

# **Housing Strategy**

## **Action Plan 2008-2011**

**05 January 2011**

Theme	Outputs and targets	Lead	Progress	Target date	Key Partners
<b>Strategic Objective 1 – Maximising the delivery of a range of new affordable homes to meet diverse needs</b>					
1. Increase supply of affordable housing including affordable rented housing and shared ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review the Affordable Homes Commissioning Brief</li> <li>- Work with Stansted Area Partnership to maximise provision of affordable homes in East Herts</li> <li>- Explore feasibility of East Herts Asset Managed land for developing affordable housing.</li> <li>- Ensure East Herts' contribution to the County Council's local LAA2 affordable housing target of 35%.</li> <li>- Carry out A Strategic Housing Market Assessment with partner Local Authorities. Review planning polices if required.</li> <li>- Deliver 200 affordable homes on average over a five year rolling programmed subject to amendment of target following completion of SHMA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>East Herts Housing Services</li> <li>Stansted Area Partnership</li> <li>East Herts Housing Services</li> <li>County Council</li> <li>East Herts Housing Services and Planning Policy</li> <li>East Herts Housing Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be reviewed again to reflect the changes in the housing market, the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the Local Investment Plan. Post of Development Manager currently vacant.</li> <li>No current development projects suitable for the Stansted Area partnership local authorities. Uttlesford are project lead and currently considering winding project up.</li> <li>Reviewed as part of Community Scrutiny Report Jan 09. Option not supported at this time due to lack of suitable land.</li> <li>Herts County Council published figures show that East Herts provided 489 gross housing completions in 2009/10 of which 142 were affordable, which is 30% on sites eligible for affordable housing. However LAA 2 targets now abandoned by County.</li> <li>Strategic Housing Market Assessment completed January 2010 and report presented to the Local Development Framework Panel by the Consultants. In addition SHMA Viability Report, that considers the economics of housing development was published in August 2010. Planning policies under review.</li> <li>Number of new affordable homes delivered 2008/09 : 138 2009/2010 :185 including Homebuy (which is market housing purchased by housing associations for sale on shared ownership basis) . Figures collated by the East Herts Housing Development Manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed &amp; Ongoing</li> <li>Annual and Ongoing</li> <li>Completed and Ongoing</li> <li>Annual and Ongoing</li> <li>Completed</li> <li>Annual and Ongoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>East Herts Housing Services, Development Control and Planning Policy, RSLs, HCA, TSA, Developers, other Local Authorities</li> </ul>

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 and all significant stock holding RSLs in East Herts are part of the Council's Common Housing Register (CHR) and are putting all vacant properties through Choice Based Lettings (CBL).</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>Completed</p> <p>Mar-11</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 470 (net) new properties, ( 489 gross) were completed in 2009/10 of which 142 were affordable. An additional 43 affordable homes were acquired from the private sector by RSLs outside of the planning system via Homebuy.</p>	<p>Annual and Ongoing</p>	<p>Herts County Council, East Herts Housing Services and Planning Policy</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. 30% achieved on eligible sites in 2009/10 as reported in the Council's Annual Monitoring Report.</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	- Monitor Value for money of average unit cost, using internal and external public funds, of each affordable home developed by type, tenure and site.	East Herts Housing Services	Report detailing options in the current housing market discussed at January 2009 Executive meeting. The Council have produced a Local Investment Plan (LIP) with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to provide a framework that will be used to seek future HCA funding for primarily affordable housing in East Herts. The LIP identifies the strategic context for investment and summarises the evidence base that will be used to direct investment from us and our partners including the HCA to ensure we develop the right type of accommodation in the right locations.	Completed and Ongoing	East Herts Housing services and Planning Policy
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Theme	Outputs and targets	Lead		Target date	Key Partners
<b>Strategic Objective 2. Improve the condition of the housing stock both public and private</b>					
7. Increase the number of properties made decent as a result of Council action which are occupied by vulnerable households.	<p>- Target Decent Home Grants (DHGs) to vulnerable households</p> <p>- Monitor the number of dwellings occupied by vulnerable households made decent with a grant, or by informal or formal action.</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p>	<p>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 was unlikely to continue as a new scheme for heating &amp; energy was introduced in 2009. The new HEEP scheme resulted in much higher numbers of household receiving measures, increasing numbers of homes made decent, and as a result, fewer Decent Home Grants were sought. Due to funding limitations and increasing demand for mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, DHGs are now being limited.</p> <p>In 2008/09, 114 non decent homes were improved of which 43 were occupied by vulnerable households. In 2009/10, 29 Category 1 hazards were remedied, in 22 premises, and 45 dwellings occupied by vulnerable households received energy measures.</p>	<p>Annual and Ongoing</p> <p>Annual and Ongoing</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services</p>

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. Extensive publicity of HEEP scheme, through NI187 survey, Link magazine, newspaper articles, direct mailing and door knocking, landlord forum, and website.	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  -RSLs and Council to report annual outcomes to Council	East Herts Housing Services	Regular annual reports presented to Community Scrutiny; last report July 2010  Housing Service continue to monitor and audit residual Delivery of Promises with last report July 2010. Both South Anglia and Riversmead housing associations each gave presentations to Community Scrutiny Committee including individual question and answer sessions.	Completed and Ongoing  Completed and Ongoing	East Herts Housing Services, Riversmead and South Anglia Housing Associations
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	Both Riversmead and South Anglia report that all their stock is decent homes compliant.	Completed	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. 92% of housing complaints responded to in 1-3 working days in 2009/10.  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. In 2009/10, 29 category 1 hazards were remedied, in 22 premises.	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	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. The Housing Register Application form is now available on the Council's website for customers to download and complete. Energy efficiency advice updated.	Completed and Ongoing	East Herts Housing Services
	- Give out at least 1,000 pieces of housing advice	East Herts Housing Services	From April 09 to March 2010 1,045 pieces of housing advice given out, primarily by interview and telephone.	Annual and Ongoing	
	Hold at least one Private Sector Landlords Forum annually	East Herts Housing Services	Forum held on 25 March 2009, and 23 March 2010. Agenda items included Council's rent deposit scheme and discussion on Landlords Accreditation Scheme. Also changes to planning legislation for HMOs, housing benefit, Housing Fire Safety Guidance, House Condition survey. Next forum planned for February 2011.	Completed and Annual Ongoing	
	- Review existing leaflets and ensure up to date and comprehensive	East Herts Housing Services	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	Annual and Ongoing	
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. Referrals and measures through HEEP scheme increased.	Annual and Ongoing	East Herts Housing services

14. Implement the actions in the Empty Homes Strategy	- Refer to Strategy for detailed actions and monitoring schedule:	East Herts Housing Services	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. Empty Homes Strategy reviewed and adopted in 2010.	Annual and Ongoing	
	- Aim to bring back into use 12 empty homes in the private sector each year	East Herts Housing Services	Achieved target of bringing back into use 12 homes in the private sector in 2008/09. Target in Empty Homes Strategy 2010 - 15 is to bring 10 empty private sector homes into use each year. This reflects greater emphasis in the new strategy on tackling longer term or problematic empty homes. This was achieved in 2009/10.	Annual and Ongoing	East Herts Housing Services
	- Monitor the annual number of returned empty homes providing accommodation for private sale, private rent, or social rent.	East Herts Housing Services	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.	Annual and Ongoing	East Herts Housing Services
15. Inspect and initiate action to bring HMOs up to standard and issue license where appropriate	- Aim to inspect and initiate action on 10 HMOs per annum	East Herts Housing Services	14 HMOs inspected with action initiated 2008/09. 22 in 2009/10. Likely to achieve target in 2010/11.	Annual and Ongoing	East Herts Housing Services
	- Aim to issue 10 licenses per annum	East Herts Housing Services	13 HMO licences issued 2008/09. 20 in 2009/10. Fewer applications received in 2010/11, and emphasis now on securing compliance with conditions.	Annual and Ongoing	
16. Undertake a house condition survey in 2009/10.	- Schedule contract to ensure that all funding spent 2008-2010	East Herts Housing Services	Survey work started week beginning 18 May 2009 and finished mid September 09. Contract issued within budget.	Completed March 2010	East Herts Housing services, contractor and potential partner LA
	- Aim for production of final report by end 2009/10	East Herts Housing Services	Report presented by end of March 2010 and subsequently revised, and produced in 2010/11.	Completed March 2010	

Theme	Outputs and targets	Lead		Target date	Key Partners
<b>Strategic Priority 3: Build sustainable and thriving neighbourhoods and communities and ensure that vulnerable people are supported in the community.</b>					
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 2009/10 produced by East Herts Council shows the number of properties, 489, built by size. 1 bed flat = 103; 2 bed flat = 229; 3 bed flat = 12. 1 bed house = 3; 2 bed house = 51; 3 bed house = 46; 4+ bed house = 32. unknown = 13	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	<p>- Carry out Equality Impact Assessments on: Housing register and Allocations policy and Affordable Warmth Strategy</p> <p>- Homeless and Homeless Prevention Strategy, Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy,</p> <p>- Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy and Housing Strategy</p> <p>Through the LDF, seek to deliver Gypsy &amp; Traveler pitches and Traveling Showperson plots.</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Planning Policy</p>	<p>Equality Impact Assessment completed for Housing register and allocations policy and submitted to Community Projects Section. Action Plan developed. Revised guidance and matrix produced April 09 and data updated and revised into new matrix. Produced within target.</p> <p>Enforcement Policy Equality Impact Assessment now due Mar 12.</p> <p>Consultants have completed a joint Gypsy and Traveller technical study to identify suitable broad locations. The Council will fully consider the accommodation needs of both Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople throughout the LDF process.</p>	<p>Mar-10</p> <p>Mar-11</p> <p>Mar-12</p> <p>2011</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services</p> <p>East Herts Planning Policy &amp; Broxbourne BC ( in respect of Travelling Showpeople)</p>
19. Encourage high quality of design and layout in new developments, including public health, crime prevention, community safety and energy and water 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>The East Herts Community Safety Partnership has one priority for 2010-11; 'Keep crime levels low and improve public confidence through reassurance and crime prevention measures'.</p>	<p>Priorities and Actions from 2009-10 Action plan:</p> <p>1. Improve public confidence through reassurance messages and crime prevention measures . Action: Work with partners to devise reassurance schemes</p> <p>7. Raise awareness of domestic violence and reduce repeat incidents through a coordinated approach. Action: Raise awareness of domestic violence.</p>	<p>East Herts Community Safety</p>	<p>Two editions of Community Safety partnership newsletter published. Five partnership public meetings held Jan/Feb 2010 to improve public confidence. 15 problem solving meetings held including locality and street briefings. Halloween rock concert for secondary school age children took place 31/10/09. 200 young children attended this event and a significant decrease of 50% in respect of and reports of ASB/Criminal damage was recorded between 1600-0000hrs 31/10/09.</p> <p>Six forums of the East Herts and Broxbourne Domestic Violence Forum held annually. Mobile phones and wrist alarms issued for victims. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MMARAC) in place since January 2009, meetings held monthly, East Herts Housing Options Service attends.</p> <p>DV forum has created charity website. www.dv-advice.org.uk</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. Achieved 100% in 2009/10.</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 developing a joint Housing Register application form. Senior Housing Options Officer working with East Herts IT Service to migrate our Housing Register database across to Locata. This will ensure smooth transition of information between the housing register and allocations process and allow a much wider analysis including collating data that is currently not available for our Equality Impact Assessments.</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>Supporting People service now part of HCC Adult Care Service (including grant) and Commissioning Body no longer exists. Herts County Council developing links to services at district level through Herts Heads of Housing and other project boards to be agreed. Housing Officer attends where relevant.</p> <p>Accommodation for Older Persons Review Group attended by Housing Strategy and Policy Manager. Other groups currently suspended by Herts County Council.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>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 on progress of 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. Funding for 2010/2011 agreed through LSP.</p> <p>Report on the progress of the Homeless and Homeless prevention Strategy presented to Community Scrutiny July 2010.</p>	<p>Annual and Ongoing</p>	<p>East Herts Housing services, County Council, Voluntary and Statutory support agencies</p>
<p>25. Work with health and care agencies to target vulnerable households in need of home improvements</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Herts County Council Housing Services</p>	<p>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 has been consulted on by all partners. Scheme recently launched.</p>	<p>Annual and Ongoing</p>	<p>East Herts Council, Herts County Council, Voluntary and Statutory support agencies</p>
<p>26. Reduce levels of fuel poverty, particularly for vulnerable Groups.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>East Herts Housing Services</p>	<p>Project launched 8 July 2009. First installations measures installed in August. Target number of measures achieved. Project across the 15 council districts currently under spent, but strong promotion in East Herts maximised share.</p>	<p>Annual 2009/10 &amp; 2010/11</p>	<p>LCB authorities, Communities &amp; Local Government, EERA, Climate Energy (managing agents)</p>