

Housing Strategy

Action Plan 2013-2016

Action Plan 2013-16

1. Introduction

This high level strategy has highlighted a number of the key challenges and housing issues in East Herts. Our three year action plan has been developed around the Strategic Objectives of:

- Maximise the delivery of new affordable homes, whilst ensuring the best use of existing housing
- Meeting the needs of a growing elderly population
- Meeting the needs of vulnerable people and stronger communities

The three Strategic objectives and subsequent priorities and actions, reflect the challenges highlighted in the Housing Strategy.

2. Detailed Action Plans

The actions contained in the Housing Strategy Action Plan are relatively high level. Detailed action plans around specific issues such as homelessness and empty properties can be found in the relevant sub strategies and work plans.

3. Monitoring and communications

The Strategy Action Plan will be updated every six months by officers to monitor progress and monitored by the Council's Community Scrutiny Committee by an annual report. We recognise that it is important to report on progress with East Herts' residents and partners. Progress on the Housing Strategy will be made available to all residents and partners through the strategic housing section of the council's website and the Council's Housing Forum.

June 2012

Priorities	Outputs and Targets	Lead	Target date	Key Partners	Progress
Strategic Objective 1: – Maximise the delivery of new affordable homes, whilst ensuring the best use of existing housing					
1. Optimise opportunities for increasing new affordable housing supply, particularly family sized homes and the range of affordable housing options through effective partnership working	Investigate and undertake, if considered necessary, work to refresh the SHMA.	East Herts Housing Services and Planning Policy		Broxbourne Borough Council, Brentwood Borough Council, Epping Forest District Council, Harlow District Council, Uttlesford District Council	Report to December District Planning Executive Panel.
	- Aim to deliver up to 40% affordable housing on eligible housing sites	East Herts Housing Service and Planning	Annual monitoring	East Herts Housing Service, Planning, Developers and Registered Providers	The Annual Monitoring Report 2012/13 reported that there was 196 affordable housing units delivered.
	Achieve the right mix, tenure and proportion of affordable housing based on need.	East Herts Housing Service and Planning	Annual monitoring	East Herts Housing Service, Planning, Developers and Registered Providers	The Housing Development Team provide clear guidance on need and mix and tenure requirements. The advice was updated in the Housing Strategy 2013-16.
	Maximise funding opportunities for the delivery of new affordable housing	Housing Service	Annual monitoring	Housing Service	The Housing Team is preparing funding criteria for grants and to work with providers to secure a pipeline.
	Promote and assist our register provider partners to release larger homes that are under occupied	Housing Service and Registered Providers	Annual monitoring	Housing Service and Registered Providers	Closely worked with RP's on under occupation particularly in light of the impact of Welfare Reform. Targeted work has been undertaken by the RPs.
2. Monitor the impact of the Council's Local Plan Policies on the delivery of new affordable housing and take action as appropriate	- 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	East Herts Planning Policy	Annual monitoring	Herts County Council, East Herts Housing Services and Planning Policy	The Annual Monitoring Report 2012/13 was published in February 2014.

3. Generate new affordable housing planning policies for inclusion within the East Herts District Plan to replace current policies in the Local Plan.	~ Affordable housing requirement ~ Affordable housing site size thresholds ~ Affordable housing tenure split ~ Affordable housing dwelling sizes	Planning Policy Planning Policy Planning Policy Planning Policy		East Herts Housing services and Planning Policy	The Housing and Planning Policy Team worked closely on developing new affordable housing policies as part of the new District Plan.
4. Work with partners to meet identified rural affordable housing needs	Appropriate rural housing developed	Housing Service	Annual monitoring	Housing Service, Parish Council's and Registered Providers	The Council is supporting the new role of the Rural Housing Enabler who works across the county based at the Community Development Agency.
5. Run a Housing Forum at least 3 times a year and consult on proposed housing reforms	Consult, inform and let influence our external stakeholders on the Council's future housing policies.	Housing Service	Annual monitoring	Housing Service and external housing stakeholders	Forums have been run in March, July, Nov 2012 and April and August 2013.
6. Launch the East Herts Council backed Local Authority Mortgage indemnity Scheme (LAMS).	First time buyers are more likely to be able to access private housing. Monitor the take-up of the scheme.	Housing Service	Quarterly Monitoring	Housing Service, residents and mortgage lender	Service has been launched but with limited take-up.
7. Review and update Affordable Warmth Strategy and action plan 2007-12, to ensure strategy is fit for purpose for Green Deal and HECA.	Enable and encourage the provision of affordable warmth in private sector homes through advice, grants, discounted measures and partnership initiatives	Private Sector Housing	2013-14	Private sector Housing , residents and landlords	HEEP finished. Green Deal slow take-up. East Herts Strategy to be reviewed when Government's new Fuel Poverty Framework published, which is expected late 2014. Current national and local Fuel Poverty issues reported to Environmental Scrutiny Sept 2014.
8. Implement the actions in the Empty Homes Strategy	Bring Private sector empty homes back into use through encouragement and using appropriate legislation.	Private Sector Housing	Annual monitoring	Private sector Housing, home owners.	Target achieved. 10 brought back into use each year, including some particularly long term or problematic.
9. Regulate private rented sector housing via advice, inspection, enforcement and House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing	Ensure HMO accommodation is suitable and of a good standard	Private Sector Housing	Annual monitoring	Private Sector Housing, Landlords	High profile successful prosecution of landlord of 3 HMOs in 2013. Continuing successful work in 2013/14 to bring those properties up to acceptable standard. One landlord received a Caution for failure to license a licensable HMO. Proactive HMO inspections and action, and reactive inspections and advice about private rented housing carried out.

Priorities	Outputs and targets	Lead	Target date	Key Partners	Progress
Strategic Objective 2: Meeting the needs of a growing elderly population					
10. Continue to work with our Registered Providers to either regenerate their existing older persons housing, or re-commission for alternative client group, or re-develop.	Monitor number of units of older persons accommodation made fit for purpose or re-developed.	Registered Providers	Annual monitoring	Housing Service and Registered Providers	The County Council is restructuring this team and we will work closely with them once established.
11. To work with the County Council and Registered Providers to identify future opportunities within the district for flexi-care.	New flexicare accommodation provided in appropriate locations.	County Council and Registered Providers	Annual monitoring	County Council, Housing Service and Registered Providers	Calton Court Flexicare scheme has opened. The Housing Team regularly meet with HCC to discuss older persons needs.
12. To introduce and monitor a fixed price tendering scheme for certain adaptation works through Papworth Trust Home Solutions.	Aim for swifter joint process with Home Improvement Agency for completion of level access shower works through Disabled Facilities Grant.	Private Sector Housing	Annual monitoring	Private Sector Housing	Achieved. Developed in-house technical service with Building Control.
13. Continue with the Ageing Well Initiative and monitor the outcomes		East Herts Council	Annual monitoring		A number of initiatives and approaches have been carried out by the Ageing Well Steering group and Council Public Health work aimed at increasing independence and social interaction, reducing isolation and promoting physical activity.

Priorities	Outputs and targets	Lead	Target date	Key Partners	Progress
Strategic Objective 3: Meeting the needs of vulnerable people and stronger communities					
14. 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 sustainable locations	Planning policy and Housing service	Annual Monitoring	Planning Policy, Housing, Developers and Registered Providers	The Annual Monitoring Report provides data on affordable housing.
15. Ensure that housing policies and practices promote equalities and diversity	- Carry out Equality Impact Assessments on: revised Housing register and Allocations policy and Housing Strategy	Housing Service	Apr-13	Housing Service	Equality Impact Assessments have been carried out on the Housing Register and Allocations Policy.
	Through the District Plan, seek to deliver Gypsy & Traveller pitches and Travelling Showperson plots.	Planning policy		Planning Policy	Work is in progress in the Planning Policy team.
16. Continue to prevent homelessness through the provision of good quality advice and developing new solutions to housing need	Develop and publish Homeless and Homeless Prevention Strategy.	Housing Service	Sep-13	Housing Service	An updated Homeless and Homeless Prevention Strategy was published in December 2013.
17. Work with supported accommodation Providers to provide and make effective use of supported accommodation and appropriate access to move on accommodation in the district	Monitor existing and new supply of supported accommodation. Develop new and monitoring existing re-housing protocol with supported accommodation Providers.	Housing Service	Annual Monitoring	Housing Service, Registered Providers and Herts County Council	The Baker Street Young Persons Project (known as Rose Court) opened at the end of September 2013.
18. Monitor effect of changes introduced in April 2012 in the way Herts County Council deal with Disabled Facilities Grants, and liaise as appropriate to ensure effective joint service.	Monitor trends in number of grants approved	Private Sector Housing	Annual Monitoring	Essential Reference Paper B	Monitored. Liased. Number of referrals from HCC have not returned to previous (increasing) trend. Participating in Countywide review of adaptations processes. Disabled Facilities Grants promoted locally in 2013/14.

19. Review the council's allocations policy in response to legislation changes.	Develop and publish a revised Housing Register and allocations Policy for the Council.	Housing Service	Mar-13	Housing Service, range of housing stakeholders including Registered Providers	A new Allocations Policy was adopted on the 1 May 2013.
20. Produce a Tenancy Strategy for the District	Develop and publish a Tenancy Strategy for East Herts	Housing Service	Apr-13	Housing Service, range of housing stakeholders including Registered Providers	A new Tenancy Strategy was published in December 2012.
21. Maximise the opportunities to enhance and develop services to vulnerable residents of East Herts	- Ensure adequate representation by East Herts Council at the County Council's various working groups for vulnerable residents and maintain regular liaison with providers of supported accommodation.	Housing Service	Annual Monitoring	Housing Service, Herts County Council and Registered Providers	2014 - 'dementia friend' training provided to 50 EHDC councillors and officers. Officers exploring options with Alzheimers Society for potential new services.
22. Review future Home Improvement Agency Services and funding levels in conjunction with the HIA in the light of changing County Council services and reduced core funding.	Seek to identify opportunities for continued support for East Herts residents with reduced core funding	Private Sector Housing		Private Sector Housing, Papworth, Herts County Council	Reviewed. HIA funding and service reduced, but still provided. Gardening service for vulnerable residents secured for 2013/14 through Groundwork as result of successful joint bid to Police and Crime Commissioner.
23. 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, provide articles for the Council's resident magazine, press releases.	Housing Service, Private Sector Housing	Annual Monitoring	Housing Service, Private Sector Housing	A new Tenancy Strategy was published. Information on website updated. Landlords consulted on review of Private Sector Housing Enforcement policy, adopted Oct 2013.