



# **UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES**

## **HRA HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

**June 2013**

## **Background and introduction**

Uttlesford District Council own and manage approximately 3,000 homes. Most are a mixture of general needs housing and include approximately 450 homes as sheltered accommodation and an additional 120 leasehold properties.

Investment in our housing stock is predicted at circa £8.5 million for the financial year 2013/2014, comprising of £1.8 million for Responsive (Revenue) Repairs, £4.95 million for planned (capital) works and £1.75 million for the Development of new homes.

It is crucial that this spending is prioritised to ensure that the council make best use of the assets whilst striving to provide homes of the highest possible quality.

The council must also look for opportunities to increase the number of rented homes available to help the many people on the housing register.

The HRA Housing Asset Management Strategy is an important corporate document which sets out how the council will aim to achieve best use of its housing assets whilst maximising the value derived from the money available for investment.

## **Objectives**

The overall objectives of this HRA Housing Asset Management and Development Strategy are to ensure:

- that existing housing stock meets needs and achieves decent homes standards
- that the housing stock and other housing assets continue to generate an acceptable level of income
- that the council creates sustainable affordable housing both now and into the future

The strategy sets out the basis from which the council can achieve its objectives, both in terms of long and short term goals. These goals will include matters such as providing best service, value for money, community support and the achievement of high levels of customer satisfaction.

The strategy will be supported by an annual Housing Asset Management and Development Plan designed to ensure that the overall objectives of the strategy are being delivered and that there is a regular review of the priorities within the strategy.

The key objectives of the strategy are to ensure that the council:

- operates an effective responsive repair service which is sustainable, flexible, provides best value and delivers upon promises made to tenants within the council's corporate statements
- produces and monitors a suite of key performance indicators (KPIs) for the purpose of quarterly reporting to Corporate Management Team (CMT), Members and for the purpose of data sharing and benchmarking with the Housemark organisation

- maintains homes that meet, and exceed, the Decent Homes status
- provides a programme of planned improvement works in order to continually improve our homes to meet the expectations of both tenants and the housing board
- strives to ensure that investment in planned and cyclical improvement works result in a favorable ratio of capital to revenue works, a target for which should be around 70:30
- delivers value for money and provides efficiency savings throughout all services provided
- improves energy efficiency of non traditional solid wall properties, in particular those utilising solid fuel and oil, in order to improve the lives of those tenants who are currently experiencing fuel poverty and contribute more widely to the overall sustainability agenda
- takes advantage of any grants or initiatives to address the growing threat of fuel poverty
- creates successful communities via the continual assessment, remodelling and regeneration of existing out dated stock to create homes that mirror modern living requirements
- ensures that both tenants and the wider community have sufficient opportunity for consultation within regeneration and development proposals
- optimises use of existing council land via robust options appraisals and the development of suitable processes to highlight sites suitable for re-development or re-modelling
- ensures that the asset management risk register is up to date and relevant to current works
- ensures sufficient future development sites are highlighted to fulfill desired development targets for the construction of new homes, constructing a minimum of 5 no. new homes within each financial year
- ensures that all homes (where possible) comply with design and quality standards, achieve minimum scores required for design for life and achieve a minimum of Code 3 for sustainability
- promotes issues of equality and diversity throughout all services and activities completed within both asset management and development
- complies with all health & safety obligations as a social landlord, and wider legislation regarding the completion of assessment of hazards such as fire and asbestos

The key objectives listed above represent the core of the overall strategy and mirror the aspirations detailed within the current 30 year HRA business plan. The business plan provides the footprint which underpins the financial budgetary requirements necessary to provide suitable investment levels for works required to existing stock.

### **Housing Asset Management and Development Plan**

The Housing Asset Management and Development Plan, produced annually, will contain a number of elements including details of:

- Planned tenant engagement activity
- Work required
  - to update the inventory of assets

- to update stock condition information
- to complete or update the performance assessment of assets
- The process and timetable for production of the rolled forward 5 year investment plan, including a review of the agreed standard for maintenance and improvement
- Arrangements for monitoring performance against the strategy
- investment programme for the year

### **Co-ordination and delivery**

The Housing Asset Manager is responsible for the implementation and service delivery of the annual housing asset management plan. Service delivery is driven by the Housing Asset Management team but requires key links with all other operational departments to produce a smooth synergy resulting in the production of desired outcomes.

Outcomes are measured will be reported to the tenant forum and housing board on a quarterly basis to enable a high level of both transparency and operational performance. Reports produced will contain data useful for both internal and industry wide comparison. This process includes the ability to satisfy external scrutiny, with asset management and development measures enabling wider reporting upon the effectiveness of the following:

- Stock investment and asset management
- Resident involvement
- Member involvement
- Tenancy and estate engagement
- Management of leasehold and right to buy properties
- Housing regeneration (re-modelling)
- Diversity
- Value for money
- Adaption of risk registers both asset management and council wide

### **Project specific action plans ( as and when required)**

Assets should be regularly assessed to ensure that housing stock meets the needs of the wider community, fulfils criteria set by government and provides a high level of financial return. This can be achieved by the use of project specific action plans. It is recommended that such a plan should be produced when the following criteria have been established:

- Void or voids within a specific block or property for a greater period than 12 weeks
- Difficult to let
- Significant improvement or repair costs highlighted at void
- Individual structural issues either tenanted or during void
- Requiring significant demolition either due to tenant involvement, structural movement or non-traditional construction
- Tenant scrutiny and liaison reports

Wider issues should also be taken into account during the creation of project specific action plans such as:

- Neighbourhood sustainability indicators
- Levels of estate antisocial behaviour
- Crime prevention reports
- Previous estate investment levels
- Future planned maintenance programmed investment
- Recent responsive repair costs
- Local planning requirements
- Local stakeholder group reports

### **Financial resources**

The resources available within the HRA for revenue and capital expenditure will be reviewed on an annual basis, with financial projections produced for 5 years and 30 years for business planning purposes.

The full investment requirements indicated from stock condition data and decisions on standards of maintenance and improvement will be used for scenario planning within the financial projections.

This will enable a decision to be made on the standard of maintenance and improvement to be implemented. This decision will be reviewed on an annual basis. An important element of resource planning will be ensuring that all possible resource options are fully explored, including funding available through grant schemes.

### **Overall implementation and review**

The Asset Management and Development Strategy is intended to enable the implementation and operation of the overall housing asset management and development. Great care has been taken to ensure that the strategy reflects the needs of both the wider community and Uttlesford District Council. Commitment to the overall success of the strategy and desire to produce continual development and improvement can be summarised within the following responsibilities:

- Produce an annual strategy review in line with both departmental and council wide guidance
- Prepare and review an annual Asset Management and Development Plan including investment and budgetary programme
- Ensure that all investment decisions are taken in line with the Asset Management and Development strategy
- Monitor performance against the proposed investment plan contained within the business plan
- Produce and review necessary project specific action plans
- Monitor and review risks and risk registers
- Ensure that all management decisions are taken in line with the the overall strategic plan
- Ensure team culture and ethos is embedded around the strategy

A report will be produced annually reviewing performance on implementing the strategy and Housing asset management and development plan. This will include assessment against relevant national and local performance indicators and benchmarking against comparator organisations where appropriate.

The report will examine performance in a number of areas including:

- The standard to which properties are being maintained
- The financial performance of the assets as a whole (eg revenue loss from void properties)
- The value for money achieved through the investment programme
- The quality of service achieved in delivering the investment programme

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