



Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: John Mitchell

Cabinet

Date: Tuesday, 12 January 2016
Time: 19:00
Venue: Council Chamber
Address: Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER

Members: Councillors H Rolfe (Leader and Chairman), S Barker, S Howell, J Redfern and L Wells

Other attendees: Councillors A Dean (Liberal Democrat Group Leader and Chairman of Scrutiny Committee), J Lodge (Residents for Uttlesford Group Leader) and E Oliver (Chairman of Performance and Audit Committee)

Public Speaking

At the start of the meeting there will be an opportunity of up to 15 minutes for members of the public to ask questions and make statements subject to having given two working days' prior notice.

AGENDA PART 1

Open to Public and Press

- 1 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest.**
To receive apologies for absence.

- 2 Minutes of the previous meeting** 5 - 12
To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2015.

- 3 Matters Arising**
To consider matters arising from the minutes

- 4 Questions or statements from non executive members of the council**
To receive questions or statements from non-executive members on matters included on the agenda
- 5 Matters referred to the Executive (standing item)**
To consider matters referred to the Executive in accordance with the provisions of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules or the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules
- 6 Reports from Performance and Audit and Scrutiny Committees (standing item)**
To consider any reports from Performance and Audit and Scrutiny Committee
- 7 Refugee Working Group**
To consider matters reported from the Refugee Working Group (standing item)
- 8 Sale of land at rear of 21 Churchfield** 13 - 16
To consider and approve a request to purchase an area of Council-owned land to the rear of 21 Churchfield, Saffron Walden.
- 9 Financial Outlook and 2016-17 Budget Strategy** 17 - 78
To consider a report summarising the financial outlook for 2016/17 to 2020/21 and to approve a strategy for drawing up the 2016/17 budget.
- 10 New Homes Bonus consultation** 79 - 86
To consider and approve the response to the consultation on the New Homes Bonus.
- 11 HRA business plan 2016 - 2046** 87 - 146
To consider and adopt the revised Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.
- 12 Housing strategy** 147 - 222
To consider and adopt a new housing strategy.

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| 13 | Homelessness strategy
To consider and adopt a new homelessness strategy. | 223 - 274 |
| 14 | Housing allocations policy
To consider proposed amendments required to the Council's housing allocations policy following recent case law. | 275 - 332 |
| 15 | ECC reduction in funding for housing related support.
To consider how the Council proposes to charge for and deliver support services in light of a reduction in funding by Essex County Council. | 333 - 354 |
| 16 | Any other items which the Chairman considers to be urgent
To consider any items which the Chairman considers to be urgent. | |

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General Enquiries

Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER

Telephone: 01799 510510

Fax: 01799 510550

Email: uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk

Website: www.uttlesford.gov.uk

**CABINET MEETING held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN on 10 DECEMBER 2015 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillor H Rolfe (Leader)
Councillor S Barker (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environmental Services)
Councillor S Howell (Cabinet Member for Finance and Administration)
Councillor J Redfern (Cabinet Member for Housing and Economic Development)

Also present: Councillors A Dean (Liberal Democrat Group Leader and Chair of Scrutiny Committee), J Lodge (Residents for Uttlesford Group Leader) and Councillor G Sell.

Officers in attendance: R Harborough (Director of Public Services and Interim Head of Paid Service) M Cox (Democratic Services Officer), A Knight (Assistant Director – Finance), M Perry (Assistant Chief Executive – Legal) and A Webb (Director of Finance and Corporate Services).

CA52 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Wells.

Councillor S Barker declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 11, Local Council Tax support scheme, as a member of Essex County Council.

CA53 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2015 were received and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CA54 QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS FROM NON- EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Councillor Sell said he would speak to the car parking report when the item was discussed later in the meeting.

CA55 REPORTS FROM PERFORMANCE AND AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Councillor Dean said he was considering whether to add a review of the Cabinet system to the Scrutiny Committee's future work programme and was trying to establish whether the actions from the previous review had been completed. The Chairman said he would ask Councillor Ranger, the Chairman of the Constitution Working Group to reply.

CA56 **REFUGEE WORKING GROUP**

Councillor Redfern said that Essex would receive three refugee families before Christmas, who would be housed within the Colchester Borough. There would be a meeting with the organisers early in the New Year to share best practise before the expected arrival of further refugees. She said that UDC currently had two properties available, one council owned and one offered from a private landlord to be let at a social rent.

CA57 **BUDGET MONITORING 2015- 16 QUARTER 2**

Councillor Howell presented a report on the financial performance relating to the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Capital Programme and Treasury Management from April to October and a predicted forecast for the end of the financial year.

The key points were as follows. The General Fund was forecasting an increased underspend of £1,213,000 due mainly to the Business Rates income which has been realised as part of the Business Rates review of the scheme undertaken by officers. The HRA was forecasting a £598,000 underspend due mainly to the slippage in the Capital Programme and the associated financing and the Capital Programme was predicting a £4,168,000 underspend mainly due to project slippage.

The Cabinet discussed the detail of the report. The Assistant Director Finance answered questions around NNDR income but explained that this was a complex and changing area. Members were pleased with the proposal to transfer the surplus to Strategic Initiatives Fund Reserve to provide future funding opportunities.

RESOLVED to note the report and approve

- i) the transfer of £1.148m from the Business Rates Reserve to the Strategic Initiatives Fund Reserve as set out in point 10.
- ii) Approve the transfer of the General Fund Surplus of £1.213m to the Strategic Initiatives Fund.

CA58 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT BENCHMARKING EXERCISE**

At the last meeting, the Leader asked for a report to compare Uttlesford's treasury management activities with that of other Essex Councils as the Cabinet had noted a low rate of return on investment. It had not been possible to obtain the information for all the Essex authorities, but information was available from the council's treasury consultant, Arlingclose who produced a quarterly benchmarking exercise, comparing average treasury activities of their client councils across the country.

Members considered the report, which covered all investments made for treasury purposes, including external funds, but excluded any investments made for service purposes.

The report concluded that the council's current investment strategy was more risk adverse than the average authority and prevented the council from receiving higher returns. In the light of past events, the council had adopted a cautious approach and invested more in fixed term deposits, whereas the average authority placed more funds with the money markets and call accounts and had a greater number of counterparties.

The Cabinet agreed that there appeared to be scope to increase the rate of return by taking on a modest increase in risk and asked officers to prepare the new Treasury Management policy on this basis. However, Members were clear that they did not wish to increase the risk appetite beyond a moderate level, particularly as the authorities that had adopted a higher risk approach did not necessarily achieved a corresponding level of return.

RESOLVED to prepare the 2016/17 Treasury Management Strategy with the aim of ensuring an improved rate of return is achieved whilst acknowledging the risk appetite of the council.

CA59 **AUTUMN STATEMENT – AN OVERVIEW OF KEY POINTS**

Councillor Howell presented a report, which set out the key points arising from the Autumn Statement announced on 5 November. However, at this stage there was insufficient detail to determine the funding available to the council; this would be announced on 17 December. The main areas of concern were around the cut in Government support, a shift towards funding of social care and upper tier authorities, a reduction in the New Homes Bonus from 2017/18 and to encourage the use of reserves. To counter this district authorities would be able to retain business rate receipts, although there was likely to be levelling across the country and authorities would be required to take on additional responsibilities.

There was discussion around the desire not to reduce the council's front line services, the future use of reserves and plans to stimulate income opportunities for the council.

The timing of the Government announcement meant that the preparation of reports for the 2016/17 budget and MTFS would be squeezed into a short period. There would be a workshop for members on 11 January, with an additional afternoon session, if this would be useful for members. There would however still be the opportunity for member to input their views before the budget was approved in February.

The report was noted.

CA60 **2016-17 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

Councillor Howell presented the report on the LCTS. The Cabinet had approved the 2016/17 scheme for consultation in June 2015 on the following basis

- 1 The 2016/17 LCTS scheme is set on the same basis as the 2015/16 scheme and therefore the contribution rate is frozen for the second consecutive year.
- 2 Provide discretionary subsidy for town & parish councils for 2016/17 in accordance with the principles set out in paragraph 29.
- 3 The 2016/17 Council Tax discounts are set at the same rate as the 2015/16 discounts as set out in paragraphs 30 – 33.

The consultation replies had been reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee and were broadly in support of the scheme.

Members questioned whether it was common practise for other authority's schemes to include funding for parish councils to ensure there was no effect on the parish council band D calculation. Officers said there was varying practice in this area but this was something that could be considered at the next annual review.

The Cabinet was proud that UDC had continued to support the scheme and still had the lowest contribution of all Essex authorities. However, it recognised the impending financial challenges and the likely need to make difficult decisions in the future.

RESOLVED to approve for recommendation to Full Council, the Local Council Tax Support scheme as recommended in June and set out in the report.

CA61

SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLE

The Cabinet was asked to approve in principle the setting up of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) as a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Council. The purpose of the SPV would be to develop a range of commercial opportunities, including property development of council-owned General Fund land. This was an alternative way of generating income in the light of reduced Government funding and had been trialled by a number of other councils. The initial loan to the SPV would be made by way of a new reserve funded from the Strategic Initiatives Fund.

A separate, wholly-owned subsidiary of the Council in the form of a SPV for housing and commercial purposes would enable the Council to engage in direct development of General Fund land it owns and to also transfer assets into the SPV.

Members welcomed the proposal as a positive move although pointed out that the project would require entrepreneurs to drive it forward. It was agreed that future resourcing would need to be addressed, but initially it was important to ensure that legal advice was obtained and to establish the best business model for the success of the scheme.

RESOLVED to

- 1 Approve the principle of establishing a SPV.

- 2 Instruct the Chief Financial Officer to establish a SPV Reserve in readiness to provide a loan to the SPV.
- 3 Require officers to bring an interim report to Cabinet setting out the draft Articles of Association and likely costs and timescales for establishing the SPV.

CA62

USE OF COUNCIL BUILDINGS FOR WEDDINGS

The Cabinet was advised that UDC was aiming to promote the Saffron Walden Council Offices as a wedding venue following ECC's decision to withdraw from the promotion of wedding venues. This was in line with the council's aim to seek maximum income opportunities from its assets, as well as an opportunity to work with the community to promote local businesses.

The aim was to offer a complete wedding service. There would be a new schedule of charges based on the time of the ceremony and the type of room used and there would be a new brochure to promote the service.

There was concern at the £20K allocation for preparing the brochure. However, Members appreciated that the council would be competing with a number of other venues, and an initial investment was required to get the brand right from the outset.

RESOLVED to

- 1 Allocate the sum of £20,000 from the Strategic Initiative Fund to enable the production of a wedding brochure.
- 2 Agree the 2016/17 fees and charges as set out in Appendix One

CA63

TRANSFER OF LAND TO GREAT CHESTERFORD PARISH COUNCIL

The Cabinet was asked to approve the transfer of a piece of land in Great Chesterford to the Parish council. The land had been obtained as a requirement under a section 106 agreement to provide education/community space. The land had been valued at £52,000 but was being transferred at nil value because it would help to secure the promotion of the social and environmental well being of the area.

Councillor Redfern declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Great Chesterford Parish Council and confirmed that the parish council was currently liaising with groups for the provision of a preschool on the site.

RESOLVED to

- 1 Allocate the sum of £20,000 from the Strategic Initiatives Fund to enable the production of a wedding brochure.

- 2 Agree the 2016/17 fees and charges as set out in Appendix One. that the land be transferred land to the east of Great Chesterford recreation ground, for nil value to Great Chesterford Parish Council.

CA64

SALE OF LAND AT WOOD LANE BIRCHANGER

Councillor Redfern said that a request had been received from the residents of 5 and 5a Wood Lane, Birchanger to purchase an area of council owned land in front of their properties. There was no planning potential for this land and it would be transferred subject to a restrictive covenant limiting the use of the site to garden use only. The value of the land would be determined using the Market Value/Fair Value definition.

RESOLVED

- 1 To approve the sale of the land in front of 5 and 5a Wood Lane in Birchanger.
- 2 The land to be sold subject to conditions preventing any development of the land and the purchasers will bear all legal and survey costs of the transaction

CA65

CAR PARKING REVIEW

Councillor Barker presented a report, which set out a number of recommendations and a work programme for improvements to the council owned car parks in Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet. The report brought together areas of work including the scrutiny car park review, the recent review of car parking charges and an external report into car parking across the district.

The recommendation reviewing charging for blue badge holders had been withdrawn in the light of further representation received.

Councillor Sell commented on the proposals for the car parks in Stansted and also presented the parish council's views. He said that whilst he generally welcomed the suggestions, there was a complicated and emerging situation in Stansted and thought given to the effect of implementing the recommendations. He said it was important to review Car Parking charges as soon as possible after the new health centre was open. There was further discussion around ways to address the congestion on Cambridge Road, the availability of car parking at the station and a review of the season ticket charges.

The Cabinet was generally pleased with report so far but asked for the recommendations to be put in place as soon as possible.

RESOLVED

- 1 That the new parking charges (including season ticket prices) and timings as set out in Appendix 2 and paragraph 25 be adopted following formal advertising.
- 2 Discuss with Saffron Walden Town Council (the owners) the future of the Catons Lane car park with the option of either levying a parking charge in line with others in the town or passing the maintenance and running back to the Town Council.
- 3 Allow season ticket parking spaces to be open to all users from 10am in the morning and all day at the weekend.
- 4 Refresh all car park signage to prominently advertise Mipermit.
- 5 In principle agreement to purchase an additional area of land (Appendix 4) adjacent to Lower Street car park, Stansted Mountfitchet to create an extended car park. This would be subject to independent valuation and a future Cabinet report.
- 6 To carry out a review of Lower Street car park, Stansted Mountfitchet post opening of the new Medical Centre to consider any change of usage patterns. This will include a review of the season ticket pricing levels in comparison with the station car park.
- 7 Arrange annually meetings with Chairs of the Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow Town Teams, Chair of the Stansted Economic Development Forum and Chairs of the relevant committees from Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow Town Councils and Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council to discuss the effectiveness of the car parking provision. These meetings to include discussion on the best way of using car park pricing to support the economic vitality of the centres.
- 8 That a “dashboard” of indicators be created and published quarterly to enable monitoring and management of the effectiveness of car parking provision.

CA66

DESIGNATION OF THAXTED NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

Councillor Barker reported that an application had been received from Thaxted Parish council for the designation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan Area. The proposal was for the area to follow the existing parish boundary for the village, which was considered to be appropriate and no comments had been received in response to the public consultation.

RESOLVED to designate the area outlined on the map at Appendix 1 as the Thaxted Neighbourhood Development Plan Area.

CA67

RNP1 TRIAL AT STANSTED AIRPORT

The Cabinet received a report on the results of a trial at Stansted Airport to use modern navigational procedures to improve track keeping of departing aircraft, and whether this should be formally adopted. This had been considered by the recent STAAP meeting, which had concluded that the new track keeping system would enable departing aircraft to fly as close as possible to the centre line, which would reduce the number of people being overflown.

Councillor Barker reported the views of residents from High Easter who felt that the village had experienced an increased number of aircraft overflying the village and had submitted its own responses to the consultation.

RESOLVED

- 1 That taking into account Government policy on noise, the Council should support the airspace change proposal as;
 - i) it would result in fewer people being directly overflown by aircraft, and
 - ii) it would give more certainty about the paths that departing aircraft take
- 2 That the RNP1 procedures be implemented as soon as possible on the remaining four SIDs.

CA68

ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE

The Cabinet considered the recent submission from parish councils to add assets in their area that were considered to be a community asset.

The Chairman of the parish council spoke to the committee about the ownership of the sites in Clavering. The Cabinet considered an objection to the listing of the asset in Manuden, but concluded that it was the only pub in the village and its listing would be consistent with the listing of similar assets elsewhere in the district.

RESOLVED to agree to include the following on the Assets of Community Value list:

- a) Upper Hill Green, Clavering
- b) Fox and Hounds Public House, Clavering
- c) The Yew Tree Public House, Manuden

The meeting ended at 9.05 pm

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 12 January 2016

8

**Title: Sale of land to the rear of 21 Churchfield,
Saffron Walden**

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Howell

Key decision: Yes

Summary

1. This report advises Cabinet of a request to purchase an area of Council owned land to the rear of 21 Churchfield, Saffron Walden

Recommendations

2. That Cabinet approves the sale of the land to the rear of 21 Churchfield, Saffron Walden at a price of £3,000.
3. The sale will be subject to conditions preventing any development of the land.

Financial Implications

4. The land concerned is a council asset and the sale will raise a capital receipt.
5. The council must satisfy the requirements of Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to derive the 'Best Consideration' for disposal of the land.

Background Papers

6. None.

Communication/Consultation	Owner of 21 Churchfield, Saffron Walden and neighbouring properties in Churchfield and Peel Road
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The land will be sold subject to conditions preventing any development of the land
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	Shire
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

1. The Council has received a request from the resident of 21 Churchfield, Saffron Walden to purchase a small parcel of land at the rear of their property. The Council owns no other land in the area.
2. Churchfield is located off of Cromwell Road within Saffron Walden.
3. The parcel of land is to the rear of the property and currently is rough land with significant poor quality tree growth that is uncut. In addition soil and a grass cuttings have been dumped on the area. If the land is sold to the owner of 21 Churchfield they intend to use it as garden land.
4. The area of the site, highlighted in red at Appendix One, is approximately 92m².
5. The land will be transferred subject to a restrictive covenant limiting the use of the site to garden use only.
6. The value of the land has been determined as between £4,100 and £6,000
7. Currently, the Council has to bear the cost of maintaining this piece of land, which is approximately £1,300 per annum.
8. In order to turn this piece of land into usable garden land the potential purchaser will have to incur quite significant costs in tree clearance and ground levelling. To reflect this they have offered to pay £3,000 for the land.
9. Clearly this is below the land value. However, when the annual cost of maintenance is factored in, along with the knowledge that this is an isolated piece of land that has no potential use and if not sold would remain with the Council in perpetuity the offer is a reasonable one.

Risk Analysis

1.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Appendix One

Land at Churchfield, Saffron Walden



Date: 04/01/2016

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Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 12 January 2016

9

Title: Financial Outlook and 2016/17 Budget Strategy

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Simon Howell

Key decision: No

Summary

1. This report summarises the financial outlook for 2016/17 through to 2020/21 and asks Members to approve a strategy for drawing up the 2016/17 budget.
2. The report also sets out the results of the public consultation on Council priorities.
3. Based upon the approved strategy officers will draw up a proposed budget for formal review by Members as follows:

Scrutiny review	Scrutiny Committee	9 February
Finalisation of budget proposals	Cabinet	16 February
Approval of final budget	Full Council	25 February

Recommendations

4. The Cabinet is recommended to approve the 2016/17 Budget Strategy and key actions as set out in this report.

Financial Implications

5. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation.

Background Papers

6. None.

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Detailed in the report
Community Safety	None
Equalities	An EQIA will be prepared as part of developing budget proposals for approval.
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	It is a legal requirement to ensure a balanced budget.

Sustainability	The budget is to be set within the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy which is designed to ensure stability and sustainability of budget decisions.
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	Some of the decisions made as part of the budget setting process could have implications for staff.

Financial Outlook for 2016/17 and beyond

7. Budget planning this year is again characterised by uncertainty about Government funding and local government finance generally. Root and branch reform of the funding system continues apace with this being the third year of localisation of business rates and council tax support. The basis of local government funding has radically altered such that Councils' funding depends directly on growth and prosperity in their local economies.
8. Following the announcement of the Autumn Statement on 25 November 2015 and the Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) on 17 December 2015 the Council is able to begin to prepare a budget for 2016/17. The LGFS is subject to consultation which closes on 15 January with final figures being confirmed in February therefore there is a possibility that the announced figures could change.
9. With that caveat in mind, the indications at this stage are that UDC has a stable budget outlook for 2016/17, in which an in-year surplus is forecasted.
10. There is major uncertainty in the five year forecast as the Government has commenced a consultation to radically reform New Homes Bonus (NHB). The proposals are varied and the implications potentially significant. The NHB figure for 2016/17 is confirmed at £4.279m.
11. On 11 January 2016 a Member briefing was held presenting all of the options and implications contained within the consultation document.
12. The consultation closes 15 March 2016 with the outcome expected to be announced during June 2016. Therefore this outlook and the subsequent Medium Term Financial Statement (MTFS) will be based on an assumption of NHB income that is affordable to the Government.
13. A more informed MTFS will be prepared for the September Cabinet meeting.
14. The next item on the agenda tonight is the recommended response to the NHB consultation.
15. This consultation is in line with the advice given to Members in the equivalent of this report in late 2014 when it said

'The format of the scheme in future years will be determined by the result of the general election next year. Terminology being used by the main party's ranges from 'reform' to 'scrapping' there is little or no talk of it staying in the current

format. Whatever the outcome of the election there is a high risk that the amount of funding received by this council will be significantly reduced.'

16. It is therefore prudent for the MTF Reserve to be maintained at the current level as this will most likely be needed to balance the shortfall in Government grant, whilst actions are taken to reduce the overall budget requirement of the council.

Budget Model

17. To inform the financial outlook for UDC, a detailed budget model is used. The following are key assumptions used in the model.

- a) **Gross service expenditure:** Uses the 2015/16 base budget as a starting point and one-off items removed. Assumptions about annual inflation for 2015/16 are used: Staff Pay 1%, Utilities 3%; Contractual indexation 3%; Price Inflation 2%.
- b) **Gross Service Income:** Again uses the 2015/16 base budget as a starting point. Assumed price inflation 2% for fees and charges except where special arrangements apply e.g. car park charges and taxi licences.
- c) **Universal Credit** – assumes that Housing Benefits expenditure and subsidy will start to phase out of the UDC budget in 2016/17 and this process to complete by 2020/21.
- d) **Service demand** – because of growing population and housing numbers, it is prudent to assume greater demand for council services such as refuse & recycling, revenues collection etc. A cumulative figure of £50,000 pa has been used.

£000	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Gross service expenditure	33,648	32,600	30,066	26,683	23,355
Gross service income	-23,833	-22,884	-20,221	-16,592	-13,015
Demand growth	0	50	100	150	200
Net service expenditure	9,815	9,766	9,945	10,241	10,540

e) Corporate items:

- Pension Fund deficit payment – inflationary increase.
- Capital Financing Costs – in line with expected capital expenditure financing requirements.
- Investment income – nominal sum only due to continued low interest rates and prudent investment policy.
- Recharges to HRA – no change in methodology or amount recharged.

£000	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Capital financing costs	2,497	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800
Pension fund - added years	94	102	127	152	577

Recharge to HRA	-1,666	-1,650	-1,650	-1,650	-1,650
Investment Income	-119	-120	-120	-120	-120
Total Corporate Items	806	132	157	182	607

Government Funding Assumptions

- f) **Specific grants:** Assumed no change to PFI, Homelessness and NNDR collection costs funding. Housing Benefits subsidy at 98% of expenditure, phased out from 2016/17. Benefits admin subsidy reduced to reflect onset of Universal Credit
- g) **Localisation of Business Rates** – A review of the Business Rates retention scheme was undertaken during the summer and a much more realistic approach has now been applied. The increased figure for 16/17 compared to future years is because the council has joined the Essex Business Rates Pool. The pool has to be approved by government each year and with 100% Business Rates retention commencing in 2020 there is no indication the pooling scheme will continue beyond 2016/17.

£000	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Business Rates Retention	-3,232	-2,573	-2,528	-2,482	-2,434

- h) **Formula Grant:** The Government has now given clear indication of the removal of formula grant (also known as Revenue Support Grant (RSG)). The grant will be phased out by the end of 2017/18.

£000	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Formula Grant	-684	-251	0	0	0

- i) **New Homes Bonus:** The model shows the announced figure for 2016/17 and then an assumed 'affordable' figure for central government for the remaining years of the plan

£000	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
New Homes Bonus	-4,279	-1,936	-1,936	-1,936	-1,936

Council Tax

- j) The Administration has given informal guidance that UDC's Council Tax should be frozen in 2016/17. The Government announced in the Autumn Statement that the finances are based on an assumption that all councils will increase Council Tax by the maximum amount each year. Therefore the plan assumes a 2% annual increase from 2017/18. The Administration will be looking carefully at the Council's finances as the outcome of the NHB consultation is announced and will take appropriate and responsible decisions depending on the circumstances at the time. Taxbase assumptions are in line with housing growth forecasts and an estimate of LCTS discounts, and additional income arising from reducing discounts on

second homes and empty homes. These assumptions give rise to the forecasts below.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Tax Base	36,463.81	37,386	38,348	39,335	40,349
LCTS discounts	-2,013.06	-2,000	-2,000	-2,000	-2,000
Tax Base (net)	34,450.75	35,386	36,348	37,335	38,349
UDC Band D	£138.74	£141.51	£144.34	£147.23	£150.17
Planning assumptions	Freeze	+2%	+2%	+2%	+2%
Council Tax income	£4.780m	£5.008m	£5.246m	£5.497m	£5.759m

Summary of Budget Model

18. All of the above assumptions produce the following forecasts for the next five years:

	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000
Gross service expenditure	33,648	32,600	30,066	26,683	23,355
Gross service income	-23,833	-22,884	-20,221	-16,592	-13,015
Demand growth	0	50	100	150	200
Net service expenditure	9,815	9,766	9,945	10,241	10,540
Capital financing costs	2,497	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800
Pension fund - added years	94	502	527	552	577
Recharge to HRA	-1,666	-1,650	-1,650	-1,650	-1,650
Investment Income	-119	-120	-120	-120	-120
Total budget	10,621	10,298	10,502	10,823	11,147
Funding					
Business Rates Retention	-4,911	-2,573	-2,528	-2,482	-2,434
Council Tax Freeze Grant	0	0	0	0	0
Collection Fund Balance	-174	0	0	0	0
Section 106 Funding	0	0	0	0	0
Formula Grant	-684	-251	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	-4,279	-1,936	-1,936	-1,936	-1,936
Total Funding	-10,048	-4,760	-4,464	-4,418	-4,370
Net Operating Expenditure	573	5,538	6,038	6,405	6,777
Movement in Reserves	-505	-29	-58	-169	-75
COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT	68	5,509	5,980	6,236	6,702

COUNCIL TAX INCOME	-4,780	-5,008	-5,246	-5,497	-5,759
In year surplus (-) / deficit	-4,712	501	734	739	943

19. The forecasts show:

- An in-year surplus of £4.712m for 2016/17
- An ever increasing deficit in from 2017/18 onwards.

20. Given the level of uncertainty around NHB it is wise to continue to look for efficiencies and savings, along with ways of increasing income, in readiness for challenges the Council may face in the future.

21. The Council is in the process of establishing a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). This is a wholly Council owned company which would look to maximise income from utilising surplus Council assets to provide commercial units and private housing which would be let at market rates. The Articles of Association would enable the vehicle to be the sole external delivery arm of the Council.

22. To establish this business it is likely that the Council will need to allocate between £5m - £7m to fund the initial development and/or purchase of suitable dwellings. The majority of this sum will be generated from the 2016/17 forecast surplus and use of the Strategic Initiatives Fund.

Public Consultation

23. For the previous four years the budget consultation has been based on the key actions contained within the Corporate Plan. However for 2016/17 the approach to this consultation was changed to try to improve the response rate.

24. In addition the council widened the scope of the consultation, using three streams

- a) A telephone survey undertaken by a professional market research company who contacted a profiled sample of Uttlesford residents. The company was commissioned to deliver 500 responses and in fact exceeded that with 533 responses.
- b) Open public consultation using an online questionnaire. Paper copies were also available at council office reception desks. In addition a face to face consultation was also carried out with staff available to answer questions at Great Dunmow Carnival and at Saffron Walden and Thaxted markets. This received 79 responses.
- c) The 450 members of the Uttlesford Citizens Panel. This received 208 responses.

25. This gives a total response of 820 compared to 196 in 2014.

26. The full analysis of the budget consultation is included as Appendix One. This report contains an executive summary, precis of the combined results of all the

survey streams and detailed results from each of the telephone, public and panel consultations. Very briefly, the people of Uttlesford would like their council to concentrate spending on collecting bins, planning how the district develops, sweeping the streets, supporting the elderly, working with police and preventing drugs use. They would rather the council spent less on providing car parks and funding Saffron Walden Museum. For next year they are of the opinion that Council Tax, or at least the Uttlesford portion of it, should remain at the same level.

Key actions and budget strategy for 2016/17

27. The following are the key actions and assumptions that will inform the 2016/17 budget process

- a) To take account of budget consultation results when drawing up budget proposals.
- b) To plan on the basis that the UDC Council Tax will be frozen for 2016/17.
- c) Unless there is a significant change in circumstances, not to require any cuts in services to make financial savings, although efficiency savings will continue to be sought.
- d) To develop the new housing company and other income streams.
- e) Continue to implement the HRA Business Plan.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Changes in circumstances and/or new information becomes available that affects the assumptions in the budget strategy	2 (inherent risk of variability in any budget model)	3 (sums involved are potentially significant)	<p>A detailed risk assessment will be prepared and incorporated with budget approval papers in February.</p> <p>The Working Balance is to be maintained at a minimum safe contingency level.</p> <p>Medium Term Financial Strategy outlines clear criteria for decision making.</p>

1 = Little or no risk or impact

- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.



Appendix one
Uttlesford District Council

Council Spending

A report on the public survey about council spending priorities for the year 2016-17



November 2015



Contents

- 1. Executive summary**
 - Introduction
 - Results summary
 - Results priorities
 - Results priority analysis
- 2. Purpose methodology**
- 3. Survey results, detailed findings**
 - Survey results across all streams
 - Results analysis across all streams
- 4. Appendices –Tables and charts**
 - Open text responses
 - Questionnaire
 - Profiling
 - How rating scores are calculated

1. Executive summary

This is the fifth year that a consultation asking for residents' views on the headline priorities for setting the budget for the approaching financial year has been run. In order to obtain as wide a body of opinion as possible a multi-directional approach has been taken comprising a telephone survey of over 500 residents, online and paper questionnaires and on-the-ground research carried out in a number of the key population centres. A copy of the survey was also included in the summer Citizens Panel questionnaire.

In a departure from the format of previous years, in which questions were based on high level corporate priorities, the consultation on the direction for spending in 2016-17 concentrated on asking for residents' views on their prerogatives for the future resourcing of specific service areas. An additional question was provided for consultees to comment on the level of Council Tax that Uttlesford District Council should be setting in the coming year.



Uttlesford residents' survey 2015

Preparing the council's budget is a process that takes many months - and it can't be done without the input of the district's residents.

This survey gives you the chance to have your say on what should be the priorities for Uttlesford District Council and what we should spend your council tax on. The results of this consultation will help design the budget for April 2016 to March 2017, which councillors will be asked to approve in February next year.

The closing date for this survey is Thursday 24 September 2015 at 5pm

If you have any queries regarding this questionnaire, please contact the Consultation Team at Uttlesford District Council on 01799 510670 or Email: consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk

Please answer the questions below by ticking in the appropriate boxes.

Q1 Below is a list of services Uttlesford District Council has to provide or has to ensure are provided by another organisation. For each service, please indicate whether you consider it to be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority. (Please select one option for each service).

	High Priority	Medium priority	Low priority	No opinion
Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emptying your bins and emptying public litter and dog bins (The town or parish councils in Saffron Walden, Dunmow and Stansted are responsible for public litter bins in their areas)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and keeping district council-owned land tidy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Results summary

The results for each of the different consultation streams – telephone survey, public consultation and Citizens Panel survey – are being reported separately. This report summary records an overview of these three consultative strands.

Responses from panellists have been analysed using a rating system which weights the options selected by residents. Rating is a system particularly recommended by Snap Surveys following the introduction of Version 11 of their software earlier in 2014. This system is used to collate the majority of the council's general survey work throughout the year and was employed on the analysis of the current Council Spending Survey results.

A rating system¹ is an appropriate analysis tool for the Council Spending Survey since the same area of spending might have been chosen by different respondents at a different level of priority; more weight is thus given to that selection if it is selected as the 'Highest Priority' than if the same spending area is still chosen as priority, but at a lower level. Consequently, a fair analysis is achieved by allocating 3 points to each vote for the 'High Priority', 2 points to each vote for the 'Medium Priority' and 1 point to each vote for the 'Low Priority'. Those offering a 'No Opinion' have been attributed a zero score value reflecting their neutral response to the question.

Uttlesford District Council administers a wide range of services. Many of these must be provided either by the council itself or by another organisation. There is also a portfolio of services which are deemed to be non-statutory, in that the council is not required to offer these facilities but may do so to the benefit of the community. For the purposes of the consultation, residents were asked to comment on statutory services and non-statutory services separately. A final and distinct question sought respondents' views on the level of Council Tax charge that should be levied by the district council in the forthcoming financial year.

¹ See Appendix 4 for an explanation of rating system calculations

The combined results across the three survey strands - the telephone survey, public consultation and Citizens Panel survey - are given below:

Results priorities

Statutory Services

Headline	Spending Area – ranked top three priorities
High priority	<p>“Emptying your bins and emptying public litter and dog bins” - (93.78 %)</p> <p>“Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located” - (86.94 %)</p> <p>“Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and keeping district council-owned land tidy” - (86.47 %)</p>

Headline	Spending Area – ranked as ‘low priority’ by the most respondents
Low priority	<p>Running car parks and on-street parking such as residents permit schemes” - (60.63 %)</p>

Non-statutory Services

Headline	Spending Area – ranked top three priorities
High priority	<p>“Helping older/vulnerable people live independently by providing the Lifeline service, through which users can raise an alarm if assistance is required” - (88.63%)</p> <p>“Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe” - (88.01%)</p> <p>“Educating young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol” - (81.58 %)</p>

Headline	Spending Area – ranked as ‘low priority’ by the most respondents
Low priority	“Running Saffron Walden Museum” - (57.75 %)

Council Tax 2016-17

Headline	Council Tax priority
Headline result	“Keep the amount of council tax the same” – (69.09 %)

Results priority analysis

Previous surveys conducted in 2013 for the 2014-15 budget and in 2014 for the 2015-16 budget were conducted using the priorities within the Council’s long term strategy as promoted in the Corporate Plan. It is therefore difficult to make direct comparisons with opinions given by residents in the current consultation where a different baseline has been applied, though some general observations may be made on trends.

Statutory Services Top Three Priorities:

The headline results from the current piece of market research demonstrate that across the three consultative streams respondents manifested a marked preference for supporting spending on “Emptying your bins and emptying public litter and dog bins” with 93.78 % considering this to be a high priority. As one of the principal universal services provided to residents, the collection of waste and recycling represents a consistent concern amongst all consultees. This is broadly in line with the results of the 2015-16 (conducted in 2014) budget survey where the core priority including “maintaining or improving services” was selected as the primary direction of travel for the council’s budgetary provision².

Planning and development formed the headline view for the second highest spending priority. Using the rating system to analyse the results “Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses

² Cf. *Council Spending. Budget Consultation Results*, September 2014

will be located” scored 86.94% support. This result is perhaps indicative of the continuing interest in the planning process and in particular the formulation of the Local Plan. Although not a noted concern in the 2015-16 (conducted in 2014) budget survey, in 2013, an option (rendered as question C in the survey - “Provide affordable housing for local people through a robust Local Plan”) was returned as a joint second highest priority.

“Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and keeping district council-owned land tidy” was selected by just a very slightly reduced number of respondents (86.47%) to come in as the third of the top priorities. Again, this partly reflects a persistent trend in feedback from previous years when caring for the local transport infrastructure formed the headline view for the second highest spending priority.

Respondents were also offered the option to select a “lowest priority” category of spending to consider where the council should be curtailing resources. Here, some 60.63% were of the opinion that “Running car parks and on-street parking such as residents permit schemes” should be an area in which savings might be made.

Non-statutory Services Top Three Priorities:

There are a number of services which are provided by Uttlesford District Council for which there is no statutory requirement. These are offered for the better benefit of the local community.

Within the basket of non-statutory services residents considered that “Helping older/vulnerable people live independently by providing the Lifeline service, through which users can raise an alarm if assistance is required” to be highly important and worthy of future resourcing. This view was supported by an 88.63% majority. The secondary priority - “Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe” (selected by 88.01%) – also reflects a concern with supporting local communities. In previous years this had been covered by the corporate objective towards “Reducing crime and antisocial behaviours in partnership with the police and others”. In the 2015-16 budget survey (conducted in 2014) this was ranked fourth

as the highest priority by those who answered the question. Again in the area of community safety, for 2016-17, 81.58% of people supported the council's work in "Educating young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol" with such events as 'Crucial Crew' and 'Motorwise'.

Within the non-statutory services "Running Saffron Walden Museum" was rated as the lowest priority.

Council Tax spending direction:

Consultees were also asked to indicate their preference reading the future setting of Council Tax for the forthcoming budget period. For 2016-17, 69.09% were of the opinion that there should be no change in the amount of Council Tax levied by the District Council.

2. Purpose methodology

The council is obliged to consult with the residents of the district when setting the budget for the forthcoming year and the results of this consultation will inform the decisions made by officers and councillors when setting spending for the year April 2016 to March 2017.

In a departure from the format of questions employed in previous years, based on high level corporate priorities, the consultation on the direction for spending in 2016-17 concentrated on asking for residents' views on their prerogatives for the future resourcing of specific service areas.

This is the fifth year that a consultation asking for residents' views on the headline priorities for setting the budget for the approaching financial year has been run. For a number of years the consultation had been run via a single survey distributed

via the council's community newsletter, *Uttlesford Life*. For the 2016-17 budget survey a multi-directional approach was taken comprising a telephone survey of over 500 residents, online and paper questionnaires and on-the-ground research undertaken in a number of the key population centres. A copy of the survey was also included in the summer Citizens Panel questionnaire.

The consultation was run over the period 7 to 24 September 2015. Respondents were asked to select their highest, mid-range and lowest spending priorities from a list of 11 statutory and 14 non-statutory service options covering the full range of the council's activities. They were also offered the opportunity to indicate a preference for raising, reducing or maintaining the current level of Council Tax levied by the District Council. For profiling purposes they were also invited to include postcode, gender and age data.

The following consultative methods were used, in all cases the same questions were asked:

- Telephone survey undertaken by a professional market research company, NWA Social and Market Research Ltd on behalf of Uttlesford District Council.
- Open public consultation. The survey was promoted on the council's website from 7 to 24 September via an interactive form using the Snap 11 consultation platform. Paper copies were also distributed to the council's main contact points at the Great Dunmow Library, Thaxted CIC and the CSC in Saffron Walden. A face to face consultation was also carried out with staff on hand to answer questions and to distribute surveys at Great Dunmow Carnival and on Saffron Walden and Thaxted markets.
- The budget 2016-17 questions were also included as part of Uttlesford Voices 11, the half-yearly consultation questionnaire sent out to 450 members of the Uttlesford Citizens Panel.

General promotion was carried out with direct mailings to the members of the Citizens Panel, press releases, exposure via the council's social media channels and prominent half-page advertisements in local papers.

By the close of the consultation period, 533 telephone responses had been registered; 79 submissions had been received from the public; and 208 by members of the Citizens Panel. This represents a significant increase in overall submissions on the previous year when the consultation was available only via *Uttlesford Life* and as an online survey. It should be remembered that not all respondents chose to answer all of the questions and that in a small number cases residents opted to submit a statement rather than selecting any of the stated spending options.

3. Survey results, detailed findings

3.1 Survey results across all streams

The results for each of the different consultation streams – telephone survey, public consultation and Citizens Panel survey – are reported below.

3.1.1 Telephone survey results summary

A telephone survey of 533 residents from across the district was carried out by NWA Social and Market Research Ltd on behalf of Uttlesford District Council

Key results from the survey are as follows:

Statutory Services

Headline	Spending Area – ranked top three priorities
High priority	<p>“Emptying your bins and emptying public litter and dog bins” - (93.75%)</p> <p>“Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located” - (88.19%)</p> <p>“Providing council housing and providing sheltered housing for older people” - (87.94%)</p>

Headline	Spending Area – ranked as ‘low priority’ by the most respondents
Low priority	Running car parks and on-street parking such as residents permit schemes” - (67.75%)

Non-statutory Services

Headline	Spending Area – ranked top three priorities
High priority	“Helping older/vulnerable people live independently by providing the Lifeline service, through which users can raise an alarm if assistance is required” - (91.95%)

	<p>“Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe” - (89.77%)</p> <p>“Educating young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol” - (84.69%)</p>
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Headline	Spending Area – ranked as ‘low priority’ by the most respondents
Low priority	“Running Saffron Walden Museum” - (58.72%)

Council Tax 2016-17

Headline	Council Tax priority
Headline result	“Keep the amount of council tax the same” – (71.19%)

3.1.2. Public Survey

An online interactive consultation was available via the council’s website. Paper copies were also distributed to the authority’s main contact points in Great Dunmow Library, Thaxted CIC and the Saffron Walden CSC where they were available to all visitors. Over 525 copies of the paper survey were distributed at Great Dunmow carnival, Saffron Walden market and Thaxted market. Across all distribution points 77 surveys were submitted.

Key results from the survey are as follows:

Statutory Services

Headline	Spending Area – ranked top three priorities
High priority	<p>“Emptying your bins and emptying public litter and dog bins” - (94.02%)</p> <p>“Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located” - (89.78%)</p> <p>“Providing council housing and providing sheltered housing for older people” - (84.65%)</p>

Headline	Spending Area – ranked as ‘low priority’ by the most respondents
Low priority	Running car parks and on-street parking such as residents permit schemes” - (58.44%)

Non-statutory Services

Headline	Spending Area – ranked top three priorities
High priority	“Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe” - (83.12%)

	<p>“Helping older/vulnerable people live independently by providing the Lifeline service, through which users can raise an alarm if assistance is required” - (80.26%)</p> <p>“Providing the Highway Rangers service which carries out small jobs such as keeping road verges tidy through hedge cutting, mowing and strimming, repainting and repairing road signs” - (76.62 %)</p>
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Headline	Spending Area – ranked as ‘low priority’ by the most respondents
Low priority	“Running Saffron Walden Museum” - (62.04%)

Council Tax 2016-17

Headline	Council Tax priority
Headline result	“Keep the amount of council tax the same” – (60.00%)

3.1.3. Citizens Panel Survey

An online interactive consultation and paper surveys were made available to the 450 registered members of the Uttlesford District Council Citizens Panel. Across all online and paper streams a total of 205 surveys were submitted.

Key results from the survey are as follows:

Statutory Services

Headline	Spending Area – ranked top three priorities
High priority	<p>“Emptying your bins and emptying public litter and dog bins” - (93.79%)</p> <p>“Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and keeping district council-owned land tidy” - (85.78%)</p> <p>“Enforcement work including prosecuting people for not paying council tax or council house rent, benefit fraud, fly-tipping” - (83.08%)</p>

Headline	Spending Area – ranked as ‘low priority’ by the most respondents
Low priority	Running car parks and on-street parking such as residents permit schemes” - (58.58%)

Non-statutory Services

Headline	Spending Area – ranked top three priorities
High priority	<p>“Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe” - (85.26%)</p> <p>“Helping older/vulnerable people live independently by providing the Lifeline service, through which users can raise an alarm if assistance is required” - (83.09%)</p> <p>“Educating young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol” - (76.57 %)</p>

Headline	Spending Area – ranked as ‘low priority’ by the most respondents
Low priority	“Running Saffron Walden Museum” - (53.54%)

Council Tax 2016-17

Headline	Council Tax priority
Headline result	“Keep the amount of council tax the same” – (66.84 %)

3.2. Results analysis across all streams

This analysis comments on whether the responses received from telephone respondents are similar or different to those received via other consultation channels. Results are broadly in line with the views of residents across all three consultation streams with only minor variation in feedback rates against the top statutory and non-statutory priorities. As with the public consultation, emptying bins, planning how the district will develop and providing council housing form the three top priorities for statutory services. Members of the Citizens Panel, by contrast, saw sweeping the streets as one of the main priorities, together with enforcement work. Their weighting of these priorities means that overall support for council housing is eclipsed by considerations for cleaner streets across the district.

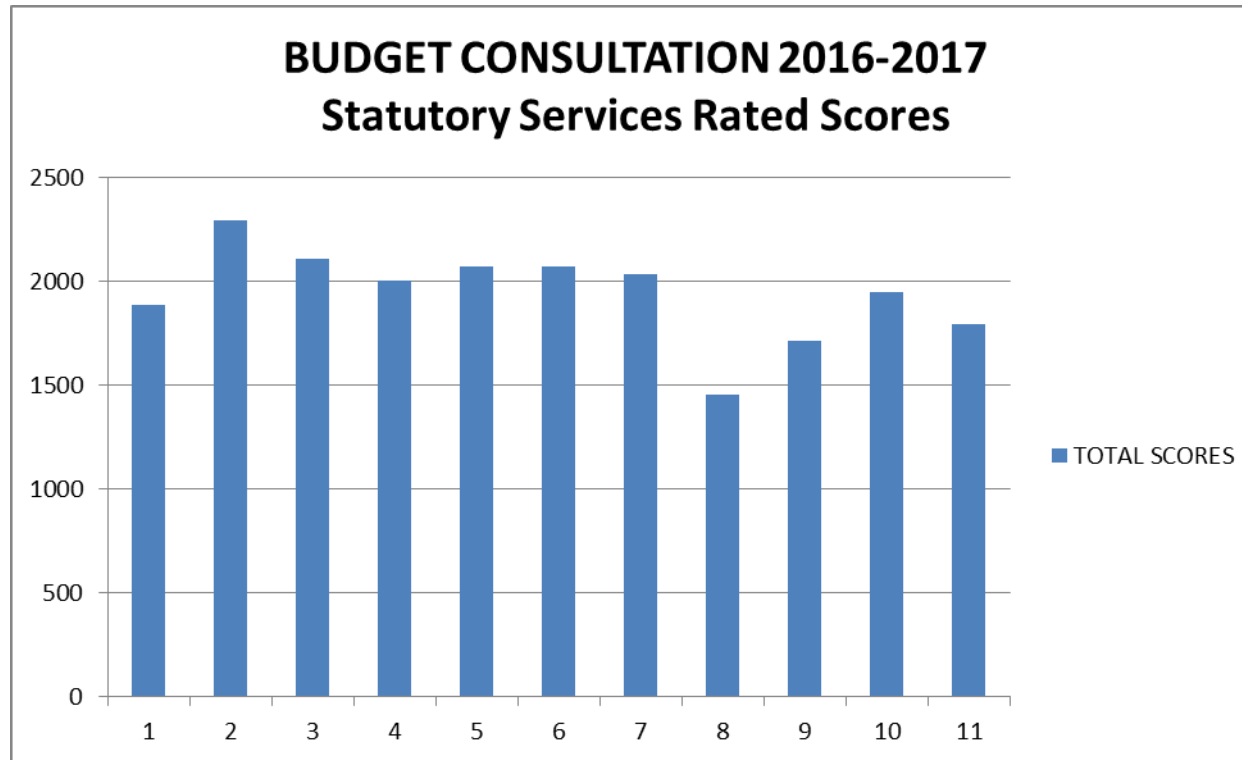
Across the board residents considered running car parks as being the lowest priority form amongst the basket of statutory services.. Response rates varied from 61.75% support for this option from amongst telephone respondents, to 58.44% from the public.

In the overall results, helping older people emerged as the foremost area for non-statutory services. This was ranked in first place by telephone respondents, but as only the second most important service by both the public and panellists. By comparison, members of the Citizens Panel and the public considered working with the police to be of primary importance. In the top three priorities, the public felt that the Highway Ranger service warranted support, whereas telephone interviewees and panellists all agreed that educating young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol should be a well-resourced area of work.

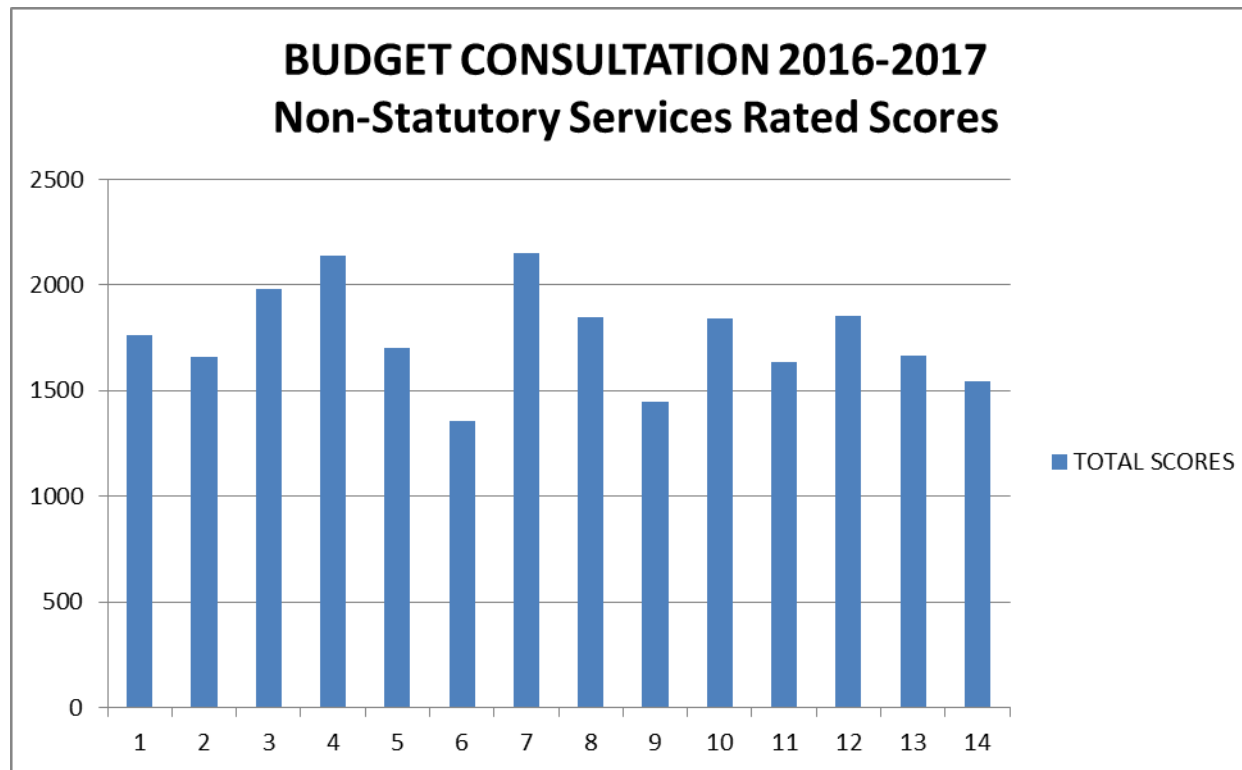
Amongst the non-statutory services there was a universal body of opinion that running Saffron Walden Museum should be considered the lowest priority.

Over the past three years Uttlesford District Council has consistently reduced its share of the council tax bill. Residents were asked for their opinions on the future direction of council tax changing in the district. Universally across all three consultation streams respondents were of the opinion that the District Council's portion of the council tax should remain unchanged in the coming financial year. This opinion was most marked amongst those contacted by telephone with 71.19% of those answering this question opting for a freeze. The public were slightly more reticent with only 60.00% support, whilst amongst members of the Citizens Panel there was support for this course of action by 66.84%. Again amongst panellists, only 16.58% supported an increase in Council Tax with the same percentage, 16.58% viewing a decrease as being preferable. By contrast, 17.89% of telephone respondents supported an increase as against 10.92% who thought a decrease an advisable course of action.

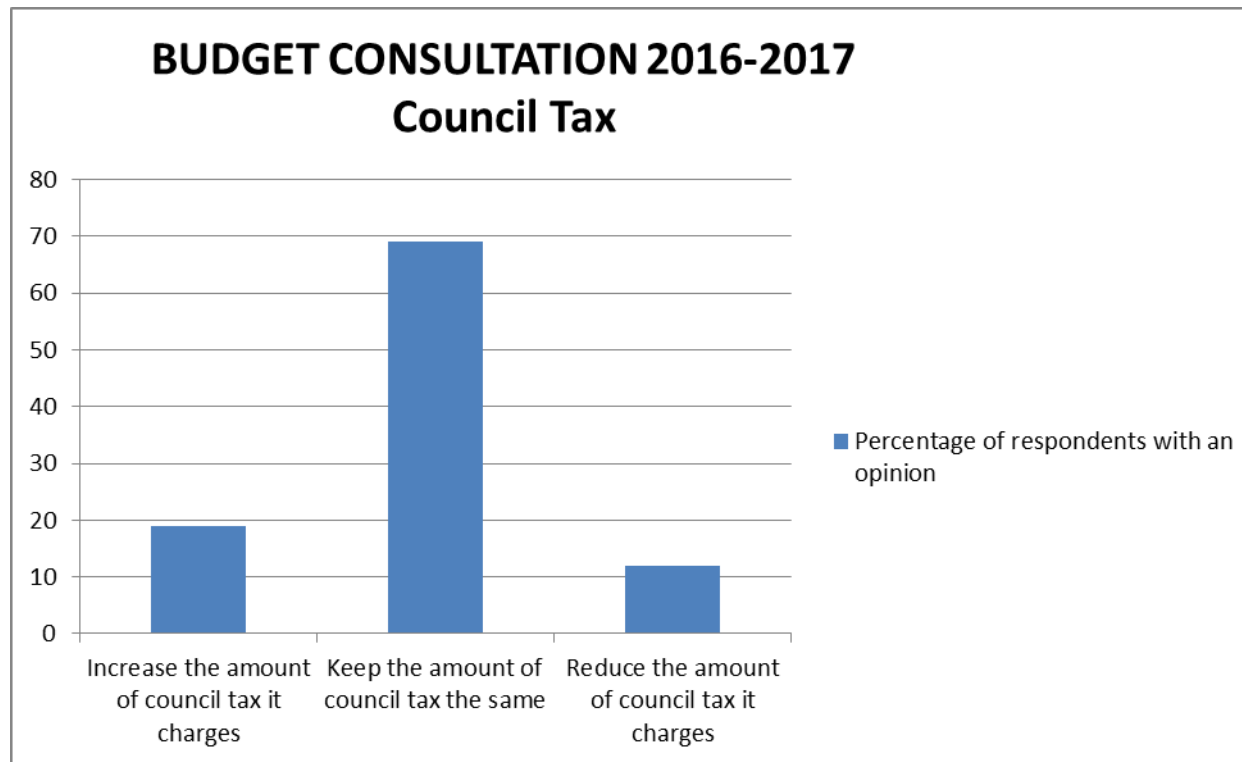
Overall detailed results across all questions



Priority	1-1_Noise	1-2_Bins	1-3_Street_Sweeping	1-4_Planning_Apps	1-5_Development	1-6_Housing	1-7_Enforcement	1-8_Car_Parks	1-9_Tax_Calculation	1-10_Tax_Collection	1-11_License_Inspection
High (response x3)	1098	2028	1524	1392	1590	1524	1428	396	786	1278	945
Medium (response x 2)	718	252	560	550	434	504	552	784	802	602	720
Low (response x1)	72	13	25	59	47	44	56	277	125	68	130
No Opinion (zero score)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	1888	2293	2109	2001	2071	2072	2036	1457	1713	1948	1795
Potential Score	2391	2445	2439	2394	2382	2412	2424	2403	2364	2385	2415
Priority score (percentage)	78.96%	93.78%	86.47%	83.58%	86.94%	85.90%	83.99%	60.63%	72.46%	81.68%	74.33%



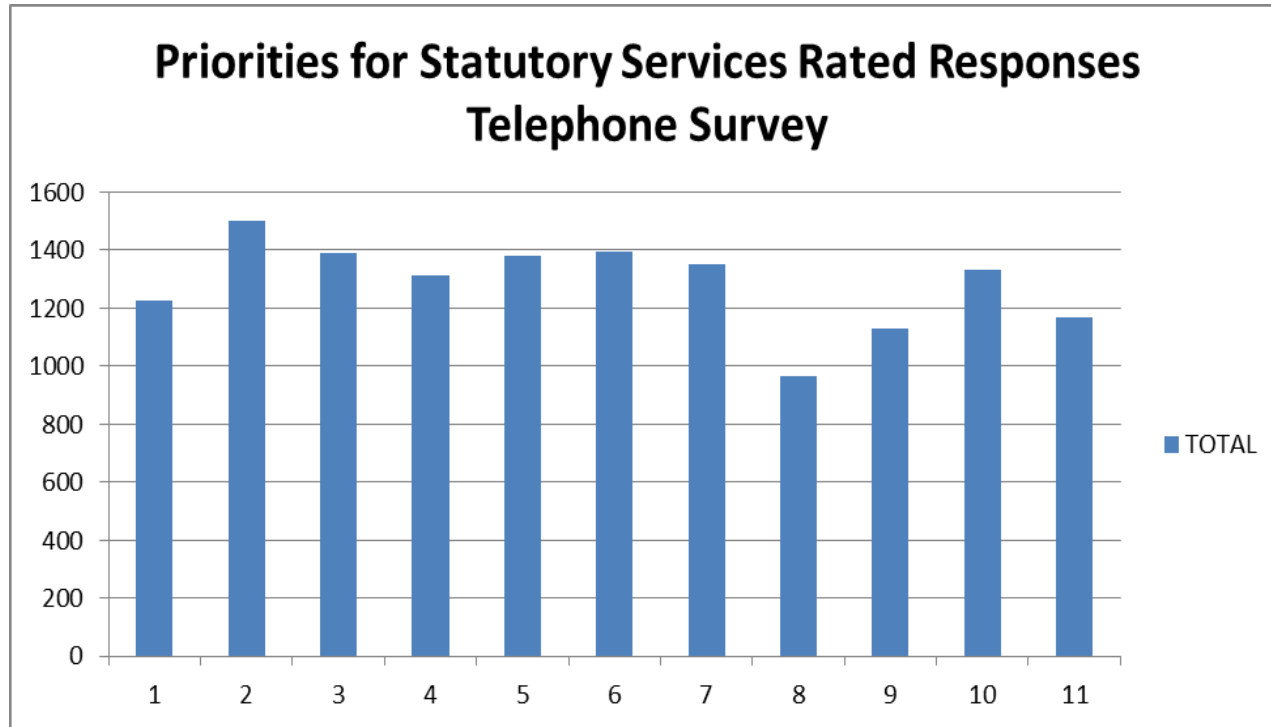
Priority	2-1_Grants	2-2_Health_Classes	2-3_Drug_Education	2-4_Police_Work	2-5_PubHealth_Work	2-6_Museum	2-7_Lifeline_Service	2-8_Day_Centres	2-9_Stray_Animals	2-10_Rejuv_Homes	2-11_Business_Bins	2-12_Highway_Rangers	2-13_Promoting_Businesses	2-14_Listed_Buildings
High (response x3)	852	711	1392	1677	768	336	1689	984	465	1170	720	984	738	531
Medium (response x 2)	780	752	486	418	764	696	432	770	674	520	726	764	748	772
Low (response x1)	131	196	102	41	167	321	30	92	308	154	189	103	180	239
No Opinion (zero score)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Score	1763	1659	1980	2136	1699	1353	2151	1846	1447	1844	1635	1851	1666	1542
Potential Score	2415	2427	2427	2427	2415	2343	2427	2415	2400	2412	2376	2439	2400	2406
Priority score (percentage)	73.00%	68.36%	81.58%	88.01%	70.35%	57.75%	88.63%	76.44%	60.29%	76.45%	68.81%	75.89%	69.42%	64.09%



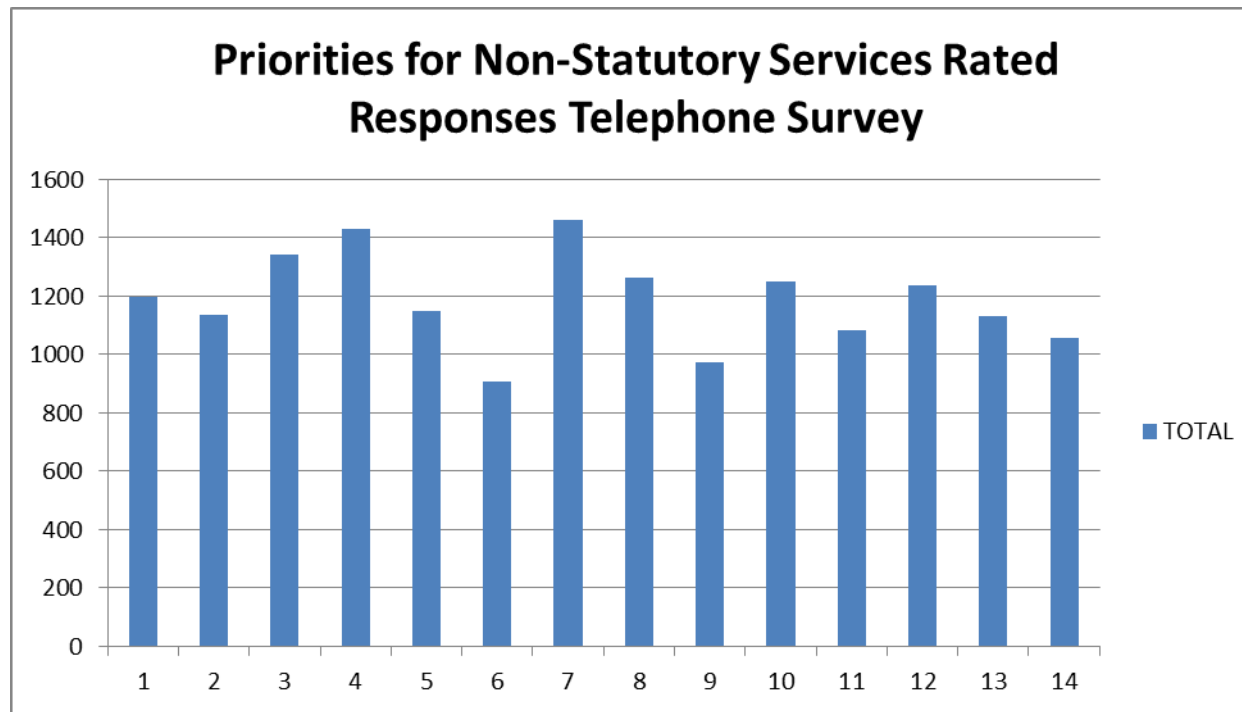
Budget Consultation 2015

Priority		Counts	Percentage of those with an opinion
Increase the amount of council tax it charges		151	18.90%
Keep the amount of council tax the same		552	69.09%
Reduce the amount of council tax it charges		96	12.02%
No opinion		10	
Total		809	
Total excluding "no opinion"		799	

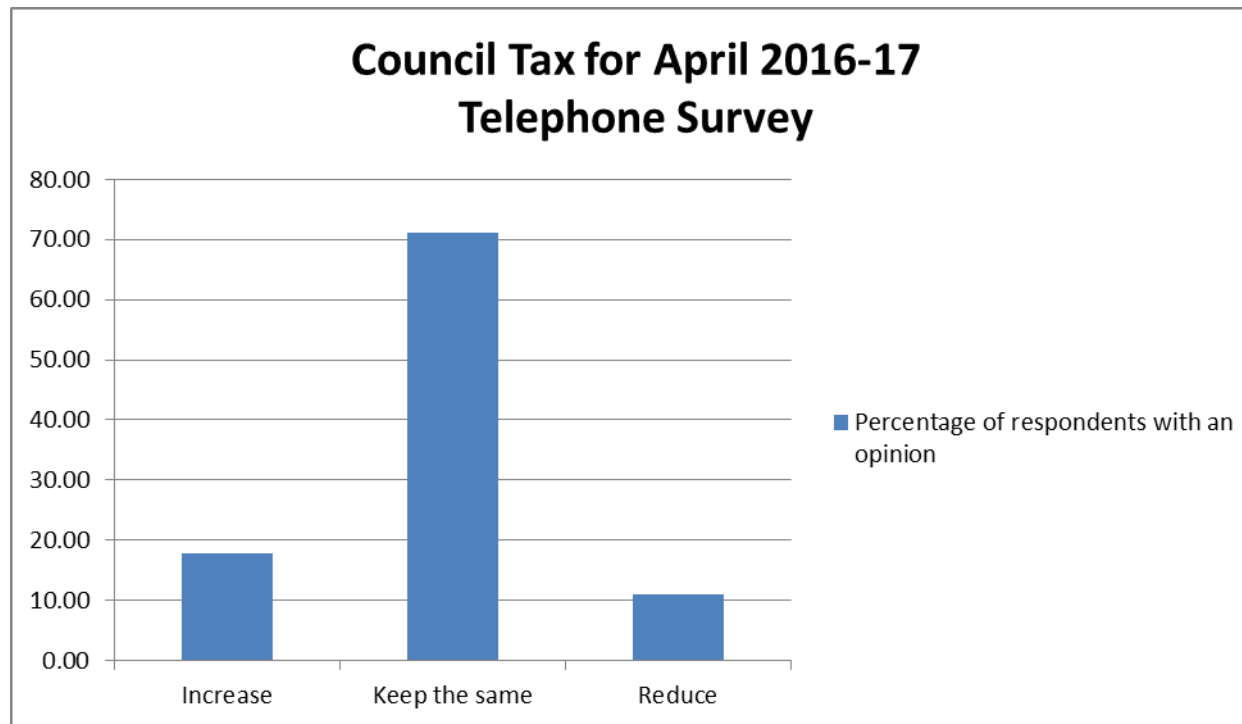
Telephone Survey - detailed results across all questions



Priority	1-1_Noise	1-2_Bins	1-3_Street_Sweeping	1-4_Planning_Apps	1-5_Development	1-6_Housing	1-7_Enforcement	1-8_Car_Parks	1-9_Tax_Calculation	1-10_Tax_Collection	1-11_License_Inspection
High (response x3)	684	1326	1020	936	1092	1056	969	297	537	930	615
Medium (response x 2)	488	164	354	336	262	322	352	494	518	376	470
Low (response x1)	54	9	15	39	27	15	31	176	74	25	83
No Opinion (zero score)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	1226	1499	1389	1311	1381	1393	1352	967	1129	1331	1168
Potential Score	1578	1599	1596	1557	1566	1584	1590	1566	1536	1569	1569
Priority score (percentage)	77.69%	93.75%	87.03%	84.20%	88.19%	87.94%	85.03%	61.75%	73.50%	84.83%	74.44%

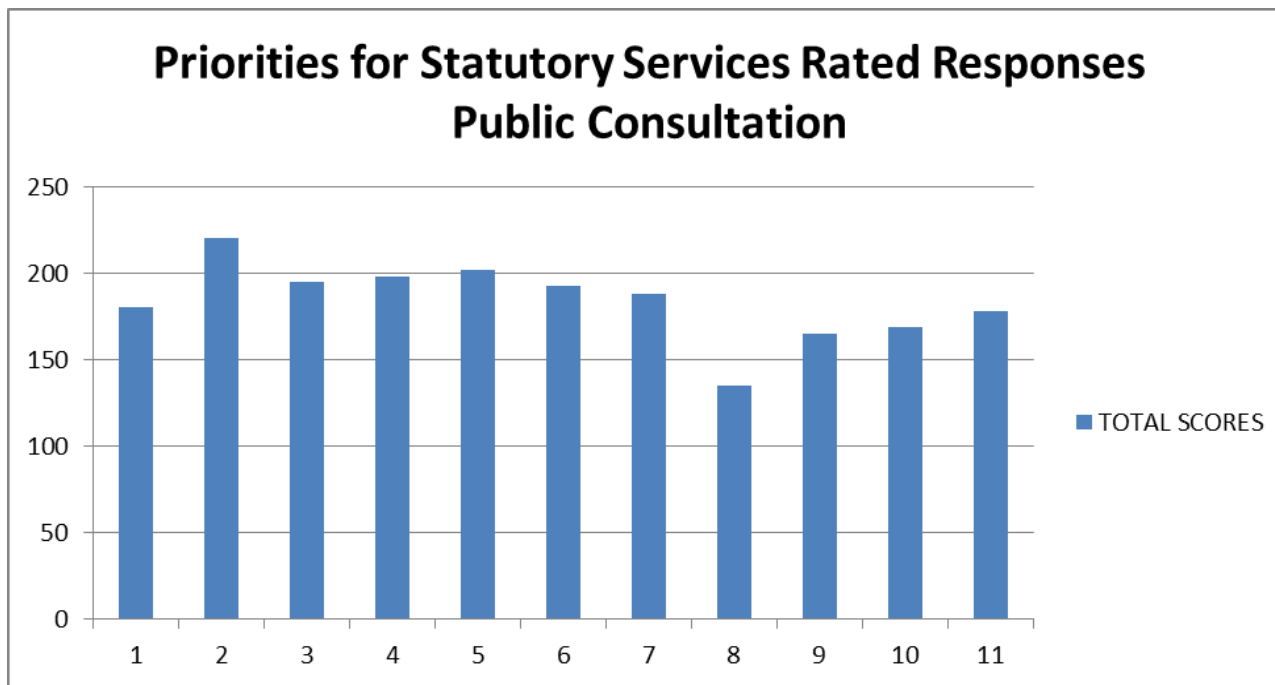


Priority	2-1_Grants	2-2_Health_Classes	2-3_Drug_Education	2-4_Police_Work	2-5_PubHealth_Work	2-6_Museum	2-7_Lifeline_Service	2-8_Day_Centres	2-9_Stray_Animals	2-10_Rejuv_Homes	2-11_Business_Bins	2-12_Highway_Rangers	2-13_Promoting_Businesses	2-14_Listed_Buildings
High (response x3)	630	537	1026	1167	567	228	1236	729	360	837	516	693	540	414
Medium (response x 2)	498	498	262	242	490	482	216	508	416	330	438	482	492	506
Low (response x1)	68	101	56	21	94	199	10	28	198	83	131	60	101	136
No Opinion (zero score)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1196	1136	1344	1430	1151	909	1462	1265	974	1250	1085	1235	1133	1056
Potential Score	1581	1587	1587	1593	1584	1548	1590	1575	1578	1581	1566	1596	1581	1581
Priority score (percentage)	75.65%	71.58%	84.69%	89.77%	72.66%	58.72%	91.95%	80.32%	61.72%	79.06%	69.28%	77.38%	71.66%	66.79%

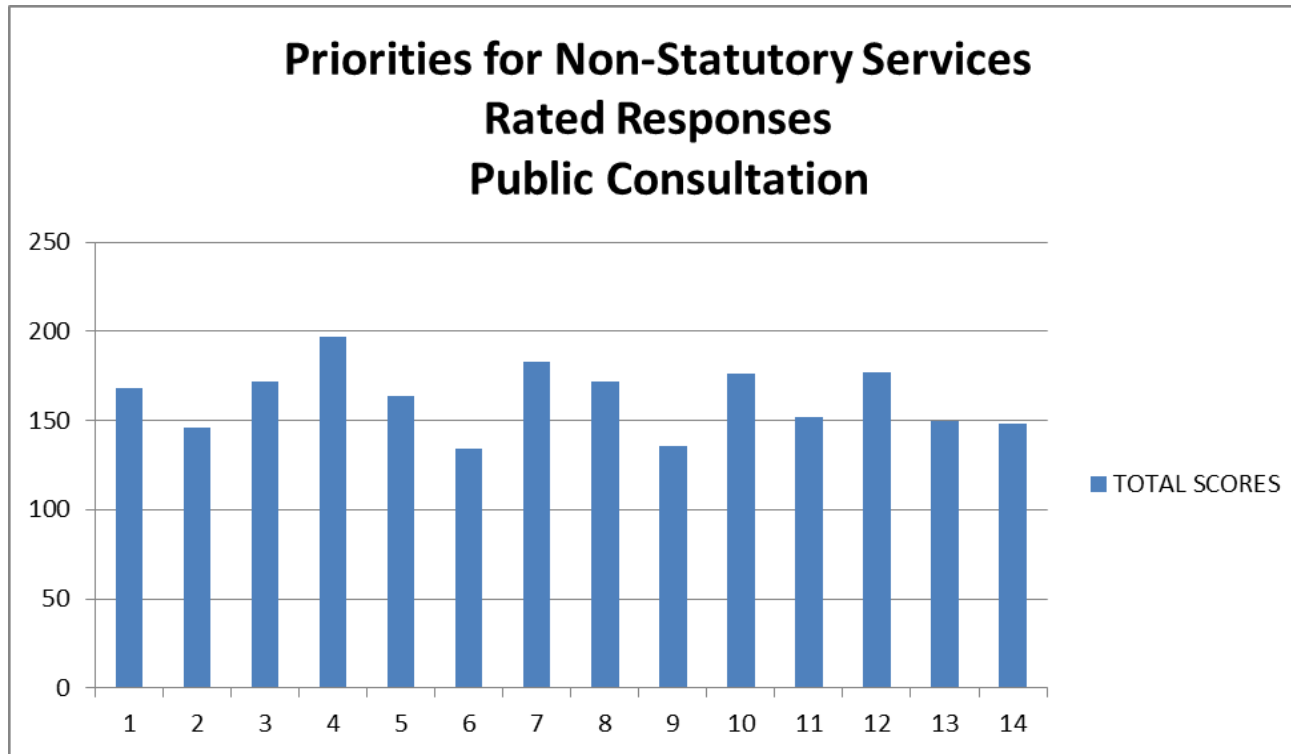


Priority		Counts	Percentage of those with an opinion
Increase the amount of council tax it charges		95	17.89%
Keep the amount of council tax the same		378	71.19%
Reduce the amount of council tax it charges		58	10.92%
No opinion		2	
Total		533	
Total excluding "no opinion"		531	

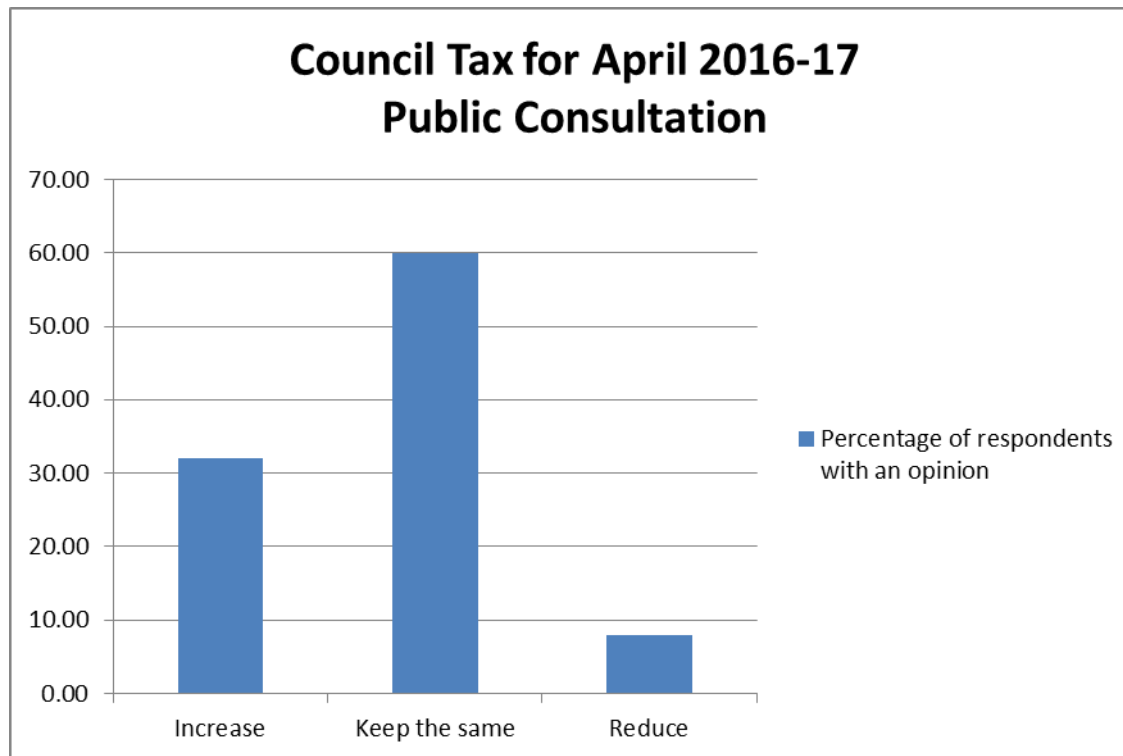
Public Consultation - detailed results across all questions



Priority	1-1_Noise	1-2_Bins	1-3_Street_Sweeping	1-4_Planning_Apps	1-5_Development	1-6_Housing	1-7_Enforcement	1-8_Car_Parks	1-9_Tax_Calculation	1-10_Tax_Collection	1-11_License_Inspection
High (response x3)	120	195	129	138	162	144	117	27	84	93	96
Medium (response x 2)	54	24	64	56	38	42	62	80	64	58	70
Low (response x1)	6	1	2	4	2	7	9	28	17	18	12
No Opinion (zero score)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	180	220	195	198	202	193	188	135	165	169	178
Potential Score	219	234	231	234	225	228	237	231	231	234	237
Priority score (percentage)	82.19%	94.02%	84.42%	84.62%	89.78%	84.65%	79.32%	58.44%	71.43%	72.22%	75.11%

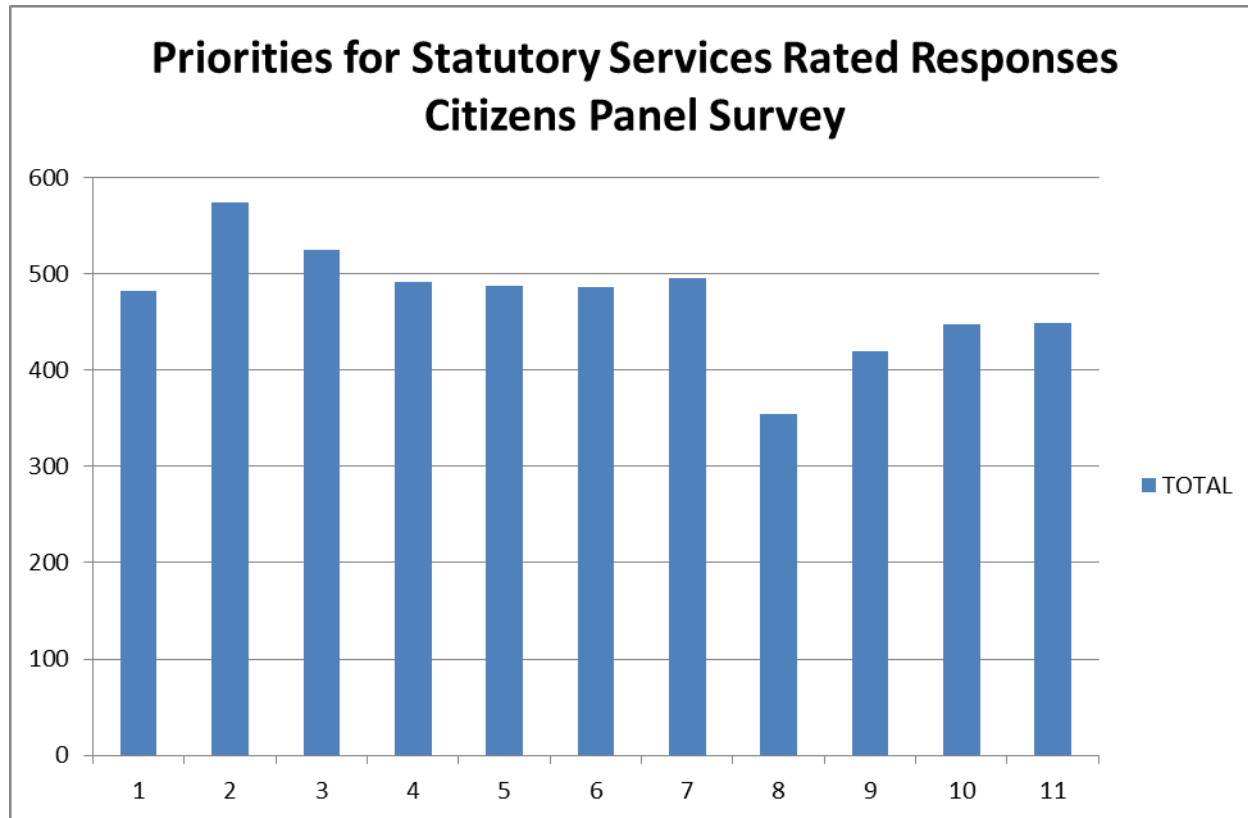


Priority	2-1_Grants	2-2_Health_Classes	2-3_Drug_Education	2-4_Police_Work	2-5_PubHealth_Work	2-6_Museum	2-7_Lifeline_Service	2-8_Day_Centres	2-9_Stray_Animals	2-10_Rejuv_Homes	2-11_Business_Bins	2-12_Highway_Rangers	2-13_Promoting_Businesses	2-14_Listed_Buildings
High (response x3)	87	57	90	138	72	42	114	93	36	114	66	99	72	57
Medium (response x 2)	66	62	68	52	76	68	62	66	76	44	68	68	56	70
Low (response x1)	15	27	14	7	16	24	7	13	24	18	18	10	22	21
No Opinion (zero score)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Score	168	146	172	197	164	134	183	172	136	176	152	177	150	148
Potential Score	231	231	234	237	234	216	228	231	222	234	222	231	222	225
Priority score (percentage)	72.73%	63.20%	73.50%	83.12%	70.09%	62.04%	80.26%	74.46%	61.26%	75.21%	68.47%	76.62%	67.57%	65.78%

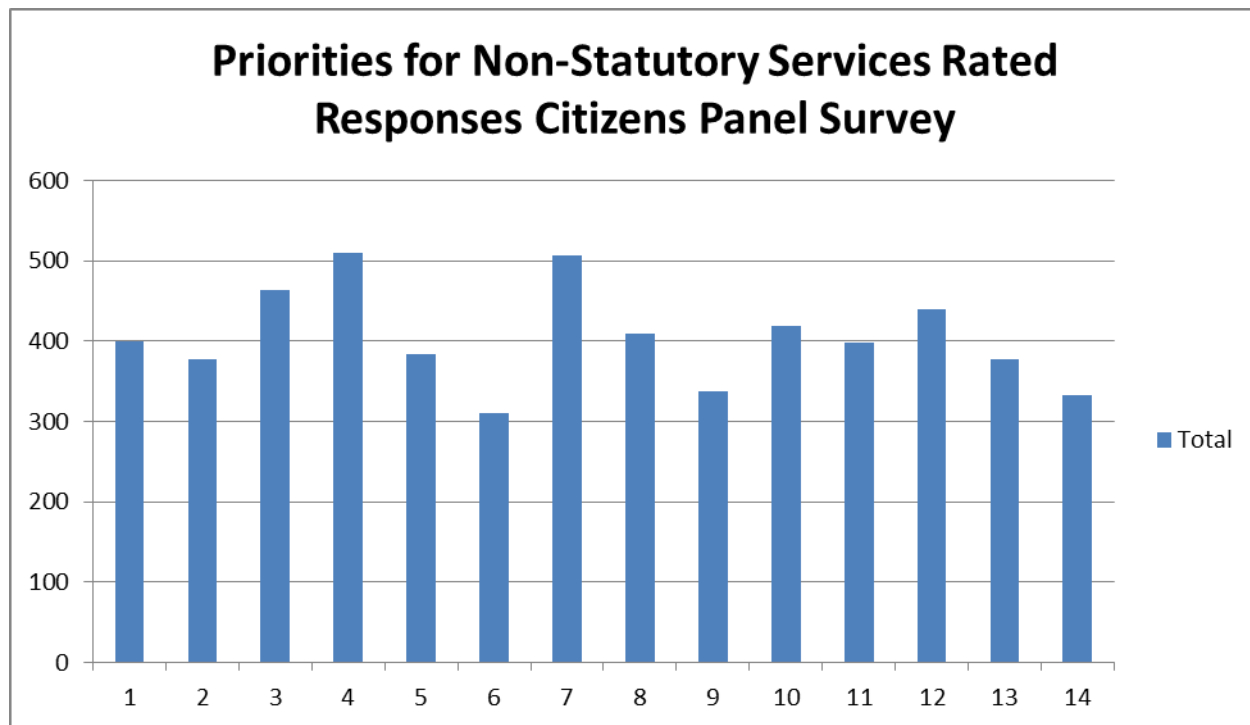


Priority		Counts	Percentage of those with an opinion
Increase the amount of council tax it charges		24	32.00%
Keep the amount of council tax the same		45	60.00%
Reduce the amount of council tax it charges		6	8.00%
No opinion		3	
Total		78	
Total excluding "no opinion"		75	

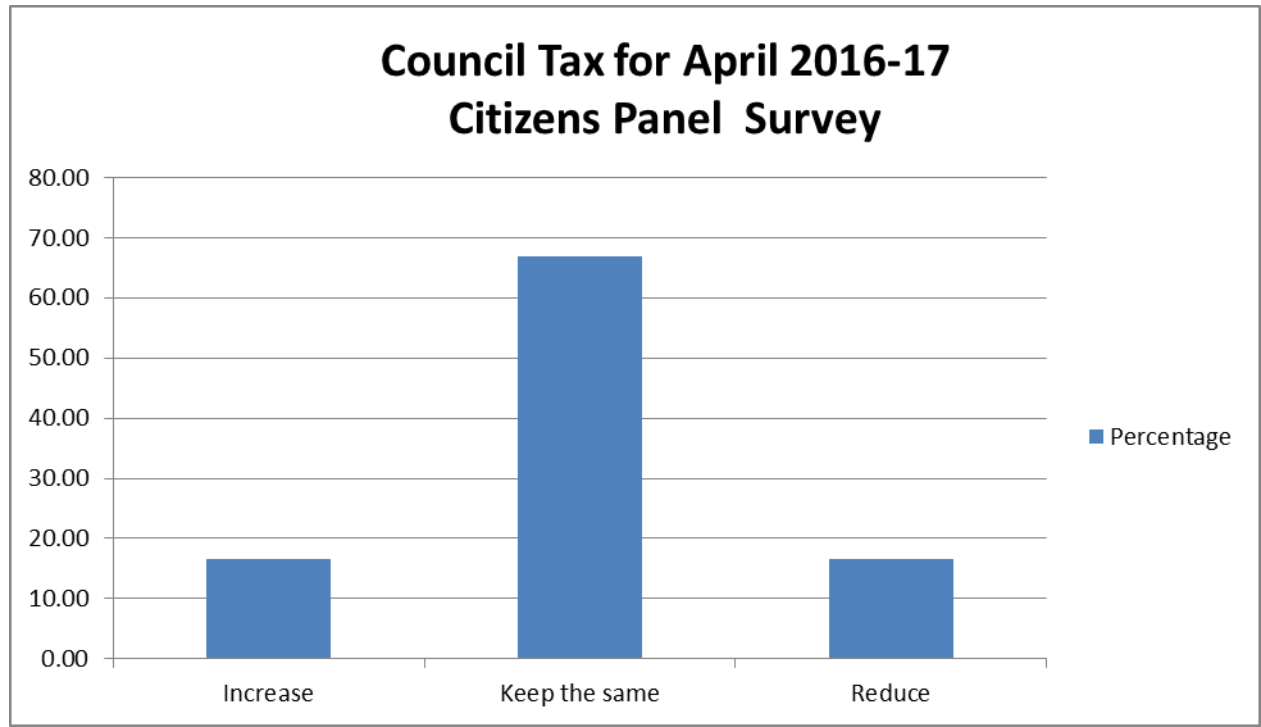
Citizens Panel detailed results across all questions



Priority	1-1_Noise	1-2_Bins	1-3_Street_Sweeping	1-4_Planning_Apps	1-5_Development	1-6_Housing	1-7_Enforcement	1-8_Car_Parks	1-9_Tax_Calculation	1-10_Tax_Collection	1-11_License_Inspection
High (response x3)	294	507	375	318	336	324	342	72	165	255	234
Medium (response x 2)	176	64	142	158	134	140	138	210	220	168	180
Low (response x1)	12	3	8	16	18	22	16	73	34	25	35
No Opinion (zero score)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	482	574	525	492	488	486	496	355	419	448	449
Potential Score	594	612	612	603	591	600	597	606	597	582	609
Priority score (percentage)	81.14%	93.79%	85.78%	81.59%	82.57%	81.00%	83.08%	58.58%	70.18%	76.98%	73.73%



Priority	2-1_Grants	2-2_Health_Classes	2-3_Drug_Education	2-4_Police_Work	2-5_PubHealth_Work	2-6_Museum	2-7_Lifeline_Service	2-8_Day_Centres	2-9_Stray_Animals	2-10_Rejuv_Homes	2-11_Business_Bins	2-12_Highway_Rangers	2-13_Promoting_Businesses	2-14_Listed_Buildings
High (response x3)	135	117	276	372	129	66	339	162	69	219	138	192	123	57
Medium (response x 2)	216	192	156	124	198	146	154	196	182	146	220	214	198	194
Low (response x1)	48	68	32	13	57	98	13	51	86	53	40	33	57	82
No Opinion (zero score)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Score	399	377	464	509	384	310	506	409	337	418	398	439	378	333
Potential Score	603	609	606	597	597	579	609	609	600	597	588	612	597	600
Priority score (percentage)	66.17%	61.90%	76.57%	85.26%	64.32%	53.54%	83.09%	67.16%	56.17%	70.02%	67.69%	71.73%	63.32%	55.50%



Priority		Counts	Percentage of those with an opinion
Increase the amount of council tax it charges		32	16.58%
Keep the amount of council tax the same		129	66.84%
Reduce the amount of council tax it charges		32	16.58%
No opinion		5	
Total		198	
Total excluding "no opinion"		193	

4. Appendices

4.1 Open text responses received

The following open text responses were provided where the respondent did not choose from the listed priorities, or submitted a separate letter/email:

Responses received:

A member of the public

I have just received a phone call from NWA in regards to a survey being conducted on your behalf.

I could not help but notice that there were no questions relating to housing for younger people within the town, but were loads of housing questions in connection with the elderly and people claiming benefits.

I agree that people that need help should get help, but what about younger people who have grown up in the town, do they not deserve housing within Saffron Walden also?

I am a hard working individual who contributes to the council through my taxes, but I will never be able to afford a house here due to the lack of affordable housing for young professionals. This is going to push such individuals out of the town, taking their council tax payments with them.

Can you please tell me what steps are being taken to address this situation.

A member of the public

Q1 (Car Parks...) Need to be able to pay by cheque or cash. Not everyone has computer!

Q2. (Highway Rangers...) Maintain rural pavements.

A member of the public

Q2. (Highway Rangers...) Road signs need cleaning

A member of the public

Q1 (Providing council housing...) Very high priority

A panellist

Section 1) Q3)

Day Centres - important for those who benefit in the town centres but not widespread enough to benefit the rural community where there are no Day Centres and no facilities to get there.

Microchipping - should not be done by the council but should be a legal requirement for the owner to get it done.

Emptying bins for businesses - if they are paying for it they should get the service but what they are paying should cover the service.

Highway Rangers - it seems every time in our parish when they have been asked to do something they can't do it! If evidence had been seen of them doing the work it would be a high priority!

Section 2 Q5)

Animal Warden - Have had dealings and although she would have liked to have helped she couldn't as she didn't get the support from the council. Not her fault at all.

Building control - Do not seem to take any notice of comments made by people affected in the area.

Day Centres - Would be very satisfied if those in rural areas could easily use them.

Housing Benefits - should be reviewed more carefully.

Council Housing Repairs - Totally dissatisfied as know of two elderly tenants who couldn't get anything done but when they passed away it seems that a lot of work has been carried out for the new tenants after they moved in. Also aware of repairs to houses being carried out on properties as a result of children abusing the properties. Believe that the council properties should be inspected periodically with no warning given. Money being spent on properties unnecessarily.

Tenant Liaison - don't understand that when there is a tenancy agreement in place the council do not ensure that it is adhered to.

Leisure Centres - Very dissatisfied as our council tax is spent on them but people in the rural community do not get the same benefit as those living close to them.

4.2 Questionnaire

Questionnaire forms for the telephone, public and Citizens Panel followed an identical format.

The screenshot shows the Uttlesford District Council website navigation. At the top right, there are links for 'Skip Navigation | Home | Login | A to Z of Services | Search | Apply for it | Report it | MyUttlesford'. The main navigation bar includes 'Resident', 'Business', 'Your Council' (highlighted), and 'Pay for it'. Below this is a search box with a 'Go' button. A secondary menu lists 'About the Council', 'Elections and Voting', 'Finance and Accounts', 'Consultation', 'Emergency Planning', and 'Councillors and Committees'. A breadcrumb trail at the bottom reads 'You are in: Your Council > Consultation > Council Spending - have your say!'.

The banner features the Uttlesford District Council logo on the left, which includes the text 'UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL' and 'Be Our Community'. To the right of the logo, the text reads 'Uttlesford District Council citizens Panel - Uttlesford Voices 11' in white text on a dark blue background.

Statutory Services

Q2 Below is a list of services Uttlesford District Council has to provide or has to ensure are provided by another organisation. For each service, please indicate whether you consider it to be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority. (Please select one option for each service).

	High Priority	Medium priority	Low priority	No opinion
Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emptying your bins and emptying public litter and dog bins (The town or parish councils in Saffron Walden, Dunmow and Stansted are responsible for public litter bins in their areas)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and keeping district council-owned land tidy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Council Spending - have your say!

... say on what the council's top spending priorities should be during 2016-17.

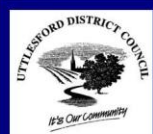
Uttlesford District Council sets a budget to decide how to allocate money to the wide range of services that the council

[Take part in the Uttlesford residents' survey here >>](#)

... es of the survey will be available from the Council Offices in Saffron Walden, the district council's customer service ... mow Library and the Thaxted Community Information Centre, or residents can request a copy by calling 01799 ... emailing consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk

... any queries regarding this questionnaire, please contact the Consultation Team at Uttlesford District Council on 01799 ... email: consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk

... is page | [Print this page](#) | [Subscribe to this page](#) | [Bookmark and Share](#)



Council Spending - have your say!

Uttlesford residents' survey 2015

Preparing the council's budget is a process that takes many months - and it can't be done without the input of the district's residents.

This survey gives you the chance to have your say on what should be the priorities for Uttlesford District Council and what we should spend your council tax on. The results of this consultation will help design the budget for April 2016 to March 2017, which councillors will be asked to approve in February next year.

**The closing date for this survey is
Thursday 24 September 2015 at 5pm**

If you have any queries regarding this questionnaire, please contact the Consultation Team at Uttlesford District Council on 01799 510670 or Email: consultation@uttlesford.gov.uk

Please answer the questions below by ticking in the appropriate boxes.

Q1 Below is a list of services Uttlesford District Council has to provide or has to ensure are provided by another organisation. For each service, please indicate whether you consider it to be a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority. (Please select one option for each service).

	High Priority	Medium priority	Low priority	No opinion
Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emptying your bins and emptying public litter and dog bins (The town or parish councils in Saffron Walden, Dunmow and Stansted are responsible for public litter bins in their areas)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sweeping the streets, litter picking, clearing up fly-tipping and keeping district council-owned land tidy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	High Priority	Medium priority	Low priority	No opinion
Deciding planning applications and making sure new buildings and extensions are built according to approved plans and following building regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning how the district will develop in the coming decades, including where new housing and businesses will be located	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing council housing and providing sheltered housing for older people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enforcement work including prosecuting people for not paying council tax or council house rent, benefit fraud, fly-tipping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Running car parks and on-street parking such as residents permit schemes (this is done in partnership with other councils)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working out how much people should receive in housing and council tax benefits and paying those benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collecting council tax for Essex County Council, the police, the fire service, town or parish councils and Uttlesford District Council and collecting business rates on behalf of the government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inspecting restaurants, pubs and other businesses which sell food and issuing various licences such as those needed for pubs, off-licenses, taxis, kennels and tattoo parlours and making sure people do not break the terms of those licences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q2 Below is a list of services Uttlesford District Council currently provides, but does not have to. For each service please indicate whether you think it is a high priority, a medium priority or a low priority. (Please select one option for each service).

	High Priority	Medium priority	Low priority	No opinion
Giving grants to voluntary and community organisations such as the Citizens Advice, Uttlesford Community Travel and the Council for Voluntary Service Uttlesford	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Running health and fitness classes, particularly to help people with medical conditions and/or older people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educating young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with the police and other organisations to keep Uttlesford safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with public health bodies on projects to keep people in the district healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Running Saffron Walden Museum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helping older/vulnerable people live independently by providing the Lifeline service, through which users can raise an alarm if assistance is required	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	High Priority	Medium priority	Low priority	No opinion
Supporting the volunteer committees who run day centres in Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet, Takeley and Thaxted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collecting stray animals, microchipping dogs and cats and dealing with complaints from the public about pet and animal-related issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bringing privately-owned homes that have been empty for a long time back into use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emptying bins for businesses (businesses are charged for this service)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing the Highway Rangers service which carries out small jobs such as keeping road verges tidy through hedge cutting, mowing and strimming, repainting and repairing road signs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promoting and supporting businesses in the area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Giving advice on work to listed buildings and work to protected trees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q3 **Just under 10 per cent of the council tax you pay goes to Uttlesford District Council, with about 70 per cent going to Essex County Council and the remainder to the police, the fire authority and your town or parish council.**

Over the last three years the district council has cut its share of council tax by a total of 6 per cent and froze the amount in the two years before that.

For next year (April 2016 to March 2017), do you think Uttlesford District Council should (please select one option only):

Increase the amount of council tax it charges

Keep the amount of council tax the same

Reduce the amount of council tax it charges

No opinion

Thank you for your responses.

It is hoped that a cross-section of Uttlesford residents will participate in this survey. To determine how effectively we have reached different age groups, genders and electoral wards within our district, it would greatly assist us in collating the responses to this questionnaire if you would answer a few questions on the following page.

Please proceed to the next page...

For office use only

About you:

You can choose not to answer any questions in this section. However, all the answers to the survey and the 'About You' section are anonymous and it is not possible for us to identify individuals from their response.

Please enter your postcode:

What is your gender?

Male Female

What is your age?

<input type="checkbox"/> 16-19	<input type="checkbox"/> 45-54
<input type="checkbox"/> 20-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 55-64
<input type="checkbox"/> 25-34	<input type="checkbox"/> 65+
<input type="checkbox"/> 35-44	

Please submit your questionnaire by 5pm, Thursday 24 September 2015

**Thank you for taking part in our survey.
Now please return your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided.**

For office use only:

Scanning Calibration

4.3 Profiling

Telephone survey

Gender

Male	256
Female	273
Not provided	4

Age

Age Range	
18 to 29 years	71
30 to 49 years	190
50 to 74 years	209
75 years and over	62
Not provided	1

Public consultation

Gender

Counts			Percents		
What is your gender?			What is your gender?		
Base		75	Base		100.00%
What is your gender?	Male	32	What is your gender?	Male	42.67%
	Female	43		Female	57.33%

Age

Counts			Percents		
What is your age?			What is your age?		
Base		77	Base		100.00%
What is your age?	16-19	1	What is your age?	16-19	1.30%
	20-24	1		20-24	1.30%
	25-34	7		25-34	9.09%

	35-44	6		35-44	7.79%
	45-54	19		45-54	24.68%
	55-64	9		55-64	11.69%
	65+	35		65+	45.45%

Citizens Panel

The Citizens Panel is profiled so as to represent in microcosm then macrocosm of the district for all of the principal protected characteristics and as recorded by the Census 2011 and subsequent revised datasets.

4.4 How rating scores are calculated

Rating is a system recommended by Snap, the company who provide the consultation system used to collate and make the analysis of the 2016-2017 Budget Consultation results.

To establish the overall views of all those participating in this survey, priority selections made by respondents are given extra weight if chosen as a 'high priority' compared with those chosen as 'low priority'. This is called 'rating' and is achieved by attributing a weighted score (+3 for 'high priority', +2 for 'medium priority', +1 for 'low priority' and 0 for 'no opinion') to the number of responses received.

The overall score for each priority is therefore calculated to exclude all respondents who did not express an opinion.

For example:

Regarding priorities for Statutory Services, 'Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health issues':

366 respondents selected this as 'high priority' = $(+3) \times 363 = 1098$

359 selected 'medium priority' = $(+2) \times 359 = 718$

72 selected 'low priority' = $(+1) \times 72 = 72$

14 had 'no opinion' = $0 \times 14 = 0$

So, the overall rating for this priority

$$1098 + 718 + 72 + 0 = 1888$$

To achieve a maximum 100%, all respondents with an opinion would need to have selected a priority as 'high priority' resulting in a rating score of $(+3) \times (\text{number of respondents})$ i.e. $(+3) \times (366 + 359 + 72)$ or 2391

The overall priority score, expressed as a percentage, for "Dealing with noise complaints, air and water quality issues and other environmental health issues" is therefore $1888/2391 = 78.96\%$

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 12 January 2016

10

Title: New Homes Bonus Consultation Response

Portfolio Holders: Councillor Howell

Item for decision

Summary

1. On 17 December 2015 the provisional 2016/17 local government finance settlement was announced.
2. As part of this there was also an announcement of possible changes to New Homes Bonus (NHB) from 2017/18. The Government commenced a consultation which runs until 15 March 2016 with the outcome being announced in June 2016.
3. This report sets out the recommended response to the consultation. The paragraphs giving context to the questions are taken directly from the consultation document.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet approves the response to the consultation as set out in this report.

Financial Implications

4. None at present. However the outcome of the consultation could have significant financial consequences for the Council.

Background Papers

None.

Impact

Communication/ Consultation	A Member briefing was held on 11 January 2016 setting out the potential implications of the proposals
Community Safety	No specific implications
Equalities	No specific implications
Health and Safety	No specific implications
Human Rights	No specific implications
Legal implications	No specific implications
Sustainability	No specific implications
Ward-specific impacts	No specific implications
Workforce/Workplace	Depending upon the outcome there is the potential for the need to review service delivery in light of reduced funding.

Background

5. The New Homes Bonus reflects the crucial role local authorities play in supporting housing and wider economic growth by rewarding additional homes built in their areas. The Bonus rewards local authorities for each additional new build and conversion using the national average council tax in each band. Long-term empty properties brought back into use are also included and there is a premium for affordable homes. Each year's grant is paid for 6 years. The Bonus is not ring-fenced. In two-tier areas payments are split between both county (20%) and district (80%) authorities. From 2016-17, allocations to local authorities made under the Bonus are expected to total in the region of £1.4 billion to £1.5 billion annually. Since its introduction, payments to local authorities have totalled just under £3.4 billion reflecting over 700,000 new homes and conversions and over 100,000 empty homes brought back into use. Of the total, over 200,000 were affordable homes.
6. Proposed changes to the distribution of the Bonus should be seen in the context of the outcome of the 2015 Spending Review. This confirmed the intention to move to full retention of business rates by 2020 and a preferred option for savings of at least £800 million, which can be used for social care. Savings in the overall cost of the Bonus will be redistributed with the local government settlement, in particular to support authorities with specific pressures, such as in adult social care budget.
7. Although the Government is not proposing changes for 2016-17 payments, reductions in payments will be necessary in order to stay within this new funding envelope from 2017-18 onwards. This can be combined with reforms to both sharpen its incentive effect and free up resources for authorities with particular pressures, such as adult social care.
8. The consultation consists of 14 questions split over a number of areas.

Payment years

9. At present, each year's allocation under the Bonus leads to "legacy" payments over 6 years. Originally, this was to compensate for reductions in settlement allocations which reflected growth in an authority's Council Tax base. However, since 2011, the decision has been taken not to reduce allocations in this way.

Question 1

What are your views on moving from 6 years of payments under the Bonus to 4 years, with an interim period for 5 year payments?

Response to Question 1

Under these proposals the Council would lose a considerable amount of money which is an integral part of the Council's budget and is used for the benefit of the community. Any loss of these funds could have a significant detrimental impact on the Council's ability to provide important services.

Question 2

Should the number of years of payments under the Bonus be reduced further to 3 or 2 years?

Response to Question 2

No. Under these proposals the Council would lose a considerable amount of money which is an integral part of the Council's budget and is used for the benefit of the community. Any loss of these funds could have a significant detrimental impact on the Council's ability to provide important services. Reducing further the number of years in the scheme would have a much bigger impact on the range and quality of services the Council could provide.

Bonus allocation calculator

10. Bonus allocations are currently calculated using the council tax returns. The net increases in numbers of homes falling within each council tax band are established by comparing successive years' returns. The numbers of homes falling outside band D are then scaled to reflect their equivalence to band D. The resulting total figure is then applied to the national average band D council tax bill for the year to generate the total allocation for that year. There are some concerns that this approach, by favouring higher band homes above those falling into lower bands, could result in some skewing of allocations in favour of areas with higher house prices although this may be partially mitigated by the use of an average value for the band D council tax bill

Question 3

Should the Government continue to use this approach? If not, what alternatives would work better?

Response to Question 3

This seems to be the simplest and fairest way to allocate the bonus.

Local Plan, appeals and deadweight

11. At present, the Bonus rewards all net additions to housing in an area regardless of the path leading to their construction. It is possible to argue that the Bonus is, therefore, insufficiently focused on really strongly performing authorities. In order to counteract these effects, the Government has considered three ways in which the incentive impact of the Bonus could be improved:

- a) withholding new Bonus allocations in areas where no Local Plan has been produced in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
- b) reducing payments for homes built on appeal; and
- c) only making payments for delivery above a baseline representing deadweight (development that would have been delivered regardless of incentive).

Question 4

Do you agree that local authorities should lose their Bonus allocation in the years during which their Local Plan has not been submitted? If not, what alternative arrangement should be in place?

Response to Question 4

The worked example is unclear. If the Council failed to submit a Local Plan in 2017/18 the impact would be in 2018/19 not as shown in the example. DCLG have set a target date of Local Plan submission by 31 March 2017. No penalties should arise before that date. We understand that a Local Plan is important and the Council is committed to producing a new Local Plan. However, the Council has taken a positive attitude to addressing the requirements of the NPPF and has been positively engaging with developers to bring forward potential schemes, considering them positively and in many cases approving them. To penalise this authority who has taken this positive stance to the delivery of new housing by approving acceptable schemes (totalling some 3800 since 2012) outside existing development limits is unfair.

12. To be effective, Local Plans need to be kept up-to-date. Policies will age at different rates depending on local circumstances, and local planning authorities should review the relevance of the Local Plan at regular intervals to assess whether some or all of it may need updating. Most Local Plans are likely to require updating in whole or in part at least every five years. The Government has, therefore, considered an alternative approach to abatement based on a banded mechanism whereby authorities would lose a fixed percentage of the Bonus they would otherwise have received based on the date of their adopted Local Plan.

Question 5

Is there merit in a mechanism for abatement which reflects the date of the adopted plan?

Response to Question 5

No. While the Council agrees that it is right, and important, to keep Local Plans up to date setting an arbitrary date of 5 years is inappropriate. Local Plans (as required by the NPPF) have to have at least a 15 year horizon. Plans and policies need to be reviewed to ensure they are up to date but policies become out of date at differing times not to some arbitrary limit.

13. Currently, where a development is granted planning permission on appeal, overturning the original decision made by a local planning authority (or in place of a decision by the authority in the case of appeals against non-determination), councils receive the same reward as when development takes place that the local planning authority has permitted. This means that Bonus payments do not always reflect positive decisions to allow development, and nor do they reflect the additional costs and delays for applicants arising as a result of the appeal process. The Government is, therefore, proposing to reduce new in-year allocations payments to individual authorities where residential development is allowed on appeal.

Question 6

Do you agree to this mechanism for reflecting homes only allowed on appeal in Bonus payments?

Response to Question 6

No. If this were to be introduced it should be over and above a certain number as proposed for deadweight in questions 9 and 10. This would be on the assumption that there will always be some cases won at appeal regardless of the Local Plan or Bonus. Should the appeal be for a significant number of homes, applying the penalty immediately would be over penalising as, in reality, housing delivery for the site will occur over a much longer period of time. There should be no retrospective element to this proposal and it should only apply to local authority decisions made after the date of the consultation results announcement. Any change should ensure the in-year minimum is zero i.e. an authority cannot be in a position of negative subsidy.

Question 7

Do you agree that New Homes Bonus payments should be reduced by 50%, or 100%, where homes are allowed on appeal? If not, what other adjustment would you propose, and why?

Response to Question 7

No. If this were to be introduced it should be over and above a certain number as proposed for deadweight in questions 9 and 10. The percentage of NHB lost should be no more than 50%

Question 8

Do you agree that reductions should be based on the national average Band D council tax? If this were to change (see question 3) should the new model also be adopted for this purpose?

Response to Question 8

Yes

14. The Bonus is currently paid on all new housing regardless of whether or not it would have been built without an incentive. Removing this deadweight from the calculation of the Bonus would allow payments to be more focused on local authorities demonstrating a stronger than average commitment to growth.

Question 9

Do you agree that setting a national baseline offers the best incentive effect for the Bonus?

Response to Question 9

No. The best incentive is to continue to award Bonus on all new homes. A national baseline would be an arbitrary decision and would not be based on evidence. If this idea of deadweight were to be introduced it should be aligned to the 'windfall allowance' that is tested as part of the Local Plan process.

Question 10

Do you agree that the right level for the baseline is 0.25%?

Response to Question 10

No. The best incentive is to continue to award Bonus on all new homes. A national baseline would be an arbitrary decision and would not be based on evidence. If this idea of deadweight were to be introduced it should be aligned to the 'windfall allowance' that is tested as part of the Local Plan process. Under this proposal the deadweight for Uttlesford would be approximately 90 units whereas the tested 'windfall allowance' is 50.

Question 11

Do you agree that adjustments to the baseline should be used to reflect significant and unexpected housing growth? If not, what other mechanism could be used to ensure that the costs of the Bonus stay within the funding envelope and ensure that we have the necessary resources for adult social care?

Response to Question 11

If there is a finite pot of money the average council tax multiplier should be reduced. Increasing the baseline would be arbitrary.

National parks, development corporations and county councils

15. National Park Authorities (and the Broads Authority) are responsible for decisions on planning applications in their areas, and for producing a Local Plan; whereas New Homes Bonus payments are made to the relevant district and county councils. This reflects the fact that local authorities are responsible for many of the services that would be affected by increased population in their areas. The original scheme design for the New Homes Bonus did, however, make clear that billing authorities were expected to discuss with National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority the use of Bonus receipts in their areas.

Question 12

Do you agree that the same adjustments as elsewhere should apply in areas covered by National Parks, the Broads Authority and development corporations?

Response to Question 12

Yes. All bodies should be treated the same.

16. Government has also considered the position of county councils in two tier areas, who receive 20% of Bonus payments, but are not the planning authority for decisions involving residential development.

Question 13

Do you agree that county councils should not be exempted from adjustments to the Bonus payments?

Response to Question 13

Yes. County councils are tied to and therefore part of the process as they are directly responsible for highways, education and flood prevention

Protecting individual local authorities

17. In proposing the reforms set out in this consultation, Government has sought to ensure that impacts strike the right balance between rewarding local authorities who are truly open to housing growth in their areas and the provision of sufficient resources, when taken with those provided under the wider local government settlement, to meet local needs. It is possible, however, that some local authorities might be particularly adversely affected by the changes which Government is proposing. Whilst this might reflect unwillingness to support and encourage housing growth in their areas, it might also suggest factors which are outside that local authority's control. Government would, therefore, welcome views on whether there is merit in some form of mechanism to protect local authorities who are particularly adversely affected by the reforms proposed in this consultation paper.

Question 14

What are your views on whether there is merit in considering protection for those who may face an adverse impact from these proposals?

Response to Question 14

There is merit in considering protection however in the event of a smaller total funding envelope it is likely that most authorities will face an adverse impact. The calculation should be based on revised allocation as a percentage of expected, with protection for those incurring the biggest percentage decrease.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The outcome of the consultation is such that it has significant financial consequences for the Council	4 (The Government will introduce at least some changes)	3 (Any change will have a significant impact on the finances of the Council)	Respond to the consultation and prepare plans for change whilst ensuring sufficient reserves exist to smooth the change process

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 12 January 2016

11

Title: HRA Business Plan 2016 – 2046

Author: Julie Redfern – Housing Portfolio Holder

Key decision: Yes

Summary

1. The 30 year HRA Business Plan has been reviewed and updated to reflect the current regulatory and economic climate, and builds on the 2015-16 HRA budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Recommendations

2. That Cabinet agrees the adoption of the HRA Business Plan 2016 - 46 as recommended by the Housing Board

Financial Implications

3. The Financial implications are contained within the body of the report.
4. Regular review of the HRA Business Plan is essential to ensure short, medium and long term viability of the plan.

Background Papers

5. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.
 - HRA Business Plan 2012
 - MTFS
 - HRA Revenue and Capital programme 2015 - 2045

6.

Communication/Consultation	Members, tenants, all partner agencies and public consultation via the website
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	Equality impact assessment has been completed on the HRA business plan
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A

Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	Housing, Planning, Environmental Health

Situation

7. The updated HRA business plan has been developed from the previous business plan approved in 2012. It was originally proposed to update the Business Plan in 2017 however the Housing Board agreed that the document should be re-written earlier as major changes have occurred since 2012 in relation to assumptions within the original Business Plan.
8. The updated business plan reflects current thinking about areas such as general inflation, national rental policy, Right-to-Buy (RTB) sales, works cost inflation, and interest rates.
9. These have potential to impact the Council's major investment plans, particularly the development of new homes, improvement of its sheltered housing and other planned maintenance programmes.
10. In both the Welfare Reform & Housing Bills there have been a number of proposals and statements which could also have a significant impact on the Council's HRA, both immediately and in the longer term.
11. Whilst much of the detail and legislation is yet to be finalised, officers have been working to try and estimate some of the impact on the Business Plan and what actions are needed in terms of mitigation and reviewing assumptions within the Business Plan.
12. A summary of the Government's policy changes potential impact on the HRA are as follows:
13. **Reductions in social rents** – The government will reduce rents in social housing by 1% for the next 4 years to reduce their housing benefit expenditure, and that this will apply to local authorities as well as housing associations.
14. The Council's current 30 year business plan for the HRA is predicated on annual income rises of CPI + 1% so this shift could have a potentially large impact on rental income and therefore the ability of the council to continue to invest in stock and projects identified in the HRA business plan. The assumed reduction of 1% on rents for this period will result in a rental base that will be in the region of at least 12% lower in 2019-20 than anticipated.
15. There is currently insufficient detail to model the impact with any certainty. For example it is not clear whether the 1% reduction includes supported housing. If the reduction was applied on all current rents this could have a

cumulative impact of at least £1.8m by 2018/19 compared with existing business plan assumptions. Over the life of the business plan losses will amount to £14.9m.

16. **Lifetime tenancies** - The government has again indicated that it will look to review the use of lifetime tenancies. No further information was presented.
17. **Enforced Sales of Voids** - The Housing Bill confirmed the Queen's Speech announcement that Right to Buy would be introduced to tenants in Housing Association properties, with replacement housing funded from 'expensive' local authority properties as they fall void. Under proposed regional figures to identify such stock at least 45% of the council's properties will fall into this definition. It seems likely that regional figures will be adjusted and therefore the business plan has not factored in any potential impact of this policy until further details are known. The business plan will need to be reviewed if threshold house values remain at a regional level and are not determined at a more local level.
18. **'Pay to Stay'** – The government announced plans to enforce market or near market rents on tenants with household income above £30k in this area. The additional rent raised by councils will be passed to the government and used towards national deficit reduction. The mechanism for introducing this policy is unclear and the government has said it will consult on the proposals along with setting out the detail. The impact is potentially large. There will be an administrative burden in monitoring incomes. If rents treble for tenants with incomes above £30k in many cases rent will become unaffordable. If they then vacate the property there is the further implication that the property may become void and have to be sold as part of the announcements relating to the expansion of RTB to Housing Associations. The Government estimates that 9% of tenants nationally will be affected – this would be around 250 tenants in Uttlesford.
19. **Other pressures on the HRA Business Plan:** The introduction of further welfare reforms will mean that additional resources are required to provide advice and support to tenants including help with budgeting and access to banking, and help in understanding responsibility for rent payments and other bills.
20. There will be further pressure on the HRA with potential Supporting People funding cuts. Essex CC has agreed support funding cuts for older peoples services over the next 2 years. This will be covered in a separate report to Cabinet.
21. It should be noted that inflation on contracts will continue through the period of rent reductions which places further pressure on the HRA.
22. An updated version of the HRA business plan model has been produced which uses the current budgets for 2015/16 and also the five year medium term forecast for projecting expenditure and income forward whilst adding general RPI (inflation) increases. It takes into account all estimated

investment, repairs and management costs required over the next 30 years, assuming compliance with national rent policy, and taking account of a continued high level of sales under the Right-to-Buy scheme.

23. The plan assumes for a modest development programme from 2021. If RTB sales continue to escalate beyond those estimated in the business plan additional finances will be required to ensure the 1 for 1 replacement programme can be achieved. No allowance has been made in the business plan for larger building or re-furbishing projects beyond 2021. If members wish to see a continuation of the re-development projects beyond 2021 options to finance these projects will need to be explored.

Summary

24. The business plan provides the framework within which the council would expect future budgets to be set, subject to changes in underlying assumptions and/or government or council policy, and gives an indication of the level of resources likely to be available to deliver new initiatives, build new housing, regenerate estates and potentially repay debt, should this be felt to be an appropriate course of action

25. Based on current financial assumptions the business plan demonstrates that expenditure proposals can be met. These include:

- The management and maintenance of the stock
- Payment of debt
- Investment in the stock
- Delivery of regeneration and new affordable housing
- Re-modelling of sheltered schemes

Risk Analysis

26.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
HRA Debt Settlement could be re-opened by Government	2 Possibility if council's do not demonstrate that they are delivering improvements	3 less financial resources	The Council has processes in place to manage the demands of local and national housing agendas
Higher construction costs than estimated	3 Construction costs escalating in the region	3 Schemes become unviable	Value management to be undertaken throughout design process
The Council approves plans which are not	3 uncertainty around the continuing rise	3 schemes become unviable	Officers use medium and long-term modelling (up to 30

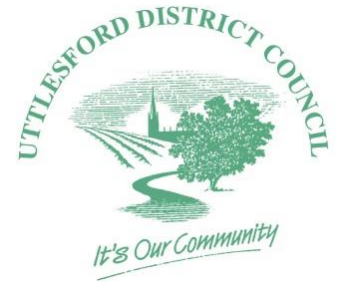
sustainable into the future, leading to increasing problems in balancing budgets	in contactor/ construction costs		years) for HRA, to ensure decisions are made in the knowledge of long-term deliverability issues / implications
Rent and service charge arrears increase and bad debt rises, as a direct result of the Welfare Benefit Reforms	2 Introduction of Universal Credit will have an impact on rent collection	3 Income needs to be maintained to ensure schemes are delivered	Increased resources identified for income management. Performance closely monitored to allow further positive action if required
Enforced sales of voids	2 Government proposal – though it seems likely that regional threshold values may be adjusted	4 At least 45% of the council's properties will fall into this definition. If regional threshold values do not change, and the council is forced to sell properties when they become void this will clearly impact significantly on the viability of the Business Plan	Lobby Government to adjust regional figures The business plan will need to be reviewed if threshold values are not determined at a more local level
Introduction of Pay to Stay	2 Government proposal	3 High cost of administration Increase in arrears Increase in RTB	Increased resources will need to be identified to administer the scheme

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.



UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

2016 – 2046

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Foreword from Housing Portfolio Holder

I am delighted to introduce this business plan, which sets out our ambitions for the future of council housing in Uttlesford. The plan sets out our scope for investment in new and improved homes; benefitting local people and the local economy.

This is the first revision of our five-year plan since the replacement, in 2012, of the housing subsidy system with 'self-financing' arrangements for local authorities with retained housing stock.

Despite borrowing more than £88 million, the council is now in a much stronger position than under the previous arrangements and, as this plan describes, we can look forward to significant investment in new and improved housing to help meet the current and anticipated future needs of the district.

We have already successfully delivered 21 new council homes for rent. These new homes, which complement the communities in which they sit, are a taste of things to come: they are attractive, well designed and constructed.

In scaling up the investment in our housing and new homes we are carefully considering our options: how best to improve our existing stock; what to build and where. These deliberations are intended to ensure that the best possible outcomes are achieved from our investments.

The future of council housing in Uttlesford is looking a good deal better and will play a continuing and important role in meeting the needs of local people; now and for generations to come.

Cllr Julie Redfern
Housing Portfolio Holder Uttlesford District Council

Executive Summary

This Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan demonstrates how investment in housing assets will be utilised to deliver Uttlesford District Council's overall Corporate Plan and strategic housing priorities and the significant contribution that this investment will make to support the delivery of wider economic and environmental priorities.

Since self-financing was introduced in 2012 the council has been able to retain its rental income in full, creating new opportunities that are contributing to the economic vitality of the district and improving the health and wellbeing of communities.

A number of financial assumptions, including interest rates, rent setting, void rates, bad debt levels and repair costs have been used in the Business Plan financial model. These and other assumptions will be kept under review to ensure that the Business Plan remains a robust tool in the delivery of the council's priorities.

An HRA investment programme has been developed based on these financial assumptions. Alongside investment in existing stock and new housing, a range of actions are planned to deliver value for money service improvements.

This review of the HRA Business Plan demonstrates that it remains viable over the 30 years even with the latest rent policy modelled. Viability is judged in that the capital expenditure can be maintained, the HRA does not fall into deficit and that the debt cap is not breached.

Introduction

The first Business Plan for the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) under self-financing was published in April 2012. The Business Plan set out how the Council intended to manage, maintain and invest in its housing and deliver services to its tenants and leaseholders. The document has been reviewed annually and where necessary future projections amended in the light of changing circumstances.

Major changes have occurred since 2012 in relation to assumptions within the original Business Plan, including the impact of changes to rent calculations, the level of Right to Buy (RTB) sales, welfare reforms and trends in inflation. These have potential to impact the Council's major investment plans, particularly the development of new homes, improvement of its sheltered housing and other planned maintenance programmes. It was originally proposed to update the Business Plan in 2017 however in September 2014 the Housing Board agreed that the document should be updated in 2015 to address these major changes.

This updated Business Plan covers the 30-year period 2016 to 2046. The plan contains an investment programme, formulated on a 5 year and a 30 year basis, reflecting the Government's requirement for a longer term planning cycle. The 30 year projections are based on the most up to date information available. Current stock condition data has been built into the model on which the projections have

been based. With the comprehensive information available, the 2016 Business Plan will be a key element in informing the future direction of the Housing Service by:

- examining the current position and the Council's performance as landlord
- estimating the money that that will be needed over the next 30 years to manage the housing stock and ensure that it is properly maintained
- setting out a 5 year plan for capital investment and maintenance
- setting out a 5 year plan for service development and improvements
- identifying options for additional investment as resources become available immediately and throughout the lifetime of the plan

This Business Plan also reports on achievements since the 2012 Business Plan was adopted and sets updated key priorities. It is primarily concerned with the Authority's landlord role and should be read in conjunction with the Council's Housing Strategy which has a wider cross tenure strategic purpose and establishes objectives for meeting housing need in Uttlesford in the coming years.

Progress with implementing the key objectives from the 2012 HRA Business Plan

The 2012 HRA Business Plan included key objectives and an action plan to achieve them. Significant progress has been made in a number of areas, while in others implementation is still in progress.

Key achievements include:

- Successfully delivered 21 new council homes for rent through the following schemes:
 - Holloway Crescent
 - Mead Court (Phase I)
- Reviewed opportunities for delivery of further regeneration and new build including exploration of alternative delivery models
 - Mead Court (Phase II) - construction of 16 properties. On site and progressing well
 - Catons Lane, Saffron Walden - construction of 6 properties. On site and progressing well
 - Hatherley Court, Saffron Walden – planning permission for construction of 4 new flats and remodelling of existing sheltered scheme. Start on site programmed for January 2016

- Reynolds Court, Newport – planning permission for redevelopment of sheltered scheme to provide 41 flats. Start on site programmed for January 2016
- Delivered one of the largest stock investment programmes in the council's history. Since April 2012 capital investment of £15m has been delivered which includes expenditure on:
 - 296 new kitchens
 - 210 new bathrooms
 - 905 replacement boilers
 - 1542 electrical rewires
- Agreed a revised lettable standard for the council's housing to ensure consistent standards are achieved for all maintenance contracts, including works to vacant homes
- Obtained significant external funding (£½ million) towards the costs of energy efficiency measures to council properties, work included:
 - Installing external wall insulation to 158 properties
 - Installing 845 new front doors
 - Installing new energy efficient communal boilers at all sheltered schemes
- Upgraded 6 sheltered housing schemes with the provision of 'internet lounges'
- Delivered service improvements including:
 - Re-structured housing property services department - 98% of repair request now dealt with as 'first time fix'
 - Produced new tenants handbook
 - Produced repairs booklet for tenants
 - Implemented annual tenancy inspections
 - Procured housing repairs contractor
- Completed a comprehensive review of the Allocations Policy which resulted in a number of changes including increasing the time that housing applicants have to be living in the District to go on the Housing Register
- Reviewed and updated the council's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedures that established a corporate approach to implementing the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Developed a downsizing / decant policy that explains the level of compensation that will be paid to tenants when they are decanted. The policy also details the payments that will be made to tenants who decide to downsize from a property that is larger than their needs to one of a more suitable size as defined in the Council's Allocation Policy

- Developed a Void Management Policy. This policy outlines how the council intends to provide high quality homes and sustainable lettings by delivering a cost efficient void management service
- Developed a Tenancy Strategy that enabled fixed term tenancies to be offered to meet an identified need and make better use of the asset
- Introduced an in-house Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme
- Converted 8 extra temporary accommodation units from within council stock
- Set up a tenant regulatory panel and delivered a comprehensive co-regulatory framework. Supported the Panel to complete its first review of the void property process which resulted in a number of recommendations being implemented, including a proposal to create a new role of Voids Administrator to co-ordinate the void process. Continuing to support the panel's ongoing programme of reviews
- Re-launched the tenant participation service under the 'Get Involved' banner

Background Information

The Housing Service

The Housing Service provides management and maintenance for just under 3,000 homes, within the HRA. Equally it performs the statutory duties in relation to advice and homelessness. There is around 80 staff delivering the housing service. The roles are diverse and include sheltered housing officers and maintenance operatives as well as office based staff and staff with technical roles. There are few problems with recruitment and retention, although there can be difficulties in recruiting to specialist roles such as development officers.

Housing staff attend courses to ensure their knowledge in the housing field is current and that best practice is always used. Staff are also encouraged to study for professional qualifications, including both day release and distant learning.

UPerform, the Council's appraisal scheme, identifies the training needs of staff and the division has its own training budget to meet identified needs. In addition all staff have access to 'Learning Pool' an interactive learning system.

Self-financing

In April 2012, the Localism Act 2011 introduced a new financial regime for local authority housing. A new self-financing system replaced the previous subsidy system, giving Council's more freedom to borrow money and spend the income they receive from rents.

The new system required local authorities to take on a one off debt. Uttlesford District Council made a substantial single payment of £88.407 million to the Government, which it financed with loans from the Public Works Loans Board.

An effective Business Plan has become crucial since the introduction of the self-financing system.

Housing Revenue Account

The Council manages its properties and landlord services through its business plan and Housing Asset Management and Development Strategy. The finances for both are managed through the HRA.

The HRA is a 'ring-fenced' account. As such, it cannot receive any financial assistance from the General Fund or the Council Tax payer. It is imperative, therefore, that the HRA can fully meet its statutory and Business Plan ambitions from the rental income it receives from the housing stock and from other qualifying income, such as capital receipts arising from the sale of HRA assets.

Self-financing introduced new opportunities for the Council's housing service but also increased its exposure to risks. It is therefore critical that the HRA continues to be managed on sound business principles

Debt Cap

The government has imposed a limit on the amount of money the Council can borrow, and reserves the right to reopen the settlement in the event of major changes in housing policy. The borrowing limit constrains the ability of the Council to consider major regeneration and new build projects financed from this HRA business plan. If the borrowing limit is relaxed, as a result of government decisions in future spending reviews, this would increase borrowing capacity and enable a wider range of options to be considered.

Housing Reform

As well as self-financing the Government also introduced a range of reforms to the way social housing is delivered. These include giving greater flexibility to social landlords to determine the types of tenancies they grant to new tenants. The council has implemented a new Tenancy Policy which enables lifetime tenancies to be offered where this is needed, but also gives the flexibility to set shorter tenancy periods where that makes more sense. The rights of existing secure and assured tenants are protected.

Councils have become the housing provider for those who are most vulnerable and judged to be in greatest need. As a result of this changing profile of council tenants the council has to recognise and react to the implications this has for service provision.

Consultation

The Council will continue to monitor, review and develop the business plan in consultation with all stakeholders.

To ensure that the Business Plan is developed in an effective and inclusive way regular reviews and updates are taken to the Housing Board. This group is made up of tenant representatives, members and key officers from the Housing, Planning and Finance Departments. The board plays an important part in the development of the plan and will continue to play an important part in monitoring progress of the action plan.

Tenants and leaseholders are able to comment on and suggest changes to the Council's strategic ambitions through regular consultations. They are also encouraged to submit ideas and priorities for the housing service.

Strategic Priorities

Links to other documents

The business plan links in and draws upon wider regional and national priorities as well as the key priorities within the council's Corporate Plan and the council's key strategies.

Corporate Plan

The business plan priorities will be closely aligned with the Council's corporate priorities. As the major provider of social housing in the area the Council has a key role to play in supporting the Council's strategic objectives and priorities which are:

- Remain a **low tax** Council
- Continue to listen and respond to our communities so we stay focused on our customers' needs and the delivery of **high quality** key services that matter
- We will have shared the benefits of growth with our communities in a **responsible** way that protects and enhances our environment
- Delivering **thriving communities**

Housing Strategy

The council's Housing Strategy 2016 – 2021 sets out how the council wants to improve both the quality of accommodation and lives of people who live in the district by:

1. Increasing housing supply across all tenures
2. Helping people to live independently
3. Ensuring decent, safe and healthy homes
4. Creating sustainable communities

The Housing Strategy is complemented by the council's Tenancy Strategy and Housing Allocation scheme which ensure that the council meets housing need, appropriately allocates tenancies, provides tenancy options and promotes mobility.

Homelessness Strategy

The Homelessness Strategy sets out how the council will try to prevent and tackle homelessness in the district by:

1. Preventing homelessness by providing a first class housing advice service to clients in all housing tenures and by sustaining tenancies
2. Providing good quality suitable temporary accommodation and work towards the ending the use of bed and breakfast even in an emergency
3. Engaging with the private rented sector to improve access to accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
4. Improving the Health and Wellbeing of homeless people

Housing Asset Management and Development Strategy

Key priorities of the Housing Asset Management and Development Strategy are to ensure that:

1. Existing housing stock meets needs and achieves decent homes standards
2. The housing stock and other housing assets continue to generate an acceptable level of income
3. The council creates sustainable affordable housing both now and into the future

This Business Plan aims to detail what needs to be done to realise these overall objectives and identify how the council can maintain its housing assets to an agreed standard and continuously improve people's living environment.

HRA Business Plan Key Priorities

The purpose of the business plan is to demonstrate that the council can maintain its housing assets, and deliver the levels of service, home and neighbourhood improvements. It is first and foremost a financial document, which determines how the council will meet the needs of present and future tenants, demonstrating that Government and local targets can be achieved and ensuring the long-term viability of the stock.

The keys priorities of the Business Plan have been developed having regard to the council's Corporate Plan and strategic documents mentioned above, and are as follows:

1. Operate a sound and viable housing business in a professional and cost effective manner

2. Ensure that all the council's tenants live in a decent home in settled communities for as long as needed, consistent with the council's Tenant Strategy
3. Help tenants and leaseholders get involved with decisions about their housing regenerate the stock and build new affordable rented council housing in an efficient and effective manner

The above priorities were drawn up following consultation with tenants and leaseholders.

Action Plan

An action plan has been drawn up focusing on the key priorities above. A copy of the action plan can be found in Appendix 2.

Monitoring the Action Plan

The Council will continue to work with tenants, members and partners to monitor the Council's performance against priorities via the action plan and will provide regular progress reports to the Tenant Forum and Housing Board.

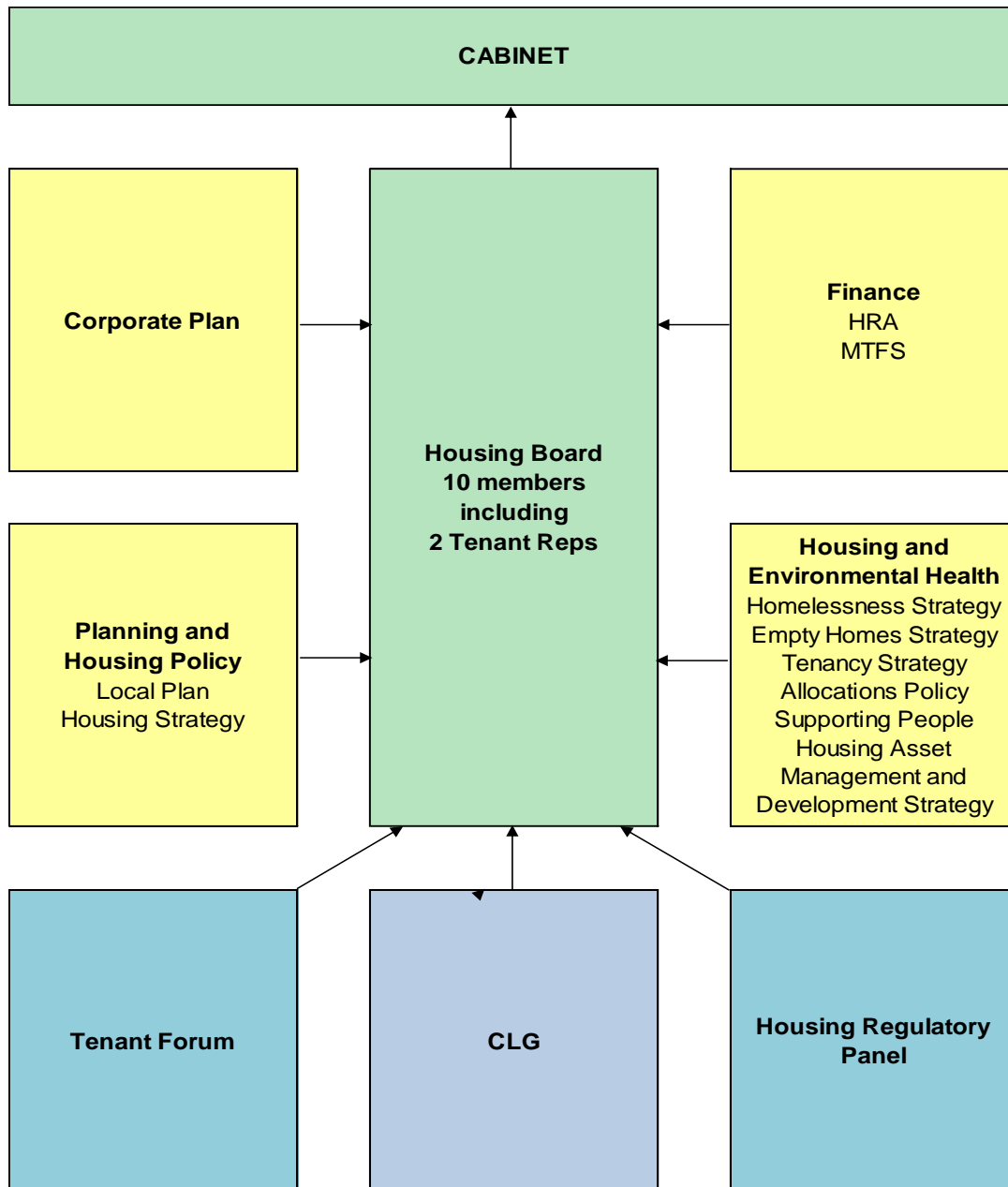
Decision Making

The Housing Board

The Housing Board, consisting of members and tenants, monitors and reviews all matters relating to the council's housing strategic role and housing management function. The Housing Board will assist with influencing policy development and budget setting. The following terms of reference have been agreed for the Housing Board:

Inform on and monitor the performance and delivery of all Council housing related strategies and policies

- Monitor housing related performance indicators
- Inform on and monitor the Council's Housing Revenue Account Business Plan
- Monitor the Council's Housing Revenue Account
- Monitor and inform on the delivery of affordable housing units in the District
- Consider the use of existing housing stock and other housing assets



Reports from the tenant forum and housing regulatory panel feed into the board for discussion and action. Recommendations from the Board are taken to the Cabinet.

The Cabinet consists of senior elected councillors who make most of the Council's important decisions. They are guided by the Housing Portfolio Holder, who is a member of the Cabinet with special responsibility for housing matters. The Housing Portfolio Holder also sits on the Housing Board. The Full Council, however, retains the responsibility for the policy framework, which includes this Business Plan.

Monitoring Performance

Since the last business plan the Council has developed a stronger and more coherent Housing Service Divisional Plan and monitoring framework. Corporate Objectives, Strategic Priorities, and options identified in the Council's Housing

Strategy and Business Plan are drawn together in the Housing Divisional Plan to produce team targets for each team within Housing and Environmental Services. These targets then link directly to Performance Indicators and targets.

The Housing and Environmental Service Divisional Plan works in two ways. It allows Members and senior management to gauge progress against agreed targets. Also front line employees can connect their day to day tasks with the Council's corporate ambitions.

The Divisional Plan is monitored at monthly meetings with Service Heads so that progress against priorities, objectives and targets is constantly under review. Performance is monitored by recording and analysing statistical information and progress is shown graphically using 'traffic light indicators' (where green shows work on target or ahead of schedule and red shows that there is a risk of not delivering).

Performance since the last business plan has been strong in the following areas:

- Rent collection
- Tenant satisfaction with repairs
- Decent Homes delivery
- Gas servicing

This same monitoring identified the following area where performance could be improved:

- The time taken to re-let voids (major works)

A full list of the most recent performance indicators relating to the service is set out in the Appendix 3.

Where performance does not meet targets, an action plan is developed, implemented and monitored, with tenant input where appropriate. For example in 2014 the Tenant Regulatory Panel carried out a review of the void re-let process. The focus of the review was to improve performance in relation to how quickly voids are re-let and therefore to reduce the amount of rent lost from void periods. As part of the review tenants visited other local landlords to understand and learn from best practice elsewhere. As a result of the review an action plan was developed.

The implementation of the action plan has been reviewed. This has shown the following results:

- Improvements in the management of voids, including weekly void meetings, clear responsibilities, improved record keeping
- Changes in operational processes including pre void inspections to improve the condition in which properties are left

- Improved void turnaround times, and improved proportion of homes accepted on first offer

In all service areas performance targets are set to achieve continuous improvement and to aim for performance to be in the top quartile when compared with other similar social landlords.

The Council also compares its performance regularly with other landlords through the Chartered Institute of Housing and National Housing Federation's benchmarking service, Housemark.

Performance management information is regularly monitored by the Housing Regulatory Panel, the Housing Board and the Council's Corporate Management Team (CMT).

Budget Monitoring

Budgets are monitored on a monthly basis by relevant staff as a minimum and problems, if identified, are addressed at an early stage. Close ongoing monitoring of the housing revenue and capital programme budgets has enabled the Council to ensure that available resources are used efficiently.

Officers re-assess the programmes to ensure that the resources resulting in any savings are used fully and effectively. For example savings from extremely competitive tenders received last year enabled the Council to re-direct money towards other major projects.

An analysis of spend on responsive repairs identified areas that could be addressed much more effectively by larger planned capital schemes. This has resulted in a more cost effective use of limited resources.

Asset Management

The Council's housing stock is a valuable asset. As a major provider of social housing the Council makes a significant contribution to meeting the need for affordable housing in the district. The stock has been well maintained, with an investment strategy targeted at bringing all homes up to the decent homes standard.

Profile of the Housing Stock

The Council's stock consists of traditionally constructed houses, flats, and bungalows. The stock is mostly low rise, although varied in archetype. There are no high-rise flats. All non-traditional build properties, such as Airey and PRC houses, have been re-built.

The council owns the following properties as of 1 April 2015:

Dwelling Type	Rented	Shared Ownership	Leasehold
Bedsit	66		
Flat	673		128
House	1,349	16	
Bungalow	745		
DWELLINGS TOTAL	2,833	16	128
Garages	586		

470 Council homes are in ‘sheltered housing’, where tenants receive a support and intensive housing management service. The council leases 128 flats and maisonettes that have previously been sold under the Right to Buy. The council has retained certain responsibility for these homes, including regular repairs maintenance, which the leaseholders pay for through their annual service charges.

The business plan draws upon the stock condition information and data analysis used in the formulation of the Housing Asset Management and Development Strategy, which sets out priorities for the physical care and improvement of the housing stock and related housing assets. It recognises the natural tension between competing investment needs, for example investment in the existing housing stock, investment in new affordable housing and investment in housing management services.

The overall objectives of the Housing Asset Management and Development Strategy are to ensure that:

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



To maximise new housing delivery the Council is considering options for the structuring and funding of new homes outside the HRA.

Sheltered Housing

In the previous business plan the Council outlined its ambition to improve housing options for older people in the district.

The council owns 16 sheltered housing schemes consisting of 451 properties. Some of the properties in these schemes currently fall below the desired standard for older people's accommodation. The Council has explored opportunities for the refurbishment or redevelopment of this type of housing. Since 2012 six schemes have been re-furbished. Plans to re-model Hatherley Court and re-develop Reynolds Court are progressing well and work is due to commence in January 2016.

When developing the improvement programme for sheltered housing, it will be essential to plan for the long term requirements of an ageing population to ensure the sheltered housing stock will meet the demand for this type of accommodation in the future, as well as the changing needs and aspirations of older people.

It is hoped that the work carried on the schemes will improve housing mobility of older people who are under-occupying family-sized accommodation by offering desirable and accessible homes that are fit for the future.

Disposals

Disposals are considered on a case by case basis and would only be included if they are assessed as not being financially viable, i.e. investment will not generate sufficient return. Any income from disposals or conversions will be re-invested back into the Council's housing stock, both to increase supply and improve its quality.

Greener Housing

The council is developing an Environmental Strategy that will sit alongside the Asset Management Strategy. This has the objectives of reducing climate emissions through the stock, alleviating fuel poverty, and improving the health and wellbeing of residents.

There are a number of homes with solid walls that have poor thermal efficiency. 150 of these have recently been upgraded and their thermal efficiency is being reassessed. Others will be prioritised for investment programmes in the short term. The council is also in the process of installing solar panels on the housing stock.

Disabled Adaptations

Funding for disabled adaptations of £250k per annum has been included within the 30 year Planned Maintenance Programme, which is assessed as being adequate to meet anticipated demand for adaptations from council tenants.

Decent Homes

Based on survey information 100% of the stock complies with the Decent Home Standard. However approximately 10% of the stock annually would become non-decent without investment. The investment requirements in the business plan include all costs required to maintain the properties at the decent homes standard identified in the current stock condition database. It also includes costs for works that improve the stock beyond the basic decent homes standard including:

£5.9m over 30 years on sustainable energy projects to provide affordable warmth and improve the energy efficiency of homes

£3.1m over 30 years for environmental improvements to fund works outside the home including improved parking provision.

Decent Homes is a minimum standard that requires that the home:

- Meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing
- Is in a reasonable state of repair
- Has reasonably modern facilities and services and
- Provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

Estate Improvement/Regeneration

Estate regeneration provides the opportunity to enhance estates, address issues of health inequalities and deprivation. The council will continue to work with communities to develop and implement initiatives for improving estates.

Stock Options

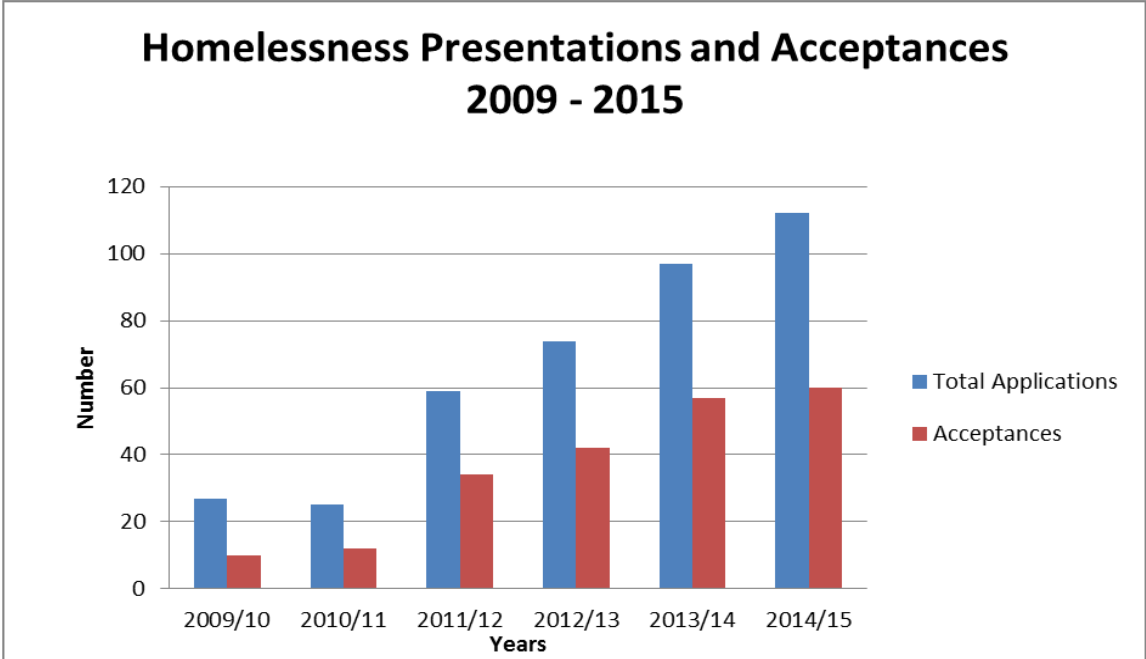
Detailed analysis work has begun to consider the financial contribution that particular categories of housing stock and assets such as garages and land make to the business plan. The Council will need to consider the best options for individual properties, or groups of properties that are a drain on the business model, and identify whether they require significant investment, redevelopment, strategic disposal, demolition or alternative use.

Any investment decisions in housing assets will need to be carefully balanced with both the financial impact on the business plan and social impact on tenants and leaseholders.

Housing Options and Homelessness

It is important that the HRA Business Plan reflects the known housing need in Uttlesford and predictions of how this might change in the future. Uttlesford has seen a steep increase in homelessness presentations in the past 6 years as demonstrated in the graph below.

This is a trend being reported by most local authorities. Figures collated by Crisis show that there has been a 26% increase in homelessness presentations in England from 2010 to 2014. Research shows that there will continue to be a rise in the number of homeless households even as the economic downturn is reversed.



Whilst this area of the service is strictly a General Fund function rather than that of the HRA there is a direct impact on the housing stock. More of the stock is being used for temporary accommodation and therefore can restrict transfers or movement within the stock for tenants to ensure families are living in appropriate sized accommodation.

The council works closely with the Uttlesford Citizens Advice Bureau to prevent homelessness and refers to them cases requiring financial advice or support through the court eviction processes. The bureau has also experienced in recent years an increase in demand for their services.

The council has built 4 new purpose built units of accommodation on its Mead Court redevelopment site to use as temporary accommodation. These will add to the 8 units that have been developed by converting 4 existing council properties. In total the council currently now has access to 18 units of temporary accommodation which has resulted in a decreasing need to place homeless families in bed and breakfast accommodation.

Choice Based Lettings

Housing applicants are given choice about which home is let to them using HomeOption a “choice based lettings” (CBL) scheme. The council works with five neighbouring councils and the housing associations that work in the district to operate the scheme jointly. This reduces the costs of the scheme.

CBL schemes can enhance mobility between areas and tenures and provide a balance between the needs of prospective tenants and choice and so may contribute to sustainable neighbourhoods.



Between April 2012 and March 2015 a total of 950 properties were let via the HomeOption system, 551 of these properties were Council owned. Where properties become empty the Council have set re-let targets from the date the key is returned to the date the next tenant gets the key to their new home to ensure that rent loss is minimalised.

Uttlesford is an area of high property values and intense demand for social housing. This means that the council has not experienced significant difficulty when letting vacant property. There is however a need to maintain housing to a standard which is attractive to potential tenants, meets the changing nature of household formation and responds to other demographic or cultural issues.

The Council needs to ensure that with an increase in demand for social housing that its own stock is used in the most effective way. In some cases an increase in the void period may be because possible tenants did either not bid or did not wish to take up the offer of that property. This has been a particularly an issue for some of the Council's sheltered housing schemes where average re-let times far greater than general need properties.

Tenure

The tenancy agreement sets out the rights and responsibilities of tenants and the Council. The Council provides support and assistance to tenants who need it to sustain their tenancy. The tenancy agreement includes grounds for possession in the case of breach of tenancy. Eviction through a court order is used as a last resort in the case of continuous tenancy breach.

New tenants are offered an introductory tenancy which is converted to a secure/fixed term tenancy following a period of 12 months providing there have been no major breaches in the tenancy agreement in that time.

The Localism Act provided for a new form of tenancy for local authority tenants. It included a new statutory requirement for all social landlords “to offer and issue the most secure form of tenancy compatible with the purpose of the housing and the sustainability of the community”. This meant that Councils were no longer required automatically to let all new tenancies on long term secure tenancies (with or without an introductory or probationary period) but had the option to issue fixed term tenancies in some cases.

The Council responded to these changes to the law and introduced a new tenancy policy that enables fixed term tenancies to be offered to meet an identified need, and make better use of the asset.

Tenancy Sustainment

The success or failure of a tenancy, particularly of a vulnerable person, can often be heavily influenced by the property they live in and the support that the landlord can give. This was recognised by the Council and it is proposed to create a tenancy sustainment team mainly from existing resources pulled from other teams.

This will allow a relatively small number of tenants to receive intense work from the housing team in order to successfully sustain their tenancy. A failed tenancy costs the Council several thousands of pounds so the success of this team will ultimately save money for re-investment in the housing stock.

Supported Housing - Young People and Vulnerable Adults

Uttlesford currently only has one scheme of general needs supported housing. Bromfield House in Saffron Walden provides 17 units of shared supported housing for people, predominately but not exclusively young, who need support to develop life skills before they are ready to live independently.

Whilst this scheme can assist clients with mental health, drug and alcohol issues, it can only do this for those at the lower level of support needs. The scheme is also often at full capacity leaving clients with support needs being housed in unsuitable accommodation. There is also, within the District, a lack of supported housing for those with higher and multiple support needs. Housing people in inappropriate accommodation causes management issues and tenancy failure.

Specialist Refuges - Victims of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is one of the most complex issues requiring the co-operation of numerous statutory and voluntary agencies at a national as well as regional and local level. It is not a popular issue or one that easily attracts funding. It is however an issue that has been under resourced within Uttlesford where there has never been refuge provision within the district for victims of domestic abuse.

It is recommended that Local authorities provide 1 refuge space per 10,000 of population, depending on local needs. This would indicate that Uttlesford should consider providing a refuge of between 7 – 8 spaces. Currently Uttlesford victims of

domestic abuse are referred out of area when they require a refuge, which may be appropriate; however Uttlesford is not providing any reciprocal services.

The council is currently working with Safer Places and have identified a site for a potential specialist housing facility in the district.

Financial Modelling of the HRA Business Plan

An updated version of the HRA business plan model has been prepared taking into account all assumed investment, repairs and management costs required over the next 30 years, assuming compliance with national rent policy, and taking account of a continued high level of sales under the Right to Buy scheme.

Rental Income

Following the Summer Budget on 8 July 2015 it was announced to the social housing sector that all rents within social housing would have to be reduced by 1%, rather than the previous guidance of annual increases of CPI plus 1%. The rent reduction is to be applied over a four year period. So for example a tenant currently paying £100.00 per week will see it reduced to £99.00 next April and then £98.01 the following year and so on until April 2020 when rents are proposed to increase by CPI plus 1% again.

The 2012 business plan was predicated on annual income rises of CPI + 1% so this shift could have a potentially large impact on rental income and therefore the ability of the council to continue to invest in stock and projects identified in the business plan. The assumed reduction of 1% on rents for this period will result in a rental base that will be in the region of at least 12% lower in 2019-20 than anticipated. If the reduction was applied on all current rents this could have a cumulative impact of at least £1.8m by 2018/19 compared with existing business plan assumptions. Over the life of the business plan losses will amount to £14.9m.

Capital Programme Priorities

Using the principles established in the Asset Management and Development strategy, the council has developed an investment plan that sets out the programme priorities over the next 30 years.

The investment plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to take into account changing levels of resources, any planned regeneration works, updated survey information and feedback from resident consultation on where investment priorities should be made.

The plan is based around creating sensible geographic concentrations of work for internal refurbishments, so that programmes can be efficiently managed and delivered from local site set ups. External works have been planned around the 5-6 year cyclical decorations programme, with the intention that where scaffolding is

erected for external decorations other key components that require work are also replaced. This will prevent repeated costs of erecting scaffolding.

Surveys will be completed on an ongoing basis so that stock condition information is up to date and planned programmes can be adjusted accordingly.

The council is also developing ways of communicating the planned programme with residents. Estates that have been identified as being part of the 2016/17 programme will be visited as part of the 'get involved' roadshows. At these events officers will present what work is being considered and asks for residents' feedback on what their priorities are. These will then be factored into the programme planning.

The major investment in kitchens and bathroom replacement, as well as rewires and heating improvements will continue. Replacements of roofs and other external elements continue and will be those prioritised in accordance with the Asset Management and Development Strategy. In addition a programme of window replacements will begin, focusing on those areas where existing UPVC windows have reached the end of their useful life.

The total spending requirement on capital programmed works over the five year period is estimated to be £16.2m.

In total the average expenditure costs per unit are in the region of £45,500 per unit which are higher than benchmarked costs though this reflects the age and profile of the stock.

New Build

Demand for social housing remains high and therefore the business plan model sets out the Council's aspiration to build new council housing of the types required.

The mode includes 4 current new build schemes and provisional schemes which cover years 2 to 5 for unidentified sites. The current schemes will deliver 21 homes from 2015/16 and the provisional schemes a further 30. All the expenditure for this is included within the budget capital costs. The model also provides for future new build beyond year 5 at an average of 6 units per year.



Revenue Maintenance Budgets

There is a close link between revenue maintenance budgets and the Capital Programme. Spending on revenue through planned and reactive maintenance programmes will extend the life of a property, thus minimising the capital spend on major works. The tables in Appendix 1 set out the revenue and capital requirements/potential schemes for the next 5/30 years.

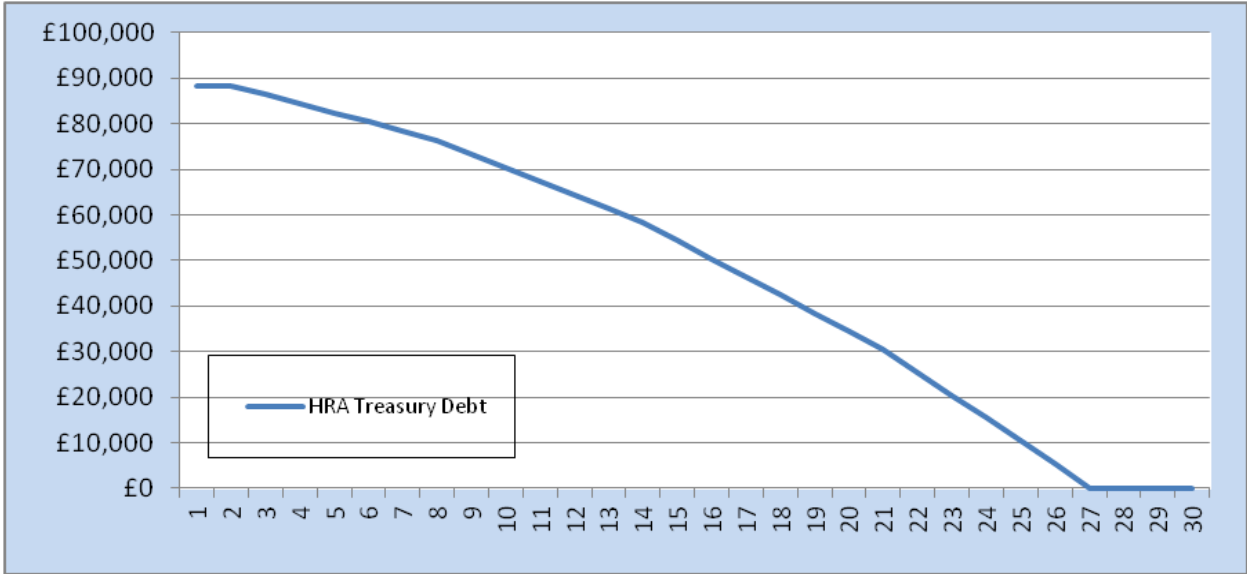
Treasury Management

The loan portfolio that was established to finance the self-financing transactions consists of 25 loans totalling £88.407million. There is no 'internal' borrowing from the Council's General Fund.

The interest on these loans (which vary from 0.7% to 3.5% depending on duration) are charged directly to the HRA, and the vast majority being fixed rates the forecast interest projections will be accurate. Should internal borrowing be required in the medium to long-term it is estimated that this will be charged at 5%.

The graph below shows the current financing position of the HRA before applying any future income and cost projections:

HRA Financing Position £'000 – Prior to Forecasting Adjustments



The graph shows the actual HRA loan portfolio starting at £88.407million and reducing gradually over 27 years until all loans are repaid. Prior to any adjustments no additional borrowing would be required during this period.

Sensitivities

The plan is viable and resilient to changes in key assumptions. The three key variable factors are interest rates, inflation and right to buy sales.

If interest rates increase above expected levels assumed in the business plan this would reduce the revenue headroom over 30 years.

Income will not increase by more than the rate of inflation over the next 4 years, following the government's announcement to reduce rents, so an increase in inflation could impact the viability of the plan.

If right to buy sales exceed the assumed levels then available income would reduce and could potentially affect the viability of the plan. The mitigation is to ensure that monies are invested to ensure that void levels in existing stock are minimised and to ensure that new build is delivered to replace dwellings lost through RTB.

Right to Buy Receipts

With the reinvigoration of the right to buy policy the council has seen sales in the past three years exceed those in the immediate prior years (and those assumed within the self-financing settlement).

The result of the increased volume of sales affects the business plan model not only with loss of income but also introduces the ability to retain the balance of the receipts (after some initial deductions) known as '1-4-1' receipts.

After all eligible deductions the council currently has £1.219million in balances at the end of June 2015. Regulations state that this can be used for up to 30% of new build or acquisitions within 36 months of the receipt arising. These receipts can be reclaimed by DCLG if they are not utilised within 36 months with compounded interest. Therefore £4.065million needs to be spent on total in providing new affordable homes.

Up to and including 2014/15 £2.202 million has been spent and a further £1.112 million in 2015/16 and £0.586million (projected) in 2016/17 as part of the '1-4-1' scheme. This totals £3.9 million, which virtually meets the spend requirements.

Given that right to buy levels are expected to continue at current levels '1-4-1' receipts will continue to accrue and the model has assumed that new build levels are maintained at rate that utilises these receipts with the HRA providing the 70% match funding through a mix of borrowing and future surpluses. With the projected levels of right to buys within the plan it is estimated that receipts will cease to accrue from year 6 (2020/2021).

Extension of RTB to Housing Associations – Forced Sale of Council Stock

The recent Queens Speech highlighted the Government's wish to expand the eligibility of right to buy to HA properties. In order to fund this there are proposals that Councils should sell a percentage of their high value stock when they become void. Proposed regional values on which to identify which stock could be at risk were published in the Conservative party manifesto but these have not been formalised.

The sale of Council stock on the open market will fund the compensation to HAs for the difference between the receipt they will receive from each sale and the value of

their home. At the same time the money from the sale of the Council home will also have to support a new fund for building on brownfield sites. It is not clear as yet, whether it will also support the building of a much needed replacement home for the Council.

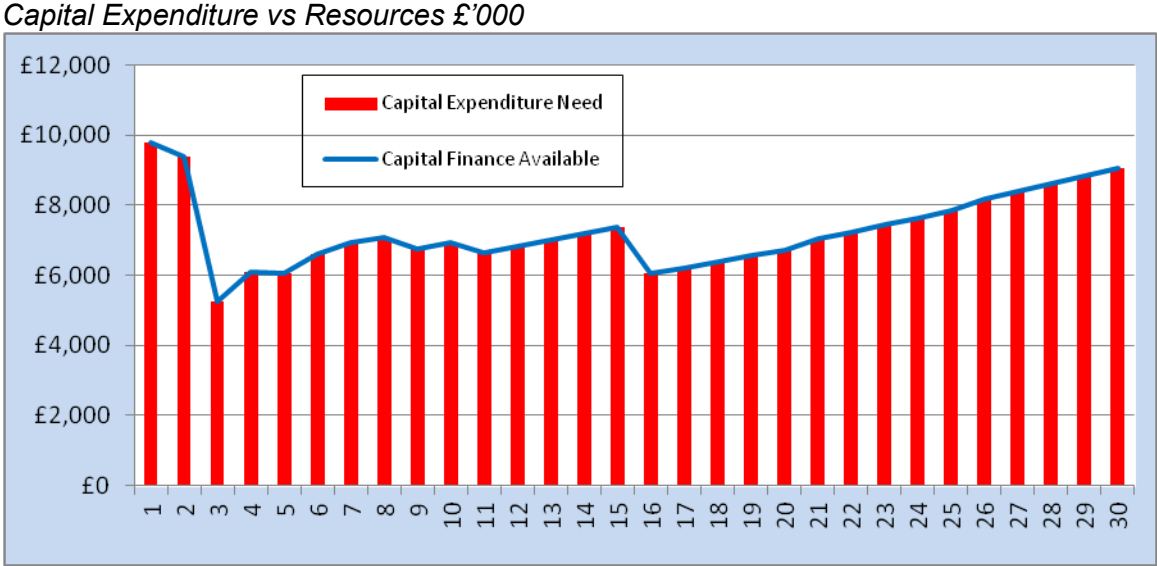
Modelling, based on the proposed regional values, show that the council would be expected to have to sell around 45% of all voids. The proposal to force the council to sell such a large number of its 'high value' stock will undermine the 30 year 'business plan' which was based on an assessment of the level of RTB sales which obviously did not include this proposal.

The introduction of 'self-financing' in 2012 included a 'debt settlement' which was based on a revenue stream which will be less than expected if the Housing Bill with this proposal is passed by the House of Commons. This will undermine the financial stability of the Housing Revenue Account. The business plan model cannot factor in any potential impact of this policy until there is clarity on what constitutes a high value council property, the formula to be used and whether Councils will be allowed to retain part of the receipt to pay off debt associated with the properties sold.

Funding the Capital Projections

Projections have been amended to reflect the change in rent policy and include the affordable levels of new build.

The graph below demonstrates the capital expenditure (in the thick red vertical bars) for each year including inflation. The available resources are shown (using the thin blue horizontal line).

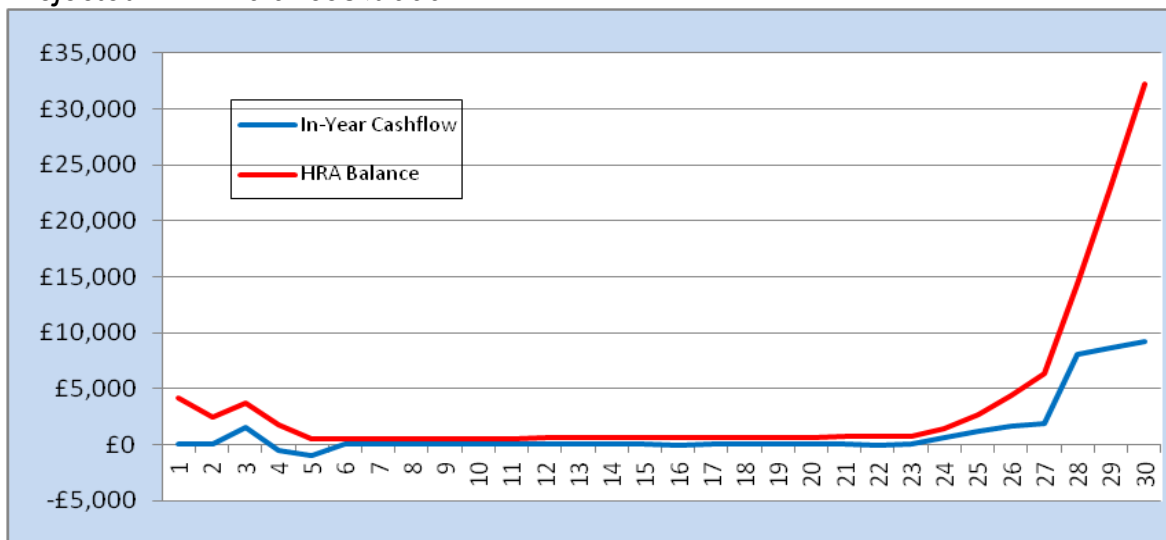


The plan demonstrates that the new build programme and provision for future investment works is affordable.

HRA Revenue Balance Projections

The projected balances for the HRA are as follows:

Projected HRA Balances £'000



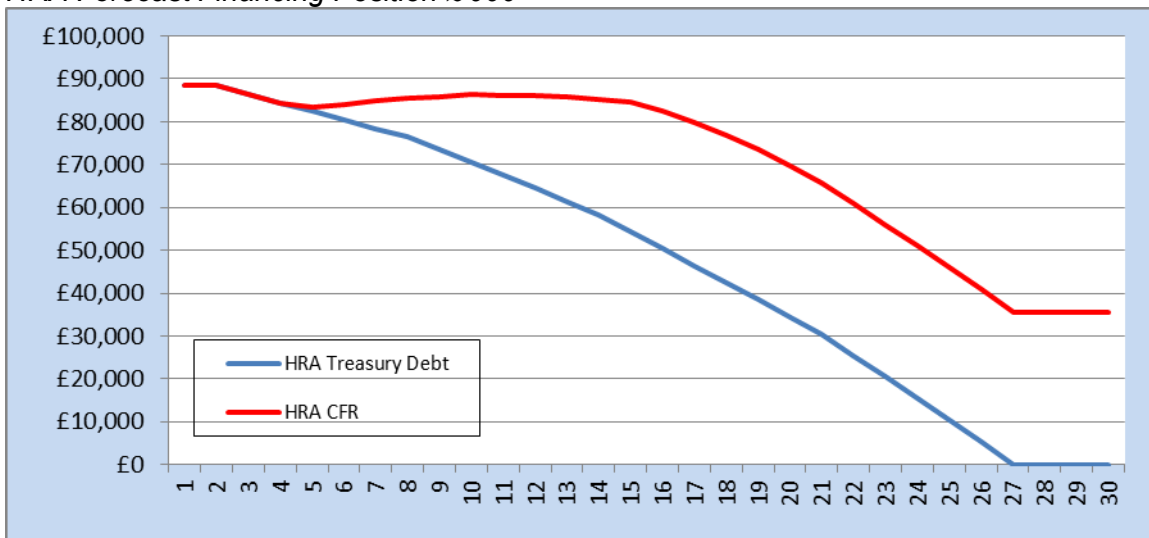
The HRA is set not to let balances to go below £0.5million (plus inflation) and is set to attempt loan repayments where possible according to the treasury loan repayment strategy. The balances held in other reserves with are fully utilised by year 4.

Only after year 24 do balances start to accrue in the HRA above the minimum balance due to the loan repayments. The balances are then projected to increase to a forecast £32.2million in year 30.

HRA Debt Projections

The chart below shows the revised borrowing position for the Council.

HRA Forecast Financing Position £'000



The above graph shows that additional borrowing is in fact required with the gap between the HRA CFR and Treasury debt increasing. The HRA CFR is set to reduce in line with the Treasury debt but is unable to during years 5 to 22. The gap is

financed within the model as 'internal borrowing' at an interest rate which peaks at 5%, but can be replaced with assumed treasury loans.

As the 'internal borrowing' is without a specified repayment, the projected HRA CFR is £35.597million in year 30. This could be virtually repaid through the balance projected within the HRA.

If the council wished to see an earlier debt repayment then the programme for new build at any stage of the plan could simply be reduced to accommodate this.

Review of the Business Plan

The Business Plan will be monitored on an annual basis to identify emerging risks and developing issues which may impact on the delivery of the planned actions or long term viability of the plan. The plan will be formally reviewed before 2021, to ensure that resources available remain capable of delivering the planned actions and that the actions can be amended accordingly.

Conclusion

This review of the HRA Business Plan demonstrates that it remains viable over the 30 years even with the latest rent policy modelled. Viability is judged in that the capital expenditure can be maintained, the HRA does not fall into deficit and that the debt cap is not breached. For the council all of the above apply although the debt cannot be fully repaid without adjustments to the assumed new build programme throughout the thirty years.

The plan assumes for a modest development programme of 5 units a year. If RTB sales continue to escalate beyond those estimated additional finances will be required to ensure the 1 for 1 replacement programme can be achieved. No allowance has been made in the business plan for larger building or re-furbishing projects beyond year 5 (2017/2018). If members wish to see a continuation of the 1 for 1 replacement programme and progression of re-development projects, for example proposals for Walden Place, options to re-finance the loans will need to be explored.

The Council will need to manage the HRA Business Plan robustly and proactively. Income will need to be maximised and costs kept under close review. Provided this is achieved, this Business Plan enables the council to make a genuine step change improvement in the quality and delivery of social housing in Uttlesford.

APPENDICES

HOUSING REVENUE AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE ON STOCK - 2016/2017 TO 2046/2047														
	Budget Code	Description of Works	CURRENT	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YRS 6-10	YRS 11-15	YRS 16-20	YRS 21-25	YRS 26-30	
			15 / 16	16 / 17	17 / 18	18 / 19	19 / 20	20 / 21	£	£	£	£	£	£
			£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
A. HOUSING REVENUE EXPENDITURE	Ad Hoc	HRE001/2013	Ad-hoc Repairs	885,400	830,000	830,000	830,000	830,000	830,000	4,205,400	4,205,400	4,205,400	4,205,400	
	Cyclical	HRE001/2041	External and Internal Decorations	230,000	280,000	280,000	280,000	280,000	280,000	1,350,000	1,350,000	1,350,000	1,350,000	
		HRE001/2014	Pre-paint Repairs	100,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	420,000	420,000	420,000	420,000	
	Routine Maintenance - Service Maintenance Contracts	HHE001/2011	Estate Maintenance planned repairs	250,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	650,000	650,000	650,000	650,000	
		HRE001/2042	Servicing/Maintenance of Central Heating Boilers	350,000	350,000	350,000	350,000	350,000	350,000	1,750,000	1,750,000	1,750,000	1,750,000	
		HRE001/2043	Servicing/Maintenance of Communal Boilers	45,500	44,500	44,500	44,500	44,500	44,500	223,500	223,500	223,500	223,500	
		HRE001/2044	Asbestos Management	130,000	130,000	130,000	130,000	130,000	130,000	650,000	650,000	650,000	650,000	
		HRE001/2045	Legionella Management	56,300	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000	276,300	276,300	276,300	276,300	
		HRE001/4005	Electric Testing	72,000	72,000	72,000	72,000	72,000	72,000	360,000	360,000	360,000	360,000	
		HSH001/2012	Servicing/Maintenance of Communal & Disabled Lifts	22,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	142,000	142,000	142,000	142,000	
		HSH001/4012	Sheltered Furniture	28,000	17,500	17,500	17,500	17,500	17,500	98,000	98,000	98,000	98,000	
	HSH001/4001	Sheltered Equipment	14,000	17,500	17,500	17,500	17,500	17,500	84,000	84,000	84,000	84,000		
	SUB TOTAL A: HOUSING REVENUE EXPENDITURE			2,183,200	2,006,500	2,006,500	2,006,500	2,006,500	2,006,500	10,209,200	10,209,200	10,209,200	10,209,200	
B. HOUSING CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	Planned Works	CHR200/6812	Central Heating Boiler Replacement	570,000	570,000	570,000	570,000	570,000	570,000	2,850,000	2,850,000	2,850,000	2,850,000	
		CHR201/6811	Sheltered Scheme Improvements	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	25,000	75,000	25,000	75,000	
		CHR212/6812	Adaptations for Disabled (Major)	260,000	260,000	260,000	260,000	210,000	210,000	1,050,000	1,050,000	1,050,000	1,050,000	
		CHR202/6812	Adaptations for Disabled (Minor)	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	
		CHR203/6812	Environmental Improvements	130,000	100,000	150,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	
		CHR204/6811	Chimneys	50,000	20,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	400,000	600,000	600,000	300,000	
		CHR205/6811	Energy Conservation/Plant Replacement	250,000	10,000	50,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	75,000	250,000	250,000	75,000	
		CHR206/6812	Security Programme	20,000	10,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	
		CHR207/6811	Structural Works	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	750,000	750,000	750,000	750,000	
		CHR208/6811	Sewage Plant Replacement Works	10,000	70,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	50,000	100,000	50,000	100,000	
		CHR209/6811	Roof works	70,000	160,000	120,000	250,000	250,000	300,000	2,250,000	1,250,000	1,250,000	500,000	
		CHR210/6812	Doors	70,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	
		CHR211/6812	Re-wiring	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	490,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	2,500,000	
		CHR213/6811	Major Work - Voids	600,000	700,000	600,000	600,000	600,000	700,000	3,000,000	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000	
		CHR214/6812	Bathroom/Kitchen Upgrade	500,000	500,000	625,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,500,000	2,250,000	2,250,000	2,250,000	
		CHR215/6812	Re-windowing	35,000	35,000	35,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	600,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	
		CHR217/6801	Insulation Works	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	
		PLANNED WORKS PROGRAMME			3,260,000	3,180,000	3,255,000	3,345,000	3,295,000	3,435,000	15,600,000	16,225,000	16,125,000	16,500,000
		CHR223/6812	UPVC fascias/downpipes	263,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	
		CHR500/6841	Cash Incentive to move grant	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	
		CHR401/6824	IT - Planned Repairs/Service Charge Module etc	65,000	0	0	0	0	0	350,000	100,000	350,000	100,000	
		CHR402/6824	Housing Contractors Portal & SAM	55,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		CHR301/6822	Energy Efficiency Works	380,000	150,000	0	0	0	0	1,600,000	1,600,000	200,000	200,000	
			Resurfacing trunk/access roads	0	150,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		CHR501/6841	Learning Difficulties Support Unit	100,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		CHR104/6801	Mead Court Development	1,768,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		CHR219/6812	Sheltered Housing Alarms Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		CHR221/6801	Internet Cafes	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		CHR600/6823	Vehicle purchase programme	0	0	87,000	96,400	0	0	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	
		CHR105/6801	New Build Development Sites	212,000	586,000	1,200,000	1,300,000	2,100,000	600,000	4,500,000	4,500,000	4,500,000	4,500,000	
CHR106/6801	Catons Lane	900,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
CHR107/6801	Reynolds Court	2,450,000	4,200,000	620,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
CHR108/6801	Hatherley Court	865,000	898,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
CHR109/6801	Walden Place	10,000	400,000	400,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
BUSINESS PLAN/ADDITIONAL WORKS TOTAL			7,143,000	6,534,000	2,457,000	1,546,400	2,250,000	750,000	7,300,000	7,050,000	5,900,000	5,650,000		
SUB TOTAL B : CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME			10,403,000	9,714,000	5,712,000	4,891,400	5,545,000	4,185,000	22,900,000	23,275,000	22,025,000	22,150,000		
TOTAL REVENUE AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE ON HOUSING PROJECTS UNDER SELF FINANCING: A + B			12,586,200	11,720,500	7,718,500	6,897,900	7,551,500	6,191,500	33,109,200	33,484,200	32,234,200	32,359,200		

HRA projection – 2015/16 – 2020/21

APPENDIX 2

YEARS	4	5	6	7	8	9
Overall impact on rents received	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	Original	Original	Original	Original	Original	Original
	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
Projected rents for 5 year strategy, based on CPI +1%	(14,672)	(14,974)	(15,277)	(15,585)	(15,900)	(16,218)
Rents with new 1% decrease	(14,672)	(14,302)	(14,159)	(14,017)	(13,877)	(14,085)
Loss of rent					(5,380)	
Total loss of rent	0	(672)	(1,118)	(1,568)	(2,023)	(2,133)
£'000	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	Forecast	Original	Original	Original	Original	Original
	Actuals	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
Dwelling Rents	(14,672)	(14,302)	(14,159)	(14,017)	(13,877)	(14,016)
Garage Rents	(184)	(208)	(196)	(202)	(207)	(209)
Other Rents etc	(4)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(4)
Charges for Services & Facilities	(826)	(908)	(868)	(896)	(918)	(927)
Contribution towards expenditure	(41)	0	0	0	0	0
Total Income	(15,727)	(15,421)	(15,226)	(15,119)	(15,006)	(15,156)
<u>Housing Finance & Business Management</u>						
Business & Performance Management	307	103	105	106	108	109
Rents, Rates & Other Property Charges	41	76	77	78	79	81
	348	179	182	184	187	190
<u>Housing Maintenance & Repairs Service</u>						
Common Service Flats	248	226	229	233	236	240
Estate Maintenance	293	145	147	149	152	154
Housing Repairs	2,207	2,324	2,359	2,394	2,430	2,467
Housing Sewerage	57	53	54	55	55	56
Newport Depot	11	11	11	11	12	12
Property Services	282	273	277	281	285	290
	3,098	3,032	3,077	3,124	3,170	3,218
<u>Housing Management & Homelessness</u>						
Housing Services	323	394	400	406	412	418
Sheltered Housing Services	611	635	645	654	664	674
Supporting people	53	0	0	0	0	0
	987	1,029	1,044	1,060	1,076	1,092
<u>Other Costs</u>						
Depreciation - Council Dwellings	3,209	3,281	3,356	3,432	3,518	3,606
Depreciation - Other Assets	146	146	150	150	150	154
Impairment	100	0	0	0	0	0
Bad Debt Provision	50	50	50	50	50	50
Recharge from General Fund	1,138	1,330	1,350	1,370	1,391	1,412
HRA Share of Corporate Core	340	335	340	345	350	356
Interest/Costs re HRA Loan	2,625	2,625	2,625	2,625	2,625	2,625
Investment Income	(39)	(52)	(20)	(11)	(11)	(11)
HRA Loan Repayments	0	0	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Pension Costs	20	19	0	0	0	0
Right to Buy admin allowance	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
Minimum revenue provision	0	0	(0)	(0)	(0)	0
	7,579	7,724	9,841	9,951	10,063	10,181
Total Expenditure	12,012	11,964	14,145	14,319	14,496	14,681
OPERATING (SURPLUS)/DEFICIT	(3,715)	(3,457)	(1,082)	(800)	(510)	(475)
Transfer to(+)/from(-) the Change Management Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer to(+)/from(-) the Transformation Reserve	42	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer to(+)/from(-) HRA Working Balance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer to(+)/from(-) Capital receipts	0	0	(1,793)	(152)	(152)	(376)
Release of CAA funds	0	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue balance available for capital financing	(3,673)	(3,457)	(2,875)	(952)	(662)	(851)
<u>CAPITAL and RESERVES</u>						
Capital Spend	7,371	12,520	5,712	4,891	5,545	4,185
<i>Potential S106 contribution</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer to(+)/from(-) Capital receipts (1-4-1 and other)	(304)	(221)	(360)	(390)	(630)	(180)
Transfer to(+)/from(-) reserves grants/contributions	0	(902)	0	0	0	0
Transfer to(+)/from(-) reserves for Major Repairs	(3,334)	(3,426)	(3,502)	(3,578)	(3,541)	(3,683)
Transfer to(+)/from(-) reserves for Capital Schemes	648	(4,104)	1,025	29	(712)	529
Release of funds from TA unit sale	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transfer to(+)/from(-) reserves for Potential Developments	(708)	(92)	0	0	0	0
Transfer to(+)/from(-) reserves for Sheltered Housing Projects	0	(318)	0	0	0	0
Surplus Transfer	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital spend financed by RCCO	3,673	3,457	2,875	952	662	851
(SURPLUS)/DEFICIT	0	(0)	0	0	0	(0)

Housing Revenue Account 2015/16 – 2020/21 funding for capital schemes year totals

The extract below from the Business Plan Model shows the next 5 years of the HRA capital projections. It should be noted that these figures are forecasts based on current best estimates, and are subject to change as time progresses and more information becomes available.

Housing Revenue Account Capital Schemes	2015-16 Current Budget £	2015-16 Forecast Spend £	2016-17 Forecast Budget + Slippage £	2017-18 Budget £	2018-19 Budget £	2019-20 Budget £	2020-21 Budget £	TOTAL £
Total programme spend	10,403,000	7,371,000	12,520,000	5,712,000	4,891,000	5,545,000	4,185,000	40,224,000
Financing - Housing Revenue Account								
Business Plan Schemes								
Funded from reserves	(2,864,000)	(708,000)	(4,514,000)	0	0	(712,000)	0	(5,934,000)
S106 - Housing Partnership Funding - HRA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HCA grant funding	0	0	(902,000)	0	0	0	0	(902,000)
Capital Receipts - RTB	(334,000)	(304,000)	(221,000)	(360,000)	(390,000)	(630,000)	(180,000)	(2,085,000)
HRA Financial Headroom - Specific Schemes	(3,632,000)	(2,947,000)	(3,457,000)	(1,850,000)	(910,000)	(662,000)	(322,000)	(10,148,000)
Other MRR reserve cont	0	0	(96,000)	(9,000)	0	(96,000)	(98,000)	(299,000)
Internal Borrowing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(6,830,000)	(3,959,000)	(9,190,000)	(2,219,000)	(1,300,000)	(2,100,000)	(600,000)	(19,368,000)
Other Schemes								
Major Repairs Reserve Contribution	(3,208,960)	(3,209,000)	(3,280,000)	(3,356,000)	(3,432,000)	(3,395,000)	(3,537,000)	(20,209,000)
Other MRR reserve cont	(125,000)	(125,000)	(50,000)	(137,000)	(146,000)	(50,000)	(48,000)	(556,000)
HRA Revenue Funding	(239,040)	(78,000)	0	0	(13,000)	0	0	(91,000)
Sub total	(3,573,000)	(3,412,000)	(3,330,000)	(3,493,000)	(3,591,000)	(3,445,000)	(3,585,000)	(20,856,000)
TOTAL FINANCING	(10,403,000)	(7,371,000)	(12,520,000)	(5,712,000)	(4,891,000)	(5,545,000)	(4,185,000)	(40,224,000)
Funding deficit (Borrowing outside of HRA required internal from cash or external)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0




	Action	By When	Resources	Outcome
1. Operate a sound and viable housing business in a professional and cost effective manner	Continue to develop business plan financial model to inform investment and service planning	Ongoing	Within existing resources	HRA that continues to be managed on sound business principles
	Prepare for supporting people funding reductions	Mar-17	Within existing resources	Options identified to enable key services to continue to be delivered
	Improve performance management systems in housing services	Mar-17	Within existing resources	PI targets based on a combination of performance of peer LA's in HouseMark benchmarking group and historic UDC performance data
	Maximise income to the HRA by achieving high collection rates for rents, service charges, sewage charges, garage rents and miscellaneous invoices	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Rent arrears action taken at an earlier stage to prevent arrears from escalating. Providing debt support and signposting to tenants/leaseholders who are struggling. Corporate approach to rent collection to ensure join-up with individual cases
	Implement re-chargeable repairs policy	Apr-16	Within existing resources	Improve recovery of costs of repairs which are tenants' responsibility
	Evaluate the alternative options available for the delivery of housing services through strategic and /or operational partnerships	Apr-17	Within existing resources	Options identified for step change improvement in value for money
	Review the arrangements for the management of non-housing assets	Oct-16	Within existing resources	Rationalisation of management responsibilities and clarification of development potential
	Ensure the void turnaround figures do not exceed targets to minimise rent losses	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Rent loss through voids minimalised

2. Ensure that all the council's tenants live in a decent home in settled communities for as long as needed, consistent with the council's Tenant Strategy	Review tenant strategy to ensure that local housing need is met and assets are used effectively, utilising all available flexibilities	Apr-17	Within existing resources	Updated strategy
	Create a tenancy sustainment team	Aug-16	Within existing resources	Increased support for vulnerable tenants. A failed tenancy costs the Council several thousands of pounds so the success of this team will ultimately save money for re-investment in the housing stock
	Improve the information on the housing stock	Apr-17	Within existing resources	Accessible up to date stock data
	Continue to manage and maintain the housing stock effectively and efficiently ensuring that properties meet, as a minimum, the decent homes standard	Ongoing	Within identified resources - approximately £5.3m pa	Well maintained homes and assets to minimum decent homes standard
	Deliver an improved repairs and maintenance service through: 1. Enhancement of mobile technology for repairs and voids teams; 2. Electronic van stocking of operatives' vehicles 3. Online reporting of repairs	Aug-16	£120k	Homes well maintained Improved tenant satisfaction More efficient and responsive deployment of personnel
	Improve average energy efficiency for council properties	Apr-17	£530k	Reduced fuel costs for residents
	Continue to fund disabled adaptations for tenants and improve the delivery process	Ongoing	£260k pa	Reduction in the time people have to wait for adaptations
	Undertake fundamental review of	Ongoing	Within existing	Policies in place that reflect best practice/current

	policies and procedures to ensure service is 'Fit for Purpose'		resources	legislation
3. Help tenants and leaseholders get involved with decisions about their housing	Continue to develop Housing Regulatory Panel to scrutinise the performance of the Housing Service and to undertake service reviews	Ongoing	5k pa - training for members	A Housing Regulatory Panel that deliver in-depth challenging inspections - achieving improvements that really matter to tenants
	Review the approach to gathering tenant feedback and satisfaction	Mar-17	Within existing resources	Refreshed approach to assessing tenant satisfaction to inform service improvement planning
	Link tenant participation with opportunities for skill development	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Skilled Tenant Forum and Tenant Regulatory Panel members
	Publish annual tenants report	Ongoing	£3k pa	Annual report published
	Benchmark service with other landlords through HouseMark	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Core benchmarking data uploaded to HouseMark for full organisational review
4. Regenerate the stock/estates and build new affordable rented council housing in an efficient and effective manner	Deliver the new homes programme	Mar-21	£6.898m	New homes to replace those lost through RTB sales - approximately 6 -10 per year
	Deliver Sheltered scheme re-development programme	Mar-18	£11.5m	Fit for purpose accommodation for the elderly
	Review housing asset management strategy	Apr-18	Within existing resources	Established a clear policy on the use of HRA assets, regeneration and development
	Develop and implement initiatives for improving estates	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Delivery of new estate improvement/ regeneration initiatives as part of the housing asset management strategy. Delivery of resident led improvements






















	Carry out development appraisals of identified sites and review business plan capacity to develop	Apr-17	Revenue cost of £50k pa for surveyor to co-ordinate works	Established housing development programme
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2014/15 Housing KPI & PI Outturn Report

PI Status	
	This PI is more than 10% below target.
	This PI is between 0.01 and 10% below target.
	This PI is on target.

































* Cumulatively monitored

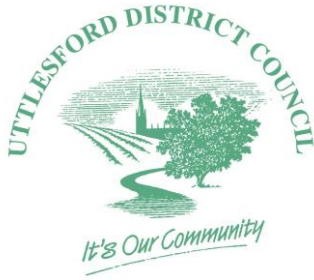
Quarterly targets for these indicators have been profiled

PI Code & Short Name	Q4 201 3/1 4	Q1 2014 /15	Q2 2014 /15	Q3 2014 /15	Q4 2014 /15	2013/14	2014/1 5	Latest Note
HSG 4 (H4) New tenants visits completed within 4 weeks	57%	54.3%	64%	68.2%	80%	96.5%	65.1%	Q4 2014/15 Number of new tenant visits to be completed 35. Completed within 4 weeks = 28, completed within 5 weeks = 4, completed within 6 weeks = 1, completed within 7+weeks =1.
								
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
HSG 5 % of rent lost through dwellings being vacant (GN & HfOP)	1.75%	1.80%	1.85%	1.87%	2.28%	1.54%	1.96%	Q4 2014/15 Numerator: £91,461.35 Denominator: £4,012,225.92 = 2.28%. This indicator is slightly under target due to a higher than expected void rate in final quarter. 2014/15 Numerator: £295,243.78 Denominator: £15,089,582.03 = 1.96%.
								
	1.95%	1.90%	1.90%	1.90%	1.90%	1.95%	1.90%	
HSG 9 % of BME applicants on the housing register	10.5%	10.2%	10.7%	11.8%	10.9%	10.2%	10.9%	Q4 2014/15 Total applicants = 892 of which % BME applicants = 10.9%. This figure is consistent with previous quarters. BME figures have decreased slightly from last month possibly due to the review of the housing register in line with the new policy.
								
	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	

PI Code & Short Name	Q4 201 3/1 4	Q1 2014 /15	Q2 2014 /15	Q3 2014 /15	Q4 2014 /15	2013/14	2014/1 5	Latest Note	
HSG 10 Average time taken (days) to process homeless applications	28.6 	23.5 	16.5 	29 	24.5 	21.2 	23.3 	Q4 2014/15 22 Decisions made totalling 539/22 = 24.5 days on average. The average has gone down from last quarter and shows a consistent high performance.	
	33	33	33	33	33	33	33		
HSG 14 (HMGH 60) % of dwellings that are vacant and available to let (GN & HfOP)	Annual LPI						0.70% 	0.50% 	2014/15 Numerator: 12 (Total no. of properties void for less than 28 days) Denominator: 2,408 (Total Housing Stock as @ 31.03.15) = 0.50%. Turnaround of voids continues to improve this year with Voids Surveyors, Voids Operatives team and Housing Management Team working closely on all cases.
							0.80%	0.75%	
HSG 20 (HMPI220) Current tenant rent arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit (excluding HB adjustment)	2.88% 	3.18% 	3.20% 	3.24% 	3.11% 	2.88% 	3.11% 	Q4 2014/15 Numerator: -£21,495.15 Denominator: £4,012,225.92 (-0.54%). 2014/15 Numerator: £469,028.40 Denominator: £15,089,582.03 = 3.11%. This PI is on target. Continued specific focus on rent collection activities within the Rents team has supported the performance of this PI.	
	3.30%	3.29%	3.29%	3.29%	3.29%	3.30%	3.29%		
HSG 21 Homelessness: Number of people accepted as homeless (Minimise)	7 	14 	19 	14 	13 	57 	60 	Q4 2014/15 13 homeless applicants accepted. Acceptances are slightly down from last quarter and better than previous quarters. Finding private rentals as an alternative has been very challenging.	
	15	15	15	15	15	35	60		
HSG 22 Average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation for accepted priority needs families (weeks) (Minimise)	1.71 	0 	0.9 	2.9 	3.3 	3.71 	1.7 	Q4 2014/15: Total number accepted cases in nightly paid accommodation = 4. Total length of stay = 93 days; 93/4 = 23.2 23.2/7= (days in a week) = 3.3 weeks. 4 families only in B&B and they were moved to more suitable UDC accommodation as soon as it was available. UDC TA has been at a premium during this period owing to damp issues and the upcoming demolition of Mead Court.	
	1	0	0	0	0	1	0		

PI Code & Short Name	Q4 201 3/1 4	Q1 2014 /15	Q2 2014 /15	Q3 2014 /15	Q4 2014 /15	2013/14	2014/1 5	Latest Note	
HSG 23 Average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation for accepted priority needs others (weeks) (Minimise)	0 	5.9 	3.07 	0 	0 	5.9 	2.2 	Q4 2014/15 There were no cases in this category in Q4	
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4		
HSG 24 Average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation for rejected (all groups) (weeks) (Minimise)	0.2 	0.1 	1.8 	9.1 	3.9 	0.24 	0.7 	Q4 2014/15 Total number cases in nightly paid accommodation = 3. Total length of stay = 83 nights 83/3 = 27.6. 27.6/7 (days in a week) = 3.9 weeks. One of the cases was a couple who were temporarily housed by us for 3 days and returned to East Herts. The other 2 cases were complex single men who were not suitable for family or shared accommodation.	
	5	4	4	4	4	5	4		
HSG 28 Average energy efficiency rating of dwellings (based on SAP 2005)	Annual LPI						69 	65 	2014/15 Some of the energy efficiency programmes have conversely affected energy efficiency. Future programmes intend to rectify the issue and raise thermal efficiency in the forthcoming years.
							69	70	
HSG 32 (GNPI 19) % of urgent repairs completed within target time	92.0% 	95.2% 	94.7% 	95.1% 	96.7% 	95.0% 	95.4% 	Q4 2014/15 Numerator: 1,044 Denominator: 1,080 96.7%. Performance further improved as Restructure bringing benefits.	
	100.0%	97.5%	97.5%	97.5%	97.5%	100.0%	97.5%		
HSG 34 % of lets to all properties allocated through the allocation scheme to BME applicants	7.15% 	5.97% 	5.7% 	4.5% 	8% 	8.9% 	6.04% 	Q4 2014/15 75 total lets, 6 to BME groups = 8 %. An increase from last quarter.	
	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%		

PI Code & Short Name	Q4 2013/14	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	2013/14	2014/15	Latest Note	
HSG 35 % of Pre-Void Inspections completed on all voids that can be pre-inspected for the period	92%	69%	75%	96%	83.3%	48%	80%	Q4 2014/15 60 voids of which 18 could have been inspected. Of the 18 properties that could have been inspected 15 inspections were completed. 2014/15 201 voids of which 92 could be inspected. 74 Inspections completed = 80%.	
									
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%		
HSG 37 (GNPI 18) % of emergency repairs completed within target time (24hrs)	94.0%	94.9%	96.6%	96.4%	95.7%	96.0%	95.9%	Q4 2014/15 Numerator: 687 Denominator: 718 = 95.7%. Slight reduction in performance during period where Responsive Contract being tendered and renewed.	
									
	100.0%	97.5%	97.5%	97.5%	97.5%	97.0%	97.5%		
HSG 42 (GI5C0) Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate	99.90%	99.43%	99.62%	99.81%	100.00%	99.90%	99.86%	Q4 2014/15 Due to Q1 percentage being so low this lowered our overall percentage for the year.	
									
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%		
HSG 43 Rent collected as a percentage of rent owed (excluding arrears b/f) (HMPI 210)	100.57%	100.32%	98.56%	99.23%	99.30%	100.57%	99.30%	Q4 2014/15 Numerator: £3,992,627.68 Denominator: £4,012,225.92 = 99.51%. 2014/15 Numerator: £14,984,554.29 Denominator: £15,089,582.03 = 99.30%. This PI remains on target due to continued priority focus on rent and rent arrears collection processes.	
									
	99.10%	98.15%	98.65%	98.90%	99.15%	99.10%	99.15%		



Uttlesford District Council

Fast-track equality impact assessment (EqIA) tool

What is this tool for?


This tool will help you to assess the impact of existing or new strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions on residents and staff. It will help you to deliver excellent services, by making sure that they reflect the needs of all members of the community and workforce.

What should be equality impact assessed?

You only need to equality impact assess strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions that are **relevant** to equality. If you are not sure whether your activity is relevant to equality take the 'relevance test' on Page 9.


How do I use the tool?

This tool is easy to use and you do not need expert knowledge to complete it. It asks you to make judgments based on evidence.

The tool uses a system of red flags  to give you an indication of whether or not your responses are identifying potential issues. Getting a red flag does not necessarily indicate a problem, but it does mean that your assessment is highlighting issues or gaps in data that may require further investigation or action.

If there is insufficient space to answer a question, please use a separate sheet.

General information												
1	Name of strategy, policy, project, contract or decision.	HRA Business Plan 2016 – 2046										
2	What is the overall purpose of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	Financial analysis of HRA										
3	Who may be affected by the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision? All tenants in council owned properties All leaseholders in Council owned properties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A specific client group/s e.g. linked by geographical location, social economic factors, age, disabilities, gender, transgender, race, religion or sexual orientation (please state)										
4	Responsible department and Head of Division.	Department: Housing Services Head of Division: Roz Millership										
5	Are other departments or partners involved in delivery of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (please state): Finance, Housing Planning and Policy, Environmental Health. Benefits CAB and other partner agencies										
Gathering performance data												
6	Do you (or do you intend to) collect this monitoring data in relation to any of the following <u>diverse groups</u> ? UDC send out a tenant satisfaction survey which includes questions on equality to ensure that the needs of all service users are being met.	<table border="0"> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender Reassignment</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion & Belief</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy and Maternity</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marriage and Civil Partnerships</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural Isolation</td> </tr> </table>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion & Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy and Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marriage and Civil Partnerships	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural Isolation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability											
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race											
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation											
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion & Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy and Maternity											
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marriage and Civil Partnerships	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural Isolation											

7	<p>How do you (or how do you intend to) monitor the impact of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?</p> <p>The tenant satisfaction survey sent to all tenants gives the opportunity to express if tenants feel that they get value for money. People are free to make their comments and concerns known by returning the survey. The council consults with tenants including through the tenants forum and gives notice on rent and service charge increases.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Performance indicators or targets</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> User satisfaction</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uptake</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consultation or involvement</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Workforce monitoring data</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complaints</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> External verification</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eligibility criteria</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None </p>

Analysing performance data

8	<p>Consider the impact the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision has already achieved, measured by the monitoring data you collect. Is the same impact being achieved for diverse groups as is being achieved across the population or workforce as a whole?</p>	<table> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Yes *</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No*</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Insufficient </td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Not applicable </td> </tr> </table> <p><i>*Please state your evidence for this, including full document titles and dates of publication for audit purposes. Where applicable please also state the nature of any issues identified:</i></p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes *	<input type="checkbox"/>	No*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Insufficient	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes *									
<input type="checkbox"/>	No*									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Insufficient									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable									

9	<p>Is uptake of any services, benefits or opportunities associated with the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision generally representative of <u>diverse groups</u>?</p> <p>The policy does not represent any specific diverse groups. It ensures that council tenants and leaseholders are treated equally regarding of circumstance.</p>	<table> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Yes *</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No*</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Insufficient </td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Not applicable </td> </tr> </table> <p><i>*Please state your evidence for this, including full document titles and dates of publication for audit purposes. Where applicable please also state the nature of any issues identified:</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes *	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Insufficient	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes *									
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No*									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Insufficient									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable									

Checking delivery arrangements

10	<p>You now need to check the accessibility of your delivery arrangements against the requirements below. Click on the hyperlinks for more detailed guidance about the minimum criteria you should meet.</p> <p><i>If assessing a proposed strategy, policy, project, contract or decision, indicate 'Yes' if you anticipate compliance by launch of implementation.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"> <table> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>No </td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> </p>	Yes	No	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No	N/A					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					

The [premises](#) for delivery are accessible to all.

[Consultation](#) mechanisms are inclusive of all.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-------------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

[Participation](#) mechanisms are inclusive of all.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-------------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------


If you answered 'No' to any of the questions above please explain why giving details of any legal justification.

Checking information and communication arrangements

11 You now need to check the accessibility of your information and communication arrangements against the requirements below. Click on the hyperlink for more detailed guidance about the minimum criteria you should meet.

If assessing a proposed strategy policy, project, contract or decision, indicate 'Yes' if you anticipate compliance by launch of implementation.

[Customer contact](#) mechanisms are accessible to all.

Yes	No 	N/A
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Electronic, web-based and paper information is accessible to all.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
-------------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Publicity campaigns are inclusive of all.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

Images and text in documentation are representative and inclusive of all.



<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If you answered 'No' to any of the questions above please explain why, giving details of any legal justification.

Future Impact

12 Think about what your strategy, policy, project, contract or decision is aiming to achieve over the long term and the ways in which it will seek to do this. This is your opportunity to take a step back and consider the practical implementation of your strategy, policy, project, contract or decision in the future. As well as checking that people from diverse groups will not be inadvertently excluded from or disadvantaged by any proposed activities, it is also an opportunity to think about how you can maximize your impact, reach as many people as possible and really make a difference to the lives of everyone in Uttlesford regardless of their background or circumstances.

Is it likely to inadvertently exclude or disadvantage any diverse groups?


- No
- Yes * 
- Insufficient evidence 

*Please state any potential issues Identified.

OVERVIEW
70,000 residents
Demographic make up according to diverse groups.

Improvement actions

13 If your assessment has highlighted any potential issues or red flags, can these be easily addressed?

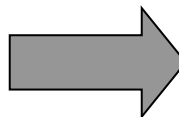
- Yes
- No* 
- Not applicable

**If Yes, please describe your proposed action/s, intended impact, monitoring arrangements implementation date and lead officer:*

Making a judgement – conclusions and next steps

14 Following this fast-track assessment, please confirm the following:

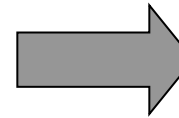
- There are no inequalities identified that cannot be easily addressed or legally justified
- There is insufficient evidence to make a robust judgement.
- Inequalities have been identified which cannot be easily addressed.



No further action required. Complete this form and implement any actions you identified in Q13 above



Additional evidence gathering required (go to Q17 on Page 7 below).



Action planning required (go to Q18 on Page 8 below).

15 If you have any additional comments to make, please include here.

- None

Completion

16	Name and job title (Assessment lead officer)	Roz Millership
	Name/s of any assisting officers and people consulted during assessment:	Judith Snares
	Date:	1 December 2015
	Date of next review:	1 December 2015
	<i>For new strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions this should be one year from implementation.</i>	
<p>When completed, a copy of this form should be saved with the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision's file for audit purposes and in case it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act.</p>		

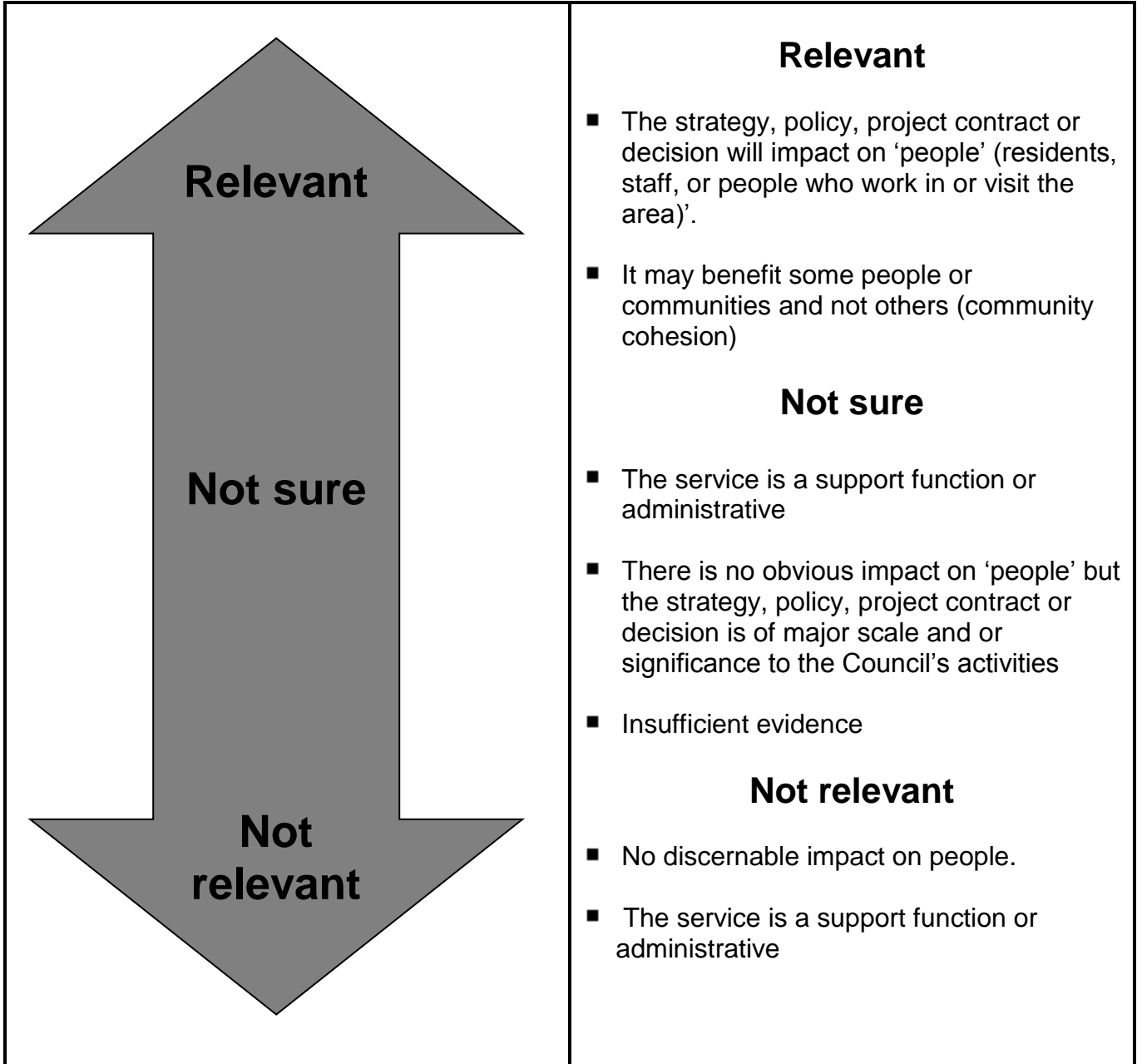
Additional evidence gathering and action planning	
17	<p>If your fast-track assessment indicated that complex issues or inequalities were identified which could not be easily addressed, or you had insufficient evidence to make a judgement, you need to undertake an additional evidence gathering and action planning process. This is described below:</p> <p>(a) Gather and analyse relevant additional evidence (which may include engagement with diverse groups), to address gaps in your knowledge, enhance understanding of the issues and inform options for addressing these. Additional evidence is likely to include any or all of the following:</p> <p>Data gathering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demographic profiles of Uttlesford ■ Data about the physical environment, e.g. housing market, workforce, employment, education and learning provision, transport, spatial planning and public spaces ■ Results of local needs analysis ■ Results of staff surveys ■ Research reports on the needs/experience of diverse groups ■ National best practice/guidance ■ Benchmarking with other organisations <p>Consultation and involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Existing consultation findings that may provide insight into the issues ■ New, specially commissioned engagement with diverse groups ■ Expert views of stakeholders/employers organisations representing diverse groups ■ Advice from experts or national organisations ■ Specialist staff/in-house expertise. <p>(b) For advice on evidence gathering or engagement with diverse groups please contact</p>

	<p>your departmental equality lead officer. Discuss any proposed consultation with your departmental equality lead officer to ensure it is coordinated with related exercises across the Council as a whole.</p> <p>(c) Use your evidence gathering, analysis and engagement with diverse groups to develop options for addressing inequalities or unmet need, consulting with relevant management teams, Members, strategic groups/partners where necessary to confirm proposed actions and resource issues.</p> <p>(d) When options for addressing any issues are agreed, if these cannot be implemented immediately integrate them into the appropriate service plan/strategic plan/multi-agency strategy, so that it is clear how they will be delivered, when they will be delivered, by whom and how this will be monitored.</p> <p>(e) Identify how the continuing implementation and impact of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision on diverse groups in Uttlesford will be monitored.</p> <p>(f) Having gathered evidence re-evaluate this assessment.</p> <p>(g) Following completion of the above, please confirm the following:</p>
18	<p>The conclusions and agreed proposals: A review of the strategy will take place in 2017/2018. After this the policy will be reviewed in 5 year cycles.</p> <hr/> <p>Summary of evidence gathered, including any internal and external consultation (please include full document titles and dates of publication and consultation for audit purposes): Consultation with tenant forum and housing board</p> <hr/> <p>Date proposals to be implemented and lead officer: The proposal is that the strategy will become effective from January 2016</p> <hr/> <p>Where implementation is not immediate, please state in which service plan or strategy the proposed actions will be integrated: N/A</p> <hr/> <p>Monitor arrangements (please include full details for audit purposes): The equality impact assessment will be reviewed if any inequalities are identified or within 2 years of the date of the original assessment.</p>

Additional Comments	
19	<p>If you have any additional comments to make, please include here:</p> <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> None
Completion	
20	<p>Name and job title (Lead Officer): Roz Millership</p> <p>Name/s of other assisting officers: Judith Snares</p> <p>Date: 1 December 2015</p> <p>Date of next review (if any): 1 December 2017</p>
<p>When completed, a copy of this form should be saved with the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision's file for audit purposes and in case it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act.</p>	

The relevance test

Use the quick guide below to decide whether or not your strategy, policy, project, contract or decision is relevant to equality:



If you are not sure whether your strategy, project or decision is relevant to equality, ask Sue Locke, a member of the Council's Equality Standard Working Group Officer for advice.
Tel. 01799 510537

Ensuring your premises for delivery are easily accessible

In order to ensure that your premises for delivery are accessible to disabled customers and staff, older people and people with small children you should comply with the principles of accessible design summarised below.

In some cases, and for legitimate reasons, this may not be possible. Where this is the case you can still ensure your premises are accessible if you make appropriate reasonable adjustments. For guidance on reasonable adjustments see the 'Key contacts' section at the foot of this page.

Level access

Is there level access into and inside your premises? This means no steps, steep slopes or lips on doorways.

Ramp or lift

If there are steps, can you fit a ramp or install a lift so disabled customers and staff and parents with pushchairs can get in? To be safe ramps must:

- Have a gradient of 1:20 or less
- Have a handrail
- Be firmly fixed to the ground

Bell or buzzer and alarms

Can you install a bell or buzzer outside and go out to disabled customers or staff when they ring? Do you have a visual as well as audible alarm?

Door handles

Are door handles easy to grip and easy to reach for customers or staff who are wheelchair users?

- Use an easy grip handle in a contrasting colour
- Install a magnetic device to hold doors open
- Are door locks easy to handle (not fiddly)?

Doormats

Are any doormats flush with the floor? Avoid bristle matting – it can be difficult for customers or staffs who are wheelchair users.

Colour contrast

Is there a colour contrast between your floors, walls, ceilings and doors? Use matt paint in contrasting colours or different tones.

Corridors and aisles

Are corridors and aisles clear enough for a wheelchair or pushchair to pass through?

Seating

Is there somewhere to sit down if customers or staffs have to queue or wait?

- Have seating with and without armrests, if possible.
- Leave space for a wheelchair user to pull up alongside a seated companion.

Height

Are all key facilities on the main floor? Are popular products on a mid-height shelf, and easy to reach from a wheelchair? Provide a lap tray or clipboard if a lower counter section is not available.

Lighting

Is it easy for visually impaired customers or staff to see everything they need to?

- Make sure your premises are well lit.
- Mark corners, steps and counter edges with high visibility tape so they can be easily seen.
- Keep highly reflective surfaces away from signs to avoid glare.

Guide dogs

If you normally ban animals, you should consider relaxing this for assistance dogs. Remember, it is not just visually impaired people who use assistance dogs.

Signs and labels

Are signs and labels short and easy to read? Are Induction loops available?

- Use large clear text (for example, 24-point text for shelf bar labels)
- Use contrasting colours (for example, black text on a white or yellow background)
- Make sure signs are at a suitable height.

Use visual or picture symbols as well as words, if appropriate.

Key contacts

For further advice or information please contact Sue Locke, a member of the Council's Equality Standard Working Group Officer.

Email: slocke@uttlesford.gov.uk

Telephone: 01799 510537

Text phone: 18001

Alternatively, contact your Divisional Equality Lead Officer:

Division/Services	Head of Division/Services	Tel. No.

Ensuring customer contact mechanisms are easily accessible

In order to ensure that customer contact mechanisms are accessible to disabled customers and staff, you should provide a range of alternatives – for example: phone, email, text phone, fax and face-to-face.

In some cases and for legitimate reasons, this may not be possible. Where this is the case you can still ensure customer contact mechanisms are accessible if you make appropriate reasonable adjustments. For guidance on reasonable adjustments see the 'Key contacts' section below.

Key contacts

For further advice or information please contact Sue Locke, a member of the Council's Equality Standard Working Group Officer.

Email: slocke@uttlesford.gov.uk
Telephone: 01799 510537
Text phone: 18001

Alternatively, contact your Divisional Equality Lead Officer:

Division/Services	Head of Division/Services	Tel. No.

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 12 January 2016

12

Title: Housing Strategy 2016-21

Portfolio Holder: Julie Redfern, Executive Member for Housing and Economic Development

Key decision: Yes

Summary

1. The Housing Strategy 2016-21 sets out the Council's vision and aims for housing in the District for the next five years. It describes the key issues affecting the local housing market and what the Council intends to do to help overcome these challenges and create the right conditions to support growth and improve housing outcomes for local people

Recommendations

2. That Cabinet agrees the adoption of the Housing Strategy 2016 - 21 as recommended by the Housing Board.

Financial Implications

3. Recommendations have costs but these are already budgeted.

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Housing Board report, 9th December 2015

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	Members, tenants, all partner agencies and public consultation via the website
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	Equality impact assessment has been completed
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None

Sustainability	The Council's energy officer has been involved in the drafting of the document.
Ward-specific impacts	Whole District
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

6. The last Housing Strategy was written and published in 2012 and set priorities for a three year period. During that time, many of the key priorities have been achieved. These include the following:
- Delivered 284 affordable homes
 - Landlords forum held once a year
 - Successful Housing Strategy conference held once a year
 - Delivering 1 and 2 bed bungalows on S106 sites
 - Reviewed opportunities for delivery of further regeneration and new build including exploration of alternative delivery models
 - Development of a new Allocations Policy
 - Brought 185 empty properties back into use since October 2013
 - Assisting in the development of the Essex Landlord Accreditation Scheme
 - Administered and provided 62 grants costing £455,428 to enable disabled people to live as comfortably and independently as possible in their homes
7. It was agreed that a new Housing Strategy needed to be written and published in 2015 and a conference was held to scope our future priorities for the next 5 years. This was well attended by Councillors, tenant forum members, key partners and organisations.
8. A draft document was published for a 6 week consultation period on the Council's website, emailed to key partners, members of the Housing Board and Tenant Forum and to those who attended the Conference. Comments have been looked at and changes made to the document. The comments were considered by the Housing Board and the final strategy was agreed on 9th December 2015.
9. The new housing strategy for 2016-2021 sets out the main changes in the housing market, identifies the key challenges in delivering new homes and housing services locally, and informs on what action will be required to help meet both current and future housing needs and aspirations.

The four key strategic aims suggested for the new Housing Strategy 2016-21 are:

- a. Increasing housing supply across all tenures

- b. Helping people to live independently
- c. Ensuring decent, safe and healthy homes
- d. Creating sustainable communities

10. Accompanying the Housing Strategy is a Housing Strategy Action Plan which sets out detailed objectives and outcomes for each of the themes above.

11. Due to the number of policy changes currently being proposed by Government, the Housing Strategy and Action Plan will be kept under review and updated regularly in order to reflect changes in policy, practice or economic conditions.

Conclusion

1. The new Housing Strategy will provide a coherent plan for housing policy, a sound evidence base and seek to inform the new Local Plan for the District. The Strategy is aligned with the Housing Business Plan and will stand alongside the Homelessness Strategy.

Risk Analysis

2.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document is delayed/not approved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 – little risk, partners and members will be involved in scoping the document and tight timescales have been set 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 – a future plan is needed and could cause delays to key projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that sufficient time is given to consult with partners and members

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Housing Strategy Action Plan 2016-21

Priority	Action	Timescale	Resources	Outcome
Increasing housing supply across all tenures				
Delivering Affordable Housing	Work with the Rural Community Council for Essex to develop new rural housing schemes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver 3 new housing needs surveys in identified parishes with the Rural Housing Enabler • Complete a site search in one of the identified parishes 	September 2017 January 2016	Resource identified in Planning and Building Control budget	3 housing needs surveys completed in the District 1 site search completed and site identified for a rural housing scheme.
	Continue to develop LA new build scheme and deliver 15 homes per year.	April 2017	HRA funding	15 new Council homes built per year.
	Review potential development on Council owned land	April 2016	HRA funding	Development review completed and sites identified for sale or Council own development.
	Deliver in partnership with Registered Providers 100 affordable homes per year	April 2016	HCA funding	100 affordable homes delivered per year
	Review best use of commuted sum	September 2016	Within existing resources	Committed sum pot

	pot across the District when re established			spent in the most cost effective way.
	Complete a review of our developing registered providers to ensure that residents are gaining a good service from providers.	December 2016	Within existing resources	Review complete
	Work with Hastoe to deliver the Growth Area Funding project in Newport and deliver 34 affordable homes	April 2017	Growth Area Funding	34 affordable homes delivered
	Work with consultants to look at viability on large scale affordable housing schemes when required	On-going	Within existing resources	Affordable housing maximised.
	Work with Access group and arrange a visit to a new development scheme to look at accessibility of new build bungalows.	July 2016	Within existing resources	Scheme visit complete and findings used to improved future schemes.
	Implement the findings of the SHMA update	January 2016	Within existing resources	SHMA findings implemented
Helping people to live independently				
Delivering Supported Housing	Re-provision of a new Mental Health facility with Metropolitan housing	April 2017	Will require funding for the development	New mental health facility provided.
	Work with partners to deliver a supported unit for people with learning disabilities with Hastoe and East Thames	September 2016	Funding gained from Essex CC	New learning disability scheme provided

	Work with Home Farm Trust (HFT) to identify development opportunities for a new Learning disability scheme in Ugley	January 2017	Funding will be required	New learning disability scheme provided.
	Work with planning policy to identify and deliver new sites for Gypsy and Travellers.	January 2017	Within existing resources.	New sites for gypsy and travellers identified.
	Review the Government's wheelchair standards when published	April 2016	Within existing resources	Wheelchair standards reviewed and used as policy.
	Review Uttlesford's wheelchair policy, look at how many units are in the pipeline, are they meeting our needs, is the % correct	April 2016	Within existing resources	UDC Wheelchair standards reviewed and used as policy.
	Work with Essex CC to investigate the needs of care leavers and progress a scheme if required.	September 2016	Funding would need to be sought	Care leavers housed in Uttlesford.
	Work with key partners and stakeholders to ensure that we understand the specialist housing needs of those living in the District to inform the Local Plan	April 2016	Within existing resources	Fully informed Local Plan
Older People	Deliver an extra care scheme in	September 2017	Funding gained from	Extra care scheme

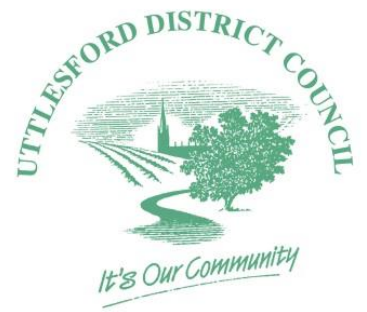
	Radwinter Road, Saffron Walden		HCA and Essex CC	delivered
	Deliver an extra care scheme in Great Dunmow in partnership.	September 2017	S106 site to be provided by the developer	Extra care scheme delivered
	Investigate and work with a specialist provider to deliver a scheme for dementia sufferers in Uttlesford.	September 2017	Funding will be required	Dementia scheme delivered
	On all new developments, request 5% as one and two bedroom bungalows to meet the needs of the ageing population	April 2016	Within existing resources	5% bungalows delivered.
	Investigate the implications of the Care Act 2014	April 2016	Within existing resources	Implications investigated and policy paper published
	Deliver the sheltered housing upgrade programme ensuring that all schemes are fit for purpose	April 2018	Within existing resources	Sheltered housing upgraded.
	Provide Internet cafes in all our sheltered schemes for silver surfers.	April 2016	Within existing resources	Internet cafes provided in all sheltered schemes.
	Publish key documents in easy read format	March 2016	Within existing resources	Documents published in easy read format
Homelessness	Investigate and deliver in partnership the provision of additional supported accommodation for vulnerable adults	June 2017	Funding will be required	Supported housing scheme for vulnerable adults built.
	Deliver a supported unit in the	April 2017	Funding identified	Domestic violence

	District for those fleeing Domestic Violence in partnership with Safer Places			scheme built
	Write and publish new Homeless Strategy 2015-20	January 2016	Within existing resources	Homeless strategy published
Allocations	Review the new allocations policy and the impact it has had on the Housing register	January 2016	Within existing resources	Allocations policy reviewed.
Ensuring decent, safe and healthy homes				
Private sector	Deliver on the new Climate Local Strategy	April 2016 and moving forwards	Within existing resources	Climate Local Strategy delivered.
	Continue to identify empty homes within the district and take appropriate action to bring them back into use	On-going	£50K allocated for 2015/16 plus additional PLACE scheme funding in place	Empty homes brought back into use
	Organise Landlords forum once a year	April 2016 and yearly after.	Within existing resources	Landlords forum held.
	Take part in a winter campaign with CAB ensuring that residents know how to keep warm, where to seek advice etc.	Winter 2015	Within existing resources	Winter campaign successfully run.
	Continue to administer Disabled Facilities Grants and seek additional funding from Essex County Council	On-going	Within existing resources	Disabled Facilities grants allocated.
	Continue to administer Home Repair Assistance Grants for those	On-going	Within existing resources	Home repair assistance grants allocated.

	in greatest need			
	Continue to investigate complaints alleging poor housing conditions	On-going	Within existing resources	Complaints investigated and dealt with.
	Commission the BRE housing stock modelling service to profile housing within the district	April 2015	Funding allocated in 2014/2015	Survey commissioned and implemented.
	Develop and implement an action plan based on the findings of the stock modelling data	March 2016 and moving forwards	Within existing resources	Implement Action plan
	Develop and implement an action plan for identifying licensed HMOs and take action to ensure that they are legally compliant	February 2015 and moving forwards	Within existing resources	Implement action plan
	Explore funding opportunities to implement projects to improve the condition of private sector housing	April 2016	Within existing resources	Funding gained for improvements to private sector house condition.
	Measure the cost savings to the NHS from the councils intervention	April 2016 and moving forwards	Within existing resources	Cost savings measured.
	Work with Home Improvement Agency to meet local needs	On-going	Within existing resources	
The Council's Housing Stock and other public sector housing	Continue to implement the agreed action plan of new housing improvements and service enhancements, funded from the additional resources made available by HRA self-financing	April 2016	HRA Funding	Housing improvements completed and reviewed at Housing Board
	Publish updated HRA Business Plan	January 2016	Within existing resources	HRA Business Plan published.

	Continue to make energy efficiency improvements to the existing housing stock	On-going	Within existing resources / HRA funding	Energy efficiency improvements complete
	Continue to provide advice to tenants on saving energy	On- going	Within existing resources	Energy saving advice given to tenants
	Work with the Tenant Regulatory Panel to undertake detailed reviews of specific housing services	April 2016	Within existing resources	Tenant Regulatory Panel reports to Housing Board with review findings.
Sustainable Communities	Investigate levels of Black and Minority Ethnic housing need and ensure that current and future housing provision meets these needs.	April 2016	Within existing resources	Data published and a way forward identified.
	Undertake equality impact assessments on new and existing housing policies.	October 2016	Within existing resources	Equality impact assessments completed on new documents.
	Continue to work towards Equality standards	April 2016	Within existing resources	Progress on meetings equality standards.
	Involve service users in shaping the services that they use and that affect their lives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through tenant forum • Ongoing consultation events with older people, young people, those with specialist needs. • Yearly Housing Strategy 	March 2016	Within existing resources	Service users fully involved in key decisions.

	conference			
	Work with Planning and Health colleagues within the Council to ensure that adequate facilities are provided alongside housing. (Community facilities, health centres and schools)	On-going	Within existing resources	Good facilities provides alongside new development.
	Work with Uttlesford Futures to ensure that the Housing Strategy can inform the West Essex Health and Wellbeing Strategy	April 2016	Within existing resources	Housing Strategy informs the West Essex Health and Wellbeing Strategy
	Publish an easy read executive summary of the Housing Strategy to ensure that all service users can understand and shape our priorities.	December 2015	Voices to be Heard Group providing support.	Easy read executive summary of the Housing Strategy published.
Housing Strategy Review	Organise Housing Strategy conference to review progress, set new targets and celebrate success	October 2015	Within existing resources	Housing Strategy conference held.
	Review action plan twice a year and report to Housing Board.	Six monthly report to Housing Board and Tenant Forum.	Within existing resources	Action plan reviewed.



UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Housing Strategy

2016 - 2021

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Foreword from Housing Portfolio Holder

Uttlesford is a beautiful rural area, regularly rated as one of the best places in the country in which to live. This along with its great location between London and Cambridge makes this district a most desirable place to live. This in turn inflates house prices making it very difficult for young people and families to get a foot on the housing ladder.

We have a lack of availability in both the privately owned and rental market of bungalows and other types of suitable accommodation for our more mature residents. This is a problem in both our towns and villages making it difficult for people to move from properties that are too big and not suitable for their changing needs to something more appropriate.

Housing continues to be a key priority for Uttlesford District Council. Our housing and planning departments continue to work together to provide for the needs of our residents. The challenges of delivering housing, particularly affordable housing, are growing. Many who are already adequately housed do not wish to see further development despite the clear need. Continual changes in government policy make planning for the future of affordable and council owned properties more difficult not only to build but to retain for future tenants.

This council will continue to contribute to the Rural Community Council for Essex (RCCE) to help parish councils plan for exception sites which are so important in keeping our village communities vibrant and giving local people the opportunity to live where they have roots and personal connections.

The Council will look for ways in which it can continue with its programme of building and refurbishment of its own homes as well as working with developers and housing associations to meet our housing need. Times are very difficult but we will look for opportunities and maximise them where we can for the benefit of the residents of Uttlesford.

Cllr Julie Redfern
Housing Portfolio Holder Uttlesford District Council

Chapter 1: Summary and Introduction

The Council's new Housing Strategy draws on a wide ranging consultation with stakeholders as well as building on existing evidence and local knowledge. As the new Local Plan is drafted, the Housing Strategy will form part of the evidence base of the Local Plan alongside the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).

The Council is committed to producing and adopting a sound Local Plan and has set out the programme for completing this work. The Council will continue to work towards the delivery of the Housing Strategy through both Local Planning and Development Management.

The new Strategy also stands alongside the HRA Business Plan, Homelessness Strategy and Developers Guide and sets out how we plan to deliver our key priorities and objectives for the next three years.

Our key objectives

Increasing Housing Supply across all tenures

Helping People to live independently

Ensuring decent, safe and healthy homes

Creating sustainable communities

Achievements from 2012-15

- Redevelopment of Holloway Crescent complete
- Growth area funding gained and used to provide rural housing in Hatfield Heath
- Completion of a second Passiv haus scheme with Hastoe and a further one planned
- Delivered 284 affordable homes as part of market housing development on sites across the District.
- An annual Landlord forum
- An annual Housing Strategy conference
- Delivering 1 and 2 bed bungalows on new development sites
- New commuted sum policy that is providing a pot of funding for affordable housing development in the District.

- Set up a tenant regulatory panel and delivering a comprehensive co regulatory framework.
- Reviewed opportunities for delivery of further regeneration and new build including exploration of alternative delivery models
 - Mead Court redevelopment on site and progressing well
 - Catons Lane, Saffron Walden – redevelopment of a garage site with 6 houses. Planning permission secured. Scheme on site.
 - Hatherley Court, Saffron Walden – Remodelling of existing sheltered scheme. Planning application secured. Start on site programmed for April 2016
 - Reynolds Court, Newport – new build redevelopment of existing sheltered scheme. Planning application submitted. Start on site targeted for October 2015.
 - Other sites, including sheltered schemes, garage and infill sites, and excess garden land are being assessed for development viability
- Successful delivery of the investment programme including the delivery of environmental improvements
- Development of a new Anti-Social Behaviour policy and procedures
- Development and adoption of a new Allocations Policy
- Implementation of annual tenancy inspections
- Implementation of an in-house Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme
- New tenancy strategy
- Brought 185 empty properties back into use since October 2013
- Assisting in the development of the Essex Landlord Accreditation Scheme
- Administered and provided 62 grants totalling £455,428 to enable disabled people to live as comfortably and independently as possible in their homes
- Administered and provided 18 grants totalling £31,167 to residents in receipt of means tested benefits to carry out home repairs and improve energy efficiency
- Investigated 105 complaints of poor conditions in private sector housing

Chapter 2: The National Context

Key Policies

The Governments' Housing Strategy

The Government's national policies for housing have recently been updated and published in the Productivity Plan. The Plan sets out the steps the Government are going to take to ensure more homes are built that people can afford, through planning reform, progress on delivering 200,000 starter homes and the extension of the Right to Buy.

Legislative changes

The introduction of the Localism Act in 2011 gave local authorities new powers to discharge homelessness duties into the private sector, a new duty to introduce a Tenancy Strategy, and new flexibilities to determine housing allocations and qualification criteria. It also introduced reforms to social housing tenure which enabled social landlords to grant tenancies for a fixed length of time.

The Localism Act introduced significant housing related changes, including:

Social housing allocations reform – social housing is in great demand and the Act gives local authorities more freedom to develop policies about eligibility to enter the housing register. While this means that local authorities can prevent people who do not need social housing from joining the list, they are still obliged to ensure that social homes accommodate those most vulnerable.

Social housing tenure reform – this allows for more flexible arrangements for people entering social housing in the future by enabling social landlords to grant tenancies for a fixed length over time.

Reform of homelessness legislation – this enables local housing authorities to discharge their statutory homeless duty into a suitable private rented accommodation.

Reform of council housing finance – this enables local authorities to retain collected rent and spend it on local priorities.

Right to buy – Discounts increased from £16,000 to £75,000 to encourage tenants to access the housing market and buy their Council property.

The **Welfare Reform Act 2012** made the biggest change to the welfare system for over 60 years. It introduced a wide range of reforms which aimed to make the benefits system simpler. The main elements of the welfare reform were:

- Universal Credit
- Benefits Cap
- Personal Independence Payment

- Council tax benefit
- Housing Benefit

Of equal significance to the raft of new legislation passed was the dismantling of the existing infrastructure within which local authorities have been used to operating. Key changes saw the removal of regional government, the abolition of the Audit Commission and the demise of the Housing Corporation and its successor body the Tenant Services Authority (TSA). Housing associations moved from being Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to Registered Providers (RPs) and their regulation and funding was assumed by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). In the transition, regulation became 'light touch' with an emphasis on value for money and financial viability.

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Affordable Homes Programme introduced Affordable Rent, a new form of social housing and the main type of new housing supply. Housing providers can let a property at an Affordable Rent (inclusive of service charges, where applicable) of up to 80% of the gross market rent reflective of the property size and location. Affordable rent will also be used to support funding for future delivery.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. It provides a framework within which councils and local people can produce their own distinctive Local Plans or Neighbourhood Development Plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of their communities.

It specifies that local authorities have a duty *"to plan for a mix of housing for different groups, including older people, based on robust data, needs analysis and local demographic projections."*

It also set out the requirement for local Authorities to maintain a five year land supply of deliverable sites for housing

New Homes Bonus

The New Homes Bonus was introduced during 2011/12 and has meant that for every new home and empty property brought back into use, local authorities receive the equivalent of the annual council tax raised, together with an additional £350 for affordable units. This scheme intends to incentivise local authorities and local communities to accept and encourage residential development.

Help to Buy Scheme

The 'Help to Buy' scheme was introduced to help first time buyers by providing Government loans of 20% of the price of a newly built home, with no interest to pay for the first five years of the loan. This was intended as a stimulus to generate a greater number of people able to take up home ownership and to support the building of new homes.

The Care Act 2014

The wellbeing of people is at the centre of the new Care Act. Councils now have a duty to think about the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of people who need care. Councils also have a new duty to provide preventative services to keep people healthy in the first place.

The aim of the act is to put people and their carers in control of their care and support. In addition the Act will put a limit on the amount anyone will have to pay towards the cost of their care.

The Care Act contains core legal duties and powers relating to adult social care. Local authorities will be responsible for providing a broader care and support role towards the local community.

We will need to recognise and incorporate the strategy that Adult Social Care and the West Essex Clinical Commissioners develop into the Housing Strategy.

Implications of the 2015 Budget

As this document is being drafted, there are many new proposals coming from the 2015 Budget, the Autumn Statement and the Productivity Plan, the implications of these are not currently known and many will have an effect on our work programme and priorities in the coming years.

- 1% rent reduction for the next 4 years for social housing tenants

This has implications for both the Council and our Housing Association partners. Future development programmes are based around rental income and borrowing capacity from new and existing stock. With cuts of 1% per year, housing providers are facing significant losses to their balance sheets. Our Housing Association partners are currently assessing the impact of this and looking at their future development programmes. This could mean that many providers cannot progress schemes that they have expressed an interest in or they may be renegotiating with developers and offering lower prices for schemes.

- Extend the Right to Buy scheme to housing association tenants.

This has implications for our Housing Association partners who have not factored this into their business plans financially. It is also a concern on rural exception schemes whereby development is allowed on greenfield sites as the properties are held in perpetuity to meet a local need, we welcome the proposal that homes on such sites will be exempt but await further detail from Government. We will respond to consultation on these mechanisms once the detail is known, drawing on our depth of experience of the operation of rural exception schemes.

It also proposed the following:

- selling off the most expensive council houses when they become vacant. We are still waiting for confirmation on the final figures before we understand the true implications of this.
- Those on higher incomes in social housing will have to pay the market rate for their homes. That applies to those earning above £40,000 in London and £30,000 elsewhere in Britain.
- The cap on benefits will be cut from £26,000 to £23,000 in London and £20,000 in the rest of the UK. Working-age benefits will be frozen for four years, including tax credits and housing benefit

As these proposals are developed, the Council will be looking at the impact and reviewing the Housing Strategy to take account of it.

Developer Contributions

Throughout the life of the last Housing Strategy, we were collecting commuted sums from developers on small sites and using this to fund our Council house building programme.

In November 2014, a Ministerial statement was published which made small developments exempt from affordable housing contributions. This had a significant impact on the Council and we were unable to collect £1.4million of affordable housing contributions from developers.

This has since been appealed by two Councils and the policy has been quashed. The government has now removed paragraphs from a section on planning obligations in the national planning practice guidance related to the small development policy and the vacant building credit.

The Council has reviewed its policies in the light of this announcement and published a new Developer Contributions document.

Chapter 3: The Local Context

Partnerships and Policies

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)

Locally-owned partnerships between local authorities and business that play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and creation of jobs. Uttlesford works with two LEP the South East LEP (SELEP); and the Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership (GCGPEP) Both are focused on helping to drive forward sustainable economic growth in our area – with local business, education providers, the third sector and the public sector working together to achieve this.

West Essex Commissioning Care Group (CCG)

In April 2013, the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group became the statutory body responsible for buying healthcare services on behalf of 290,000 people in the Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford districts. The commissioning group is made up of 38 general practices who work together to ensure the best possible healthcare is available to everyone in west Essex.

Representatives from the CCG sit on the Local Strategic Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board. Working jointly will help to meet the future needs of residents in Uttlesford in the future.

Housing Related Support Partnership


Officers are represented on the Housing Related Support Partnership group which is made up of officers from the District Councils across Essex, County Council officers, Provider representatives, Police, Probation, mental health commissioning and Essex Drug and Alcohol Team (EDAAT).

The aim of this group is to inform and recommend the strategic direction of the housing related support (HRS) programme in Essex. It will identify opportunities for joint or aligned commissioning of services which will meet a wider range of outcomes, especially within the context of the developing Social Care, Public Health and Health agendas. The group will also look at the best use of reduced and non-ring-fenced resources.

Local Strategic Partnership – Uttlesford Futures

The Uttlesford LSP “Uttlesford Futures” is a collaboration of organisations including the district council, the county council, the local health service, the emergency services, the voluntary sector and statutory social care partners.

Their vision is to bring partners together to help resolve community priorities and challenges, with a view to maximising effectiveness and sustainability.

LSPs allow public bodies to work together on projects they wouldn't be able to do on their own. Uttlesford Futures' work is guided by the priorities that are set out in the district's  [Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2018 \[143kb\]](#).

The key themes in this strategy are:

- Children and young people matter
- Staying healthy
- Developing business
- Feeling safe
- Protecting the environment
- Getting around

These themes come from a combination of priorities that have been identified as being important locally and ones which central government have said that LSPs need to look at.

The Housing Strategy works alongside the Sustainable Community Strategy and both documents aim to complement the work of each other.

Corporate Plan 2015-20

The Council has recently published its Corporate Plan 2015-20 and has the following priorities:

- Remain a **low tax** Council
- Continue to listen and respond to our communities so we stay focused on the delivery of **high quality** key services that matter.
- We will have shared the benefits of growth with our communities in an **responsible** way that protects and enhances our environment
- Delivering thriving communities

Local Plan

The adopted Local Plan, together with national policy and guidance, sets out the framework for development within the District. The Council is working to produce a new Local Plan and recently adopted a new Local Development Scheme which sets out the timescale and process for completing this work.

The Housing Strategy forms a key part of the evidence base for the Local Plan as well as Development Management decisions on applications and will need to be taken into account.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Uttlesford District Council worked with the adjoining authorities of Brentwood, Broxbourne, East Herts, Epping Forest and Harlow in 2008 and commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to undertake an assessment of the housing markets of these districts, which for the purposes of this study is collectively called the London Commuter Belt (East)/M11 sub-region.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is a framework that the district council can follow to develop a good understanding of how housing markets operate. It assesses housing need and demand and will be used to development the housing policies in the Local Development Framework.

A further update commissioned by Epping Forest, Harlow, East Herts and Uttlesford Councils was published in September 2015 and informs this Strategy.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan sets out how the Council will resource the maintenance of its homes and its investment priorities for the future.

The purpose of the business plan is to demonstrate that the council can maintain its housing assets, and deliver the levels of service, home and neighbourhood improvements. It is first and foremost a financial document, which determines how the council will meet the needs of present and future tenants, demonstrating that Government and local targets can be achieved and ensuring the long-term viability of the stock.

An effective Business Plan has become crucial since the government announced the reform of the rules governing local authority housing finance and the introduction of the self-financing system. This has been a major change in national housing finance and has introduced new opportunities for the Council's housing service but also caused exposure to risks. It is therefore critical that the HRA continues to be managed on sound business principles.

The document can be found at www.uttlesford.gov.uk

Chapter 4: Scene Setting – The Uttlesford Area

Uttlesford is a sparsely populated rural locality in Northwest Essex. The District borders Hertfordshire to the West and Cambridgeshire to the North. It is the largest District in Essex at 63,752 hectares and is mainly rural in character with two market towns - Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow, a range of key villages; Elsenham, Takeley, Great Chesterford, Newport, Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted and a number of smaller parishes.

Uttlesford has a population of around 83,500 (2014 figure) which is set to increase over the next 10 -15 years with new housing development. 53% of residents are aged 25 – 64. Around 30% are under 24 and 16.5% are over 65. When compared to the East of England and England, it is clear that Uttlesford has less young people and more older people. With a lower number of working age adults supporting both the retired and the young.

There are good road and rail links into London, Cambridge and Harlow from settlements in the M11 Stansted-Cambridge and A120 Stansted-Braintree corridors, although public transport in the more rural locations is poor. Stansted Airport lies within its boundaries.

Key Messages from the evidence base

- The Uttlesford District is projected to increase from 83,500 people to 105,800 by 2035.
- The number of residents living in the district who are aged 65 and over is expected to increase from 15,800 people to 28,000.
- Growing ageing population with 1,070 people aged over 65 in Uttlesford are thought to have dementia. This figure is estimated to rise to 1,920 by 2030.
- 70% of the population own their own home.
- Average house price of £450,300 compared to regional average of £299,400 (August 2015)
- Average house price is 11 times the average income.
- Average income in Uttlesford is £24,575 per annum.

The evidence base shows that house prices are high in Uttlesford and incomes low, meaning that mortgages are unaffordable for a large percentage of our population. This places a strain on the Council's housing stock and the private rented sector. Young people, families and those providing our key services (for example care staff, teachers, cleaners etc.) are moving out of Uttlesford away from family and support to be able to buy their first home.

Our population is getting older, living longer and requiring greater care. This is already having implications for the housing market. Requirements for extra care, residential homes and a specialist dementia facility are needed to meet these needs.

Chapter 5: Partnership Working

Strong partnerships are an essential part of this strategy and ensures that key projects can be delivered even with limited resources. Partners include all of the Local Authorities in Essex through the Essex Housing Officers Group, Registered Providers, the Homes and Communities Agency and Essex County Council. Another key partner for Uttlesford is its Local Strategic Partnership, Uttlesford Futures which is the key driver for Uttlesford's Community Strategy.

Housing Strategy Conference

As a result of the successful Housing Strategy Conference held in July 2012, the Council hosts a yearly conference to share best practice, monitor achievements and set future objectives. This has helped set the objectives for this new Housing Strategy.

Housing Board

The Housing Board was set up to champion housing issues within the authority, to monitor the Housing Strategy and Business Plan and work on specific time limited housing projects. The group are currently progressing the councils new build programme and the redevelopment of Mead Court Stansted. The group includes Councillors and Tenant Forum members and reports to Cabinet.

The Tenant Forum

Tenant Participation is seen as a vital link between the Council and its tenants. There is one Forum representing Uttlesford, made up of 12 Council tenants and one leaseholder from within the District. The Forum members are consulted on a multitude of different areas of the Housing Service including rent setting, repairs, housing policy, etc.

Two tenants from the Tenant Forum (one of whom is the Chairperson) also sit on the Housing Board covering housing issues.

Homelessness Partnership

The Council has a homelessness partnership that meets quarterly. This is the forum for partnership working and to discuss and implement the Action Plan of the Homelessness Strategy. Partnership working underpins the delivery of a comprehensive and holistic housing options and homelessness service. Invariably the delivery of sustainable housing solutions requires the addressing of non-housing problems, this requires a multi-agency approach. As advice and support services can be delivered by an often complex and fragmented range of organisations, without partnership working and a co-ordinated approach, it is easy for people to slip through the net.

Private Sector Landlords Forum

Locally and nationally some of the worst housing is in the private rented sector, and the Council has recognised the need to work proactively with landlords and letting agents to achieve improvements. The Council organises a private sector landlord forum once a year. Topics have included the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation, tenancy deposit protection schemes, the Local Housing Allowance and bringing Empty Homes back into use.

Chapter 6: Consultation

Housing Conference

A successful Housing Conference was held on 14th October 2015 to help inform the new Housing Strategy. District and County Councillors, Parish Councils, key partners and Officers came together to hear about and debate future issues and initiatives that will affect the Council in the next three to five years. Presentations were made about the new local plan, homelessness, delivering housing for vulnerable people and decent safe and healthy homes.

Workshop groups then addressed the key issues in more detail. Discussions included addressing the welfare changes affecting those on low incomes to ensure that homelessness does not increase, meeting housing needs through the emerging local plan and meeting the specialist housing needs of vulnerable groups.

Registered Providers (RP) Event

An event was held with our RP partners to discuss our affordable housing development programme, how our current policy is working and look for ways to work together more closely.

A lively debate took place about clustering on schemes, the provision of lifts in blocks of flats, parking courts, scheme viability. This has helped us scope our new Guide for Developers which will be published in 2015.

A similar event is being held in December 2015 to understand the implications of the Autumn Statement.

Learning Disability Action Group and meetings with service users at Home Farm Trust

Officers took part in Local Action group meetings with providers, support services and service users to understand the issues faced by the Learning disability community. A workshop was held with service users living in Uttlesford and East Herts to understand their aspirations for their future housing need and a follow up session held with staff who manage Home Farm Trust in Ugley.

Service users have helped us pull together an easy read copy of the Housing Strategy. This has helped them understand the future housing policies of the Council and ensures that they can help influence them.

Workshops and home visits with older people

Workshop sessions were held in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow along with some home visits for those less able to access our workshop sessions. The aim was to understand the future needs of older people living in our District in order to better plan for their needs.

Research with young people

We carried out a survey within one of the local schools, to find out what their 16-18 year old pupils felt their housing options were in the future. Many were planning to go to university and anticipated staying in those areas afterwards, others wanted to move to London. Very few saw their future in Uttlesford due to the cost of house prices and private rental costs.

Health and Wellbeing Group

This group work towards one of the themes in the Sustainable Communities Strategy. Their work helps inform and set future priorities in the Housing Strategy. The group consists of health professionals, Essex County Council, Mind, Citizens Advice Bureau, Council for Voluntary Services Uttlesford, West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, Alzheimer's Society, Age UK, Carers UK.

Tenant Forum/Housing Board

The Tenant Forum and Housing Board play a key part in the preparation of this new strategy from influencing new policy to monitoring key progress made.

Chapter 7: Housing Needs, Supply and Demand

The Housing Market

There are approximately 32,862 properties in the Uttlesford District. 28,286 of these are in the private sector and 2,805 are owned by the Council. Smaller numbers are owned by Registered Providers and the Ministry of Defence.

Renting in Uttlesford

As with most areas, there are three main types of landlord in Uttlesford – The Council, Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) and Private Landlords. The Government's subsidy system for building and maintaining Council and RSL homes leads to them being able to charge a lower rent than most private landlords.

The table below shows the average Council social rents per week in Uttlesford.

Table 1: Average social rents per week

BEDS	Type	Average (£)
Bedsit	Flat	81.39
1	Flat	81.16
2	Flat	91.99
3	Flat	102.89
1	Bungalow	90.88
2	Bungalow	100.55
3	Bungalow	104.36
1	House	95.52
2	House	103.50
3	House	111.66
4	House	122.47
5	House	115.61

Source: UDC data August 2015.

The average monthly private rent in Uttlesford is:

Table 2: Average monthly private rent

	Saffron Walden	Stansted	Great Dunmow
1 bed	£650	£700	£750
2 bed	£900	£995	£800
3 bed	£1350	£1200	£1200
4 bed	£1650	£1600	£1450

Source: Research completed on Rightmove, August 2015.

The lack of private rented properties in Uttlesford has meant that rents charged are high. This has implications for low earners and those living on Local Housing Allowance. As can be seen in the tables below, the LHA rates do not cover the costs of a rental property in the District.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Rates

A Local Housing Allowance rate is the maximum amount of eligible rent that local authorities can use in the assessment of a housing benefit claim which falls under the LHA scheme. LHA rates are applicable from the 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016

Table 3: Cambridge area (i.e. North of the Uttlesford District)

Number of Bedrooms	Category	Weekly Amount	Monthly Amount
Shared Room Rate	A	£80.52	£348.92
1 Bedroom	B	£126.05	£546.22
2 Bedrooms	C	£140.74	£609.87
3 Bedrooms	D	£168.45	£729.95
4 Bedrooms	E	£218.16	£945.36

Table 4: Harlow and Bishops Stortford (i.e. South of the Uttlesford District)

Number of Bedrooms	Category	Weekly Amount	Monthly Amount
Shared Room Rate	A	£68.08	£295.01
1 Bedroom	B	£133.32	£577.72
2 Bedrooms	C	£164.79	£714.09
3 Bedrooms	D	£198.11	£858.48
4 Bedrooms	E	£279.69	£1211.99

Table 5: Stevenage and North Herts (i.e. West of the Uttlesford District)

Number of Bedrooms	Category	Weekly Amount	Monthly Amount
Shared Room Rate	A	£72.04	£312.17
1 Bedroom	B	£122.36	£530.23
2 Bedrooms	C	£155.37	£673.27
3 Bedrooms	D	£186.46	£807.99
4 Bedrooms	E	£238.80	£1034.80

Source: UDC Data 2015

House Prices

The attractiveness and desirability of the Uttlesford District has a major effect on house prices and land values. The average house price here is currently £450,300 compared to the regional average of £299,400 (Hometrack, August 2015)

Table 6: Average House Price

Breakdown by bedroom size	Price
1 bed flat	£123,300
2 bed flat	£172,100
2 bed house	£257,300
3 bed house	£331,700
4 bed house	£521,600

Source: Hometrack August 2015

Affordability is still a problem in Uttlesford; this is measured by affordability ratios. These show the relationship between income and house prices. Data shows that average house prices in Uttlesford are almost 11 times the average income.

Mortgages are calculated on 3.5 times household so this shows how unaffordable property is for those on an average income.

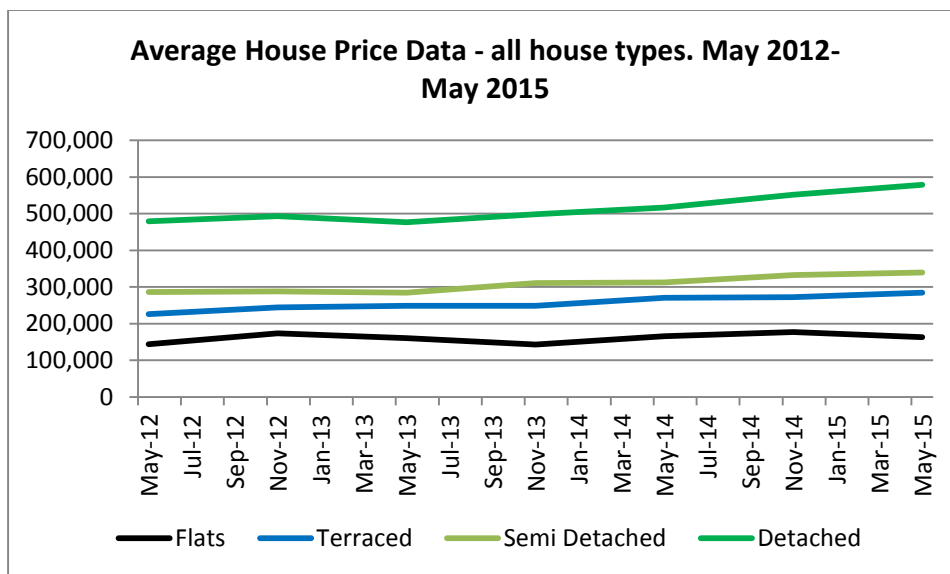
If you look at house prices in the lowest 25% price band, households will still need 8 times their income to buy a property.

An example: Mr and Mrs Smith want to buy a 2 bedroom house in Saffron Walden. They have a good deposit so only require an 85% mortgage. The mortgage payments equate to £197 per week assuming a 2.88% mortgage rate. To private rent a property, it would cost £184 per week and the supply isn't available to meet the demand.

Table 7: This shows the average house prices by property type in Uttlesford between May 2012 to May 2015.

Average figures for flats have risen by £19,384, terraced properties have risen by £58,488, semi-detached have risen by £53,552 whilst detached properties have risen by £99,836. Over the past 2.5 years, terraced properties have risen the greatest by 26%.

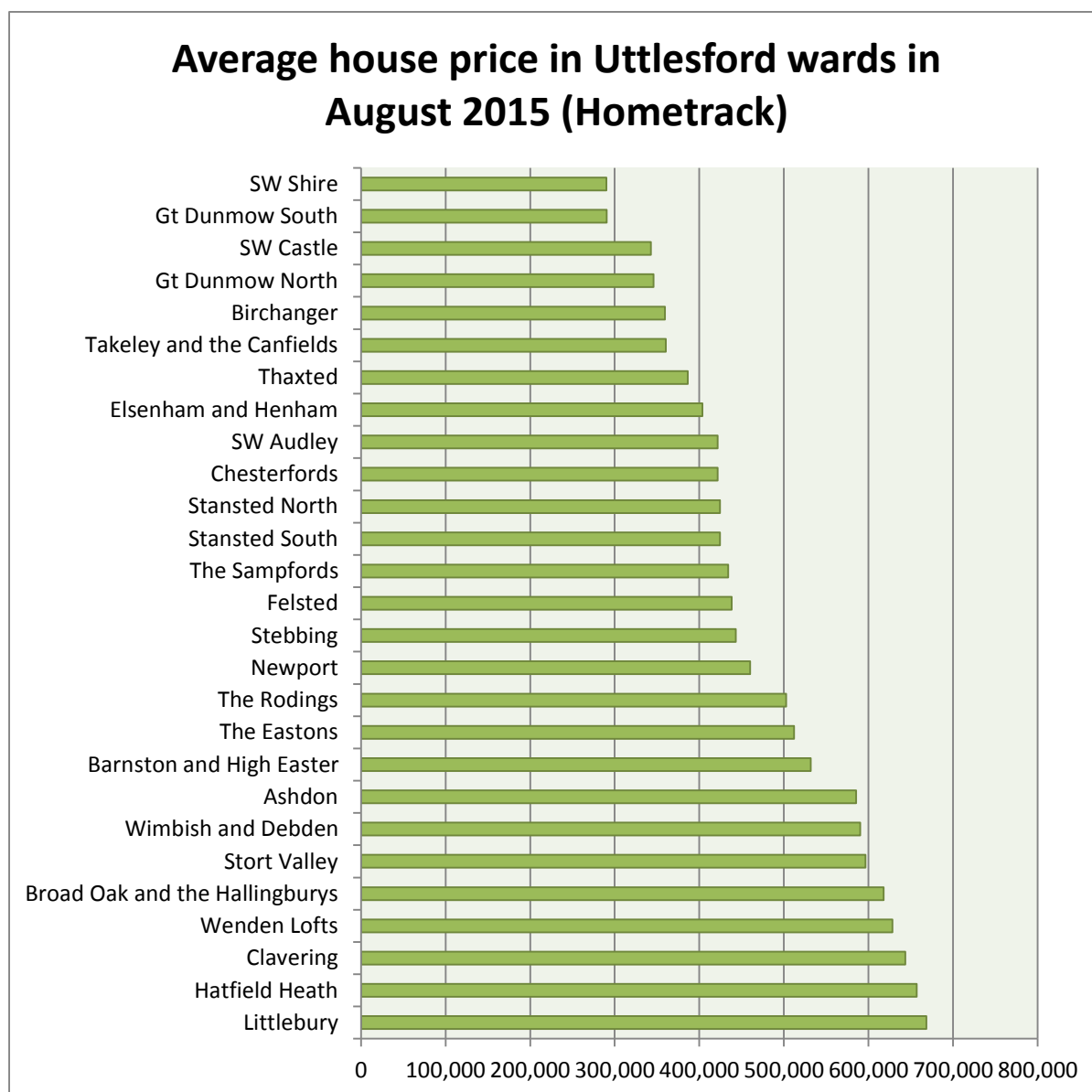
Table 7 House prices by property type



Source: Hometrack Aug 2015

The chart below (table 8) shows the lowest average price is Saffron Walden, Shire Ward with £290,155 compared to the highest average price in Littlebury with £668,412.

Table 8 Average house prices



Source: Hometrack, August 2015

Shared Ownership

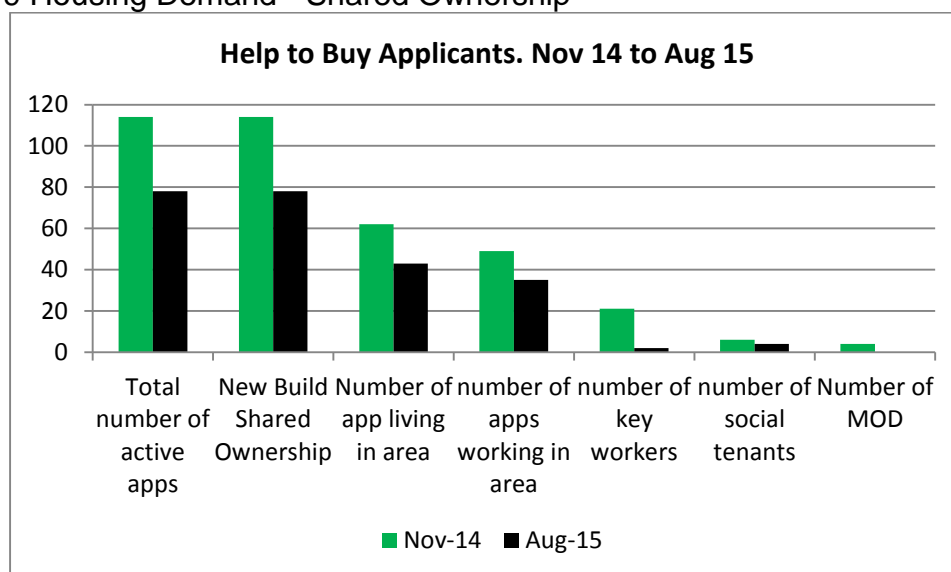
Residents interested in home ownership but whose household income is insufficient to meet their full housing needs may be eligible for Shared Ownership. This model allows the applicant to purchase up to 75% of the property with rent paid on the remaining share. Properties are managed by Registered Providers.

The following data is provided through the Help to Buy website which manages all applicants. Applicants are registered for all products from the Help to Buy agent which could include an equity loan. The registrations data does not indicate which financial product applicants are interested in.

The number of applicants registered for this model is given in Table 9. A comparison of data for Nov 2014 and August 2015 highlights the continuing interest in the model. The total number of interested applicants amounted to 114 for 2014 reducing slightly to 78 for August 2015. The number of applicants who are social housing tenants has remained similar whilst more Key Workers were registered in November, 2014 than August 2015.

A refresh of the data was carried out earlier this year which may account for the differences in figures. However, the data is a useful benchmark to highlight the interest and financial ability of residents to access home ownership.

Table 9 Housing Demand - Shared Ownership



Source: (Help to Buy Aug 2015)

Housing need and demand

Housing need and demand is measured and assessed from a variety of sources, this can include formal studies and information already held by the Council.

Identifying Housing Needs

For some years, Government guidance on housing and planning has emphasised the requirement for local authorities to assess local housing need and develop strategies to address that need. This assessment process has generally been achieved by conducting Housing Needs Surveys. The Council last undertook a District-wide Housing Needs Survey in 2002, covering the period from 2002 to 2007 and an update of this work took place in 2004. In 2006 a framework was introduced under Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) for carrying out Strategic Housing Market Assessments, with final guidance published in March 2007. These assessments continue to provide information on the level of need and demand for housing locally, but they also contribute to the sub regional and regional levels of planning.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment

A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) analyses the entire local housing market, which is likely to be wider than the local authority boundaries. It forms a crucial part of the evidence base that informs the Local Plan. A survey was initially conducted in 2010 comprising of six districts in the sub region, including Uttlesford, Brentwood, Broxbourne, East Herts, Epping and Harlow, who joined to form London Commuter Belt (East) and commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to undertake a comprehensive SHMA. The research used secondary data from sources such as the UK Census, Homes and Communities Agency, HM Land Registry and the Office for National Statistics, along with a qualitative consultation programme with a wide range of stakeholders. This research has now been updated, the study was carried out in partnership with East Herts, Epping and Harlow Councils and was published in September 2015.

Headline findings showed:

- 6.6% of households in the LCB M11 east are overcrowded. However when looking at those living in the social rented sector, 13% were overcrowded in Uttlesford.
- Over the 22 year period between 2011 and 2033 it is projected there will be an additional 36,899 households living within the SHMA study area. 9,877 additional households will be living in Uttlesford.
- It is predicted that across the study area there are 13,291 households in housing need, 576 are currently in housing need with a further 2,541 needing affordable housing between 2011 and 2033 in Uttlesford.
- Of the 2,724 households requiring affordable housing in Uttlesford, 14.5% need a 1 bed, 40% need a 2 bed, 36% need a 3 bed and 9% need a 4 bed house for affordable rent.
- Of those requiring intermediate affordable housing, 4% need a 1 bed, 47% need a 2 bed, 43% need a 3 bed and 5% need a 4 bed.
- These figures will be used when agreeing a mix on market led sites for our affordable housing requirements alongside negotiations with our allocations team.

Housing Supply

Delivery of Affordable Housing

The Council are very successful in delivering affordable housing in partnership with registered providers. During 2012/15, 284 properties were completed. These properties are allocated to those on our Housing Register.

The Council has a good programme moving forward with the total numbers of units projected to be completed between 2015-2020 amounting to 3,733 with 1,330 being delivered as affordable housing. Further details of this programme are available in Appendix 2 and 3.

Rural Housing

Since 1989, we have provided 350 affordable homes in rural areas through the rural exception policy. Schemes have recently completed in Hatfield Heath and Arkesden with future schemes progressing in Little Hallingbury, Wimbish, Newport, Hatfield Broad Oak and many more. Further details of this programme are available in Appendix 2 and 3.

The key to success is supporting Parish Councils to bring forward rural housing schemes to meet the needs of their local communities. This will be developed through the use of Neighbourhood plans in the future.

After a rural scheme has completed, we survey the residents allocated the properties, the local residents living close to the scheme and the Parish Council.

Research has shown that:

- 100% of respondents were allocated a property based on the local connection criteria.
- 86% rated their property either excellent or good, 14% satisfactory
- 95% of local residents agreed that the affordable housing had benefitted the local community
- 48% were attending local groups in the community.

The research has given the Council a greater knowledge of what is successful/not successful in a scheme, has shown how it has allowed young people to remain in the village and that they were allocated to those with a local connection. It has also encouraged Parishes to move forward with affordable housing schemes in their area.

Housing Register

As at August 2015, there were 954 applications on the housing register, of those applications 397 were in bands A-D and considered to be in housing need.

Choice Based Lettings

In 2007 the Council agreed that a Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme should be developed for Uttlesford. The government had set a target that all housing authorities should be operating a CBL scheme for allocating social housing by 2010. The government considers that CBL schemes can enhance mobility between areas and tenures and provide a balance between the needs of prospective tenants and choice and so may contribute to sustainable neighbourhoods.

The Council joined a Consortia of five other Local Housing Authorities (Broxbourne, Epping Forest, Chelmsford, East Herts and Brentwood), and 25 registered social landlords and successfully bid for government funding to assist with the development and initial set-up of a CBL scheme. The CBL scheme called HomeOption went live in November 2008.

Since that time, the Council have also introduced an online application form and moved from a points based lettings system to a banding system. This has made it clearer for applicants to understand the process and know where their application sits in terms of priority.

We have also introduced a new Allocations Policy which places greater emphasis on those with a local connection. This policy was introduced in January 2015 and will ensure that those applying for housing have the relevant links to Uttlesford before joining our housing register.

Lettings through Home Option

Between April 2014 and March 2015, a total of 281 properties were let via the Home Option system, 178 of these properties were Council owned. Where properties become empty the Council have set targets on its various properties from the date the key is returned to the date the next tenant gets the key to their new home. The Council needs to ensure that with an increase in demand for social housing that its own stock is used in the most effective way. In some cases an increase in the void period may be because possible tenants did either not bid or did not wish to take up the offer of that property. This is particularly an issue for some of the Council's sheltered housing schemes where average re-let times are higher than general needs properties.

Older Persons Housing

The Council currently provides 406 units of older persons accommodation spread across the District. This ranges from one and two bedroom bungalows to flats and bedsits. Some of these schemes are no longer fit for purpose and we have been updating and regenerating them during the life of the last Housing Strategy. However the need for more accommodation for older people is growing as our ageing population grows.

Table 10: Uttlesford Population aged 65 and over, projected to 2030

	2014	2015	2020	2025	2030
People aged 65-69	5,100	5,200	4,700	5,600	6,500
People aged 70-74	3,600	3,800	4,900	4,500	5,300
People aged 75-79	2,800	2,900	3,500	4,600	4,300
People aged 80-84	2,100	2,100	2,500	3,100	4,100
People aged 85-89	1,300	1,400	1,700	2,000	2,600
People aged 90 and over	800	900	1,200	1,600	2,100
Total population 65 and over	15,700	16,300	18,500	21,400	24,900

Source: Poppi August 2015

The charts below show the number of people requiring supported housing growing significantly in the next 15 years.

Table 11 People aged 65 and over living in a care home with or without nursing in Uttlesford, by age, projected to 2030

	2014	2015	2020	2025	2030
People aged 65-74 living in a LA care home with or without nursing	0	0	0	0	0
People aged 75-84 living in a LA care home with or without nursing	0	0	0	0	0
People aged 85 and over living in a LA care home with or without nursing	0	0	0	0	0
People aged 65-74 living in a non LA care home with or without nursing	25	26	27	29	33
People aged 75-84 living in a non LA care home with or without nursing	109	111	134	172	187
People aged 85 and over living in a non LA care home with or without nursing	314	328	414	513	656
Total population aged 65 and over living in a care home with or without nursing	448	465	575	714	877

Source: POPPI 2014 data

Table 12: People with dementia living in Uttlesford, projected to 2030.

Dementia - all people	2014	2015	2020	2025	2030
<input type="button" value="Show by gender"/>					
People aged 65-69 predicted to have dementia	65	65	59	69	81
People aged 70-74 predicted to have dementia	101	105	134	123	145
People aged 75-79 predicted to have dementia	157	164	204	268	245
People aged 80-84 predicted to have dementia	251	262	298	369	486
People aged 85-89 predicted to have dementia	261	283	339	417	495
People aged 90 and over predicted to have dementia	268	268	357	474	622
Total population aged 65 and over predicted to have dementia	1,104	1,146	1,391	1,720	2,075

Source: POPPI 2014 data

Table 12 shows that the numbers living with dementia in Uttlesford will almost double in the next 15 years. This will have an impact on the housing we need to provide and the services to support those living with dementia.

Supported Housing

Learning Disability Schemes

There are two learning disability schemes in Saffron Walden. They provide 12 units of accommodation at Ferguson Close (Family Mosaic) and 3 at Gallows Hill (Family Mosaic)

Officers from the Council are represented on the local Learning Disability Action Group (LAG); this group helps the Council to look at future and current need in the District and creates effective partnership working.

Mental Health

There are two schemes for mental health consisting of 8 units at Station Street, Saffron Walden managed by Granta and 3 at St Edmunds Field, Great Dunmow managed by Springboard that have been refurbished.

There is a requirement for a new scheme to replace the units at Station Street as it is no longer fit for purpose. The residents currently share a bathroom and kitchen which does not encourage them to live independently

Officers are working with Metropolitan Housing Association to identify a future location for the scheme that will meet the needs of those with mental health needs.

Physical Disability

For those with a physical disability, we request bungalows as part of our affordable housing requirement. However we will be working with the Housing allocations team throughout 2015/16 to analyse the data they hold and begin to build properties that meet the needs of those on our register.

Young Parents Scheme

This scheme is in partnership with Brentwood and Epping Forest Councils and has provided 12 units of supported accommodation for young parents living in Uttlesford, Brentwood or Epping Forest. The scheme has been provided on a new development in Ongar and provides the three Councils with nominations to the project. It provides the young parents with the skills they need to care for a child, access benefits and housing to ensure they can move on to manage their own tenancy.

As can be seen below, the Council do not have a significant problem with young parents presenting as homeless and could not justify a scheme in the District, partnership working with Epping Forest and Brentwood meant a more viable option

Table 13: Acceptances from young parents, 2012-15

Year	Acceptances
2012	2
2013	4
2014	1
2015	2

Source: Homeless data from Housing Dept. (August 2015)

Bromfield House

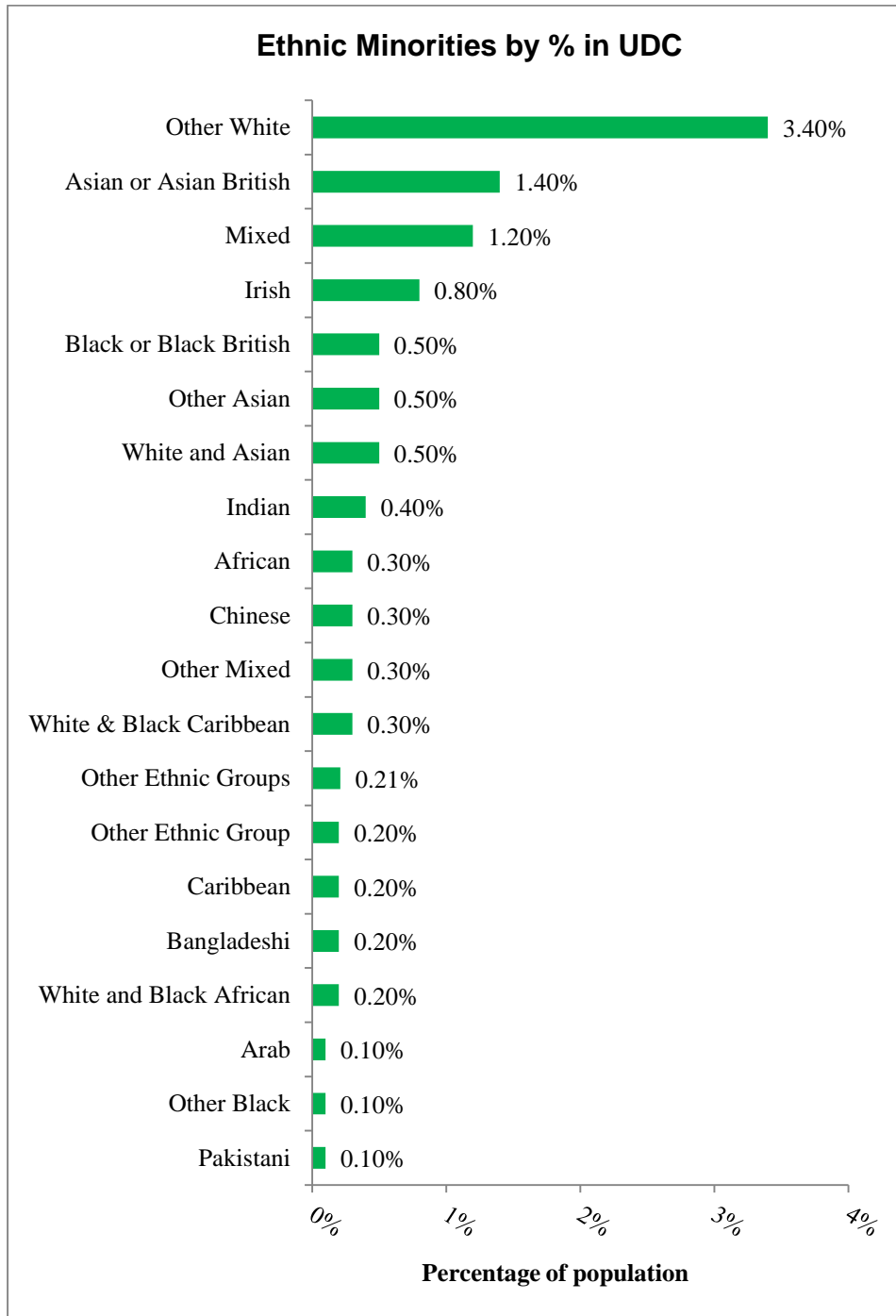
The Council continue to work with Genesis Housing to develop Bromfield House as a first class facility offering supported housing to homeless residents, the units generally house those aged 16 – 25 but can house people up to age 65 if required. It is staffed 24 hours 7 days a week and residents have support plans which they work on with staff. They are regularly reviewed to ensure that goals are being achieved. Staff meet with Council staff on a quarterly basis to update on residents progress and the Council facilitate move on accommodation when clients are ready to move out of a supported environment. This has worked really well and residents are moving on successfully and living an independent life.

Black and Minority Ethnic

The Council must promote and monitor the needs of those in minority groups. As part of this requirement, Officers took part in the Essex wide research Facing the Facts. This was delivered through the Essex Housing Officers group and looked at

the Housing requirements of the BME population in Essex. Engagement with communities in Uttlesford was difficult as our population is so small. The current population of Uttlesford indicates the following:

Table 14: Ethnic Minorities



Source: (Census 2011)

The population of Uttlesford is predominately White with 96.6% of the population stating this as their ethnicity whilst 92.3% considers themselves to be British. The total percentage of Ethnic Minorities in the district is 3.40%. The breakdown of these communities is given in Table 14. Other White is the highest with 3.40% whilst Arab, Other Black and Pakistani amount to only 1% of the population.

The Council recognises that the information it holds on needs and demand for this group is not complete. Further research then needs to be carried out over the life of this strategy to investigate the housing needs of this group further.

Gypsy and Travellers

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Policy for Travellers sites sets out the Governments policy for travellers sites. It is the responsibility of Local planning authorities to assess their need for traveller sites and to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale. To increase the number of traveller sites in appropriate locations with planning permission, to address under provision and maintain an appropriate level of supply.

Uttlesford currently has the following sites within the District.

Table 15: Private Gypsy and Traveller Sites in Uttlesford

Location	Sites	Total caravans
Barnston	1	0
Broxted	2	3
Clavering	1	1
Great Dunmow	1	2
High Easter	1	1
High Roding	1	3
Little Canfield	1	4
Little Hallingbury	1	5
High Easter	1	5
Radwinter End	1	2
Stansted	1	10
Stebbing	1	3
Takeley	1	8

Source: Data taken from www.iform.co.uk Feb 2015.

Table 16: Public site owned and managed by Essex County Council

Location	Sites	Total caravans
Felsted	17	25

Source: Data taken from www.iform.co.uk Feb 2015.

Table 17: Unauthorised sites yet tolerated

Location	Sites	Total caravans
Barnston	1	2
Lindsell	1	1
Stansted	1	2

Source: UDC data Sept 2015.

The Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment (2014) concluded that Uttlesford needs to provide 26 additional pitches over the period 2013 to 2033. These will be identified through the ongoing Local Plan process.

Chapter 8: Addressing Our Key Priorities

1. Increasing Housing Supply Across all Tenures:

The Council has an ambitious programme of development moving forward to ensure that we meet the needs of local people living in the District along with meeting specialist housing needs. This is a key priority for the Council throughout the life of this strategy.

Council house building

Having completed two phases of council built new housing in Leaden Roding, we now have an ambitious development programme replacing out of date sheltered housing with new houses and bungalows in Stansted and upgrading other sheltered housing in the District to make it fit for the future and a desirable place to grow old in.

We will also be looking at all Council owned land to ensure that we make the best use of the resources available and maximise development potential in the District.

Developing affordable housing as part of market led schemes

We will continue to deliver affordable housing on market led sites, working with registered providers to ensure that the completed homes meet local need and that tenants receive a good service from their landlord.

The Council will continue to expect 40% affordable housing on market led sites delivered in partnership with one of our registered providers. Full guidance is published in our Guide for Developers which is available on our website.

For a number of years, we have been working with Registered Providers on market led schemes and also rural exception sites to deliver affordable housing. During this time, our partners have changed, new providers have expressed an interest in working in Uttlesford, whilst others can no longer build viable schemes and have stopped developing here.

As with our own housing and part of good practice, we monitor our performance and ensure that our tenants gain a good service from us as a landlord. We are planning to extend this further and analyse the performance of our registered providers as landlords, to ensure that those who are allocated a Housing Association property are provided with a good service. This work will be carried out through 2015/16.

During 2015/16, we will be exploring the proposals published in the Governments Productivity Plan and Autumn Statement. We will be working with our Housing Association partners and local communities to understand how we can provide starter homes for first time buyers under 40.

Rural housing

Delivering rural housing on exception sites is an important priority in Uttlesford. In the last 3 years, we have delivered schemes in Arkesden, Wimbish and Hatfield Heath. Future schemes are progressing in Little Hallingbury, Great Hallingbury, Newport, Chrishall and Hatfield Broad Oak.

The key to our success is supporting parish councils to bring forward rural housing schemes to meet the needs of their local communities, and ensuring that rural housing continues to be delivered in our villages. This will be developed through our neighbourhood plan process over the coming years.

Growth Area Funding

We were fortunate to receive an allocation of Growth Area funding in 2010 for two affordable housing schemes on rural exception sites. The first scheme in partnership with Hastoe Housing completed in February 2015 and residents have now moved in. This scheme is built to Passiv haus standards and means that residents will experience very low heating costs in their homes.

The second scheme is progressing well and should be submitted for planning during 2015. This will provide 34 homes in Newport for local people in partnership with Hastoe Housing.

Key Outcomes in delivering this Strategy:

100 affordable homes delivered per year

40% affordable housing gained on market led sites.

3 rural housing needs surveys carried out and a site secured for rural housing in one of our villages

15 new Council homes built per year

Development review completed and sites identified for sale or Council own development.

Growth Area Funding scheme completed in Newport

SHMA findings implemented across all Council Policies

2. Helping People to Live Independently

Helping people to live independently is an important priority in this strategy, whether they are living in the Councils sheltered housing, a supported housing scheme, in their own home or in a private nursing or residential facility. We want to ensure that our residents have choices when they need support and we intend to deliver this through our action plan.

Throughout the next year, we will be working with key partners and stakeholders to ensure that we understand the specialist housing needs of those living in the District. This data will inform the emerging Local Plan and ensure that specialist housing needs are met on new developments across Uttlesford.

Older Persons Housing

The Council has an ambitious programme of development to ensure that its sheltered housing schemes meet current needs. The Mead Court redevelopment in Stansted is on site and progressing well. This scheme will complete by September 2016 and will provide 29 houses and bungalows for affordable rent and 4 flats to be used as temporary accommodation.

Hatherley Court, Saffron Walden – Remodelling of existing sheltered scheme. A Planning application has been approved and a start on site programmed for April 2016.

Reynolds Court, Newport – a new build redevelopment of an existing sheltered scheme. Planning application submitted. Start on site targeted for October 2015.

We will continue to request 1 and 2 bed bungalows on S106 schemes, this means that older people can downsize to accommodation that is fit for purpose but still maintains their independence. It also meets a need for those with a physical disability who require accommodation on one floor.

As part of S106 obligations, we have negotiated with developers to provide two independent living schemes. One in Saffron Walden and one in Great Dunmow. These will provide a mix of affordable rented and shared ownership to meet the needs of those over 65 who require an element of care in their home. This will complement our sheltered housing service and the private retirement villages and care homes in the District.

The Council continue to encourage residents to organise activities in sheltered housing. This includes armchair aerobics, bingo, coffee mornings, computer training and visits out of the schemes. This helps combat social isolation often experienced by older people living alone or supporting a partner with health issues.

Specialist housing to meet local needs

As part of our consultation on the Housing Strategy, we met with providers of **learning disability** schemes in the District and also spent time with service users living in Uttlesford. It became apparent that service users wanted to live independently rather than having to share facilities.

We are already progressing a scheme in Saffron Walden to provide a number of flats for those with a learning disability and funding has been gained from Essex County Council. This will be delivered during 2016/17. The scheme will enable service users to live a more independent life.

We are also having early discussions with one of our providers in Ugley along with Essex County Council to look at the possibility of providing a number of independent living flats for those currently residing in residential care. This would help meet the needs of those wanting to lead a more independent life.

We will continue to further liaise with current providers of specialist housing to ensure that their needs are met in the District. A review will be carried out to assess the housing requirements of those with **mental health** issues to ensure their housing needs are met.

We currently require developers to build new homes to lifetime homes standards. These standards apply to all new housing including blocks of flats for both social housing and private housing. We also require developers to provide an element of wheelchair accessible housing in new developments over 10 properties. These properties are important in helping us meet the needs of residents who use a wheelchair or those with a mobility problem.

We will also be working with a care provider to progress a dementia scheme that is planned in Uttlesford. This scheme will help meet the increasing needs of those with high level dementia, which is levels 5, 6, and 7 on the Global Deterioration Scale for Assessment of Primary Degenerative Dementia who we currently struggle to accommodate and as a result residents need to be relocated outside the district.

In the last Housing Strategy we identified the need for a scheme for those at risk of **domestic violence**. A piece of Council owned land was identified and a partner chosen. This scheme will progress over the life of this strategy.

We also identified the need for another **homeless facility**. We currently work with Genesis Housing on a scheme in Saffron Walden that successfully meets the needs of single (often young) people who approach the Council as homeless. It helps them get back on their feet, provides them with advice and support and helps them move on to independent living. We are now looking to provide a scheme in Great Dunmow, a site will be identified in the Local Plan and we are talking to partners about how to progress this. This scheme will emerge through the life of this strategy.

We will work with Essex County Council to investigate the needs of care leavers, many of these are currently placed outside of Uttlesford as we do not have

accommodation suitable for their needs. We will explore this need and work with the County to find a way forward.

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)

The Council administers and provides DFGs allowing disabled people to live as comfortably and independently as possible in their home. Since 2012, 54 grants have been awarded to a value of £456,943. The Council works in partnership with a Home Improvement Agency who are available to act on behalf of the applicant if the applicant chooses to engage their services.

In 2014 the funding allocation for DFGs has passed from central government to Essex County Council (ECC). Historically the funding allocation for DFGs has been one of the lowest in the Country and the Council regularly adds to this funding from its own capital budget. We will work with Essex Health and Wellbeing Board to increase our funding allocation.

Home Repair Assistance

The Council offers discretionary grant assistance to occupiers of dwellings and mobile homes to carry out essential structural repair work or improvements. All applicants need to be on a means tested benefit to receive the grant, which is up to £3000 or up to £5000 in the case of mobile homes where thermal insulation or energy efficiency measures are carried out in addition to repairs. For additional work over the grant limit, an interest free loan of up to £7000 can be given, which becomes repayable once the property is sold or the applicant no longer lives there. Since 2012, the Council has provided 12 HRA grants totalling £34,587. We will continue to offer this service to those in need.

Key Outcomes in delivering this Strategy:

New mental health facility provided.

New learning disability scheme provided

UDC Wheelchair standards reviewed and used as policy.

Access Group visit to new build bungalows and findings used to improved future schemes.

Extra care scheme delivered in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow

Dementia scheme delivered

5% bungalows delivered on all market led sites

Sheltered housing upgraded.

Supported housing scheme for vulnerable adults built.

Domestic violence scheme built

Homelessness Strategy published.

Allocations policy reviewed.

Documents published in easy read format

3. Ensuring Decent, Safe and Healthy Homes

We expect that our residents should be able to live in a decent home that is safe and is not detrimental to their health. This priority looks at how we ensure that our residents live in good quality healthy housing.

Council Housing

The Council has published a HRA Business Plan covering the period 2015-2045. This gives detailed information about how the Council will maintain and manage its housing stock. The information below is just a summary. For more information, please visit our website www.uttlesford.gov.uk

Stock figures

The Council's stock, as at 1 August 2015, was 2,805 rented properties. In addition to the tenanted stock there are 122 right to buy leasehold properties that the Council continue to manage.

The Council's stock consists of traditionally constructed houses, flats, and bungalows. The stock is mostly low rise, although varied in archetype. There are no high-rise flats. All non-traditional build properties, such as Airey and PRC houses, have been re-built however there are a small number of Swedish units.

Programme of council housing stock improvements

The council is continuing to deliver a significant programme of investment in the first five years of the HRA business plan - the largest investment in the stock/service for many years. Since the introduction of self-financing over £11.2million has been spent to improve the standard and availability of council housing.

Energy Efficiency/Sustainability

The Council has a strong commitment to energy efficiency and sustainability. A key strategic objective of the business plan is to tackle climate change by reducing the carbon emissions from the Council's housing stock. This will also address tenants concerns about fuel poverty, reducing the cost of heating by improving insulation and replacing electric systems with modern oil or gas central heating systems. There are a number of homes (around 250) with solid walls that have poor thermal efficiency. Some of these have recently been upgraded and their thermal efficiency is being reassessed. Others will be prioritised for investment programmes in the short term.

The Councils development programme

Our Council housing development programme is now established and includes a number of sheltered schemes, garage and infill sites, and excess garden land being assessed for development viability. This will create a number of homes for those on our housing register. Negotiations are on-going with the HCA to bid for National Affordable Housing Programme (2015/18) Affordable Housing Grant in the future.

Private sector housing

The private rented sector makes up an important part of the housing market in UDC. 13% of all households in the district are privately rented. In the past 10 years the percentage of privately rented housing has increased by 5%.

The Council provides advice, assistance and enforcement on matters such as safety, disrepair, overcrowding, and energy efficiency in owned or rented homes, including Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and mobile homes. In addition, the Council provides a range of home improvement services offering assistance with home repairs, improvements and adaptations.

Poor housing has a direct link to poor health, comfort and mental wellbeing. The work undertaken by the Council contributes directly to the health, protection and wellbeing of residents

Since 2012 Environmental Health Officers have investigated 172 complaints relating to poor housing conditions .

Due to the economic climate and challenges around housing demand and supply it is likely that the private rented sector is likely to continue to grow. This sector is the most under regulated sector of housing and contains the highest proportion of non-decent homes. In 2008, less than 50% of private rented homes housing people on benefits were considered decent.

One of the key challenges we face is how to improve standards in the private sector when the property maintenance and energy efficiency are at the discretion of the landlord. We are therefore looking at opportunities to raise awareness with tenants and landlords to ensure high standards are achieved. Our participation and marketing of the Essex Landlord Accreditation Scheme is one example of this.

We are keen to continue to raise standards in the private rented sector and plan to commission a stock modelling survey in 2015 to provide the Council with data on key housing indicators that will allow us to focus our resources and target specific housing related problems.

Since October 2013 we have employed a temporary empty homes and housing officer. This has increased our ability encourage owners to bring their empty home into better use through cooperation and using enforcement provisions if necessary. The enforcement provisions include the power to compulsorily purchase a property. Other provisions include the application of Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO) that gives the council the right to possession of the dwelling but not ownership. Since 2012 the Council's intervention has resulted in 185 properties brought back into use. We hope that this post will be made permanent and the work will continue throughout the life of the Strategy.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are known to present a high risk in terms of general property standards and fire safety. Larger HMOs require a license to operate although the Council has identified only 1. We will utilise the skills of the empty

homes officer to identify more HMOs and implement initiatives working with our partners in the fire service to address any hazards.

In 2015 and beyond, it is our intention to contribute to the Council health and wellbeing agenda. As part of this work we attempt to measure the cost savings to the NHS from the Councils interventions.

Mobile homes

The Council is responsible for the regulation of mobile homes used for habitation, the main provision being by means of licensing to protect the health, safety and welfare of the occupants. The Council licences 38 caravan sites totalling 237 caravans. Since the introduction of the Mobile Homes Act 2013 the council will be better able to make sure site owners are complying with the terms of their site licence.

Energy efficiency

Fuel poverty and excess winter death are issues in Uttlesford. The latest Local Authority profile indicates that 9.4% of the Uttlesford districts households were deemed fuel poor (based on the "Low income, high cost" methodology) in 2012. This is less than the national average (10.4%), but the highest in Essex. (Essex highest: Uttlesford 9.4%, Essex lowest: Basildon 6.1%).

From 2011 - 2012 there were 54 excess winter deaths in Uttlesford. This is around 29.5% additional deaths, this is higher than the national average (16.1%) (Essex highest: 33.8% Braintree, Essex lowest: 11.73% Rochford).

We are rolling out the Government Green Deal ECO programme to target energy inefficient properties and deliver better health outcomes essential to reduce cold weather related illness and winter mortality.

We are also offering a scheme whereby residents can sign up to reduce utility bills by switching provider. This scheme is working really well and providing savings for residents.

The Council requires the development of new build properties to meet national sustainable standards across all tenures to ensure that high levels of energy efficiency can be embedded within high quality development.

Key Outcomes in delivering this Strategy

Climate Local Strategy delivered.
Empty Homes brought back into use
Landlords Forum held
Winter campaign successfully run
Disabled facilities grants allocated
Home repair assistance grants allocated.
BRE Survey commissioned and action plan implemented.
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) action plan developed and implemented
Funding gained for improvements to private sector house condition.

Improvements to Council stock continue to be completed
HRA Business Plan published.
Tenant Regulatory Panel reports to Housing Board with review findings.

4. Creating balanced communities by delivering sustainable, safe, attractive and healthy places to live while meeting local housing needs.

We want to create balanced communities with a mix of tenure type and size, good amenities and services and healthy places for people to live and work.

Creating Sustainable Communities

As new developments are planned, planning, housing and health colleagues within the Council will work together to ensure that adequate facilities are provided alongside housing. This will include community facilities, health centres and schools.

Health and Wellbeing

We will work with Uttlesford Futures to ensure that the Housing Strategy can inform the West Essex Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

We will continue to take part in the Health and Wellbeing group and the wider Local Strategic Partnership. These groups help us to understand the wider issues in the District, inform our work plan and progress projects together. This includes a project we are progressing which will help us understand the needs of the ageing population in Uttlesford and how we meet these needs in the future. This will be completed during 2015/16 and published jointly.

We are also planning to work with other providers represented on the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure that we understand other specialist requirements in Uttlesford. This includes The Alzheimer's Society, Carers UK and Mind.

Economic Development

Economic Development is a priority in Uttlesford, with thriving town centres and successful businesses providing key services.

The Economic Development Strategy seeks to enable people, communities and business to be what they want to be by providing:

- Help to start and stay in business
- Help to start exporting or export more
- Access to superfast broadband
- Help for town centres with their viability and vitality
- Help for business to expand in or locate in Uttlesford
- Help to persuade more people to visit Uttlesford

This document is available on our website www.uttlesford.gov.uk

The priorities in the Economic Development Strategy are critical for a sustainable community, residents need to be able to live and work in a sustainable location with good service centres.

Equalities

We want to ensure that all of our residents experience the same level of service when approaching the Council. Inclusion is very important to us and we are working towards the Achieving Level of the Equality Standard. This involves analysing our services and ensuring they all reach the same high standard. Our Single Equality Duty Scheme helps us to ensure this.

We are committed to completing an equality impact assessment on all of our new policies as they are published to ensure they meet this standard.

For the purposes of Equality Impact assessments undertaken by the Council, we also consider 'Rurality' due to the nature of the district. To ensure that we understand who makes up our communities, we try to work with groups and information available to us, to ensure that we maintain inclusion as a strong theme for cohesion. In developing this understanding, we work principally with the following groups;

The Uttlesford Area Access Group, Support4Sight, Deaf Blind UK, Council for Voluntary Services Uttlesford, the Volunteer Centre, Uttlesford Community Travel, Uttlesford Taxi Forum and the Uttlesford Transport Forum, the Tenants Forum, individuals and groups from our larger ethnic populations of Eastern European and Nepalese residents.

We also work with Parishes and Carver Barracks, where rural isolation can reduce access to services to meet a community need. We want to make Uttlesford a safe place to live and projects around Hate Crime and Anti-Social behaviour are put in place to do this. The Council has supported the Essex Pride event each year and has flown the Rainbow Flag to support staff and residents and had also undertaken an exhibition to support Disability History month and included many local organisations in putting this together.

Black and minority ethnic requirements - As our evidence base shows, the majority of residents are white British, however we want to ensure that our housing and services meet the needs of the whole community. We will continue to analyse data about the District, review our housing waiting list and ensure that those from BME communities are treated fairly and have the same chances available to them as the wider community.

Gypsy and travellers – Gypsies and Travellers were captured as a distinct ethnic group for the first time in the 2011 Census and make up 0.2 % of the overall population. Currently there are 43 Gypsy and Traveller pitches on 17 private sites with permanent planning permission, 17 pitches on one county council owned site and 1 Travelling Showpeople site within Uttlesford. However the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment (2014) concluded that Uttlesford needs to provide 26 additional

pitches over the period 2013 to 2033. Progress on this will be made through 2015/16 alongside the new Local Plan.

We want to ensure that Gypsy and Traveller rights and needs are integrated in our policies and services.

Meeting the needs of our Council tenants

We will continue to relaunch the tenant participation service under the 'Get Involved' banner and visit local areas holding community fun days. These have been really successful in encouraging residents to engage with Council services.

Annual tenancy inspections are now in place and ensure that tenants are given the help and support they need in maintaining their tenancy.

We have successfully set-up a tenant regulatory panel who are delivering comprehensive co regulatory framework. Their current project will pull together service standards for sheltered housing.

An Anti-Social Behaviour policy has recently been put in place which will give greater guidance for staff and residents when there are problems in a neighbourhood.

Housing for local people

We have also introduced a new Allocations Policy which places greater emphasis on those with a local connection. This policy was introduced in January 2015 and will ensure that those applying for housing have the relevant links to Uttlesford before joining our housing register.

All of these documents can be found on the Councils website www.uttlesford.gov.uk

Anti-Social Behaviour

The Council doesn't tolerate anti-social behaviour and has a dedicated officer focusing on this issue. Their role is to work with the local community and partner organisations to tackle anti-social behaviour and improve community relations. Uttlesford District Council is a member of the District wide Community safety partnership (CSP). This group pledged their commitment to a set of anti-social behaviour standards set by the Home Office in 2010.

Uttlesford Community Safety Partnership also works alongside Uttlesford District Council to reduce the occurrence of hate crime and provide an appropriate response to any reports received. Alongside all the relevant agencies, the Council actively encourages the reporting of hate crimes and incidents.

Floating Support

Funded by Essex Supporting People and provided by Family Mosaic, Floating Support is a short-term service that **provides support to vulnerable people, regardless of their tenure**, who may be experiencing problems with maintaining

their accommodation or have health or other issues which affect their ability to cope with day-to-day living.

Their aim is to enable people to live independently in the community and assist with looking at housing options for those in need of a home. They also provide assistance for those with tenancies or owner-occupiers. With the intention of gradually reducing the support as the situation improves, they can work with residents for up to two years or until they no longer need the support.

Working with Service Users

We will continue to involve service users in shaping the services that they use and that affect their lives. This will be through the tenant forum, ongoing consultation events with older people, young people, those with specialist needs etc. We will continue to host a yearly Housing Strategy conference to create a chance to debate key issues and update and inform the Housing Strategy.

We will publish an easy read executive summary of the Housing Strategy to ensure that all service users can understand and shape our priorities.

Key Outcomes in delivering this Strategy

BME review data published and a way forward identified.

Equality impact assessments completed on new documents.

Economic Development Strategy delivered

Gypsy and Traveller sites identified and delivered.

Progress made on meeting equality standards.

Service users fully involved in key decisions.

Housing Strategy informs the West Essex Health and Wellbeing Strategy

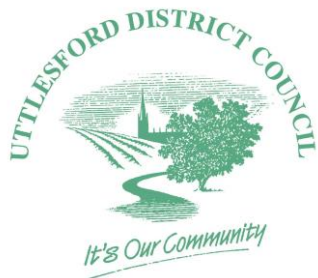
Easy read executive summary of the Housing Strategy published.

Monitoring the Housing Strategy

The Housing Strategy has been written at a time when Government policy is changing, as these proposals are developed, the Council will be looking at the impact and reviewing the Housing Strategy to take account of it. This will be done in consultation with the Housing Board and will need to be approved by Cabinet.

The Housing Strategy action plan will be monitored and updated twice a year, a report will then be presented to the Housing Board and Tenant Forum.

Our Housing Strategy Conference will be held annually to discuss progress on the Housing Strategy, set new targets and celebrate success.



Uttlesford District Council

Fast-track equality impact assessment (EqIA) tool

What is this tool for?


This tool will help you to assess the impact of existing or new strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions on residents and staff. It will help you to deliver excellent services, by making sure that they reflect the needs of all members of the community and workforce.

What should be equality impact assessed?

You only need to equality impact assess strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions that are **relevant** to equality. If you are not sure whether your activity is relevant to equality take the 'relevance test' on Page 9.

How do I use the tool?


This tool is easy to use and you do not need expert knowledge to complete it. It asks you to make judgments based on evidence.

The tool uses a system of red flags  to give you an indication of whether or not your responses are identifying potential issues. Getting a red flag does not necessarily indicate a problem, but it does mean that your assessment is highlighting issues or gaps in data that may require further investigation or action.

If there is insufficient space to answer a question, please use a separate sheet.

General information		
1	Name of strategy, policy, project, contract or decision.	Housing Strategy 2016-21
2	What is the overall purpose of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	Set housing policy and direction for next 5 years
3	Who may be affected by the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residents <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A specific client group/s e.g. linked by geographical location, social economic factors, age, disabilities, gender, transgender, race, religion or sexual orientation (please state)
4	Responsible department and Head of Division.	Department: Planning and Housing Policy Head of Division: Andrew Taylor
5	Are other departments or partners involved in delivery of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision? Housing and Enviromental services are responsible for parts of the strategy. Many of the development schemes listed will involve registered providers and developers to deliver the housing. Specialist providers and groups have been involved when looking at future need (Mental health, Learning Disability local action group and service users, Domestic Violence, Registered Providers (Future homeless provision, Independent living schemes) Tenant forum and all those living in Council accommodation Parish Councils (through consultation)	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (please state):

Gathering performance data			
6	Do you (or do you intend to) collect this monitoring data in relation to any of the following <u>diverse groups</u> ?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion & Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy and Maternity
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marriage and Civil Partnerships	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural Isolation

7	<p>How do you (or how do you intend to) monitor the impact of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?</p> <p>A consultation event was held in October with key partners, councillors, tenant forum members and staff. This event set the priorities for the strategy.</p> <p>A similar event will be held once a year to reflect on progress made, celebrate success and set new priorities.</p> <p>Many of the actions are also performance indicators or divisional targets so will be monitored.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Performance indicators or targets</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> User satisfaction</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uptake</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consultation or involvement</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Workforce monitoring data</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Complaints</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> External verification</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility criteria</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None </p>
---	--	--

Analysing performance data

8

Consider the impact the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision has already achieved, measured by the monitoring data you collect. Is the same impact being achieved for diverse groups as is being achieved across the population or workforce as a whole?

The Strategy intends to meet the needs of the whole population. Some projects will meet the needs of specific groups for example a scheme planned in Saffron Walden will provide independent living for those with learning disabilities. This will enhance their quality of life once complete.

Attendance at specialist groups (health and wellbeing group, learning disability and mental health groups) helps to identify specific housing requirements. Discussions at the consultation events also helped identify specific needs and these were followed up with in depth discussions after the event.

Evidence is updated as and when new data is published and we revisit the action plan and consider future projects if required. For example, a requirement for specialist BME accommodation might need to be researched and planned for once we have carried out further research.

The strategy will also be published in an easy read format, this is being completed by the Voices to be heard group in partnership with staff from Home Farm Trust, Ugley.

Yes *

No*

Insufficient 

Not applicable 

**Please state your evidence for this, including full document titles and dates of publication for audit purposes. Where applicable please also state the nature of any issues identified:*

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9	<p>Is uptake of any services, benefits or opportunities associated with the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision generally representative of <u>diverse groups</u>?</p> <p>As question 8, this will be monitored further during the life of the strategy.</p>	<table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Yes *</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No*</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Insufficient </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Not applicable </td> </tr> </table> <p><i>*Please state your evidence for this, including full document titles and dates of publication for audit purposes. Where applicable please also state the nature of any issues identified:</i></p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes *	<input type="checkbox"/>	No*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Insufficient	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes *									
<input type="checkbox"/>	No*									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Insufficient									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable									

Checking delivery arrangements

10	<p>You now need to check the accessibility of your delivery arrangements against the requirements below. Click on the hyperlinks for more detailed guidance about the minimum criteria you should meet.</p> <p><i>If assessing a proposed strategy, policy, project, contract or decision, indicate 'Yes' if you anticipate compliance by launch of implementation.</i></p> <p>The premises for delivery are accessible to all.</p> <p>Consultation mechanisms are inclusive of all.</p>	<table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No </th> <th>N/A</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox" value="y"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox" value="y"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox" value="y"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Yes	No	N/A	<input type="checkbox" value="y"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox" value="y"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox" value="y"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No	N/A												
<input type="checkbox" value="y"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>												
<input type="checkbox" value="y"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>												
<input type="checkbox" value="y"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>												


Participation mechanisms are inclusive of all.

If you answered 'No' to any of the questions above please explain why giving details of any legal justification.

Checking information and communication arrangements

11 You now need to check the accessibility of your information and communication arrangements against the requirements below. Click on the hyperlink for more detailed guidance about the minimum criteria you should meet.

If assessing a proposed strategy policy, project, contract or decision, indicate 'Yes' if you anticipate compliance by launch of implementation.



	Yes	No 	N/A
Customer contact mechanisms are accessible to all.	<input type="checkbox"/> y	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronic, web-based and paper information is accessible to all.	<input type="checkbox"/> y	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publicity campaigns are inclusive of all.	<input type="checkbox"/> y	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Images and text in documentation are representative and inclusive of all.	<input type="checkbox"/> y	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered 'No' to any of the questions above please explain why, giving details of any legal justification.

Future Impact

12 Think about what your strategy, policy, project, contract or decision is aiming to achieve over the long term and the ways in which it will seek to do this. This is your opportunity to take a step back and consider the practical implementation of your strategy, policy, project, contract or decision in the future. As well as checking that people from diverse groups will not be inadvertently excluded from or disadvantaged by any proposed activities, it is also an opportunity to think about how you can maximize your impact, reach as many people as possible and really make a difference to the lives of everyone in Uttlesford regardless of their background or circumstances.

Is it likely to inadvertently exclude or disadvantage any diverse groups?

- y No
- Yes * 
- Insufficient evidence 

*Please state any potential issues Identified.

OVERVIEW
70,000 residents
Demographic make up according to diverse groups.

Improvement actions	
13	<p>If your assessment has highlighted any potential issues or red flags, can these be easily addressed?</p> <p>No issues as yet, will revisit annually.</p>

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No*
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable

**If Yes, please describe your proposed action/s, intended impact, monitoring arrangements implementation date and lead officer:*

Making a judgement – conclusions and next steps	
14	<p>Following this fast-track assessment, please confirm the following:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> There are no inequalities identified that cannot be easily addressed or legally justified</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> There is insufficient evidence to make a robust judgement.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Inequalities have been identified which cannot be easily addressed.</p>

	No further action required. Complete this form and implement any actions you identified in Q13 above
	Additional evidence gathering required (go to Q17 on Page 7 below).
	Action planning required (go to Q18 on Page 8 below).

15	<p>If you have any additional comments to make, please include here.</p>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	None
--------------------------	------

Completion	
16	<p>Name and job title (Assessment lead officer)</p> <p>Suzanna Wood</p>
	<p>Name/s of any assisting officers and people consulted during assessment:</p> <p>Sue Locke</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>1 December 2015</p> <p>Date of next review:</p> <p>April 2016 (to analyse updated research/data)</p> <p><i>For new strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions this should be one year from implementation.</i></p>

When completed, a copy of this form should be saved with the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision's file for audit purposes and in case it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

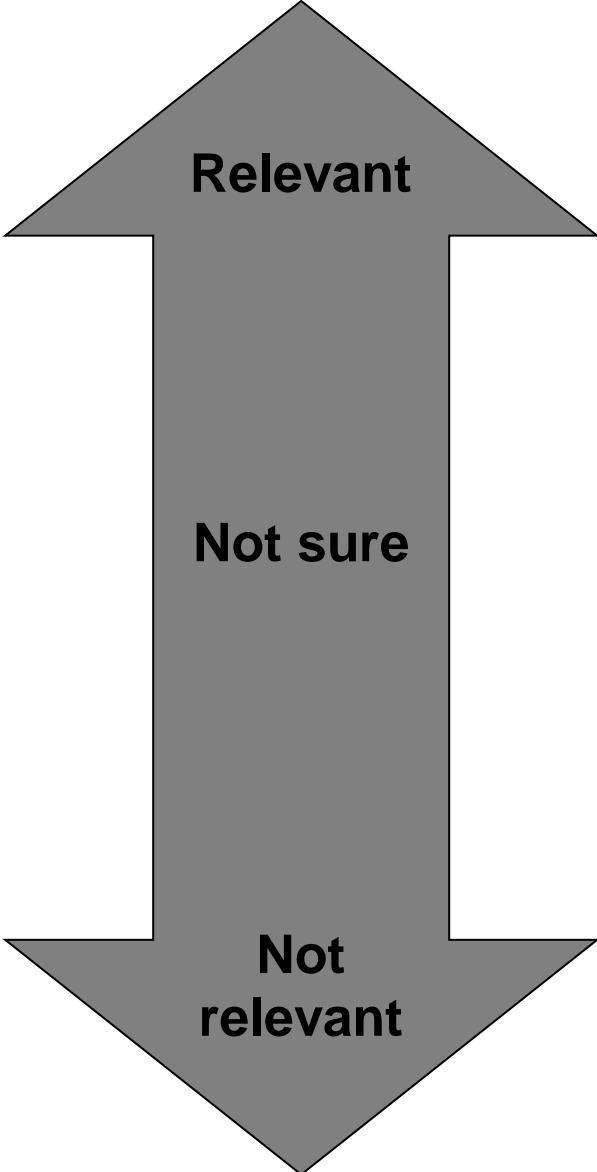
Additional evidence gathering and action planning

- 17 If your fast-track assessment indicated that **complex issues** or **inequalities** were identified which could not be easily addressed, or you had **insufficient evidence** to make a judgement, you need to undertake an additional evidence gathering and action planning process. This is described below:
- (a) Gather and analyse relevant additional evidence (which may include engagement with diverse groups), to address gaps in your knowledge, enhance understanding of the issues and inform options for addressing these. Additional evidence is likely to include any or all of the following:
- Data gathering**
- Demographic profiles of Uttlesford
 - Data about the physical environment, e.g. housing market, workforce, employment, education and learning provision, transport, spatial planning and public spaces
 - Results of local needs analysis
 - Results of staff surveys
 - Research reports on the needs/experience of diverse groups
 - National best practice/guidance
 - Benchmarking with other organisations
- Consultation and involvement**
- Existing consultation findings that may provide insight into the issues
 - New, specially commissioned engagement with diverse groups
 - Expert views of stakeholders/employers organisations representing diverse groups
 - Advice from experts or national organisations
 - Specialist staff/in-house expertise.
- (b) For advice on evidence gathering or engagement with diverse groups please contact your departmental equality lead officer. Discuss any proposed consultation with your departmental equality lead officer to ensure it is coordinated with related exercises across the Council as a whole.
- (c) Use your evidence gathering, analysis and engagement with diverse groups to develop options for addressing inequalities or unmet need, consulting with relevant management teams, Members, strategic groups/partners where necessary to confirm proposed actions and resource issues.
- (d) When options for addressing any issues are agreed, if these cannot be implemented immediately integrate them into the appropriate service plan/strategic plan/multi-agency strategy, so that it is clear how they will be delivered, when they will be delivered, by whom and how this will be monitored.

	<p>(e) Identify how the continuing implementation and impact of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision on diverse groups in Uttlesford will be monitored.</p> <p>(f) Having gathered evidence re-evaluate this assessment.</p> <p>(g) Following completion of the above, please confirm the following:</p>	
18	The conclusions and agreed proposals:	
	Summary of evidence gathered, including any internal and external consultation (please include full document titles and dates of publication and consultation for audit purposes):	
	Date proposals to be implemented and lead officer:	
	Where implementation is not immediate, please state in which service plan or strategy the proposed actions will be integrated:	
	Monitor arrangements (please include full details for audit purposes):	
Additional Comments		
19	If you have any additional comments to make, please include here:	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Completion		
20	Name and job title (Lead Officer): Name/s of other assisting officers: Date: Date of next review (if any):	
When completed, a copy of this form should be saved with the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision's file for audit purposes and in case it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act.		

The relevance test

Use the quick guide below to decide whether or not your strategy, policy, project, contract or decision is relevant to equality:

 <p>Relevant</p> <p>Not sure</p> <p>Not relevant</p>	<p>Relevant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The strategy, policy, project contract or decision will impact on ‘people’ (residents, staff, or people who work in or visit the area)’. ■ It may benefit some people or communities and not others (community cohesion) <p>Not sure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The service is a support function or administrative■ There is no obvious impact on ‘people’ but the strategy, policy, project contract or decision is of major scale and or significance to the Council’s activities■ Insufficient evidence <p>Not relevant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ No discernable impact on people.■ The service is a support function or administrative
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If you are not sure whether your strategy, project or decision is relevant to equality, ask _____, a member of the Council’s Equality Standard Working Group Officer for advice.
Tel. _____

Ensuring your premises for delivery are easily accessible

In order to ensure that your premises for delivery are accessible to disabled customers and staff, older people and people with small children you should comply with the principles of accessible design summarised below.

In some cases, and for legitimate reasons, this may not be possible. Where this is the case you can still ensure your premises are accessible if you make appropriate reasonable adjustments. For guidance on reasonable adjustments see the 'Key contacts' section at the foot of this page.

Level access

Is there level access into and inside your premises? This means no steps, steep slopes or lips on doorways.

Ramp or lift

If there are steps, can you fit a ramp or install a lift so disabled customers and staff and parents with pushchairs can get in? To be safe ramps must:

- Have a gradient of 1:20 or less
- Have a handrail
- Be firmly fixed to the ground

Bell or buzzer and alarms

Can you install a bell or buzzer outside and go out to disabled customers or staff when they ring? Do you have a visual as well as audible alarm?

Door handles

Are door handles easy to grip and easy to reach for customers or staff who are wheelchair users?

- Use an easy grip handle in a contrasting colour
- Install a magnetic device to hold doors open
- Are door locks easy to handle (not fiddly)?

Doormats

Are any doormats flush with the floor? Avoid bristle matting – it can be difficult for customers or staffs who are wheelchair users.

Colour contrast

Is there a colour contrast between your floors, walls, ceilings and doors? Use matt paint in contrasting colours or different tones.

Corridors and aisles

Are corridors and aisles clear enough for a wheelchair or pushchair to pass through?

Seating

Is there somewhere to sit down if customers or staffs have to queue or wait?

- Have seating with and without armrests, if possible.
- Leave space for a wheelchair user to pull up alongside a seated companion.

Height

Are all key facilities on the main floor? Are popular products on a mid-height shelf, and easy to reach from a wheelchair? Provide a lap tray or clipboard if a lower counter section is not available.

Lighting

Is it easy for visually impaired customers or staff to see everything they need to?

- Make sure your premises are well lit.
- Mark corners, steps and counter edges with high visibility tape so they can be easily seen.
- Keep highly reflective surfaces away from signs to avoid glare.

Guide dogs

If you normally ban animals, you should consider relaxing this for assistance dogs. Remember, it is not just visually impaired people who use assistance dogs.

Signs and labels

Are signs and labels short and easy to read? Are Induction loops available?

- Use large clear text (for example, 24-point text for shelf bar labels)
- Use contrasting colours (for example, black text on a white or yellow background)
- Make sure signs are at a suitable height.

Use visual or picture symbols as well as words, if appropriate.

Key contacts

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Email:

Telephone:

Text phone:

Alternatively, contact your Divisional Equality Lead Officer:

Division/Services	Head of Division/Services	Tel. No.

Ensuring customer contact mechanisms are easily accessible

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Alternatively, contact your Divisional Equality Lead Officer:

Division/Services	Head of Division/Services	Tel. No.

Committee: Cabinet Report

Agenda Item

Date: 12 January 2016

13

Title: Homelessness Strategy

Author: Julie Redfern – Housing Portfolio Holder

Key decision: Yes

Summary

1. In 2012 the council included its Homelessness Strategy within the Housing Strategy document. The Housing Strategy is now being renewed and the decision has been to once again have a stand-alone Homelessness Strategy to better illustrate the council's commitment to tackling homelessness. The Homelessness Strategy has now been finalised following a period of public consultation and is ready for member approval, prior to its adoption in January 2016.

Recommendations

2. That Cabinet agrees the adoption of the Homelessness Strategy 2016-21 as recommended by the Housing Board.

Financial Implications

3. It is envisaged that the strategy's Action Plan will be delivered from within existing resources.

Impact

- 4.

Communication/Consultation	Members, tenants, all partner agencies and public consultation via the website
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	Equality impact assessment has been completed
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	It is a requirement for the council to have a homelessness strategy
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	All wards

Workforce/Workplace	Housing, Planning, Environmental Health
---------------------	---

Situation

5. The council's current Homelessness Strategy is contained within the Housing Strategy which expired at the end of December 2015. As the council is legally required to have a Homelessness Strategy a new document has been prepared and consulted on. The new Strategy will run from 2016 -2021.
6. The document details the council's homelessness service's achievements since 2012. It also looks at the legal context for having a homelessness strategy and the National and Local context of homelessness and other strategies that the document links to.
7. The Strategy also contains a review of homelessness within Uttlesford and details homelessness statistics for the past 4 years. These clearly show the impact that the recession has had on increasing homelessness during this period.
8. The Strategy contains an Action Plan that outlines how the council will meet the four strategic priorities that have been set for the council's homelessness service during the lifetime of this new document. These priorities are:-
 - Prevent homelessness, by providing a high quality housing advice service to clients in all housing tenures, by sustaining tenancies and by mitigating the negative effects of welfare reform
 - Provide good quality suitable temporary accommodation and work towards ending the use of bed and breakfast even in an emergency
 - Engage with the private rented sector to improve access to accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
 - Improving the Health and Wellbeing of homeless people
9. The Strategy has been out for a 2 month period of public consultation and a few minor amendments have been made. The document has now been agreed by the Housing Board who recommends its adoption by Cabinet.

Risk Analysis

17.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The council fails to have carried	1 Little risk – review and	3 – the council may lose	The document has already been out for

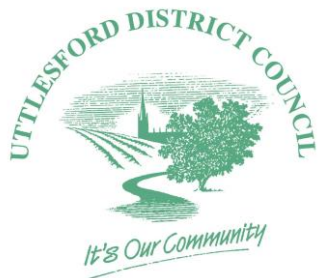
out a homelessness review and have an updated Homelessness Strategy before the current document expires	draft strategy already prepared in advance of current document being out of date	government funding if it cannot demonstrate it has a homelessness strategy in place	public consultation and is ready to put before Cabinet for approval in January
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.



Uttlesford District Council

Fast-track equality impact assessment (EqIA) tool

What is this tool for?


This tool will help you to assess the impact of existing or new strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions on residents and staff. It will help you to deliver excellent services, by making sure that they reflect the needs of all members of the community and workforce.

What should be equality impact assessed?

You only need to equality impact assess strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions that are **relevant** to equality. If you are not sure whether your activity is relevant to equality take the 'relevance test' on Page 9.


How do I use the tool?

This tool is easy to use and you do not need expert knowledge to complete it. It asks you to make judgments based on evidence.





The tool uses a system of red flags  to give you an indication of whether or not your responses are identifying potential issues. Getting a red flag does not necessarily indicate a problem, but it does mean that your assessment is highlighting issues or gaps in data that may require further investigation or action.

If there is insufficient space to answer a question, please use a separate sheet.

General information		
1	Name of strategy, policy, project, contract or decision.	Homelessness Strategy and Review 2016 - 2020
2	What is the overall purpose of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	To set out the Councils Strategic position on homelessness and an Action Plan for how it can be implemented
3	Who may be affected by the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision? Anyone who may be homeless or threatened with homelessness within Uttlesford or who wishes to look for assistance from Uttlesford Council	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A specific client group/s e.g. linked by geographical location, social economic factors, age, disabilities, gender, transgender, race, religion or sexual orientation (please state)
4	Responsible department and Head of Division.	Department: Housing Services Head of Service: Roz Millership
5	Are other departments or partners involved in delivery of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes Housing Planning and Policy, Environmental Health, Benefits CAB and other partner agencies
Gathering performance data		
6	Do you (or do you intend to) collect this monitoring data in relation to any of the following <u>diverse groups</u> ? Core monitoring data and tenants surveys	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender Reassignment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion & Belief <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy and Maternity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marriage and Civil Partnerships <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural Isolation

7	How do you (or how do you intend to) monitor the impact of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Performance indicators or targets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> User satisfaction <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uptake <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consultation or involvement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Workforce monitoring data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complaints <input type="checkbox"/> External verification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eligibility criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state): <input type="checkbox"/> None 


Analysing performance data

<p>8</p>	<p>Consider the impact the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision has already achieved, measured by the monitoring data you collect. Is the same impact being achieved for diverse groups as is being achieved across the population or workforce as a whole?</p>	<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes * <input type="checkbox"/> No* <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient  <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable  </p> <p><i>*Please state your evidence for this, including full document titles and dates of publication for audit purposes. Where applicable please also state the nature of any issues identified:</i></p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Is uptake of any services, benefits or opportunities associated with the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision generally representative of <u>diverse groups</u>?</p>	<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes * <input type="checkbox"/> No* <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient  <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable  </p> <p><i>*Please state your evidence for this, including full document titles and dates of publication for audit purposes. Where applicable please also state the nature of any issues identified:</i></p>

Checking delivery arrangements

10 You now need to check the accessibility of your delivery arrangements against the requirements below. Click on the hyperlinks for more detailed guidance about the minimum criteria you should meet.

If assessing a proposed strategy, policy, project, contract or decision, indicate 'Yes' if you anticipate compliance by launch of implementation.

	Yes	No 	N/A
The premises for delivery are accessible to all.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Consultation mechanisms are inclusive of all.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
---	-------------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------


Participation mechanisms are inclusive of all.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--	-------------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

If you answered 'No' to any of the questions above please explain why giving details of any legal justification.

Checking information and communication arrangements

11 You now need to check the accessibility of your information and communication arrangements against the requirements below. Click on the hyperlink for more detailed guidance about the minimum criteria you should meet.

If assessing a proposed strategy policy, project, contract or decision, indicate 'Yes' if you anticipate compliance by launch of implementation.



	Yes	No 	N/A
Customer contact mechanisms are accessible to all.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronic, web-based and paper information is accessible to all.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publicity campaigns are inclusive of all.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Images and text in documentation are representative and inclusive of all.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered 'No' to any of the questions above please explain why, giving details of any legal justification.

Future Impact


12 Think about what your strategy, policy, project, contract or decision is aiming to achieve over the long term and the ways in which it will seek to do this. This is your opportunity to take a step back and consider the practical implementation of your strategy, policy, project, contract or decision in the future. As well as checking that people from diverse groups will not be inadvertently excluded from or disadvantaged by any proposed activities, it is also an opportunity to think about how you can maximize your impact, reach as many people as possible and really make a difference to the lives of everyone in Uttlesford regardless of their background or circumstances.










Is it likely to inadvertently exclude or disadvantage any diverse groups?

- No
- Yes * 
- Insufficient evidence 

*Please state any potential issues Identified.

OVERVIEW
70,000 residents
Demographic make up according to diverse groups.

Improvement actions	
13	<p>If your assessment has highlighted any potential issues or red flags, can these be easily addressed?</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No*  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable </p> <p><i>*If Yes, please describe your proposed action/s, intended impact, monitoring arrangements implementation date and lead officer:</i></p>

Making a judgement – conclusions and next steps										
14	<p>Following this fast-track assessment, please confirm the following:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 40%; vertical-align: top;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> There are no inequalities identified that cannot be easily addressed or legally justified </td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">  </td> <td style="width: 45%; vertical-align: top;"> No further action required. Complete this form and implement any actions you identified in Q13 above </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <input type="checkbox"/> There is insufficient evidence to make a robust judgement. </td> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">  </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> Additional evidence gathering required (go to Q17 on Page 7 below). </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inequalities have been identified which cannot be easily addressed. </td> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">  </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> Action planning required (go to Q18 on Page 8 below). </td> </tr> </table>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> There are no inequalities identified that cannot be easily addressed or legally justified		No further action required. Complete this form and implement any actions you identified in Q13 above	<input type="checkbox"/> There is insufficient evidence to make a robust judgement.		Additional evidence gathering required (go to Q17 on Page 7 below).	<input type="checkbox"/> Inequalities have been identified which cannot be easily addressed.		Action planning required (go to Q18 on Page 8 below).
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<input type="checkbox"/> Inequalities have been identified which cannot be easily addressed.		Action planning required (go to Q18 on Page 8 below).								
15	<p>If you have any additional comments to make, please include here.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None</p>									

Completion											
16	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 40%;">Name and job title (Assessment lead officer)</td> <td>Judith Snares</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Name/s of any assisting officers and people consulted during assessment:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date:</td> <td>27/11/2015</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date of next review:</td> <td>27/11/2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>For new strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions this should be one year from implementation.</i></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Name and job title (Assessment lead officer)	Judith Snares	Name/s of any assisting officers and people consulted during assessment:		Date:	27/11/2015	Date of next review:	27/11/2016	<i>For new strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions this should be one year from implementation.</i>	
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Date:	27/11/2015										
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When completed, a copy of this form should be saved with the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision's file for audit purposes and in case it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

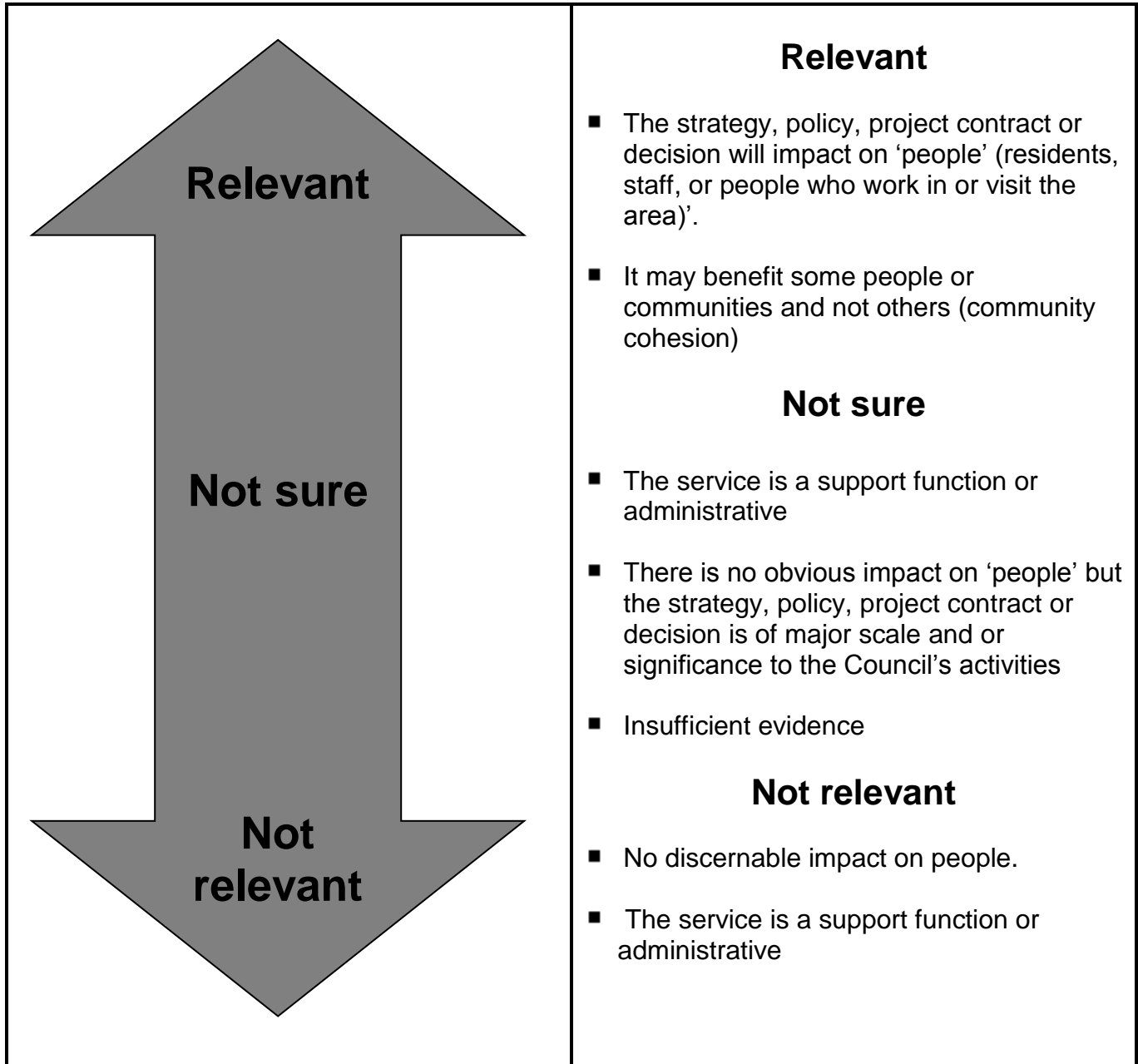
Additional evidence gathering and action planning

- 17 If your fast-track assessment indicated that **complex issues** or **inequalities** were identified which could not be easily addressed, or you had **insufficient evidence** to make a judgement, you need to undertake an additional evidence gathering and action planning process. This is described below:
- (a) Gather and analyse relevant additional evidence (which may include engagement with diverse groups), to address gaps in your knowledge, enhance understanding of the issues and inform options for addressing these. Additional evidence is likely to include any or all of the following:
- Data gathering**
- Demographic profiles of Uttlesford
 - Data about the physical environment, e.g. housing market, workforce, employment, education and learning provision, transport, spatial planning and public spaces
 - Results of local needs analysis
 - Results of staff surveys
 - Research reports on the needs/experience of diverse groups
 - National best practice/guidance
 - Benchmarking with other organisations
- Consultation and involvement**
- Existing consultation findings that may provide insight into the issues
 - New, specially commissioned engagement with diverse groups
 - Expert views of stakeholders/employers organisations representing diverse groups
 - Advice from experts or national organisations
 - Specialist staff/in-house expertise.
- (b) For advice on evidence gathering or engagement with diverse groups please contact your departmental equality lead officer. Discuss any proposed consultation with your departmental equality lead officer to ensure it is coordinated with related exercises across the Council as a whole.
- (c) Use your evidence gathering, analysis and engagement with diverse groups to develop options for addressing inequalities or unmet need, consulting with relevant management teams, Members, strategic groups/partners where necessary to confirm proposed actions and resource issues.
- (d) When options for addressing any issues are agreed, if these cannot be implemented immediately integrate them into the appropriate service plan/strategic plan/multi-agency strategy, so that it is clear how they will be delivered, when they will be delivered, by whom and how this will be monitored.

	<p>(e) Identify how the continuing implementation and impact of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision on diverse groups in Uttlesford will be monitored.</p> <p>(f) Having gathered evidence re-evaluate this assessment.</p> <p>(g) Following completion of the above, please confirm the following:</p>	
18	<p>The conclusions and agreed proposals: Draft policy has been out for public consultation and has been agreed by the Tenants Forum and the Housing Board</p>	
	<p>Summary of evidence gathered, including any internal and external consultation (please include full document titles and dates of publication and consultation for audit purposes): Nov Tenants Forum minutes, Sep/Dec Housing Board minutes, email from CAB</p>	
	<p>Date proposals to be implemented and lead officer: Jan 2016 – Judith Snares</p>	
	<p>Where implementation is not immediate, please state in which service plan or strategy the proposed actions will be integrated:</p>	
	<p>Monitor arrangements (please include full details for audit purposes): Homelessness Partnership and performance data monitoring via Covalent</p>	
Additional Comments		
19	<p>If you have any additional comments to make, please include here:</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> None
Completion		
20	<p>Name and job title (Lead Officer): Name/s of other assisting officers: Date: Date of next review (if any):</p>	<p>Judith Snares Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager</p> <p>27/11/2015</p> <p>27/11/2016</p>
<p>When completed, a copy of this form should be saved with the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision's file for audit purposes and in case it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act.</p>		

The relevance test

Use the quick guide below to decide whether or not your strategy, policy, project, contract or decision is relevant to equality:



If you are not sure whether your strategy, project or decision is relevant to equality, ask _____, a member of the Council’s Equality Standard Working Group Officer for advice.
Tel. _____

Ensuring your premises for delivery are easily accessible

In order to ensure that your premises for delivery are accessible to disabled customers and staff, older people and people with small children you should comply with the principles of accessible design summarised below.

In some cases, and for legitimate reasons, this may not be possible. Where this is the case you can still ensure your premises are accessible if you make appropriate reasonable adjustments. For guidance on reasonable adjustments see the 'Key contacts' section at the foot of this page.

Level access

Is there level access into and inside your premises? This means no steps, steep slopes or lips on doorways.

Ramp or lift

If there are steps, can you fit a ramp or install a lift so disabled customers and staff and parents with pushchairs can get in? To be safe ramps must:

- Have a gradient of 1:20 or less
- Have a handrail
- Be firmly fixed to the ground

Bell or buzzer and alarms

Can you install a bell or buzzer outside and go out to disabled customers or staff when they ring? Do you have a visual as well as audible alarm?

Door handles

Are door handles easy to grip and easy to reach for customers or staff who are wheelchair users?

- Use an easy grip handle in a contrasting colour
- Install a magnetic device to hold doors open
- Are door locks easy to handle (not fiddly)?

Doormats

Are any doormats flush with the floor? Avoid bristle matting – it can be difficult for customers or staffs who are wheelchair users.

Colour contrast

Is there a colour contrast between your floors, walls, ceilings and doors? Use matt paint in contrasting colours or different tones.

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Are corridors and aisles clear enough for a wheelchair or pushchair to pass through?

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- Make sure signs are at a suitable height.

Use visual or picture symbols as well as words, if appropriate.

Key contacts

For further advice or information please contact Sue Locke , a member of the Council's Equality Standard Working Group Officer.

Email: slocke@uttlesford.gov.uk

Telephone: 01799 501510

Text phone: 18001

Alternatively, contact your Equality Lead Officer:

Division/Services	Head of Division/Services	Tel. No.

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Alternatively, contact your Divisional Equality Lead Officer:

Services	Head of Services	Tel. No.



UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Homelessness Strategy and Review

2016-2021

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Foreword by the Housing Portfolio Holder

The development of our new Homelessness Strategy comes at a time of great change within housing, welfare and social policy. There are continual pressures on housing within Uttlesford particularly with regard to the affordability of housing for many local people.

Since the publication of the 2011 Homelessness Strategy, which at that time was amalgamated with the Housing Strategy, significant achievements have been made in the prevention of homelessness in Uttlesford and the reduction in use of emergency bed and breakfast accommodation for all client groups.

We have greatly improved the accommodation that we offer to homeless households whilst they wait for a permanent home to become available. This includes the building of four purpose built units on our new development at Mead Court in Stansted, however one of our priorities remains the further provision of good quality temporary accommodation.

The new Homelessness Strategy has been developed against fresh and bigger challenges that threaten to increase homelessness and make it more difficult for people to meet their housing need. The reasons that people become homeless are many and varied but being without a settled home is usually only one of the issues that people present with. This is why we rely on our partner organisations to help us manage the more complex cases of homelessness that we are now seeing and why we have improving the health and wellbeing of homeless people as one of our priorities.

As an Authority we have increased the supply of available accommodation for people in housing need and continue to work closely with Landlords in the private rented sector to improve access to affordable private rented accommodation. This is not easy in a high value area but another of our priorities will be to increase the availability to homeless people of affordable private rented sector properties.

Through the work of the Uttlesford Homelessness Partnership we will continue to work with partners to meet our first priority which is to prevent homelessness by providing a first class housing advice service to help people sustain their tenancies in whichever tenure they currently reside.

Uttlesford is fortunate not to have the degree of homelessness as seen in other parts Essex but this means we also do not have the access to resources of others, however by working with our partners on the Essex Homelessness Officers Group, we can take ideas of best practice and innovation to help Uttlesford develop services to match the increasing demand and improve the offer that we are able to make to those who find themselves without a home.

Cllr Julie Redfern – Housing Portfolio Holder Uttlesford District Council

Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory obligation on all local authorities to undertake a review of homelessness and then publish a strategy on how they will try to prevent and tackle homelessness in their area. Uttlesford has published three homelessness strategies, the last being integrated into the 2012 - 2015 Housing Strategy.

This Strategy looks at the context of homelessness both nationally and locally, it reviews the levels of homelessness within the district and looks back at the achievements since the last document. The emphasis has been on preventing homelessness and offering advice and support to people to be able to remain in their homes, where this is not possible, the aim has been to provide good quality temporary accommodation and then to help people into stable affordable long term accommodation.

The document and has been developed in consultation with partners and by looking across the country at of the work that others are doing within this area, it sets out the council's strategic priorities for tackling homelessness within Uttlesford for the next five years.

Achievements since the Last Homelessness Strategy

There have been many developments in the council's Housing Options/ Homelessness service since the previous strategy was published within the Housing Strategy in 2012. Despite the huge challenges faced due to the economic climate that has prevailed during this time, the council is able to report on a number of important successes that have been achieved these include:-

- Development of the council's Housing Options Team – the council has invested in staff to develop the Housing Options Team who are now able to offer a high quality housing advice service to all clients on a no appointment needed basis and then where appropriate follow this with detailed case working for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- Development of an appropriate portfolio of temporary accommodation, providing good quality ready to occupy accommodation. This has enabled Uttlesford to have only minimal use of bed and breakfast for families unless in an absolute emergency and greatly reduced use for all other client groups.
- Development of an in-house rent deposit scheme to help clients into private sector accommodation and the employing of a dedicated Empty Homes Officer to bring empty private sector properties back into use. The council also holds an annual Landlords Forum to engage with private sector

landlords as they are an important key to solving the problems of homelessness within the district.

- Working with the West Essex Mental Health Joint Referral Panel to engage with the providers of specialist supported housing to ensure clients with mental health issues are helped into appropriate housing
- Comprehensive review of Allocations Policy to take advantages of freedoms offered by the Localism Act. This has enabled us to rethink the way homeless households can engage with the council's choice based lettings system.
- Developed a comprehensive arrears policy including the appointment of a dedicated officer to work with council tenants who have debt issues or subject to the spare room subsidy to try to prevent the need to take eviction action to recover rent arrears within the councils own stock.
- Development of procedures for housing and the council's housing benefit department to work together on the use of Discretionary Housing Payments to be used to prevent homelessness.
- Worked with Essex County Council on the development of services for victims of Domestic Violence. Uttlesford has signed up to TUTIS a countywide reciprocal agreement to increase the options for tenants in social housing who need to move because of domestic abuse.
- Achieving recognition of the good quality of the homelessness services provided by Uttlesford Council by taking part in the National Practitioner Support Service Diagnostic Peer Review with 4 other neighboring authorities.

Context

This chapter puts the homelessness strategy in perspective by looking at the legal context, the national policy changes since the last strategy and the local context

Homelessness is expensive, not just to the individual or household experiencing it but also to the community and the taxpayer - it has been estimated that on average each homeless person costs the public purse £26,000 per year and the overall costs of homelessness in the UK exceed £1billion per annum (Homeless Link 2013).

Below are some of the individual costs associated with some of the public services used by homeless people:-

- £387– average cost of each homelessness assessment (Homeless Link 2013)
- £1,668 – average cost of an arrest (research shows homeless people are at significantly greater risk of offending) (Ministry of Justice 2010)
-
- £147 – average cost of a visit to A&E leading to admission (it is estimated that homeless people use A&E five times more than the general population) (Lesley Curtis – ‘Unit Costs of Health and Social Care’ (2011) and Inclusion Health (March 2010))
-
- £1,005 average weekly cost of residential care for older people (Lesley Curtis – ‘Unit Costs of Health and Social Care’ (2011))

The Legal Context

Definition of homelessness for the purpose of this strategy

Statutory homeless households as defined by the 1996 Housing Act and Homelessness Act 2002. These are more likely to be families with dependent children, pregnant women and adults who are assessed as vulnerable. (This definition of homelessness is relatively narrow and does not constitute the majority of homelessness cases).

Those households who do not fall into the above categories (sometimes called ‘non-statutory’ homeless) and are more likely to be single or couples (with no dependents) who are either sleeping rough, living in supported accommodation or are deemed as “hidden homeless” and are typically sleeping on friends or family member’s sofas as a temporary stop gap measure.

The Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002

Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 continues to be the overarching piece of legislation that relates to homelessness and informs the way in which local authorities respond to homelessness.

The Act has since been amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011. These subsequent pieces of legislation have placed a requirement on Local Authorities to adopt a strategic approach to managing and preventing homelessness.

The Localism Act 2011

Section 153 of the Localism Act 2011 prescribes the relationship between schemes and strategies that local authorities must have regard to in developing or modifying their local preventing homelessness strategies:

'In formulating or modifying a homelessness strategy, a local housing authority in England shall have regard to—

- (a) its current allocation scheme under section 166A of the Housing Act 1996,*
- (b) its current tenancy strategy under section 150 of the Localism Act 2011*

The National Context

Policy changes since the last strategy

A number of key national policy changes have been introduced since the last strategy in 2012. The following section attempts to draw some of the main policy changes that have had a direct or indirect effect on homelessness in Uttlesford

Localism Act 2011

The purpose of the act was to shift power from the state to local communities by:

- Lifting the burden of bureaucracy
- Empowering communities to do things their way
- Increase local control of public finances
- Diversifying the supply of public services
- Opening up government to public scrutiny
- Strengthening accountability to local people.

Welfare reform Act 2012

Against a background of financial constraints the coalition government introduced a number of changes through the Welfare Reform Act 2012. Some of these changes were the biggest seen since the introduction of the Welfare state in the 1940s, these include:

- Measures to simplify the system
- More stringent rules and eligibility criteria
- Stricter sanctions
- Making work pay
- More frequent benefit entitlement assessments
- Benefit rate freezes
- Caps to some benefits
- Loss of benefit uprating linked to actual costs
- Increase in a range of deductions made to benefits
- New payment methods
- Localisation of the social fund

Reduction in the value of working-age benefits

A significant number of the changes brought about by the Welfare Reform Act 2012 were made to reduce the value of working-age benefits for people who are on low incomes. These measures include:

- Restricting the annual uprating of working age benefits to 1%
- Lowering the rates for Local Housing allowance (LHA)
- The Benefits Cap
- Means testing Child Benefit
- Limiting contribution-based Employment Support Allowance
- The Social Sector Size Criteria (SSSC)
- Replacing Council Tax Benefit (CTB) with Council Tax Support (CTS)
- Restrictions on Working Tax Credits
- Raising the deduction rate for non-dependents

Some of the above reductions have placed people in Uttlesford at further risk of homelessness.

Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment Act 2012 - Legal aid changes

In April 2013, the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment Act 2012 was introduced. The main aim of the act was to reduce the legal aid bill by £350m a year in England and Wales. The Act removed funding for a number of areas of civil law including some debt, housing and benefit issues. Legal aid is still available for debt and housing matters where someone's home is at immediate risk but for some people intervention at an earlier stage may have prevented them reaching this stage of threatened homelessness.

The Health and Social Care Act 2012

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 introduced some of the biggest changes to the NHS since its introduction in 1948. The main focuses of the changes were around:

- Structure
- Accountabilities
- Funding arrangements
- Working arrangements

This has led to Local Authorities (Councils) taking a larger role in public health promotion requiring each local authority to undertake a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and creating Health and Wellbeing Boards. Uttlesford's Health and Wellbeing Group feeds directly into the Essex Board.

The Care Act 2014

The wellbeing of people is at the centre of the new Care Act. Councils now have a duty to think about the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of people who need care. Councils also have a new duty to provide preventative services to keep people healthy in the first place.

Domestic Abuse

There have been considerable legislative changes between 2010 and 2014 which address the issue of domestic abuse and its negative impacts. This increases awareness of the issue. It is a continual challenge to understand the true level of those affected by domestic abuse, and the impact that this has on homelessness. The introduction of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing and the DASH assessment form means that our approach to dealing with customers is more consistent and offers an opportunity for us to do effective action planning with the individual. This also helps the customer to measure their own risk levels, and minimise them.

The introduction of the Social Sector Size Criteria (SSSC)

The introduction of the SSSC was brought about primarily to reduce expenditure on Housing Benefit and to reduce under-occupation in the social sector. The scheme reduces Housing Benefit for social tenants (of working age) with more bedrooms than they are required to have. Those people affected have had their Housing Benefit reduced by 14 per cent for one spare bedroom and 25 per cent for two or more spare bedrooms. As of September 2015 222 households were affected by SSSC in Uttlesford. The council's Allocations Policy in 2013 was amended so that the allocation of housing was in line with SSSC.

Incentivising Right to Buy

In October 2011, the Coalition government announced that they wanted to "raise Right to Buy discounts which will make the scheme attractive again and rejuvenate the housing stock." Since this announcement in April 2012 the government increased the maximum cap on the discount to £70k. This maximum cap is now raised on an annual basis from April 2015 by CPI. It is likely that these rises in discounts will mean that more council houses will continue to be sold in Uttlesford. Over the five year period between 2010 and 2015 38 homes were sold through Right to Buy.

Ending of mortgage rescue

The Mortgage Rescue Scheme was designed to support vulnerable owner-occupiers at risk of repossession to remain in their own home. Since its inception in

2009 there has been 5 successful mortgage rescues in Uttlesford. The Government ended the scheme in 2014.

Interest only mortgages

There is some concern that homeowners who took out interest only mortgages in the late 80s and 90s will struggle to find the necessary funds to repay the capital element of their mortgage when their mortgage term comes to an end. The Financial Conduct Authority estimates around 260,000 homeowners (10% of cases) whose mortgage matures before 2020 do not have a strategy in place to repay their mortgage at the end of their term.

National Strategies and Guidance

Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England 2011

The national housing strategy published in 2011 set out the government's approach for housing by giving local communities a greater say over decisions on housing in order to provide a stable, long term increase in housing supply.

It also identified addressing homelessness as a key priority for the government to tackle, with greater focus on prevention as well as targeting action for dealing with rough sleeping. The strategy introduced the Ministerial Working Group comprising of representatives from across eight government departments working together to prevent homelessness and crisis. The group published its first report "No Second Night Out nationwide in July 2011, this focused on ending rough sleeping. This report was followed in August 2012 by "Making Every Contact Count", a joint approach to preventing homelessness. The document provided detailed guidance for how councils should work collaboratively with other local authority services to prevent homelessness through early intervention in order to avoid households reaching crisis point.

No Second Night Out nationwide: Vision to End Rough Sleeping (July 2011)

- The report set out 6 joint commitments:
- Helping people off the Streets
- Helping people access healthcare
- Helping people into work
- Reducing bureaucratic burdens
- Increasing local control over investment in services
- Developing responsibility in tackling homelessness

The aim being for the working group to work across government to give local people the tools to tackle rough sleeping and put an end to second nights out on the street

Making Every Contact Count: A Joint Approach to Preventing Homelessness (August 2012).

The aim of the report by the Ministerial Working Group was to make sure that every contact local agencies have with vulnerable people and families has value. It brought together five government commitments to:

- Tackle troubled childhoods and adolescence
- Improve health
- Reduce involvement in crime
- Improve skills, employment and financial advice
- Pioneer social funding for homelessness

The report poses ten local challenges to the sector. The following table shows the current position of the council in relation to each challenge

Making Every Contact Count	Current Uttlesford Position
Adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services	In place – see forward to this strategy
Actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs.	In place – Uttlesford Homelessness Partnership
Offer a Housing Options prevention service including written advice to all clients.	In place
Adopt a ‘No Second Night Out’ model or effective alternative.	In place
Having housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support.	In development
Develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups including advice and support to both clients and landlords.	In place
Actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the mortgage rescue scheme.	In place
Have a homelessness strategy that sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is	In place

reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs	
Not place any Young Person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation.	In development
Not place any families in Bed & Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks.	In development

The Government is also encouraging Local Authorities to take part in the Gold Standard Challenge and in doing so commit to continuous improvement.

Uttlesford has started this process by participating in the Diagnostic Peer Review process with 4 other neighbouring authorities.

Improving outcomes and supporting transparency – A Public Health Outcomes Framework for England 2013 – 2016 Part 1 January 2012

This document sets out the new framework for public health and recognises the factors that influence public health over the course of a lifetime including poverty, education, housing, employment, crime and pollution

The document outlines how the NHS, social care, the voluntary sector and communities will work together to plan and deliver services to improve health inequalities.

The new Public Health Outcomes Framework is in three parts. Part 1 introduces the two overarching outcomes that set the vision for the whole public health system.

Theses two outcomes are:

- Increased healthy life expectancy
- Reduced differences in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy between communities

The document recognises the important link between health inequality and homelessness

The Local Context

Uttlesford Housing Strategy

The Council's new Housing Strategy draws on a wide ranging consultation with stakeholders as well as building on existing evidence and local knowledge. As the

new Local Plan is drafted, the Housing Strategy will form a key part of the evidence base of the Local Plan.

The Council is committed to producing and adopting a sound Local Plan and has set out the programme for completing this work. The Council will continue to work towards the delivery of the Housing Strategy through both Local Planning and Development Management.

The new Strategy also stands alongside the HRA Business Plan, Homelessness Strategy and Developers Guide and sets out how Uttlesford Council plans to deliver the key priorities and objectives outlined in the strategy over for next five years. The key objectives being:-

- Increasing Housing Supply across all tenures
- Helping People to live independently
- Ensuring decent, safe and healthy homes
- Creating sustainable communities

West Essex Tenancy Policy and Uttlesford Tenancy Policy

The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to publish a Tenancy Strategy which must set out the matters to which registered providers are to have regard in formulating their policies relating to:

- The kinds of tenancies they grant;
- The circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind;
- Where they grant tenancies for a term certain, the lengths of those terms; and
- The circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the coming to an end of an existing tenancy.

Uttlesford District Council joined with Epping and Harlow Councils to form the West Essex Housing Forum and produced the West Essex Tenancy Strategy the objectives of which are as follows:

- To fulfil the statutory requirement to publish a Tenancy Strategy, following consultation with stakeholders;
- To ensure that affordable housing meets locally, identifiable housing need;
- To provide guidance and direction to RPs regarding their use of social and affordable housing tenancies;
- To set out clearly to partner agencies and others, the expectations of the West Essex Housing Forum in relation to the use of flexible tenure;

- To indicate to home seekers what they can expect from their fixed term tenancy, if one is granted, including arrangements for statutory reviews;
- To provide a framework for working in partnership over flexible tenure, including establishing a joined up approach and joint governance arrangements;
- To ensure that local authorities have regard to the Tenancy Strategy when reviewing its allocations policies and exercising its housing management functions; and
- To keep the Tenancy Strategy under review.

Uttlesford Council then formulated its Tenancy Policy, taking account of the West Essex Tenancy Strategy and the local context within Uttlesford. Uttlesford's Tenancy Policy set out:-

- The type of tenancies we will grant and the circumstances in which we will grant tenancies of a particular type.
- The circumstances in which fixed term tenancies will not be renewed
- The use of Affordable rents

Uttlesford Council's Housing Allocations Scheme – Offer to those owed the full housing duty

In 2014 Uttlesford Council carried full consultation on a review of its Allocations Policy, this involved staff, elected members, partner agencies as well as public consultation via the Citizens Panel.

The review looked at whether Uttlesford, following government guidance, needed to strengthen its local connection criteria for applicants wishing to apply for social housing within the district. The consultation also covered financial eligibility criteria and the offer made to homelessness applicants.

Following adoption by the Council's Cabinet in December 2014 the new policy was implemented in January 2014 with some minor amendments being implemented in August 2015 following a six month review of the new policy.

The local connection criteria is now set at three year residence or three years working within the district (for full details please see the Allocation Policy). This is less than some of our neighboring authorities but members felt that this was the correct degree of connection to satisfy the public desire for local houses going to 'local people' in an area where alternative housing options, other than social housing, can be out of reach for many Uttlesford residents.

To ensure that tenants with young children living in flats, who are otherwise suitably housed but who have conducted their tenancies satisfactorily for a minimum of two years, get the opportunity to move to a house of the same size, the policy was

changed to give these tenants priority over higher banded applicants that require the same size of accommodation. It was felt that as accepted homeless applicants were often the highest banded applicants it would be fairer if their offer to discharge the council's full housing duty was to be firstly, if available, a private sector offer or if this was not available then flatted accommodation. The rationale being that this was fairer to existing tenants with young children, who were not getting the opportunity to move to houses.

The current offer to accepted homeless applicants of all household types is as follows:-

Accepted homeless households are applicants to whom:

- The Council has accepted a duty under Part VII of The Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 (the duty towards households who are in priority need and unintentionally homeless) **and**
- The council accepts a duty to provide suitable accommodation.

In the first instance the Council will look to discharge its homelessness duty for all accepted homeless applicants within the private rented sector. The Council will ensure that any offer of private rented housing is appropriate to the needs of the household, that the length of any tenancy is a minimum of 12 months and that the property meets the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012. An assessment will also be carried out to assess the affordability of the property, including the eligibility to receive Local Housing Allowance/Housing Benefit. The property may be outside the Uttlesford District.

Whilst the Council is looking for suitable accommodation within the private sector, applicants will be allowed to make expressions of interest on suitable properties advertised through the CBL system. If after a period of 2 cycles from when the applicant received their S.184 decision letter they have either not been offered a suitable private sector property or been successful through the CBL system, the Council will express interest on their behalf and make one final offer of suitable accommodation. The property will be either a privately rented property or social housing depending of which type of accommodation is available first, and will generally be flatted accommodation. If this offer is refused, the Council's homelessness duty under the Housing Act 1996 to provide accommodation will be considered to have been discharged.

Accepted homeless applicants, who meet the Council's Allocation Policy eligibility criteria, who are housed in temporary accommodation provided by the Council, including Bed & Breakfast accommodation, hostels or homeless at home, will be placed in Band B. Accepted homeless applicants in severe need will be placed in Band A

When a private rented property becomes available it will be offered to the accepted homeless applicant for whom the property is suitable and if this is more than one applicant, it will be offered to the applicant with the earliest homeless application date.

Any private rented tenancy that discharges the council's homelessness duty will be for a period of not less than 12 months. If within 2 years, beginning with the date on which the applicant accepts a private rented sector offer, the applicant re-applies for accommodation, or for assistance in obtaining accommodation, and if the applicant is found to be homeless (from the date of the expiry of the termination notice) and did not become homeless intentionally from the private rented accommodation, the Council will accept a homelessness duty regardless of whether the applicant has a priority need.

Essex Health and Wellbeing Board – Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Essex October 2012

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been developed and is being implemented by the Health and Wellbeing Board, which brings together key partners to improve health and wellbeing of communities across Essex.

The main source of evidence for this strategy has been the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. This has provided information on the health and wellbeing of the population of Essex, the wider determinants of health and the quality of life in the county. The assessment has provided the basis for the key priorities of the strategy, namely

- Starting and developing well
- Living and working well
- Aging well

The main focus of the strategy is to reduce health inequalities and tackle the wider determinants of health to increase life expectancy and reduce inequalities between areas and groups.

Uttlesford council recognises the significance of the links between health and homelessness particularly amongst single homeless people and the effect it has on families. We also recognise that we need to work together to achieve better outcomes for people who are affected by homelessness and ill-health. We know that if someone becomes homeless they are likely to "suffer significant health inequalities in comparison with people in more secure accommodation, in terms of both their health status and their ability to access health services. We also recognise the direct relationship between an individual's physical and mental wellbeing can have on their own housing situation if their health needs are not met.

All local authorities (unitary and district) have a general statutory duty to protect and improve health and wellbeing and to tackle inequalities and the 'social determinants' of health – that is, those aspects of people's social and economic condition that impacts on their health. Extending far beyond social care from education to housing, economic development to leisure services, planning to trading standards, they all have a significant impact on people's health.

In particular District authorities, such as Uttlesford, have a significant function and role in helping improve people's health and wellbeing through the homeless prevention work we do. Examples of this work include:

- The function of the housing options teams in helping vulnerable people find (or keep) safe and secure good quality housing
- Direct provision of permanent and temporary housing
- Joint commissioning of services to help reach out to vulnerable people who are either young, rough sleeping or fleeing domestic abuse
- Helping people stay in their own homes through grants and adaptations to help them live more independently
- Improving the quality of private sector housing for people
- Working with other Essex authorities on protocols for working with Social Care for families and 16 and 17 year olds

Joint Commissioning Strategy for Domestic Abuse 2015 - 2020

This Strategy aims to assist partnerships and agencies across Greater Essex in delivering appropriate joined up responses to those affected by domestic abuse, underpinned by a recognition and an understanding that no single agency can address this complex issue in isolation. The strategy has the aim of ensuring that by working together partners can make the best use of existing collective resources, and draw upon additional resources, to address the issue of domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse impacts on quality of life and can ultimately destroy people's lives. Despite being a significant contributor to crime statistics and the causes of homelessness, it is also a pattern of behaviour that often happens behind closed doors and is grossly under-reported. It is an issue that cuts across all social, geographical and cultural groups. Domestic abuse causes harm to both adults and children, both directly and indirectly, and is of high financial cost to public agencies, the economy, the individuals concerned and wider society. Furthermore it produces patterns of behaviour that are often replicated from generation to generation and these inter-generational cycles must be broken.

Uttlesford District Council has been working with Essex County Council on and the wider work that has been undertaken across the county in relation to housing up domestic abuse services. The council has signed up to the countywide reciprocal agreement TUTIS to enable social housing tenants who are the victims of domestic abuse to move more easily across the county.

Uttlesford also takes part in the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences for high risk domestic abuse cases and provides funding for an outreach service for victims within Uttlesford. The council is also currently looking at transferring land at nil cost for the development of a specialist refuge within the district.

Joint Protocol between Essex County Council and Local Authority Housing Services to Address the Needs of Intentionally Homeless Families with Children

This is a joint protocol agreed between Essex County Council Social Care and Essex Housing Authorities. The protocol covers the assessment and provision of services to families with dependent children who are homeless and no longer eligible for assistance from the Homeless Team within Housing Services. The Homelessness Act 2002 states the need for cooperation between Housing authorities and Children's Social Care when dealing with intentionally homeless households with dependent children and this protocol details how Social Care and housing will work together when dealing with intentionally homeless families.

Joint Protocol between Essex County Council and Local Authority Housing Services in Dealing with Homeless 16 and 17 Year Olds

This joint protocol recognises that the welfare of the child is paramount and all parties need to work together to ensure young people are safe and have their needs met. The protocol was developed following the House of Lords judgement in May 2009 in the case of G v LB Southwark and the subsequent statutory guidance issued by the department for Children, Schools and Families and Communities and Local Government department in April 2010. These clarified the legal responsibilities of Children and Young People's Services towards homeless 16 and 17 year olds and the interrelationship between duties under the Children Act 1989 and homelessness legislation.

Essex County Council (ECC) and the twelve district local housing authorities (LHA's) are committed to meeting the social and housing needs of young people who are at risk of homelessness and who are unable to live with their (wider) family or suitable friends.

The protocol details how Essex County Council and the 12 district local authorities in will work together with supported housing providers to deliver the most effective options for young people, ensuring they have appropriate advice and guidance, and that the young person continues to take responsibility for the decisions they take about their lives and the subsequent consequences of these. Both agencies have responsibilities to ensure young people are safeguarded and that services are jointly planned and secured. These services will include: homelessness prevention services (provision of advice and guidance to young people), supported accommodation schemes, relevant support services and more specialised supported housing provision for more vulnerable young people.

Uttlesford has only one supported housing scheme within the district for single people. This is Bromfield House in Saffron Walden, which is a 17 bed unit run by Genesis Housing Association. Although the unit can take single people from 16 to 65 the majority of referrals are at the younger end of the spectrum. Bromfield House would be the first choice of accommodation for any 16 and 17 year olds that the local authority has a duty to house.

Review of Homelessness in Uttlesford since 2011

The Statistics

Uttlesford District Council is a stock holding council with 2850 properties scattered across 56 parishes in what is the largest geographical district in the county of Essex. The district has a population of around 83,500 (2014 figure).

The average household price across the district is £421,100 (Sept 2014) whilst the average income is £24,575

The Local Housing Allowance for a 2 Bedroom House in Saffron Walden is £609.87 (2015) whilst the average rent for a 2 bedroom house in Saffron Walden is £900.00

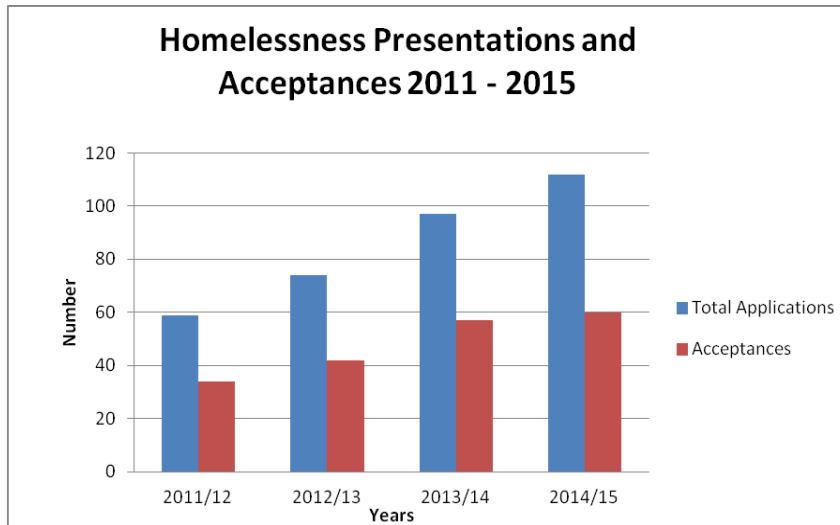
In the last 4 years Uttlesford has delivered 284 new affordable homes across the district

The housing register as at 1 April 2015 had 1193 registered applications with 483 of them within Bands A –D (in recognised need of alternative housing)

The number of social housing allocations from the housing register in Uttlesford in 2014/15 was 252

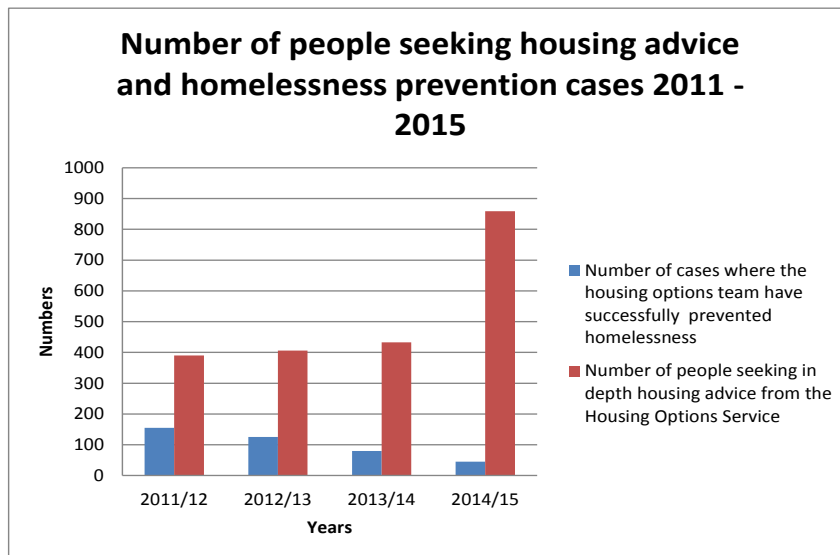
The estimated numbers for rough sleeping in Uttlesford was 2 as at November 2014

Homelessness has increased within Uttlesford, as it has nationally, over the past 4 years. The table below shows the number of homeless applications the council has taken in this time and the number of those applications for which the council has accepted the full homelessness duty – to find them permanent housing.



DCLG P1E data

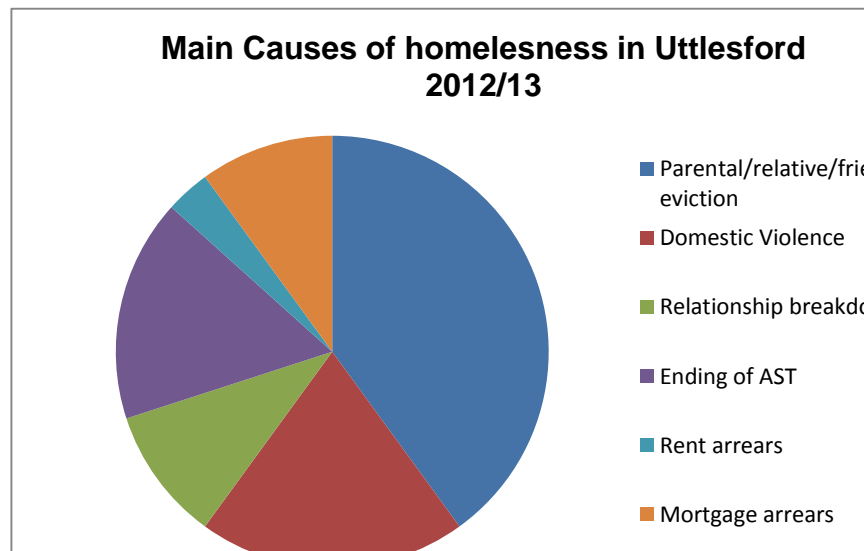
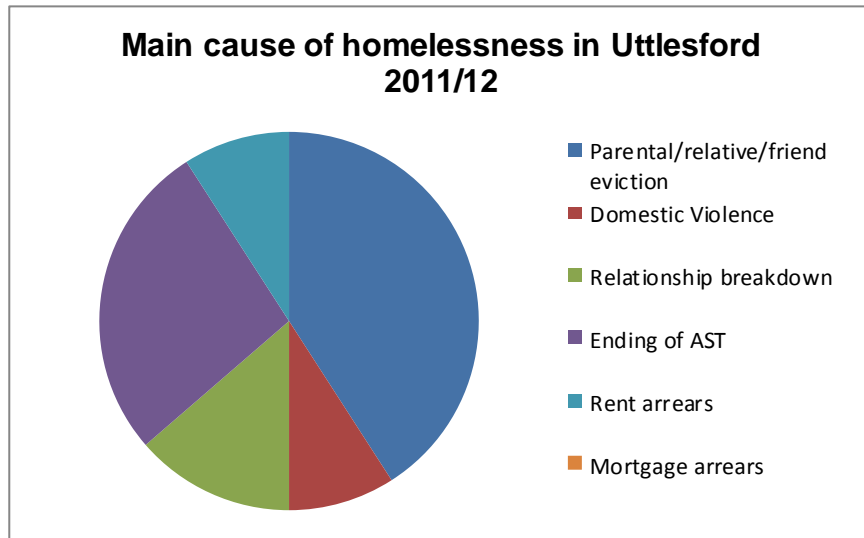
The number of people making homeless applications is only one part of the homelessness picture with Uttlesford. The table below shows the number of clients that have sought in depth housing advice from the council’s housing options service. These will be people who are having problems with their current housing and can be across any tenure type. Some of these clients will be people threatened with homelessness and the council will work with these clients and other partner agencies to try to prevent homelessness. The chart clearly demonstrates that as difficult economic climate has prevailed it has become increasingly difficult to prevent homelessness by finding suitable affordable accommodation for clients.



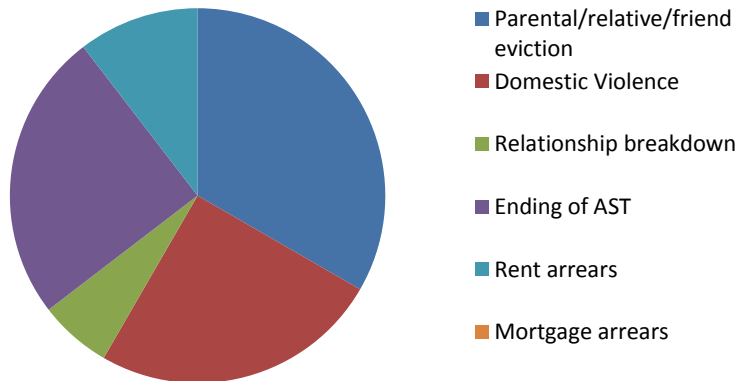
Council and P1E data

The following charts taken from the council’s P1E returns data show the main causes for homelessness within Uttlesford over the past 4 years. They demonstrate

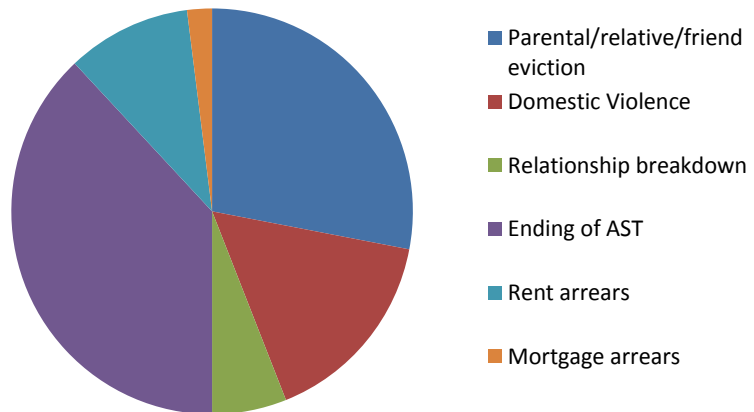
how the main cause has changed from parental/relative/friend eviction in 2011/12 to the ending of privately rented Assured Shorthold Tenancies (AST) in 2014/15.



Main causes of homelessness in Uttlesford 2013/14



Main causes of homelessness in Uttlesford 2014/15



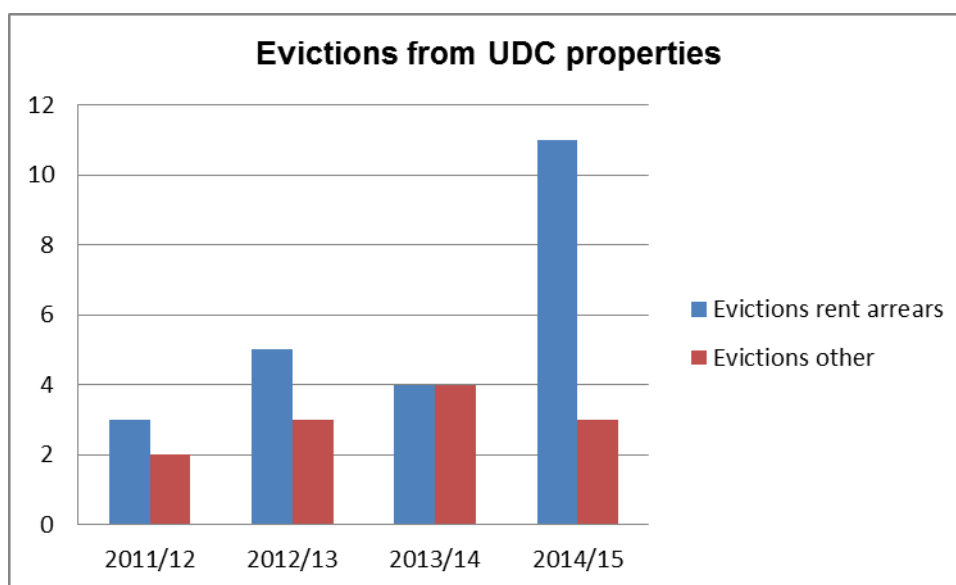
Uttlesford Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) statistics

Uttlesford CAB are an important partner to the local authority in preventing homelessness, particularly in the work that they do on debt, this is an area for which the council has used government grant money to assist the CAB in training their staff to deal with debt issues. The following statistics show the levels of debt work the CAB has carried out over the past two years and the increase in housing advice that clients have sought from them during the same period.

Debt	Unique clients	
	2013-14	2014-15
Mortgage and secured loan arrears	35	43
Hire purchase arrears	7	7
Fuel debts	38	66
Telephone and broadband arrears	14	40
Rent arrears – LA or ALMOs	28	50
Rent arrears – housing	25	33
Rent arrears – private landlords	16	11
Council tax arrears	70	82
Mag. Ct. – fines and compulsory orders	16	11
Maintenance and child maintenance	3	2
Bank and building society overdrafts	63	89
Credit, store & charge card debts	107	164
Unsecured personal loan debts	58	122
Catalogue and mail order debts	17	32
Water supply and sewerage debts	24	42
Unpaid parking penalty & congestion charge	6	9
Overpayments of WTC and CTC	11	20
Overpayments of IS / JSA / ESA	2	4
Overpayments of housing and council tax	19	15
Social fund debts	5	4
Payday loan debts	7	16
3rd party debt collection	8	-
Private bailiffs	8	-
Debt relief order	28	30
Bankruptcy	33	26
Logbook / bill of sale loan debts	-	2
Loan sharks / illegal lenders	-	1
Arrears of income tax, VAT or NI	-	26
Overpayment of other benefits	-	8
Other legal remedies	5	1
Other	125	130
Total	437	473

Housing	Unique clients	
	2013-14	2014-15
Discrimination	2	-
Actual Homelessness	44	60
Threatened Homelessness	91	132
LA homelessness service	26	23
Access to & provision of accommodation	61	50
Local Housing Authority	96	114
Housing Association property	44	40
Private sector rented property	127	141
Owner occupier property	53	48
Environmental & neighbour issues	35	45
Other housing issues	56	80
Total	468	518

The table below shows the number of evictions carried out by Uttlesford Council, although the numbers are low it can be seen that the trend is increasing particularly on rent arrears. The council works hard to avoid having to resort to court action on arrears and has processes in place for the council's housing management and housing options teams to work together to try to avoid eviction. Referrals are also made to other agencies who can support clients with debt problems such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and the districts floating support provider.



Council data

Strategic Priorities for the Next Five Years

The following priorities have been developed alongside the key priorities within the council's Corporate Plan and the council's Housing Strategy:

1. Prevent homelessness by providing a high quality housing advice service to clients in all housing tenures, by sustaining tenancies and by mitigating the negative effects of welfare reform
2. Provide good quality suitable temporary accommodation and work towards ending the use of bed and breakfast even in an emergency
3. Engage with the private rented sector to improve access to accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
4. Improving the Health and Wellbeing of homeless people

Priority 1: Prevent homelessness by providing a high quality housing advice service to clients in all housing tenures and by sustaining tenancies

The review has highlighted the need for the council and its partner organisations to continue to prevent homelessness and help people to sustain their tenancies by early intervention and providing good quality advice and support services. Analysis of data regarding households who have approached the council as being potentially homeless shows that a significant proportion have accessed assistance from the housing options team more than once.

The Council recognises the importance of multi-agency working to tenancy sustainment and will look for new and innovative ways to prevent homelessness and help tenants remain in their homes

To meet this priority the council will need to:

- Implement the recommendations made to improve the housing options service following the Diagnostic Peer Review
- Develop good quality, easily accessible housing advice materials, including web based material which reflect the diversity of applicants needs and abilities
- Prevent homelessness by helping people sustain their tenancies across all tenure through the increased provision of debt and welfare advice
- Work with partner agencies to mitigate the effects of the introduction of Universal Credit and the Benefit Cap

- Increase prevention of homelessness caused by domestic violence by working with partners to keep victims safe within their current accommodation where this is appropriate
- Flexible use of the Discretionary Housing Payments

Priority 2: Provide good quality suitable temporary accommodation and work towards ending the use of bed and breakfast even in an emergency

The review recognises the need to provide good quality temporary accommodation for those households that are or may become homeless so that the council can work towards ending bed and breakfast for all client groups and even in an emergency. The trend points to the growing need for smaller units of accommodation both as temporary accommodation and permanent housing

To meet this priority the council will need to:

- Ensure that enough ready to access temporary accommodation is available in the right location for homeless households to access support, maintain employment and education
- Ensure through the Council’s Housing Strategy that the council is able to deliver sufficient units of social housing to allow the free flow of households from temporary accommodation into permanent housing
- Ensure through the Council’s Housing Strategy that the council is able to deliver suitable supported housing for homeless households with complex needs, particularly single homeless households

Priority 3: Engage with the private rented sector to improve access to accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness

The review recognises that households made homeless from the private sector has increased and that access to this sector in Uttlesford is extremely limited, especially for clients reliant on local housing allowance to meet their rent payments as the local rates are well below local rent levels. As would be first-time buyers continue to struggle to access mortgages and turn to the private sector to meet their housing needs the sector has even less need to consider the clients of the council’s housing options service as potential tenants. However as social housing is never going to be able to fully meet the housing needs of all those who would wish to access it, there is an increasing need to work with the private sector. The Localism Act gave the council the opportunity to discharge its homelessness duty into the private sector subject to certain criteria being met. The Act also allowed councils to end the idea of a tenancy for life with the introduction of Tenancy Strategies, this means that homelessness can no longer be an assumed route into social housing.

To meet this priority the council will need to:

- Promote the council's services to private sector landlords
- Continue to encourage owners of empty properties to bring them back into use
- Refer tenants within the private sector to appropriate support agencies to help them maintain their tenancies when difficulties first arise
- Have closer links between the Housing Options Team and the Housing Benefit Department
- Review the council's Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme to see if it can provide greater incentives for private sector landlords to work with the scheme
- Continue to hold a Landlords Forum and review other ways to connect with landlords

Priority 4: Improving the Health and Wellbeing of homeless people

The review recognises the impact that homelessness has on peoples' health and wellbeing and the role that the council and its partner agencies can have on improving outcomes for households who have experienced a period of homelessness

To meet this priority the council will need to:

- Work in partnership with other key agencies to prevent individuals and families from getting into a housing crisis
- Work with health partners to ensure that homeless households and linked into appropriate health services
- Work with the West Essex Joint Referral Panel to ensure clients with mental health issues are appropriately housed
- Make appropriate referrals to support agencies to ensure homeless households have access to support that meets all their needs
- Data sharing and data analysis with statutory and voluntary partners
- Review and strengthen existing protocols and implement new ones particularly with mental health, drug and alcohol services and probation

Consultation and Engagement

In preparing this Homelessness Strategy we have worked with a wide range of staff, elected members, partners and stakeholders to ensure that the document is shaped to reflect legislation as well as national and local priorities.

Consultation has been undertaken to get the views of as many people and organisations as possible to inform the development of this strategy. A draft document was circulated for comment and put out for public consultation via the council's website.

This has included work through the Homelessness Partnership and Housing Strategy Conferences.

The final document was been agreed by the council's Housing Board and Tenant Forum prior to be recommended to the council's Cabinet for adoption.

Implementing the Strategy

How the council will deliver the priorities within this Strategy is contained within the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan which sets out clear tasks and targets within identified areas of work. The Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed annually by the Homelessness Partnership, a multi-agency group, so that it is responsive to emerging needs and achieves the priorities within it.

By adopting the Homelessness Strategy Uttlesford Council is making a firm commitment to tackling and preventing homelessness within the District.

Action Plan – Homelessness Strategy 2016 - 2021

Priority 1: Prevent homelessness by providing a high quality housing advice service to clients in all housing tenures, by sustaining tenancies and by mitigating the negative effects of welfare reform						
How this priority will be achieved	Key Actions	When	Resources	Target	Key Officers	Comments /Progress
Implement the recommendations made to improve the housing options service following the Diagnostic Peer Review	Implement the key actions within the DPR improvement plan document	April 16	Within existing resources	DPR improvement plan fully implemented	Housing Options Team Leaders	
Develop good quality, easily accessible housing advice materials, including web based material which reflect the diversity of applicants needs and abilities	Review and revise the information around homelessness on the councils website and leaflets	Start Jan 16 and ongoing	Within existing resources	Information provided to clients up to date, relevant and easily accessible, clients better informed	Housing Options Team Leaders	
Prevent homelessness by helping people sustain their tenancies across all tenures through the increased provision of debt and welfare advice	Utilise staff across housing department to support and advise tenants Make timely referrals to partners agencies	Ongoing	Within existing resources	No tenancy breakdown as a result of lack of ongoing tenancy support and advice	Housing Options and Housing Management team leaders	
Work with partner agencies to mitigate the effects of the introduction of Universal Credit and the Benefit Cap	Hold regular meetings with HB leads and CAB	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Minimize negative impact of welfare reform	Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager	
Increase prevention of homelessness caused by domestic violence by working with partners to	Work with partner agencies, including police and specialist support services	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Victims able to maintain local support networks	Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager	

keep victims safe within their current accommodation where this is appropriate						
Flexible use of the Discretionary Housing Payments	Work with HB department to review use of DHP	From April 16 and ongoing	Within existing resources	DHP money fully utilized by the authority	Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager	

Priority 2: Provide good quality suitable temporary accommodation and work towards ending the use of bed and breakfast even in an emergency						
Ensure that enough ready to access temporary accommodation is available in the right location for homeless households to access support, maintain employment and education	Carry out a review of temporary accommodation usage/location/access to inform development of portfolio of suitable TA	April 16	Within existing resources	Portfolio of suitable temporary accommodation available	Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager	
Ensure through the Council's Housing Strategy that the council is able to deliver sufficient units of social housing to allow the free flow of households from temporary accommodation into permanent housing	Regular meetings between housing and planning to identify the right mix of units in the required localities	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Regular supply of new affordable housing	Housing Strategy Manager	
Ensure through the Council's Housing Strategy that the council is able to deliver suitable supported housing for homeless households with complex needs	Carry out further work to establish the precise requirements and find a suitable partner to be able to deliver the project	April 18	Within existing resources	New supported housing units delivered	Housing Strategy Manager	

Priority 3: Engage with the private rented sector to improve access to accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness						
Promote the council's services to private sector landlords	Explore ways via different media to encourage private landlords to work with the housing department. Provide a named officer for landlords to deal with	April 16 and ongoing	Within existing resources			Housing Options Team Leaders
Continue to encourage owners of empty properties to bring them back into use	Take appropriate enforcement action Investigate potential for additional schemes to bring empty homes back into use	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Decrease in long-term empty homes		Empty Homes and Private Sector Housing Officer
Refer tenants within the private sector to appropriate support agencies to help them maintain their tenancies when difficulties first arise	Work with CAB and floating support provider to make timely referrals	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Increased tenancy sustainment within the private sector		Housing Options Team Leaders
Have closer links between the Housing Options Team and the Housing Benefit Department to increase access to DHP	Regular monthly meetings with HB colleagues	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Increased use of DHP to prevent homelessness		Housing Options Team Leaders
Review the council's Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme to see if it can provide greater incentives for private sector landlords to work with the scheme	Look at whether cash incentives could be used to incentivise landlords to work with the scheme	June 16	Within existing resources	Increase use of private sector to prevent homelessness		Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager
Continue to hold a	Carry out a consultation	June 16	Within	Annual Forum		Empty Homes

Landlords Forum and review other ways to connect with landlords	exercise with private landlords and agents as to what type of forum event they would like to engage with		existing resources	held with increased attendance	and Private Sector Housing Officer	
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Priority 4: Improving the Health and Wellbeing of homeless people						
Work in partnership with other key agencies to prevent individuals and families from getting into a housing crisis	Work with the council's Homelessness Partnerships Group to identify ways for better partnership working to identify vulnerable clients at the earliest possible stage	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Increased number of sustained tenancies	Housing Options Team Leaders	
Work with health partners to ensure that homeless households and linked into appropriate health services	Provide clients with details of health services in the areas they are housed and where appropriate make direct referrals	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Homeless households linked in to local health services	Housing Options Team Leaders	
Work with the West Essex Joint Referral Panel to ensure clients with mental health issues are appropriately housed	Attend the West Essex JRP and make referrals where appropriate	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Homeless clients with mental health issues appropriately housed	Housing Options Team Leaders	
Make appropriate referrals to support agencies to ensure homeless households have access to support that meets all their needs	Review support available for clients moving in to temporary. Identify new sources of provision accommodation. Create referral routes	Ongoing	Within existing resources	No tenancy breakdown or re-occurrence of homelessness due to lack of resettlement support	Housing Options Team Leaders	

	(Uttlesford Frontline)					
Data sharing and data analysis with statutory and voluntary partners	Through the homelessness partnership use data sharing to identify gaps in service provision	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Gaps in service identified	Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager	
Review and strengthen existing protocols and implement new ones particularly with mental health, drug and alcohol services and probation	Review exiting provision and develop new working arrangements through joint working	April 17 and ongoing	Within existing resources	New protocols in place that better support joint working	Housing Options Team Leaders	

If you require any further information about the Uttlesford District Council Homelessness Strategy 2015 – 2020, please contact the Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager on 01799 510671 or email jsnares@uttlesford.gov.uk or write to:-

Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager
Uttlesford District Council
Council Offices
London Road
Saffron Walden
Essex
CB11 4ER

Committee: Cabinet Report

Agenda Item

Date: 12 January 2016

14

Title: Allocations Policy amendments

Author: Julie Redfern – Housing Portfolio Holder

Key decision: yes

Summary

1. This report outlines proposed amendments required to the council's Allocations Policy following recent case law relating to homelessness applicants.

Recommendations

2. That the Cabinet agrees amendments to the council's Allocations Policy as recommended by the Housing Board.

3. Financial Implications

4. None

Background Papers

5. None

Impact

- 6.

Communication/Consultation	Consultation has taken place with members , the public and partners
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	The policy has been equality impact assessed
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Change required due to recent case law
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

1. The Allocations Policy sets out who is eligible to apply for social rented housing in the district, how people apply for such housing and how applications are assessed and awarded priority.
2. Following recent case law it is necessary to make some amendments to the Allocations Policy around the eligibility of accepted homeless applicants and other categories of applicants who fall within reasonable preference categories as defined by the Housing Act 1996.
3. The proposed amendments allow for applicants to whom the council has accepted the full homelessness duty, namely to provide long term accommodation to, to join the housing register regardless of whether they meet the council's local residency criteria. This means that under the allocations policy all accepted homeless cases will now be offered accommodation in accordance with same criteria.
4. The amended policy also allows for exceptional circumstances to be considered for any other applicants wishing to join the housing register who fall within one of the reasonable preference categories but do not meet the council's local residency criteria.
5. One other minor policy change is that applicants who have been given band B for serious medical or welfare issues, who have not expressed interest in all suitable advertised properties during 12 cycles of the freesheet, will have their band B award reviewed.

Risk Analysis

6.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the Allocations Policy will be subject to legal challenge by categories of applicants currently not able to join the housing register	3 Significant risk if the amendment is not made	2 Some Risk. There is a risk of legal challenge	By amending the Allocations Policy it is considered that subject to further case law the policy meets current legislation

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.



UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME (ALLOCATIONS POLICY)

Uttlesford District Council Housing

Allocations Scheme

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is required, by virtue of Section 167 of the Housing Act 1996 to have an allocations scheme for determining priorities and the procedure to be followed in allocating housing accommodation.
- 1.2 We have written and published this policy so everyone can be clear how:
 - i. Council houses are allocated
 - ii. The homes we are offered by our Registered Providers (RP) are allocated
 - iii. Applicants on our housing register have some choice about the home they are offered;
 - iv. We meet the law's requirements about people whose housing needs we should consider.
 - v. We make best use of the available housing stock within the District
 - vi. We give preference to those applicants who have a local connection to the District
- 1.3 This Allocations Scheme has been formulated in accordance with the provisions of
 - The Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002
 - The Localism Act 2011
 - The Allocation of Accommodation: Choice Based Lettings Code of Guidance 2008
 - The Equality Act 2010
 - The Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local Housing Authorities England 2012
 - Providing social housing for local people: Statutory Guidance December 2013
 - Other relevant legislation and Guidance
- 1.4 In operating the Allocations Scheme, the Council will have due regard to legislation which shall take precedence.

2. Choice Based Lettings

- 2.1 The Council allocates accommodation through a Choice Based Lettings Scheme (CBL) called Home Option. The scheme enables applicants to

express an interest in available properties which are advertised in a fortnightly publication and on a website. All applicants are provided with detailed information explaining how the scheme operates.

2.2 Under the CBL Scheme, applicants are able to register their interest in properties which are suitable for their household size and needs in accordance with the terms of this Allocations Policy.

2.3 Direct Lets

2.3.1 Direct Lets will not be part of the choice based lettings scheme.

2.3.2 Direct Lets may apply in the following circumstances:

- i. Extra care properties
- ii. If a property is needed to house someone in council property temporarily
- iii. In cases of where someone has to be moved immediately a direct let may be made
- iv. In the case of a specially adapted property built for a specific person
- v. Decants – Council properties required to be vacated by the Council for a specific purpose
- vi. If a previously joint applicant qualifies to be offered the property of which they were previously a joint tenant we will make them an offer of that property
- vii. Where applicants owed a homelessness duty by the Council under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended who do not meet the Council's Allocation's Policy eligibility criteria.
- viii. In cases where a multi-agency team requests a planned move to resolve a serious management situation a direct let (one offer only to be made) may only be considered if the situation cannot be resolved by any other means and the tenant is either an existing Uttlesford tenant or the tenant of a RP property within Uttlesford and the subsequent vacancy would be allocated through the council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme

3. The Allocations Scheme

- 3.1 Allocation of accommodation will be through the Housing Register in accordance with the provisions of the Allocations Scheme.
- 3.2 The Council recognises that there may be some exceptional situations not covered by the Allocations Scheme. In such instances, Assistant Director of Housing and Environmental Health will have delegated authority to make decisions, as he/she considers appropriate and these will be fully documented.
- 3.3 The Scheme will apply to vacancies in the Council's own housing stock and to vacancies in accommodation in the District belonging to RPs for which the Council is required to make nominations.
- 3.4 The provisions of this Allocations Scheme will apply to applicants on the Council's Housing Register at the effective date of this Allocations Scheme, as well as those who apply after the effective date.
- 3.5 **The Allocations Scheme will not apply in the following cases;**
 - i. Where a tenant succeeds to a secure tenancy on the death of a tenant
 - ii. Where a tenancy is assigned to a person who would qualify to succeed to the secure tenant
 - iii. Where a tenancy is assigned by way of a mutual exchange to an existing secure tenant or RP assured tenant
 - iv. Where a tenancy is disposed through the courts (under matrimonial and family proceedings)
 - v. Where a priority transfer is agreed in urgent circumstances due to person's safety being at risk.
 - vi. Where a property has been identified as temporary accommodation
 - vii. Where the council needs to provide alternative accommodation for a council tenant in order to carry out repairs or improvements to their property.
 - viii. Where the council has a duty to re-house home owners following a compulsory purchase, provide suitable alternative accommodation under the Land Compensation Act 1973, s 39, or under the Rent Agricultural Act 1976. (If it is not possible to provide a permanent tenancy immediately, the applicant will be registered within band A of the scheme).
 - ix. Where the council grants a secure tenancy to a former owner of a defective home under the Housing Act 1985, s554 or s555

4. The Housing Register

- 4.1 The Council is not legally obliged to maintain a Housing Register but has chosen to do so.
- 4.2 The Housing Register will be maintained by Housing Services at the Council Offices in Saffron Walden.
- 4.3 The Housing Register will be open to all categories of person except those who are ineligible as defined at Paragraph 5.
- 4.4 The Housing Register will be open to;
 - i. homeseekers of 18 years of age and over
 - ii. current council or RP tenants
 - iii. 16 and 17 year olds owed a full housing duty by a local housing authority under homelessness legislation.
 - iv. 17yr 6mth old Care Leavers who were resident in Uttlesford at the time they were placed in Care

5. Eligibility categories

5.1 Eligibility

- 5.1.1 The following categories of applicant may not be eligible for the Housing Register;
 - i. Persons subject to immigration control (except those in classes prescribed by the Secretary of State as being eligible for an allocation of housing)
 - ii. Persons not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area (i.e. the U.K., Channel Islands, Isle of Man and the Irish Republic)
- 5.1.2 Any person making an application who is identified as falling under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 will be assessed in accordance with the Act.
- 5.1.3 Eligibility for housing will be determined in accordance with the Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local authorities in England issued by the government under s169 of the Housing Act 1996 Part 6 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.
- 5.1.4 Any other persons the Secretary of State may by regulations prescribe as persons from abroad who are ineligible to be allocated housing by local authorities in England.

5.2 Local Connection Eligibility

5.2.1 Any applicant who does not meet the following local connection eligibility criteria will be ineligible and therefore not qualify to join the housing register.

- i. Have lived continuously in the Uttlesford District for the last three years (time spent away at University or college will count as living continuously within the district providing the applicant had previously lived in the district immediately prior to the start of their course.)
- ii. Living outside of Uttlesford but have immediate family members who have lived in Uttlesford for the last 5 years and from whom they are receiving substantial ongoing support.
- iii. Living outside of Uttlesford but have been permanently employed in the Uttlesford District for a minimum of 3 years and working at least 24 hours per week
- iv. Applicants who meet the Right to Move criteria as set out in Appendix III.
- v. Applicants who are owed a full homelessness duty by Uttlesford District Council under s.193 of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, as amended.
- vi. Applicants assessed as falling within a reasonable preference category (unders.166A (3) of the Housing Act 1996) where the Housing Needs Team Leader has agreed exceptional circumstances resulting in the need for access to social housing locally
- vii. Other special reasons to be agreed by a Senior Housing Manager at their discretion for example, where an applicant has no safe connection to another area due to violence.

5.2.2 The following categories of person will be exempt from local connection criteria:-

- i. Existing social housing tenants residing in the Uttlesford District
- ii. Applicants who are serving members of the regular forces or who have served in the regular forces or been honourably discharged, if the application is made within five years of their date of discharge.
- iii. Applicants who have recently ceased or will cease to be entitled to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of

Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner where:-

- the spouse or civil partner has served in the regular forces; and
- their death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service
- Is serving or has served in the reserve forces and who is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to that service and the application is made within five years of discharge.

5.3 Financial Eligibility

- 5.3.1 Any applicant who in the opinion of the Council has sufficient funds including: annual income, residential property equity, savings, or other assets to enable them to meet their own housing costs by open market purchase or open market renting will be ineligible to join the housing register.
- 5.3.2 Any lump sums received as compensation for injury or disability sustained on active service by either, members of the Armed Forces, former Service personnel, bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Regular Forces, or serving or former members of the Reserve Forces, will be disregarded from this criterion
- 5.3.3 Owner Occupiers, or other applicants who are financially ineligible to join the housing register, will be eligible to join if they qualify for sheltered housing.

5.4 Housing Related Debt Eligibility

- 5.4.1 Applicants with housing related debt will generally not be eligible to join the housing register if they are not addressing the debt. Housing related debt includes rent arrears to the Council, RP, other local authority or private landlord, also Council Tax and any monies given through the Councils Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme.
- 5.4.2 When a financial assessment carried out by the Council shows that the debt cannot be cleared immediately then a realistic and affordable repayment arrangement should be agreed to clear the debt.
- 5.4.3 Applicants will become eligible to join the register if they have an agreed repayment plan in place and have made regular payments for at least 12 months or the debt has been cleared in full.

- 5.4.4 Council and RP tenants who have been accepted onto the housing register but have rent arrears on their current property will not be offered another tenancy until all rent arrears have been cleared in full.
- 5.4.5 Accepted homeless applicants who have rent arrears on their current temporary accommodation will not be offered accommodation that would discharge the Council's homelessness duty until the rent arrears are cleared in full.
- 5.4.6 Housing Associations may also hold their own policy on debt.
- 5.4.7 All cases of housing related debt will be considered on an individual basis taking account of all the information provided by all interested parties.

5.5 Exclusions from the Housing Register

- 5.5.1 The Council may exclude someone from the register if it considers it proportionate and reasonable to do so as a result of unacceptable behaviour. The Council will take into account all relevant factors such as health, dependants and the individual circumstances of the applicant when making these decisions. The decision to exclude someone from the housing register will in the first instance be made by the Housing Needs Team Leader.

5.6 Unacceptable Behaviour

- 5.6.1 "Unacceptable behaviour" " is defined as behaviour, which would, if the person was either a secure tenant or a member of a secure tenants household, entitle a landlord to a possession order under any of grounds 1 to 7 of HA 1985 sch 2."
- 5.6.2 If an applicant who has previously been refused an application onto the housing register because of unacceptable behaviour and considers that their unacceptable behaviour should no longer be held against them they can complete a new application from.
- 5.6.3 When making decisions regarding unacceptable behaviour Uttlesford District Council will consider:
 - i. If the applicant (or a member of their household) has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant.
 - ii. When the unacceptable behaviour took place. Consideration will be given to the length of time that has elapsed, this will

be a minimum of two years and whether there has been any change in circumstances.

- iii. What action the landlord would have taken against the perpetrator of the unacceptable behaviour. The behaviour must be serious enough for the landlord to be granted a possession order as detailed above.
- iv. Whether the behaviour is serious enough to make the applicant unsuitable as a tenant.
- v. If the applicant or any member of their household is subject to an Anti-Social Behaviour Order an Acceptable Behaviour Contract or any similar penalty introduced by the ASB and Crime and Policing Act 2014 or any relevant legislation.

5.6.4 The Council may decide to exclude existing applicants from the register where they become aware of unacceptable behaviour that would make them unsuitable to be a tenant.

5.6.5 All decisions made by the Council in relation to excluding applicants from the housing register are subject to review if requested by the applicant (see 16).

5.7 Notifying an ineligible applicant

5.7.1 Applications from ineligible applicants will not be registered. The applicant will be notified in writing of the decision and the reasons for the decision will be explained to them.

6. Application to the Housing Register

6.1 Advice and Information

6.1.1 The Council will ensure that advice and information is available free of charge to persons in the District about the right to make an application for housing.

6.1.2 The advice and information can be provided by the Council on the phone, by letter/e-mail or in person at the Council Offices. Applicants may also seek advice from other agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.

6.1.3 Applicants will be required to complete an on-line application form for inclusion on the Housing Register and to provide supporting documentation as the Council deems appropriate to allow an

assessment of their entitlement to housing accommodation to be made.

6.2 Joint Applicants

6.2.1 Applicants may be a joint applicant with another person although for a joint application, both applicants must be eligible under this policy, except for the local connection criteria where only one of joint applicants needs to meet the criteria.

6.3 Definition of a household

6.3.1 Applicants should only include persons on their application who will be part of their household and occupying the accommodation as their only principal home.

6.3.2 Non- dependent children/step-children or adults previously dependant on the applicant, will only be considered as part of the household where they have had continuous recorded residence with the applicant and have never had their own independent accommodation, unless this was whilst in further education.

6.3.3 Applicants with a shared residence order or staying contact for children are not automatically entitled to bedrooms for their children. The general principle is that a child needs one home of an adequate size, and that the council will not accept responsibility for providing a second home for children. The council will make an assessment based on the individual circumstances.

6.4 Documents

6.4.1 As part of the application process, applicants will be asked to provide documentary proof of certain things such as:

- i. Photographic proof of their identity and that of all those included on their application
- ii. Their current address
- iii. Proof of meeting the local connection residency criteria
- iv. Details of any dependants living with them
- v. Their income

- vi. Their savings
- vii. Details relating to previous accommodation where appropriate

6.4.2 We may require additional information according to an applicant's circumstances and may sometimes need to contact third parties to verify the information that the applicant has given us. By completing the application form applicants, as detailed on the form, are giving consent for us to do this.

6.4.3 If all the required supporting documents are not received within 28 days the application will be cancelled.

6.4.4 If assistance is needed in making an application to the Housing Register help will be available from the Housing Services Department.

6.5 User guide

6.5.1 When an applicant has been found to be eligible to join the Register, we will assess their application and they will receive a letter of confirmation and access to an on-line Scheme User Guide which will tell them:

- i. Their HomeOption identification number;
- ii. The Band that their application has been placed in and the date from which this takes effect
- iii. The size of home for which they are eligible
- iv. Details of how they can register interest for a home under CBL

6.5.2 If from an application form we have identified that an applicant may need assistance with using the Scheme we will add their name to a database of applicants for whom assistance with making expressions of interest is offered. Applicants can be added to this list at any time upon their request.

6.5.3 A printed version of the User Guide can be provided on request.

6.6 Renewal of applications

6.6.1 In order to keep the Housing Register up to date, applicants will be required to renew their application, this will normally be on the anniversary of their application. Applicants will be prompted to

renew their application when they log on to the HomeOption website. They will also be sent an email to the email address supplied on their application or a letter to the address registered on the application.

- 6.6.2 If an applicant fails to renew their application within 28 days from the date they received a communication to say that renewal is due, they will be deleted from the Housing Register without further notification.

6.7 Cancelling an application

6.7.1 We will only cancel an application if:

- i. The applicant has written to us to ask us to cancel it, or
- ii. The applicant has not responded to the renewal requests (see paragraph 6.6 above) or
- iii. The applicant has accepted an offer of accommodation through HomeOption.
- iv. The applicant has ceased to be eligible (see paragraph 5 above), or
- v. The applicant has made false or deliberately misleading statements in connection with their application (see paragraphs 18 below)
- vi. The applicant has not provided documentary proofs for their application within 28 days of completing the on-line form

7. Access to Information

7.1 Upon written request, an applicant, will be able to;

- i. receive a copy of their details entered on the Housing Register free of charge
- ii. receive copies of documents provided by them
- iii. have access to their file in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998
- iv. ask for a formal review of any decisions about the facts of their case

- v. be informed in writing of any decision about the facts of their case and of their right to request a review of any such decision
- vi. receive general information to enable an applicant to assess;
 - how their application is likely to be treated
 - whether accommodation appropriate to their needs is likely to be available and, if so, when

8. Assessment of Housing Need and Allocation of Properties

8.1 Assessing Housing Need

- 8.1.1 Applicants housing circumstances are assessed on their individual circumstances and their application placed in one of five Bands. These Bands ensure that we give greatest priority to those in the greatest housing need, so that we make the most effective use of available homes. The law also requires us to give preference to certain categories of housing need, and these have been included within the banding priority criteria.
- 8.1.2 Band A is considered the highest priority of housing need, Band B the next highest etc., with Band E being the lowest priority.
- 8.1.3 Within each Band, the applicant with the greatest priority is the applicant who has spent the longest time in that band.
- 8.1.4 Some allocations will be dealt with outside the scheme; these are explained in paragraphs 2.3 and 3.2.
- 8.1.5 Where an applicant or one of joint applicants is a tenant of the Council at the time of the application then the property subject to that tenancy will be inspected by the Council to ensure compliance with the terms of the tenancy agreement before the application is processed.
- 8.1.6 Further details of how each band has been assessed is provided below:

The Band Criteria

8.1.6.1 BAND A

Applicants meet at least one of the following criteria

- i. Accepted Homeless in severe need

- ii. Critical Medical/Welfare award – to include emergency situations
- iii. Relationship breakdowns in council properties where applicants are under-occupying but have been assessed as having housing need within Uttlesford
- iv. Successor tenants in council properties where applicants are under-occupying
- v. Releasing a property in need (council or RP property that the Council has nominations rights to) or where it prevents the Council making expensive alterations to a property
- vi. Those applicants within Uttlesford required to leave their homes as a result of an emergency prohibition order served in relation to the premises under the Housing Act 2004
- vii. Uttlesford Council tenants, or tenants in RP property where the Council will receive the nomination, who are currently in accommodation larger than their needs(Uttlesford tenants may be eligible for removal expenses grant see paragraph 9.21 below)
- viii. Multiple needs - If someone has two or more needs in band B they will be moved to band A (accepted homeless cases do not come under this category – if additional preference is needed for homeless cases they will be assessed as accepted homeless in severe need)

8.1.6.2 High welfare and multiple needs in band A would be expected to express an interest within 4 cycles of available properties otherwise priority may be reduced.

8.1.6.3 **BAND B**

Applicants meet at least one of the following criteria

- i. Serious Medical/Welfare award (If after 12 cycles applicants have not expressed interest in all suitable advertised properties this award will be reviewed and applicants may be placed in a lower band)

- ii. Overcrowding in permanent social housing within Uttlesford
- iii. Accepted homeless cases
- iv. Applicants threatened with homelessness who are likely to lose their accommodation through no fault of their own, for which there is no legal redress, who are assessed by the council as likely to be in priority need and who are receiving housing advice from the council to prevent homelessness. If in rented accommodation under an assured or assured short hold tenancy or tied accommodation this threat will be deemed to exist at the point at which the applicant's landlord can begin an application to the Court to seek possession of the property. This is the point at which a notice of seeking possession or notice to quit expires and there is a clear indication that the landlord intends to seek possession.
- v. Nominations from supported housing schemes where the Council has agreed move-on arrangements and the applicant is ready to move on. These applicants will be able to use the CBL scheme for a period of 4 weeks from the date they are placed into this band to express interest in any suitable flatted accommodation. If they have not been successful after the end of this period they will be made one offer of suitable flatted accommodation which may be either in the private or social sectors which if they refuse will result in them being down banded to a band that reflects their housing need.
- vi. A prohibition order or demolition order has been served, or is about to be served in relation to the applicant's dwelling. This indicates that the property contains one or more category 1 hazards that probably cannot be remedied.
- vii. An improvement notice has been, or is about to be, served in relation to the applicant's dwelling and :-
 - a. The remedies that are needed to reduce the hazard will require the property to be vacated for a significant period of time
 - b. The cost of the remedies are beyond the means of the applicant (where applicable)

- c. The remedies will make the property unsuitable for occupation by the applicant
- viii. Multiple needs – Applicants with four or more needs in band C will move to band B

8.1.6.4 **BAND C**

Applicants meet at least one of the following criteria

- i. Moderate medical/welfare award
- ii. Notice of Seeking Possession
- iii. Notice to Quit - other than s.21 HA 1988 notices served at the start of a tenancy
- iv. Applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness who are assessed by the council as not in priority need
- v. Applicants who following a homelessness application have been deemed by the council to be in priority need but intentionally homelessness
- vi. No fixed abode
- vii. Overcrowded in private rented accommodation or social housing outside Uttlesford
- viii. Fixed term licensees
- ix. Shared facilities – not generally applicable for single applicants under 35yrs
- x. Lacking facilities
- xi. A hazard awareness notice has been served in relation to a category 1 or 2 hazard at the applicant's dwelling

and

the remedies that are needed to reduce the hazard will require the property to be vacated for a significant period of time;

or

the cost of the remedies are beyond the means of the applicant (where applicable);

or

the remedies will make the property unsuitable for occupation by the applicant

8.1.6.5 **BAND D**

- i. Applicants assessed as meeting Right to Move criteria who have been placed in one Band higher than their housing need.

8.1.6.6 **BAND E**

Applicant meets at least one of the following criteria

- i. Caravan or mobile home but no housing need
- ii. Tied accommodation but no housing need
- iii. Applicants who live in a property that is adequate to meet their needs in terms of property type, size and facilities.
- iv. In prison
- v. A suspended prohibition order or improvement notice has been or will be served by the Environmental Health Department in relation to the applicant's dwelling but the criteria leading to it becoming active are not met by the applicant.
- vi. A hazard awareness notice or improvement notice has been or will be served in relation to the applicant's dwelling but the specified remedies are low cost and straight-forward to achieve.

8.2 **Allocation of Properties**

8.2.1 With the exception of those allocations dealt with outside the scheme; these are explained in paragraphs 2.3 and 3.2 properties will be allocated to the applicant who expressed interest in the property, who is in the highest Band and with the earliest priority date within that Band.

8.2.2 At the time of the offer of a property applicants will be asked to provide proof that they continue to meet all eligibility criteria to be included on the housing register

8.2.3 Where two applicants have the same priority date in the Band the property will be allocated to the household who it is judged to have the family composition that makes best use of the accommodation. This will be decided by a Senior Manager and the reasons documented

8.2.4 **Houses** – Transfer applicants and homeseekers who are tenants of RP accommodation within Uttlesford, where UDC has the nomination rights, will be given priority for houses with the same number of bedrooms as their current property ahead of other homeseekers, even if they are in a lower Band or have a lower priority date, providing they meet the following criteria:-

- Currently living in a flat
- Have lived in the flat for more than 2 years
- Have conducted their current tenancy in a satisfactory manner

For properties larger than one bedroom this will only apply if there are children under 16 within the household.

9. Housing Priority

9.1 Deciding who has priority on the register

9.1.1 Applicants will be placed in the relevant Band defined by their specific circumstances and as assessed by the Housing Options Team with reference to the banding system set out in this policy

9.2 Overcrowding

9.2.1 Homeless applicants placed in temporary accommodation by the council will not be assessed under the criteria for overcrowding.

9.2.2 Applicants will be placed in Band B if they are overcrowded, i.e. lacking one or more bedrooms and live in Council or Housing Association properties where the Council has nomination rights to the RP.

9.2.3 Applicants will be placed in Band C if they are overcrowded in private rented accommodation or living with relatives or friends.

- 9.2.4 Overcrowded applicants with a local connection to Uttlesford, but living in Council or Housing Association properties outside the District will be in Band C.
- 9.2.5 Rooms which do not meet the standards for use as living accommodation for one person (the standards are given in the Housing Act 1985 Part X) will not be counted.
- 9.2.6 If applicants need an extra room for medical or welfare/hardship reasons they will not be considered overcrowded but will be assessed for medical or welfare priority.
- 9.2.7 Overcrowding priority will not be given if someone moved into the applicants' household making them overcrowded. This will be looked at on welfare grounds.
- 9.2.8 Where an applicant is pregnant and the birth of the child will mean that they are entitled to a larger property, the applicant will not receive overcrowding priority until the baby is born.

9.3 Children sharing bedrooms

- 9.3.1 Two children of the same sex are expected to share a bedroom until one of them reaches the age of 16.
- 9.3.2 Two children of the opposite sex are expected to share a bedroom until the oldest is 10 years old.

9.4 Applicants without children

- 9.4.1 Single applicants and couples without children who are living in overcrowded conditions will not be given priority for overcrowding unless they are in self-contained accommodation which is too small, for example a couple in a one person bed-sit. Young adults living with their parents or people temporarily sharing with friends will not get overcrowding priority.

9.5 Disrepair, poor design and lack of facilities

- 9.5.1 Any complaint about poor repair within Council or RP properties must be reported to the applicant's landlord's Repairs service.
- 9.5.2 Applicants living in private sector accommodation in poor condition must be referred to the Council's Environmental Health Department who will assess the situation and then make their recommendations according to the Allocations Scheme.

9.5.3 If an applicant lacks facilities such as cooking facilities, washing facilities, toilet facilities or adequate heating they will be placed in Band C.

9.6 Sharing with another household

9.6.1 Applicants will be placed in Band C if they share any of the following facilities with either people they are not related to or their family if they are wishing to live separately from them.

- i. living room
- ii. kitchen
- iii. bathroom or toilet.

9.6.2 Single applicants under the age of 35 who are sharing will generally be considered as adequately housed. Consideration will be given for applicants in special circumstances.

9.7 People living in mobile homes or caravans

9.7.1 Applicants living in a caravan, mobile home or houseboat will be placed in band E if there is no other housing need, reflecting parity with other private sector applicants.

9.7.2 It does not matter if the caravan is on a site or not or if they own or rent the property.

9.7.3 If their accommodation lacks facilities or is in poor repair (see paragraph 9.5) they will be placed in band C.

9.8 Homelessness

9.8.1 Accepted homeless households are applicants to whom:

- i. The Council has accepted a duty under Part VII of The Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 (the duty towards households who are in priority need and unintentionally homeless) **and**
- ii. the council accepts a duty to provide suitable accommodation.

9.8.2 In the first instance the Council will look to discharge its homelessness duty for all accepted homeless applicants within the private rented sector. The Council will ensure that any offer of private rented housing is appropriate to the needs of the

household, that the length of any tenancy is a minimum of 12 months and that the property meets the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012. An assessment will also be carried out to assess the affordability of the property, including the eligibility to receive Local Housing Allowance/Housing Benefit. The property may be outside the Uttlesford District.

9.8.3 Whilst the Council is looking for suitable accommodation within the private sector, applicants will be allowed to make expressions of interest on suitable properties advertised through the CBL system. If after a period of 2 cycles from when the applicant received their S.184 decision letter they have either not been offered a suitable private sector property or been successful through the CBL system, the Council will express interest on their behalf and make one final offer of suitable accommodation. The property will be either a privately rented property or social housing depending of which type of accommodation is available first, and will generally be flatted accommodation. If this offer is refused, the Council's homelessness duty under the Housing Act 1996 to provide accommodation will be considered to have been discharged.

9.8.4 Accepted homeless applicants who are housed in temporary accommodation provided by the Council, including Bed & Breakfast accommodation, hostels or homeless at home, will be placed in Band B. Accepted homeless applicants in severe need will be placed in Band A

9.8.6 When a private rented property becomes available it will be offered to the accepted homeless applicant for whom the property is suitable and if this is more than one applicant, it will be offered to the applicant with the earliest homeless application date.

9.8.7. Any private rented tenancy that discharges the council's homelessness duty will be for a period of not less than 12 months. If within 2 years, beginning with the date on which the applicant accepts a private rented sector offer, the applicant re-applies for accommodation, or for assistance in obtaining accommodation, and if the applicant is found to be homeless (from the date of the expiry of the termination notice) and did not become homeless intentionally from the private rented accommodation, the Council will accept a homelessness duty regardless of whether the applicant has a priority need.

9.9 Accepted homeless households in severe need

9.9.1 These are applicants to whom:

- i. the council has accepted a duty under the Homelessness legislation **and**

- ii. they meet the Councils eligibility criteria
- iii. are elderly and vulnerable due to frailty* **or**
- iv. have a terminal or long-term illness **or**
- v. have severe mental health problems, have been unable to cope in temporary accommodation, and have been 'sectioned' or are likely to be admitted under the Mental Health Act **or**
- vi. are permanent wheelchair users **or**
- vii. are council or RSL tenants who have an urgent need to transfer as they are suffering from violence or threats of violence and are considered to be at significant risk

9.9.2 Where the above circumstances apply these applicants will be placed in Band A.

9.9.3 The Council will decide who will be placed in Band A. Recommendations will be made by the Housing Officer dealing with the case because they have the most accurate and up-to-date information on the applicant, due to the investigations carried out before an applicant is accepted as homeless.

9.9.4 *Elderly non-frail applicants may still be placed in Band A, however clear supporting evidence will be required to support their application.

9.10 Prevention of homelessness

9.11.1 Applicants threatened with homelessness who are likely to lose their accommodation through no fault of their own, for which there is no legal redress, who are assessed by the council as likely to be in priority need and who are receiving housing advice from the council to prevent homelessness will be placed in Band B. If the applicant is in rented accommodation under an assured or assured short hold tenancy the threat of homelessness will be deemed to exist at the point at which your landlord can begin an application to the Court to seek possession of their property. This is the point at which a notice of seeking possession or notice to quit expires.

9.11.2 If they are subsequently accepted as homeless they will remain in Band B but their earlier effective date will remain.

9.11.3 An applicant is subsequently deemed to be not working with the Council and who has not expressed interest in suitable properties advertised through the CBL system or has refused a suitable offer

of accommodation will be down banded to the Band that otherwise reflects their housing need.

9.12 Assured shorthold tenants under notice

9.12.1 Assured shorthold tenants who have received a 'Notice Requiring Possession'/ Notice to Quit from their landlord will be placed in Band C if there is less than three months before the notice expires.

9.12.2 All applicants will be offered advice regarding their housing options.

9.13 Lodger under notice

9.13.1 This applies to applicants living in the same property as their landlord.

9.13.2 They must be renting a room that is for their own use only, and be paying a market rent.

9.13.3 Proof that notice has been served is required.

9.13.4 They will be placed in Band C if there is less than three months before the notice expires.

9.13.5 The Council will then check to see whether the notice will be enforced.

9.14 Tenants of tied accommodation under notice

9.14.1 Tenants in tied accommodation with no need to move will be placed in Band E.

9.14.2 If they have received a legal notice asking them to leave that accommodation they will be placed in Band C.

9.15 Protected tenants with a possession order

9.15.1 This applies to a tenant with a 'protected' tenancy (that is a tenancy with protection from eviction, but not an assured shorthold tenancy).

9.12.5 They must have been served with a court order for possession and then will be placed in Band C.

9.16 Fixed-term licensee

9.16.1 This applies to applicants living in supported housing schemes. Applicants in these schemes will be placed in Band C.

9.16.2 Applicants in supported housing schemes where the Council has agreed move-on arrangements will be placed in Band B if they are judged as ready to move on.

9.16.3 Applicants accepted by the Council as being owed the full homeless duty and in a specialist refuge for victims of domestic abuse will be placed in Band B

9.17 Applicants with no fixed address

9.17.1 This applies to applicants who have no fixed address.

9.17.2 They will be placed in Band C.

9.17.3 If they are in prison they will be placed in Band E.

9.18 Medical, welfare, hardship and harrassment

9.18.1 Important: priority can only be awarded under **one** heading: medical, welfare, hardship or harassment.

9.18.2 Applicants can be assessed under all headings, but get awarded priority under only one heading.

9.18.3 Any medical or welfare priority can be reassessed if an applicant's circumstances change.

9.19 Medical assessments

9.19.1 This applies if an applicant's present housing is detrimental to their health, or if a move to more suitable accommodation would have a positive effect on their health.

9.19.2 Applicants may also be awarded priority if the applicant is asking to be rehoused so they can receive care or specialist support.

9.19.3 Extra information may be sought from private sector landlords, housing officers, GPs, health visitors and other parties.

9.19.4 The table below is used to act as a guide to priority:

Effect on housing	Medical Problem			
	Very Serious	Serious	Moderate	Low
Very Serious	Band A	Band B	Band C	No award
Serious	Band B	Band B	Band C	No award
Moderate	Band C	Band C	Band C	No award
Low	No award	No award	No award	No award

9.19.5 Assessments of medical priority will be carried out by two senior officers in consultation with any officers with direct knowledge of the applicants and using all information available at the time and using the above guide.

9.19.6 Applicants accepted under Homelessness legislation will not be eligible for medical priority. If a homeless applicant's temporary accommodation is unsuitable on medical grounds the Council will first look to see if alternative temporary accommodation can be found.

9.19.7 Homeless households can be considered through a medical assessment if an extra room is required on medical grounds.

9.20 Welfare/Hardship/Harassment assessments

9.20.1 This applies if at least one person in the household is vulnerable and less able to find settled or suitable accommodation.

9.20.2 These people will have a need to move but may not get medical priority because their present housing may be suitable for their needs.

9.20.3 The table below is used to act as a guide to priority:

Need for settled suitable accommodation	Level of Vulnerability		
	High	Medium	Low
High	Band A	Band B	Band C
Medium	Band B	Band B	Band C
Low	Band C	Band C	Band C

9.20.4 Welfare/Hardship/Harassment priority will be carried out by two senior officers in consultation with any officers with direct knowledge of the applicants and using all information available at the time and using the above guide.

9.20.5 Homeless applicants will not be looked at under welfare issues. If a homeless applicant's temporary accommodation is unsuitable on welfare grounds the Council will first look to see if alternative temporary accommodation can be found.

9.20.6 If a homeless applicant or household is particularly vulnerable and they may be at significant risk in temporary accommodation the Council can consider the category of 'accepted homeless applicants in particular need' to increase them to band A (see paragraph 9.9).

9.21 Tenants with a home that is bigger than they need

9.21.1 This applies to Uttlesford District Council secure tenants or tenants of RPs (where the Council has nomination rights), who are 'under-occupying' their homes and want to move to a smaller property. These applicants are given high priority because it enables a household with high need to move into the freed up larger home.

9.21.2 Applicants who are currently in property larger than their needs will be placed Band A.

9.21.3 Where an Uttlesford District Council tenant is downsizing to a Council or RSL property they may be eligible for a downsizing grant to help with removal costs. For further details please see the Council's Decant Policy.

9.22 Applicants offered housing because of the death of an Uttlesford Council secure tenant

9.22.1 This applies if the applicant qualifies to 'succeed' to a tenancy when the tenant dies.

9.22.2 To be a 'successor tenant' the applicant has to meet certain rules – usually must be related to the tenant, or be their partner, and have lived in the property a certain time. The rules for this are in the tenancy conditions for the property.

9.22.3 If the successor tenant does not need the property because of its size, or the adaptations or services in the property, they may be served a notice seeking possession under Schedule 2, Ground 16 of The Housing Act 1985. This will be served more than six months but less than twelve months after the tenant's death.

9.22.4 Where successor tenants are in a property larger than they need or with major adaptations they do not require they will be placed in band A. They are able to express an interest for suitable properties under the scheme. If they have not expressed an interest within six months of their application their case will be reviewed and the Council may reserve the right to express an interest for them on suitable properties.

9.23 Uttlesford Council secure tenants offered housing because of a Relationship breakdown

9.23.1 This category applies to Uttlesford secure tenants only.

9.23.2 If a joint tenant ends the tenancy when moving out, the property is not automatically offered to the tenant remaining.

9.23.3 Applicants will be placed in Band A when there is a relationship breakdown and the joint tenant moves out and ends the tenancy and the other tenant qualifies to be offered a smaller property.

9.23.4 They will be able to express an interest for properties under the scheme but if they have not expressed an interest within six months of their application their case will be reviewed. The Council reserves the right to express an interest for them on suitable properties.

9.23.5 If a property is then subsequently refused they will have no right to remain in their current property and therefore action will be taken by the council to gain possession of the property.

9.23.6 If an applicant qualifies to be offered the same property we will make them a direct let offer of that property.

9.24 Transfers which will release a property that is needed

9.24.1 Applicants will be placed in Band A of the scheme if they wish to move **and**

- i. the property they would leave is needed to meet the urgent housing needs of another household on the register which otherwise would not be met within a reasonable time **or**
- ii. where it prevents the Council making expensive alterations to the property **and**
- iii. there is not a serious shortage of the types of home they want to move to.

9.25 Applicants who have deliberately made their housing situation worse

9.25.1 The Council will consider whether an applicant has deliberately made their housing situation worse to increase their housing need, and consequently improve their chances of re-housing through the register.

9.25.2 If it is decided that the applicant has made their housing situation worse, they will remain in the band that reflects their housing need in their previous accommodation.

9.25.3 If the applicant was not registered from their previous address, the assessment of housing need will be based on the accommodation occupied before their accommodation changed.

9.25.4 The assessment will be reviewed after 12 months, on request. If the restriction is removed, the application will be placed in the band that reflects current circumstances. Their effective date will be the date they moved to the new band.

9.26 Owner-occupiers

9.26.1 Applicants who previously owned a property and have sold it will be asked to provide proof of the sale and evidence of any proceeds received.

9.26.2 Owner-occupiers will generally not be eligible to join the housing register unless they are able to demonstrate that they are unable to meet their housing needs through their own resources.

9.26.3 Property owners over 60 will be eligible to join the housing register if they can demonstrate a need for sheltered accommodation.

9.27 Applicants in 'tied' accommodation which is suitable for their needs

9.27.1 Applicants are considered to be in tied accommodation if the occupation of their home is essential for the performance of their duties as an employee. This includes applicants who are accommodated by HM Forces.

9.27.2 Applicants in 'tied' accommodation will be placed in band E. They will be moved to Band C if:

- i. they are six months away from retirement **or**
- ii. they have received a legally binding notice asking them to leave their accommodation.

9.28 Deciding the effective date

9.28.1 Priority within bands relates to an applicant's effective date. The effective date is usually the date the application is received, except;

- i. Where an applicant is moved from one band to a higher band. Their new effective date will be the date their circumstances changed.
- ii. Where an applicant receives priority on medical or welfare grounds their effective date will be the date the Council receives the required supporting evidence to make this award.

- iii. Where an applicant has been accepted as Homeless their effective date will be the date they applied as homeless; unless they already qualify for Band B with an earlier date.

9.29 Armed Forces Priority

9.29.1 Members of the Armed Forces, who are in urgent housing need who fall within one or more of the following criteria, will be placed in one Band higher than their housing need.

- i. Is serving in the regular forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service
- ii. Formerly served in the regular forces or was honourable discharged where the application is made within 5 years of their date of discharge
- iii. Has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service or
- iv. Is serving or has served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service

9.29.2 For this purpose "the regular forces" and the "reserve forces" have the meanings given by section 374 of the Armed Forces Act 2006(4)

9.30 By-passing applications that would otherwise meet eligibility criteria for an offer of accommodation

The Council reserves the right to by-pass an offer of accommodation while shortlisting applicants in the following circumstances

- i. The property is not in accordance with an applicant's assessed medical needs
- ii. Applicant has pets and the property is not suitable or pets are not permitted
- iii. Applicant has housing related debt where an agreed repayment plan has been breached (see 5.4)
- iv. Applicant is a Council or RP tenants with rent arrears (see 5.4)

- v. If the applicant does not meet the rules relating to age or household size by the RP advertising the property.
- vi. Other reasons where the Council deem that a sensitive allocation is necessary and this has been agreed by a Senior Manager .
- vii. If the applicant has been offered a property and have not yet refused that offer.
- viii. If the applicant is unable to view or accept the property within the required timescale.
- ix. Where the applicant has not notified the Council of a change of circumstances material to their application.

9.31 Penalty for refusal of offers of accommodation

Any applicant (except from existing Council or RP tenants who are under-occupying and wishing to move to smaller accommodation) who refuses 2 offers of accommodation, for properties on which they have expressed interest, within a 6 month period, will have their application e suspended for 12 months.

10. Types of Tenancies

- 10.1 The type of tenancy an applicant will be offered will be in accordance with the Council's tenancy policy or the tenancy policy of the landlord of the property. Tenancy policies will be set having regard to the West Essex Tenancy Strategy.
- 10.2 The Council will offer joint tenancies to adult partners where there is a need for a long term commitment to a joint home, except where one of the prospective joint tenants is excluded from or ineligible to join the housing register.
- 10.3 Generally, homeless applicants residing at homeless accommodation (including the Council's managed short stay accommodation) or bed and breakfast accommodation, if offered Council accommodation, will be offered an Introductory Tenancy followed by secure or flexible tenancy in accordance with the Council's Introductory Tenancy Scheme and Tenancy Policy.

11. Tenancy Start Dates

- 11.1 The Council will allow applicants 7 days to reach a decision whether to accept any Council accommodation they are offered, although we may allow longer having regard to personal circumstances.

- 11.2 Where possible the applicant will be given an opportunity to view the property they are being offered before they have to give the Council a decision.
- 11.3 If the applicant is interested in the tenancy they will either be advised by telephone when the property is ready for letting or receive a formal offer of the tenancy by first class post.
- 11.4 Generally, for properties becoming ready for letting on Friday, the tenancy start date will be the following Monday.

12. Redecoration Scheme

Internal decorations to an Council property are the tenant's responsibility. However, if a property (excluding sheltered accommodation) offered to a housing applicant is, in the view of the inspecting officer, in need of redecoration, a voucher for the purchase of an appropriate amount of paint will be provided.

13. Designation of Property Type – Age restrictions

- 13.1 To make best use of housing stock properties are designated as being either general needs or for older persons or people with disabilities.
- 13.2 Older person's properties, such as bungalows, will normally be allocated to the following categories of person:-
- i. Those aged 60 or over (55 for some RP accommodation)
 - ii. Those under 60 with Band B medical assessment for mobility who require this type of accommodation. In these circumstances single people and couples will only be offered 1 bed bungalows and will not be able to express interest in general needs properties.
- 13.3 In areas of lower demand some bungalows may be advertised without an age restriction, however, in the first instance preference will still be given to applicants over 60 expressing interest.
- 13.4 General needs properties such as houses or flats will be allocated to persons under 60 unless there are special circumstances which indicate that a particular general needs property is suitable for and applicant who is 60 or over.

14. Allocating Sheltered Housing

- 14.1 When allocating sheltered housing the same general principles as for other property types are followed, apart from the following:
- i. An assessment of the applicants suitability and need for support must be completed before any tenancy is offered. If the applicant is

considered unsuitable for sheltered accommodation, they will be advised and given advice on homes more suitable to their needs.

- ii. When assessing suitability for sheltered housing applicants will also be given advice about the allocation scheme and how to bid. If an applicant needs help with the process, this will be noted and appropriate arrangements made.
- iii. Applicants must generally be over 60 years of age to be eligible for sheltered housing (over 55 for some RP accommodation)

15. Properties designed or adapted for people with physical disabilities

15.1 If an applicant needs a home suitable for wheelchair users or needs other specialist adaptations we will usually require an assessment by an Occupational Therapist before an offer can be considered. (Please refer to the Council's Disabled Adaptations Policy)

15.2 Homes particularly designed for, or accessible to, people with disabilities will be advertised as such to help applicants with those needs identify them.

15.3 Properties which have been adapted to a very high standard may not be included in the scheme and may be directly allocated.

16. Reviews

16.1 If an applicant considers they have been unfairly or unreasonably treated having regard to the provisions of the Allocations Scheme they have the right to request a review of their case. (i.e. the band they have been placed in)

16.2 In the first instance, they must appeal in writing to the Housing Needs Team Leader and will receive a written response within 10 working days.

16.3 If, having received this response they wish to make a further appeal they can write to the Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager who will then review the case.

17. Equal Opportunities

17.1 The Council's allocation scheme will be operated strictly in accordance with Council policy irrespective of an applicant's ethnic origin, race, nationality, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age or disability.

17.2 The Council will have regard to, and implement, the provisions of the Race Relations Code of Practice in Rented Housing, which it has adopted. The Council will also abide by the Race Relations Act 1976.

17.3 As an aid to ensuring that applicants are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, the Council will monitor the racial origin of:

- i. Applicants on the Housing Register
- ii. Applicants allocated housing
- iii. Applicants offered sheltered accommodation

17.4 The practices and procedures of Housing Services will be monitored by the Head of Service to ensure that they do not discriminate directly or indirectly. Changes will be made if it is established that practices or procedures may be contravening the Equalities Act 2010.

18. False and Withheld Information

18.1 It is an offence for anyone seeking housing assistance from us to give false information or withhold information that may affect their application for housing.

18.2 This could result in:

- i. Criminal prosecution
- ii. Cancelling the applicant's housing register application (see paragraph 6.6 above)
- iii. Possession proceedings for any tenancy an applicant has obtained as a result of giving or withholding false information

18.3 The Council may seek possession of a property under Ground 5 of Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985 if a tenant has induced the Council to grant a tenancy by knowingly or recklessly making a false statement. The Council can prosecute and fine up to £5,000 if found guilty.

19. Information on the Allocations Scheme

19.1 The Council will:-

- i. Publish a summary of its Allocations Scheme in a leaflet and provide copies free of charge on request to any member of the public
- ii. Provide copies of the Allocations Scheme free of charge at Housing Services, Council Offices, Saffron Walden
- iii. Enable copies of the Allocations Scheme to be downloaded on the Internet from the Council's web-site: www.uttlesford.gov.uk

19.2 Within a reasonable period of time, the Council will notify applicants on the Housing Register of an alteration to the Allocations Scheme reflecting a major change of policy, explaining in general terms the effect of the change.

20. Review of Allocations Scheme

The Allocations Scheme will be reviewed periodically by the Council's Housing Board and any recommended changes agreed by the Council's Cabinet.

21. Consultation on Changes to the Allocations Scheme

Before adopting a new Allocations Scheme or making an alteration reflecting a major change of policy in an existing Allocations Scheme, the Council will notify every RP with which it has nomination arrangements of the change, and all local Councils affording them a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposals.

Data Protection Act

The information you provide may be put on a computer system registered under the current Data Protection law. It may be checked with other information or data held by the Council. It may be disclosed for the purposes as described on the Register Entry in the Council's Data Protection Register. We may also share data with other agencies for the prevention and detection of crime.

IF YOU REQUIRE THIS INFORMATION LEAFLET IN AN ALTERNATIVE FORMAT AND OR LANGUAGE PLEASE CONTACT HOUSING SERVICES ON 01799 510510

Housing Services
Uttlesford District Council
Council Offices
London Road
Saffron Walden
CB11 4 ER

Telephone: 01799 510510
Email: uconnect@uttlesford.gov.uk
Website: www.uttlesford.gov.uk

Appendix I

For General Needs Accommodation, the number of bedrooms that working age applicants are eligible to express interest in, will be in line with the prevailing Housing Benefit Regulations on size criteria.

Size of Accommodation Allocated – working age applicants

Household Size	Number of rooms
1 adult	Bedsit/ 1 bedroom
2 adults living together as a couple	1 bedroom
1 adult (2 adults living together as a couple) expecting baby and the pregnancy is over 24 weeks	2 bedrooms
1 adult (or 2 adults living together as a couple) with either: - 1 child* - 2 children* of different sexes where neither child is over 10 years of age - 2 children* of the same sex up until the eldest child is 16 years of age	2 bedrooms
1 adult (or 2 adults living together as a couple) with either: - 2 children* of different sexes where the oldest child is over 10 years of age - 2 children* of the same sex where the eldest child is over 16 years of age - 3 children* - 4 children* regardless of sex up until the eldest child is 16 years of age	3 bedrooms
1 adult (or 2 adults living together as a couple) with either: - 4 children* where 1 child is over 16 years of age - 5 or more children*	4 bedrooms

***Parents with ‘staying access’ to dependent children or shared residence orders** - Applicants with a shared residence order or staying access for children are not automatically entitled to bedrooms for their children. The general principle is that a child needs one home of an adequate size, and that the council will not accept responsibility for providing a second home for children. The council will make an assessment based on the individual circumstances.

Single applicants or couples where one is over 60 years of age will be eligible to express interest in 1 or 2 bedroom designated older persons accommodation.

Appendix II

Local Lettings Plans

A Local Letting Plan is an arrangement for the allocation of properties to meet the specific needs of a locality in response to results of a housing needs survey..

Rural Housing – Exception site

When vacancies arise in properties that have been built in rural localities (rural exception sites) and a planning obligation specifies a local connection requirement, this takes precedence over the local connection eligibility in 5.2. This means that households wishing to apply for housing on an exception site who fulfil the local connection requirement set out in a planning obligation, but not the eligibility criteria in 5.2, will be eligible to join the housing register but **only** for this specific development site.

The local connection criteria for rural exception sites will be as follows and in the following order of priority

1. Persons who have been permanently resident in the specified parish for at least two years
2. Persons who are no longer resident in the specified parish but who have been resident for at least three years during the past five years
3. Persons who meet either of the following criteria
 - i. in permanent employment in the specified parish for a minimum of 2 years and working at least 24 hours per week
 - ii. having close relatives (i.e. parents, grandparents, children, brother or sister) living in the specified parish or parishes who have lived there for at least five years
4. If there are no persons meeting the criteria in 1 to 3 then the cascade above will be applied to any neighbouring parishes identified in relevant clauses in the planning agreement
5. In the event that it is still not possible to allocate a property to applicants who meet criteria 1 to 4 above then the property may be allocated to applicants who meet the local connection requirements who will under-occupy the property, providing that the under-occupancy created does not exceed one bedroom
6. In the event that it is still not possible to allocate a property to applicants who meet criteria 1 to 5 above then the property may be allocated to applicants who meet the Uttlesford eligibility criteria set out in Section 5.2.1

7. In the exceptional event that the council is unable to nominate any persons from its Housing Register who comply with 1 to 6 above, the Registered Provider would offer tenancies to Eligible Persons, the definition of which would be consistent with both the council's local connection criteria and the occupancy requirements. The priority when offering tenancies to Eligible Persons would mirror the council's policies on Allocation of Properties.

The council will select nominations which meet the criteria set out in 1 to 6 in the priority order of their local connection and then on the basis of their housing need and then the date that their housing need priority was awarded.

The age criteria (Section 13) may be waived for suitable properties to allow older people to remain in a village.

Rural Housing – Non exception site

Requiring applicants to have a connection with the locality may also be considered by the Council, on a proportion of the affordable housing provision, on any site subject to the terms of a planning obligation where a local need can be demonstrated through a housing needs survey, no more than three years old at the time of the submission of the planning application.. To be eligible for an allocation on these sites applicants must be assessed as having a housing need by being in Bands A – D of the allocation policy.

Sustainable Communities

In exceptional circumstances, the council may decide to let properties on a slightly different basis from normal, in the interests of building a strong and sustainable community or to deal with particular local issues. The decision to apply such criteria will be jointly made by the landlord of the property and the council.

On new developments, the Council and the landlord may consider widening the eligible bands for home types on first lettings, again taking equal opportunities and legal issues into account

Appendix III

Right to Move Guidance

The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Right to Move) (England) Regulations 2015 states that local authorities cannot decide that a person does not qualify for an allocation of accommodation on the grounds that the applicant does not have a local connection with the area if the applicant is a tenant of social housing and who needs to move to take up a job or live closer to employment or training (including apprenticeships).

A local connection requirement must **not** be applied to existing social tenants seeking to transfer from another local authority district in England who:

- have reasonable preference under s.166(3)(e) because of a need to move to the local authority's district to avoid hardship, and
- need to move because the tenant works in the district, or
- need to move to take up an offer of work

The applicant must demonstrate that they **need**, rather than wish, to move, for work related reasons. In this regard the following factors will be taken into account:

- the distance and/or time taken to travel between work and home
- the availability and affordability of transport, taking into account level of earnings
- the nature of the work and whether similar opportunities are available closer to home
- other personal factors, such as medical conditions and child care, which would be affected if the tenant could not move
- the length of the work contract
- whether failure to move would result in the loss of an opportunity to improve their employment circumstances or prospects, for example, by taking up a better job, a promotion, or an apprenticeship

This is not an exhaustive list, other local circumstances may be taken into consideration.

The following forms of work are excluded from the Right to Move

Short-term

In determining whether work is short-term the following factors will be taken into consideration

- whether the work is regular or intermittent
- the period of employment and whether or not work was intended to be short-term or long-term at the outset
- A contract of employment that was intended to last for less than 12 months could be considered to be short-term

Marginal

In determining whether work is marginal the following factors will be taken into consideration

- the number of hours worked (employment of less than 16 hours a week could be considered to be marginal in nature)
- the level of earnings

However Uttlesford District Council may take into account, for example, if a tenant only works 15 hours a week but they can demonstrate that the work is regular and the remuneration is substantial.

Ancillary

- If a person works occasionally in the local authority's district, even if the pattern of work is regular, but their main place of work is in a different local authority's district, the work is excluded from the regulations
- If the tenant is expected to return to work in the original local authority district. If a local authority has reason to believe this is the case, they should seek verification from the tenant's employer
- A person who seeks to move into a local authority to be closer to work in a neighbouring authority – for example, where the transport links are better in the first local authority's area – is also excluded from these regulations.

Voluntary Work

- Voluntary work means work where no payment is received or the only payment is in respect of any expenses reasonably incurred

Apprenticeship

- The term 'work' includes an apprenticeship. This is because an apprenticeship normally takes place under an apprenticeship agreement which is an employment contract (specifically a contract of service) *[Why are apprenticeships excluded?]*

Verification and evidence

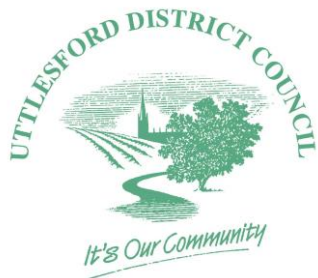
Uttlesford District Council will require proof that the work or job-offer is genuine and will need to see appropriate documentary evidence, which could include:

- a contract of employment
- wage/salary slips covering a certain period of time, or bank statements (this is likely to be particularly relevant in the case of zero-hours contracts)
- tax and benefits information – e.g. proof that the applicant is in receipt of working tax credit (if eligible)
- a formal offer letter
- additionally, the employer may be contacted to verify the position *[Do we need to write in that applicants may be required to sign an authority to enable the employers to provide information regarding employment?]*

Uttlesford District Council may consider whether an applicant qualifies both at the time of the initial application and when considering making an allocation.

A set quota which the Council feels appropriate for the proportion of properties that it expects to allocate each year to transferring tenants who need to move into their district for work related reasons is 1%. However this will be reviewed and revised as appropriate based upon supply and demand through monitoring channels.

Applicants who meet the criteria for Right to Move will be placed in one and higher than their housing need.



Uttlesford District Council

Fast-track equality impact assessment (EqIA) tool

What is this tool for?


This tool will help you to assess the impact of existing or new strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions on residents and staff. It will help you to deliver excellent services, by making sure that they reflect the needs of all members of the community and workforce.

What should be equality impact assessed?

You only need to equality impact assess strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions that are **relevant** to equality. If you are not sure whether your activity is relevant to equality take the 'relevance test' on Page 9.




How do I use the tool?


This tool is easy to use and you do not need expert knowledge to complete it. It asks you to make judgments based on evidence.

The tool uses a system of red flags  to give you an indication of whether or not your responses are identifying potential issues. Getting a red flag does not necessarily indicate a problem, but it does mean that your assessment is highlighting issues or gaps in data that may require further investigation or action.





If there is insufficient space to answer a question, please use a separate sheet.

General information		
1	Name of strategy, policy, project, contract or decision.	Allocations Policy – amendments to be made following recent case law regarding the eligibility of accepted homeless applicants and other categories of applicants who fall within reasonable preference categories as defined by the Housing Act 1996
2	What is the overall purpose of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	To inform people how we assess housing applications and allocate social housing in Uttlesford.
3	Who may be affected by the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision? The housing register is open to all client groups who are not subject to immigration control and meet the local eligibility criteria	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Those not meeting the local eligibility criteria
4	Responsible department and Head of Division.	Department: Housing Services Head of Division: Roz Millership
5	Are other departments or partners involved in delivery of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (please state): Housing Associations with properties within Uttlesford.
Gathering performance data		

6	<p>Do you (or do you intend to) collect this monitoring data in relation to any of the following <u>diverse groups</u>?</p> <p>The information is collected from the application form. Reports can be run off to see what people fall into the diverse groups mentioned. The CORE data is also used to monitor the allocations of housing.</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Age</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Disability</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Gender/ Transgender</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Race</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Religion & Belief</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Sexual Orientation</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Rural Isolation</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Social Economic</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Other (please state)Location</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>None </td> </tr> </table>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gender/ Transgender	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Religion & Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rural Isolation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Social Economic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please state)Location	<input type="checkbox"/>	None 
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disability																			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gender/ Transgender	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Race																			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Religion & Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sexual Orientation																			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rural Isolation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Social Economic																			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please state)Location	<input type="checkbox"/>	None 																			

7	<p>How do you (or how do you intend to) monitor the impact of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?</p> <p>Monitored through customer complaints using the Corporate Compliments and Complaints system. Core data shows who are housed and we monitor that the statistics match throughout all the data collected. Eligibility criteria is determined by legislation. Local eligibility criteria will be monitored by reports from CBL system</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Performance indicators or targets</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> User satisfaction</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uptake</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consultation or involvement</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Workforce monitoring data</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complaints</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> External verification</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eligibility criteria</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None </p>
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Analysing performance data

<p>8</p>	<p>Consider the impact the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision has already achieved, measured by the monitoring data you collect. Is the same impact being achieved for diverse groups as is being achieved across the population or workforce as a whole?</p> <p>The statistics show that the proportion of diverse groups housed are consistent with the background population as a whole as compared against census data, CORE data and housing register reports.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes *</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No*</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient </p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable </p> <p><i>*Please state your evidence for this, including full document titles and dates of publication for audit purposes. Where applicable please also state the nature of any issues identified:</i></p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Is uptake of any services, benefits or opportunities associated with the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision generally representative of <u>diverse groups</u>?</p> <p>Policy will be monitored to check that those applying to the housing register are representative of the local population in relation to diverse groups</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes *</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No*</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient </p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable </p> <p><i>*Please state your evidence for this, including full document titles and dates of publication for audit purposes. Where applicable please also state the nature of any issues identified:</i></p>

Checking delivery arrangements

10 You now need to check the accessibility of your delivery arrangements against the requirements below. Click on the hyperlinks for more detailed guidance about the minimum criteria you should meet.

If assessing a proposed strategy, policy, project, contract or decision, indicate 'Yes' if you anticipate compliance by launch of implementation.

Yes No  N/A

The [premises](#) for delivery are accessible to all.

X		
---	--	--

[Consultation](#) mechanisms are inclusive of all.

X		
---	--	--

[Participation](#) mechanisms are inclusive of all.

X		
---	--	--

If you answered 'No' to any of the questions above please explain why giving details of any legal justification.

Checking information and communication arrangements

11 You now need to check the accessibility of your information and communication arrangements against the requirements below. Click on the hyperlink for more detailed guidance about the minimum criteria you should meet.

If assessing a proposed strategy policy, project, contract or decision, indicate 'Yes' if you anticipate compliance by launch of implementation.

Yes No  N/A

[Customer contact](#) mechanisms are accessible to all.

X		
---	--	--

Electronic, web-based and paper information is accessible to all.

X		
---	--	--

Publicity campaigns are inclusive of all.

X		
---	--	--

Images and text in documentation are representative and inclusive of all.



X		
---	--	--

If you answered 'No' to any of the questions above please explain why, giving details of any legal justification.

Future Impact

12 Think about what your strategy, policy, project, contract or decision is aiming to achieve over the long term and the ways in which it will seek to do this. This is your opportunity to take a step back and consider the practical implementation of your strategy, policy, project, contract or decision in the future. As well as checking that people from diverse groups will not be inadvertently excluded from or disadvantaged by any proposed activities, it is also an opportunity to think about how you can maximize your impact, reach as many people as possible and really make a difference to the lives of everyone in Uttlesford regardless of their background or circumstances.

Is it likely to inadvertently exclude or disadvantage any diverse groups?


- No
- Yes * 
- Insufficient evidence 

*Please state any potential issues Identified.

OVERVIEW
70,000 residents
Demographic make up according to diverse groups.

Improvement actions

13 If your assessment has highlighted any potential issues or red flags, can these be easily addressed?

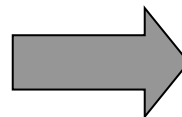
- Yes
- No* 
- Not applicable

**If Yes, please describe your proposed action/s, intended impact, monitoring arrangements implementation date and lead officer:*

Making a judgement – conclusions and next steps

14 Following this fast-track assessment, please confirm the following:

There are no inequalities identified that cannot be easily addressed or legally justified

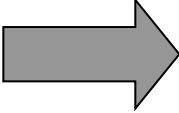


No further action required. Complete this form and implement any actions you identified in Q13 above

There is insufficient evidence to make a robust judgement.



Additional evidence gathering required (go to Q17 on Page 7 below).

	<input type="checkbox"/> Inequalities have been identified which cannot be easily addressed.		Action planning required (go to Q18 on Page 8 below).
15	If you have any additional comments to make, please include here.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None	

Completion

16	Name and job title (Assessment lead officer)	Judith Snares – Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager
	Name/s of any assisting officers and people consulted during assessment:	Helynn Thompson
	Date:	14/11/2015
	Date of next review:	1 year after implementation of new policy – implementation anticipated Jan 2016
	<i>For new strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions this should be one year from implementation.</i>	.

When completed, a copy of this form should be saved with the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision’s file for audit purposes and in case it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

Additional evidence gathering and action planning

17	<p>If your fast-track assessment indicated that complex issues or inequalities were identified which could not be easily addressed, or you had insufficient evidence to make a judgement, you need to undertake an additional evidence gathering and action planning process. This is described below:</p> <p>(a) Gather and analyse relevant additional evidence (which may include engagement with diverse groups), to address gaps in your knowledge, enhance understanding of the issues and inform options for addressing these. Additional evidence is likely to include any or all of the following:</p> <p>Data gathering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demographic profiles of Uttlesford ■ Data about the physical environment, e.g. housing market, workforce, employment, education and learning provision, transport, spatial planning and public spaces ■ Results of local needs analysis ■ Results of staff surveys ■ Research reports on the needs/experience of diverse groups ■ National best practice/guidance ■ Benchmarking with other organisations
----	---

Consultation and involvement

- Existing consultation findings that may provide insight into the issues
 - New, specially commissioned engagement with diverse groups
 - Expert views of stakeholders/employers organisations representing diverse groups
 - Advice from experts or national organisations
 - Specialist staff/in-house expertise.
- (b) For advice on evidence gathering or engagement with diverse groups please contact your departmental equality lead officer. Discuss any proposed consultation with your departmental equality lead officer to ensure it is coordinated with related exercises across the Council as a whole.
- (c) Use your evidence gathering, analysis and engagement with diverse groups to develop options for addressing inequalities or unmet need, consulting with relevant management teams, Members, strategic groups/partners where necessary to confirm proposed actions and resource issues.
- (d) When options for addressing any issues are agreed, if these cannot be implemented immediately integrate them into the appropriate service plan/strategic plan/multi-agency strategy, so that it is clear how they will be delivered, when they will be delivered, by whom and how this will be monitored.
- (e) Identify how the continuing implementation and impact of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision on diverse groups in Uttlesford will be monitored.
- (f) Having gathered evidence re-evaluate this assessment.
- (g) Following completion of the above, please confirm the following:

18 **The conclusions and agreed proposals:**

Following recent case law it is necessary to make some amendments to the Allocations Policy around the eligibility of accepted homeless applicants and other categories of applicants who fall within reasonable preference categories as defined by the Housing Act 1996. Amendments to the policy have been consulted on.

Summary of evidence gathered, including any internal and external consultation (please include full document titles and dates of publication and consultation for audit purposes):

Legal

Housing Board

RSL Partners

Homelessness partnership

Parish Councils

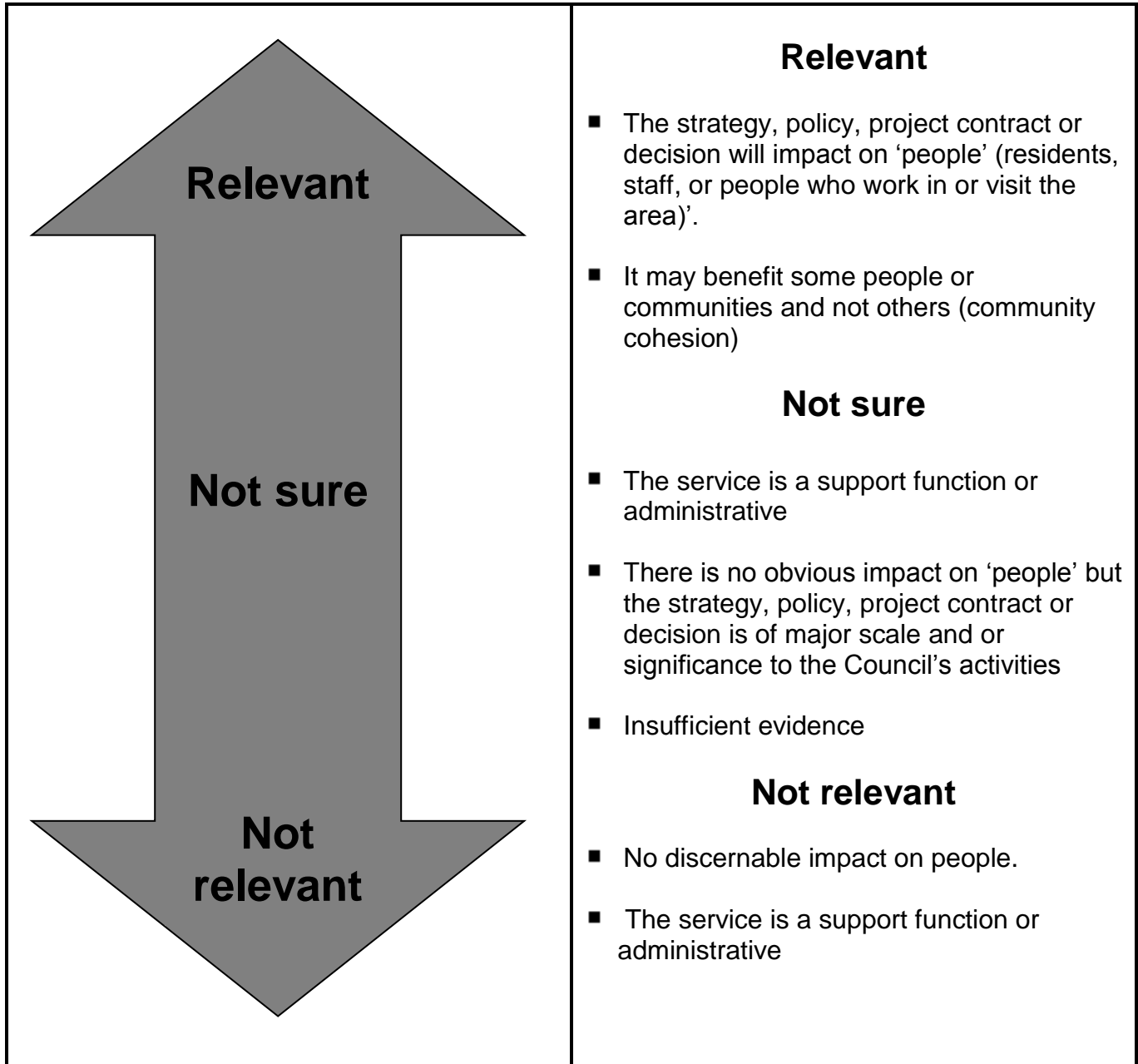
Housing Act 1996 as amended as amended by the homelessness act 2002

Choice based lettings guidance code of guidance 2008. Statutory guidance on the

allocation of social housing 2009. Relevant Case Law Consultation through – Tenant forum, Community and Housing Committee, Open day consultation event.									
Date proposals to be implemented and lead officer: To be approved by cabinet January 2016 and will be implemented with immediate effect - Judith Snares									
Where implementation is not immediate, please state in which service plan or strategy the proposed actions will be integrated: n/a									
Monitor arrangements (please include full details for audit purposes): Continue to monitor through performance indicators and as previously mentioned.									
Additional Comments									
19	If you have any additional comments to make, please include here: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None								
Completion									
20	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Name and job title (Lead Officer):</td> <td>Judith Snares – Housing Options Homelessness Manager.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Name/s of other assisting officers:</td> <td>Helynn Thompson – Housing Options</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date:</td> <td>14/11/15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date of next review (if any):</td> <td>1 year after implementation of new policy – implementation anticipated Jan 2016</td> </tr> </table>	Name and job title (Lead Officer):	Judith Snares – Housing Options Homelessness Manager.	Name/s of other assisting officers:	Helynn Thompson – Housing Options	Date:	14/11/15	Date of next review (if any):	1 year after implementation of new policy – implementation anticipated Jan 2016
Name and job title (Lead Officer):	Judith Snares – Housing Options Homelessness Manager.								
Name/s of other assisting officers:	Helynn Thompson – Housing Options								
Date:	14/11/15								
Date of next review (if any):	1 year after implementation of new policy – implementation anticipated Jan 2016								
When completed, a copy of this form should be saved with the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision's file for audit purposes and in case it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act.									

The relevance test

Use the quick guide below to decide whether or not your strategy, policy, project, contract or decision is relevant to equality:



If you are not sure whether your strategy, project or decision is relevant to equality, ask _____, a member of the Council’s Equality Standard Working Group Officer for advice.
Tel. _____

Ensuring your premises for delivery are easily accessible

In order to ensure that your premises for delivery are accessible to disabled customers and staff, older people and people with small children you should comply with the principles of accessible design summarised below.

In some cases, and for legitimate reasons, this may not be possible. Where this is the case you can still ensure your premises are accessible if you make appropriate reasonable adjustments. For guidance on reasonable adjustments see the 'Key contacts' section at the foot of this page.

Level access

Is there level access into and inside your premises? This means no steps, steep slopes or lips on doorways.

Ramp or lift

If there are steps, can you fit a ramp or install a lift so disabled customers and staff and parents with pushchairs can get in? To be safe ramps must:

- Have a gradient of 1:20 or less
- Have a handrail
- Be firmly fixed to the ground

Bell or buzzer and alarms

Can you install a bell or buzzer outside and go out to disabled customers or staff when they ring? Do you have a visual as well as audible alarm?

Door handles

Are door handles easy to grip and easy to reach for customers or staff who are wheelchair users?

- Use an easy grip handle in a contrasting colour
- Install a magnetic device to hold doors open
- Are door locks easy to handle (not fiddly)?

Doormats

Are any doormats flush with the floor? Avoid bristle matting – it can be difficult for customers or staffs who are wheelchair users.

Colour contrast

Is there a colour contrast between your floors, walls, ceilings and doors? Use matt paint in contrasting colours or different tones.

Corridors and aisles

Are corridors and aisles clear enough for a wheelchair or pushchair to pass through?

Seating

Is there somewhere to sit down if customers or staffs have to queue or wait?

- Have seating with and without armrests, if possible.
- Leave space for a wheelchair user to pull up alongside a seated companion.

Height

Are all key facilities on the main floor? Are popular products on a mid-height shelf, and easy to reach from a wheelchair? Provide a lap tray or clipboard if a lower counter section is not available.

Lighting

Is it easy for visually impaired customers or staff to see everything they need to?

- Make sure your premises are well lit.
- Mark corners, steps and counter edges with high visibility tape so they can be easily seen.
- Keep highly reflective surfaces away from signs to avoid glare.

Guide dogs

If you normally ban animals, you should consider relaxing this for assistance dogs. Remember, it is not just visually impaired people who use assistance dogs.

Signs and labels

Are signs and labels short and easy to read? Are Induction loops available?

- Use large clear text (for example, 24-point text for shelf bar labels)
- Use contrasting colours (for example, black text on a white or yellow background)
- Make sure signs are at a suitable height.

Use visual or picture symbols as well as words, if appropriate.

Key contacts

For further advice or information please contact Sue Locke, a member of the Council's Equality Standard Working Group Officer.

Email: slocke@uttlesford.gov.uk
Telephone: 01799 510 537
Text phone: 18001

Alternatively, contact your Divisional Equality Lead Officer:

Division/Services	Head of Division/Services	Tel. No.

Ensuring customer contact mechanisms are easily accessible

In order to ensure that customer contact mechanisms are accessible to disabled customers and staff, you should provide a range of alternatives – for example: phone, email, text phone, fax and face-to-face.

In some cases and for legitimate reasons, this may not be possible. Where this is the case you can still ensure customer contact mechanisms are accessible if you make appropriate reasonable adjustments. For guidance on reasonable adjustments see the 'Key contacts' section below.

Key contacts

For further advice or information please contact Sue Locke, a member of the Council's Equality Standard Working Group Officer.

Email: slocke@uttlesford.gov.uk
Telephone: 01799 510 537
Text phone: 18001

Alternatively, contact your Divisional Equality Lead Officer:

Division/Services	Head of Division/Services	Tel. No.

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 12 January 2016

15

Title: Essex County Council reduction in funding for Housing Related Support

Author: Julie Redfern – Housing Portfolio Holder

Key decision: yes

Summary

1. This report is to inform members of the cuts being made to Housing Related Support (HRS) funding by Essex County Council from April 2016 and how the council proposes to deliver services to sheltered housing tenants and tenants with community alarms in light of the funding shortfall to the council that these cuts will result in.
2. The report has been considered by the tenant forum and housing board who endorse the recommendations and have added 2 further recommendations as follows: that a review is carried out after 6 months to assess the impact of the changes; that those currently receiving a Bronze Service are informed in writing that the service will be phased out by April 2017.

Recommendations

3. That the Cabinet notes the loss of HRS funding from Essex County Council and recommends:
 - a. The proposed changes to the sheltered housing scheme management service in light of the funding reductions from Essex County Council as follows:
 - i. withdrawal of gold, silver and bronze level of services
 - ii. introduction of two levels of service: sheltered (weekly visit) and sheltered plus (daily visit)
 - iii. continuation of Bronze service for current bronze service tenants (interim)
 - b. That charges for the council's sheltered housing scheme management service (funded from HRS charges and Intensive Housing Management charges) to be set at:
 - i. Sheltered: £15.80 per week
 - ii. Sheltered plus: £17.80 per week
 - iii. Bronze service (to be continued for existing users): £13.80 per week

- c. Residents are written to informing them of changes in the funding arrangements.
- d. Residents receiving the Bronze service are written to informing them that it will be phased out by April 2017.
- e. Changes to the housing related support service are reviewed 6 months after implementation of the changes.
- f. That the cost of community alarms be fully recovered from users.
- g. That the further reductions in HRS by Essex County Council in 2017/18 be noted.

Financial Implications

- 4. Failure to pass on the funding reductions to tenants would have a negative impact on the Housing Revenue Account.
- 5. The loss of HRS funding for the scheme management service to be fully recovered from April 2016.

Background Papers

- 6. None

Impact

- 7.

Communication/Consultation	Tenants, Members, Staff
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	Equality Impact Assessment carried out
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	Proposed changes will ensure sustainability of service going forward
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	Sheltered Housing Team

Situation

- 8. Essex County Council (ECC) has informed officers that as from April 2016 there will be a reduction in the level of Housing Related Support (HRS)

(formerly known as Supporting People (SP)) funding received by all authorities across Essex.

9. The cuts have been confirmed as £2 per sheltered housing tenant that currently receive HRS funding and the discontinuing of the funding that currently allows council tenants to have a community based alarm (Lifeline) without any cost to the tenant.
10. The council has already been subsidising the cost of providing support within sheltered housing following previous cuts to HRS. This is now not a sustainable approach to funding these services particularly as ECC has indicated that all funding may cease from April 2017. The rationale that ECC makes for these cuts is that people who require this type of support can claim appropriate benefits to pay for it themselves.
11. A review of how the sheltered housing service is delivered has shown that whilst sheltered housing officers spend a large part of their time supporting tenants or providing the Lifeline service they also spend a considerable proportion of their time on Intensive Housing Management (IHM) functions and so it is important that when looking at future charges to the service these duties are correctly identified and charged for appropriately. IHM functions are able to be covered by Housing Benefit whereas support charges are not.
12. It is therefore proposed that a specific service charge for IHM be introduced from April 2016 and that all tenants within sheltered housing will need to pay this charge either for themselves or via Housing Benefit. The amount that tenants will then be charged for support services will be reduced proportionately so that the overall effect will in fact not be to increase charges to tenants over and above the need to recover the reduction of funding from ECC.
13. Currently sheltered housing tenants have the choice of receiving a bronze silver or gold sheltered housing service. However it is felt that it is important that sheltered housing is for people who do require a level of support and that the minimum a client should require is a weekly visit. Whilst the bronze service may suit some residents, a recent incident has shown that a tenant can be subject to a dramatic event at any time and that it is therefore hard to justify why we would have tenants living in sheltered housing who are not seen from one week to the next, even where this is at the tenants request.
14. It is proposed that the current three levels of sheltered service are reduced to two, 'Sheltered' – with a weekly visit and 'Sheltered Plus' – with a daily visit. Tenants who currently receive the Gold or Silver service will be automatically transferred to Sheltered or Sheltered Plus. Bronze service tenants will be allowed to continue with this level of service until their circumstances change and they are identified as requiring more support. All new tenants as from January 2016 will only be able to choose between 'Sheltered' and 'Sheltered Plus'.
15. By changing the levels of service and introducing the IHM service charge the council will be able to continue to provide a first class sheltered service for

tenants in spite of the loss of income from ECC. Although it will mean that some tenants who are currently in receipt of housing benefit will, for the first time, have to start paying a contribution towards their support costs any increase in charges to tenants will be mitigated by the 1% per annum rent decrease that all social housing tenants will be receiving over the next 4 years.

16. It is also proposed that tenants who wish to continue to have a Lifeline unit as from April 2016 are going to have to pay for this service in full as the Housing Revenue Account will not be able to sustain the provision of these units to tenants without the funding from ECC. The charge for a Lifeline unit is currently £4.16pw and there is already a shortfall in funding for these units as ECC only pays the equivalent of £3.10. This will be reducing to zero. The only sustainable option is therefore to ask tenants to pay for this service if they wish to continue with it. Again the argument from ECC is that people who need a Lifeline should be in receipt of or be able to claim such benefits that are designed to be used to pay for this type of support service. Private tenants and tenants of housing associations as well as owner occupiers pay for this service in full for themselves regardless of their financial circumstances. It is therefore thought that this should be the same for council tenants going forward and again with the 1% reduction in rent as opposed to what would have been a 4% increase the cost of charging tenants for their Lifeline will be mitigated.

17. The following charts show the current charges to tenants and the proposed new charges. The first table shows the charges for tenants not on housing benefit (HB), the second shows the charges for those on HB

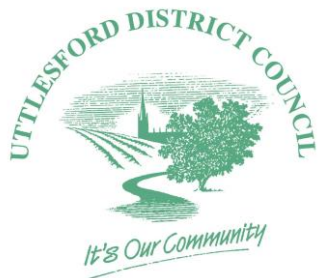
Actual costs for those paying						
	Bronze Service	Bronze Service	Silver Service	Sheltered	Gold Service	Sheltered Plus
	Current Charges	New Charges	Current Charges	New Charges	Current Charges	New Charges
Support Charge (paid by tenant)	11.77	7.91	14.72	9.91	16.63	11.91
IHM (paid by tenant)	0.00	5.89	0.00	5.89	0.00	5.89
Total	11.77	13.80	14.72	15.80	16.63	17.80
Actual costs for tenants on HB						
	Bronze Service	Bronze Service	Silver Service	Sheltered	Gold Service	Sheltered Plus
	Current Charges	New Charges	Current Charges	New Charges	Current Charges	New Charges
Support Charge (funded by UDC)	2.27	0.00	2.90	0.00	3.18	0.00
Support Charge (paid by tenant)		0.41		0.39		0.46
HRS	9.50	7.50	11.52	9.52	13.45	11.45
IHM		5.89		5.89		5.89
Total	11.77	13.80	14.42	15.80	16.63	17.80

Risk Analysis

18.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Charges are not passed on	2. Members do not agree to pass on charges	2. Financial risk to the HRA	Service re-configured so that some cost can be met by HB

- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.



Uttlesford District Council

Fast-track equality impact assessment (EqIA) tool

What is this tool for?


This tool will help you to assess the impact of existing or new strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions on residents and staff. It will help you to deliver excellent services, by making sure that they reflect the needs of all members of the community and workforce.

What should be equality impact assessed?

You only need to equality impact assess strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions that are **relevant** to equality. If you are not sure whether your activity is relevant to equality take the 'relevance test' on Page 9.


How do I use the tool?

This tool is easy to use and you do not need expert knowledge to complete it. It asks you to make judgments based on evidence.





The tool uses a system of red flags  to give you an indication of whether or not your responses are identifying potential issues. Getting a red flag does not necessarily indicate a problem, but it does mean that your assessment is highlighting issues or gaps in data that may require further investigation or action.

If there is insufficient space to answer a question, please use a separate sheet.

General information												
1	Name of strategy, policy, project, contract or decision.	Changes to Housing Related Support Service										
2	What is the overall purpose of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	Withdrawal of gold, silver and bronze level of services and introduction of two levels of service: sheltered (weekly visit) and sheltered plus (daily visit)										
3	Who may be affected by the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision? Elderly residents in council owned sheltered housing or those on the waiting list seeking sheltered housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A specific client group/s e.g. linked by geographical location, social economic factors, age, disabilities, gender, transgender, race, religion or sexual orientation (please state)										
4	Responsible department and Head of Division.	Department: Housing Services Head of Service: Roz Millership										
5	Are other departments or partners involved in delivery of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes - Housing Planning and Policy, <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing Benefits and other partner agencies										
Gathering performance data												
6	Do you (or do you intend to) collect this monitoring data in relation to any of the following <u>diverse groups</u> ? Core monitoring data and tenants surveys	<table border="0"> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender Reassignment</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion & Belief</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy and Maternity</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marriage and Civil Partnerships</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural Isolation</td> </tr> </table>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion & Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy and Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marriage and Civil Partnerships	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural Isolation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability											
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion & Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy and Maternity											
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marriage and Civil Partnerships	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural Isolation											

7	How do you (or how do you intend to) monitor the impact of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Performance indicators or targets <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> User satisfaction <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uptake <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consultation or involvement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Workforce monitoring data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complaints <input type="checkbox"/> External verification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eligibility criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state): <input type="checkbox"/> None 
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Analysing performance data

<p>8</p>	<p>Consider the impact the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision has already achieved, measured by the monitoring data you collect. Is the same impact being achieved for diverse groups as is being achieved across the population or workforce as a whole?</p>	<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes * <input type="checkbox"/> No* <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient  <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable  </p> <p><i>*Please state your evidence for this, including full document titles and dates of publication for audit purposes. Where applicable please also state the nature of any issues identified:</i></p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Is uptake of any services, benefits or opportunities associated with the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision generally representative of <u>diverse groups</u>?</p>	<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes * <input type="checkbox"/> No* <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient  <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable  </p> <p><i>*Please state your evidence for this, including full document titles and dates of publication for audit purposes. Where applicable please also state the nature of any issues identified:</i></p>

Checking delivery arrangements

10 You now need to check the accessibility of your delivery arrangements against the requirements below. Click on the hyperlinks for more detailed guidance about the minimum criteria you should meet.

If assessing a proposed strategy, policy, project, contract or decision, indicate 'Yes' if you anticipate compliance by launch of implementation.

	Yes	No 	N/A
The premises for delivery are accessible to all.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Consultation mechanisms are inclusive of all.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Participation mechanisms are inclusive of all.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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If you answered 'No' to any of the questions above please explain why giving details of any legal justification.

Checking information and communication arrangements

11 You now need to check the accessibility of your information and communication arrangements against the requirements below. Click on the hyperlink for more detailed guidance about the minimum criteria you should meet.

If assessing a proposed strategy policy, project, contract or decision, indicate 'Yes' if you anticipate compliance by launch of implementation.



	Yes	No 	N/A
Customer contact mechanisms are accessible to all.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronic, web-based and paper information is accessible to all.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publicity campaigns are inclusive of all.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Images and text in documentation are representative and inclusive of all.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered 'No' to any of the questions above please explain why, giving details of any legal justification.

Future Impact


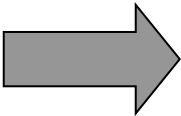
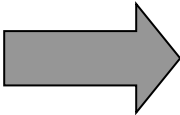
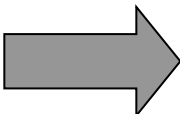
12 Think about what your strategy, policy, project, contract or decision is aiming to achieve over the long term and the ways in which it will seek to do this. This is your opportunity to take a step back and consider the practical implementation of your strategy, policy, project, contract or decision in the future. As well as checking that people from diverse groups will not be inadvertently excluded from or disadvantaged by any proposed activities, it is also an opportunity to think about how you can maximize your impact, reach as many people as possible and really make a difference to the lives of everyone in Uttlesford regardless of their background or circumstances.

Is it likely to inadvertently exclude or disadvantage any diverse groups?

- No
- Yes * 
- Insufficient evidence 

*Please state any potential issues Identified.

The new policy is to discontinue the Bronze service. Continuing with a Bronze service, in which residents can opt out of visits and checks, will leave residents and the council at

	risk.	
Improvement actions		
13	If your assessment has highlighted any potential issues or red flags, can these be easily addressed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No*  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable <i>*If Yes, please describe your proposed action/s, intended impact, monitoring arrangements implementation date and lead officer:</i>
Making a judgement – conclusions and next steps		
14	Following this fast-track assessment, please confirm the following:	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> There are no inequalities identified that cannot be easily addressed or legally justified <input type="checkbox"/> There is insufficient evidence to make a robust judgement. <input type="checkbox"/> Inequalities have been identified which cannot be easily addressed.	 No further action required. Complete this form and implement any actions you identified in Q13 above  Additional evidence gathering required (go to Q17 on Page 7 below).  Action planning required (go to Q18 on Page 8 below).
15	If you have any additional comments to make, please include here.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None

Completion		
16	Name and job title (Assessment lead officer)	Judith Snares
	Name/s of any assisting officers and people consulted during assessment:	
	Date:	27/11/2015
	Date of next review:	01/10/2016
	<i>For new strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions this should be one year from implementation.</i>	

When completed, a copy of this form should be saved with the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision's file for audit purposes and in case it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

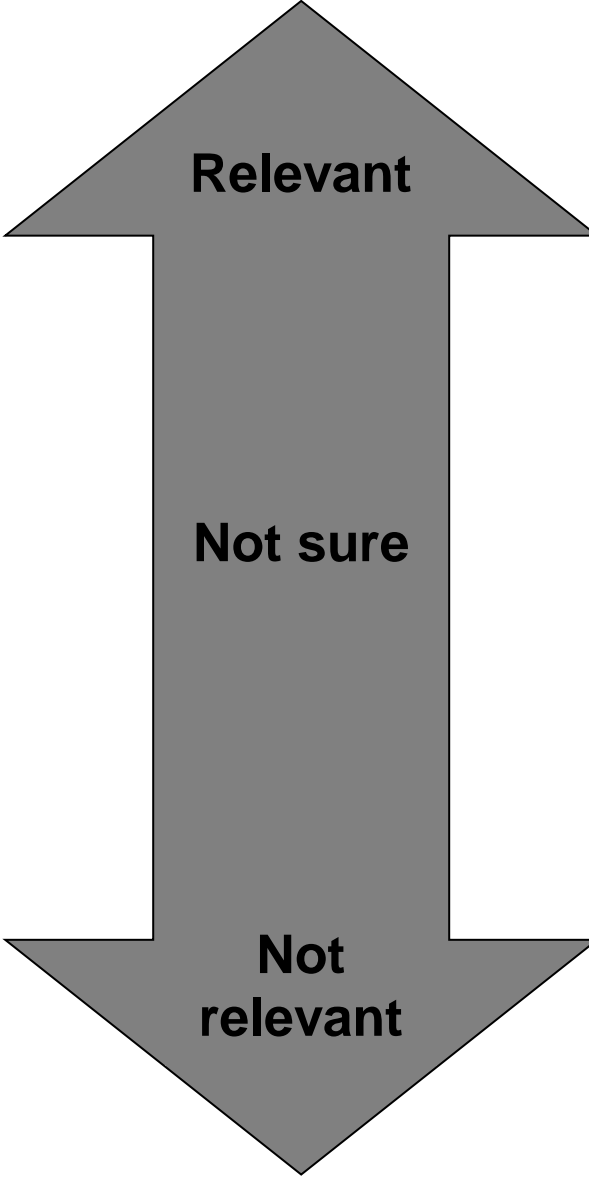
Additional evidence gathering and action planning

- 17 If your fast-track assessment indicated that **complex issues** or **inequalities** were identified which could not be easily addressed, or you had **insufficient evidence** to make a judgement, you need to undertake an additional evidence gathering and action planning process. This is described below:
- (a) Gather and analyse relevant additional evidence (which may include engagement with diverse groups), to address gaps in your knowledge, enhance understanding of the issues and inform options for addressing these. Additional evidence is likely to include any or all of the following:
- Data gathering**
- Demographic profiles of Uttlesford
 - Data about the physical environment, e.g. housing market, workforce, employment, education and learning provision, transport, spatial planning and public spaces
 - Results of local needs analysis
 - Results of staff surveys
 - Research reports on the needs/experience of diverse groups
 - National best practice/guidance
 - Benchmarking with other organisations
- Consultation and involvement**
- Existing consultation findings that may provide insight into the issues
 - New, specially commissioned engagement with diverse groups
 - Expert views of stakeholders/employers organisations representing diverse groups
 - Advice from experts or national organisations
 - Specialist staff/in-house expertise.
- (b) For advice on evidence gathering or engagement with diverse groups please contact your departmental equality lead officer. Discuss any proposed consultation with your departmental equality lead officer to ensure it is coordinated with related exercises across the Council as a whole.
- (c) Use your evidence gathering, analysis and engagement with diverse groups to develop options for addressing inequalities or unmet need, consulting with relevant management teams, Members, strategic groups/partners where necessary to confirm proposed actions and resource issues.
- (d) When options for addressing any issues are agreed, if these cannot be implemented immediately integrate them into the appropriate service plan/strategic plan/multi-agency strategy, so that it is clear how they will be delivered, when they will be delivered, by whom and how this will be monitored.

	<p>(e) Identify how the continuing implementation and impact of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision on diverse groups in Uttlesford will be monitored.</p> <p>(f) Having gathered evidence re-evaluate this assessment.</p> <p>(g) Following completion of the above, please confirm the following:</p>	
18	<p>The conclusions and agreed proposals: Changes to service levels have been agreed by the Tenants Forum and the Housing Board</p>	
	<p>Summary of evidence gathered, including any internal and external consultation (please include full document titles and dates of publication and consultation for audit purposes): Nov Tenants Forum minutes, Sep/Dec Housing Board minutes</p>	
	<p>Date proposals to be implemented and lead officer: Jan 2016 – Judith Snares</p>	
	<p>Where implementation is not immediate, please state in which service plan or strategy the proposed actions will be integrated:</p>	
	<p>Monitor arrangements (please include full details for audit purposes): Performance data monitoring via Covalent, review after 6 month to be reported to Housing Board</p>	
<p>Additional Comments</p>		
19	<p>If you have any additional comments to make, please include here:</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None</p>
<p>Completion</p>		
20	<p>Name and job title (Lead Officer): Name/s of other assisting officers: Date: Date of next review (if any):</p>	<p>Judith Snares Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager 27/11/2015 01/10/2016</p>
<p>When completed, a copy of this form should be saved with the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision's file for audit purposes and in case it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act.</p>		

The relevance test

Use the quick guide below to decide whether or not your strategy, policy, project, contract or decision is relevant to equality:

 <p>Relevant</p> <p>Not sure</p> <p>Not relevant</p>	<p>Relevant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The strategy, policy, project contract or decision will impact on ‘people’ (residents, staff, or people who work in or visit the area)’.■ It may benefit some people or communities and not others (community cohesion) <p>Not sure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The service is a support function or administrative■ There is no obvious impact on ‘people’ but the strategy, policy, project contract or decision is of major scale and or significance to the Council’s activities■ Insufficient evidence <p>Not relevant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ No discernable impact on people.■ The service is a support function or administrative
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If you are not sure whether your strategy, project or decision is relevant to equality, ask _____, a member of the Council’s Equality Standard Working Group Officer for advice.
Tel. _____

Ensuring your premises for delivery are easily accessible

In order to ensure that your premises for delivery are accessible to disabled customers and staff, older people and people with small children you should comply with the principles of accessible design summarised below.

In some cases, and for legitimate reasons, this may not be possible. Where this is the case you can still ensure your premises are accessible if you make appropriate reasonable adjustments. For guidance on reasonable adjustments see the 'Key contacts' section at the foot of this page.

Level access

Is there level access into and inside your premises? This means no steps, steep slopes or lips on doorways.

Ramp or lift

If there are steps, can you fit a ramp or install a lift so disabled customers and staff and parents with pushchairs can get in? To be safe ramps must:

- Have a gradient of 1:20 or less
- Have a handrail
- Be firmly fixed to the ground

Bell or buzzer and alarms

Can you install a bell or buzzer outside and go out to disabled customers or staff when they ring? Do you have a visual as well as audible alarm?

Door handles

Are door handles easy to grip and easy to reach for customers or staff who are wheelchair users?

- Use an easy grip handle in a contrasting colour
- Install a magnetic device to hold doors open
- Are door locks easy to handle (not fiddly)?

Doormats

Are any doormats flush with the floor? Avoid bristle matting – it can be difficult for customers or staffs who are wheelchair users.

Colour contrast

Is there a colour contrast between your floors, walls, ceilings and doors? Use matt paint in contrasting colours or different tones.

Corridors and aisles

Are corridors and aisles clear enough for a wheelchair or pushchair to pass through?

Seating

Is there somewhere to sit down if customers or staffs have to queue or wait?

- Have seating with and without armrests, if possible.
- Leave space for a wheelchair user to pull up alongside a seated companion.

Height

Are all key facilities on the main floor? Are popular products on a mid-height shelf, and easy to reach from a wheelchair? Provide a lap tray or clipboard if a lower counter section is not available.

Lighting

Is it easy for visually impaired customers or staff to see everything they need to?

- Make sure your premises are well lit.
- Mark corners, steps and counter edges with high visibility tape so they can be easily seen.
- Keep highly reflective surfaces away from signs to avoid glare.

Guide dogs

If you normally ban animals, you should consider relaxing this for assistance dogs. Remember, it is not just visually impaired people who use assistance dogs.

Signs and labels

Are signs and labels short and easy to read? Are Induction loops available?

- Use large clear text (for example, 24-point text for shelf bar labels)
- Use contrasting colours (for example, black text on a white or yellow background)
- Make sure signs are at a suitable height.

Use visual or picture symbols as well as words, if appropriate.

Key contacts

For further advice or information please contact Sue Locke , a member of the Council's Equality Standard Working Group Officer.

Email: slocke@uttlesford.gov.uk
Telephone: 01799 501510
Text phone: 18001
Alternatively, contact your Equality Lead Officer:

Division/Services	Head of Division/Services	Tel. No.

Ensuring customer contact mechanisms are easily accessible

In order to ensure that customer contact mechanisms are accessible to disabled customers and staff, you should provide a range of alternatives – for example: phone, email, text phone, fax and face-to-face.

In some cases and for legitimate reasons, this may not be possible. Where this is the case you can still ensure customer contact mechanisms are accessible if you make appropriate reasonable adjustments. For guidance on reasonable adjustments see the 'Key contacts' section below.

Key contacts

For further advice or information please contact Sue Locke , a member of the Council's Equality Standard Working Group Officer.

Email: slocke@uttlesford.gov.uk
Telephone: 01799 510510
Text phone: 18001

Alternatively, contact your Divisional Equality Lead Officer:

Services	Head of Services	Tel. No.

