Ground 16 of the Housing Act 1985
- Where the property is under-occupied by a family member who has resided at the property for less than three years then they be required to vacate. If the occupier refuses to vacate, then the Council will take Court action to seek possession

*b) Assignment*



Under the Housing Act 1985, tenants have the right to assign their tenancy to anyone who would be eligible to succeed to their tenancy upon their death. When a formal request is received a Deed of Assignment will be signed by both parties concerned.

#### *c) Mutual Exchanges*

All secure tenants have the Right to Exchange, with tenants being able to register free of charge with HomeSwapper, which matches property swaps electronically. All mutual exchanges are administered by way of assignment, thereby protecting the rights of the tenant and the Council. Housing Services staff will visit all Council tenants seeking an exchange to give advice and assistance, inspect the condition of the properties, ensure there is a clear rent account and note any other relevant information prior to giving permission in accordance with current legislation.

#### *d) Any Other Changes in Tenancy*

Any other changes in tenancy such as name or marital status will be administered by Housing Management, with the Housing Options Section being notified. Following an investigation into the validity of the changes the tenant will be formally notified of any changes.

### **8. Joint Tenancies**

- 8.1 When an existing tenant requests the creation of a joint tenancy, an analysis of the tenancy history will be undertaken. A joint tenancy will not be granted if there has been a previous succession to the tenancy, due to the new joint tenancy removing the succession which has already taken place. Generally, requests for joint tenancies with relatives will not be granted. In some circumstances, joint tenancies with carers may be granted, provided the carer has themselves given up accommodation to care for the secure tenant. Housing Management will observe Council policy and Government Circulars when taking decisions.

### **9. Introductory Tenancies**

- 9.1 Under the Housing Act 1996, local authorities are given discretionary powers to operate a scheme of "introductory tenancies", whereby all new tenancies allocated are not secure until after a twelve month "trial" period. The Council's Cabinet agreed the introduction of an Introductory Tenancy Scheme, which was brought in on 1 April 2005. Introductory Tenancies apply to both Secure and Flexible (fixed-term) Tenancies. The scheme has proved to be very successful and has assisted in reducing both incidents of anti-social behaviour on estates and rent arrears.

### **10. Family Intervention Tenancies**

- 10.1 Family Intervention Tenancies were introduced under the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, and are designed to provide non-secure tenancies, in an alternative property, to applicants who have previously been the subject of a Possession Order made on the grounds of nuisance or annoyance and where a lower security of tenure should be provided for the purposes of providing behavioural support. Should any applicants offered a Family Intervention Tenancy re-offend then re-possession of the property through the Courts will be more easily achievable than if they were secure

tenants.

## **11. Demoted Tenancies**

- 11.1 The Council may apply to the County Court for a “Demotion Order” to reduce the security of tenure of an existing tenant on their own home on the grounds of anti social behaviour or unlawful conduct, following the service of the prescribed notice. A Demotion Order ends a secure tenancy. If the tenant remains in occupation of the property after the date that the secure tenancy is ended, it creates, in the place of the secure tenancy, a less secure “demoted tenancy” for a minimum period of twelve months. Demoted tenants lose many of their rights including; the Right to Buy and any discount accrued for any demoted tenancy period, their right to succession, which does not apply during any demoted tenancy period and security of tenure. Demoted tenants are automatically promoted back to a higher form of security (i.e. secure tenant) after twelve months, unless there has been a further breach of tenancy during that period. The Court may then make an Order for possession if the demoted tenant, another resident or visitor has behaved in a way which is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance or if such a person used the premises for illegal purposes, and the Court is satisfied it is reasonable to make the Order. Seeking possession of a Demoted Tenancy is more straightforward, as the Court cannot refuse a landlord’s application for possession unless it thinks that the procedure has not been properly followed. Prior to the serving of any Notice, officers would have undertaken home visits and written letters to the tenant taking every possible action to try and resolve matters.

## **12. Priority Transfers**

- 12.1 If in exceptional circumstances a tenant needs to be transferred to alternative accommodation for housing management reasons e.g.due to personal risk, (which must be confirmed by appropriate sources), the Assistant Director (Housing Operations) and the Housing Options Manager will authorise Priority Transfers in appropriate cases in accordance with the Council’s Housing Allocations Scheme.

## **13. Vehicle Crossovers & Off-Street Parking Schemes**

- 13.1 For all current and former Council properties, Housing Management will assess all applications for vehicular crossovers ensuring that the Council’s existing policy is applied. Residents of neighbouring properties will be consulted with their views being taken into account before permission is granted. In addition, Ward Members will be consulted on any crossover which removes between 6 and 12 metres in length of grassed amenity land.
- 13.2 The Council undertakes a programme of off-street parking schemes in order to ease parking congestion in high priority areas. Potential sites are identified by either local residents Ward Members or officers. All requested sites are placed on a register and are scored based upon an assessment criteria which includes the percentage of Council tenants in the area, lack of possible off-street parking, consultation outcomes etc. The Cabinet approve the register and agree the schemes to be given priority. Due to the high cost, the Council can only achieve a limited number of off-street

parking schemes.

## **14. Breaches of Tenancy Conditions**

### **14.1 Prevention**

Housing Management will work proactively through home visits and estate inspections to ensure against breaches of tenancy conditions. This will attempt to identify neglect of gardens, rubbish dumping, vandalism and the general external condition of properties.

### **14.2 Action Taken in Response to Breaches of Tenancy Conditions**

When an alleged breach is reported, the Housing Management Officer will investigate the case. If an actual breach is identified, the tenant will be notified formally of the breach and given a deadline by which to resolve it. The implications of their action under the terms of their tenancy will also be explained. A home visit will be undertaken if the problem persists. Should Housing Management serve Notice or proceed to Court, appropriate evidence will be gathered as necessary.

### **14.3 Boundary Disputes**

When Housing Management receives written confirmation of a boundary dispute, a Housing Management Officer will visit. If appropriate, a joint visit will be made with a Surveyor. In difficult cases the Assistant Director (Housing Operations) may arrange for a Consultant Chartered Surveyor to be employed in order to resolve the matter. All parties will be told of the decision in writing. Should any of the parties dispute the decision, they will be advised that it shall stand unless they provide documentary evidence to the contrary.

### **14.4 Breaches of Covenants**

When Housing Management receive a complaint of a potential breach of a covenant on a former Council dwelling the matter will be investigated. If appropriate, the freeholder/leaseholder will be notified of the breach and, if it persists, Legal Services will be asked to take Court action.

### **14.5 Unauthorised Occupation**

In the case of unauthorised occupation, Legal Services will be asked to apply to the County Court for possession within 5 days. A Notice will be fixed to the door of the property.

### **14.6 Social Housing Fraud**

The Corporate Fraud Team has a dedicated officer who investigates social housing fraud. The Council has launched its "Cheater Campaign" which publicises the fraud hotline through the distribution of posters and leaflets throughout the District. The cheater Campaign has also been publicised in the Tenants' magazine "Housing News". Reports of social housing fraud come from a number of sources, including from the general public, Members, other Council officers and services, through

Tenancy Audits, and the checking of internal documentation held on persons and general processes. The types of Social Housing Fraud investigated fall mainly into the following 6 categories:

- Sub-letting of a Council property
- Fraudulent Right to Buy applications
- Obtaining a tenancy by deception
- Non-occupation of a Council property
- Unlawful successions to a Secure Tenancy
- Fraudulent Private Sector Grant applications

The Council has a separate Housing Service Strategy on the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud. The Strategy sets out to approach in dealing with cases of Social Housing Fraud in more detail. However, as public disclosure of the Fraud Strategy would undermine the Council's efforts to deal with this issue the document is confidential and for the use of officers only.

#### **14.7 Estate Inspections**

Housing Management Officers will inspect the areas they are responsible for on a regular basis and will generally identify problems whilst they are visiting tenants on other matters. More formally, Area Housing Managers will inspect a sample of estates with each of their Housing Management Officers and record requested actions to ensure that estates are kept to a high standard. Representatives from local Residents Associations will be invited to attend the annual estate inspections. In addition, Ward Members will be asked in advance if they have any concerns and will receive a report on the outcome of the inspection.

#### **15. Older and Disabled People's Garden Maintenance Scheme**

- 15.1 Housing Management will monitor the Older and Disabled People's Garden Maintenance Scheme, which is managed by Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF). Provided applicants have no-one living at the property who is under 70 years of age and have a clear rent account they will be added to the list and dealt with in date order. The Council funds VAEF's part-time Co-ordinator; around fifty vulnerable tenants' gardens are maintained four times each year between April and October.

#### **16. Compensation for Tenants Improvements Scheme**

- 16.1 Requests from tenants to undertake improvements will be received by Housing Management and passed on to the Housing Repairs Service to deal with the technical aspects. Providing the improvements qualify under the Scheme, the Housing Management Officer will ensure the rent account is clear, and, if agreed, write to the tenant giving consent and details of how to claim their compensation on vacation of the property. When the improvement has been completed, the Housing

Repairs Officer will visit to ensure the improvement has been carried out satisfactorily. When a claim has been made, the Housing Repairs Officer will visit again to inspect, and if satisfied, the Housing Management Officer will calculate and arrange payment of the compensation.

## **17. Alterations and Improvements (Not Qualifying for the Tenants Improvement Scheme)**

- 17.1 The Tenancy Agreement requires tenants to seek permission before undertaking any improvements to their properties. The Housing Assets Section considers each application from any tenant, checking that the improvement does not qualify for the Compensation Scheme (see 16.1). If the improvement is straightforward e.g. shed, greenhouse, no structural works etc, permission will be granted. If the request is more complicated then the Housing Assets Section will arrange for an inspection to be undertaken. If appropriate, neighbours will be consulted and their views taken into account. Housing Management will be consulted and the tenant will be notified of the decision in writing.

## **18. Estate Enhancements & Grounds Maintenance**

- 18.1 The Assistant Director (Housing Operations) and the Area Housing Managers (North and South) attend twice yearly meetings with Leisure Services in order to monitor the Grounds Maintenance Contract for the Communities Directorate. Housing Management also become involved in various improvement schemes.

## **19. Abandoned Vehicles**

- 19.1 When vehicles appear to be abandoned and are identified on Housing Act land, the Housing Management Officer will contact officers in the Neighbourhoods Directorate who will determine ownership via the DVLA computer link. For those which are clearly abandoned, a Notice will be attached to the vehicle warning the owner of its removal within seven days and, if appropriate, to remove the vehicle. If the vehicle is in such a poor condition that it is likely to cause a danger it will be removed immediately.

## **20. Caretaking Service & Cleansing of Communal Areas**

- 20.1 Housing Management will undertake and monitor the cleaning service, which includes all sheltered housing scheme cleaners, mobile cleaners, and cleaners at some designated blocks across the District. In addition, there are three Caretakers, two at the Limes Farm Estate, Chigwell and one at the Oakwood Hill Estate, Loughton. Notice Boards have been installed in all designated blocks on housing estates to advise residents when cleaning will be undertaken and inviting their comments on the standard of the service.

## **21. Right to Buy**

21.1 Housing Management will respond to enquiries from the Home Ownership Team concerning the tenancies of tenants who have applied to buy their home.

**22. Land Sales**

22.1 When a request is received to purchase a piece of Housing land, the Housing Management Officer will inspect the site and seek the advice and agreement of their Area Housing Manager. If the land is less than 50 square metres, in accordance with delegated authority, the Assistant Director (Housing Operations) in consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder and local Ward Members will decide if the land can be sold. If all are in agreement, the proposed purchaser will be advised of the valuation and the land will be sold. If the request is refused, then they will have the right to Appeal. Requests to purchase land in excess of 50 sq mtres will be referred to the Housing Portfolio Holder.

**23. Covenant Approval**

23.1 Housing Management will deal with requests from the owners of former Council properties who are seeking permission to carry out improvements. In addition to receiving requests, any improvement works to former Council properties that have not been notified will be identified on estate inspections and through checking the list of planning applications. If any request is refused, the owners will have the right to appeal against the decision.

**24. Family Mosaic Housing-Related Support Services**

24.1 Under the Supporting People Programme, Essex County Council provides housing related support to tenants with care and support needs through its appointed contractor, Family Mosaic. This additional support is of great assistance to Housing Management Officers when dealing with tenants who are in need of additional housing welfare support. Cases are referred to the Family Mosaic “Gateway” for assessment. The Family Mosaic Support Worker will visit tenants, offer counselling, advice and support, assist with tenancy set-up, benefit and employment advice or provide any other help they may need to in order to sustain their tenancy. Regular meetings are held with Family Mosaic to monitor progress and performance.

**25. Action Plan**

25.1 The actions in the table below will be undertaken in the future by the Housing Service in order to enhance the Housing Management Service.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
Update the Equalities Impact Assessment for Housing and Neighbourhood Management	Area Housing Managers	September 2016	Within Existing Resources
Explore greater use of CCTV on estates to combat anti-	Area Housing Managers	On-going	Within Existing

social behaviour and fly-tipping			resources
Continue to support all Resident Associations and attend meetings when appropriate.	Area Housing Managers	On-going	Existing resources

## 26. Key Targets and Performance Monitoring

26.1 The Council will monitor performance and compliance with this Strategy through quarterly customer Improvement meetings chaired by the Assistant Director (Housing Operations) and Area Housing Managers, to ensure that a number of targets, which include the following, are met:

<b>Key Targets &amp; Performance</b>					
<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
	(Actual)	(Target)	(Target)	(Target)	(Target)
Rent collection rate	99.08%	98%	101%	101%	101%
Rent arrears as a percentage of the rent roll	1.27%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%
Former tenant arrears collection rate	£82,336	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000	£75,000

26.2 As can be seen, performance on both current and former tenant rent arrears in 2014/2015 has been exceptional particularly in the light of the Welfare Reforms.

26.3 It should be noted that the calculation of the rent collection rate will, from 2015/2016, be based upon the "Housemark" formula. Housemark is a performance indicator benchmarking club for Councils, Arms-Length Management Organisations and Housing Associations in England. It aims to improve performance and efficiency in social housing. It has more than 950 members and is jointly owned by the Chartered Institute of Housing and the National Housing Federation.

- 26.4 In previous years, the total amount collectable (100%) included both the current collectable rent and all outstanding arrears. In future years, the rent collectable will represent the total amount (100%), with all outstanding arrears being added above this figure, hence the target in future years being in excess of 100%. As the former Housing Scrutiny Panel has already agreed the target of 98% for 2015/2016, this cannot be changed.
- 26.5 The targets for future years have been set taking into account the potential effect of the introduction of "Universal Credit" which is expected to be implemented some time during 2016 in the Epping Forest District. As this will include housing benefit being paid directly to tenants, it is expected to have a detrimental effect on rent collection.

## **27. Reviewing the Strategy**

- 27.1 The Strategy for Housing and Neighbourhood Management will be reviewed by the Housing Scrutiny Panel in consultation with the Tenants' and Leaseholders Federation before July 2018.



## **Report to the Housing Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 16 June 2015**

**Portfolio: Housing – Councillor D Stallan**

**Subject: Housing Service Strategy on Older Peoples Housing Services**



**Officer to contact for further information: Roger Wilson extension 4419**

**Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins extension 4607**

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**1. That the Housing Select Committee considers and endorses the Housing Service Strategy on Older Peoples Housing Services, attached as an appendix, and provides any comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder for incorporation.**

### **Report:**

1. The Housing Service Strategies were originally produced around 15 years ago in accordance with an agreed standard framework, and have since been updated. The Strategies give more detail than the Council's main Housing Strategy on the various housing services provided. In total, 16 Housing Service Strategies have been produced to date, covering:

Equality and Diversity	House Sales & Leasehold Services
Rent Arrears	Rent Collection and Administration
Under-occupation	Harassment
Housing Information	Tenant Participation
Private Rented Sector	Older Peoples' Housing Services
Housing Advice	Empty Council Properties
Energy Efficiency	Prevention of Social Housing Fraud
Anti-Social Behaviour	
Housing and Neighbourhood Management	

2. The Strategies are produced to a common format that set out how individual housing services will be delivered. They have assisted the Housing Service in achieving the Customer Service Excellence award and ISO 9001:2008 Quality Accreditation, and have been important to meeting the minimum requirement for Housing Related Support funding from Essex County Council under the conditions of the contract.

3. The Housing Select Committee is asked to consider and endorse the Housing Service Strategy on Older Peoples Housing Services attached as an appendix to the report and provide any comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder for incorporation.

**Reason for decision:**

In order for the Committee to agree the updated Housing Service Strategy on Older Peoples Housing Services. The Service Strategies have assisted the Housing Service in achieving the Customer Service Excellence award and ISO 9001:2008 Quality Accreditation, and have been important to meeting the minimum requirement for Housing Related Support funding from Essex County Council under the conditions of the contract.

**Options considered and rejected:**

Not to consider and agree the updated Housing Service Strategy on Older Peoples Housing Services.

**Consultation undertaken:**

The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation will be consulted on the Strategy at their next meeting.

**Resource implications:**

Budget provision: As set out in the Strategy

Personnel: As set out in the Strategy

Land: N/A

Community Plan/BVPP reference: N/A

Relevant statutory powers: As set out in the Strategy

Background papers: N/A

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: As set out in the Strategy

Key Decision reference: (if required) N/A

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Housing Service Strategy relates to the Council's approach to the provision of Housing Services for Older People. The Strategy sets out how this element of the service is delivered by the Communities Directorate, including links with other services both internally and externally.
- 1.2 Housing Services for Older People is delivered by the Older Peoples Services Team and is an important front-line service which covers a wide-range of activities. It includes services delivered by Scheme Managers, sheltered housing, the Council's twenty-four hour emergency alarm Careline Service, the Housing Re-location Officer and the Directorate's involvement with the Sheltered Housing Forum.
- 1.3 Comprehensive systems are in place and are detailed later in the Strategy. The efficiency of these systems are confirmed by Housing being accredited with both the international quality standard of ISO 9001:2008 and the Customer Service Excellence award, for all of its services including Older People's Services.
- 1.4 Following a rigorous audit process undertaken by an external Assessor, in July 2011, Careline was awarded the coveted Telecare Services Association's (TSA) Accreditation, being a Quality Award for services provided in the emergency alarm (Telecare) industry.
- 1.5 This Older People's Service Strategy has been formulated in consultation with representatives of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, the Sheltered Forum and includes information contained in the Communities Directorate's policies and procedures. The Strategy was considered by the Housing Select Committee and approved by the Housing Portfolio Holder in July 2015.

## **2. Background to Housing Services for Older People**

- 2.1 Housing Services for Older People are managed from the Careline Centre in Loughton, which is not open to the general public. The Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) who is responsible for the service is based in offices above the Centre. The Assistant Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) deputises for the Housing Manager in all aspects of the Section. In addition, the Senior Scheme Manager is responsible for overseeing and supervising the work of all Scheme Managers.
- 2.2 To ensure communication on policy, procedural and performance matters, quarterly meetings with Scheme Managers take place, chaired by the Housing Manager (Older

Peoples Services). In addition, regular meetings are held for Careline staff. The Assistant Director (Housing Operations) attends periodically.

### **3. Relationships with Other Documents**

- 3.1 Housing Services for Older People forms part of the Council's overall landlord function which is set out in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.
- 3.2 The Council has adopted its Housing Charter which sets out, in simple, clear and precise terms, the Council's general approach to all its Housing Services.
- 3.3 The Communities Directorate has detailed policies and procedures for most of its functions, including Housing Services for Older People that give important guidance to staff.
- 3.4 Housing related support services provided by the Older Peoples Services Section are funded by Housing Related Support. There is a contract in place between Essex County Council as the Administering Authority and the Council for the provision of these services. The Council continues to meet the standards required to retain funding.
- 3.5 Important statistical performance information is collected and is monitored at quarterly Customer Improvement Meetings chaired by the Assistant Director (Housing Operations)
- 3.6 Information on Housing Services for Older People is contained within the Tenants Handbook. Certain Conditions of Tenancy relating solely to tenants in sheltered accommodation are contained within the latest Tenancy Agreement, which came into effect in September 2013
- 3.7 Leaflets on Services to Older People and sheltered accommodation have been distributed to around 1,000 tenants living in both sheltered accommodation and designated dwellings for the older people on housing estates who receive the Service. These are also available for those who are considering moving to sheltered accommodation. Incorporated within these leaflets is a clear explanation of the Scheme Manager's role. These have been distributed to staff from outside agencies to enable them to understand the responsibilities of the Scheme Manager. All new tenants are given a "Welcome Pack" when they sign up for their new sheltered housing tenancy. In addition, tenants in sheltered accommodation have been given a leaflet on health and safety advice.
- 3.8 Information packs on the Careline Service are sent to all residents within the District, who are considering applying for telecare. These are also sent to Adult Social Care, Hospitals, and GP Surgeries etc. in order to further promote the service.

### **4. Aims and Objectives**

- 4.1 The aim of the Council's Housing Service Strategy on Older People's Housing Services is:

"To ensure that the well-being of all older tenants living in sheltered accommodation and designated dwellings for older people is carefully monitored, and that all users of the Careline Service receive an efficient and effective response to their calls giving them an increased sense of security and peace of mind".

4.2 The following Section explains how the aim will be met, under four headings:

#### **4.3 Sheltered Accommodation**

- a) Scheme Managers in sheltered accommodation will visit, or account for all tenants, on every duty day, completing the visit declaration form;
- b) When Scheme Managers at sheltered accommodation are absent for less than a week the Careline Centre will call, each day, all those tenants previously nominated by the Scheme Manager as being “at risk”;
- c) If any Scheme Manager at sheltered accommodation is absent for one week or more, the Housing Assistants (Older Peoples Services) will visit the scheme three times each week and undertake a full round, accounting for all residents;
- d) Scheme Managers will assist residents to live independently, offering housing related support and encouraging communal social activities;
- e) Scheme Managers will liaise with outside agencies on behalf of residents;
- f) Scheme Managers will contact the tenant’s relatives in the event of illness or accident; and
- g) Tenants living in sheltered accommodation will be encouraged to use the Careline alarm service in emergency situations. The equipment will be tested by the Scheme Manager on a regular basis, with all tests being recorded.

#### **4.4 Area Schemes for Older People**

- a) Through the call category system (set out in Paragraph 7.2.2) Scheme Managers who cover designated dwellings for older people will ensure that all older tenants are visited in accordance with their need;
- b) Those living on area schemes will be provided with housing related support, assisted to live independently, with their health and general well-being monitored;
- c) Scheme Managers will contact the tenant’s relatives in the event of their illness or accident;
- d) All Tenants will be encouraged to use the Careline alarm service in emergency situations, which will be tested and recorded by Scheme Managers on a regular basis; and
- e) Scheme Managers will encourage all their tenants to support one another, act as a community, and promote social activities.

#### **4.5 Epping Forest Careline**

- a) Careline staff will endeavour to ensure that all calls received by the Careline Centre are responded to within target times, and that nine out of ten urgent telecare referrals are installed within 2 days with the remaining being installed within 5 days of the application being received. These targets are set by TSA and are monitored

under the Communities Directorate's quarterly Customer Improvement Meetings regime;

b) All calls received over the alarm system, and telephone conversations, will be tape recorded as a safeguard to both service users and the Council; and

c) Careline will promote the service and manage the installation of telecare equipment which is referred to later in this strategy.

#### **4.6 Other Services provided by the Older Peoples Services Section**

a) The Older Peoples' Services Section will visit potential tenants who have applied for sheltered accommodation and have been referred by the Housing Options Section for assessment;

b) The Housing Manager (Older Peoples' Services) will contact Adult Social Care to initiate an assessment, when the Council is concerned that a greater level of care is required for one of its older tenants; and

c) The Older Peoples' Services Section will work closely with the Sheltered Forum which is a consultative group of tenant representatives for each sheltered scheme. Their views will be sought and taken into account when shaping services to older people.

### **5. Statutory Requirements**

5.1 The relevant key statutory requirements for older people's services are as follows:

- a) Housing Act 1985;
- b) Health and Safety at Work Act 1974;
- c) Environmental Protection Act 1974;
- d) Human Rights Act 1998;
- e) Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- f) Noise Act 1996;
- g) Public Health Act 1936;
- h) Care Act 2015
- i) Equality Act 2010 and
- j) Data Protection Act

### **6. Client Consultation, Information & Involvement (Statutory Requirement)**

6.1 The way in which tenants will be consulted, informed and involved with regard to the Council's policy on housing services for older people is as follows:

- a) Consultation with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation;
- b) Consultation with the Sheltered Forum
- c) Consultation with Residents Associations;
- d) Encourage the setting up of Tenants Associations in sheltered housing schemes;
- e) Information to tenants in publications e.g. Housing News, Careline Annual Report;
- f) Posters on the Careline Service displayed throughout the District;
- g) Distribution of leaflets on Older Peoples Services and Careline;
- h) Providing a Welcome Pack to all sheltered housing tenants
- i) Liaison with the Citizens Advice Bureau;
- j) One to one consultation with tenants;
- k) Consultation with tenants at various meetings at the schemes; and

l) Changes in policy;

## **7. General Principles**

7.1.1 Section 4 of this Housing Service Strategy sets out the aims and objectives of Older People's Housing Services. This Section details the general approach taken on the delivery of the service under the following headings:

### **7.2 Services Provided by Scheme Managers**

7.2.1 The Council currently employs 11 FTE Scheme Managers at sheltered and grouped schemes for older people. All full time Scheme Managers visit properties designated for older people outside of their sheltered schemes. The Council also employs one further full-time Scheme Manager who solely visits older tenants living in designated dwellings for older people on general needs housing estates.

7.2.2 The service assists older tenants to live as independently as possible. Tenants living in sheltered housing are visited by the Scheme Manager on every duty day. When they are absent the Careline Service monitors calls from tenants and calls each day those who are designated by the Scheme Manager as being "at risk". Tenants living in designated properties for older people on estates are visited in accordance with the documented call category system. In accordance with this procedure the Scheme Manager undertakes a risk assessment of tenants to assess if they are either "high" "medium" or "low" risk. "High" risk tenants are visited approximately twice weekly, "medium" risk tenants visited twice each fortnight, with "low" risk tenants being visited once every four weeks. All area scheme properties are linked to the Careline Service.

7.2.3 Records of residents are maintained detailing those who are absent. All Scheme Managers complete a visit declaration form on a monthly basis detailing all visits made to residents during the period. This is submitted to the Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) who undertakes "spot checks." To ensure visits were actually carried out.

7.2.4 Scheme Managers do all that is possible to encourage tenants to support each other, act as a community, and promote social activities.

7.2.5 The Council has 12 sheltered housing schemes which are for people who are over the age of 60 years, capable of living on their own, but feel more secure with support from the Scheme Manager. The level of support depends upon the needs of the residents; advice is offered when needed and communal activities encouraged. All sheltered housing properties are linked to the Careline Service.

7.2.6 One-bedroom flats are the most common type of accommodation, although there are some studio flats. All sheltered housing schemes have door entry systems installed and reception areas are covered by CCTV. Communal facilities generally include a laundry room, guest room for visiting friends or relatives, communal lounge and kitchen for social activities and special events.

7.2.7 Scheme Managers are normally on duty during normal working hours between

Monday and Friday. When off duty the scheme is linked into the Careline Centre.

### **7.3 Designated Dwellings for Older People on Housing Estates**

- 7.3.1 Around 455 properties on general needs estates are designated as suitable for occupation by an older person. One Scheme Manager is dedicated to visiting 97 of these properties on a full-time basis. Scheme Managers in sheltered accommodation visit the remaining 358 designated properties which are located near to their schemes with the residents often being invited to social activities in the complex.
- 7.3.2 The Council's Housing Select Committee will be asked to undertake a review of designated properties for older people to consider whether a different approach should be taken and if the current policy remains fit for purpose.
- 7.3.3 All properties covered by the Scheme Manager are linked directly into the Careline Service. All staff are provided with mobile phones, personal attack alarms for their own safety and have access to the Council's Accompanied Attendance list.

### **7.4 Tenants and Leaseholder's Federation and the Sheltered Forum**

- 7.4.1 The way in which the Communities Directorate involves, consults and provides information to tenants is set out in the Housing Service Strategy on Information under Client Consultation, Information and Involvement. The District-wide Tenant Participation Agreement explains the Council's commitment to tenant participation and how it will enable its tenants to participate in the delivery of their housing service.
- 7.4.2 The Tenants and Leaseholders Federation comprises two members of each recognised tenants associations in the District, and the Leaseholders Association. Regular meetings are held with the Federation to consult on housing policy matters and to seek their views. The outcomes are reported back to the local associations and Members take them into account when making decisions.
- 7.4.3 The Council is committed to consulting with tenants on housing issues that are important to them. Over recent years, attempts were made to set up tenants associations within the sheltered schemes, but there were only a few residents at each scheme who were willing to become involved.
- 7.4.4 It was therefore decided to set up a Sheltered Forum comprising of a small number of residents from each scheme who could put forward their views on behalf of all residents on housing services offered to older people. The Forum was established in 2004; meetings take place on a bi-monthly basis and are well attended.

### **7.5 Epping Forest Careline**

- 7.5.1 The Careline Centre based at Parsonage Court, Loughton was set up in June 1984 and had around 2,500 properties linked into the service as at 1 June 2015. Connections include all the Council's sheltered housing schemes and designated



dwellings for older people. Around 1,400 dispersed alarms are also included, which are one-off installations for those living in the private sector for which they pay an annual rental, which is agreed annually by the Council. In addition, a monitoring service is provided to housing associations.

7.5.2 Careline is a twenty-four hour, 365-day service dealing with around 60,000 calls each year and offers valuable support to Scheme Managers. The Centre is equipped with PNC 5 technology, with "Communicall" two-way speech systems installed in sheltered and grouped housing schemes. In addition, there is a Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan which covers the Centre, should it not be able to function for any reason. In these rare circumstances all call handling will be undertaken by the alarm system manufacturer at their own control centre located in Doncaster.

## **7.6 Review of the Careline Service**

7.6.1 At its meeting on 1 September 2008, the Cabinet undertook a Review of the Careline Service. It was agreed that the Careline premises be extended into the vacant adjacent former Scheme Manager's three bedroom house. This project has now been successfully completed and the new re-furnished centre was opened in September 2011.

7.6.2 The Careline Centre now periodically monitors existing Council-owned CCTV systems at sheltered housing schemes through website access. In addition, a scheme has been introduced to monitor the whereabouts of the Council's lone workers on a 24-hour basis, which has been rolled out to all staff in the Communities Directorate and is now being extended Corporately. Careline also manages the call-out process for Civil Emergencies

## **7.7 Telecare in the Community**

7.7.1 The range of equipment available to Careline service users is increasing due to developments in technology. A wide range of sensors are now available that can be linked into a telecare alarm which, when activated, automatically send a call through to Careline eliminating the need to press a button or pull a cord.

Some examples of Telecare sensors include:

- . Smoke detectors which raise an instant call if it detects smoke.
- . Flood detector which provides an early warning of a potential flood situation.
- . Carbon monoxide detector warns of dangerous CO levels within a property.
- . Fall detectors automatically detect a serious fall and raise an alert.
- . Pill dispensers automatically call the monitoring centre if medication is not taken.
- . Pressure mats monitor inactivity or intruders dependent on individual needs.
- . Bed occupancy sensors warn that a user has left their bed and not returned.
- . Epilepsy sensor warns of an epileptic attack whilst in bed.

7.7.2 Telecare sensors offer a comprehensive way of managing the risks to a person's health and home environment 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, enabling people to live independently for as long as possible and brings additional security and peace of mind to new and existing service users.

7.7.3 Careline staff work in partnership with Adult Social Care, Health, Police and Fire Services to promote the service. A number of staff are trained assessors who survey each property ensuring users receive the correct equipment.

## **7.8 Assessment of Applicants for Sheltered Accommodation**

7.8.1 All applicants who apply to live in sheltered accommodation are visited and assessed by the Older Peoples Services Section prior to an offer being made. A copy of the assessment is included in the new tenant's Tenant Support Plan, which is a detailed record of the housing related support provided.

## **7.9 Assisting Older people to move to more suitable accommodation**

7.9.1 The Re-Housing Support Officer assists older people with care and support needs with the practicalities of moving home when they need to relocate due to health reasons, for example when they can no longer manage stairs. This service also includes assisting older and vulnerable people who wish to join the Council's Housing Register to register on-line and arranging accompanied viewings at sheltered housing schemes.

## **7.10 Care in the Community**

7.10.1 The Council works in partnership with other agencies in order to achieve a multi agency approach to Care in the Community. The Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) attends the Older Peoples Joint Management Team which consists of a representative from all agencies meeting on a quarterly basis in order to work with service users, carers, to ensure that services for older people are accessible and meet people's needs.

## **8. Action Plan**

8.1 The actions in the table below will be undertaken in the future by the Communities Directorate in order to enhance Older People's Housing Services.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
Encourage the setting up of Tenants' Associations at sheltered housing schemes in accordance with the Tenant Participation Strategy and District Tenant Participation Agreement to promote and implement Tenant Participation	Tenant Participation Officer	On-going	Within existing resources
Update the Equality Analysis for Sheltered Housing	Older Peoples Services Manager	January 2018	Within existing Resources

Update the Equality Analysis for Epping Forest Careline	Older Peoples Services Manager	December 2015	Within existing Resources
Continue to maintain Telecare Services Association (TSA) Accreditation	Older Peoples Services Manager	On-going	Within existing Resources

<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
Consider upgrading the PNC equipment in Careline	Older Peoples Services Manager	January 2016	Additional funding required
Consider reviewing the Scheme Managers' contract to require them to work 2 half days between Christmas and New Year to enable visits to residents during this period	Older Peoples Services Manager	November 2015	Within existing resources
<p>Submit a report to the Housing Select Committee reviewing the approach to designated properties on the Council's housing estates including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether all designated flats on housing estates should be de-designated from older people's use;</li> <li>• If flats on housing estates are de-designated should existing tenants be able to opt out of the service;</li> <li>• Should properties be de-designated, the effect of the Right to Buy;</li> <li>• Reviewing the way in which housing related support is provided to our tenants;</li> <li>• Consider offering a visiting</li> </ul>	Older Peoples Services Manager	November 2015	Within existing resources

Scheme Manager Service on a tenure neutral basis; and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implications of any changes on staffing levels</li> </ul>			
Continue to monitor the number of properties visited by Scheme Managers and review staffing levels accordingly	Older Peoples Services Manager	On-going	Within existing resources

Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Resource Implications
Promote the provision of Careline monitoring to other providers	Older Peoples Services Manager	On-going	Within existing resources
Promote Sheltered Housing to older people under-occupying Council Housing	Re-housing Support Officer	On-going	Within existing resources

## 9. Key Targets & Performance Monitoring

9.1 The Council will monitor performance and compliance with this Strategy through quarterly Customer Improvement Meetings chaired by the Assistant Director (Housing Operations) and the Housing Manager (Older Peoples Services) ensuring the following target times are met:

Task	Actual 2014/15	Target
% of calls responded to within 30 seconds (including routine calls from Scheme Managers and test calls)	99.7%	97.5%
Average (seconds) to respond to calls	5.6 seconds	10 Seconds

Installation of dispersed alarms	100%	Within 5 Working Days
Installation of Telecare Sensors including client assessment	100%	20 days

<b>Task</b>	<b>Actual 2014/15</b>	<b>Target</b>
Number of dispersed alarms installed	395	360 per annum
Contractors repairs response in accordance with service agreement targets	90%	90%

## **10. Reviewing the Strategy**

- 10.1 The Strategy for Older Peoples Services will be reviewed by the Housing Select Committee and agreed by the Housing Portfolio Holder in consultation with the Tenants' and Leaseholders Federation before July 2018.

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## **Report to Housing Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 16 June 2015**

**Portfolio: Housing – Cllr D. Stallan**

**Subject: Housing Strategy: 6-Month Progress Report on Key Action Plan 2015/16**



**Officer contact for further information:**

**Alan Hall – Director of Communities (01992 56 4004)**

**Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (01992 56 4607)**

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### **Recommendations:**

**That the 6-Month Progress Report on the Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2015/16, attached as an Appendix, be considered, with any comments passed to the Housing Portfolio Holder and Director of Communities accordingly.**

### **Report:**

1. At its meeting in September 2009, the Council's Cabinet adopted the Housing Strategy 2009-2012. The Housing Strategy assesses the District's current and future housing needs and sets out the Council's approach to meeting those needs.
2. The Strategy also included a Key Action Plan, which set out the proposed actions that would be taken by the Council to contribute towards the achievement of the housing objectives over the first year of the Housing Strategy.
3. When adopting the Housing Strategy, the Cabinet also agreed that Key Action Plans for the Housing Strategy should be produced and updated on an annual basis.
4. The latest Key Action Plan was agreed in January 2015 and the Cabinet has previously agreed that progress with the Key Action Plans should be monitored on a 6-monthly basis by the Housing Select Committee (previously the Housing Scrutiny Panel), in accordance with its Terms of Reference. Therefore, the 6-Month Progress Report for the current Key Action Plan for 2015/16 is attached as an Appendix, which the Select Committee is asked to consider and to provide any comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder and Director of Communities.

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## Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2015-16

No	Category	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress Report (as at 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2015)
1	General	Review the Housing Strategy 2009-2012 and produce an updated Housing Strategy for 2014-2017, following a consultation exercise on a Draft Housing Strategy	Director of Communities	<del>Mar 2016</del> July 2016	<b>Delayed</b> – The Housing Portfolio Holder has previously determined that the next Housing Strategy should not be drafted until the Council's new Draft Local Plan has been published. Since production of the Council's Draft Local Plan is not now likely to be published until around July 2016, the timescale for producing the new Housing Strategy has also had to slip.
2	Local Plan	Complete the gathering of information, including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), to form the evidence on which key decisions will be taken as part of the Local Plan.	Asst. Director (Policy Planning & Economic Devt)	<del>Under Review</del> July 2016	<b>In Progress</b> - An updated joint SHMA, covering 4 local authority districts, is currently in preparation. Work on the SHMA began last year and a draft report was prepared at the end of 2014. However, in early 2015, two new relevant sets of data were released covering 2012-based Household Projections and a new 2014-based run of the East of England Forecasting Model economic projections. These new datasets, as well as an analysis of other inter-Censal data, need to be incorporated into the new SHMA, in order to make it as robust as possible, and members have asked officers to discuss this latest information with SHMA partner authorities, and undertake this additional analysis as part of the SHMA.
3	Local Plan	Agree on objectively assessed Housing and Employment Need for the Local Plan Period.	Asst. Director (Policy Planning & Economic Devt)	<del>Under Review</del> Spring 2016	<b>Not yet required</b> – This work will follow on from completion of the SHMA (see (2) above). Once an Objectively Assessed Housing Need figure is established for the SHMA area apportionment of this figure will need to be agreed between the 4 SHMA partners. Agreement on apportionment is unlikely to be reached until after EFDC has completed its Green Belt Review (anticipated December 2015).



4	Local Plan	Complete a District-Wide Viability Assessment on viable levels of affordable housing provision within developments	Asst. Director (Policy Planning & Economic Devt)	<del>Under Review</del> Spring 2016	<b>In Progress</b> – The Council’s consultants have produced their Draft Stage 1 Report, on which officers have commented. The final version is expected in early June 2015. A presentation on the findings was given to all members on 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2015. Stage 2 of the Viability Assessment will be undertaken once the Council’s proposals for its new Local Plan are more advanced.
5	Local Plan	Agree a Draft Local Plan (Preferred Options) and undertake the appropriate Sustainability Appraisal	Asst. Director (Policy Planning & Economic Devt)	<del>Under Review</del> Spring 2016	<b>Not yet required</b> – The Draft Plan will be formulated (accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal) once all the required evidence has been gathered, including the SHMA, and the Objectively Assessed Housing Need has been established.
6	Local Plan	Undertake a Consultation Exercise on the Local Plan Preferred Options Draft	Asst. Director (Policy Planning & Economic Devt)	<del>Under Review</del> July 2016	<b>Not yet required</b> – This will be undertaken once the Draft Plan has been published.
7	Local Plan	Submit the Final Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for an Examination in Public	Asst. Director (Policy Planning & Economic Devt)	<del>Under Review</del> Sept 2017	<b>Not yet required</b> – This will be undertaken once the consultation on the Draft Plan has been completed and the Council has agreed its Pre-Submission Local Plan.
8	Housing Market	Consider subscribing to the Hometrack Service to provide ongoing housing market intelligence for planning and housing purposes	Director of Communities / Forward Planning Manager	<del>March 2015</del> Sept 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – Housing and Planning Officers have received a presentation from Hometrack, and their service appears to meet the Council’s needs. Planning Officers are currently in discussions with officers from neighbouring councils to consider a possible joint/bulk subscription, which would reduce the costs to the Council.

9	Regeneration	Work in partnership with Essex County Council, Epping Town Council and other partners to commence a sustainable regeneration scheme for the St Johns Area of Epping, in accordance with the adopted Design and Development Brief, which includes an appropriate amount of market and affordable housing	Director of Neighbourhoods	Dec 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – The Council has selected a preferred developer following a competitive process and has agreed key terms. Discussions are currently in progress with regard to the legal documentation and it is hoped that completion will take place during Summer 2015.
10	Affordable Housing Provision	Work with Moat Housing to commence the development of the Council-owned difficult-to-let garage site at Vere Road, Loughton to provide 15 new affordable rented flats and an additional 14 parking spaces for private development on the adjacent site of the former Sir Winston Churchill PH.	Director of Communities	Dec 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – The Cabinet has agreed the key terms for the provision of a 125 year lease to Moat Housing. Following approval from its officer committee, Moat now needs to obtain approval from its Board to undertake the development. Once approval has been received, Moat will prepare and submit a planning application. Part of this process will include an early discussion with the two ward members on the proposed design, as agreed by the Housing Portfolio Holder. EFDC's Legal Service has been instructed to draft the required lease.
11	Affordable Housing Provision	Work with housing associations and developers to complete the development of 107 new affordable homes for rent and shared ownership by September 2015 at the following non-Council owned sites: (a) Jennikings Nursery, Chigwell – 52 new homes (b) Manor Road Garden Centre, Chigwell – 17 new homes (c) St. Johns School – 38 new homes	Director of Communities	Sept 2015	<b>Partly Achieved</b> – The 69 new affordable homes at the former Jennikings Nursery and Manor Road Garden Centre sites have now all been completed. The 11 affordable homes forming Phase 1 of the St Johns School development are due for completion in June 2015, and the remaining 27 affordable homes under Phase 2 are due for completion in September 2015.

12	Affordable Housing Provision	Seek planning permission for residential development at the Council's Pyrles Lane Nursery site, Loughton, including the provision of at least 40% affordable housing, by addressing the issues resulting in the previous planning permission refusal	Director of Neighbourhoods	<del>April 2015</del> June 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – The design for the revised scheme is currently being finalised and a new outline planning application is due to be submitted in June 2015. At its meeting on 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2015, the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee will be considering a recommendation that, if outline planning application is granted and the Cabinet subsequently decides to sell the site on the open market, the sale be subject to a requirement that the required affordable housing element (expected to be between 40-50% of the total number of properties) be sold to the Council on practical completion, on agreed terms (to be set out in a separate Development Agreement) to be approved by the Cabinet when considering the sale of the site.
13	Affordable Housing Provision	Consider whether to undertake a Phase 3 of the Open Market Home Ownership Scheme with B3Living - to enable first-time buyers in the District to purchase a property of their choice from the open market through shared ownership, funded jointly by the Council, B3Living and the applicants	Director of Communities	<del>April 2015</del> Aug 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – The final sales under Phase 2 are almost at completion. A recent analysis has shown that the Council's investment in each of the first 10 properties provided under the Scheme, up to and including 2013/14, has increased by an estimated 21 % (£115,343) - from £552,015 to £115,343 - since the first property was purchased in March 2012. The Director of Communities is currently in discussions with B3Living over the potential for undertaking a Phase 3 and, if it is felt this would be appropriate, a report will be submitted to Cabinet accordingly.
14	Affordable Housing Provision	Appoint an affordable housing viability consultant, through a competitive exercise, for a 3-year period in order to provide specialist advice and undertake the validation of viability appraisals submitted by developers who assert that the Council's expected level of affordable housing provision on their site unviable and propose a financial contribution in lieu	Director of Communities	April 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – Following a competitive exercise, Kift Consulting Ltd has been appointed as the Council's affordable housing viability consultant, for an initial period of 1 year, with the option to extend by two further one year periods.

		of the provision of on-site affordable housing			
15	Affordable Housing Provision	Consider the introduction of Supplementary Planning Guidance on the required approach by developers to the undertaking of viability assessments for developments involving affordable housing	Principal Planning Officer / Director of Communities	<del>July 2015</del> Sept 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – It has been concluded that the approach should be to provide guidance to planning applicants, rather than formal Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Director of Communities will shortly be drafting the proposed Guidance, initially for consideration by officers and then for formal adoption by the Governance and Development Management Portfolio Holder.
16	Council Housebuilding Programme	Complete the development of 23 new affordable homes for rent at Waltham Abbey, under Phase 1 of the Council's Housebuilding Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	<del>Dec 2015</del> Apr 2016	<b>In Progress</b> – Works are currently behind schedule, due to issues raised by the contractor. The current expected completion date is March/ April 2016.
17	Council Housebuilding Programme	Complete a major conversion scheme to convert 20 unpopular bedsits at Marden Close and a community hall at Faversham Hall, Marden Close, to provide 12 self-contained one-bedroomed rented flats for Housing Register applicants	Asst. Director (Property & Devt.)	<del>Sept 2015</del> Oct 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – Works are substantially on target to complete in October 2015.
18	Council Housebuilding Programme	Obtain planning permission for the development of new affordable homes for rent at Burton Road, Loughton, under Phase 2 of the Council's Housebuilding Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	Sept 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – Following refusal of the original application for planning permission, a revised planning application has been submitted, for a development with slightly less homes and a lower building height. At the request of the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee, the Cabinet is due to consider a recommendation at its meeting in June 2015 that off-street parking be provided in nearby Torrington Drive, to help ensure that the new development does not cause any local parking problems.

19	Council Housebuilding Programme	Seek Development Partner status for the Council with the HCA, to enable the Council to secure the £0.5 million funding obtained from the HCA for Phase 2 of the Council Housebuilding Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	<del>June 2015</del> May 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – Notification was received in May 2015 that the Council's application for Development Partner Status has been approved, which will enable the Council to access the £0.5million grant, provided that planning permission is granted for Phase 2 of the Housebuilding Programme.
20	Council Housebuilding Programme	Complete the remaining development and financial appraisals for the identified potential development sites and formulate a Pipeline Programme of developments for Phases Years 3-6 of the Programme	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	<del>Mar 2016</del> July 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – The next 9 development/financial appraisals will be considered by the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee on 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2015. The last 12 development appraisals are due to be considered at the following meeting of the Cabinet Committee in July 2015.
21	Council and Housing Association Accommodation	Implement the Council's revised Housing Allocations Scheme, including a revised Local Eligibility Criteria increasing the requirement for applicants to have lived within the District from 3 – 5 years and lowering the maximum combined income / assets threshold to £76,000.	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	July 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – Following the adoption of the revised Housing Allocations Scheme by the Cabinet, arrangements are on target to implement the changes to the new Scheme on 27 <sup>th</sup> July 2015.
22	Council and Housing Association Accommodation	Update the existing District-wide Nominations Agreements with each of the Council's Preferred Housing Association Partners for new rented housing developments - to take account of the new Affordable Rents Framework - and formulate new District-wide Nominations Agreements for shared ownership properties with the same partners.	Director of Communities	June 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – A new District-wide Nominations Agreement has been drafted, on which all the Council's Preferred Housing Association Partners have been consulted. A further version of the Draft Nominations Agreement, which takes account of Preferred Partners' comments, is currently being produced for final consultation, prior to engrossment and signing by each Partner.

23	Council and Housing Association Accommodation	Procure a provider for an updated Housing Register Hosting and Choice Based Lettings Agency Service, in partnership with five neighbouring local authorities	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	Sept 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – The procurement is at the final stages of the selection process and a recommendation on the selection of the preferred tenderer will be considered by the Housing Portfolio Holder in June 2015.
24	Council and Housing Association Accommodation	Subscribe and contribute information to the new proposed Essex Veterans' Portal, in partnership with other Essex local authorities and Essex agencies, in support of the Community Covenant to assist former members of the Armed Forces.	Policy & Grants Officer	June 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – The Council now supports the Essex Veterans' Portal, which was officially launched at the end of May 2015, and information from the Council will be updated on a regular basis.
25	Council Housing	Implement the Council's revised Tenancy Policy, to extend the provision of flexible (fixed term) tenancies for 10 year periods (including an introductory tenancy period) to all Council properties (excluding sheltered properties).	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	July 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – All the required work to implement the policy is underway, and arrangements are on track to implement the new policy on 27 <sup>th</sup> July 2015. The policy excludes existing Council tenants downsizing to smaller Council accommodation.
26	Council Housing	Bring together all the Council's fraud functions, including social housing fraud into one corporate team, to provide synergy, consistent working practices and shared intelligence	Chief Internal Auditor	April 2015	<b>Achieved</b> – The Corporate Fraud Team was formed in April 2015. All fraud officers now come under the responsibility of the Chief Internal Auditor.
27	Homelessness	Update the Council's Homelessness Strategy, to ensure that it is up to date and sets out the most appropriate approach to responding to homelessness over the next 3 years	Asst. Director (Housing Operations)	June 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – The Draft Homelessness Strategy is due to be considered by the Housing Select Committee in June, prior to adoption by the Housing Portfolio Holder.



28	Homelessness	Consider the feasibility of replacing the mobile homes in the grounds of the Council's Homeless Persons' Hostel at Norway House, North Weald with new temporary accommodation for homeless families, that will be fit for purpose for the future	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	Dec 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – An initial Feasibility Report has been received from the Council's consultants, which is currently under consideration.
29	Homelessness	Undertake improvements to the rooms at Norway House, North Weald, to improve the facilities and decor	Asst. Director (Housing Property & Devt.)	Mar 2016	<b>In Progress</b> – Initial considerations are under discussions, but cannot be progressed yet due to staffing issues at Norway House.
30	Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People	Work in partnership with Essex County Council to provide a supported housing scheme at Lindsay House, Epping.	Director of Communities	Mar 2017	<b>In Progress</b> – The Chief Executive is leading on negotiations with the County Council over the disposal of Lindsay House to Essex County Council, as part of the arrangements for the development of the site at St Johns Road, Epping.
31	Supported Housing – Older and Other Vulnerable People	Include a requirement in the Draft Local Plan that an increased number of homes within new housing developments in the District should meet the Lifetime Homes Standard than presently required	Asst. Director (Policy Planning & Economic Development)	Under Review	<b>Not yet required</b> – This will be considered as part of the Preferred Options (Draft) Local Plan.
32	Empty Homes	Bring at least 40 long-term empty properties back into use by Council intervention within any 12-month period, including the continued use of the PLACE Scheme	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	Mar 2016	<b>Achieved</b> – 60 long term empty properties were brought back into use in 2014/15.
33	Rural Housing	Continue to work with Hastoe Housing Association and Parish Councils to investigate the development potential for rural housing schemes in villages, through the Council's Rural Planning Exceptions Policy	Director of Communities	Mar 2016	<b>In Progress</b> – As part of the promotion of rural exception schemes, Hastoe Housing Association will be giving a presentation to the Local Councils Liaison Committee on 6 <sup>th</sup> July to explain how they work and the success of schemes undertaken in rural areas to date.

34	Decent Homes – Private Sector	Introduce new licence conditions for existing holiday park homes sites in the District, following consultation with site owners and statutory agencies	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	Sept 2015	<b>In Progress</b> – Following a consultation process, the Cabinet will be considering the adoption of new licence conditions for holiday park home sites at its meeting on 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2015.
35	Decent Homes – Private Sector	Consider and adopt a corporate protocol for dealing with unsuitable living conditions within agricultural and nursery accommodation, from a housing, planning, legal and economic development perspective	Private Housing Manager (Technical)	Mar 2016	<b>In Progress</b> – The Leadership Team has agreed in principle to establish a Working Party to consider all the issues, subject to the Terms of Reference and membership being agreed by the Management Board.
36	CARE Agency	Prepare for the retendering of the County Council funding for home improvement agencies within Essex, to ensure the continued viability of the Council's in-house Caring and Repairing in Epping Forest (CARE) Agency	Private Housing Manager (Grants and CARE)	July 2015	<b>No Longer Required</b> – The latest information received from Essex County Council is that they appear, again, not to tender HIA services for Epping Forest, since they are happy with the performance and quality of the service provided by the Council's CARE Service – which is currently the only in-house HIA in Essex.

## **Report to: Housing Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 16 June 2015**



**Portfolio:** Housing (Councillor D. Stallan)

**Subject:** Key Performance Indicators 2014/15 – Outturn (Q4) Performance

**Officer contact for further information:** B. Copson (01992 564042)

**Democratic Services Officer:** A. Hendry (01992 564246)  
M. Jenkins (01992 564607)

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**That the Select Committee review outturn performance in relation to the key performance indicators within its areas of responsibility.**

### **Executive Summary:**

Pursuant to the Local Government Act 1999, the Council is required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions and services are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

As part of the duty to secure continuous improvement, a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) relevant to the Council's services and key objectives, are adopted each year. Performance against the KPIs is monitored on a quarterly basis, and has previously been a focus of inspection in external assessments and judgements of the overall progress of the authority.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

The KPIs provide an opportunity for the Council to focus attention on how specific areas for improvement will be addressed, and how opportunities will be exploited and better outcomes delivered.

A number of KPIs are used as performance measures for the Council's key objectives for each year. It is important that relevant performance management processes are in place to review and monitor performance against the key objectives, to ensure their continued achievability and relevance, and to identify proposals for appropriate corrective action in areas of slippage or under performance.

### **Other Options for Action:**

No other options are appropriate in this respect. Failure to monitor and review KPI performance and to consider corrective action where necessary could have negative implications for judgements made about the Council's progress, and might mean that opportunities for improvement are lost.

## Report:

1. A range of thirty-six (36) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2014/15 was adopted by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee in March 2014. The KPIs are important to the improvement of the Council's services and the achievement of its key objectives, and comprise a combination of some former statutory indicators and locally determined performance measures. The aim of the KPIs is to direct improvement effort towards services and the national priorities and local challenges arising from the social, economic and environmental context of the district, that are the focus of the key objectives.
2. Progress in respect of each of the KPIs is reviewed by the relevant Portfolio Holder, Management Board, and overview and scrutiny at the conclusion of each quarter. In order to enhance the value of the on-going review of KPI performance throughout each year, no indicators are subject to scrutiny or performance reporting at year-end only.
3. Improvement plans are produced for all of the KPIs each year, setting out actions to be implemented in order to achieve target performance, and to reflect changes in service delivery. In view of the corporate importance attached to the KPIs, the improvement plans are agreed by Management Board and are also subject to ongoing review between the relevant service director and Portfolio Holder over the course of the year.
4. From 2014/15 each former Scrutiny Panel became responsible for the review of quarterly performance against KPI's falling within its areas of responsibility. This report therefore includes in detail only those indicators which fall within the areas of responsibility of the Housing Select Committee.

### Key Performance Indicators 2014/15 – Outturn (Quarter 4) Performance

5. The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance for **all** of the KPIs at the end of the year, was as follows:
  - (a) 26 (72%) indicators achieved the cumulative end of year target;
  - (b) 10 (27%) indicators did not achieve the cumulative end of year target; although
  - (c) 1 (3%) performed within its tolerated amber margin.
6. Ten (10) of the Key Performance Indicators fall within the Housing Select Committee's areas of responsibility. The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance at the end of the year for these ten indicators, was as follows:
  - (a) 10 (100%) indicators achieved the cumulative end of year target.

A headline end of year performance summary in respect of each of the KPIs falling within the Housing Select Committee's areas of responsibility for 2014/15, is attached as Appendix 1 to this report together with details of the specific twelve-months performance for each indicator.

7. The 'amber' performance status used in KPI reports identifies indicators that have missed the agreed target for the quarter, but where performance is within an agreed tolerance or range. The KPI tolerances were agreed by Management Board when targets for the KPIs were set in February 2014, or were subsequently determined by the appropriate service directors.
8. The Select Committee is requested to review outturn performance in relation to the KPIs for 2014/15 within its areas of responsibility.

**Resource Implications:**

Resource requirements for actions to achieve specific KPI performance for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer and reflected in the budget for the year.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

There are no legal or governance implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific KPI performance for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

**Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:**

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the district. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific KPI performance for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

The performance information and targets set out in this report have been submitted by each appropriate service director and have been reviewed by Management Board. The individual KPI improvement plans for 2014/15 will be agreed by the Board.

**Background Papers:**

Fourth-quarter KPI submissions held by the Performance Improvement Unit. KPI calculations and supporting documentation is held by respective service directorates

**Impact Assessments:*****Risk Management***

There are no risk management issues arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant issues arising from actions to achieve specific KPI performance for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

***Equality:***

There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific KPI performance for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

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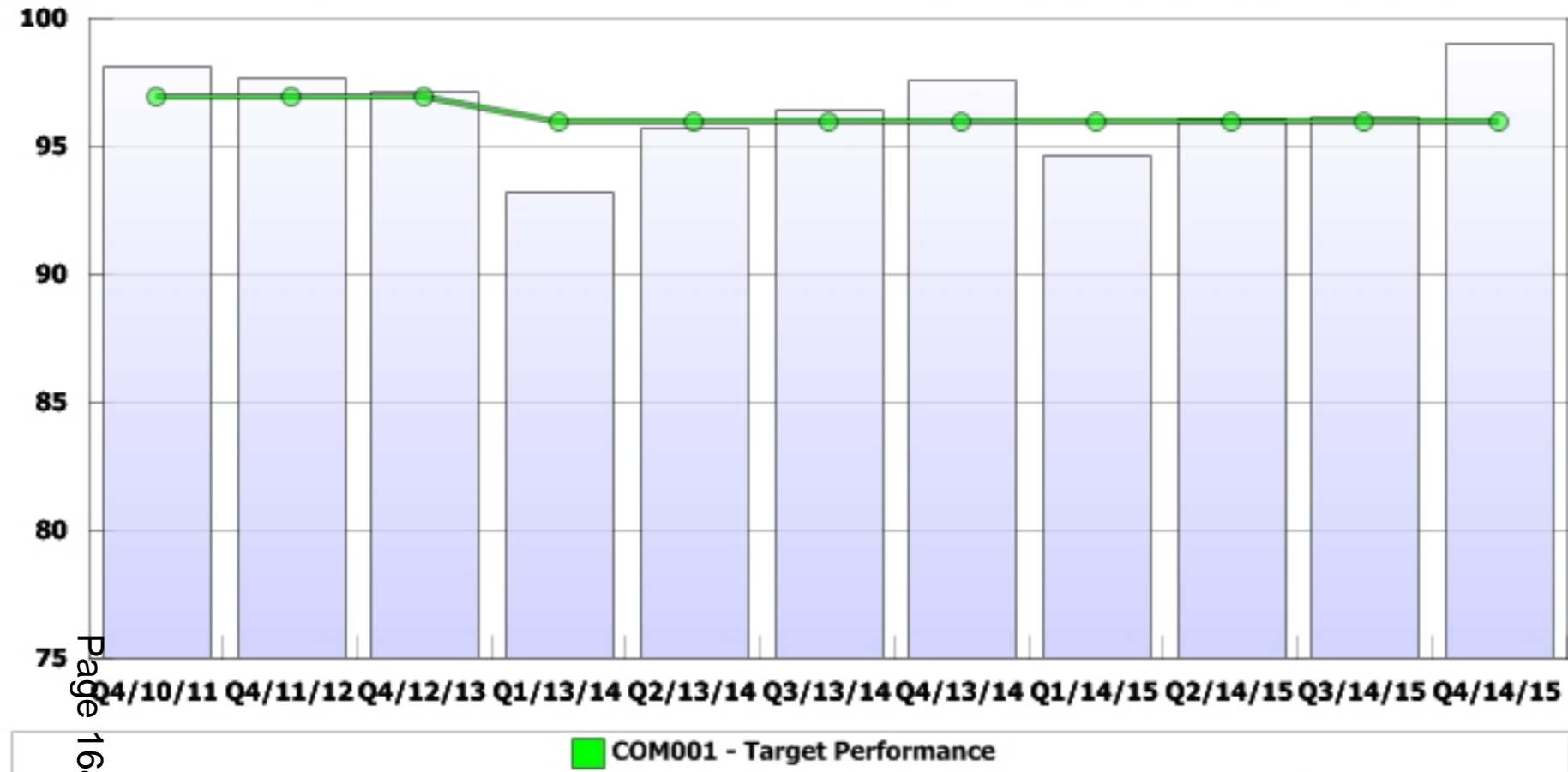
Quarterly Indicators		Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4		Is year-end target likely to be achieved?				
		Tgt	Actual	Tgt	Actual	Tgt	Actual	Tgt	Actual					
<b>Housing Scrutiny Panel</b>														
COM001	(Housing rent) (%)	96.00%	94.66%		96.00%	96.09%		96.00%	96.21%		96.00%	99.08%		Yes
COM002	(Void re-lets) (days)	37.0	39.0		37.0	34.0		37.0	35.0		37.0	34.0		Yes
COM003	(Tenant satisfaction) (%)	98.00%	99.00%		98.00%	100.00%		98.00%	100.00%		98.00%	100.00%		Yes
COM004	(Temp. accommodation) (no.)	65	51		65	47		65	60		65	58		Yes
COM005	(Non-decent homes) (%)	0.00%	0.00%		0.00%	0.00%		0.00%	0.00%		0.00%	0.00%		Yes
COM006	(Modern Homes Std) (%)	825	1,244		1,650	2,204		2,475	2,861		3,300	4,020		Yes
COM007	(Emergency repairs) (%)	99%	99%		99%	99%		99%	99%		99%	99%		Yes
COM008	(Responsive repairs) (days)	7.0	7.7		7.0	7.0		7.0	6.7		7.0	6.5		Yes
COM009	(Emergency repairs) (%)	98%	99%		98%	98%		98%	98%		98%	99%		Yes
COM010	(Calls to Careline) (%)	97.5%	99.7%		97.5%	99.7%		97.5%	99.8%		97.5%	99.8%		Yes

**COM001 What percentage of the rent due from our council home tenants was paid?**

**Additional Information: This indicator is a measure of a local authority's rent collection and arrears recovery service**

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual	Status
Q4/14/15	96.00%	99.08%	✓
Q3/14/15	96.00%	96.21%	✓
Q2/14/15	96.00%	96.09%	✓
Q1/14/15	96.00%	94.66%	✗
Q4/13/14	96.00%	97.60%	✓

**Annual 2014/15 - 96.00%**  
**Target: 2013/14 - 96.00%**

**Indicator of good performance:**  
 A higher percentage is good

↑ is the direction of improvement

**Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?**  
 Yes



**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q4 2014/15) - Target met.

**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

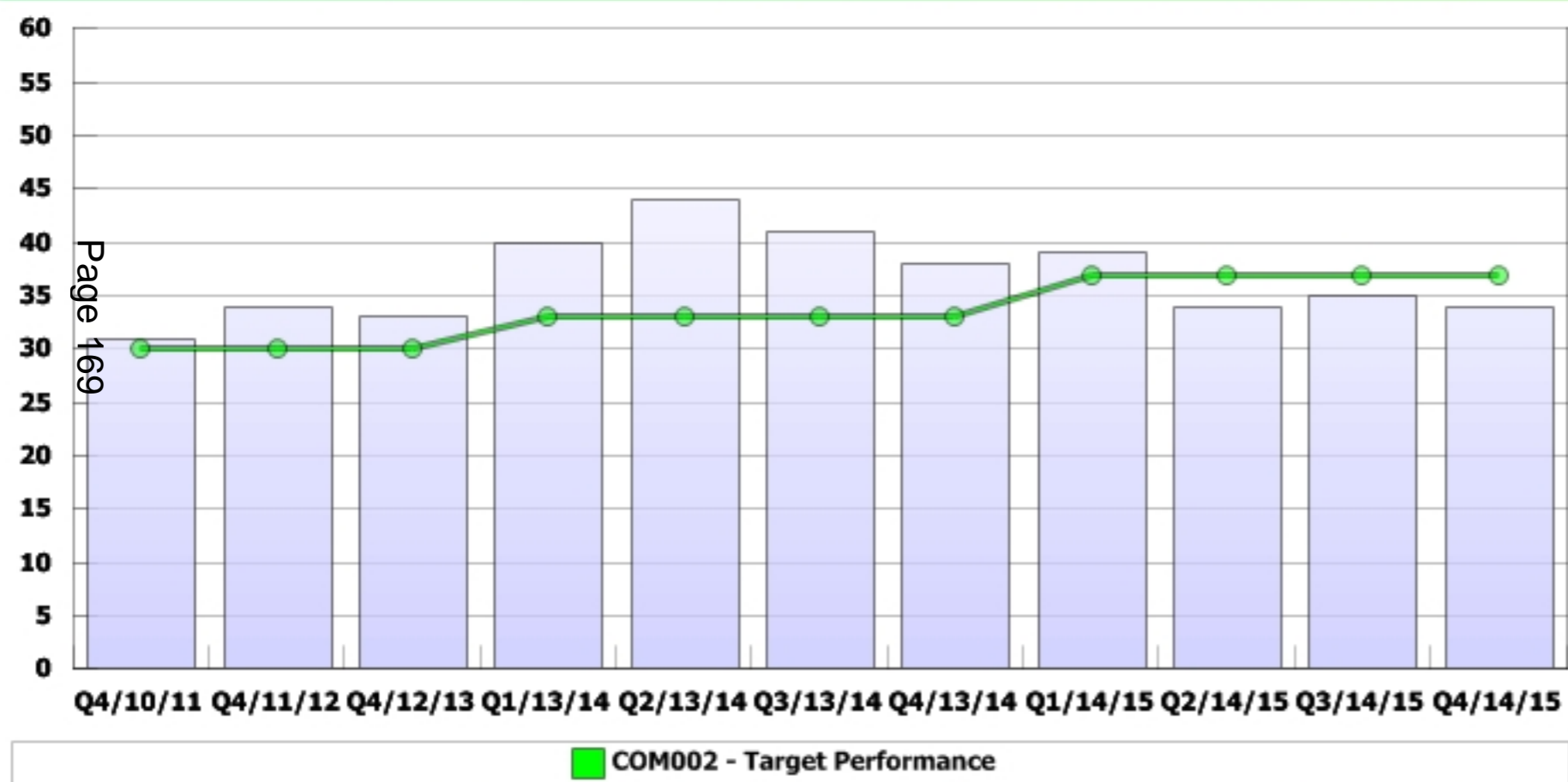


**COM002 On average, how many days did it take us to re-let a Council property?**

**Additional Information:** The calculation excludes those properties which are 'difficult to let' (offered to and refused by at least two applicants) or 'major works' (works over 6 weeks AND over £1500 in cost terms). In addition it also excludes 'properties let through mutual exchanges', 'very sheltered accommodation' and 'properties the council intends to sell or demolish'.

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual	Status
Q4/14/15	37.0	34.0	✓
Q3/14/15	37.0	35.0	✓
Q2/14/15	37.0	34.0	✓
Q1/14/15	37.0	39.0	✗
Q4/13/14	33.0	38.0	✗

**Annual 2014/15 - 37 days**  
**Target: 2013/14 - 33 days**

**Indicator of good performance:**  
 A lower number of days is good

↓ is the direction of improvement

**Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?**

Yes



**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q4 2014/15) - A pilot scheme for harder to let vacancies has been introduced by Housing Options and this has reduced time taken to let a property in some instances. Furthermore, new administrative arrangements in the Housing Allocations Team has continued to improve performance. It should also be noted that the number of voids in this quarter, is the lowest for this year, compared to the other quarters.

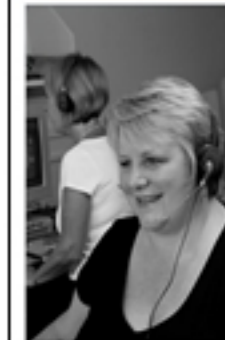
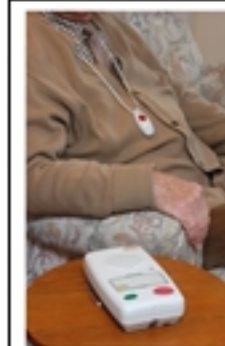
**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

# COM003 How satisfied were our tenants with the standard of the repairs service they received?

**Additional Information:** This indicator is a measure of housing management performance, as it is incumbent upon the Council as landlord to ensure the upkeep of its dwellings and that repairs are completed on time and to the satisfaction of tenants

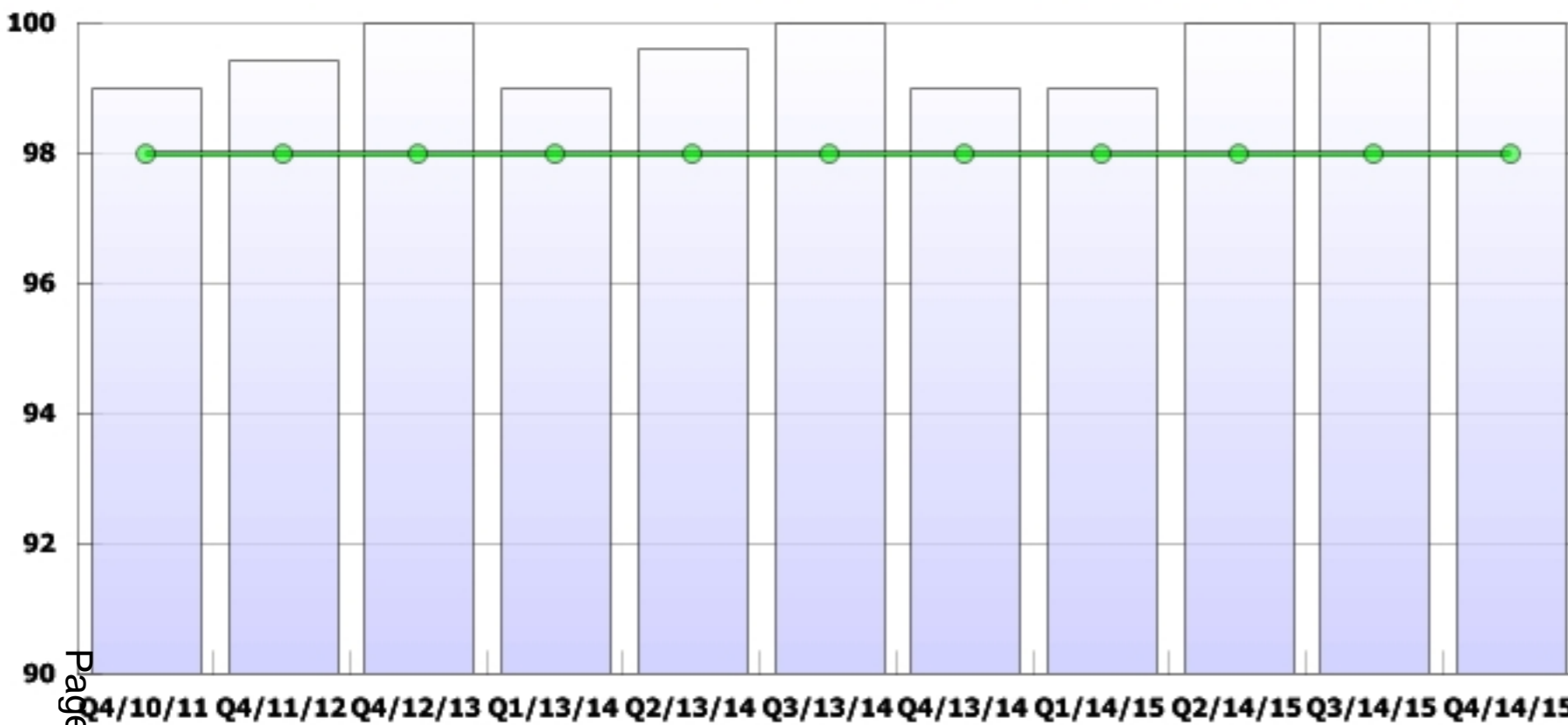
For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

## Current and previous quarters performance



Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?

Yes



Quarter	Target	Actual
Q4/14/15	98.00%	100.00%
Q3/14/15	98.00%	100.00%
Q2/14/15	98.00%	100.00%
Q1/14/15	98.00%	99.00%
Q4/13/14	98.00%	99.00%

Annual 2014/15 - 98.00%  
Target: 2013/14 - 98.00%

Indicator of good performance:  
A higher percentage is good

↑ is the direction of improvement

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COM003 - Target Performance

### Comment on current performance (including context):

(Q4 2014/15) - Performance target exceeded.

### Corrective action proposed (if required):

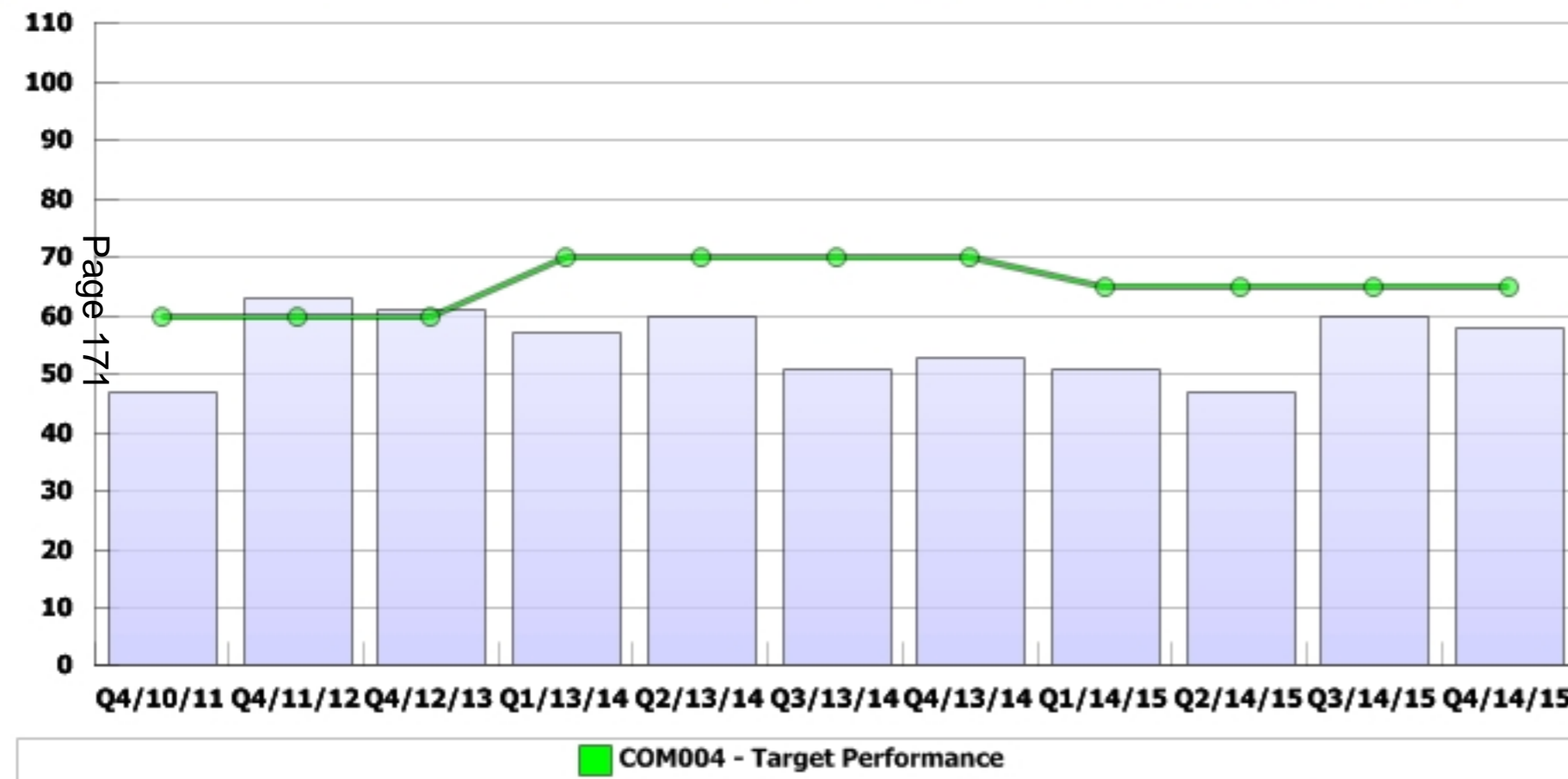
Empty box for corrective action.

# COM004 How many households were housed in temporary accommodation?

**Additional Information:** This indicator monitors progress towards reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation provided under homelessness legislation. Annual performance is judged on the average of all four quarters performances.

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

## Current and previous quarters performance



Quarter	Target	Actual
Q4/14/15	65	58
Q3/14/15	65	60
Q2/14/15	65	47
Q1/14/15	65	51
Q4/13/14	70	53



**Annual** 2014/15 - 65  
**Target:** 2013/14 - 70

Indicator of good performance:  
 A lower number is good

↓ is the direction of improvement

Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?

Yes

### Comment on current performance (including context):

(Q4 2014/15) - The target has been achieved.

### Corrective action proposed (if required):

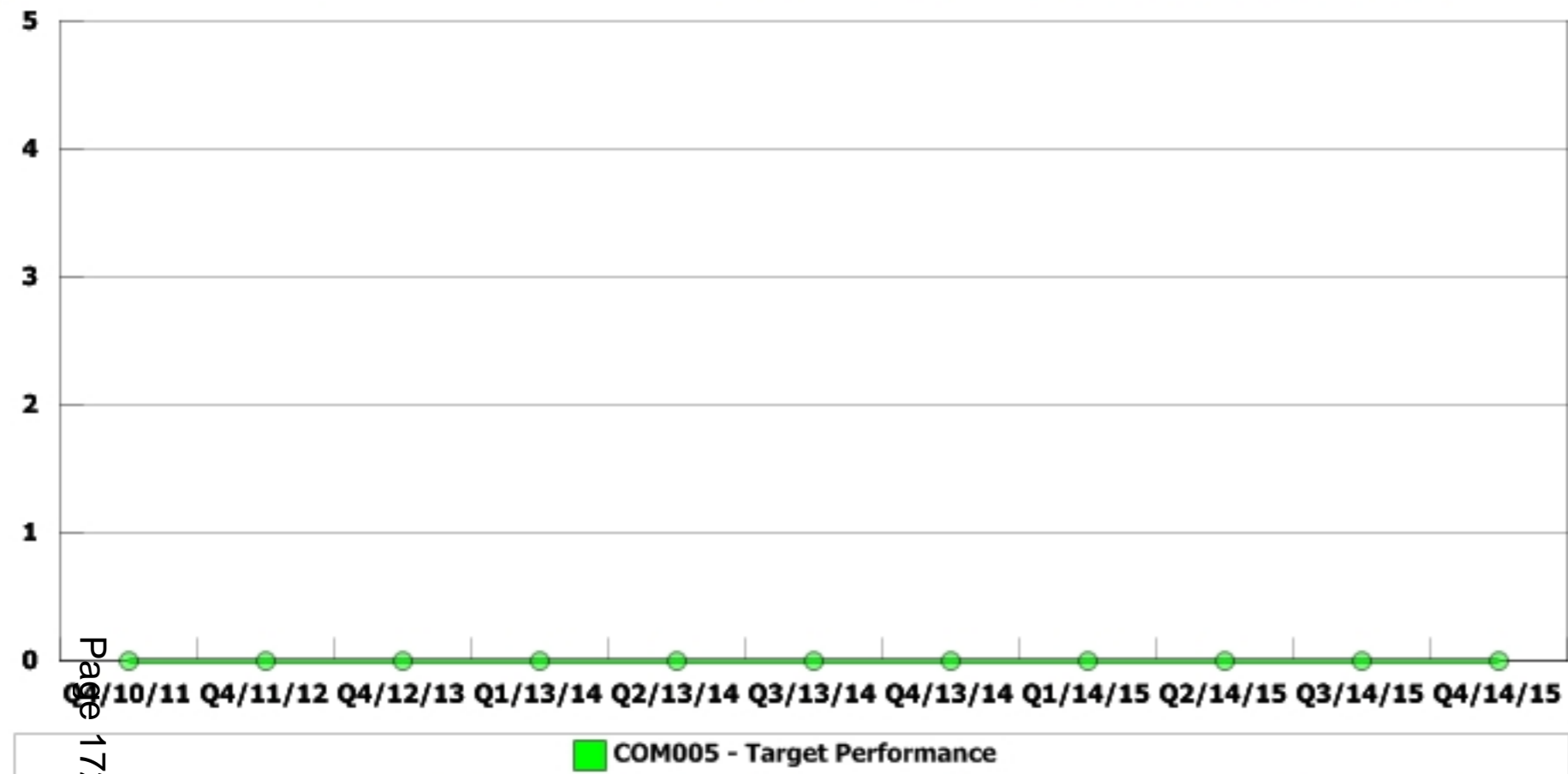
Empty box for corrective action proposed.

**COM005 What percentage of our council homes were not in a decent condition?**

**Additional Information:** This indicator measures the number of non-decent council homes and the proportion this represents of the total council housing stock, in order to demonstrate progress towards making all council housing decent.

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual
Q4/14/15	0.00%	0.00%
Q3/14/15	0.00%	0.00%
Q2/14/15	0.00%	0.00%
Q1/14/15	0.00%	0.00%
Q4/13/14	0.00%	0.00%



**Annual Target:** 2014/15 - 0.00%  
2013/14 - 0.00%

**Indicator of good performance:**  
A lower percentage is good

↓ is the direction of improvement

**Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?**

Yes

**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q4 2014/15) - Potential building element failures have been identified from Stock Condition Survey Address List and appropriate Capital and Revenue works programmes have commenced to prevent these properties falling into Non-Decent category.

During 2013-14 over 998 Stock Condition Surveys were completed and during 2014-15 the same number of surveys are planned to ensure no properties fall into the Non-Decent category.

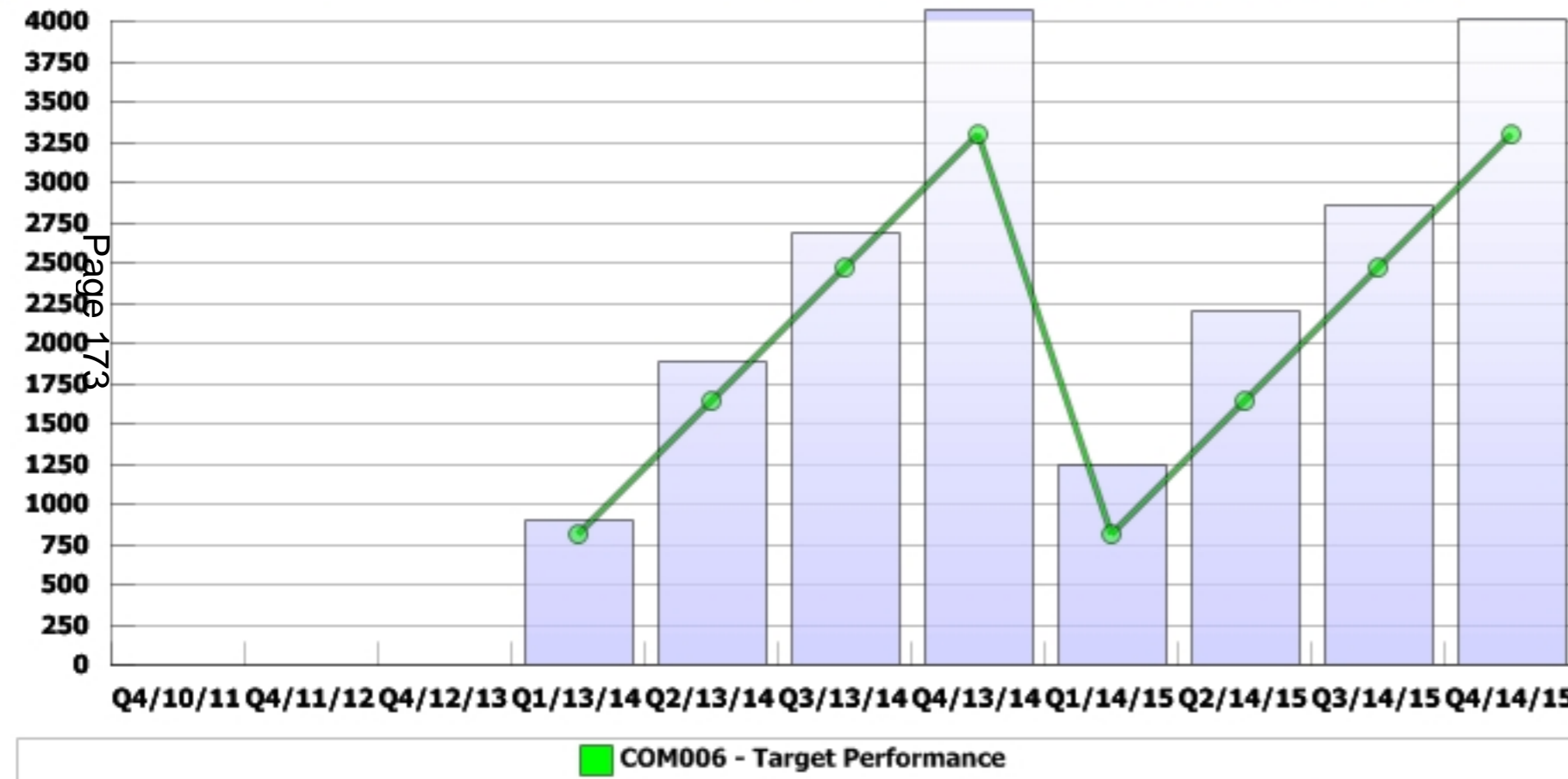
**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

**COM006 How many of the key building components required to achieve the Modern Homes Standard were renewed?**

**Additional Information: We are not currently at the Modern Homes Standard. If we were, we would still anticipate having to replace in excess of 2750 components per year to maintain that standard. Therefore, in order to address the backlog over time we will aim to replace in excess of this annual requirement each year, until we reach the Modern Homes Standard across our housing stock.**

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual
Q4/14/15	3,300	4,020
Q3/14/15	2,475	2,861
Q2/14/15	1,650	2,204
Q1/14/15	825	1,244
Q4/13/14	3,300	4,076

**Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?**  
 Yes

↑ is the direction of improvement

**Annual Target:** 2014/15 - 3,300  
 2013/14 - 3,300  
**Indicator of good performance:**  
 A higher percentage is good

**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q4 - 2014/15) - Target achieved - Potential building element failures have been identified from Stock Condition Survey Address List and appropriate Capital and Revenue works programmes have commenced to prevent these properties falling into the Non-Decent category.

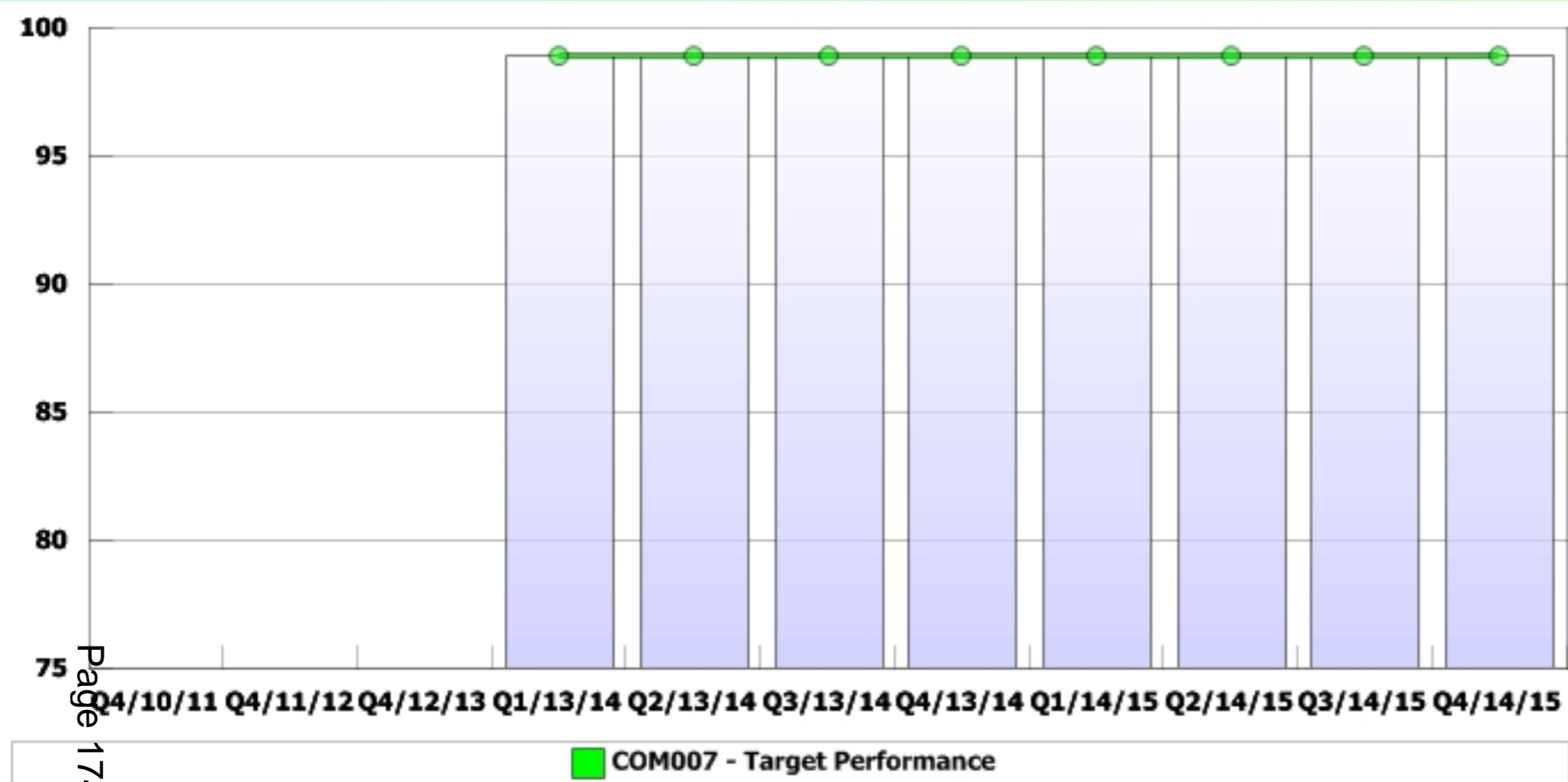
**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

**COM007 What percentage of all emergency repairs are attended to within 4 working hours?**

**Additional Information:**

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual
Q4/14/15	99%	99%
Q3/14/15	99%	99%
Q2/14/15	99%	99%
Q1/14/15	99%	99%
Q4/13/14	99%	99%

Annual Target: 2014/15 - 99%  
2013/14 - 99%

Indicator of good performance:  
A higher percentage is good

↑ is the direction of improvement



Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?

Yes

**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q4 2014/15) - Performance target achieved.

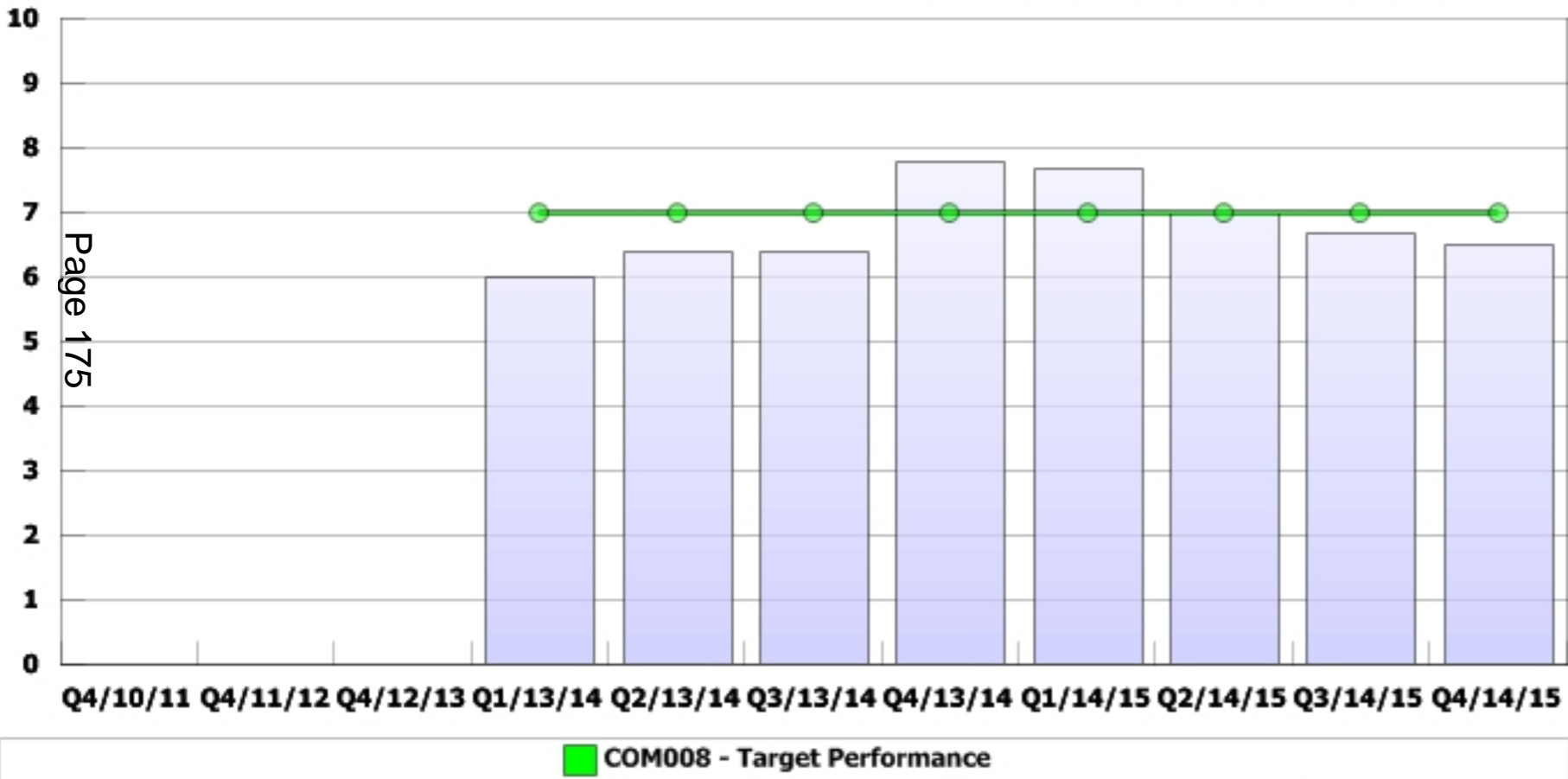
**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

**COM008 What is the average overall time to complete responsive repairs?**

**Additional Information:**

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual	Status
Q4/14/15	7.0	6.5	✓
Q3/14/15	7.0	6.7	✓
Q2/14/15	7.0	7.0	✓
Q1/14/15	7.0	7.7	✗
Q4/13/14	7.0	7.8	✗

**Annual Target:** 2014/15 - 7 working days  
 2013/14 - 7 working days  
**Indicator of good performance:**  
 A lower number of days is good  
 ↓ is the direction of improvement

Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?  
 Yes



**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q4 2014/15) - Target achieved

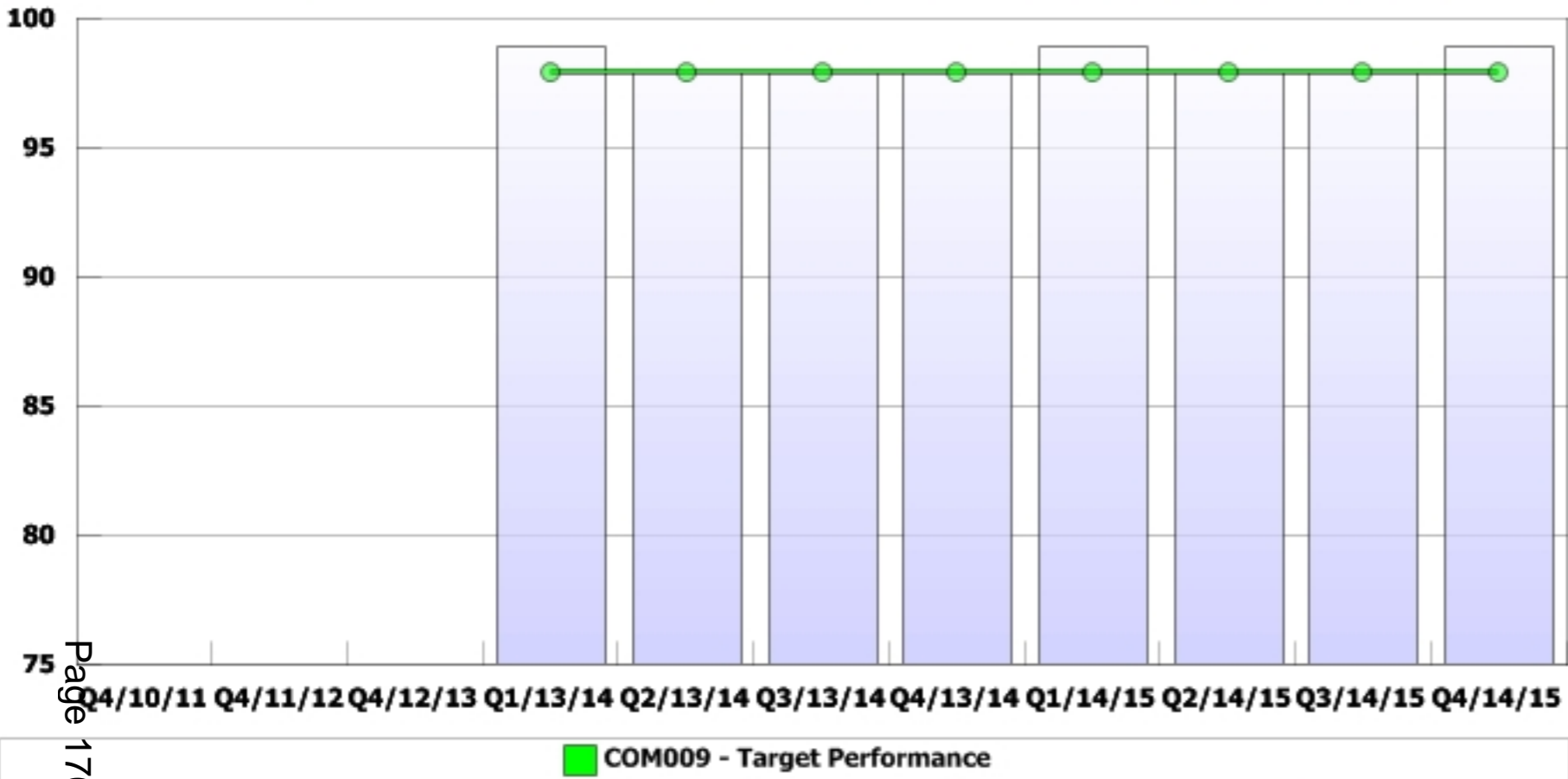
**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

**COM009 What percentage of appointments for repairs are both made and kept?**

**Additional Information:**

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01992 564472

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual	Status
Q4/14/15	98%	99%	✓
Q3/14/15	98%	98%	✓
Q2/14/15	98%	98%	✓
Q1/14/15	98%	99%	✓
Q4/13/14	98%	98%	✓

**Annual Target:** 2014/15 - 98%  
2013/14 - 98%

Indicator of good performance:  
A higher percentage is good

↑ is the direction of improvement

Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?

Yes

**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q4 2014/15) - Target exceeded.

**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

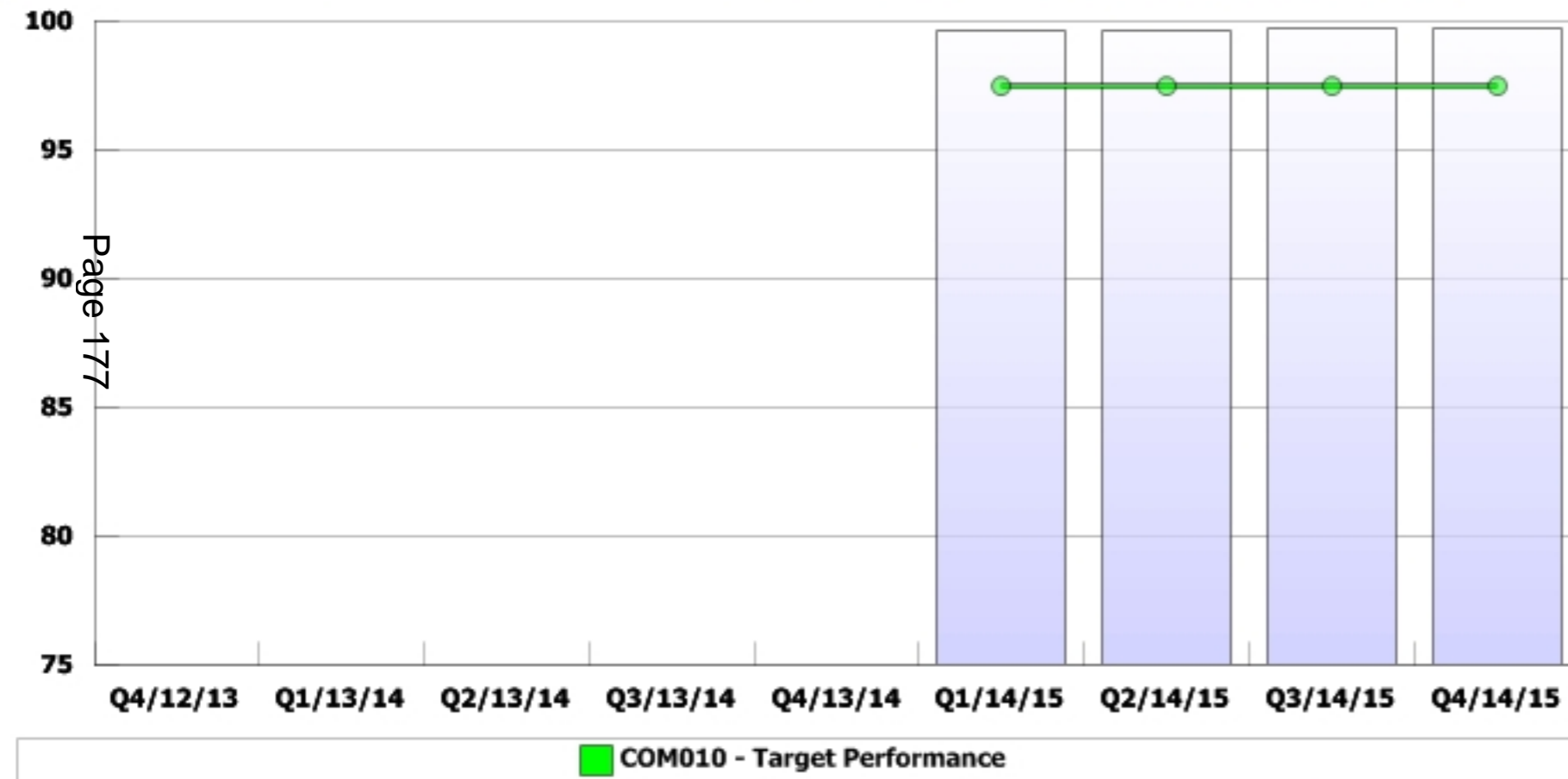


**COM010 What percentage of calls to the council's Careline service are answered within 60 seconds?**

**Additional Information:**

For enquiries regarding this indicator contact the Performance Improvement Unit by email on [performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk) or by telephone on 01992 564472

**Current and previous quarters performance**



Quarter	Target	Actual
Q4/14/15	97.5%	99.8%
Q3/14/15	97.5%	99.8%
Q2/14/15	97.5%	99.7%
Q1/14/15	97.5%	99.7%
Q4/13/14	-	0.0%

**Annual Target:** 2014/15 - 97.50%  
2013/14 - N/A

Indicator of good performance:  
A higher percentage is good

↑ is the direction of improvement



Is it likely that the target will be met at the end of the year?

Yes

**Comment on current performance (including context):**

(Q4 2014/15) - The target has been achieved.

**Corrective action proposed (if required):**

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