

**HRA Business Plan 2016/17
6-MONTH PROGRESS REPORT ON KEY ACTION PLAN**

Action	Corporate Housing Objectives	Responsibility for Achievement	Target Date	6-Month Progress Report <i>(as at 1st November 2016)</i>
Housing General				
1) Review the HRA Financial Plan, through formal officer reviews on a quarterly basis and reviews by the Communities Select Committee on a half-yearly basis.	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6	Director of Communities	Mar 2017	In Progress – The Quarter 1 Review was received and considered by the Housing Portfolio Holder and offices. The Quarter 2 Review is being reported to the 21 st November meeting of the Communities Select Committee for consideration
2) Undertake an HRA Financial Options Review, and agree actions to be taken to safeguard key housing services, whilst ensuring that the HRA does not fall into deficit at any time over the next 30 years	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6	Director of Communities	Sept 2016 Jan 2017	Delayed – It is not possible to undertake a proper review until the Government announces the detailed arrangements for its requirement that all councils sell their higher value empty properties, which has been delayed. However, preliminary work has commenced and some interim decisions made (e.g. not taking up the HCA Grant of £450,000 for Council housebuilding and paying over the 141 Receipts from Quarters 1 and 2 to the Government).
3) <i>(Subject to Cabinet approval)</i> Consider additional appropriate housing improvements and service enhancements, if affordable following the HRA Financial Options Review.	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5	Director of Communities	Jan 2016	Not Required – Due to the Government's requirement that all social landlords reduce their rents by 1% p/a from April 2016, there are currently insufficient resources for service enhancements. It may be possible to free up some resources through the HRA Financial Options Review for Service Enhancements, but this will be dependent on whether or not the Cabinet is prepared to refinance the first HRA loan due to mature in 2022.

4) Ensure that a sufficient number of vacant Council properties are sold on the open market, in order to pay the required levy to the Government to fund the extension of the Right to Buy to housing association tenants	HO 1 / 5	Director of Communities	Mar 2017	Delayed – See (2) above.
5) Engage with the Council's corporate Transformation Programme, particularly in relation to improved customer contact and customer service	HO 1 / 2 / 3	Director of Communities	Mar 2017	In Progress – There has been little involvement to date, other than attending working party meetings. However, the new Head of Customer Services takes up her post at the beginning of November 2016, when further progress is expected.
Council Housebuilding Programme				
6) Complete Phase 1 of the Council's Housebuilding Programme, to provide 23 new affordable rented homes in Waltham Abbey.	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5 / 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	July 2016	In Progress – Following the termination of the contract with the previous contractor, a new contractor was appointed at the end of October 2016 to complete the works
7) Commence Phase 2 of the Housebuilding Programme, to provide 51 new affordable rented homes at Burton Road, Loughton.	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5 / 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	Mar 2016	In Progress – The contractor commenced on site as planned, and works are currently in progress.
8) Procure a variety of works contractors, under separate contracts, and commence Phase 3 of the Housebuilding Programme, to provide 34 new affordable rented homes in Epping, Coopersale and North Weald	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5 / 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	Aug 2016 Jan 2017	In Progress – Tenders have been returned for most of the 7 separate contracts comprising Phase 3, which will be considered by the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee in December 2016. Works will commence early in 2017.
9) Obtain planning permission for up to 40 new affordable rented homes in Loughton, to comprise Phase 4 of the Council Housebuilding Programme	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5 / 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	July 2016	Achieved – Planning permission has now been secured on 10 sites for Phase 4, which will create 31 new affordable homes. However, no further progress has been undertaken beyond obtaining planning permission due to the temporary moratorium placed on the Council Housebuilding Programme.
10) Submit planning applications for up to 33 new affordable rented homes in Buckhurst Hill and Ongar, to comprise Phase 5 of the Council Housebuilding Programme	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5 / 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	Dec 2016	In Progress – Most of the planning applications for Phase 5 have been submitted and are currently in the process of being determined.

11) Enter into an agreement, in partnership with B3Living, to purchase 8 affordable rented homes proposed at Barnfield, Roydon, to fulfil the requirements of the Section 106 Planning Agreement for the development.	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5 / 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	April 2016	Achieved – The Agreement has been signed and works are currently on site.
12) Purchase a sufficient number of vacant properties from the open market to ensure that the Council utilises all of its “one-for-one” replacement RTB receipts	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5 / 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	Dec 2016	Achieved – The Council has completed the purchase of 6 properties from the open market.
13) Enter into discussions with the landowner of the Fyfield Research Park, Ongar about the possibility of the Council purchasing 32 affordable rented homes, to fulfil the requirements of the Section 106 Planning Agreement for the development of the site.	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5 / 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	June 2016	Not Required – It has been concluded that the development is currently too large for the Council Housebuilding Programme.
14) Complete the development and financial appraisals for the remaining Council sites with development potential and, through the Council’s Housebuilding Cabinet Committee, determine which sites planning permission for development should be sought.	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5 / 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	Apr 2016	Achieved – All currently identified development and financial appraisals have been completed. Where the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee has agreed that development should be pursued, planning applications have been submitted.
15) Make appointments to the new 3-year fixed term posts of Housing Development Manager and Housing Development Officer	HO 6	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	June 2016 Jan 2017	Unsuccessful – An appointment was made to the post of Housing Development Manager. However, the post-holder resigned after a few weeks, due to the uncertainties over the future of the Council Housebuilding Programme. It was not possible to make an appointment to the Housing Development Officer post, and attempts are currently being made to source someone from an agency. The vacant Housing Development Manager post will not be filled until the future of the Council Housebuilding Programme has been determined.

Housing Management

16) Prepare for the Government’s “Pay to Stay” Scheme, whereby tenants with higher incomes will be required to pay higher rents	HO 2 / 5	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	Mar 2017 Mar 2018	Delayed – No preparations can be made until the Government announces the detailed arrangements, which have been delayed. The original implementation date was meant to be April 2017, but it is now
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				likely that this will be deferred until April 2018
17) Prepare for the Government requirement to reduce the maximum length of fixed-term tenancies provided to new tenants from 10 years (as currently provided by the Council) to 5 years	HO 2	Asst Director (Housing (Operations))	March 2017 March 2018	Delayed - No preparations can be made until the Government announces the detailed arrangements, which have been delayed. It is now expected that the implementation date will be around April 2018.
18) Complete an Environmental Improvement Scheme for the Oakwood Hill Estate, Loughton, in partnership with Essex County Council, through a specially-formed Task Force of key individuals and partners	HO 2 / 3 / 4	Asst Director (Housing Property & Development)	June 2016 March 2017	Delayed – Following EFDC and residents being dissatisfied with the quality of the footpath surfacing laid by Essex CC for trial works, EFDC are awaiting details of options from Essex CC for the remaining works.
19) Introduce an IT system to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the management of the Council's leasehold property portfolio, including the provision of direct debit facilities to Council leaseholders for the first time	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 5 / 6	Communities Support Manager	April 2016	Achieved – The new system was successfully installed in April 2016 and appears to be working well.
20) Review the success and effectiveness of the extension of the opening hours of the Council Office at the Limes Centre, Chigwell into weekday afternoons and the increased the range of Council services accessible from the Office	HO 2	Area Housing Manager (South)	Sept 2016 July 2017	Not yet Required – Extended opening hours and increased range of Council services have been introduced and appear to be successful. However, following delays recruiting to the new Housing Officer post at the Limes Centre, the 12-month review is not required until July 2017.
21) Extend the funding for the Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau to enable the CAB to appoint their two Debt Advisors for a further year	HO 1 / 2	Asst Director (Housing (Operations))	April 2016	Achieved – The funding was extended for a further year, and the work of the two Debt Advisors continues to be valued by residents.
Tenant Participation				
22) Work with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation to stabilise the scheme of “mystery shopping” on the Council’s housing services by trained tenants.	HO 2 / 3 / 4	Tenant Participation Officer	July 2016 June 2017	No Progress - Following the resignation of the Tenant Participation Officer, it has not been possible to pursue this action yet.

23) Increase the number of recognised tenants associations within the District and, at the same time, increase the number of members of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation.	HO 4	Tenant Participation Officer	Mar 2017	Unsuccessful to Date – Despite the efforts of the former Tenant Participation Officer, residents appear reluctant to devote the time to setting up new tenant associations.
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Housing Related Support

24) Under a review of the Council's Careline Service, in order to determine the most appropriate approach for the future	HO 1 / 2	Asst Director (Housing (Operations))	Jun 2016 Nov 2016	In Progress – The review has been undertaken and, in the first instance, is due to be considered by the Communities Select Committee at its meeting on 21st November 2016.
25) Undertake a review of the Council's Sheltered Housing Service, in order to determine the most appropriate approach for the future	HO 1 / 2 / 5	Asst Director (Housing (Operations))	Nov 2016	Delayed – No work will be undertaken on this review, until the outcome of the Careline Review is known.
26) Undertake a review of the Council's sheltered housing assets, in order to determine the most appropriate approach for the future	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6	Director of Communities	Sept 2016	In Progress – An Officer Working Party has been established and has met on a number of occasions. A number of proposals have been formulated, but they cannot be brought forward for consideration until the future of the Council Housebuilding Programme has been determined.
27) Complete a feasibility study into the condition and future use of the chalets at Norway House, the Council's Homeless Persons Hostel	HO 1 / 2 / 3 / 6	Asst. Director (Housing Property and Development)	June 2016	Delayed – This has been delayed due to the lack of staffing capacity within the Housing Development Team. In addition, other options for the provision of temporary accommodation for homeless families are being explored.

Housing Repairs and Maintenance

28) Implement programme for repairs and maintenance expenditure over 5 and 30 years.	HO 3 / 5	Asst. Director (Housing Property and Development)	March 2017	Achieved – Following approval of the Business Plan, all work making up the Planned Maintenance Programme for 2016/17 has been put in place
29) Install mains operated smoke detectors in all Council owned properties over the next 5-years	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	March 2017	On Target - This is due to be completed by the end of March 2017.

30) Timetable at least one meeting each year with the Tenants Federation to discuss the annual repairs and maintenance programme.	HO 2 / 3	Asst. Director (Housing Property and Development) / Mears	March 2017	Not yet required – This will be undertaken in March 2017, following the Draft Business Plan for next year being produced.
31) Seek planning permission for a new depot site from which to relocate the Housing Repairs Service to free up the existing Epping Depot for redevelopment.	HO 3	Asst. Director (Housing Property and Development)	August 2016	Achieved – Planning permission was secured in August 2016. However, a decision on whether or not to progress with the works has been held in abeyance, until the outcome of the Council-wide Strategic Accommodation Review has been decided.
32) Closely monitor the new materials supply contract with Grafton Buildbase, and if performance deteriorates to an unacceptable level, then implement arrangements with an alternative supplier.	HO 1 / 3	Mears	June 2016 January 2017	On-going – Due to poor performance by the supplier, the contract with Buildbase has now been determined by mutual agreement. Temporary arrangements are in place with a range of local suppliers until a new Framework Agreement for materials supplies can be introduced. This is planned for Spring 2017
33) Renew at least 3,300 key components each year to maintain its housing stock to a more modern standard based on industry standard life cycles.	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	March 2017	On-going – As at Quarter 2, the Council is 350 components behind its target. However, it is anticipated that this will be made up and the target met by the end of Quarter 4.
34) Continue to hold meetings with the Repairs Focus Group	HO 2 / 3	Asst. Director (Housing Property and Development)	March 2017	Not achieved – Due to the departure of the Tenant Participation Officer and the demands of the Council Housebuilding Programme on the Asst. Director (Housing Property and Development) it has not been possible to schedule a meeting in 2016. It is hoped that a meeting can be held early in 2017, following the appointment of the new Tenant Participation Officer.
35) Continue to offer a 75% discount for leaseholders for 30-minute front entrance fire door installations to flats	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	March 2017	On-going – The Council has been offering this to all leaseholders to coincide with its own Door Installation Programme. To date, 427 leaseholders have been offered fire doors since April 2014, of which 281 (66%) have been installed.

<p>36) Implement the second set of “key deliverables” as agreed by the Repairs Advisory Group and the Housing Portfolio Holder:</p>	HO 3	Mears	Sept 2016	<p>Part-Achieved:</p> <p>1) <i>Customer Focused Training</i> – This has now been completed for all staff</p> <p>2) <i>HQN Assessment & Trading Account</i> – Some work was completed for the Assessment, but officers generally felt that the approach taken by HQN was not useful and it was not pursued any further. Following discussions between Housing and Finance, it has been determined that there would be no benefit in creating a trading account</p> <p>3) <i>Asbestos Policy</i> – A new Asbestos Policy has been drafted and is with the Council’s Health & Safety Officer for comment. A new leaflet for tenants on asbestos in their home has been produced and is available on-line</p>
<p>37) Seek to include at least one local business on the list of tenderers for all future contracts.</p>	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager / Mears	March 2017	<p>On-going – Wherever this is possible, a local supplier is added to all tender lists.</p>
<p>38) Analyse and report the SAP rating results of the National Home Energy Rating (NHER) software programme annually.</p>	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	March 2017	<p>Not yet required – This will be undertaken towards the end of the year and reported in next year’s Business Plan.</p>
<p>39) Continue to seek and apply for grant funding, such as Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) and the Green Deal Home Improvement Fund, to fund energy efficiency measures</p>	HO 1 / 3	Housing Assets Manager	March 2017	<p>On-going – The Council continues to apply for, and be successful in securing, Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) grant for its installation of air-sourced heat pumps to rural properties that do not have access to mains gas supplies</p>
<p>40) Provide Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) solutions for properties suffering from severe condensation.</p>	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	March 2017	<p>On-going – Properties in need of MVHR units are mainly identified during the winter months. All new-build properties on the Council Housebuilding Programme are having MVHR units fitted as standard.</p>
<p>41) Ensure all new homes, from Phase 2 onwards, built under the Council Housebuilding Programme are built to the Code for Sustainable Homes Code 4 or higher.</p>	HO 3	Asst. Director (Housing Property and Development)	March 2017	<p>Achieved – This is now set out in the specifications and Employers Requirements for new build contracts</p>

42) Monitor opportunities to trial and utilise renewable heating technologies.	HO 3	Housing Assets Manager	March 2017	On-going – This is generally reviewed on an on-going basis. However, no new technologies have been trialled so far this year.
43) Review the budget headings and formats for the Repairs Service with a view of setting up accounting systems that will analyse, monitor and report on a surplus or deficit.	HO 1 / 3 / 5	Mears	June 2016 March 2017	Delayed – A formal review of the first 6-months' costs is currently taking place, as part of the Budget Review. However, it has been identified that part of the operating costs need to be passed to the capital programme for repairs. The latest up-to-date Schedule of Rates have been purchased and installed, to give a more accurate benchmark for repair costs.

Key to Corporate Housing Objectives

HO 1 - Value for Money

HO 2 - Housing Management

HO 3 - Repairs and Maintenance

HO 4 - Tenant Participation

HO 5 - Housing Finance

HO 6 - Housing Development