

Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2015-16

No	Category	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Progress Report (as at 1 st December 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	Mar 2016 July 2016	Delayed – 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 (Preferred Approach) 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.	Planning Policy Manager	Under Review Oct 2015	Achieved - An updated joint SHMA, covering 4 local authority districts, has been produced. This may need to be updated in light of the proposals within the Housing and Planning Bill to introduce a requirement to make provision for starter homes and to no longer assess gypsies' and travellers' housing needs as a separate category to the settled community.
3	Local Plan	Agree on objectively assessed Housing and Employment Need for the Local Plan Period.	Planning Policy Manager	Under Review Oct 2015	Achieved – Following-on from the completion of the SHMA (see (2) above), Cabinet has agreed that the Objectively Assessed Housing Need for the District is 11,300 homes.
4	Local Plan	Complete a District-Wide Viability Assessment on viable levels of affordable housing provision within developments	Planning Policy Manager	Under Review July 2016	In Progress – The Council's consultants have produced their Stage 1 Report. A presentation on the findings was given to all members on 19 th 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 Approach) and undertake the appropriate Sustainability Appraisal	Planning Policy Manager	Under Review Summer 2016	Not yet required – The Draft Plan will be formulated (accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal) once all the required evidence has been gathered.
6	Local Plan	Undertake a Consultation Exercise on the Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach)	Planning Policy Manager	Under Review Summer 2016	Not yet required – 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	Planning Policy Manager	Under Review Sept 2017	Not yet required – 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 / Planning Policy Manager	March 2015 Mar 2016	In Progress – 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 June 2017	In Progress – 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 exchange of contracts will take place in early 2016. The developer will then prepare the detailed planning permission, which will take some time, including a public consultation exercise.
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	Director of Communities	Dec 2015	Delayed – The Cabinet has previously agreed to work in partnership with Moat, through the provision of a 125 year lease, for a premium to the Council of £425,000. However, due to the requirements of the

		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.			<p>Welfare Reform and Work Bill, all social landlords (including Moat) must reduce their rents by 1% per annum for 4 years, which affects the development appraisal, and Moat have advised that, now, no premium will be payable.</p> <p>Consideration is therefore currently being given to the possibility of the development being undertaken as part of the Council Housebuilding Programme, and it is planned that the Cabinet will consider a report on this issue early in 2016.</p>
11	Affordable Housing Provision	<p>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:</p> <p>(a) Jennikings Nursery, Chigwell – 52 new homes</p> <p>(b) Manor Road Garden Centre, Chigwell – 17 new homes</p> <p>(c) St. Johns School – 38 new homes</p>	Director of Communities	Sept 2015	Achieved – All of the 107 new affordable homes have now been completed.
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	<p>April 2015</p> <p>Feb 2016</p>	<p>In Progress – The design for the scheme has now been revised and a revised outline planning application was submitted in November 2015.</p> <p>At its meeting on 4th June 2015, the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee agreed 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.</p>

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	April 2015 Nov 2015	Achieved – Phase 2 has been completed. As part of the Capital Programme Review in November 2015, whilst noting the success of the scheme, the Cabinet agreed not to proceed with a Phase 3, due to the Council's other Capital Programme commitments, which will soon require the Council undertaking borrowing for itself.
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 of the provision of on-site affordable housing	Director of Communities	April 2015	Achieved – 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.
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	July 2015 Apr 2016	In Progress – Now agreed that the approach should be to provide guidance to planning applicants. The Director of Communities will shortly be drafting the proposed Guidance, 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.)	Dec 2015 Apr 2016	In Progress, but delayed – Works are currently behind schedule. The Contract Completion Date in November has passed and the Council is now deducting Liquidated and Ascertained Damages. In December 2015, a claim for an Extension of Time was received, with costs, which the Council's consultants have 12 weeks to consider and respond to.

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.)	Sept 2015 Nov 2015	Achieved – Works were completed in November 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	Achieved – Following refusal of the original application for planning permission, a revised planning application was submitted for a development with slightly less homes and a lower building height. Planning permission was granted at the Full Council meeting in September 2015.
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.)	June 2015 May 2015	Achieved – 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.)	Mar 2016 Feb 2016	In Progress – The final 12 development appraisals are due to be considered by the Council Housebuilding Committee over two meetings in January and February 2016.
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	Achieved – Following the adoption of the revised Housing Allocations Scheme by the Cabinet, the changes to the new Scheme were implemented on 27 th 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 Jan 2016	In Progress – A new District-wide Nominations Agreement has been agreed with all of the Council's Preferred Housing Association Partners, following a consultation exercise with them. Most of the Agreements have now been signed, with the remainder expected to complete in January 2016.
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	Achieved – Following a procurement through the competitive dialogue procedure under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, Locata Housing Services, (the previous provider) were selected for the new contract.
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	Achieved – 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	Achieved – Following the adoption of the revised Tenancy Policy by the Cabinet, the changes to the new Policy were implemented on 27 th 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	Achieved – 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	Achieved – The Homelessness Strategy was considered by the Housing Select Committee in June 2015, and then adopted 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 Mar 2016	In Progress – 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 Nov 2016	Limited Progress – Due to other priorities.
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	In Progress – 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 (Preferred Approach) that an increased number of homes within new housing developments in the District should meet the Lifetime Homes Standard than presently required	Planning Policy Manager	Under Review Spring 2016	Not yet required – This will be considered as part of the Draft Local Plan (Preferred Approach). However, this was considered as part of a District and Local Council Workshop in November 2015.
32	Empty Homes	Bring at least 30 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	Achieved – 60 long term empty properties were brought back into use in 2014/15. However, only 6 were brought back into use between April and September 2015. The numbers for the remainder of the year are expected to be higher - but the target of 30 is not expected to be achieved.

					The positive news is that the upturn in the market is such that fewer properties are being left empty beyond the 6 month period, so less intervention by the Empty Property Officer is required. Problematical properties that have stood empty for many years are being addressed through formal action, but this can be a slow process. In addition, there are a number of long term empties that are not problematical, where enforcement action is not justified. In these cases, an informal approach is adopted which, again, can be time consuming and slow.
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	In Progress – As part of the promotion of rural exception schemes, the Director of Communities and Hastoe Housing Association gave a presentation to the Local Councils Liaison Committee in November 2015 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	Achieved – Following a consultation process, the Cabinet agreed the adoption of new licence conditions for holiday park home sites at its meeting in 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	In Progress – A Working Party has been established to consider all the issues, with Terms of Reference and membership agreed by the Management Board. It has met a number of times and agreed an Action Plan which is currently being implemented.
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	No Longer Required – The latest information received from Essex County Council is that they appear to intend, once 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.

