HOUSING SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 2005 – 2008

'IT'S OUR COMMUNITY'

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERVICE PLAN

In preparing this Service Plan, it is important to set this document in the correct context. A Service Plan is not an isolated stand-alone document; it is in fact part of a larger management picture for the Council.

The Service Plan serves not only as a plan of proposed action for the next 1-3 years but also outlines the philosophy of the service. Therefore, it is important that both these aspects are reviewed annually and owned by the Council, both Members and staff.

When preparing the Service Plan for Housing a number of key corporate documents are major influences on the finished product. All the documents embrace partnership working and full consultation. These include:-

Uttlesford Futures Community Plan

This is a document prepared within the wider community which outlines what the community wants to see occur within Uttlesford.

Quality of Life Corporate Plan

This is a detailed document indicating the direction the Council envisages going over the next few years.

Best Value Performance Plan

This key management document indicates how the Council is performing in relation to a number of national Performance Indicators and sets out how the Council tackles Performance Management and Best Value Reviews.

Housing Strategy Statement

This is a key document which outlines the aims and objectives as to how the Council proposes to address issues in the District and Regional housing context (both private and public housing).

The Regional and Sub Regional Strategies documents address the regional housing agenda and issues relating to the M11 – Stansted – Cambridge – Peterborough growth area.

Housing Business Plan

This document projects likely resources available and needed to ensure that the Council's housing stock is maintained to a high standard.

Homelessness Strategy

This strategy outlines how the Council will address homelessness issues especially prevention.

Supporting People Position Statement

This document outlines the established special support needs of the Uttlesford Community outside of the Housing Landlord service.

Customers

The Housing Service provides a wide range of services to:

- a) Existing Council Tenants (approximately 3000)
- b) Applicants for rehousing (approximately 1000)
- c) Leaseholders (approximately 120)
- d) Lifeline subscribers (approximately 450)
- e) Wider general public (regarding advice relating to all aspects of housing both public and private)
- f) Other Council Departments

The overwhelming amount of services provided by Housing Services are those of a landlord fall within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) although some significant services such as Homelessness, Housing Strategy Enabling are a General Fund (GF) activity.

Services Provided

It should be noted that currently Housing Services provide the following Council services.

- Maintenance of a Housing Waiting List Register and the assessment of applications in accordance with the Council's Points Schemes.
- Allocation of Council vacancies and nominations to Housing Associations.
- Provision of help and advice for homeless families.
- Prevention of homelessness.
- Provision of Sheltered Housing for the elderly, and associated housing welfare assistance for elderly and vulnerable tenants of the Council.
- Provision of the Lifeline Service (dispersed emergency alarms) to elderly and vulnerable residents of the District.
- Resolution of neighbour disputes and ensuring good management of estates.
- Rent Collection and Accountancy for Council owned houses and garages
- Delivery of the Planned Programme of Work and Improvements to the Council's Housing stock.
- Delivery of the response maintenance service.
- Provision of direct maintenance services to customers via Housing Contract Services
- Preparing programmes of work to achieve the Decent Homes Standard.
- Managing Health and Safety issues such as Asbestos and Legionella.
- Consultation with tenants on issues which affect them in accordance with the Tenant Compact and legislation.
- Management of the Right to Buy scheme.
- Provision of a leasehold management service to the council's leaseholders.
- Assessment of housing need in District (Housing Needs Survey).
- Provision of new social/affordable housing within the District in accordance with Council, Government and Regional policy working in partnership with Housing Associations, Planning, Housing Corporation etc.
- Provision of services relating to the private housing sector, including the administration of relevant grants and ensuring private stock condition information is up to date
- Provision of property related services to other departments within the Council and other agencies.
- Day to day management of Day Centres working with volunteers
- Provisions of advice to the public on all services provided.

• Challenges and Opportunities Facing the Service

There continues to be great change taking place with regard to the provision of public services and in this context, the Housing Service has been, and will continue to embrace changes whilst still concentrating on the provision of first class services to our customers. It is felt that the following are some of the key issues facing the service in the foreseeable future.

- Continue to strive for excellence regarding responding to customer's needs and to care for customers.
- ❖ To continue to achieve good value for money and excellent partnering arrangements.
- ❖ To ensure that the restructuring of Contract Services provides real benefits for the Council.
- Enabling the provision of more affordable housing within the District to meet identified needs in accordance with Council and Government policy, working in partnership with other agencies.
- ❖ Achieve the Government's Decent Homes standard for the housing stock by 2007 well in advance of the Government's target (by 2010).
- Aim towards eliminating the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families.
- Encourage more tenants to become involved in consultation/participation regarding the services they receive and the future management of the Council's stock.

Situation analysis

Performance Indicators (PIs)

The following chart shows the PI position for 2003/04 and the first ½ for 2004/05. The situation generally is regarded as very satisfactory with no special action being required. The BV responsive repairs PI was in the top quartile.

All PI's are monitored and at 30 June 2004 the relet figure and the non-urgent repairs figures were a little higher than the target. It is however expected that this situation will be rectified by the end of the financial year.

Targets for 2005/06 have been added to the chart

	Performance Management 2004/3005	Target owner	2003/ 04 target	2003/04 Uttlesford outturn	2003/04 Daventry Group	2004/ 05 Target	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Current Status	Urgent 2005/06
Housing	1											
BV66a	Local authority rent collection and arrears: proportion of rent collected	Robert Patterson- Smith	98.25%	97.84%	Median	98.25%	91.45%					98.25
BV183a	The average length of stay (weeks) in bed and breakfast accommodation which include dependent children or a pregnant woman and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need	Liz Petrie	5.84 weeks	5.87 weeks	Median	5 weeks	4.46 weeks				:	4 weeks
BV185	Percentage of responsive (but not emergency) repairs during 2002/03, for which the authority both made and kept an appointment	Russell Goodey	99.70%	100%	Upper	99%						99%
H1	Average relet times (weeks) for local authority dwellings let in the financial year	Sophie Robinson	2 weeks	3 weeks	-	2.8 weeks	3.2 weeks				(3)	2.8 weeks
H2	The percentage of urgent repairs completed within Government time limits	Russell Goodey	94.44%	96.00%	-	97.00%	93.00%				\odot	97%
НЗ	The average time taken (days) to complete non-urgent responsive repairs	Russell Goodey	19 days	14.05 days	-	10 days	12 days				(3)	10 days
H4	New tenants visits completed within 3 months	Liz Petrie	90.00%	86.60%	-	88.00%	96%					90%
H5	Number of homeless cases that present and where homelessness is either delayed or avoided by direct intervention of the housing department	Judith Snares/ Liz Petrie	10.00%	35.70%	-	20.00%	38.46%				<u></u>	30%
H6	Delivering Decent Homes Standard	Rod/Liz	New target for 2004/05	New target for 2004/05	-	94.00%						97%

WORK PROGRAMME 2005/08

Appendix One to this service plan outlines the routine work covered by Housing Services which are the main tasks of the service committing most time and resources.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES 2005-08

The following tasks are regarded as new areas of work for the service. Financial estimates/comments are included in brackets. Each element of the following have been assessed to ensure that they are achievable within the resources available and that a measured outcome can be achieved (in accordance with SMART principles).

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
1 Customers	 Involve tenant forum reps in stock options appraisal (outcome uncertain – could be major project) Target – to complete exercise by 31/7/05 Review day centres procedures following Best Value Review. Target – to ensure smooth operation by 31/12/05. Implement Council's policy re: single housing register (longer term financial implications) Target – to provide greater opportunities for Social Housing 	 Following up action re: stock options Tenant Forum election Follow up action Review	Review
2 Communication	 Commence work on upgrading Vicarage Mead (Decent Homes Budget) Target – to commence building work May 05 Review all options to significantly reduce the use of bed and breakfast for homeless people (Existing budget) Such as: (a) Void management (b) Consider Rent Deposit Scheme (c) Engaging with other agencies to assess levels of applicants with mental health issues. Target – to reduce numbers placed into B/B by 31/3/06 	Finish Vicarage Mead Project Review Review ge 6	Review

	Continue to develop and promote a shared ownership scheme (Existing budget) Target – provide more tenure options during 05/06.		
3 Excellence	Achieve 97% of Council homes to Decent Homes Standard (Decent homes budget)	Achieve current Decent Home Standards by 31/3/07	Review position
	Target – to achieve the required standard in advance of government requirement • Consider extending Decent Homes Standard relating to noise insulation, asbestos management, subject to resources (Decent homes budget) Target – To provide tenants with higher standard accommodation (progress by 31/3/06) • Implement under occupation policy to provide customers with more appropriate accommodation (Possible£30k) Target – To provide more (20) vacancies within housing stock.	 Follow up action Complete strategy 	 Follow up action Complete Strategy
	To ensure that sustainability issues are addressed in contracts. Target – To ensure environmentally friendly policies are developed.		
4 People	 Review Housing DSO practices to ensure good reliable service for customers (Existing budget) Target – 1st phase 31/3/06 Review the way the Housing Services is delivered (Existing budget) Target – Sept 05 Review operation of Sheltered Housing Service (Existing budget) 	• Follow up action ge 7	Review

		Target – by 31/3/06		
5	Community	Embark on projects in Private Housing Sector Empty Homes Private Sector Condition Survey to ascertain level of activity required (£70k required) Target – to provide more information by 31/3/06 Carry out feasibility exercise regarding	Follow up actionFollow up action required	Follow up action
		future of difficult to let sheltered scheme (Existing budget) Target – To maximise resources by 31/12/05 • Review progress on affordable housing schemes and consider	Review progress Review	Review
		policy and funding initiatives (Existing	Review	Treview
		resources) Target – To provide more units - ongoing Implement Council policy regarding keyworkers Target – To develop any policy agreed 03/06 Work with partners and councils in region to develop regional and sub regional strategy Target – on-going	Review	Review

The five aims of the Council

In addressing new work relating to the Council's five aims and continuing with day to day service delivery, it is important to place in summary what the service is expecting to achieve:

Customers

The Housing Service is committed to providing the best possible service to existing tenants, potential tenants and other customers. This is achieved by consulting and involving customers in the services they receive. We survey our customers and learn from our mistakes. Customer Care is central at all team meetings and the ethos is to treat customers how we would expect to be treated.

Communication

The Housing Services is committed to ensuring good value for money and consults widely on this and strategic issues. This is achieved by prudent budget setting and monitoring. The service has developed good partnering relationships with contractors and ensures that the Housing DSO works effectively to endeavour to achieve a trading surplus. Where possible planned packages of work are carried out under programmes rather than ad-hoc work.

Excellence

The Housing Service is committed to excellence providing services that meet the customers needs by working in partnership and through consultation. This relates to not only the landlord service, but also to the wider community with the provision of new affordable housing. We will review our services/policies/practices to ensure that the needs of the community are met. We will continue to widely consult on all our strategies and listen to what people require. We will explain why we can not provide some services that may be sought by some customers.

People

The greatest resource the Council has is its workforce. The Housing Service has 62 staff which includes the Sheltered Housing Officers and the Housing DSO workforce. The service is committed to involve staff on how services are delivered and planned. All housing staff will receive an annual staff appraisal and training needs will be accessed. All staff will continue to be encouraged to attend staff meetings and corporate training.

Community

The Housing Service not only provide landlord services for existing tenants but also plans, with partners, to assist future generations. In this context, it takes the lead in the provision of new units of affordable housing on approved sites. The Housing service involves its tenants, via consultation and the tenant forum in developing services.

Cost of services provided

The Housing Landlord Service is funded via the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). In this context the Council is dependent on the Government formula for rent setting and therefore

now has few options when the rent is set. However, it is seen as important to explain budget setting within the HRA.

Figures from the Government will be available towards the end of the calendar year and rent setting will take place in February 2005.

However, due to transitional Right to Buy Capital Receipts being retained for three years major programmes of work to reach the Decent Homes Standard have been established alongside ongoing normal programmes of work.

Appendix 6 shows the projected 3 year plan in financial terms to achieve the Decent Home Standard.

Further financial details of the service will therefore be added to this Service Plan as soon as possible.

Resources to implement the Service Plan

Most of the proposed new work in the Plan, especially for 2005/6, are costed within the Corporate Plan or are covered within the HRA and these projects will be addressed as part of normal workload.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITMENT

The Housing Service is fully committed to ensuring equality of treatment for all customers without discrimination or prejudice based on a person's colour, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, nationality, age, disability or illness.

To ensure that this commitment is enforced, it should be noted that in 2002, the Council adopted the Code of Practice of the Commission for Race Relations relating to Housing. Corporately, the Housing Service will participate in monitoring the above commitment and will work in partnership with people from Ethnic minorities to ascertain what improvements can be made to service delivery.

ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

- The annual work programme for Housing Services indicates the scale of the Housing operations within the service and is the core work carried out.
- In addition to the core work as outlined the new key aims and objectives are outlined earlier in this document.
- As with any front line service situations and priorities can change during the year but based on current trends the normal work programme for 2005/06 includes:-
 - Implement cyclical property maintenance programmes, including external repair and re-decoration and regular servicing of appliances, such as central heating and other electrical and mechanical service contracts (Peter Shepherd)
 - Implement normal projected Planned Programme of Work/Improvements (Peter Shepherd)
 - Management of asbestos/legionella (Russell Goodey)
 - Ensure Council has arrangements in place to promote sustainability issues with products (Russell Goodey/Peter Shepherd)
 - Dealing with approximately 10,000 orders for repairs (Russell Goodey)
 - Carry out work to other Council property (approximately 10% of workload)
 (Peter Shepherd & Russell Goodey)
 - ❖ Administer applications (approximately 150) from tenants under the Right to Buy, Rent to Mortgage, Cash Incentive or Shared Ownership Schemes Note: new changes in legislation expected (Roz Millership)
 - Provide a leasehold management service to approximately 120 leaseholders. Note: New changes in legislation expected (Roz Millership)
 - Devise and monitor housing stock improvement programmes including a decent homes investment programme (Roz Millership)
 - Prepare budgets and monitor income and expenditure (Roz Millership)
 - Enable affordable housing schemes within district in conjunction with partners (Helen Frost)
 - Further develop Shared Ownership, Keyworker and Low Cost Market Housing in conjunction with partners
 - Review of various strategies (Housing, Homelessness, Housing Business Plan) (Helen Frost, Elizabeth Petrie, Roz Millership)
 - Develop with others, the Regional and Sub-Regional Housing Strategy
 - 10 approximately Tenant Forum Meetings (Amanda Collison)
 - 20 approximately Residents Meetings/Road shows (Amanda Collison)
 - Production of 2/3 newsletters (Amanda Collison)
 - Deal with 120 approximate Homeless Applications (Judith Snares)
 - Provide daily contact with all sheltered tenants (Elizabeth Petrie)
 - Provide approximately 100 new subscribes with lifeline (Elizabeth Petrie)
 - Administer 3,500 rent accounts for dwellings/garages and reduce rent arrears (Robert Patterson-Smith)
 - Collect/accountancy/rent arrear services for a total of approximately £9m (Robert Patterson-Smith)
 - Process approximately 600 new applications for housing (Elizabeth Petrie)
 - Provide day to day estate management services for tenants (Elizabeth Petrie)
 - Process Welfare requests for assistance (Elizabeth Petrie)
 - ❖ Involvement in Community Issues such as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders
 - Provide Housing Advice to customers (Elizabeth Petrie)
 - Provide Day Centre Services
 - Provide help and advice to Private Housing Customers
 - Monitor empty homes situation
 - Provide services to tenants and other customers by the Housing DSO within budget.

Activity is monitored for all the above and relevant monthly progress statistics are

maintained. Each year a summary of core activity of the Housing Service is published comparing performance against previous years.

HOUSING SERVICES STAFFING RESOURCES

Current Situation

Rod Chamberlain **Executive Manager**

Housing Management

Senior Housing Officer Elizabeth Petrie Housing Officer Marion Taylor Housing Officer Doreen Poole Housing Officer Mary Rowe Housing Officer Lisa Higgons Elderly Persons Officer Ruth Fulton Tenant Participation Officer Vacant (Sept 04)

Administrative Assistant Suzy Arnold Clerical Assistant Vacant (Sept 04) Housing Support Officer **Judith Snares**

Rents

Senior Housing Officer (Rents) Robert Patterson-Smith Housing Assistant (Rents) Dorothy George Rent Collector/Housing Assistant Helen Joy

Programming Team

Programme Officer Roz Millership Programme Assistant Sophie Robinson Finance Officer Stephen Eldrett Administration Assistant (Part Time) Jane Capp Administration Assistant (Part Time) Eileen Barnes

Enabling Team

Housing Enabling Officer Helen Frost

Planned Services

Planned Services Manager Peter Shepherd Senior Surveyor Brian Thain Surveyor Vacant (Nov 04) Bill Goldbourn Surveyor Andrew Hurrell Surveyor Architectural Surveyor David Osborn

Repairs

Repairs Manager Russell Goodey Repairs Officer Peter Bastendorff Repairs Officer Alan Start Repairs Officer **Derrick Morris** Repairs Assistant (temp vacant) Repairs Assistant **Barbara Chandley**

Repairs Assistant Vacant

(This section includes the Housing DSO operatives)

Sheltered Housing Officers

Sheltered Housing Officer Eileen Bracewell Sheltered Housing Officer Rita Caton Sheltered Housing Officer Janice Cousins Sheltered Housing Officer Maureen Cox Sheltered Housing Officer Lindsay Gardner Sheltered Housing Officer Vacant Sheltered Housing Officer Maureen Hunt Page 13 Kelly Rake Sheltered Housing Officer

Sheltered Housing Officer Sheltered Housing Officer Lifeline Officer Lifeline Officer

Vacant Jean Wernick Nadia Jackson Sue Russell

Comments for the Future

The above structure will need to be kept under review and subject to changes of work required.

It is expected that a full review will be undertaken during 2005/6.

ACCOMMODATION

- Currently the Housing service operates from the Council's offices within Saffron Walden. All sections are now based in one main office which includes all Housing Revenue Account (HRA) activity.
- The service provides some limited Housing Advice service at both the Great Dunmow and Thaxted CIC offices once a week.
- Within the stock there are 18 sheltered housing sites. There are offices at these sites for the use of Sheltered Housing staff.
- The Housing DSO operates from the Newport Depot.

Subject to any changes emerging from the management restructuring, no changes are proposed for the above.

EQUALITY/HARD TO REACH GROUPS

- Within the Housing Services Plan there is a strong commitment to provide all services in accordance with Equal Opportunities.
- In order to manage this commitment, the Housing Services:-
 - Monitor ethnic background of applicants
 - Monitor ethnic background of rehoused applicants
 - Ensure that where there are language difficulties with customers the translation services of 'LANGUAGELINE' are accessed.
- The service will continue to:-
 - Seek, via newsletter, information of customers who are in need of special services.
 - Seek, via newsletter, feedback from ethnic minority group information as to whether this group feel able to access services
 - Amend various housing information leaflets/newsletters with various language endorsement
 - Commitment to ensure that information is made available to those clients who currently feel they are unable to receive the information

RISK MANAGEMENT

- As with all SERVICE PLANS, risk management has to be carefully assessed.
- In the above context, the service has identified three main risk areas as follows:-

Risk Impact

- (1) Unable to reduce Bed & Breakfast use to families for no more than 6 weeks and only in an emergency.
- This is high on Government's social agenda. Could result in poor assessment of Council and reduction of funding to the Council via Housing Benefit Subsidy.
- (2) Unable to achieve Decent Homes Standard
- Would be regarded by Government as failure. Would expect Government action against Council before 2010 (latest deadline).
- Tenant dissatisfaction with service.
- (3) Unable to attract funding for Affordable Housing Schemes
- Council unable to take opportunity of new housing for Uttlesford Community.
- Council would be seen to fail on major local issue.
- Government could respond in various financial ways.
- Severe difficulty on being able to reach government homeless targets

	REVENUE AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - 2004/2005 TO 2006/2007								
Budget		Budget	Description	04 / 05	05 / 06	06 / 07			
			Code of Works	£gross	£gross	£gross			
	SI :	AHRB33	0 Ad-hoc Repairs	870,560	900,000	900,000			
	Ad Hoc Repairs		Sub Total : Ad Hoc Repairs	870,560	900,000	900,000			
	Cyclical Maintenance	PLMB31	1 External and Internal Decorations	354,380	300,240	326,160			
RE		PSRB33	2 Pre-paint Repairs	56,250	39,490	64,630			
DIT			Sub Total : Cyclical Maintenance	410,630	339,730	390,790			
(PEN	8	PSRB33	Servicing/Maintenance of Central Heating Boilers	244,160	244,160	244,160			
	Service acts	PSRB33	1 Servicing/Maintenance of Communal Boilers	11,250	11,250	11,250			
VENI	1 5	LFTB33	Servicing/Maintenance of Communal & Disabled Lifts	20,810	20,810	20,810			
A) REVENUE EXPENDITURE	Planned Maintenance - Ser Maintenance Contracts	FURB33	1 Servicing/Maintenance of Furniture Sheltered Schemes	25,310	25,310	<u>25,310</u>			
ΔI	Main	PSRB33	3 Asbestos Management	40,000	40,000	40,000			
	Mair	PSRB33	4 Legionella Management	33,750	50,000	50,000			
	Pa		Sub Total : Planned Maintenance	375,280	391,530	<u>391,530</u>			
			TOTAL: A) REVENUE EXPENDITURE	1,656,470	1,631,260	1,682,320			
1	_	PSWB40	4 Adaptations for Disabled (Major)	129,380	129,380	129,380			
	Replacement or Major Repairs	PSWB40		84,380	84,380	84,380			
		PSWB40		354,380	330,900	493,200			
		PSWB40		30,000	30,000	30,000			
	Ž	PSWB43	9 Security Programme	39,400	35,000	35,000			
	받	PSWB43	8 Bathroom/Kitchen Upgrade	<u>152,300</u>	384,400	344,400			
	me	PSWB41	4 Re-wiring	<u>252,450</u>	147,400	<u>136,400</u>			
	Planned Works: Installation, Replace	PSWB41	3 Re-windowing	364,820	375,000	350,550			
		PSWB40	2 Environmental Improvements	74,250	50,000	20,000			
		PSWB40	6 Sheltered Scheme Improvements (3 schemes per year)	8,000	8,000	8,000			
B) CAPITAL EXPENDITURE		PSWBne	w Sewage Plant Replacement Works	50,000	50,000	50,000			
		PSWB41	0 Doors	15,000	15,000	15,000			
PE		PSWB41	1 Chimneys	31,000	31,000	31,000			
ũ		PSWB41	2 Roof works	90,000	45,000	45,000			
ΙŽ		PSWB41	6 Structural Works	68,640	50,000	50,000			
API	au	PSWB41	5 Major Work - Voids	222,100	200,000	200,000			
B) C	<u>~</u> 1		Sub Total : Planned Works Programme	1,966,100	1,965,460	2,022,310			
		<u>new</u>	Decent Homes Work/Backlog Repairs (Transitional Funding)	830,000	830,000	830,000			
	Decent Homes	<u>new</u>	Vicarage Mead (Transitional Funding / Capital Allowance)	400,000	500,000	600,000			
	이회		Sub Total : Decent Homes Programme	1,230,000	1,330,000	1,430,000			
	Additional Capital Works	<u>GRTH075</u>	Cash Incentive Scheme	80,000	80,000	80,000			
		<u>new</u>	Integrated Housing IT System	70,000	0	<u>0</u>			
		new	Computers for Sheltered Schemes	30,000	0	<u>0</u>			
			Sub Total : Additional Capital Works	180,000	80,000	80,000			
			TOTAL: B) CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	3,376,100	3,375,460	3,532,310			

Page 18

TOTAL: A + B REVENUE AND CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME

<u>5,032,570</u>

5,006,720

<u>5,214,630</u>