

Housing Strategy

Action Plan 2008-2011

Updated October 2009

Theme	Outputs and targets	Lead	Progress	Target date	Key Partners
Strategic Objective 1 – Maximising the delivery of a range of new affordable homes to meet diverse needs					
1. Increase supply of affordable housing including affordable rented housing and shared ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the Affordable Homes Commissioning Brief - Work with Stansted Area Partnership to maximise provision of affordable homes in East Herts - Explore feasibility of East Herts Asset Managed land for developing affordable housing. - Ensure East Herts' contribution to the County Council's local LAA2 affordable housing target of 35%. - Carry out A Strategic Housing Market Assessment with partner Local Authorities. Review planning policies if required. - Deliver 200 affordable homes on average over a five year rolling programmed subject to amendment of target following completion of SHMA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Herts Housing Services Stansted Area Partnership East Herts Housing Services County Council East Herts Housing Services and Planning Policy East Herts Housing Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated and agreed at Community Scrutiny and Executive Oct 08. To be reviewed again by March 2010 to reflect the changes in the housing market and the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Report will go to Executive. Exploring older people and eco-homes with Growth Area Funding (3). Site identified. Reviewed as part of Community Scrutiny Report Jan 09. Option not supported at this time due to lack of suitable land. Herts County Council published figures for 2008/09 show that East Herts provided 597 housing units of which 120 were affordable, which is 20%. East Herts has produced the highest number of homes in the County but not the highest number of affordable homes. Hertfordshire as a whole has delivered 4,005 homes of which 25% were affordable. Final report due autumn 2009. There will be a presentation of the results by consultants to all partners and stakeholders after publication. Number of new affordable homes delivered April 09 to August 09 - 52. Number of new affordable homes in negotiation April 09 to August 09 - 136. Number of units gaining HCA funding April 09 to date 97. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed & Ongoing Annual and Ongoing Completed and Ongoing Oct-09 Annual and Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Herts Housing Services, Development Control and Planning Policy, RSLs, HCA, TSA, Developers, other Local Authorities

2. Maximise relet nominations from Registered Social landlord partners	<p>- Write to all preferred partner RSLs regarding the need to return data to Housing Service regarding all lets.</p> <p>- Encourage all RSLs to be part of the Common Housing Register (CHR).</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p>	<p>Both Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) housing associations are part of the Council's Common Housing Register (CHR) and are putting all vacant properties through Choice Based Lettings (CBL). Others association shave expressed a wish to join in the future. Will continue to monitor those housing associations that have significant stock and not part of the CHR.</p> <p>Currently consulting on a Memorandum of Understanding regarding operational practices and future development of the CHR and CBL. Will encourage all housing associations with stock in the district to sign up to the document and join the CHR.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Sep-09</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services, RSLs</p>
3. Encourage the RSLs to contribute to the database of local affordable rented housing in the District to include details of any adaptations made	<p>To make the best use of adapted stock in the district and to match adapted stock to housing register applicants needing adaptations.</p>		<p>This is being achieved through CBL and the Housing Register. Housing associations advise the Housing Options Team of adapted properties as they become available and property is advertised to attract appropriate bids. Applicants requiring adaptations are identified at registration and details of requirements collected. Applicants then advised of suitable properties as they become available.</p>	<p>Completed and Ongoing</p>	
4. Monitor the impact of the Council's Local Plan Policies on the delivery of new affordable housing and take action as appropriate	<p>- Relevant Core Indicators and key information monitored in the East Herts Annual Monitoring Report, with appropriate action guided by Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Strategic Housing land Availability Assessment</p>	<p>East Herts Planning Policy</p>	<p>A total of 553 (net) new properties, (598 gross) were completed in 2008/09 of which 53 were for social rent and 39 for shared ownership.</p>	<p>Annual and Ongoing</p>	<p>Herts County Council, East Herts Housing Services</p>
5. Continue to negotiate on site provision of affordable housing by private developers as directed by planning policy	<p>- Aim to deliver up to 40% affordable housing on eligible housing sites</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services</p>	<p>Negotiating up to 40% affordable housing on eligible sites registered after policy adopted in April 07. Housing Development Manager monitors individual sites for out -turn percentage achieved.</p>	<p>Annual and Ongoing</p>	<p>East Herts Housing and Planning Policy, RSLs and Developers</p>
6. Continue to secure funding that provides the optimum mix of affordable housing in terms of type and tenure, in the right location	<p>- Monitor Value for money of average unit cost, using internal and external public funds, of each affordable home developed by type, tenure and site.</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services</p>	<p>Report detailing options in the current housing market discussed at January 2009 Executive meeting. The current housing market conditions has led to a large range for the average unit costs from site to site. All being funded by the HCA. HCA using grant rates to encourage affordable housing. In addition Officers have Members have set up the Affordable Housing panel. The Panel has allowed the Council to consider approaches made by RSLs or Developers, with innovative ideas, quickly to maximise opportunities for affordable housing in the current economic conditions.</p>	<p>Completed and Ongoing</p>	<p>East Herts Housing services and Planning policy</p>

Theme	Outputs and targets	Lead		Target date	Key Partners
Strategic Objective 2. Improve the condition of the housing stock both public and private					
7. Increase the number of properties made decent as a result of Council action which are occupied by vulnerable households.	- Target Decent Home Grants (DHGs) to vulnerable households	East Herts Housing Services	Monitoring is ongoing. In 2008/09 42 DHGs were completed of which 37 were for vulnerable households (88%). This compares with 28 DHGs completed in 2007/08 of which 24 were in a vulnerable group (85%). However this increase is unlikely to continue as a new scheme for heating & energy was introduced in 2009.	Annual and Ongoing	East Herts Housing Services
	- Monitor the number of dwellings occupied by vulnerable households made decent with a grant, or by informal or formal action.	East Herts Housing Services	In 2008/09, 114 non decent homes were improved of which 43 were occupied by vulnerable households.	Annual and Ongoing	
8. Maintain take up of grants through publicity, leaflets, landlord forums	- Do a mail out with the Benefits Service to promote grants to vulnerable households at least once a year.	East Herts Housing Services	Grant leaflets regularly sent to benefit recipients plus targeted leafleting for insulation grants carried out through promotion scheme. In addition, energy advice promoted in 6,000 NI187 questionnaires sent, of which 3,000 were to housing and council tax benefit recipients. Those returned expressing an interest are offered bespoke energy advice. To end Aug 09, 30 were visited, and a further 190 contacted through HEEP scheme.	Annual and Ongoing	East Herts Housing Services and Benefits Service
9. Continue to monitor Riversmead and South Anglia housing associations residual delivery of promises actions	- Send request annually to Riversmead and South Anglia Housing Associations	East Herts Housing Services	Regular annual reports presented to Community Scrutiny; last report July 2009.	Completed and Ongoing	East Herts Housing Services, Riversmead and South Anglia Housing Associations
	-RSLs and Council to report annual outcomes to Council		Housing Service continue to monitor and audit residual Delivery of Promises with last report July 2009. Both South Anglia and Riversmead housing associations each gave presentations to Community Scrutiny Committee including individual question and answer sessions.	Completed and Ongoing	

10. Monitor local Registered Social Landlords delivery of decent homes	- Send request annually to all significant stock holding Housing Associations requesting information regarding Decent Homes	East Herts Housing Services	At the end of 2008/09 95% of Riversmead homes met the Decent Homes standard. South Anglia advise that they have the resources to meet Decent Homes and plan to do so October 2010.	Annual and Ongoing	East Herts Housing Services, RSLs
11. Take action in accordance with the council's enforcement policy to remedy category 1 hazards where appropriate	- Respond to request for service from housing complaints within one to three working days depending on risk - Monitor number of category one hazards removed	East Herts Housing services East Herts Housing services	95% of housing complaints responded to in 1-3 working days in 2008/09. 36 properties had Category 1 hazards removed through Decent Homes Grants in 2008/09, with a total of 50 hazards removed. Four properties had Category 1 hazards removed through informal or formal enforcement action, totaling 4 hazards.	Annual and Ongoing Annual and Ongoing	East Herts Housing Services
12. Provide guidance and advice to residents, tenants and landlords on their rights and responsibilities through a variety of media	- Review and expand information on Council's website - Give out at least 1,000 pieces of housing advice Hold at least one Private Sector Landlords Forum annually - Review existing leaflets and ensure up to date and comprehensive	East Herts Housing Services East Herts Housing Services East Herts Housing Services East Herts Housing Services	Housing advice information updated to include more information on debt, and mortgage arrears advice. Includes contact and website details of a wide range of external agencies, both local and national, providing free advice as well as the Council. Energy efficiency information updated. From April 08 to March 2009 1,035 pieces of housing advice given out. Forum held on 25 March 2009. Agenda items included Council's rent deposit scheme and discussion on Landlords Accreditation Scheme. Housing Register and Allocation, and Homeless leaflet updated following review of policy and contact details of agencies. Housing Advice leaflet completed, distributed and put onto website. Provides comprehensive contact details of agencies providing free advice. Grants leaflet revised & contributed to review of County Councils DFG leaflet	Completed and Ongoing Annual and Ongoing Completed and Annual Ongoing Annual and Ongoing	East Herts Housing Services

13. Implement the Actions in the 2007 Affordable Warmth Strategy	Refer to Strategy for detailed Actions and monitoring schedule	East Herts Housing services	Three actions achieved from the Strategy include: 1) Links established with County Council and other partners to target fuel poor through development of referral scheme: 2) 93 households received free insulation measures resulting from ENACT mail out: 3) Increased the number of households receiving energy efficiency measures through Decent Homes Grants from 15 in 2007/08 to 21 in 2008/09.	Annual and Ongoing	East Herts Housing services
14. Implement the actions in the Empty Homes Strategy	<p>- Refer to Strategy for detailed actions and monitoring schedule:</p> <p>- Aim to bring back into use 12 empty homes in the private sector each year</p> <p>- Monitor the annual number of returned empty homes providing accommodation for private sale, private rent, or social rent.</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p>	<p>Three actions directly relevant achieved from the Strategy include: 1) Completed first property on PLACE Scheme. Empty property renovated and tenant identified by Housing options Service. Rent just below 75% of Local Housing Allowance. 2) Web page available and reports received from members of the public 3) Publicity in LINK and press release taken up by Herts Observer leading to increased public awareness and additional properties reported as empty.</p> <p>Achieved target of bringing back into use 12 homes in the private sector in 2008/09.</p> <p>Ten homes were privately rented, 1 home was sold privately and 1 property was let on the Council's Private Leasing Scheme, through an RSL at below market rent.</p>	<p>Annual and Ongoing</p> <p>Annual and Ongoing</p> <p>Annual and Ongoing</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p>
15. Inspect and initiate action to bring HMOs up to standard and issue licence where appropriate	<p>- Aim to inspect and initiate action on 10 HMOs per annum</p> <p>- Aim to issue 10 licences per annum</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p>	<p>14 HMOs inspected with action initiated 2008/09.</p> <p>13 HMO licences issued 2008/09</p>	<p>Annual and Ongoing</p> <p>Annual and Ongoing</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services</p>
16. Undertake a house condition survey in 2009/10.	<p>- Schedule contract to ensure that all funding spent 2008-2010</p> <p>- Aim for production of final report by end 2009/10</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p>	<p>Survey work started week beginning 18 May 2009 and finished mid September. Contract issued within budget.</p> <p>On target to produce report by end of March 2010.</p>	<p>Mar-10</p> <p>Mar-10</p>	<p>East Herts Housing services, contractor and potential partner LA</p>

Theme	Outputs and targets	Lead		Target date	Key Partners
Strategic Priority 3: Build sustainable and thriving neighbourhoods and communities and ensure that vulnerable people are supported in the community.					
17. Promote community cohesion and support the local economy by providing housing that is affordable for local people.	- Monitor the mix of market and affordable housing in terms of type and tenure in right sustainable locations	East Herts Housing Services	The Annual Monitoring Report produced by Herts County Council shows the gross number of properties, 598, built by size. 1 bed flat = 162; 2 bed flat = 205; 3 bed flat = 15. 1 bed house = 7; 2 bed house = 58; 3 bed house = 73; 4+ bed house = 78.	Annual and Ongoing	East Herts Housing Services, Development Control and Planning Policy, RSLs, HCA, TSA, Developers
18. Ensure that housing policies and practices promote equalities and diversity	- Carry out Equality Impact Assessments on: Housing register and Allocations policy and Affordable Warmth Strategy	East Herts Housing Services	Initial assessment carried out for Housing Register and Allocations Policy and Affordable Warmth. Passed to Community Projects team April 08. Revised guidance and matrix produced April 09 and data updated and revised into new matrix.	Mar-10	East Herts Housing Services
	- Homeless and Homeless Prevention Strategy, Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy,	East Herts Housing Services		Mar-11	
	- Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy and Housing Strategy	East Herts Housing Services		Mar-12	
	Through the LDF, seek to deliver Gypsy & Traveller pitches and Travelling Showperson plots in accordance with the Regional Spatial Strategy for East Herts	East Herts Planning Policy	2011	East Herts Planning Policy & Broxbourne BC (in respect of Travelling Showpeople)	
19. Encourage high quality of design and layout in new developments, including public health, crime prevention, community safety and energy efficiency maintaining the attractiveness of East Herts as a residential environment	- Deliver high quality developments via effective implementation of the Local Plan Policies. Relevant Core Indicators and key information monitored in the East Herts Annual Monitoring Report	Planning policy	Internal meeting May 09 to discuss effective quality design elements to be included in the Local Development Framework. Met with RSL partners and other housing stakeholders 9 September. Agenda included consultation on housing development in East Herts and the Local Development Framework.	Completed and Ongoing	East Herts Housing Services, Planning Policy and Development Control

<p>20. Contribute to partnership action on crime and anti-social behaviour as they relate to housing through the Community Safety Plan 2008-2011</p>	<p>- Refer to Strategy for detailed actions and monitoring schedule. Two key housing related actions are: 1.5: Work with partners to devise schemes that are visible in the community to assist in reducing the fear of crime.</p> <p>6.4 : To support and contribute to : raising awareness of domestic violence (DV) and reducing incidents of domestic violence.</p>	<p>East Herts Community Safety</p>	<p>1.5: 8 Street briefings (Hertford and Ware), 17 street briefings in Bishop's Stortford, Buntingford and Sawbridgeworth. South Anglia HA carry out 'Door Step Challenges' and Riversmead HA 'Your Neighbourhood matters' as initiatives for improving and engaging in the their communities.</p> <p>6.4: Multi-Agency DV Forum meetings held bi-monthly. Funding has been received to purchase mobile phones for victims. The Council's Housing Options Service continues to support the Sanctuary Room initiative. Two Independent Domestic Violence Advisers for the Eastern region appointed.</p>	<p>Completed and ongoing</p>	<p>East Herts Community Safety, Housing Services, RSLs, statutory and voluntary services</p>
<p>21. Contribute to the improvement of public health and the reduction in health inequalities as they relate to housing through the East Herts Council Public Health Strategy 2008-2013.</p>	<p>- Refer to Strategy for detailed actions and monitoring schedule. Two key housing related actions are:</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services</p>	<p>2008-09 Action Plan monitored through Health Engagement panel and Community Scrutiny Committee. Actions to date include increased publicity of Handyperson Scheme. Handyperson jobs completed increased as follows: 2006/07 233, plus 291 home security; 2007/08 236, plus 288 home security; 2008/09 252, plus 336 home security. Aim to approve 95% of Decent Homes Grants and Disabled facilities Grants within 7 weeks. Achieved 98% in 2008/09.</p>	<p>Completed and Ongoing</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services, RSLs, statutory and voluntary services</p>
<p>22. Review Implementation of Choice Based Lettings and continue to review and develop service as best practice allows</p>	<p>- Review implementation of CBL to date</p> <p>- Continue to enhance the service by attendance at the Home Options project Review Group</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>Home Options work Group</p>	<p>CBL reviewed with Key partners. Housing Register and Allocations Policy updated to incorporate review finding and agreed at Community Scrutiny and Executive October 08.</p> <p>Home Options Review Group attended by Senior Housing Options Officer. Currently reviewing enhancements to the system including producing a Homeless Module. Next steps to develop CBL include discussions on the expansion of the scheme to outside of East Herts District to include cross boundary lettings to partner local authorities.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed and Ongoing</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services, RSLs, Other Local Authorities in Home Options work group</p>

<p>23. Maximise the opportunities to enhance and develop services to vulnerable residents of East Herts</p>	<p>- Review the Community Alarm service with a view to re-provision</p> <p>- Ensure all partner agencies are aware of the referral route for the County Council's Supporting people Floating Support Service by requesting a presentation by SP at the Homeless Strategy Group and other forums</p> <p>- Ensure appropriate officer attendance at the Supporting People Commissioning Body and Programmed Development meetings.</p> <p>- Ensure adequate representation by East Herts at the County Council's Supporting people groups and working parties, including the Accommodation for Older Persons Review Group, the Move-On project and Accommodation Services for Young People Partnership Group.</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p>	<p>Service reviewed with partners. New service provider started April 09. Transitional arrangements successful.</p> <p>Presentation on the Floating Support Service given to the Homeless Strategy Group partners by HYHG and Herts County Council November 2008. Copies of all documentation including referral documents circulated to all partners on the group.</p> <p>Attended by the Head of Health and Housing and Housing Strategy and Policy Manager.</p> <p>Accommodation for Older Persons Review Group attended by Housing Development Manager. Move-On Project & Accommodation Services for Young People Partnership Group attended by Housing Strategy and Policy Manager. East Herts facilitated a workshop at the Move-On Conference Nov 08.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Annual and Ongoing</p> <p>Completed and ongoing</p>	<p>East Herts Housing services, County Council, Voluntary and Statutory support agencies</p>
<p>24. Implement the actions in the Homeless and Homeless Prevention Strategy 2008-2013</p>	<p>- Refer to Strategy for detailed actions and monitoring schedule</p> <p>Report progress on action plan annually to Community Scrutiny.</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services</p>	<p>Regular updates provided to external partners on the Homeless Strategy Group and East Herts Corporate Homeless Group to progress action plan. Actions achieved to date include bringing back in-house the management of the Council's Hostel Services. The Housing Options Service have supported an initiative developed by Herts Young Homeless Group, with 4 other LAs in the County and the County Council, to go into schools attended by East Herts children and raise awareness of the implications of homelessness. Aimed at 14 year olds.</p> <p>Report on the progress of the Homeless and Homeless prevention Strategy presented to Community Scrutiny 21 July 2009.</p>	<p>Annual and Ongoing</p>	<p>East Herts Housing services, County Council, Voluntary and Statutory support agencies</p>

25. Work with health and care agencies to target vulnerable households in need of home improvements	Establish a referral network with Herts County Council, East Herts Council, Primary Care Trust and others for vulnerable households to receive energy efficiency measures, benefits advice and other services. For residents over 50 years old.	Herts County Council Housing Services	The County Council have invited expressions of interest for a managing agent to oversee the project for two years. A First Contact Signposting Assessment Form has been drafted and is being consulted on by all partners.	Annual and Ongoing	East Herts Council, Herts County Council, Voluntary and Statutory support agencies
26. Reduce levels of fuel poverty, particularly for vulnerable Groups.	Maximise the use of East Herts Council's share of the £6.6M London Commuter Belt funding to install fuel efficient measures in 340 homes per annum over two years.	East Herts Housing Services	Project launched 8 July 2009. First installations measures installed in August - 17 completed to date. Project progressing well.	Annual 2009/10 & 2010/11	LCB authorities, Communities & Local Government, EERA, Climate Energy (managing agents)