

21 November 2012

Dear Councillor

HOUSING BOARD

A meeting of the Housing Board will be held at the Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden at 2pm on Thursday 29 October 2012.

Yours faithfully

JOHN MITCHELL

Chief Executive

AGENDA

1	Apologies for absence and declarations of interest.	
2	Minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2012 (attached).	
3	Housing Strategy 2012-15.	9
4	Mead Court (verbal update).	
5	Rent Setting Policy – final draft.	108
6	Allocations Policy – final draft.	133
7	Local Tenancy Policy - final draft.	188
8	Housing Asset Management Strategy - sheltered schemes – (verbal update).	
9	Date of next meeting: 10 January 2013	
10	Any other urgent business	

To: Councillors S Barker, J Freeman, J Loughlin, K Mackman, J Menell, D Morson, D Perry, **V Ranger**, J Redfern and D Sadler.

Also to: Mr D Parish and Mr S Sproul (Tenant Forum representatives).

Lead Officer: Roz Millership (01799 510516)

Democratic Services Officer: Rebecca Dobson (01799 510433)

**HOUSING BOARD held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN at 10.30 am on 23 OCTOBER 2012**

Present:- Councillor V Ranger – Chairman.
Councillors S Barker, J Menell, D Morson and J Redfern.

Tenant Forum representatives: Mr D Parish and Mr S Sproul.

Officers in attendance: M Cox (Democratic Services Officer) M Donaldson (Accountancy Manager) P Evans (Housing Business & Performance Manager) A Liles (Housing Asset Manager) R Millership (Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services) S Robinson (Housing Enabling and Development Officer) J Snares (Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager) and S Wood (Planning and Housing Policy Manager).

HB24 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Freeman and Loughlin.

Councillor Ranger declared a non-pecuniary interest as a council tenant.

HB25 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2012 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the correction of two typographical errors.

HB26 BUSINESS ARISING

i) Minute HB23 (ii) – Domestic Abuse

In answer to a question from Councillor Barker it was reported that the Safer Places drop-in outreach support service was expected to start in November. The service would be publicised mainly through local agencies and referrals.

HB27 DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Board was updated on current housing developments. 134 houses were expected to be completed on section 106 sites, which was above the annual target of 100. The number was expected to be

similar going forward as a number additional sites had gained planning permission.

Members commented that this was a good news story, a significant number of affordable homes were being provided mainly for Uttlesford residents. There were many other positive initiatives taking place within the housing service and it was felt that these should be better publicised to the wider public. Councillor Redfern said she would prepare a press release to be sent out in the next few weeks and asked members and officers to email her matters that could be included.

Holloway Crescent

It was reported that although there had been some delays in starting work on site, the scheme was still expected to be completed by the end of March 2013.

The concern group had questioned whether a proportion of the 8 affordable units would be available for local residents. The Board could determine local lettings under the Council's allocation policy and AGREED the following:-

50% of the allocations for the affordable Units at Holloway Crescent, Saffron Walden be made from residents in bands A – C of the housing waiting list and residing within a 4 miles radius of the properties.

HB28

MEAD COURT DEVELOPMENT

The Board was informed of progress with the proposed development at Mead Court, Stansted. A meeting of the Mead Court Task Group in May had agreed to commit resources to drawing up proposals for a new build scheme and had instructed the Deign Partnership for this part of the project. A plan had been drawn to maximise the number of affordable units with a mix of houses, bungalows and flats, and this had been considered by a further meeting of the task group. The next steps were to conduct a parking survey and to approach the planning department to agree the broad design principles.

The task group had suggested that the preferred option should be to proceed with a local authority new build scheme. The advantages of this approach were that it would achieve increased rental income for the HRA, ensure that the whole site remained within council ownership creating a valuable asset, retain nomination rights and achieve a housing mix that made the best use of the site and met current housing need.

The residents would be kept informed of progress and meetings would be arranged with the parish council and ward members.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that a Council new build project be taken forward as the preferred option for this site.

HB29 **DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY**

Members received the draft Housing Strategy 2012 – 2015. This would update the existing document which was out of date as many of the priorities had now been achieved. The new strategy would set out the priorities for the next 3 years. The work had been informed by the housing conference held earlier in the year.

The draft strategy was now subject to a 6 week consultation. Members made a number of comments on the document, which would be included in the final draft to be considered by the Housing Board in November before being approved by Cabinet on 13 December 2012.

HB30 **LOCAL TENANCY POLICY**

At the last meeting the Board had recommended to Cabinet the approval of the West Essex Tenancy Strategy. The Council was now required to formulate a local tenancy policy that had regard to the Strategy.

Before a draft policy was prepared Members views were sought on the principle of fixed term tenancies, which had been provided for in the Localism Act 2011. The rationale behind fixed tenancies was to make the best use of the Council's housing stock by reducing the number of under-occupied properties. At the end of the period the tenancy would be assessed and if the circumstances of the tenants had changed they would be required to move to a smaller property, which would leave a larger property vacant for a family in need.

The Board discussed whether fixed tenancies should be introduced, the length of the term and the type of properties to which they should apply. It took into account discussions that had been held with the West Essex Partners on this issue.

Members were advised to focus on what the policy was trying to achieve, which was to free properties to allow better management of the housing stock. It should not impose a disproportionate administrative burden on staff. It was therefore agreed that it was not appropriate to take account of the tenant's financial circumstances as this would be too difficult to determine. It was felt that the policy should apply to properties with 3 bedrooms and above as these were the

houses in demand and the ones most likely to suffer under occupancy. Members added a caveat that the effectiveness of the scheme would depend on a supply of smaller properties coming forward. It was agreed that a 10 year period was the most suitable length of the tenancy.

The new policy would only apply to new tenancies so action was still required to reduce number of existing under occupied properties. An under occupation survey was shortly to be conducted to establish the extent of the problem and the incentive scheme would be reviewed in due course.

AGREED that the Housing Needs and Landlord Manager prepare a draft tenancy policy for discussion at the next meeting.

HB31

RENT SETTING POLICY

The Housing Board was asked to consider a draft rent setting policy which was required following the introduction of the 30 year Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. Under this regime local authorities were permitted to set their own rent levels. The policy aimed to take a longer term view as yearly rent setting could cause uncertainty within the viability of the plan.

In calculating and allocating the HRA self-financing debt, assumptions had been made by Government that local authorities would adopt a rent and service charge policy which ensured funds were raised to repay this debt. Members had agreed a debt repayment structure which continued these assumptions for 30 years. The Council had a viable HRA, with sufficient balances to ensure loans could be repaid and sufficient funds to carry out actions that had been identified in the plan. If the Council did not levy a rent increase which provided for a viable HRA, future opportunities to invest in services, existing and new homes could be lost.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said that the rent policy aimed to protect the business plan but also to ensure that rents for tenants did not rise disproportionately high.

Members were reminded that Government policy was to bring about a converging pattern of rents for all similar social housing properties. The target date for properties to converge to this 'formula rent' was 2015/16. Advice recently received indicated that this would not now be possible on some properties until at least 2020. This scenario would need to be fed through the business plan and the implications managed. In relation to this matter, it was agreed that information on property rents would be brought to the next meeting.

It was AGREED that the draft policy be forwarded to the Tenants Forum and considered again at the November meeting of the Board.

HB32 STAR SURVEY RESULTS

The Board received a copy of the high level results from the STAR Survey. The survey had been developed by HouseMark to enable social landlords to monitor and benchmark service satisfaction levels. The survey had been conducted in August and to date the response rate had been good. It was noted that a large percentage of the replies had been received from long established or more elderly tenants. Further samples from specific demographic groups would probably be required in the future.

A full report would be submitted to the next meeting when the outcomes and possible actions going forward could be discussed in greater detail. The results would also be up loaded to the HouseMark website which would enable the production of future comparative figures.

A summary of the results would be included in the Annual Tenant report and Housing News.

HB33 BUSINESS PLAN ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services updated members on the priorities included in the HRA business plan. A separate report was circulated on the energy efficiency projects that had been completed and future projects suggested for energy improvement measures to bring all properties in line with other council stock.

The Board considered other projects for this financial year and AGREED that a report be brought to the next meeting regarding a possible site for a domestic violence refuge in the district.

HB34 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The next meetings were scheduled for

29 November 2012
10 January 2012

An updated plan would be circulated before the next meeting.

URGENT ITEMS**i) Matter from the tenant's forum**

Sam Sproul mentioned issues that had been raised at a recent meeting of the tenant's forum. There had been concern at recent Government proposals

1) to allow large house extensions without the benefit of planning permission, and 2) Changes to the rules requiring a percentage of affordable houses on new development sites.

With regard to the second point, the Planning and Housing Policy Manager said that the Council had included its own policies on this issue in the emerging local plan. These would continue to require a percentage of affordable dwellings within any new developments over a certain size.

The tenant's forum had also been concerned about the rising cost of oil and asked whether the Council had considered bulk purchase to gain a lower price for council tenants. The Assistant Director said that this had been looked at but it was not considered to be beneficial for the council to act in this role. This initiative would be more effective at a local level and the Council could assist by putting residents in touch with local organisations that were currently operating this type of scheme.

ii) Regulatory Panel

The Housing Business & Performance Manager said that 8 tenants had been appointed to the Panel. Training would now be arranged and it was expected that the Panel would be up and running from January. It was suggested that it would help the panel members to have an informal meeting with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board and the Tenants Forum representatives. A suitable date would be arranged.

The meeting ended at 12.40 pm.

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 29th November 2012.

3

Title: Housing Strategy 2012-15

**Author: Suzanna Wood, Planning and Housing
Policy Manager, Ext 543**

Recommendation

1. That the Housing Board agree the Housing Strategy 2012-15 and recommend its adoption by the Cabinet.

Financial Implications

2. Financial implications of the Housing Strategy have been included in the Housing Business Plan

Background Papers

3. None

Impact

- 4.

Communication/Consultation	A consultation event was held in July to set priorities. The strategy has been published on the website and sent to partners. Consultation ran for 6 weeks and all comments have been considered.
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	Equality impact assessment 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

5. The last Housing Strategy was written and published in 2009 and set priorities for a three year period. During that time, many of the key priorities have been achieved. These include the following:
 - Gained HCA funding and built 5 new bungalows in Leaden Roding
 - Progressed a further Local Authority new build scheme which will deliver 8 houses during 2012.
 - Restructured the Planning and Housing departments to deliver a joined up service.
 - Continued to exceed the affordable housing target of 100 homes per year.
 - Provided a young parents scheme in partnership with Epping Forest and Brentwood Council's.
 - Provided temporary accommodation at Molehill Green and Stansted
 - Continued development of Bromfield House in Saffron Walden.
 - New Housing Options team set up which has been providing advice and assistance to those at risk of homelessness.
 - Successful Homeless Partnership set up, working on joint initiatives and sharing best practise.
 - Worked with Hastoe to deliver a Passivhaus scheme in Wimbish.
 - Introduced a full responder service for those with our Careline service.
 - Successful Tenant Forum who actively take part in key housing decisions.
 - First internet café opened in one of our sheltered schemes.
 - Programme of Council new build planned for next 5 years.
 - 98.5% of properties meet decent homes standard.
6. It was agreed that a new Housing Strategy needed to be written and published in 2012 and a conference was held in July to scope our future priorities for the next 3 years. This was well attended by Councillors, tenant forum members, key partners and organisations. A second event was held for tenants but this was poorly attended.
7. 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.
8. The following comments were made
 - Registered providers
 - Requirement for lifts in flats over 2 storey causes cost implications for residents who will have to pay a service charge for maintenance.
 - Greater emphasis on reducing energy costs for tenants in our stock
 - Analysis of how need translates into affordable housing requirements

Parish Councils

- Supportive of rural exception housing and will be providing a scheme in the future.

Citizens Advice Bureau

- Limited planning of the needs of those having to downsize due to changes in benefits
- Shortage of 2 bedroom properties
- New domestic violence scheme needs to be done discreetly and location not revealed.
- Do not agree that affordable housing should be provided at 80% of market rent
- Provision of very useful statistics to be included in final document

Agents representing developers

- More emphasis needed on NPPF and requirement to provide market housing in Uttlesford
- Greater emphasis that the Housing Strategy is consistent with the Local Plan
- Acknowledge the need for extra care units
- Scheme viability should be deciding factor in determining affordable housing provision
- Clusters of no more than 10 units is prohibitive, 20 is suggested
- Lifts in blocks over 2 storey are prohibitive should be 3 as in HCA guidance
- Flexible affordable housing policy that responds to market conditions
- Objection to the strategy proposed in draft Local Plan
- Does not address wider market needs for housing
- Urgent action to build new private homes

Many of these issues have been addressed in the final strategy, Members will have the opportunity to discuss them at the meeting.

9. This report is asking the Board to approve the final Housing Strategy and recommend its adoption by Cabinet.

Conclusion

9. The Housing Strategy is considered to be a robust document which will provide a coherent plan for housing policy within the District. The Strategy is aligned with the Housing Business Plan and the Strategy recommendations have informed the development of the Draft Local Plan.

Risk Analysis

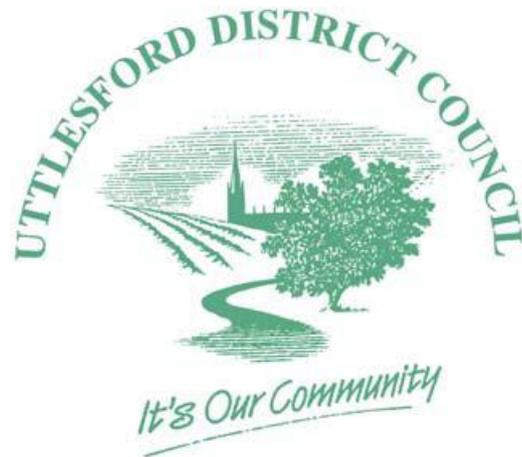
Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Document is not approved	1 – little risk, partners and members have involved in scoping the document	3 – a future plan is needed and could cause delays to key projects	Ensure that all views are taken into account during the consultation process

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 Strategy 2012 – 15

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Foreword

As I am sure you know Uttlesford is a beautiful rural area rated by many as one of the best places to reside in the country. This along with our commutability to London and proximity to Cambridge makes this district a most desirable place to live. This in turn inflates house prices making it difficult for young people and local families to get a foot on the housing ladder.

We also have a lack of availability in both the privately owned and rental markets of bungalows and other suitable types of property for our more mature residents. This is particularly a problem in many of our villages. This makes it difficult for people to move from larger family homes into something more appropriate for their changing needs.

Housing is a key priority for councillors in Uttlesford. The housing and planning departments are working together to help deliver the accommodation that meets the needs of those living and working in Uttlesford. We are doing this through both our new Local Plan and Housing Strategy.

I'm really proud to say that this Council is ahead of many as we started a building programme some time ago. Having completed our first phase of council built new housing last year in Leaden Roding we have just started phase two in the same area. We are already working on plans for our next development in Stansted which I hope will be underway in the near future.

As a council we have increased our contribution to the RCCE to buy more time and help for Parish Council to bring forward plans for exception sites. This will give local people an opportunity to continue to live in the areas where they already have roots and personal connections.

We believe that there are many ways of delivering housing, be it working with developers and housing associations or encouraging empty home owners to become landlords. We know times are very challenging in so many ways but we want to make the most of the opportunities that are available and I believe we at Uttlesford are up to the challenge!

Cllr Julie Redfern
Portfolio Holder, Housing

Chapter 1 – Summary and Introduction

The Council's new Housing Strategy has been written alongside the new Local Plan for the District. The documents show the future housing priorities in the District and how they can be delivered. The targets are challenging in a housing market that is still unpredictable.

The new Strategy will encompass many key documents the Council has published in the past and produce one key document and action plan to deliver our key priorities and objectives for the next five years.

Our Key Objectives

- To meet the housing requirement for Uttlesford and to make sure that the housing being provided creates balanced communities by delivering sustainable, safe, attractive and healthy places to live while meeting local housing needs in terms of type and tenure including affordable and special needs housing.
- To provide and maintain accommodation that meets the needs of older people living in Uttlesford.
- Maintain our housing to a high standard ensuring our tenants have a good quality of life

Our Successes

Since the last Housing Strategy was published in 2009, the Council has:

- Gained HCA funding and built 5 new bungalows in Leaden Roding
- Progressed a further Local Authority new build scheme which will deliver 8 houses during 2012.
- Restructured the Planning and Housing departments to deliver a joined up service
- Continued to exceed the affordable housing target of 100 homes per year.
- Provided a young parents scheme in partnership with Epping Forest and Brentwood Council's
- Provided temporary accommodation at Molehill Green and Stansted
- Continued development of Bromfield House in Saffron Walden
- New Housing Options team set up which has been providing advice and assistance to those at risk of homelessness
- Successful Homeless Partnership set up, working on joint initiatives and sharing best practise
- Worked with Hastoe to deliver a Passivhaus scheme in Wimbish.
- Introduced a full responder service for those with our Careline service
- Economic Development Strategy published

- Successful Tenant Forum who actively take part in key housing decisions
- First internet café opened in one of our sheltered schemes
- Programme of Council new build planned for next 5 years
- 98.5% of properties meet decent homes standard

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 four market towns - Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted and 56 parishes.

Uttlesford has a population of around 77,500 (2010 figure) which is set to increase over the next 10 -15 years with new housing development. 41% of residents are aged 30 – 59 with relatively few residents aged 20 -29 (9%) compared with the county average. The proportion of younger (0 – 19) and older (60 plus) residents is on par with the County (25% and 25% compared with 23% and 25% for County [from SNPP for 2012])

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

There are approximately 32,611 dwellings in the district, made up of the following tenures:

Tenure	Nos.
Social Rented-Local Authority owned	2,852
Social Rented-Registered Social Landlord	1,257
Stock owned by other Public Bodies	216
Private Sector (rented and owner occupied)	28,286
Total	32,611

Source: ELASH April 2012

The attractive rural nature of the district and its good accessibility to employment opportunities has led to high house prices. Unemployment remains low at 1.7% and household incomes are relatively higher than the national average. The average full-time wage for people in employment who live in the District (but may not necessarily work here) is £30,006 per person per annum. However the average full-time wage for people who work in the District (and may not necessarily live here) is £26,660 per person per annum. This could be due to the number of people who live in the District but commute to London to work.

This tends to give an initial impression of an affluent district with little or no need. However, because of high house prices there are some members of the population, particularly younger people and those on low to modest incomes, unable to access the housing market. This has led to an increasing pressure for more subsidised affordable housing. The average house price in Uttlesford is £312,892 (BBC website Oct – Dec 2011) significantly higher than the national average of £228,385 (BBC website Oct – Dec 2011).

High housing costs have also led to a growing number of households who do not necessarily require subsidised affordable housing but, due to inflated house prices, are financially restricted from entering the private housing market. This applies particularly to 'Key Workers' and other workers on modest incomes who are key in providing public services and supporting the commercial businesses on which sustainable economic growth depends.

The Housing Market

Since the last Housing Strategy was written, the market has started to show signs of a recovery. Figures from the Nationwide Building Society in August 2012 show that

“UK house prices rose by 1.3% in August, the largest monthly increase since January 2010, reversing the declines recorded in the previous two months. Given the difficult economic backdrop, the extent of the rebound in August is a little surprising. However, we should never read too much into one month's data, especially since monthly price changes have been impacted by a number of one-off factors this year, such as the ending of the stamp duty holiday for first time buyers. These are factors that cannot be controlled by the usual process of seasonal adjustment.

“Nevertheless, the fact that the annual pace of house price decline moderated to -0.7% in August from -2.6% the previous month provides evidence that conditions remain fairly stable. This may be explained by the surprising resilience evident in the UK labour market, with further increases in employment in recent months, even though the UK economy has remained in recession”

*Robert Gardner,
Nationwide's Chief Economist, August 2012*

Consultation

A Housing Strategy conference was held on 4th July 2012 and key partners, Parish and District Councillors were invited to attend and help shape our future priorities for housing in Uttlesford. This was followed by an open event for members of the public the following day. Both were well attended and the information provided was very useful.

Officer also attended key groups and meetings in the local area to gain input into this key document for Uttlesford.

The draft document was then written and was sent out for consultation to all interested parties and also placed on our website for 6 weeks.

A final document was then published in December 2012.

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, the Stansted Area Housing Partnership, Housing Association partners, 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 Partnership

Since the successful Housing Strategy Conference held in July 2012, the Council have agreed to set up a Housing Strategy Partnership that will host a yearly conference to share best practice, monitor achievements and set future objectives.

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.

Stansted Area Housing Partnership

The Stansted Area Housing Partnership (SAHP) was developed as a partnership between Harlow, Uttlesford, Braintree and East Herts councils following the granting of planning permission by Uttlesford to British Airports Authority (BAA) to increase passenger through put to 25 million. BAA

Stansted contributed £2.2 million towards the funding of affordable housing within a ten mile radius of the airport. A key feature of SAHP is the development of a cross boundary nomination agreement, giving the opportunity for residents of the four councils to move across local authority boundaries.

Funding is slowly being spent with a scheme being completed in Braintree and one on the way in East Herts.

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 redevelopment of Holloway Crescent phase 2, the councils new build programme and the redevelopment of Mead Court Stansted. The group includes Councillors, Tenant Forum members and Council officers 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.

Chapter 2 – Key Policies

National Policy

The Governments Housing Strategy

In November 2011, the Government published “Laying the Foundations, A Housing Strategy for England” with two main aims. First to help drive local economies and create jobs, secondly to build an economy that works for everyone, one in which those that work hard and play by the rules can expect to own a decent home of their own.

The national policy drivers for housing are to:

- Increase the number of houses available to buy and rent, including affordable housing
- Improve the flexibility of social housing (increasing mobility and choice) and promote homeownership
- Protect the vulnerable and disadvantaged by tackling homelessness and support people to live independently
- Make sure that homes are of high quality and sustainable.

Changes to Housing Benefit and Universal credit

In addition to publishing a national housing strategy, the Government is making significant changes to Housing Benefits, introducing a Universal Credit system (designed to simplify the benefits system and improve work incentives) and introducing a cap on benefits payable. These changes present a significant challenge to landlords, their tenants and local authorities responsible for meeting housing needs in an area.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework was published in March 2012, it provides a framework within which local people and their accountable Councils can produce their own local and neighbourhood plans which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

The Framework requires Councils to develop a wide choice of high quality homes, creating opportunities for sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

Local planning authorities should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community.

HCA programme

The Affordable Homes Programme 2011-15 (AHP) aims to increase the supply of new affordable homes in England.

Throughout 2011-15, the HCA will invest £4.5bn in affordable housing through the Affordable Homes Programme and existing commitments from the previous national affordable homes programme. The majority of the new programme will be made available as affordable rent with some for affordable home ownership, supported housing and in some circumstances, social rent.

Right to Buy

On 12th of March 2012, the Government published its “Re-invigorating Right to Buy” scheme, with the intention of generating more Right to Buy sales, mainly by increasing the discount available to tenants. Under the new scheme, the maximum discount has increased to £75,000, which is likely to increase the number of sales however the Council will keep a much greater share of the capital receipt.

Key to the Government’s RTB reforms is an expectation at a national level that RTB properties will be replaced by new affordable housing “1 for 1”. To achieve this, the Council has made a formal agreement with Government that after allowable deductions, the balance of RTB receipts retained locally will be used for new housing. The agreement will oblige Council to “match fund” the retained RTB receipt with other resources, so that the proportion of spend funded from RTB receipts is 30% or less. We will need to carry out research into the level of likely demand, and monitor the situation very closely.

HRA Self Financing

In April 2012 the national housing subsidy system changed. It meant that the Council need no longer make annual payments to government. Instead the Council made a one off payment to government of £88.4m in March 2012. It is now able to retain all surpluses from its landlord activity, and use these to support its future business plan on a self-financing basis. However it will continue to have to account for its landlord activity in a separate ring fenced Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

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.

Self financing means that for the first time the Council can set long term plans for the future of its housing stock and housing services. The self financing settlement represents an increase in resources compared with the existing subsidy system. The change means that responsibility for long term business plan and debt financing moves from central to local government.

The Council will take responsibility for long term asset management. Although borrowing levels are limited by current government spending restrictions, in general there will be less top down regulation. The change means that the

Council faces increased risks, particularly around long term asset management, inflation and interest costs. This business plan is designed to manage those risks and to put the Council in a position to take advantage of the freedoms and flexibilities offered by self financing in order to improve its housing stock and services.

A Fairer Future for Social Housing Consultation

This document has brought about a proposal to remove lifetime security of tenure for new social housing tenants and replace them with a fixed term tenancy. It has also introduced affordable rents with providers being able to charge up to 80% of market rent for an affordable home.

It placed a duty on Local Authorities to publish a Strategic Tenancy Policy.

It introduced legislation to enable Local Authorities to fully discharge a duty in to secure accommodation by arranging an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector.

Regional/Sub Regional/Essex Wide Partnership Working

Since the last Housing Strategy, we have seen the abolition of regional government and the splitting of the London Commuter Belt sub region. It was felt that many of the projects/initiatives were County wide or based on smaller sub sub regional working so the group agreed to cease meeting as a sub region.

Uttlesford works closely in West Essex with Harlow and Epping Forest Councils and felt that this grouping delivered effective partnership working. We also work across Essex to deliver supported housing services through the County Council and with Essex Housing Officers Group to share best practice.

Supporting People

Since the last Housing Strategy was written, the Essex County Council Supporting People programme has been absorbed into Adult Social Care and the funding has been cut or reduced. This has had implications in Uttlesford and it has meant that the Council had to absorb some of the cuts to services for older people. This has also had implications for our partner Housing Associations who have suffered cuts to other supported housing services in Uttlesford.

A new partnership has been set up by Essex County Council which monitors services for vulnerable people and the Council are still represented on the group. A new strategy will be published by the County Council in early 2013 and be published on their website www.essexcc.gov.uk

Local Partnerships and Policies for Uttlesford

Local Strategic Partnership

Our Local Strategic Partnership, Uttlesford Futures has recently evaluated its vision, structure and workplan and set the following:

Vision - Bring partners together to help determine community priorities and to resolve challenges, with a view to maximising effectiveness and sustainability in making Uttlesford a better place to live in.

There will be 4 workstreams to deliver this key vision.

- Health and Wellbeing,
- Community Safety Partnership,
- Employment, Economy, Skills, Environment & Transport,
- Children and Families,

Officers attend some of the workstream meetings and Housing is high on the agenda of the LSP.

Corporate Plan

The Council has recently published its Corporate Plan 2012-17. This is made up of 6 objectives.

By 2017, we will have

- Reduced the Council Tax burden for our residents in real terms
- Built partnerships that make a difference with Councils, volunteers and other providers
- Built more affordable homes
- Recycled more
- Protected and enhanced our environment
- Improved prosperity

Local Plan

As part of the work to develop a new Local Plan – the series of policies, plans and other documents that will set out where new homes and businesses will be built over the next 15 years – the council's Cabinet has approved the distribution strategy. This strategy will set out in broad terms the number of houses in various key locations in the district. This work has been completed jointly with planning and housing officers to ensure that the new Local Plan works jointly with the new Housing Strategy to deliver the housing requirements of the future. The draft Local Plan will be submitted in 2013.

Housing Inspection

The Council had a Strategic Housing Inspection in 2008 and was rated fair with no prospects for improvement. The Audit Commission reinspected in

September 2010 and declared that Strategic Housing had improved considerably and regraded it as Fair with promising prospects for improvement.

Chapter 3 – Housing Needs, Supply and Demand

The Housing market

There are approximately 32,611 properties in the Uttlesford District. 28,286 of these are in the private sector and almost 2,852 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.

Renting with the Council

With the development of a 30 year Housing Revenue Account Business Plan there was a need to take a longer term view of rent and service charge setting as yearly arrangements would cause uncertainty with regard to the financial viability of the plan. In December 2012 the Council approved a rent and service charge setting policy which will determine the levels by which rents and service charges will be increased on an annual basis.

Current Council Rents

The table below shows the current weekly rent for Council properties. These are classed as social rents.

Property type	Rent per week
Bedsit	69.49
1 bed flat	72.16
1 bed bungalow	79.74
2 bed flat	81.75
2 bed bungalow/house	88.73
3 bed flat	90.16
3 bed	98.84
4 bed	108.94
5 bed	102.00

UDC Data for CIPFA, April 2012

Private Rent

The average monthly private rent in Uttlesford and for our surrounding districts is:

	Saffron Walden	Stansted	Great Dunmow
1 bed	£545	£602	£512.50
2 bed	£785	£738.75	£748.66
3 bed	£922.50	£933.33	£1133.46
4 bed	£1329	£1580	£1737.50

Research completed on Rightmove, August 2012

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 Rates

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

Number of Bedrooms	Weekly Amount	Amount
Monthly Shared Room Rate	£75.00	£325.00
1 Bedroom	£120.00	£520.00
2 Bedrooms	£135.00	£585.00
3 Bedrooms	£156.92	£679.99
4 Bedrooms	£206.54	£895.01

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

Number of Bedrooms	Weekly Amount	Amount
Monthly Shared Room Rate	£69.27	£300.17
1 Bedroom	£126.92	£549.99
2 Bedrooms	£160.38	£694.98
3 Bedrooms	£196.15	£849.98
4 Bedrooms	£275.77	£1195.00

Comparison between Private Rent and Local Housing Allowance

No of bedrooms	Saffron Walden (SW) Average rent	SW LHA	Saffron Walden Shortfall
1 bed	£545	£520	£25
2 bed	£785	£585	£200
3 bed	£922.5	£679.99	£242.51
4 bed	£1329	£895.01	£433.99

No of bedrooms	Great Dunmow Average rent	Great Dunmow LHA	Great Dunmow Shortfall
1 bed	£512.5	£549.99	None
2 bed	£748.66	£694.98	£53.68
3 bed	£1133.46	£849.98	£283.48
4 bed	£1737.5	£1195	£542.5

No of bedrooms	Stansted Average rent	Stansted LHA	Stansted Shortfall
1 bed	£602	£549.99	£52.01
2 bed	£738.75	£694.98	£43.77
3 bed	£933.33	£849.98	£83.35
4 bed	£1580	£1195	£385

(Data kindly provided by Saffron Walden CAB)

House Prices

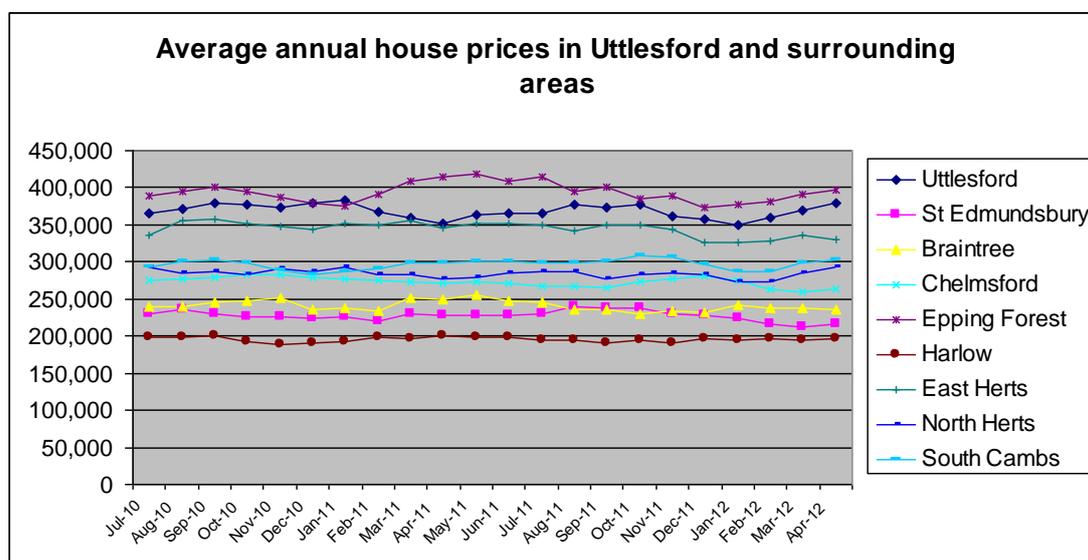
The attractiveness of Uttlesford as a place to live has led to high house prices in the District. The average house price is £309,082 which shows an annual change in house price of -5.3%.

All	Detached	Flat	Semi	Terrace
£309,082	£431,085	£167,318	£255,869	£219,388

BBC Website, house prices, Jan – March 2012

Affordability is still a problem in Uttlesford; in 2010 the ratio of lowest quartile mean house price to mean household income was 10.3, worse than the affordability ratio for the East of England (7.7). This makes owning a home very difficult for first time buyers and those on low incomes.

Average annual house price over time in Uttlesford and surrounding areas



Uttlesford consistently has the second highest house prices of the districts/boroughs shown above. The house price in Uttlesford has shown a consistent month on month rise from January – April 2012. The trajectory of this rise is slightly steeper than that for Epping Forest which has the highest average house prices.

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 Development Framework. Uttlesford District Council is within the Eastern

region for planning purposes, and part of the London Commuter Belt (LCB) sub region. The LCB sub region comprises 15 local authorities and was considered too large an area for the production of a detailed and meaningful study. Six districts in the sub region, including Uttlesford, joined to form London Commuter Belt (East)/M11 and commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to undertake a comprehensive SHMA. The other five districts in the SHMA area are Brentwood, Broxbourne, East Herts, Epping and Harlow. 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. A report was published in 2009 and the key findings are as follows.

31,100 households are considered to be unsuitably housed, including 3,300 in Uttlesford. The term 'unsuitably housed' is used to encompass households that are homeless or have insecure tenure; households that are 'mismatched' to the dwelling they live in; households living in dwellings that lack amenities or are in a poor condition; housing with social needs that can only be resolved through a move

5.5% of households in the LCB M11 east are overcrowded. However when looking at those living in the social rented sector, 11% were overcrowded in Uttlesford.

It is predicted that across the study area there are 4,800 households in housing need, 400 of those are Uttlesford residents.

Around a quarter of all households contain only pensioners while nearly 50% contain an adult couple with or without children. Over a fifth of households contain only one adult in the form of a single person or lone parent. Younger people tend to dominate the private rented sector.

Over the 25 year period between 2004 and 2029 it is projected there will be an additional 62,000 people living within the SHMA study area. In Uttlesford, the number of people aged 65 or over is projected to increase by 8,400 over the period, 3,700 of those people being aged 80 or over.

The SHMA is currently being updated to take into account current house prices, changes to Housing Benefit, increases in homelessness and the new Right to Buy initiative. Further details will be available on our website www.uttlesford.gov.uk when the document is published.

Housing Register

As at November 2012, there were 1357 applications on the housing register, of those applications 669 are in a band higher than E and therefore classed as being in housing need.

The register shows a demand for a mix of properties, this includes 1 and 2 bedroom older persons bungalows to release larger family accommodation, 1 and 2 bedroom flats and family sized 2 and 3 bedroom houses.

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.

Between April 2010 and March 2011, a total of 350 properties were let via the HomeOption system, 207 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 128.11 days compared to 28.28 days for general needs properties.

Housing Supply

Delivery of Affordable Housing

The Council are very successful in delivering affordable housing in partnership with registered providers. During 2011/12, 111 properties were completed. Further information is detailed in the Affordable Housing Strategy in Chapter

Rural Exception Housing

Since 1989, we have provided 300 affordable homes in rural areas through the rural exception policy. Further schemes are planned in Hatfield Heath, Newport, Great Chesterford and Arkesden.

We also have a good relationship with the Rural Housing Enabler working for the Rural Community Council for Essex and have recently entered into a partnership with them to extend our programme. This will involve extending our programme of housing needs surveys and support to Parish Councils.

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.

Older Persons Housing

The Council currently provides 460 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.

Holloway Crescent, Leaden Roding

Over the last few years, we have been working on a scheme in Leaden Roding which had gradually become unpopular and hard to let. Many of the units were very small bedsits.

The scheme was split into 2 phases and the first phase was completed in March 2011 on a redundant garage site adjacent to the scheme. This provided 5 x1 and 2 bed bungalows for those living in the Holloway Crescent scheme. This part of the scheme was funded by the Homes and Communities Agency through their LA New Build scheme.

The second phase has involved demolishing the sheltered block and will provide 8 houses for social rent during 2013. This part of the scheme is being funded by the Stansted Area Housing Partnership and Council borrowing.

Mead Court, Stansted

With the successful work being carried out at Holloway Crescent, members agreed to look at another sheltered scheme that was no longer fit for purpose.

Mead Court is a mix of small bedsit and 1 bed accommodation which has been difficult to let for some time. The scheme cannot be upgraded due to the layout of the units and the only option is to demolish the building and reprovide.

A task group was set up in January 2012 comprising of members, representatives of the tenant forum and officers and a report taken to the Housing Board and Cabinet in May 2012. It was agreed that the Council could develop the scheme as a Local Authority new build and use newly available HRA funding to build the scheme. £2.6 million has been allocated in the business plan and Officers are working towards a planning application being submitted by the end of 2012/13. The scheme will provide up to 28 units with a mixture of general needs flats and houses and bungalows for older people and those with mobility problems.

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 and housing sub group, this group looks at future and current need in the District and effective partnership working.

Mental Health

There are two schemes for mental health consisting of 8 units at Station Street, Saffron Walden managed by Metropolitan and 3 at St Edmunds Field, Great Dunmow managed by Genesis 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 to identify a future location for the scheme that will meet the needs of those with mental health needs.

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.

Bromfield House

The Council continue to work with St Matthews to develop Bromfield House as a first class facility offering supported housing to 16 – 25 year olds. 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.

The future need for Housing in Uttlesford

Gypsy and Travellers

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (DCLG March 2012) sets out the Government's planning policy for traveller sites. It should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework. It is the responsibility of Local Planning Authorities to assess their need for traveller sites and to plan for sites over a reasonable timescale which increases 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:

Private sites

Location	Sites	Total Caravans
Barnston	1	2
Broxted	3	3
Clavering	1	1
Great Dunmow	1	1
High Easter	1	1
High Roding	3	3
Great Canfield	1	1
Little Hallingbury	1	5
High Easter	1	5
Radwinter End	1	2
Stansted	3	21
Stebbing	1	1
Takeley (temporary)	1	8

Data taken from www.iform.co.uk, August 2012

Public site owned and managed by Essex County Council

Location	Pitches occupied	Total Caravans
Felsted	17	25

Data taken from www.iform.co.uk, August 2012

Unauthorised sites yet tolerated

Sites	Total Caravans
1	2

Data taken from www.iform.co.uk, August 2012

As part of our work on the Local Plan, we are progressing a call for sites for gypsy and travellers. This is taking place during October and November 2012 to ensure we meet the needs of this specialist group.

A gypsy and traveller housing needs survey is being commissioned jointly by Essex Planning Officers and Essex Housing Officers to identify the current need in Essex. This work will be completed during 2013.

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.

The current population of Uttlesford indicates the following:

Ethnicity	Population	%
White: British	65,564	95.09
White: Irish	534	0.77
White: Other white	1,587	2.3
Mixed: White and black Caribbean	119	0.17
Mixed: White and black African	51	0.07
Mixed: white and Asian	169	0.25
Mixed: other mixed	119	0.17
Asian or Asian British: Indian	164	0.24
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	22	0.03
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	153	0.22
Asian or Asian British: other Asian	37	0.05
Black or Black British: Caribbean	48	0.07
Black or Black British: African	54	0.08
Black or Black British: Other Black	9	0.01
Chinese or other ethnic group: Chinese	124	0.18
Chinese or other ethnic group: Other ethnic group	192	0.28
Total	68,946	

Census 2001

Uttlesford has a very small BME population and the highest other ethnic groups are Chinese or other (192 people) white and Asian mixed (169 people), Indian (164 people) and Bangladeshi (153 people)

The Council recognises that the information it holds on needs and demand for this group is not complete. The data we hold is now very out of date and will be updated when the new Census data is released. Further research then needs to be carried out over the life of this strategy to investigate the housing needs of this group further as to whether they have a different housing need that currently isn't being met.

Future Supported Housing Requirements 2012-17

As we highlighted in our last Housing Strategy, Uttlesford lacks provision of specialist supported housing. It was agreed as part of our joint working with

the Planning Policy team to highlight in the Local Plan, our requirement for specialist affordable housing and require developers to provide this as part of their Section 106 obligations.

The following are also key priorities in our Business Plan.

Learning disability scheme for young adults in Saffron Walden, HASTOE and EAST THAMES

We have been working for a number of years to provide a scheme for young adults with learning disabilities in Saffron Walden to live independently. This scheme would need to provide 6 x 1 bedroom flats and space equivalent to a 2 bedroom flat which would provide communal space and sleepover/office for carers.

Reprovision of mental health scheme in Saffron Walden, METROPOLITAN

We remain keen to undertake a reprovision of our mental health scheme in Station Street, Saffron Walden with Metropolitan Housing. It would need to be within Saffron Walden to ensure that current residents could still access services they currently receive and would ensure clients can maximise their opportunities for social inclusion. Supporting People and Adult Social Care/Mental Health both provide revenue funding into the existing service and are aware of our aspiration to reprovide this service. The scheme would need to provide 12 self contained units with a mixture of 1 and 2 bed properties.

Scheme for vulnerable adults – similar to Bromfield House

A scheme is required in Great Dunmow similar to Bromfield House in Saffron Walden, providing support to vulnerable adults who are homeless. This scheme could provide intensive support bedspaces, a number of bedsits for those who are learning to independent, move on flats and emergency crash pads. This would complement the service already provided at Bromfield House.

Reprovision of UDC temporary homeless accommodation

The Council currently use accommodation in a sheltered scheme in Stansted as temporary accommodation for the homeless. This scheme will be demolished and general needs accommodation provided during 2013/14. A new site needs to be identified.

Supported housing scheme for those at risk 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.

In the period April 2011 – November 2011 there was a 36% increase in the number of reported cases of domestic violence within Uttlesford. 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.

Discussions have been had with partners to identify requirements for a potential scheme and a Council owned site has been identified. Continued partnership working should help to create this much needed resource in the District.

Older Persons Housing

Population growth

As can be seen in the table below, the number of people living longer will grow considerably in the next 20 years. This has an impact on the type of housing provided in the future.

Uttlesford population aged 65 and over, projected to 2030

	2012	2015	2020	2025	2030
People aged 65-69	4,700	5,100	4,500	5,200	6,100
People aged 70-74	3,200	3,700	4,800	4,300	5,000
People aged 75-79	2,500	2,800	3,400	4,500	4,000
People aged 80-84	1,900	2,000	2,400	3,000	3,800
People aged 85-89	1,200	1,400	1,600	1,900	2,400
People aged 90 and over	700	800	1,100	1,400	1,800
Total population 65 and over	14,200	15,800	17,800	20,300	23,100

Source: www.poppi.org.uk version 7.0

It highlights that we have a high ageing population, with varying levels of need. We require 1 and 2 bed bungalows for those with low needs to create move on from larger council properties.

Medium/High Need - Extra Care

We also have a requirement to meet the medium/high need of older people in Uttlesford. Our main priority is to provide an extra care scheme in Saffron Walden however a second scheme in Great Dunmow would help meet the increasing need we have in the District.

The current population of those aged 75+ (2010) in Uttlesford is 6,000. This gives us an estimated requirement of 150 extra care units (Source: Essex CC Market Position Statement 2012).

We also have a growing number of older people with dementia, as the chart shows below; this is set to increase dramatically in the next 15 years. An extra care scheme will also help to meet this need.

Numbers			% increase	
2010	2015	2030	2010-15	2010-2030
911	1073	1896	18%	108%

Projected increases in Dementia (Source POPPI)

Future Actions

- Investigate the Reprovision of a new Mental Health facility
- Work with partners on the delivery of a supported unit for people with Learning disabilities
- Investigate potential for a scheme for vulnerable adults in Great Dunmow
- Work with partners to deliver an extra care scheme in Saffron Walden
- Investigate potential for a second extra care scheme in Great Dunmow
- Work with Planning Policy to identify sites for gypsy and travellers
- Work with partners to support those fleeing domestic violence, investigate potential for a supported housing scheme.
- Research Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Needs

Chapter 4 – Affordable Housing Strategy

Key Successes

- Gained HCA funding and built 5 new bungalows in Leaden Roding
- Progressed a further Local Authority new build scheme which will deliver 8 houses during 2012
- Continued to exceed the affordable housing target of 100 homes per year
- Worked with Hastoe to deliver a Passivhaus scheme in Wimbish

Since the Affordable Housing Strategy was published, the Council has worked with its Registered Provider partners to deliver affordable housing across the district. The Council's corporate target for affordable housing is 100 properties per year and in 2011/12, it enabled the delivery of 111 properties across 12 different sites. In addition to the provision of affordable housing through S106 sites, the Council made parcels of its own land available and worked in partnership with Registered Providers to increase affordable housing supply.

The Council is pleased to have enabled one particular scheme on a rural exception site in Wimbish, which has gone on to win several awards. The scheme was developed by Hastoe and was the first affordable rural housing development to achieve Passivhaus accreditation in the UK. Passivhaus properties are built to high environmental standards which use up to 90% less heating energy than equivalent sized standard homes. Further information is available at: <http://www.wimbishpassivhaus.com/>

In total, Council owned sites have provided 15 properties so far, including three elderly bungalows and one disabled adapted family home to meet a specific housing need.

Through close working with the Homes and Communities Agency and one of its Registered Providers, the Council has also developed a scheme of five bungalows on its own land.

The schemes completed in 2011/12 are detailed below:

Scheme Name	Registered Provider	Social Rented	Affordable Rented	Shared Ownership	Total No of Units
Manor Road, Stansted	CHP	2			2
Carnation Drive, Saffron Walden	Hastoe	4			4
Tye Green, Wimbish	Hastoe	10		4	14
Pinkneys, Chrishall	CHP	3			3

Frambury Lane, Newport	CHP	1			1
Former Dunmow Primary School	CHP		12		12
Bell College (Phase 2a), Saffron Walden	Hastoe		10	4	14
Priors Green (Phase A), Takeley	Moat		12	5	17
Priors Green (Phase B), Takeley	Moat		7	3	10
Priors Green (Phase C), Takeley	Moat		14	6	20
Rochford Nurseries (phase 3), Stansted	Moat		10	4	14
Sub Totals		20	65	26	111

Current Situation

Uttlesford District Council's current Affordable Housing Strategy was approved in November 2009, and was subsequently superseded by the Affordable Housing Policy Update Statement in October 2011. These documents set out Council's requirements and expectations for affordable housing, the most recent was developed in line with the policy changes put in place by the Coalition Government since May 2010.

The Council will no longer publish a standalone document relating to Affordable Housing Provision, but details are now set out within this section of the Housing Strategy, superseding the above mentioned documents. The requirements and expectations contained in this section have been written in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

In 2011, the Homes and Communities Agency set out plans to change the way in which affordable housing is delivered. The main change in the way affordable housing is delivered was a move from Social Rented Housing to Affordable Rented Housing. Rents for Affordable Rented dwellings are set by the Registered Provider at up to a maximum of 80% of Open Market Rents and are inclusive of service charges. Registered Providers were asked to set out their proposals for a four-year programme which would then form their framework contract with the Homes and Communities Agency for that period. It is important to note that as part of the changes, funding is no longer available for S106 sites

National Policy

A definition of affordable housing can be taken from The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which states:

‘Affordable housing: Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.’

The Affordable Homes Programme implemented by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) in 2011 saw the introduction of the Affordable Rented Tenure to replace the Social Rented Tenure. These properties are made available to tenants at up to a maximum of 80% of market rent (inclusive of service charge) and allocated in the same way as social housing. Registered Providers were required to develop an offer to the HCA for funding to enable schemes to be financially viable. However, funding on S106 sites is not available.

Provision of Affordable Housing

The Council’s enabling role identifies housing need and brings together key partners to generate new opportunities for affordable housing development. As part of a planning submission, developers will be expected to demonstrate how the affordable element will be realised within the overall development. The Council encourages meeting affordable housing requirements through one of their preferred Registered Providers (RP) who have the management abilities and local knowledge to effectively manage new affordable housing

If a developer seeks to enter contract with a Registered Provider who is not on the Council’s preferred list, they should arrange meetings with the Council’s Development and Enabling Officer so the Council can liaise with the Registered Provider in order to ensure that they will be able to effectively manage and deliver the future homes. Developers should ensure that Housing Quality Indicator standards are adhered to in order to meet the HCA standards for affordable housing. Further information is available through www.homesandcommunities.co.uk

Every scheme will be considered and assessed on its merits, and should be discussed and agreed with the Planning and Housing Policy Department before a planning application is submitted. However, aside from the policy position for the provision of affordable housing on S106 sites, the following requirements will be applied to all sites:

- Affordable housing provision
 - 40% on sites of 15 or more dwellings;
 - 20% on sites of 5-14 dwellings;

- Financial contribution on sites of 1-4 dwellings
- Tenure split
 - 70% Affordable Rented or Social Rented Tenure (Rents in line with Government guidance)
 - 30% Shared Ownership Tenure (Affordability to be a maximum of 30% of total household income) (Maximum of 2.75% charge on remaining rent)
- Housing mix
 - Predominantly a mix of two and three bedroom houses (2 bedroom 4 person and 3 bedroom 5 person houses to be provided)
 - 5% one and two bedroom elderly bungalows
- Other requirements to be discussed at time of application
 - Properties provided in clusters of no more than 10 units
 - Lifts in blocks of flats over two storey

The Council's position is that affordable housing should be provided on site and off site provision or financial contributions, except on sites of 1-4 dwellings, will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. In such circumstances, this would need to be robustly justified to the Council, and of broadly equivalent value, being agreed on a site by site basis. All monies received from commuted sums will be ring-fenced for affordable housing purposes in the District.

The calculation for a commuted sum will be based on the free serviced land that would have been provided for affordable housing, and a proposed affordable housing mix, as agreed with the Council. The commuted sum would then be the difference between:

- a) Land value of the whole site without affordable housing
- b) Land value of the whole site with affordable housing

It should be noted that an independent valuation would be necessary to make this assessment and will be appointed by the Council. The cost of this will be borne by the developer or landowner.

Housing in Rural Areas

The Council will support development on rural exception sites in line with the Council's policy meeting all the following criteria:

- a) The development will meet a demonstrable local need that cannot be met in any other way;
- b) The development is of a scale appropriate to the size, facilities and character of the settlement; and
- d) The site adjoins the settlement.

The Council works closely with the Rural Housing Enabler (RHE), Parish Councils and Registered Providers to instigate the development of a Rural Exception Site. The RHE will carry out a Housing Need Survey within the Parish to establish whether a need exists and make a recommendation for provision to meet that need. It is essential to ensure that these properties are made available for those people who have a genuine need for housing in the locality that cannot be met in the market.

Rural Exception sites will usually be developed and managed by a Registered Provider, who should liaise with Planning at an early stage. The NPPF now allows for a small number of market houses to be provided on rural exception sites at the local authority's discretion. This is deemed appropriate to facilitate the delivery of affordable homes for local people and will be supported provided that:

- a) Viability appraisals demonstrate that the need of the market housing component is essential for the successful deliver of the development;
- b) The proportion of market housing is the minimum needed to make the scheme viable; and
- c) No additional subsidy for the delivery of the scheme is required

Future Actions

The Council has an ambitious programme of affordable housing to deliver over the next three years. These schemes will be delivered through the Council's new build programme, and through its RP partners. Over the next two years, the Council is looking to deliver in excess of 280 affordable homes, which will exceed the corporate target and help meet the housing needs of the district.

The table below shows the future provision of affordable housing on sites that currently have planning permission:

Scheme	Parish	No. of units
Rochford Nurseries (Ph 4)	Stansted Mountfitchet	51
Rochford Nurseries (school site – Taylor Wimpey)	Stansted Mountfitchet	8
Rochford Nurseries (school site – Persimmon)	Stansted Mountfitchet	8
Holloway Crescent	Leaden Roding	8
Hampit Road (rural exception site)	Arkesden	4
Oakwood Park (village centre site)	Flitch Green	46
Rochford Nurseries (Ph 5)	Stansted Mountfitchet	4
Rochford Nurseries (Ph 6)	Stansted Mountfitchet	10
The Orchard	Elsenham	21
Wedow Road	Thaxted	22
The Street/Clavering Road	Manuden	4
Woodlands Park (sector 4)	Gt Dunmow	50

Ongar Road South	Gt Dunmow	40
Lt Walden Road	Saffron Walden	15
Ashdon Road	Saffron Walden	37
		328

Key contacts

For further information on the Council's policy for Affordable Housing and the development of affordable housing in Uttlesford, please contact the Housing Enabling and Development Officer as set out below:

Housing Enabling and Development Officer
(01799) 510633

Chapter 5 – Delivering the Homeless Strategy

Key Successes

- Worked in partnership to deliver a young parents scheme in Ongar shared with Epping and Brentwood Councils
- Provided temporary accommodation at Molehill Green and Stansted
- Continued development of Bromfield House in Saffron Walden
- New Housing Options team set up which has been providing advice and assistance to those at risk of homelessness
- Successful Homeless Partnership set up, working on joint initiatives and sharing best practise

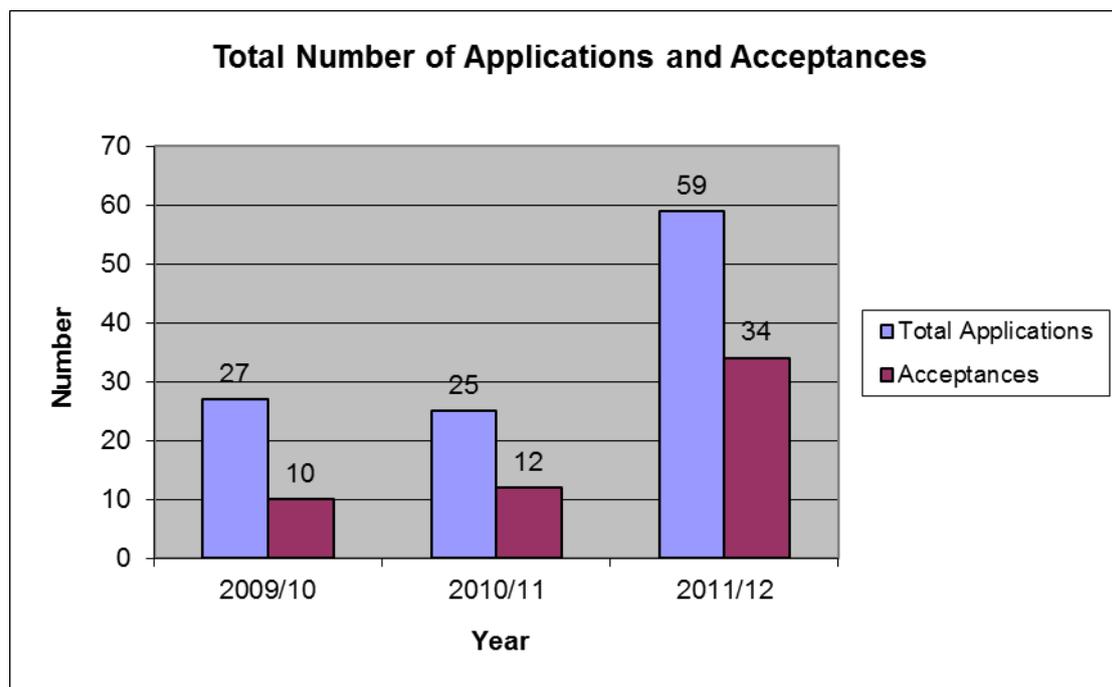
Current Situation

Uttlesford has seen a steep increase in homelessness presentations in the past year. This is a trend being reported by all local authorities. The government's official homelessness statistics show that from July to September 2011 there was a 14% rise in applicants accepted as homeless by local authorities over the same quarter in 2009. Even on a seasonally adjusted basis, this was 12% higher than the first quarter of 2011. Research shows that the number of homeless households will continue to rise as the economic downturn and benefit reforms take affect.

The Impact of Welfare Reform

The Government is making significant changes to Housing Benefits, introducing a Universal Credit system (designed to simplify the benefits system and improve work incentives) and introducing a cap on benefits payable. This will have a significant impact on the District and the Council has employed a project officer to look at the implications and who will be affected. This could cause increasing rent arrears and debt problems for many of our residents and cause a greater number of homeless applications. We will be working with tenants to ensure that they gain the advice needed to sustain their tenancy.

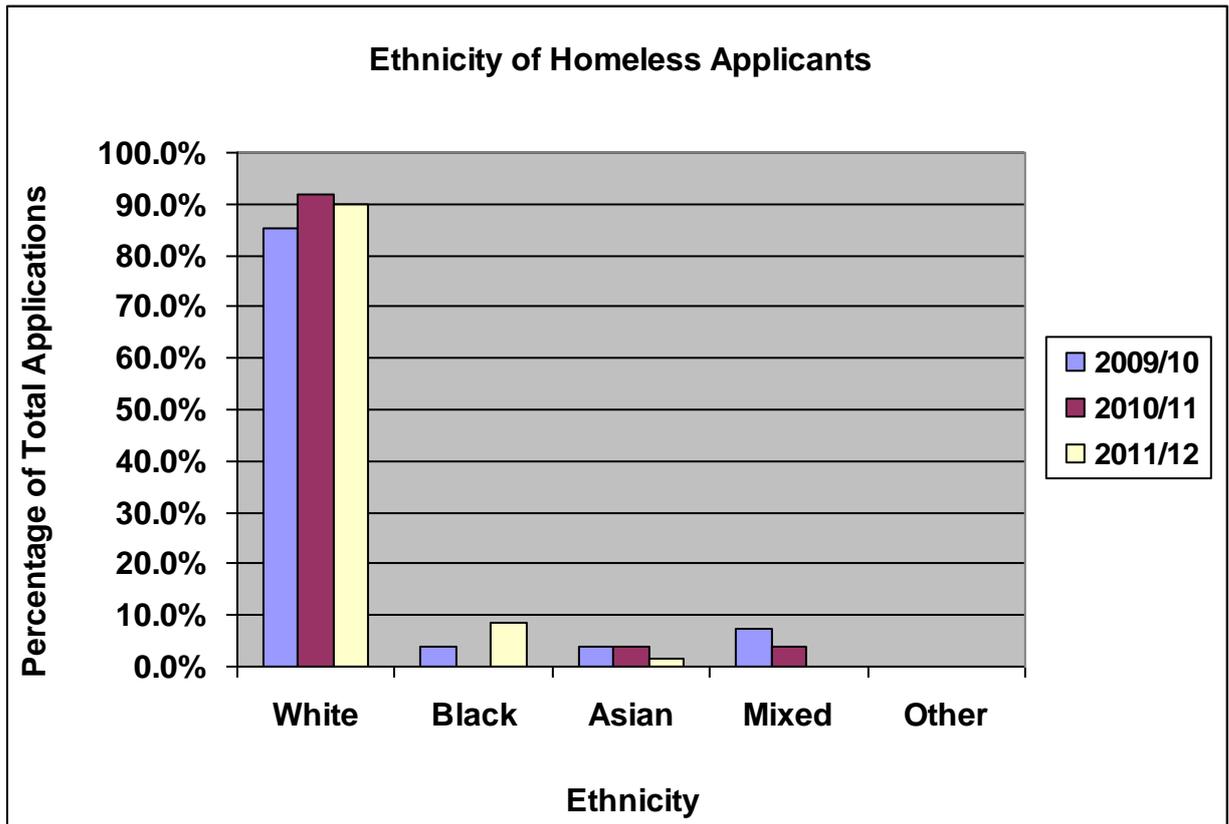
Facts and figures



Reasons for homelessness	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Parents no longer willing to accommodate	10	6	16
Other friends/relatives no longer willing to accommodate	2	5	4
Non-violent breakdown of relationship with partner	1	0	6
Violent breakdown of relationship with partner	5	4	7
Racially motivated violence	0	0	0
Other forms of violence	0	2	1
Racially motivated harassment	0	0	0
Other forms of harassment	0	0	0
Mortgage arrears (repossession or other loss of home)	2	0	1
Rent arrears; LA or other public sector dwellings	2	0	0
Rent arrears; RSL or other HA dwelling	0	2	3
Rent arrears; private sector dwellings	0	2	2
Termination of assured short-hold tenancy	0	2	4
Loss of rented or tied accommodation other than termination of AST	1	1	5

Required to leave national asylum support service accommodation	0	0	0
In institution or care	1	1	5
Other including emergency, ex HM forces, sleeping rough, in hostel	3	0	5
Total	27	25	59

Priority need category of accepted cases	20019/10	20010/11	20011/12
Homeless because of an emergency	0	0	1
Household with dependent children	8	6	21
Applicant pregnant with no other dependent children	0	0	0
applicant aged 16/17 years	0	0	0
Formally in 'care' and aged 18/20	0	0	0
Old age	0	0	2
Physical disability	0	0	0
Mental illness or disability	1	3	6
Drug dependency	0	1	0
Alcohol dependency	1	1	0
Former asylum seeker	0	0	0
Vulnerable for other reasons	0	0	1
Having been in 'care'	0	0	0
Having served in HM Forces	0	0	0
Having been in custody/on remand	0	0	0
Domestic violence	0	1	0
Having fled their home due to violence/threat of violence	0	0	0
Total	10	12	34



Services provided in Uttlesford

Supported Housing - Young People and Vulnerable Adults

Uttlesford currently only has one scheme of general needs supported housing. Bromfield House in Saffron Walden, which is part of the Genesis Group, 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. They also assist clients to claim appropriate benefits and to get back in to work or on education or training programmes.

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 runs at full occupancy which means that clients requiring this level of support cannot always be accommodated appropriately. It has been identified that a similar scheme in the Dunmow area of the district is required to meet the demand for this type of supported accommodation.

Temporary Accommodation - Molehill Green and Stansted

The stock consists of 8 units of ready to occupy furnished temporary accommodation. 2 x 3 person bedsit flats and 2 x 4/5 person 1 bed flats in Molehill Green, Takeley and 4 x 3 person bedsit flats at Mead Court in

Stansted. We also have a 3 bed house and 1 bedroom bungalow which are carpeted and have white goods provided.

The Mead Court properties are due to be demolished as part of the re-development of this site, plans are therefore being made for the provision of this accommodation.

Young Parents Scheme

Railway Meadow is a supported housing scheme built in partnership with Brentwood and Uttlesford Councils in Ongar for young parents and is designed to help young people overcome challenges during their pregnancy and the first year of their child's life. The scheme consists of 13 self-contained flats with a communal lounge, activity area, training kitchen and office. The accommodation is offered to young Mothers, Fathers and couples aged 16-25 years. The support gives young people essential parenting and life skills to enable them to move on and live independent lives.

The scheme is owned and managed by East Thames and referrals received from the Council, and Brentwood and Epping Councils, with residents being re-housed by their host authority at the appropriate time. Uttlesford District Council has nomination rights to 4 of the flats.

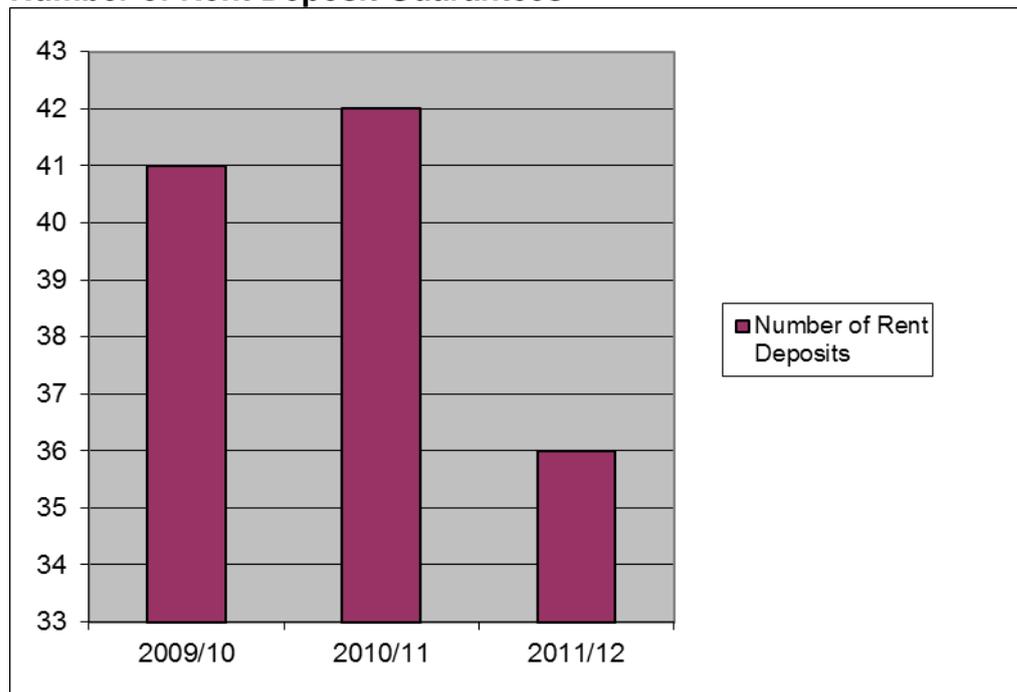
Rent Deposit Scheme

In 2004 the Council in partnership with King Street Housing Society set up a Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme. The Scheme is managed for the Council by King Street Housing Society which is based in Cambridge and runs similar schemes for neighbouring local authorities. The scheme aims to help potentially homeless people to access homes in the private rented sector that they would not otherwise be able to consider because they do not have the money needed to pay the necessary deposit. The Scheme does not pay cash deposits but King Street arranges with the landlord a deposit guarantee.

Applicants for the scheme are first interviewed by the Council and then if eligible are referred on to King Street Housing Society who will give them advice on how to find a property and then negotiate with the prospective landlord about the deposit and any rent in advance. King Street will also do credit checks on applicants and arrange for them to set up an account to pay the deposit back at an agreed monthly rate.

Funds for this scheme are restricted therefore the Council is able to help only a limited number of applicants each year.

Number of Rent Deposit Guarantees



Source: Council data

As can be seen from the above table the Scheme has been less successful in the past year helping people into the private rented sector, this has been due to the buoyant nature of the private rented sector within Uttlesford. Landlords and agents are resistant to taking clients without cash deposits and who may be claiming housing benefit. For this reason we are looking to find other ways the council can work with the private sector.

There is also the issue around the affordability of the private rented sector with the changes in Local Housing Allowance levels. The levels are now set annually but they do not reflect the cost of private renting within Uttlesford and often leave people with a shortfall between what they can claim in local housing allowance and the actual rent of the property. Below is an example of the LHA rates that cover the Saffron Walden area for 2012.

Number of Bedrooms	Weekly Amount	Amount
Monthly Shared Room Rate	£75.00	£325.00
1 Bedroom	£120.00	£520.00
2 Bedrooms	£135.00	£585.00
3 Bedrooms	£156.92	£679.99
4 Bedrooms	£206.54	£895.01

Mortgage Rescue

In January 2009, the CLG announced the introduction of the Mortgage Rescue Scheme. The intention of the scheme is to assist the most vulnerable households who are at risk through re-possession. Referrals can only be made where householders have between 20% negative and 40% positive

equity. Mortgage Rescue is a last resort when all other lender “hardship tools” have been exhausted. Following consultation with the Citizens Advice Bureau’s (CAB) debt advisor on the financial viability of the rescue, the case is referred to the lead provider for Essex being Moat Homes Limited. Depending upon the available equity, the applicant will be assessed for either “mortgage to rent” or a shared equity loan.

Between 1 July 2009 and mid-2011, the Council, in partnership with the, Moat Homes Limited, assisted a total of 4 households to keep their homes through Mortgage Rescue. However, since then no households have been assisted because of restrictions that were placed upon the scheme by the Government. These included a price cap on the value of a property being reduced to less than £200,000 with only freehold properties being rescued (i.e. houses not flats). As the values of most, if not all eligible properties in the District were well above the cap, the use of Mortgage Rescue has been limited. A more recent problem has also been the lack of a partner for MOAT in this area to actually take on any ‘rescued properties’, this has now been resolved with Hastoe Housing Association agreeing to work with MOAT in this district. There has also been a relaxation on the caps limit. This has meant that the Council has now been able to re-advertise the Mortgage rescue scheme and is currently assisting one family through the process.

Sanctuary Scheme

In November 2007 the Council launched its Sanctuary Scheme. The Scheme assists those suffering from Domestic Violence who wish to remain in their current home, where it is considered safe for them to do so and where the perpetrator is no longer in residence. This has been set up in partnership with the police, the fire service and an approved locksmith.

The Scheme has various levels of increased security that it can offer to clients ranging from new door locks to full sanctuary room. The Scheme is funded by the Council but is open to all tenure of clients identified by the Council or other agencies.

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) draws together key agencies in a local forum to co-ordinate actions and resources towards addressing the highest risk victims of domestic violence. The Housing Options Team participates in the MARAC process and attends meetings.

Floating Support

Family Mosaic provides housing related floating support to vulnerable people irrespective of tenure across the Uttlesford District.

This is particularly beneficial where we are placing young vulnerable people into temporary accommodation where they are without means of support and quite often have never had to manage on their own before.

The service also provides a high level of support to all homeless applicants placed in bed and breakfast accommodation or other temporary accommodation. The Support Worker provides agreed levels of support with the client and the support can move with the client from their temporary accommodation into their permanent housing thus increasing the chances of tenancy sustainment in the longer term.

Support Workers can also provide a service to people whom the Council does not owe a duty under homelessness legislation.

Essex National Probation Service

The Housing Options Section works with the National Probation Service's Housing Liaison Officer on cases referred by the Service. If a full housing duty is owed to the person referred, then the Council will continue to work with the Probation Service to ensure that they are able to sustain any permanent accommodation offered.

Housing Options Team

Local housing authorities have a statutory duty to offer advice and assistance on homelessness and the prevention of homelessness. They also have a duty to ensure that an Allocations Scheme for determining priorities for allocating social housing is available for inspection and that a summary of that scheme is available, on request, free of charge.

In Uttlesford, following the last Homelessness Strategy, a new dedicated team was established to provide this service. This is the Housing Options Team.

Advice and assistance on homelessness and the prevention of homelessness can encompass a wide range of issues, many of which require specialist knowledge. Some cases, for example those involving debt management, are referred to the CAB. The CAB has a dedicated "money advisor" who deals with debt referrals from the Homelessness Prevention Team. Some cases may be referred to other agencies included in the Council's Benefit Division.

Advice is given on a range of other matters including:

- Harassment
- Illegal evictions by private landlords
- Properties in need of repair, including those which are unfit for habitation
- Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Charitable organisations assisting homeless people (including victims of domestic violence)
- Securing private rented accommodation
- Access to shared ownership schemes
- Property rights in cases of relationship breakdown or other domestic issues
- Interim and temporary accommodation

- Nominations to other local housing authorities

The Housing Options team has access to a range of advice and information leaflets, some produced by the Council, others published by the National Homeless Advice Service and the CLG. Where English is not the first language of the client, assistance can be obtained through approved agencies and documents can be translated in appropriate cases. For the visually impaired, literature can be made available either in large print or by CD or Braille. Where a profoundly deaf client is a sign user, the Council can arrange “signing” through an approved agency. A loop system for people with hearing difficulties is available at the Civic Offices and. Home visits will be made in appropriate instances.

Citizens Advice Bureau

The CAB have offices in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow, they also provide surgeries in Thaxted and Stansted. The Council has a Service Level Agreement with the CAB to provide a range of advice and to support those who have difficulties expressing their needs effectively. In 2012 the Council received extra funding for homelessness prevention work from the Government £6000 of which was given to the CAB to help them provide extra debt counselling.

The Council has formal arrangements for referring cases and, in addition to front-line liaison on a case by case basis the Bureau’s office Manager is a member of the Council’s Homelessness Partnership.

Where a client is pursuing a review of a homelessness decision made by the Council they are advised in writing to seek assistance from the CAB or Shelter.

The figures below show the range and level of housing related and debt issues that the CAB handle.

Debt issues	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2011/12	2010/11
Discrimination	1	0	0	0	1	
Mortgage+secd Loan Arrears	28	20	26	15	89	104
Hire Purchase Arrears	1	4	2	1	8	21
Fuel Debts	25	23	12	32	92	147
Telephone And Broadband Debts	12	15	11	13	51	82
Rent Arrears-las Or Almos	12	15	15	15	57	37

Rent Arrears-hsg Assocs	15	21	15	11	62	49
Rent Arrears-priv.landlords	5	6	3	14	28	29
Council Tax,comm.chg Arrears	29	26	38	35	128	112
Mag.cts Fines+comp.ord.arrears	1	1	0	2	4	9
Maint.+child Support Arrears	1	2	0	0	3	5
Bank+building Soc.overdrafts	41	38	42	44	165	331
Credit,store+chg Card Debts	82	63	88	103	336	512
Unsecd Personal Loan Debts	42	53	31	69	195	258
Catalogue+mail Order Debts	13	12	8	10	43	83
Water Supply+sewerage Debts	25	23	16	25	89	83
Unpd Parkg Penalty+cong.chgs	1	3	9	5	18	12
Overpayments Of Wtc+ctc	5	3	1	5	14	7
Overpayments Of Is+/or Jsa	0	0	2	6	8	3
Overpts.hou+council Tax Bens.	1	5	6	10	22	3
Social Fund Debts	0	12	1	2	15	1
3rd Pty Debt Coln Excl Bailiffs	1	5	4	6	16	28
Private Bailiffs	2	1	9	6	18	28
Debt Relief Order	48	93	100	113	354	223
Bankruptcy	55	63	49	65	232	239
51 Other Legal Remedies	3	0	6	7	16	15
99 Other	38	47	51	74	210	215

Housing issues	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2011/12	2010/11
Discrimination	0	0	0	1	1	1
Actual Homelessness	11	8	11	14	44	38
Threatened Homelessness	38	44	49	43	174	144
La Homelessness Service	6	1	3	6	16	13
Access To+provision Of Accom.	14	24	8	12	58	67
Local Authority Housing	49	51	34	51	185	138
Housing Assoc. Property	23	12	16	14	65	86
Private Sector Rented Propty	79	74	57	57	267	268
Owner Occupier Property	12	13	11	32	68	76
Environml+neighbour Issues	21	21	13	19	74	76
Other Housing Issues	16	30	16	16	78	89

Benefit issues	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2011/12	2010/11
1 Discrimination	0	0	0	1	1	2
2 Income Support	41	62	44	51	198	196
3 Pension Credit	40	37	32	54	163	176
4 Social Fund Loans-crisis	16	15	15	10	56	59
5 Social Fund Loans-budtg	6	5	4	2	17	14
6 Sf Community Care Grants	5	3	3	7	18	16
7 Housing Benefit	137	132	135	151	555	450
8 Child Benefit	33	20	29	32	114	105
9 Council Tax Benefit	85	96	105	132	418	432
10 Working+child Tax Credits	96	103	81	105	385	400
11 Jobseekers Allowance	105	95	74	97	371	431
12 National Insurance	8	10	4	11	33	46
13 State Retirement Pension	16	20	11	15	62	81
14 Incapacity Benefit	12	16	15	8	51	48
15 Dla-care Component	589	621	573	459	2242	2810
16 Dla-mobility Component	512	516	528	382	1938	2350
17 Attendance Allowance	360	549	233	378	1520	1714
18 Carers Allowance	37	61	28	72	198	226

19 Employment Support Allowance	87	121	133	155	496	306
99 Other Benefits Issues	168	201	152	253	774	786

Homelessness Partnership

Following the publication of the last homelessness strategy the council has set up its Homelessness Partnership. Meetings are held quarterly and representatives of the following agencies are invited to attend:-

- Social Services
- CAB
- Probation
- Youth Offending
- Drug and Alcohol Services
- Community Mental Health
- PCT
- Family Mosaic
- King Street Housing Society
- Leaving and After Care
- Safer Places
- Housing Benefit

The partnership monitors the homelessness strategy action plan. Shares best practice and explores gaps in services and how these can be met by members of the partnership or other agencies.

Stansted Airport

Having an international airport within the district requires the homelessness service to deal with people arriving at the airport with no forwarding accommodation to go to and without the means to get accommodation. These clients may not be eligible for assistance from the Council, depending on their immigration status, or because they are not in priority need. They can however be both time consuming and difficult to resolve and often require a multi-agency solution.

Stansted Airport is also one of the designated airports used during evacuations from abroad or for a terrorist related incident.

The following is part of the Council's emergency response plans for the eventuality of the arrival at Stansted Airport of a large number of people requiring housing assistance.

Dealing with Passengers arriving at Stansted Airport who require assistance with Housing
1.1 From time to time passengers may arrive on flights at Stansted Airport, who for a variety of reasons request leave to enter the United Kingdom and due to circumstances in their country of origin then require permanent or temporary accommodation in this country.
1.2 Under current United Kingdom Housing legislation, Uttlesford District Council has a legal responsibility to provide housing advice and assistance for persons who arrive at Stansted Airport and on arrival are unable to return to the country they have come from and have no where to live in the United Kingdom.
1.3 Notification times of such arrivals will depend upon the circumstances, but often the numbers arriving; their immediate housing needs; and the numbers requiring such assistance from the local authority may not be known until they actually arrive through immigration controls at the airport. This makes it difficult to plan in advance for this eventuality.
2.1 On receipt of notification of the arrival/imminent arrival of a flight at Stansted Airport the Emergency Planning Officer, in conjunction with Housing staff will attempt to ascertain the approximate needs of these people.
2.2 An early decision should be made on what accommodation will be needed for these people and where this will be sourced from i.e. local hotels or rest centre type accommodation in a local school or leisure centre. Based on this decision contact should be made with local providers to source the accommodation prior to the arrival of the persons requiring it.
2.2 An early decision should be made on what accommodation will be needed for these people and where this will be sourced from i.e. local hotels or rest centre type accommodation in a local school or leisure centre. Based on this decision contact should be made with local providers to source the accommodation prior to the arrival of the persons requiring it.
2.3 Consideration should be given to special needs in terms of disabilities, medical conditions, dietary requirements, etc. and appropriate arrangements made.
2.4 Once it has been ascertained how many people will have to be dealt with, contact should be made with staff who have indicated a willingness to assist with rest/reception centre operations to put them on stand-by or if the response is more immediate, direct them to the appropriate location(s).
2.5 Contact should be made at an early stage with Essex County Council Emergency Plans & Business Continuity Team so that they are aware of the incident and to discuss any requirement for support and/or joint working such as transport, CSTE workers, etc. If it is outside of office hours, this contact should be made through the Emergency Plans Duty Officer.
2.6 Once it is known where accommodation will be located and what form this will take, contact should be made with appropriate support agencies and organisations such as WRVC, British Red Cross, etc. to provide the necessary welfare support structure

Social Services – Teams working with Housing

Leaving and After Care Team

The Leaving & After Care Team is quadrant-based and located at Goodman House, Harlow. The team takes casework responsibility for children up to the age of 15 years and six months. The team provide support whilst the young people are in care, for example: assessing need, creating “Pathway plans”

and assisting in the transition process of young people moving on from care. The team also provides aftercare support according to the specific provisions of the Children Act 1989 as amended by the Children Leaving Care Act 2000.

The Council's Housing Options Team are notified by the Leaving and After Care Team prior to a young person leaving care in order that their housing needs can be assessed.

Homeless Response Team

The Homeless Response Team is a small, centrally based team (located at County Hall, Chelmsford) which seeks to engage with 16 & 17 year olds on the verge of parental eviction and mediates with families to avoid homelessness and the necessity of providing accommodation under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

The team works in partnership with the Council's Housing Options Team and carries out joint assessments either through planned sessions or in response to urgent requests (whenever this is possible).

Assessment & Intervention Team

The Assessment and Intervention Team is also quadrant-based and located in Goodman House, Harlow. The Team respond to the immediate needs of children and families referred to Children's Social Care where an assessment of that need is required and especially in relation to "Safeguarding" (Child Protection) and "Children in Need". Referrals to this service are through the central Initial Response Team, with reference to Essex County Council threshold criteria.

Family Support & Protection

The Family Support and Protection Team is Quadrant-based at Goodman House, Harlow responding in the longer term for those children subject to Child Protection Plans, and Child in Need plans, with reference to Essex County Council threshold criteria.

Community Drug and Alcohol Team (CDAT)

The Community Drug and Alcohol Team (CDAT) are based in Harlow. The team assists clients suffering with drug and alcohol abuse. The staff includes a Clinical Psychiatrist, Clinical Psychiatric Nurse and a Social Work and Administration Team.

Clients are referred to CDAT through a number of channels including hospitals, the Alcohol and Drug Advisory Service (ADAS), GPs, family members and self-referrals, as well as The Housing Options Team, with a minimum age for clients being 16 years and no upper age limit. People with alcohol problems far outnumber those with drug problems.

All CDAT clients are risk assessed, with particular attention being paid to any risks linked to abuse, for example, mental health problems, risk of violence to self or others, and neglect. All clients have a physical assessment and a community care plan. A Panel meets monthly to prioritise cases.

Some clients may be referred for rehabilitation, which may be residential usually for 6 months, or may be day attendance based. These services are provided outside the local area, which is seen as beneficial to clients.

Future Actions

- **Reprovision of temporary accommodation**

With the re-development of the Mead Court site, where 4 units of temporary accommodation are currently situated, it is being proposed that 4 purpose built units be part of the new development. These will again be 4 small units of accommodation that will be fully furnished and ready for immediate occupation.

- **Provision of Domestic Violence Services**

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.

In the period April 2011 – November 2011 there was a 36% increase in the number of reported cases of domestic violence within Uttlesford. 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.

Discussions have been had with partners to identify requirements for a potential scheme and a Council owned site has been identified. Continued partnership working should help to create this much needed resource in the District.

- **Discharge of duty into the private sector**

Under the Localism Act, although a Government Commencement Order is yet to be issued, it is proposed that councils will be given powers to discharge their Homelessness Duty by offering suitable accommodation in the private rented sector with or without the consent of the applicant. The

accommodation must be provided for a minimum term of 12 months in order to end the Council's duty. If the accommodation is lost by the applicant within a period of 2 years of the offer then they can re-apply, regardless of priority need and if appropriate referred back to the host authority. When the Government Commencement Order is received, the Council will consider adopting the following amendment to the Allocations's Policy. (This all depends on timing of Cabinets etc)

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.

Under the Choice Based Lettings Scheme all accepted homeless applicants 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.

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 8 weeks (4 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 make the applicant one final offer of suitable accommodation. This will be in whichever tenure is available first. 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.

When a private rented property becomes available it will be offered on the same principles as the through CBL i.e. to the accepted homeless applicant who is suitable for that property and who is in the highest Band and has been waiting the longest.

- **Supported housing for vulnerable people**

It has been identified that a similar scheme to that of Bromfield House in Saffron Walden is required in the Dunmow area of the district to meet the demand for supported accommodation. This would be a scheme that provides supported housing with people of low to medium support needs, this may include those with mental health and drug and alcohol issues as well as young people from age 16 who need support to gain the skills required to live independently.

- **Delivering CLG funded project with Greater Haven Gateway**

The 'Greater Haven Gateway' (GHG) consists of eight local authorities; Babergh; Braintree; Colchester; Ipswich; Mid Suffolk; Suffolk Coastal and Tendring. GHG is working in partnership with Uttlesford District Council to develop a programme of services which will provide support to single people living on the street or who are homeless or threatened with homelessness across all nine local authority areas. This work will be funded from a one off grant of £360,000 received by the group from the Government specifically to help single homeless people.

Two areas of work have been identified that will help to reduce and prevent homelessness. These are:

- Specialist outreach support for single people living on the street – up to £100k grant
- Help to increase access to private rented accommodation for single people that are harder to house and support for tenants and landlords to sustain tenancies and keep people in their homes – up to £250k grant

- **Amendments to allocations policy**

Localism Act 2011 has made significant changes to the way in which local authorities can deal with applications for social housing and homelessness applications under Parts 6 and 7 of the Housing Act 1996. At present not all commencement orders for these changes have been introduced but the changes we are proposing to make to the allocations policy are

- Discharging homelessness duty in to the private sector
- Removing local connection criteria from the following categories of person will be exempt from local connection criteria.
 - a) Applicants who are serving members of the regular forces or who have served as regular in the regular forces within five years of their date of application
 - b) 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:-

- (i) the spouse or civil partner has served in the regular forces; and
 - (ii) their death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service
- c) 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.
- Amending the bedroom size criteria to match that of Local Housing Allowance

Chapter 6 - Older Persons Housing Strategy

Key Successes

- New Careline system introduced with Carecall
- Out of hours full response service now available
- First internet café opened in one of our sheltered schemes
- Sheltered housing service reorganised

We have recently implemented a new Careline system with Carecall. This means that we can provide a full response service out of hours to those who need it. It also means that those older people who want to stay in their own homes can do so with support from our service. We have also reorganised our sheltered housing service to complement this change with sheltered housing officers managing two schemes each.

Our sheltered residents told us they wanted to be able to have Sky television and access to the internet in their properties, the Council have worked with them to identify a solution and adaptations are being made to the buildings to create internet cafes and communal satellite dishes so that residents have the option of accessing Sky television.

Current Situation

The growing older population will lead to an increase in the demand for housing and support services, particularly among the 85+ age groups. Some older people are staying active into their old age, while others are surviving for longer with disabling illness.

Consultation carried out by the Council shows that the majority of people would prefer to remain in their own homes and receive the appropriate level of care and support to meet their needs. Current government policy, set out in Section 2, seeks to help older people to stay independent and have more choice and control over how they receive care and support.

Housing plays a key part in enabling older people to stay independent. Their housing aspirations could be achieved through flexibility, design and choice in terms of size, location and tenure.

The Council's **objectives** are:

To provide accommodation that meets the needs of older people living in Uttlesford.

To provide homes for life that can be adapted to meet people's needs as they grow older and less mobile.

On new developments, requiring accommodation that meets the housing needs of older people including extra care housing and bungalows.

Older Persons Housing Supply in Uttlesford

Uttlesford has a growing older population who can either afford to live in their own homes, private rent or live in Council accommodation, many of these properties far exceed their needs now or in future years (three bedroom houses or larger). However Uttlesford does not currently have the type of accommodation that older people in Uttlesford are looking for. This was evident in our earlier survey.

Council Owned Sheltered Housing

The Council owns and manages 450 units of sheltered accommodation across the District. These range from very small bedsit accommodation to 2 bedroom bungalows.

The current Council owned sheltered housing does not meet need or expectations. We currently have 40 sheltered flats or bedsits that are empty and hard to let. Many of these properties are concentrated in a small number of sheltered schemes.

Work has been carried out by the Council to renovate and update schemes but it has not solved the long term problem we are experiencing.

Other Council Accommodation,

The Council also owns and manages 2424 units of general needs accommodation, 650 of these are bungalows that are let to older people but are not graded as sheltered and do not have support from a sheltered housing officer.

Housing Association Sheltered Accommodation

The District also has a number of sheltered housing schemes provided and managed by Housing Association partners. 296 units are provided through a mix of bedsits, 1 and 2 bed flats and bungalows.

Private Supply in Uttlesford

Uttlesford also has a high number of care homes, retirement properties with housing support and almshouse accommodation that is normally let to those over 55.

The number of care homes is increasing and we have seen an increase in planning applications for this type of accommodation in the last couple of years.

Housing Needs Survey

An Older Persons Housing Needs Survey was carried out between July and August 2011. The study had 1,116 respondents, representing a 6% response rate.

Only 6.9% of respondents stated that they did not feel Uttlesford required more housing for the over 60s, 47.2% thought that more housing for the over 60s was needed and 45.8% were unsure. Over 38% of households were either in affordable housing, renting, or still had a mortgage. 93% of households were living in a home with two or more bedrooms, and three quarters of respondents were currently living in a house.

18.5% of households stated that they were currently in receipt of benefits, and over 40% of respondents are currently marginally able to afford, or cannot afford the costs of running their household.

44% of respondents said that they would consider downsizing in the next 10 years, and 32% of households said that if they were to move, they would be looking to move into affordable housing. If the sample size is representative of the district, this could potentially equate to around 3,000 people over 60, looking to move to affordable housing in Uttlesford in the next ten years.

According to the study, suitable housing for the over 60's should include

- One/two bedrooms apartment or bungalow
- Near shops and amenities
- Have good public transport links
- Contain a mixture of private and affordable units
- A service charge of less than £40 per week.

Changing Needs and Expectations

In the last five years, we have seen a change in the expectations of older people living in Uttlesford. The demand for high quality smaller accommodation for older people has increased dramatically with developers proposing high quality apartments, retirement flats and care homes.

Our housing needs survey showed that older people wanted to live in 1 and 2 bedroom bungalows and still have their own front door with independent living high on their priorities. The Council does have 2 bedroom bungalows as part of its stock but they are always in high demand and we need a greater supply.

The expectations of residents living in Council properties has also increased. Residents do not want to move from two or three bedroom houses into bedsit

or flatted developments and this is causing a problem in the turnover of stock. Families are waiting in cramped small properties while older people are living in family sized housing that does not meet their housing needs. The Council needs to provide high quality older persons accommodation that is desirable for those wanting to downsize.

We have found that the number of people staying in their own homes and having a lifeline fitted has increased. 850 residents have lifeline in their own homes helping to maintain their independence for as long as possible.

We are also finding that as people live longer their needs are changing. The Council does not have accommodation with care which means that carers are visiting our sheltered schemes up to three times a day to provide care to residents. 25% of those living in our sheltered housing are receiving care from either professional carers or family. This has illustrated a need for at least one extra care scheme in Uttlesford.

We also have residents living in our sheltered schemes with dementia, they have a need for specialist support that we cannot provide in a sheltered housing scheme. This need is expected to grow as the population gets older.

The table below illustrates this growing need.

Table 1 Uttlesford residents projected to suffer from dementia

	2009	2015	2020	2025	2030
People aged 65-69 predicted to have dementia	46	60	53	58	66
People aged 70-74 predicted to have dementia	79	96	123	107	124
People aged 75-79 predicted to have dementia	141	164	187	245	210
People aged 80-84 predicted to have dementia	228	262	298	345	439
People aged 85 and over predicted to have dementia	401	516	651	811	996
Total people aged 65 and over predicted to have dementia	895	1,097	1,312	1,566	1,835

Source: Projected older peoples population index

An increasing need for older person's accommodation

An analysis was carried out of those living in Council accommodation and it was found that:

543 residents aged over 55 were living in 3 bed houses
15 residents aged over 55 were living in 4 bed houses.

Some of these residents will be living alone with support from professional carers, family or lifeline. Others will still be working, living independently and

not requiring supported housing at the moment. These will be the older people with housing requirements in the future. Our housing needs survey showed that they had high expectations for future housing and the council need to be planning for this housing need.

The Council does offer an incentive scheme for those wanting to move from larger Council accommodation into sheltered housing. This can include a cash incentive and/or curtains, carpets, help with removal costs etc.

Future need

This report has shown a future need for the following:

An extra care scheme with specialist support for those with dementia

1 and 2 bedroom bungalows for older people as illustrated by our earlier survey.

Future Actions

Review Council owned sheltered accommodation and decide if it is fit for purpose.

As part of the new Local Plan, request that 5% of all housing provided is 1 and 2 bedroom bungalows to meet the needs of the growing older population

Request that an extra care scheme is provided through S106 obligations in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow as part of the new Local Plan.

Continue to upgrade communal areas in our sheltered housing to include internet cafes for our silver surfers.

Chapter 7 – Delivering the Private Sector Housing Strategy

Key successes

- Bringing 5 empty homes back into use as a result of direct UDC action
- Holding a successful landlords forum
- Compulsory purchase of a property in South Road, Saffron Walden and resale into the housing market for refurbishment and occupation
- In the 2011/12 financial year 25 DFG grants were awarded totalling £111,793 from a total budget of £120,000.

Current Situation

Condition of Private Stock

The regime for controlling the suitability of housing for occupation is set out in the Housing Act 2004, which puts local authorities under a general duty to take appropriate action where standards are not met, whether or not the dwelling is available for letting. The action taken by UDC includes advice and guidance and enforcement action where necessary.

The means of assessment of housing standards conditions is set out in the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) which provides a method of assessing the likelihood of harm arising from certain hazards. Identified hazards are categorised according to the level of risk. If a category 1 hazard exists, the authority has a duty to act, if a category 2 hazard exists it may take action.

For houses in multiple occupation, additional powers under management regulations and licensing provisions are used. A house in multiple occupation is a dwelling which is let to three or more persons who form two or more households sharing facilities such as a bathroom or kitchen. The Housing Act 2004 introduced mandatory licensing to ensure that higher risk HMO's are in good condition and adequately managed, the conditions cover such matters as fire safety and disrepair. A property must be licensed if it has 3 or more storeys, and is housing 5 or more persons, who form 2 or more households. UDC currently has one licensed HMO, and a further 9 are under consideration. The number of licensable and unlicensable HMO's in UDC is estimated to be around 150 with the number expected to increase with housing demand, particularly in towns and around Stansted Airport.

Empty Homes

Empty homes have the potential to cause problems for the surrounding neighbourhood, such as attracting anti-social behaviour and reducing the value of neighbouring properties. Empty homes are also a wasted resource that could be put to better use by helping to tackle homelessness and providing an additional home to address housing need in an area with high demand.

UDC seeks to encourage owners to bring their empty home into better use through cooperation and using enforcement provisions if necessary.

At any one time there are approximately 250 long term empty properties, defined as not having been occupied for at least 6 months. A register is maintained with regular updates from the Council Tax section. Correspondence and contact with relevant owners is made on a regular basis to establish the status of the home and enter a dialogue over the future use.

Since 2006 UDC has been part of a Consortium of seven Local Authorities across Essex and Hertfordshire that successfully bid for capital grant funding from the Regional Housing Board (RHB) for an empty homes renovation and lease project. The funding enabled the PLACE scheme (Private Lease Agreements Converting Empties) to be set up in conjunction with a RSL, Genesis Housing Association.

The scheme provides grant and loan funding to bring the dwelling up to the government's Decent Homes Standard.

The largest grant of up to £60,000 per dwelling, is offered where the work is carried by Genesis HA and the property is then leased to them for a 3 year period, after which time the property is returned to the owner in good condition with no further obligation. The RSL have nomination rights to the relevant Local Authority for the duration of the lease. During the lease period the owner will not receive any rental income, and has the option of renewing the lease after 3 years depending on circumstances.

A smaller grant of up to £30,000 is available where the owner may choose the builder and will also benefit from receiving a rental income during the 3 year lease period.

Three properties in UDC area are currently leased under the PLACE scheme with several more under active consideration.

The option of a loan is also available, to enable the dwelling to be renovated for sale, whereupon the loan is repaid, or made available for letting, repaying the loan through rental income. The owner has full control over future occupation of the dwelling.

Where a property is unsuitable for PLACE funding, other options are discussed with the owners and further contact is made after a suitable period where necessary.

In the event of an owner being unresponsive to assistance offered, legal powers available, and in taking such action, UDC will carry out its enforcement duties in accordance with the enforcement concordat.

Compulsory purchase powers have been used for one property in Saffron Walden where the owner was not responsive to other assistance and the

house had a negative effect on the neighbourhood. It is has since been sold on for renovation and occupation.

An Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) gives the council the right to possession of the dwelling but not ownership. The Order may last up to 7 years and during the time the Order is in force, the dwelling may be made available for letting and sale by the owner may be prevented.

Disabled Facilities Grants

UDC administers the provision of mandatory grants to meet the needs of disabled persons. Approximately 25 grants are awarded each year, either for adaptations or to assist relocation to more suitable accommodation. UDC works in partnership with Papworth Home Improvement Agency who are available to act on behalf of the applicant if the applicant chooses to engage their services.

During the year 2011-12, UDC have supported the introduction by Papworth HIA of fixed price adaptations, which have reduced approval time scales. The scheme is to be reviewed regularly

Home Repair Assistance

UDC also 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.

Mobile Homes

UDC 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.

Future Actions

Approval has been given for the employment of a temporary contractor to carry out further work on tackling empty homes and accelerating the rate of their return to occupation. We hope to have a suitable person in place by the beginning of 2013.

Discussion with Essex County Council, who provide resources for Occupational Therapists to carry out the assessment of the home adaptations required for an applicant in order for a DFG to be approved, has resulted in the need to provide externally appointed OT's to be assessed. Papworth HIA

have engaged OT services directly, to supplement the rate of referrals for adaptations.

We will undertake an awareness raising campaign in conjunction with Papworth HIA to residents and landlords in the district on the availability of grants from the Council to improve the take up by eligible householders.

Liaison with Housing Associations has taken place to encourage a contribution towards the cost of adaptations in their own properties. To date one HA makes a 40% contribution, and further negotiations are taking place to increase the number who make contributions.

Chapter 8 – The Council’s Housing Stock

Key Successes

- Produced new 30 year HRS Business Plan with detailed analysis of the options and opportunities available under the new self-financing arrangements
- Successful restructure and relocation of the Housing Department
- Launched new response and monitoring service for those with support needs
- Reviewed and updated Conditions of Tenancy
- Reviewed and updated Housing Allocations Policy
- Implemented an on-line housing application
- Delivered first phase of a Council new build scheme
- 98.5% of properties meet decent homes standard

Current Situation

The Council has produced an HRA Business Plan covering the period 2012-2042. The plan sets out the Council’s overall aims and objectives for the housing service, as a landlord of just under 3,000 homes.

The Plan forms a key part of the Council’s preparation for HRA self-financing. This is a major change in national housing finance which introduces new opportunities for the Council’s housing service but also exposure to risks, which will need to be managed actively.

The information below is just a summary. For more information and to view our Housing Business Plan, please visit our website www.uttlesford.gov.uk

Stock figures

The Council’s stock, as at 1 April 2011, was 2856 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.

Other key points of relevance to this plan relating to housing assets are as follows:

- **The 2009 stock condition survey results demonstrate that the council has managed to use its resources effectively to maintain the stock. A new survey will be commissioned in 2013/14**
- **The survey results indicate that over the next 30 years, the Council will need to spend a total of £152m or £50,876 per property, equating to £1,696 a year on each property**
- **A new stock condition database has been introduced and information from other databases have been transferred to it**
- **98.5% of the Council housing stock had achieved the decent homes standard**
- **A very small number of properties, 11 in total, were assessed as failing the HHSRS standard**
- **From the data collected the average energy rating was calculated as 68.89. This reflects the investment made in the stock in energy saving measures and compares favourably with other authorities**
- **Over 75% of the housing stock now has double glazing and all of the housing stock has central heating and high levels of insulation**
- **The Council is committed to the principle of sustainable development and schemes which have an impact on the quality of life**

Decent Homes

Based on survey information 98.5% 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 current 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:

£1.5m over 30 years on sustainable energy projects to provide affordable warmth and improve the energy efficiency of homes

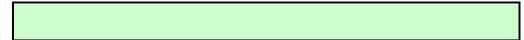
£1.1m over 30 years for environmental improvements to fund works outside the home

Decent Homes

This 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**

including improved parking provision.



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.

New Build

Changes to legislation have provided new opportunities for councils to develop new affordable housing. They enabled the Council to undertake a regeneration scheme to make better use of an unpopular sheltered housing scheme in Leaden Roding and provide 5 new bungalows. The Council plans to continue to re-develop other parts of the site to provide an additional 8 houses in 2013.

In addition, with many of the financial deterrents to local authority new build that were inherent as part of the HRA subsidy system now removed under self financing, the delivery of new affordable housing, to be managed locally, has become even more of a viable option.

The Council has identified numerous development plots throughout the district that once formed the part of gardens of council houses. These could potentially be developed by the Council to deliver each year a modest number of properties for affordable rent or other appropriate tenure as determined through its Housing Strategy. Opportunities such as these for new build will be explored through the Housing Board.

However, opportunities to increase the supply of housing to meet need can essentially only be achieved through negotiation with developers and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in relation to housing developments as part of the planning process. The Council will therefore continue to work closely with partner RSLs to ensure that the maximum number of lettings to Local Authority nominees is achieved.

Future Actions

- Implement the agreed action plan of new housing improvements and service enhancements, funded from the additional resources made available by HRA self-financing
- Continue to manage and maintain council homes effectively and efficiently
- Set up a new framework with development partner to implement the new council house building programme
- Undertake a review of the council's Housing Allocations Scheme taking advantage of the new opportunities and flexibilities provided by the Localism Act 2011
- Explore the use of fixed term tenancies for certain types of housing applicants and formulate a clear approach to when and how they should be used
- Implement a more efficient and cost effective supply chain for repair materials
- Introduce a Tenant Scrutiny Panel to undertake detailed reviews of specific housing services
- Commission a new stock condition survey in 2013/14

Chapter 9 - Sustainable Communities

Successes

- Economic Development Strategy published
- Successful Tenant Forum who actively take part in key housing decisions
- Working towards Achieving Equality standards for the Council

Current Situation

The National Planning Policy Framework details the social role required when delivering new housing. Building an inclusive sustainable community is an important part of this joint Housing Strategy and Local Plan.

“Supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural wellbeing” National Planning Policy Framework

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 came into effect on 1 October 2010 and brings together, harmonises and extends current equality law. The existing anti-discrimination laws have been consolidated into a single Act, which has been introduced to strengthen the laws preventing discrimination and the inequalities that still exist in society today.

The Equality Act has also created changes to earlier legislation and includes discrimination previously unrecognised in legislation. In essence, it creates a new '[Single Equality Duty](#)' on public bodies to tackle discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and encourage good community relations.

The term protected characteristics has replaced equality strands for describing the protected traits held by groups or individuals under anti-discrimination and equality legislation. The earlier separate duties for disability, gender and race have been replaced with a single, more effective framework and the new '[Single Equality Duty 2012-2015](#)' covers:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

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.

As more information becomes available to us, we will identify the best way to listen and support emerging groups that we can identify from the Census and any monitoring information that we are carrying out.

Anti Social Behaviour and Hate Crime

The Council doesn't tolerate anti social behaviour and has a dedicated officer focusing on this issue. Her 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 occurrence of all hate crimes 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.

Economic Development

Economic Development is a priority in Uttlesford, with thriving town centres and successful businesses providing key services.

Our new Economic Development Strategy has recently been published and it 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

Community Forums

Community forums play an important role in ensuring that services provided in Uttlesford match the needs of the local community. Uttlesford District Council works to improve life and services in Uttlesford for all its residents, and does so by seeking the views of people living in the district.

Where relevant, representatives from Essex Police, Essex Highways, NHS West Essex as well as District Councillors and representatives from the council attend the scheduled meetings.

Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement

The Council is fully committed to involving the residents of its housing in service development and improvement, as well as consultation in terms of current service delivery and future service planning.

Following extensive consultation with Tenant Representatives a Tenant Compact was introduced on 1 April 2000 and was reviewed in 2003, 2009 and again in 2011.

The Council employs a full time Tenant Participation Officer who is seen as a vital link between the Council and its tenants and leaseholders. Tenant Participation has been in operation since 1995 and has greatly assisted the

Council in improving its practices and procedures. Tenants and leaseholders play a major role in the consultation process, for example:

- stock option proposals
- production of the annual Housing Strategy
- Statement
- production of the annual Housing Business Plan
- production of the Decent Home Action Plan
- production of the new Tenants Handbook in 2011
- allocations policy
- development of the repair and improvement programme
- improvement of the Housing Service
- selection of contractors

Tenant and leaseholder involvement is seen as vital when considering the aims and objectives of all housing related issues across the district.

Tenant Panel representatives are invited to sit on the Housing Board where they have full voting rights. In addition they may be invited to sit on any other appropriate Working Parties in order that they may have involvement in proposals, ideas and initiatives. The work between the Council and the Tenant Forum has greatly assisted the Council in improving its practices and procedures.

In addition to this a Regulatory Panel is being set up and this will involve a group of independent tenants who will be given access to Performance and benchmarking data for the Housing service. They will provide an independent analysis of Housing Service performance. This work will begin in early 2013.

Future Actions

- Continue to work towards Equality standards
- Continue to build and enhance capacity in the community through working with key partners.
- Implement the Economic Development Strategy
- Continue to build skills and knowledge in the Tenant Forum

Chapter 10 – Resources

This part of the strategy sets out annual resources available for capital and revenue investment in housing services. This includes new homes, private sector renovation, disabled facilities, homelessness and homeless prevention and grants to other organisations that assist the Council in carrying out its housing functions and enhancing the services it provides.

There are two main areas in relation to funding:

- A. Capital** spending is used to finance large scale projects and items that are expected to have a long life for example roof replacements to tenants homes or providing grants to Registered Providers to assist in funding new development.
- B. Revenue** funding covers all of the day to day running costs incurred in running a housing service for example emergency repairs, staffing costs etc.

If we are to deliver the priorities set out within this strategy and the Business Plan, we must consider all funding opportunities and due regard has been given to the following:

Funding opportunities requiring Council support

- Consider financial regulations which allow Councils to borrow money
- Consider, in partnership with our tenants, the various options available to manage our homes

Working with partners

- Continue to support bids to the Homes and Communities Agency for new affordable housing schemes.
- Continue to make bids to the Government, local, sub regional, regional, and European bodies on various housing initiatives.
- Continue to work in partnership with neighbouring authorities, partners and stakeholders.

Maximise existing funding opportunities

- Ensure the major repairs allowance is used to full effect
- Ensure that private sector housing renewal grants are made available to those most in need
- Consider levying a charge on new services where appropriate
- Continue to negotiate planning agreements to secure 40% affordable housing on new developments
- Fund the HRA self financing payment
- Continue to monitor and bid for any additional funding to support our homelessness services.

Funding the Housing Service

1. The Housing Revenue Account – Is funded from tenants rents and service charges, Government grants and other income and is spent on work to Council houses/estates and the provision of support to our tenants.
2. The General Fund – is funded from Government grants and Council Tax payments and is spent on all other housing related spending for example homelessness, improvements to qualifying private sector housing etc.

Details of the Council's housing revenue and capital spending can be found in the HRA Business Plan which is available on our website.

Chapter 11 - Monitoring the Strategy and Performance Review

This chapter describes how the strategy will be monitored, reviewed and further developed through a range of corporate and partner agency forums.

The Strategy is a three year document with a Housing Strategy conference and review planned after a year. Each chapter within this strategy has its own timetabled action plan that sets outcomes, target dates, the lead organisations, partners and resources spanning the three years of the Strategy. Performance information is collected across a range of indicators to help monitor performance, identify trends and assess implementation of the strategy. This information is also used to benchmark our services against other local authorities.

Progress against the action plan and performance information will be reported as follows:

- Quarterly to the Housing Board
- Tenants Forum twice a year
- Annually to the Council's Cabinet

If you require any further information about our Housing Strategy 2012-15, please contact the Planning and Housing Policy Manager on 01799 510543 or email swood@uttlesford.gov.uk

Housing Strategy Action Plan 2012-15

Priority	Action	Timescale	Resources	Department/Officer
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 2014 January 2015	UDC funding	Planning and Housing Policy
	Develop LA new build scheme and deliver 15 homes per year.	April 2015	UDC funding	Housing/Asset Management
	Deliver in partnership with Registered Providers 100 affordable homes per year	April 2013	In existing resources	Planning and Housing Policy
	Deliver new affordable housing with Stansted Area Housing Partnership funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 2 Holloway Crescent • Extra Care scheme in Saffron Walden 	June 2013 April 2015	£1.7 million	Planning and Housing Policy Housing
	Work with Hastoe to deliver the Growth Area Funding projects in Hatfield Heath and Newport	January 2015	GAF funding, £725,000 Hastoe and HCA funding	Planning and Housing Policy
	Work with planning policy to	October 2012	Within existing	Planning and Housing

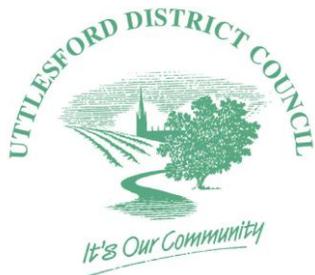
	ensure that the new Local Plan compliments the requirements of the housing strategy		resources	Policy
	Work with Kift Consulting to look at viability on large scale affordable housing schemes	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Planning and Housing Policy
	Attend Local Access Group and investigate partnership working to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design guide for bungalows • Visits to new development schemes to look at accessibility 	March 2014	Within existing resources	Planning and Housing Policy
Delivering Supported Housing	Investigate the reprovision of a new Mental Health facility with Metropolitan housing	January 2013	Within existing resources	Planning and Housing Policy
	Work with Uttlesford Local Action Group (LAG) to identify future need for supported accommodation for Learning Disabilities	March 2013	Within existing resources	Planning and Housing Policy
	Work with partners on the delivery of a supported unit for people with learning disabilities with Hastoe and East Thames	January 2014	Essex CC funding £100k UDC funding	Planning and Housing Policy
	Work with planning policy to identify future provision for Gypsy and travellers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call for sites 	November 2012	Within existing resources	Planning and Housing Policy

	Implement the findings of the SHMA update	December 2012	Within existing resources	Planning and Housing Policy
Older People	Work with partners to deliver an extra care scheme in Saffron Walden	September 2013	Use of SAHP funding	Planning and Housing Policy
	Investigate the potential for a second extra care scheme in Great Dunmow	March 2013	To be explored	Planning and Housing Policy
	On all new developments, request 5% as one and two bedroom bungalows to meet the needs of the ageing population	April 2013	Within existing resources	Planning and Housing Policy
	Review all sheltered housing schemes owned by the Council and upgrade or demolish to meet future needs.	April 2014	Within existing resources	Housing/Asset Management
	Provide Internet cafes in our sheltered schemes for silver surfers.	February 2013	£20k	Housing Management
	Carry out an under occupation survey and establish what incentives would encourage tenants to move to more appropriate accommodation.	April 2013	Within existing resources	Housing Management
Homelessness	Investigate the provision of additional supported accommodation for vulnerable adults	April 2013	Through S106 Support costs to be investigated	Planning and Housing Policy Housing Management
	Investigate the provision of a	April 2014	Council land identified	Planning and Housing

	supported unit in the District for those fleeing Domestic Violence		Support costs to be investigated	Policy Housing Management
	Investigate the Government initiative of discharging Homelessness duty into the private sector	Jan 2013	Within existing resources	Homelessness
	Investigate the reprovion of temporary accommodation that is currently at Mead Court	January 2013	HRA funding	Homelessness
Allocations	Establish a Strategic tenancy policy that ensures that local need is met.	January 2013	Within existing resources	Housing Management
	Review Anti Social Behaviour policy and procedures	April 2013	Within existing resources	Housing Anti Social Behaviour officer
	Update Allocations policy in accordance with new Government guidance	October 2012	Within existing resources	Housing management
Private sector	Employ empty homes officer	October 2012	UDC Funding	Private Sector Housing
	Organise Landlords forum once a year	April 2013	Within existing resources	Private Sector Housing
	Work with Papworth Home Improvement Agency (HIA) to engage OT services	April 2013	UDC funding HIA funding	Private Sector Housing
	Work with Home Improvement Agency to meet local needs	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Private Sector Housing
The Councils Housing Stock	Implement the agreed action plan of new housing improvements and	April 2013	UDC resources	Asset Management

	service enhancements, funded from the additional resources made available by HRA self-financing			
	Set up a new framework with development partner to implement the new council house building programme	April 2013	UDC resources	Asset Management
	Implement a more efficient and cost effective supply chain for repair materials	September 2013	UDC resources	Asset Management
	Undertake new stock condition survey	September 2013	UDC resources	Asset Management
	Introduce a Tenant Scrutiny Panel to undertake detailed reviews of specific housing services	April 2013	UDC resources	Housing Management
	Monitor implications of new Right to Buy legislation	April 2013	UDC resources	Housing Business and Performance
Sustainable Communities	Investigate levels of Black and Minority Ethnic housing need	March 2013	Within existing resources	Planning and housing Policy
	Undertake equality impact assessments on new and existing housing policies.	October 2012	Within existing resources	All
	Continue to work towards Equality standards	April 2013	Within existing resources	All
	Involve service users in shaping the services that they use and that affect their lives	March 2013	Within existing resources	All

	Work with the LSP to ensure Uttlesford has neighbourhoods in which people can afford and wish to live	Ongoing	Within existing resources	All
	Implement the Economic Development Strategy	April 2013	UDC resources	Planning and Housing Policy
	Set up and work with new tenants regulatory panel	January 2013	UDC resources	Housing Business and Performance
Housing Strategy Review	Organise Housing strategy conference to review progress, set new targets and celebrate success	September 2013	Within existing resources	Planning and Housing Policy
	Review action plan quarterly and update once a year	Quarterly report to Housing Board	Within existing resources	Planning and Housing Policy



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 2012-15
2	What is the overall purpose of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	Set housing policy and direction for next 3 years
3	Who may be affected by the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	<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: Planning and Housing Policy Head of Division: Andrew Taylor
5	<p>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.</p> <p>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, Domestic Violence, Genesis Housing (Future homeless provision)</p> <p>Tenant forum and all those living in Council accommodation</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (please state):
Gathering performance data		

<p>6</p>	<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 strategic vision which involves identifying community priorities and forming partnerships to increase sustainability and partnership working. This will be supported by input from the Health and Well Being, Community Safety, Economic Skills, Learning and Transport and Children and Young Families Groups.</p> <p>The 2011 Census resident population is 79,500.</p> <p>There were 17,700 older people in Uttlesford (2011). 25.0% of the population were 19 and under in 2011 (17.3% were 14 and under). Further details will be added when more detailed Census 2011 data becomes available.</p> <p>The break down of our demographic will be updated when the information from the Census is broken down.</p> <p>The BME population of Uttlesford comprises 4.14% of the district population (2001 Census). There are 17 authorised Gypsy and Travellers sites in Uttlesford with a total of 17 caravans (there is one unauthorized site with 2 caravans).</p> <p>In 2009/10 there were 2829.8 people per 100,000 population in Uttlesford supported to live independently. The district score for illness and disability was 63.8 compared with the average of 100 for England (2007).</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="787 178 852 241"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="901 178 982 241">Age</td> <td data-bbox="1120 178 1185 241"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="1234 178 1372 241">Disability</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="787 283 852 346"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="901 283 982 346">Sex</td> <td data-bbox="1120 283 1185 346"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="1234 283 1323 346">Race</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="787 388 852 451"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="901 388 1096 451">Gender Reassignment</td> <td data-bbox="1120 388 1185 451"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="1234 388 1404 451">Sexual Orientation</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="787 493 852 556"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="901 493 1063 556">Religion & Belief</td> <td data-bbox="1120 493 1185 556"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="1234 493 1437 556">Pregnancy and Maternity</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="787 598 852 661"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="901 598 1096 703">Marriage and Civil Partnerships</td> <td data-bbox="1120 598 1185 661"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td data-bbox="1234 598 1356 661">Rural Isolation</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gender Reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion & Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pregnancy and Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marriage and Civil Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rural Isolation
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District profile indicates Housing Strategy is targeting resources at the groups of people with specific need.

The Strategy is inclusive to people who have undergone or are undergoing gender reassignment, people regardless of their marital status, lesbian, gay men, bisexual or heterosexual people, all religious and belief groups, all age groups, people with disabilities, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnerships. The location of dwellings within this strategy will impact on those residents living in rural areas where there is no infrastructure.

[Appropriate measures will be detailed in the Policies and Action plans to measure progress](#)

District profile indicates Housing Strategy is targeting resources at the groups of people with specific need.

The Strategy is inclusive to people who have undergone or are undergoing gender reassignment,

The Housing Strategy is inclusive to people regardless of their marital status

The Strategy is inclusive to all lesbian, gay men, bisexual or heterosexual people.

	<p>The Strategy is inclusive to all religious and belief groups</p>	
<p>7</p>	<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 July with key partners, councilors, tenant forum members and staff. A further event was held for residents. 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. In addition we will make certain that it continues to reflect national and local policies in a changing environment.</p> <p>Many of the actions are also performance indicators or divisional targets so will be monitored.</p> <p>Responses to the consultation were received from developers, agents, registered providers, Homeless representatives, tenant forum, Parish Council and District Councillors</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Performance indicators or targets</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> User satisfaction</p> <p><input 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 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 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 will be provided once the new census data is published. At the moment we are not aware of population changes and will need to 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 the census data is published. Our data is too out of date at the moment to know if we are meeting this housing need.

There are specific sections relating to Supporting older people, Housing Options for younger people, and those with specific housing needs.

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:*

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>	<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>

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 border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No </th> <th>N/A</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Yes	No 	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No 	N/A									
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>									
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>									

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

y		
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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 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 once census data is published.</p>

<input type="checkbox"/> y	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"/> y 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>	 	<p>No further action required. Complete this form and implement any actions you identified in Q13 above</p> <p>Additional evidence gathering required (go to Q17 on Page 7 below).</p> <p>Action planning required (go to Q18 on Page 8 below).</p>
15	<p>If you have any additional comments to make, please include here.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> None</p>	

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>Date:</p> <p>Date of next review:</p> <p><i>For new strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions this should be one year from implementation.</i></p>	<p>Sue Locke</p> <p>17th October 2012</p> <p>5th January 2013 (analyse census data)</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.

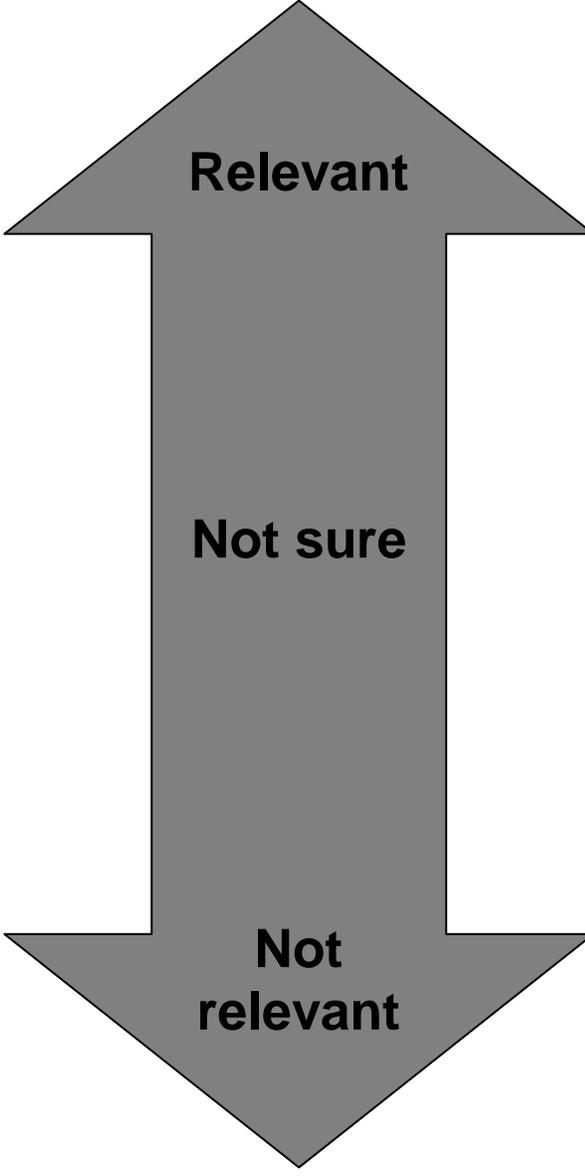
Additional evidence gathering and action planning

- 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):	Suzanna Wood
	Name/s of other assisting officers:	Stephen Rhenius, Sue Locke
	Date:	20 th November 2012
	Date of next review (if any):	November 2013
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

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

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

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 _____, a member of the Council's Equality Standard Working Group Officer.

Email:

Telephone:

Text phone:

Alternatively, contact your Divisional Equality Lead Officer:

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

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 29 November 2012

5

Title: Draft Rent Setting Policy

Author: Roz Millership, Assistant Director
Housing and Environmental Services

Summary

1. This report proposes the adoption of a rent and service charge setting policy which determines the levels by which rents and service charges will be increased on an annual basis.

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board recommends to Cabinet the approval of the draft Rent and Service Charge Setting Policy attached to this report

Financial Implications

3. The Council took on £88.4m in debt following the introduction of self-financing of the Housing Revenue Account. In agreeing a rent and service charge setting policy, the Council will need to take account of the requirement to meet the debt repayments, which are fixed and are first call on the HRA finances prior to service provision or investment in its homes. In addition to the above, there has to be due regard paid to the ability of tenants to pay their rent and therefore rent levels need to be maintained at affordable levels.

Background Papers

4. Localism Act 2011
Department for Communities and Local Government – Implementing Self Financing for Council Housing
Uttlesford District Council HRA Business Plan
Welfare Reform Act (2012)

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	N/A
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	An Equality Impact assessment of the policy will be undertaken once agreed

	in its draft form, prior to submission to Council and prior to each annual rent setting report to Council
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	There are no legal implications associated with the report's recommendations.
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	Tenants in all wards affected
Workforce/Workplace	Continuity in the delivery of services is an important factor when considering rent and service charge increase. As the repayment of HRA debt has first call on available funds, services would need to be reduced in order to limit or reduce revenue expenditure if the rent policy is not followed

Situation

6. The draft rent setting and service charge policy has previously been considered by members of the Housing Board and the Tenants Forum
7. The council received one response during this consultation to question regarding whether RPI + 0.5% after convergence in 2015 is needed and whether this will increase rents above housing association rents if they only increase by RPI
8. There is a requirement for the policy to be reviewed in 2015/16 and comparisons can be made with rents charged by other social housing providers in the district as part of this review
9. It should be noted that the business plan assumes increases in line with those recommended in the rent and service charge setting policy. Increases will give sufficient balances to ensure loans can be repaid and sufficient funds to carry out actions identified in the HRA business plan. By not levying a rent increase which provides for a viable HRA, future opportunities to invest in services, existing and new homes may be lost
10. The draft document has now been finalised and approved by the council's Legal Department and is ready to be approved by the Housing Board before it is put before Cabinet
11. Once the policy has received approval by Cabinet rents for 2013/14 will be calculated according to the policy ready for implementation on 1 April 2013
12. An analysis of proposed rent increases along with the impact on the HRA will be brought to the next housing board

Risk Analysis

13.

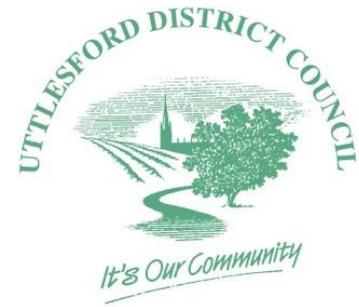
Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
There is a risk to the viability of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan if rent levels do not increase in line with estimations	2 – no current policy in place on rent increases	4 – HRA business plan will no longer be viable	The risks can be mitigated against, and would be classed as low, should future rent increases remain in line with those estimated in the HRA Business Plan to ensure the HRA is viable

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

**RENT AND SERVICE CHARGE
SETTING POLICY**

(Draft)

November 2012

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Uttlesford District Council Housing

Uttlesford District Council – Rent and Service Charge Setting Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish the principles and approach by which Uttlesford District Council will set rent levels and service charges for its housing stock and ensure it meets current government guidance.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 This policy aims to provide a fair and affordable method of calculating rents and service charges within a viable and sustainable Housing Revenue Account (HRA) that enables the Council to deliver effective services, invest in its properties to ensure homes are of a modern standard and to provide new social housing to rent.

3. Policy Objectives

- 3.1 The objectives of the Rent and Service Charge Setting Policy are to:
- i. ensure the viability of the Council's 30 year HRA Business Plan
 - ii. identify how Uttlesford District Council will set rents and service charges
 - iii. provide for rents at an affordable level for Uttlesford District Council tenants
 - iv. detail the process for providing statutory notice to tenants of proposed changes in rent levels
 - v. ensure transparency and value for money when setting and reviewing service charges for both tenants and leaseholders
 - vi. ensure rents do not exceed Government set limits in terms of Rent Rebate Subsidy Limitation

4. Background

- 4.1 As of October 2012 the council owns and manages 2852 rented properties and 122 properties subject to long leases.

- 4.2 Rents have historically been set in accordance with Government guidance following publication of the Government's Housing Green Paper, *Quality and Choice: A decent home for all*, (April 2000). This focused on the need to develop a fairer system of affordable rents in the social housing sector.
- 4.3 Rent restructuring has been in place since 2002 with the initial aim being to achieve the alignment of social sector rents by 2012. Rents have been calculated using a government formula on the basis that:
- i. 70% of a property's rent should be based on relative local earnings
 - ii. A "bedroom weighting" factor is applied to the above so that, other things being equal, smaller properties have lower rents
 - iii. 30% of a property's rent should be based on relative property values, the property value is based on social housing use and that value is fixed at January 1999 valuation levels
- 4.4 Changes to local authority housing finance came into place in April 2012 with the introduction of 'self-financing' as part of the changes brought about by the Localism Act which came into being in November 2011.
- 4.5 Under HRA self-financing the level of debt assigned to the Council was calculated assuming rents would increase in line with the Government's rent convergence formula. The Department of Communities and Local Government guidance 'Self Financing: Planning the Transition' (July 2011) states the following:

Rental assumptions

The self-financing valuation assumes that councils will set their rents in line with the Government's national social rent restructuring policy. This policy assumes the following:

- *that guideline rents will converge with formula rents in 2015-16*
- *rent increases of just above inflation year on year after 2015-16*
- *a limit on individual annual rent increases of RPI (September figure) + 0.5% + £2 per week upto convergence and thereafter for annual increases in formula rents of RPI (September figure)+0.5%.*

The housing benefit 'limit rent' will continue to ensure the Exchequer does not meet the extra costs of rents which are set above policy levels. Government does not have any plans to change the national rent policy set out above. It will however continue to collect data on actual rents charged to help inform the development of any future rent policy. In addition, the Department retains the power to direct the regulator to set a rent standard, but in the council sector, unlike the housing association sector, it has no plans to do so.

- 4.6 The affordability of the Council's HRA Business Plan is based on increasing rents in line with rent restructuring guidance.
- 4.7 Setting rents which are outside of this formula will affect the Council's ability to carry out the planned programme of investment in its homes or require an on-going saving programme or reductions in service provision. In addition, the impact of welfare reform is yet to be fully assessed and witnessed and therefore rental income needs to be maximised.

5. Principles of the Policy

- 5.1 The Council's Rent and Service Charge Setting Policy focuses on the following principles:
- i. the method used to set rents will remain in force for the duration of this policy
 - ii. rents will be set at a level that ensures that the Council's business plan remains viable
 - iii. service charges will be set annually and aim to recover the costs incurred in providing the services
 - iv. the Council will provide tenants and leaseholders with clear information which explains how rents and service charges are set
 - v. where possible guidance will be given to those tenants who have difficulty in managing their finances, ensuring income is maximised, debts are kept to a minimum and the cost of default for the HRA is kept to a minimum

6. Affordability

- 6.1 When calculating rents and service charges account will be taken of the need to balance any increase in rent charged with the potential financial impact on tenants and leaseholders.

7. Annual Rent Increases

- 7.1 The Council will levy an annual rent increase using Government guidelines which have formed the basis of the HRA Business Plan.
- 7.2 This will mean that rents will be calculated using the formula rent calculation until 2015/16. Beyond this there will be rent increases of just

above inflation year on year. There will be a limit on individual annual rent increases of RPI (September figure) + 0.5% + £2 per week up to convergence and thereafter for annual increases in formula rents of RPI +0.5%.

- 7.3 The annual RPI figure is based on that published for September preceding the April increase for each year.
- 7.4 Rent increases will be effective from the first Monday in April each year, for all tenants.
- 7.5 Projected target convergence rents will be applied immediately with new lettings.

8. New Homes

- 8.1 To ensure their financial viability 'affordable rents' will be set for new homes built by the Council where external support or use of surplus right to buy receipts are used. The method for setting such rents will be in line with the guidance published by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) in their Affordable Homes Programme Framework (February 2011) and in accordance with Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England (March 2012).
- 8.2 Affordable rents will be increased in accordance with any current regulatory guidance.

9. Notification of a Rent Increase

- 9.1 The Council will give at least one month's notice of any increase in the rent it charges. Rent increases will be applied in line with Section 13(2) of the Housing Act 1988, and use the form prescribed for this purpose as it applies at the time of the increase and following any amendment to this.

10 Service Charges

- 10.1 The overall aim of the policy is to ensure that service charges are set based on the actual costs of the services provided and that the method of calculation is transparent and can be easily understood.
- 10.2 The service charges will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the charges collected relate directly to actual costs incurred. Service charges will be based on the actual costs incurred in the prior year.
- 10.3 The Council will also provide details of actual costs incurred to ensure that service charges can be scrutinised by tenants if required.

- 10.4 For leaseholders the Council will comply with the terms of Section 153 of the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002, providing clear and transparent information to leaseholders regarding service charges and management fees.
- 10.5 Support charges are detailed separately and are determined by the Supporting People rules.

11. Responsibility

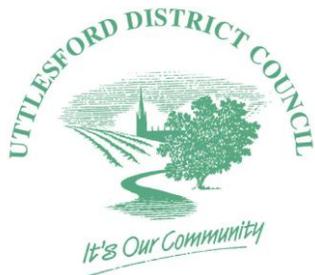
- 11.1 The Cabinet is responsible for setting the level of annual rent increases and ensuring tenants are given the statutory period of notice of any subsequent rent increases.
- 11.2 The Assistant Director of Housing and Environmental Services is responsible for arranging rent assessment of all new properties.

12. Consultation

- 12.1 The Council will consult with involved tenants using existing consultation mechanisms.
- 12.2 The Council will also consult with involved tenants and leasehold with regard to the provision of services and the charges made for these services, to ensure these are effective and provide value for money.

13. Review

- 13.1 The Rent and Service Charge Setting Policy will become effective from 1 January 2013. A review will be undertaken during the year 2015/16.
- 13.2 Following this it is the intention to maintain a 5 year cycle of review of the Policy.



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.	Rent and Service Charge Policy
2	What is the overall purpose of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	To establish how the council will set rent and service charge levels
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 type="checkbox"/> Staff <input 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
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.	<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 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 type="checkbox"/> Performance indicators or targets</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> User satisfaction</p> <p><input 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 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	<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 level of rents and service charges that tenants are charged is based on the type of property and the services required to maintain common areas.</p> <p>Leaseholders will be re-charged in accordance with their lease agreement for the cost of the services provided</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>
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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>The policy does not represent any specific diverse groups. It ensures that council tenants and leaseholders are treated equally regarding of circumstance.</p> <p>Guidance will be given to those tenants who have problems managing their finances.</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	<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>	
----	---	--

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

Future Impact

12	<p>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</p>
----	--

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).

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.

None

Completion		
16	Name and job title (Assessment lead officer)	Roz Millership
	Name/s of any assisting officers and people consulted during assessment: Date: Date of next review: <i>For new strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions this should be one year from implementation.</i>	Natalie Leatham 25 th October 2012 25 th October 2013
<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.

- (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:

A review of the policy will take place in 2015/2016. After this the policy will be reviewed in 5 year cycles.

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

Date proposals to be implemented and lead officer:

The proposal is that the policy will become effective from January 2012

Where implementation is not immediate, please state in which service plan or strategy the proposed actions will be integrated:

N/A Policy came into force in January 2012

Monitor arrangements (please include full details for audit purposes):

The equality impact assessment will be reviewed if and inequalities are identified

or in 12 months of the date of the original assessment.

Additional Comments

19 If you have any additional comments to make, please include here: None

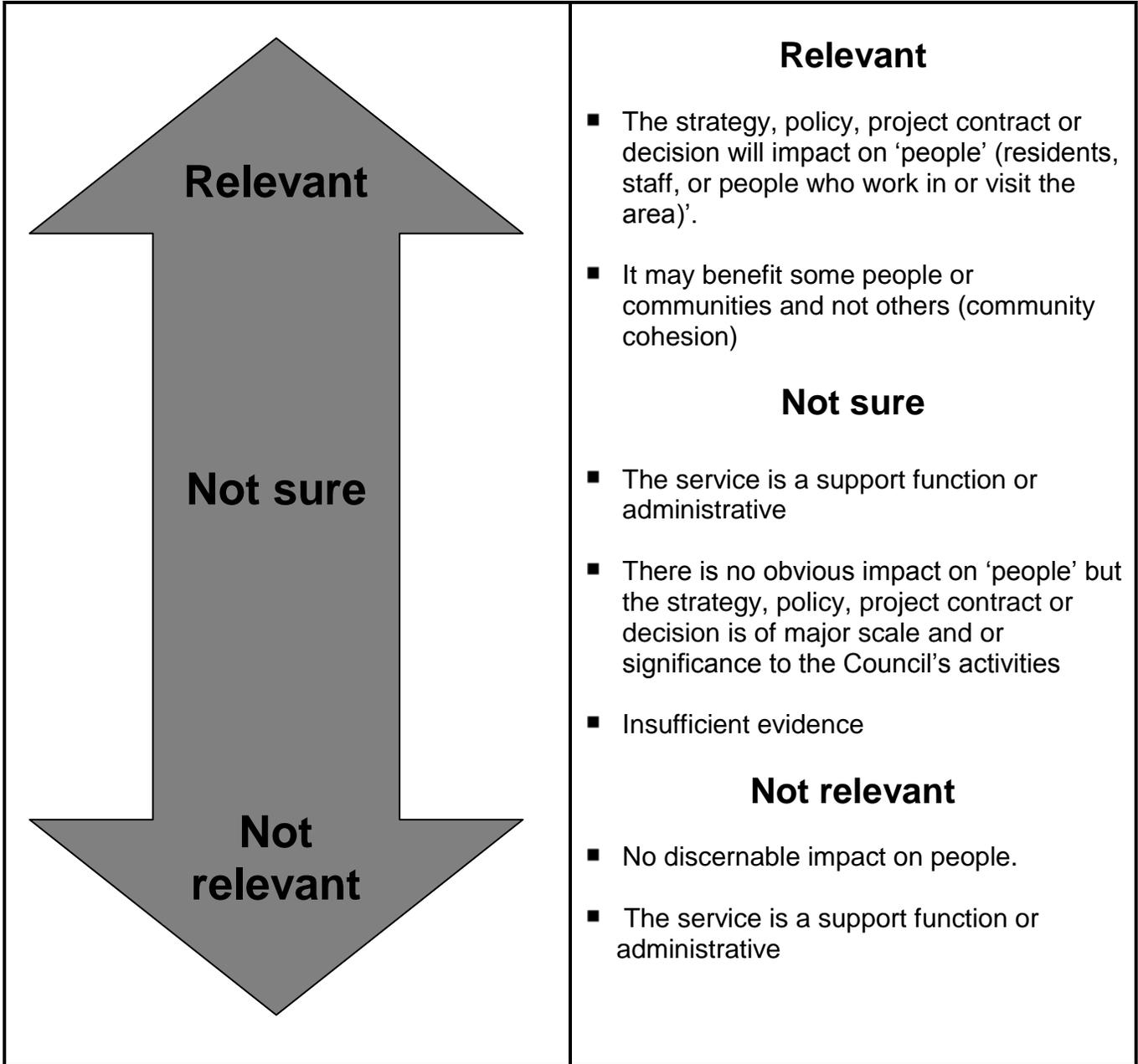
Completion

20 **Name and job title** (Lead Officer): Roz Millership
Name/s of other assisting officers: Natalie Leatham
Date: 25th October 2012
Date of next review (if any): 25th October 2013

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 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

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- 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.

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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: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 29th November 2012

6

Title: Allocations Policy

**Author: Judith Snares – Housing Needs and
Landlord Services Manager Ext 671**

Summary

Following on from the Localism Act 2011 there was a need to review and amend the allocations policy to incorporate the changes required by the Act and to consider what other changes the council wished to make, given the increase in flexibility, that The Act and 'The Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England', allows. The draft policy has now finished a period of public consultation and is ready to be considered further by Members of the Housing Board.

Recommendations

1. That the Housing Board recommends to Cabinet the approval of the draft Allocations Policy attached to this report

Financial Implications

None. There are no costs associated with the recommendations

Background Papers

Localism Act 2011
Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England 2012
Letter from the British Legion (Circulated to Members)
The Allocation of Housing (Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012
Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 - Consultation

Impact

2.

Communication/Consultation	Web and partner agencies
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	EIA completed

Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Changes required to meet changes in legislation
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	Within existing resources

Situation

- The draft Allocations Policy has previously been considered by Members of the Housing Board and the Tenants Forum. It has also completed a period of public consultation.
- The draft document has now been finalised and approved by the council's Legal Department and is ready to be approved by the Housing Board before it is put before Cabinet.

Once the policy has received approval by Cabinet it is hoped that any software changes that are required will allow for the policy to be implemented by the 1st January 2012.

Risk Analysis

5.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Legal challenge for not implementing non-discretionary changes within the Localism Act	2 Applicants who feel they have been adversely affected because policy does not comply with legislation may take legal action against the council	2 The council would incur legal costs if action was taken through the courts	Allocations policy to be amended to reflect legislative changes required

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
POLICY/SCHEME**

(Draft)

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Uttlesford District Council Housing Allocations Policy/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 Social Landlords (RSL) 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, and has regard to the Allocation of Accommodation: Choice Based Lettings Code of Guidance 2008, Statutory Guidance on the Allocation of Social Housing 2009, The Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local Housing Authorities England 2012 and recent case law.
- 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, you are able to register your interest in properties which are suitable for your 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. Where a homeless applicant has failed to bid or accept a property and needs to move on from temporary accommodation
- vii. 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
- 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 Registered Provider's 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 RSLs 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 RSL 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 RSL tenants
 - iii. 16 and 17 year olds owed a full housing duty by a local housing authority under homelessness legislation.

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.

5.2 Exclusions from the Housing Register

- 5.2.1 Uttlesford District 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.

5.3 Unacceptable Behaviour

5.3.1 “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.”

5.3.2 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.

5.3.3 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 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: Behaviour may not be considered serious enough for example if, rent arrears have resulted from factors outside the applicant’s control, e.g. delays in Housing Benefit payments or liability for a partner’s debts.

5.3.4 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.

5.3.5 All decisions made by Uttlesford District Council in relation to excluding applicants from the housing register are subject to review if requested by the applicant (see 16).

5.4 Notifying an ineligible applicant

5.4.1 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. You may also seek advice from other agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- 6.1.3 You 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 your entitlement to housing accommodation to be made.
- 6.1.4 We will ask you to declare that you do not have the financial means to resolve your housing need yourself by open market private purchase and provide the information we need to verify this. We will refer to current market house prices when making a decision. Financial means includes any income, equity, savings or any mortgage borrowing capacity which you may have. If you do have the financial means to resolve your own housing need this will be reflected in the band in which your application is placed.

6.2 Joint Applicants

- 6.2.1 You may include on your application, anyone who could be reasonably expected to live with you. Where you are in a permanent relationship and are wishing to have a shared application you may be a joint applicant with another person although for a joint application, you must both not be ineligible for reasons set out in paragraph in paragraph 5 above.

6.3 Documents

- 6.3.1 As part of your application, you will be asked to provide documentary proof of certain things such as:
 - i. Photographic proof of your identity and that of all those included on your application
 - ii. Your current address
 - iii. Details of any dependants living with you

- iv. Your income
- v. Your Savings
- vi. Details relating to previous accommodation where appropriate

6.3.2 We may require additional information according to your circumstances and may sometimes need to contact third parties to verify the information you give us. By completing the application form you are giving consent for us to do this.

6.3.3 If all the required supporting documents are not received within 28 days the application will be cancelled.

6.3.4 If assistance is needed in making an application to the Housing Register help will be available from the Housing Services Department.

6.4 User guide

6.4.1 Assuming you have been found to be eligible to join the Register, we will assess your application and you will receive a letter of confirmation and access to an on-line Scheme User Guide which will tell you:

- i. Your HomeOption identification number;
- ii. The Band that your application has been placed in and the date from which this takes effect
- iii. The size of home for which you are eligible
- iv. Details of how you can register interest for a home under CBL

6.4.2 If from your application we have identified that you may need assistance with using the Scheme we will add your name to a database of applicants for whom assistance with making expressions of interest is offered. Your name can be added to this list at anytime upon your request.

6.4.3 A printed version of the user Guide can be provided on request.

6.5 Renewal of applications

6.5.1 In order to keep the Housing Register up to date, applicants will be required to renew their application when required by the Council. Normally this will be annually and a letter will be sent

to address registered on the application or by email to the registered email address.

6.5.2 If you fail to renew your application within 28 days you will be deleted from the Housing Register and given written notification to that effect.

6.6 Cancelling your application

6.6.1 We will only cancel your application if:

- i. You have written to us to ask us to cancel it, or
- ii. You have not responded to our renewal requests (see paragraph 6.5 above) or
- iii. You have accepted an offer of accommodation through the choice based lettings scheme
- iv. You have ceased to be eligible (see paragraph 5 above), or
- v. You have made false or deliberately misleading statements in connection with your application (see paragraphs 18 below)
- vi. You have not provided documentary proofs for your application within 28 days of completing the on-line form

6.6.2 If you are allocated and have accepted accommodation through the Allocation Scheme your application will be cancelled from the Housing Register and you will need to make a fresh application if you wish the Council to consider a further request for rehousing from you.

7. Access to Information

7.1 Upon written request, as an applicant, you will be able to;

- i. receive a copy of your details entered on the Housing Register free of charge
- ii. receive copies of documents provided by you
- iii. have access to your 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 your case

- v. be informed in writing of any decision about the facts of your case and of your right to request a review of any such decision
- vi. receive general information to enable you to assess;
- vii. how your application is likely to be treated
- viii. whether accommodation appropriate to your needs is likely to be available and, if so, when

8. Assessment of Housing Need

8.1 Assessing Housing Need

- 8.1.1 Your housing circumstances are assessed on your individual circumstances and your 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 & 3.2.
- 8.1.5 Where an applicant or one of joint applicants is a tenant of Uttlesford District 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

You do not have the financial means to resolve your housing need yourself by open market private purchase, and you 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 RSL 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 RSL 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)

8.6.1.2 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.

8.6.1.3 **BAND B**

You do not have the financial means to resolve your housing need yourself by open market private purchase, and you meet at least one of the following criteria

- i. Serious Medical/Welfare award
- 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 8 weeks from the date they are placed into this band. If they have not been successful after the end of this period they will be made one offer of suitable accommodation 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
- viii. The remedies that are needed to reduce the hazard will require the property to be vacated for a significant period of time
- ix. The cost of the remedies are beyond the means of the applicant (where applicable)

- x. The remedies will make the property unsuitable for occupation by the applicant
- xi. Applicants assessed as meeting band A criteria but with no local connection to Uttlesford
- xii. Multiple needs – Applicants with four or more needs in band C will move to band B

8.6.1.4 **BAND C**

You do not have the financial means to resolve your housing need yourself by open market private purchase, and you 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

- xii. the remedies that are needed to reduce the hazard will require the property to be vacated for a significant period of time; or
- xiii. the cost of the remedies are beyond the means of the applicant (where applicable); or
- xiv. the remedies will make the property unsuitable for occupation by the applicant
- xv. Applicants assessed as meeting band B criteria but with no local connection to Uttlesford.

8.6.1.5 **BAND D**

You do not have the financial means to resolve your housing need yourself by open market private purchase and you meet the following criteria

- i. Applicants assessed as meeting band C criteria but with no local connection to Uttlesford

8.6.1.6 **BAND E**

- 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.
- vii. Owner occupiers (note: owner occupiers will normally only be offered tenancies in sheltered accommodation)

- viii. **All other applicants** - including those who have the financial means to resolve their housing need through private sector purchase

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. Reasonable preference, where appropriate, is awarded in accordance with the legal duties of the Council.

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 RSL.
- 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 Overcrowded applicants with no local connection to Uttlesford living in either private rented or social housing will be placed in band D.
- 9.2.6 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.
- 9.2.7 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.
- 9.2.8 Overcrowding priority will not be given if someone moved into the applicants' household making them overcrowded. This will be looked at on welfare grounds.
- 9.2.9 Where an applicant is pregnant and they are entitled to a larger property they will not receive overcrowded priority until that baby is born.

9.3 Children sharing bedrooms

- 9.3.1 Children of the same sex are expected to share a bedroom until one of them reaches the age of 16.
- 9.3.2 Applications will only be considered for overcrowding priority if the applicant is the main person who cares for the children named on the application. Welfare or medical grounds may be considered in other circumstances.
- 9.3.3 Applicants who have two children of opposite sex where one is over 10 years of age in a two bedroom council or RSL property who need a three bedroom property will be placed in band B.

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 RSL 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 Banding 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 and temporary or insecure accommodation

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.

9.8.3 Under the Choice Based Lettings Scheme all accepted homeless applicants 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.

9.8.4 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 8 weeks (4 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 make the applicant one final offer of suitable accommodation. This will be in whichever tenure is available first. 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.

- 9.8.5 When a private rented property becomes available it will be offered on the same principles as the through CBL i.e. to the accepted homeless applicant who is suitable for that property and who is in the highest Band and has been waiting the longest.

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. the council accepts a duty to provide permanent council or RSL housing **and**
- 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 **or**
- viii. the council is unable to provide any suitable temporary accommodation

- 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 Other Homeless households not owed a duty

Other homeless applicants who are not owed 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) are still entitled to reasonable preference and will be placed in band C of the scheme.

9.11 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 If the applicant is subsequently deemed to be not working with the Council they 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 agreed as homeless 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 and hardship

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 secure tenants or tenants of RSLs (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 moves from a 3 or 4 bedroom property to a 1 or 2 bedroom property owned by the Council or an RSL, they will be offered £500 to assist

with removal costs plus £500 for each bedroom ‘released’, subject to a maximum payment of £2,000.

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 Housing related debt

9.25.1 The Council will generally move to one band below their housing needs assessment any applicant with housing related debt.

9.25.2 This includes Council and RSL tenants who have rent arrears at the time of their application. Council and RSL tenants will not be offered a tenancy until all rent arrears have been cleared.

9.25.3 Housing Associations may also hold their own policy on debt.

9.25.4 Uttlesford District Council also expects applicants to clear any private sector housing related debts that they owe, before an offer of a tenancy is made, where it is clearly within their means to do this (for example where the debt is relatively low and the applicant has a reasonable disposable income or significant savings to draw on).

9.25.5 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.

9.25.6 The applicant shall become eligible to move to the band that reflects their housing assessment as long as the agreed repayments have been made for at least four months even though this may mean only a small proportion of the total outstanding debt has been repaid.

9.25.7 Applicants with housing related debt also includes applicants who owe money through the Council's Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme.

9.25.8 All cases of housing related debt will be considered on an individual basis taking account of all the information provided by all interested parties.

9.26 Applicants who have deliberately made their housing situation worse

9.26.1 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.

9.26.2 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.

9.26.3 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.

9.26.4 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.

9.27 Owner-occupiers

9.27.1 Owner-occupiers or applicants who own other residential property either in this country or abroad will be placed in band E. 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.

9.27.2 Owner-occupiers generally will not be able to move to another band or be awarded medical or welfare priority.

9.27.3 Property owners over 60 may be moved to a higher band if they are awarded medical or welfare priority **and** have been assessed as being unable to meet their housing need from their own resources.

9.27.4 Owner-occupiers will be able to express an interest in a property if they wish to do so, however, because a council or RSL tenancy can only be held as a main home, homes are not usually offered to applicants who still own their home or are paying a residential mortgage. An exception will be made where

an elderly owner-occupier wants to express an interest in sheltered accommodation.

9.28 Applicants in ‘tied’ accommodation which is suitable for their needs

9.28.1 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.

9.28.2 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.

9.29 Deciding the effective date

9.29.1 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 they applied for 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.

9.30 Local Connection

9.30.1 **To have a local connection an applicant must meet at least one of the following criteria a-e below:**

- i. Have lived in the district of Uttlesford for either:
 - Six out of the last twelve months or three out of the last five years;
- ii. Have **permanent paid work** in the district

- iii. Have an immediate family member who has lived in the district for at least five years. Immediate family members include:
 - Parents;
 - Adult children;
 - Brothers or sisters;
 - Other family members who are providing on-going support.

9.30.2 If immediate family members live in the district but have been here for less than 5 years and are able to provide evidence that the applicant needs to live near them for support then this residence requirement for family members may be reduced.

- i. Need to be near special medical or support services, which are only available in the district.
- ii. Other special circumstances as agreed by a Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager

9.30.3 The following categories of person will be exempt from local connection criteria.

- i. Applicants who are serving members of the regular forces or who have served as regular in the regular forces within five years of their date of application
- ii. 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.

10. Types of Tenancies

10.1 The type of tenancy you will be offered will be in accordance with the Uttlesford 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 tenancies in accordance with the Council's Introductory Tenancy Scheme.

11. Tenancy Start Dates

- 11.1 The Council will allow you 7 days to reach a decision whether to accept any Council accommodation you are offered, although we may allow longer having regard to your personal circumstances.
- 11.2 Where possible you will be given an opportunity to view the property you are being offered before you have to give the Council a decision.
- 11.3 If you are interested in the tenancy you 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

- 12.1 Internal decorations to a property are the tenant's responsibility. However, if a general needs property offered to a housing applicant is, in the view of the inspecting officer, in need of redecoration, a paint order will be delivered to the property as a contribution towards costs. The paint order will consist of 2.5l each of white undercoat & gloss and 20l of magnolia emulsion.

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.
 - 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 your suitability and need for support must be completed before any tenancy is offered. If you are considered unsuitable for sheltered accommodation, you will be advised and given advice on homes more suitable to your needs.
 - ii. When assessing your suitability for sheltered housing you will also be given advice about the allocation scheme and how to bid. If you need help this will be noted and appropriate arrangements made.

15. Properties designed or adapted for people with physical disabilities

- 15.1 If you need a home suitable for wheelchair users or need 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 you consider you have been unfairly or unreasonably treated having regard to the provisions of the Allocations Scheme you have the right to request a review of your case. (i.e. the band they have been placed in)

- 16.2 In the first instance, you must appeal in writing to the Housing Needs Team Leader and you will receive a written response within 10 working days.
- 16.3 If, having received this response you wish to make a further appeal you will write to the Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager who will then review your 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 your housing register application (see paragraph 6.6 above)
 - iii. Possession proceedings for any tenancy you have 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 Registered Social Landlord 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

Size of Accommodation Allocated:

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.

Applicants with a medical or social need for a larger property

Applicants can apply for an extra bedroom due to their medical or social needs. Their circumstances will be considered and evidence supporting the need for an extra room will be required.

Extra rooms for carers

If an applicant needs an extra room for a carer, the council will investigate and offer advice on the need for an extra room. The council will make the decision. The guidelines are as follows:

- ◆ Social Services should be able to give supporting evidence that a 'live in' carer is needed, and that if the support was not given voluntarily or paid for by the client, they would qualify for funding for a 'live in' carer.
- ◆ If one person has two carers working on a rota to cover 24 hours we would assume that they only needed one bedroom.
- ◆ In most cases only one extra bedroom for a carer will be considered. Extra rooms for a carer's dependants cannot usually be considered.

If the applicant does not need 24 hour care or intensive support an additional bedroom would not normally be considered, however an individual assessment will be made.

Local Lettings Plans – Rural Housing

A Local Letting Plan is an arrangement for the nomination of applicants with specific recognised needs related to the type or design of the new affordable housing.

Where vacancies arise in properties that have been built in rural localities under exceptional planning arrangements (outside of development limits), only applicants who comply with the requirement to have a connection with the locality can be considered.

This may also be considered by the Council on a site subject to the terms of a planning agreement (Section 106 site) (within development limits) where the Parish/Town Council can demonstrate a housing need locally.

Local Lettings Plans - Stansted Area Housing Partnership

Some of the Council's allocations on new developments are provided by the Stansted Area Housing Partnership.

It was set up to provide affordable housing across the Uttlesford and Harlow Districts and parts of Braintree and East Hertfordshire Districts. The scheme was funded by Stansted Airport Ltd through the planning obligations of a Section 106 agreement to provide a £2.2m fund for the provision of an affordable housing scheme to be made available, through a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), social rented accommodation and assisted home ownership.

The scheme operates cross border nominations and follows the guidelines below:

Host Authority

The authority in whose area the development is taking place will be entitled to 40% of the balance of nominations to homes on the scheme.

Nominating Authority

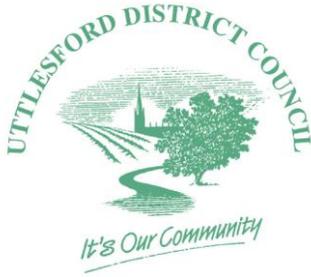
The three authorities in whose area a scheme is not being developed will be entitled to nominate to 20% of the balance for each of the three authorities, of the homes being provided under the scheme.

Applicants on the Housing Register can express an interest in a property in the local Authority areas of East Herts, Braintree or Harlow.
(Taken from SAHP Nominations protocol)

Local Lettings Plans – 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 a local lettings scheme will be jointly made by the landlord of the property and the council. On new developments, the partnership may consider widening the eligible bands for home types on first lettings, again taking equal opportunities and legal issues into account



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.	Draft Allocations Policy - November 2012
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 from anywhere in the country who are not subject to immigration control.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff <input 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): 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> <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 type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Religion & Belief</td> <td><input 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 type="checkbox"/>	Religion & Belief	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	Religion & Belief	<input 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.</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 is aimed at the population as a whole who meet the government eligibility criteria.</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>

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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</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No* </p> <p><input 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> <p><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</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> There is insufficient evidence to make a robust judgement. Additional evidence gathering required (go to Q17 on Page 7 below).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Inequalities have been identified which cannot be easily addressed. Action planning required (go to Q18 on Page 8 below).</p>
15	<p>If you have any additional comments to make, please include here.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None</p>

Completion	
16	<p>Name and job title (Assessment lead officer) Judith Snares – Housing Options Homelessness Manager</p>
	<p>Name/s of any assisting officers and people consulted during assessment: Natalie Leatham</p> <p>Date: 20/05/2010</p> <p>Date of next review: 01/2012</p> <p><i>For new strategies, policies, projects, contracts or decisions this should be one year from implementation.</i> Reviewed 06/07/2012 – No changes to be made, no complaints received regarding the protected characteristics. NL.</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

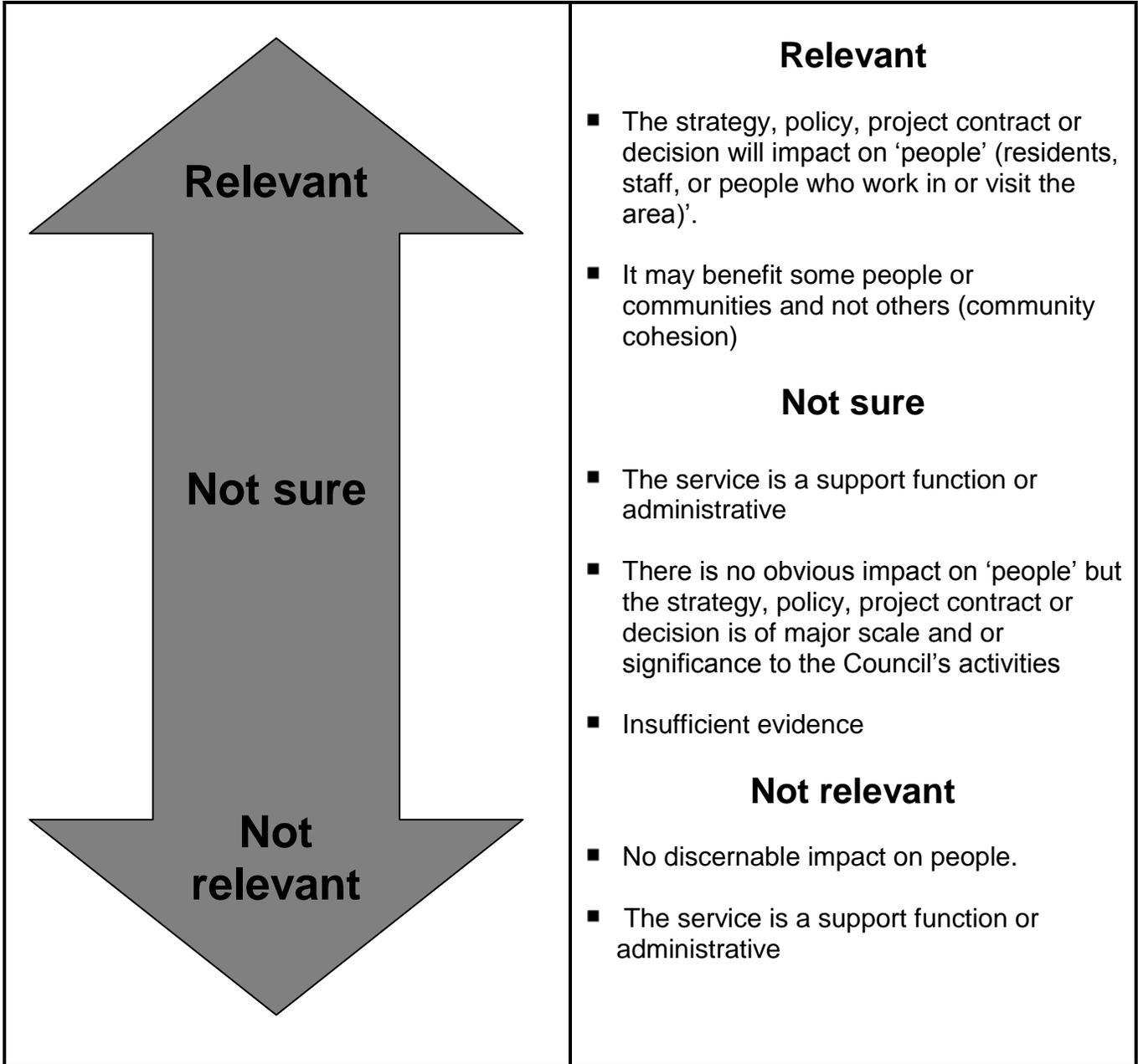
- 17 If your fast-track assessment indicated that **complex issues** or **inequalities** were identified which could not be easily addressed, or you had **insufficient evidence** to make a judgement, you need to undertake an additional evidence gathering and action planning process. This is described 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	<p>The conclusions and agreed proposals: The policy is still in consultation and will be delivered to the Housing Board and Cabinet November 2012</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): Legal Housing Initiative task group 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, Housing Board, Website, Openday consultation event.</p> <p>Date proposals to be implemented and lead officer: To be approved by Housing Board and Cabinet will be implemented by the 1 Jan 2013 - Judith Snares</p> <p>Where implementation is not immediate, please state in which service plan or strategy the proposed actions will be integrated: To be implemented after final approval from the Housing Board and Cabinet.</p> <p>Monitor arrangements (please include full details for audit purposes): Continue to monitor through performance indicators and as previously mentioned.</p>
Additional Comments	

19	If you have any additional comments to make, please include here:	<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> None
Completion		
20	Name and job title (Lead Officer): Name/s of other assisting officers: Date: Date of next review (if any):	Judith Snares – Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager. Natalie Leatham. 16/11/2012 Reviewed 01/01/2014
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: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 29th November 2012

7

Title: Tenancy Policy

Author: Judith Snares – Housing Needs and
Landlord Services Manager Ext 671

Summary

Following the adoption by the council of The West Essex Tenancy Strategy the council has now developed its tenancy policy in line with this tenancy strategy.

Recommendations

1. That the Housing Board recommends to Cabinet the approval of the draft Tenancy Policy attached to this report

Financial Implications

2. None - There are no costs associated with the recommendations

Background Papers

Localism Act 2011
West Essex Tenancy Strategy

Impact

- 3.

Communication/Consultation	Web and partner agencies
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	EIA has been carried out
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Implications for the type of tenure the council will offer to future tenants and on what grounds tenancies will not be renewed. The policy will need to comply with legislation and be compatible with the Human Rights Act.

Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

4. The Localism Act 2011 introduced new flexibilities for local authorities and registered providers (RPs) to offer social housing tenancies for a fixed-term. The Act also introduced a new statutory duty on local authorities to publish a tenancy strategy that has been developed in consultation with RPs. The new flexibilities of the Act are designed to ensure the best use of social housing stock.
5. The council has been working with Epping and Harlow councils to produce a West Essex Tenancy Strategy. This is an overarching strategy that registered providers and the council's housing departments must have regard to when deciding on their tenancy policy.
6. At a previous meeting of the Housing Board, Members considered what stance they wish to take with regard to a local Uttlesford Tenancy Policy. Having considered various proposals Members agreed that nine year (plus one year introductory) fixed term tenancies should be offered to new tenants on three bedroom houses only. The views of the Housing Board and Tenants Forum have been incorporated into this draft Tenancy Policy.

Risk Analysis

13.

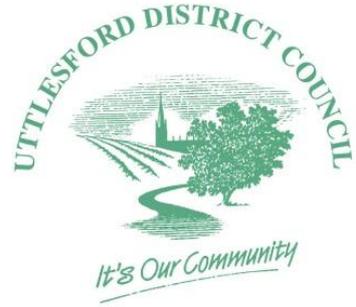
Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions

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.



UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

TENANCY POLICY

(Draft)

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Uttlesford District Council

Tenancy Policy 2012 (Draft)

1. Background

- 1.1 This tenancy policy fulfils the requirements of the Localism Act 2011) to have a tenancy policy. This policy has been developed with due regard to the West Essex Tenancy Strategy. It has also been subject to consultation with tenants and Members of Uttlesford District Council.

2. Context

- 2.1 This Policy outlines Uttlesford District Council's approach to tenancy management, including interventions to sustain tenancies and prevent unnecessary evictions. The policy sets out:
- i. The type of tenancies we will grant and the circumstances in which we will grant tenancies of a particular type.
 - ii. The circumstances in which fixed term tenancies will not be renewed
 - iii. The use of Affordable rents

3. Aims of the Policy

- 3.1 The aims of this policy are to:
- i. To act to support and sustain tenancies;
 - ii. Supporting the development of new homes and sustainable communities across Uttlesford;
 - iii. Make the best use of the available social housing stock, including tackling under-occupation, and making best use of adapted housing for those with a disability.

4. Sustaining Tenancies

- 4.1 We will ensure that all new tenants are provided with clear information concerning the terms of their tenancy agreement and of the consequences of failing to keep to those terms.
- 4.2 We will intervene at an early stage when we become aware of breaches of tenancy agreements. Following investigations, we will seek to ensure that tenants receive appropriate support to help them keep their home. Residents in supported and sheltered housing will have a support plan

identifying the type of support needed and these will be reviewed regularly. We will refer vulnerable residents in general needs housing to floating support services or other support services where applicable.

- 4.3 Where tenants have rent arrears, we will seek possession only where all preventative methods such as financial inclusion advice have been reviewed and exhausted.

5. Taking account of the needs of vulnerable residents

- 5.1 An equality impact assessment (EIA) has been undertaken on this policy, taking account the different strands of diversity. The EIA will be reviewed whenever this policy is reviewed. The EIA will available on the Uttlesford Council Website

6. Type of Tenancy to be Granted

- 6.1 We will provide new tenants with a written agreement (a Tenancy Agreement) that sets out their rights and responsibilities and our rights and obligations. This will be fully explained at the sign up interview.
- 6.2 We will grant all new tenants a one year introductory tenancy followed by a 9 year fixed term tenancy on all Uttlesford three or more bedroom properties and any other property that has been extensively adapted.
- 6.3 On all Uttlesford District Council properties other than those in 6.2 we will grant Introductory Tenancies to all our new tenants, in accordance with our Introductory Tenancy Policy, including properties let at Affordable Rents. Introductory Tenancies will run initially for twelve months. Should there be no breach within the first twelve months of this tenancy, this will automatically convert into a Secure Tenancy. Details of our use of Introductory Tenancies are set out in our Tenancy Agreement, along with the arrangement for appeals.
- 6.4 We will grant Secure Tenancies to new tenants on all types of permanent accommodation where they already have security of tenure, i.e. they already have an Assured or Secure Tenancy. These could be applicants who are transferring from within Uttlesford Council or from a Registered Provider or have completed a mutual exchange.
- 6.5 Where Uttlesford District Council properties are let as emergency temporary housing, such as in cases of homelessness, tenants will be granted Non – Secure temporary tenancies.

7. Ending Fixed Term Tenancies

- 7.1 Where a fixed term tenancy has been granted the tenancy will be formally reviewed not less than 6 months before it is due to end.
- 7.2 The criteria for not renewing a tenancy at the end of the fixed term will be as follows

- i. Under occupation – if the tenant is under-occupying the accommodation (when taking into account people required to live with the tenant e.g. family members and not lodgers), then a secure tenancy will be offered on a suitable smaller property, providing all of the other requirements for the allocation of a property are met.
- ii. Overcrowding – if the tenant is statutorily overcrowded in the accommodation then a fixed term or secure tenancy will be offered on a larger property, providing all of the other requirements for the allocation of a property are met.
- iii. Properties with major adaptations - if there is no-one in occupation who is in need of these adaptations then a further fixed term or secure tenancy will be offered of an alternative property of a suitable size, providing all of the other requirements for the allocation of a property are met.
- iv. Conduct of tenancy – If the tenant or a member of their household has committed serious acts of anti-social behaviour or any other serious breach of their tenancy conditions, including rent arrears greater than the equivalent of 8 weeks rent, a possession order has been granted or a Notice of Seeking Possession has been served which has not expired.

7.3 If any of the criteria above apply but there are special circumstances, including where tenants are active foster carers or where a tenant or a member of their household has a terminal illness or a disability a further fixed term tenancy of 2 years may be granted to monitor the special circumstances.

7.4 If it is decided, as a result of the tenancy review, that on expiry of the tenancy a new fixed term tenancy will not be granted, written notice advising the tenant of this will be served at least 6 months before the expiry of the tenancy in accordance with Section 107 (D) of the Localism Act 2011. The notice will contain the reasons for the decision and notify the tenant of their right to request a review and the time within which a request may be made. Should a tenant seek a review and it is dismissed, the landlord will be able to seek possession of the property.

7.5 If a tenant disagrees with the decision reached not to renew their fixed term tenancy, they may appeal this decision. The appeal process will be as follows:-

- i. The appeal can be made any time from the serving of Notice until the end of the fixed term tenancy.
- ii. The appeal must be in writing stating all the reasons on which the appeal is based and providing documentary evidence where appropriate.

- iii. The appeal will be made to the Assistant Director of Housing and Environmental Service or their equivalent.
 - iv. Tenants will be signposted to independent agencies to assist them with making an appeal.
- 7.6 No less than six months in advance of a tenancy being terminated Uttlesford Council officers will offer advice and assistance to help the tenant find alternative housing. This will include:-
- i. working proactively with the tenant to assist them to explore their options for alternative housing
 - ii. signposting/referring them to relevant support agencies

8. Affordable Rents

- 8.1 We will grant Tenancies let at Affordable Rent for our new build homes. The use of affordable rent is to ensure that we can continue to provide new affordable housing to respond to on-going housing needs. Affordable rents will be set in line with guidance published by the Homes and Communities Agency and in accordance with Uttlesford's Rent and Service Charge Policy. These tenancies will be clearly marketed as such.

9. Succession Rights

- 9.1 These are as detailed in our Tenancy Agreement.
- 9.2 Succession Policy for tenants whose tenancy started before 1 April 2012 is as follows:-
- i. If you are a sole tenant and are married **then your spouse will automatically succeed to the tenancy provided he or she** is living in the property at the date of your death. If you are not married or are separated and your spouse does not live in the property then if a close relative (as defined by the Housing Act 1985) is living with you at your death and has been living with you for the whole of the twelve (12) months immediately before your death then that person will automatically succeed to the tenancy. These provisions do not apply if you acquired the tenancy yourself upon the death of another person. In such a case no-one can succeed and the tenancy will come to an end. If the successor is a close relative (not your surviving spouse) we may require the successor to move to a smaller property if the existing property would be under-occupied.
 - ii. If you are joint tenants then on the death of either of you the tenancy will automatically pass to the survivor

- iii. Wherever there is a change in the identity of the tenant on death (either because of a succession referred to in sub-paragraph 9.2.i above or because the property passes to a surviving tenant as referred to in sub-paragraph 9.2.ii) there can be no further succession to the tenancy
- iv. Subject to very few exceptions a secure tenancy may not be assigned. Some of the permitted exceptions give rise to a situation where the person taking the tenancy will be deemed to have succeeded to it so as to prevent the possibility of a further succession occurring

9.3 Succession Policy for tenants whose tenancy started after 1 April 2012 is as follows:-

- i. If you are joint tenants then on the death of either of you the tenancy will automatically pass to the survivor.
- ii. Wherever there is a change in the identity of the tenant on death, either because of a succession as referred to below or because the property has passed to a surviving joint tenant there can be no further successions to the tenancy.
- iii. The following provisions do not apply if you acquired the tenancy yourself upon the death of another person. In such a case no-one can succeed to the tenancy and the tenancy will therefore come to an end.
- iv. If you are a sole tenant and are married, in a civil partnership, or living with a partner as if you were married or in a civil partnership, then your partner will automatically succeed to the tenancy provided he or she is living in the property as their only or principal home at the date of your death.
- v. If at the time of death your spouse or partner is not living with you then an immediate family member who is living with you will be allowed to succeed to the tenancy. This is providing they meet all of the succession rules set out under the Housing Act 1985 Part IV, have been living in your household as their only or principal home for at least the **three** years preceding your death and are judged to be in housing need as defined by the council's allocations policy.
- vi. If an immediate family member is eligible to succeed but the property is under-occupied they will be made one offer of suitable alternative accommodation. If the successor tenant refuses to move, then the Council would take Court action to seek possession under Ground 15A of Schedule 2 of the Act.
- vii. If there is more than one family member who is eligible to succeed, in the absence of agreement between the parties who should succeed, the Council will decide who should succeed to the tenancy. There can be no joint succession.

- viii. Subject to a very few exceptions a secure tenancy may not be assigned. Some of the permitted exceptions give rise to a situation where the person taking the tenancy will be deemed to have succeeded to it so as to prevent the possibility of a further succession occurring.

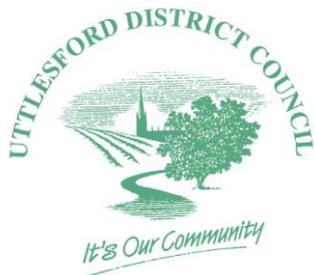
10. Policy Review

10.1 The policy shall be reviewed on 1st April 2014 and then at intervals of no longer than 5 years from the date of the last review.

11. Associated Policies

11.1 The following Uttlesford District Council policies have relevance to this Tenancy Policy:

- i. Allocations Policy
- ii. Rent and Service Charge Setting Policy



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.	Draft Uttlesford Tenancy Policy - November 2012
2	What is the overall purpose of the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision?	To inform people how we will grant fixed term tenancies on some Uttlesford Council's social housing stock to meet local housing need
3	Who may be affected by the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision? Anyone who is being offered a tenancy within Uttlesford Council's social housing stock	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prospective tenants and tenants <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (please state):
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> <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 are determined by legislation. The policy will be reviewed after 12 months and then at intervals of not more than 5 years to ensure it is meeting the objectives of the strategy</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>
---	---	---

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 criteria for granting fixed term tenancies will not be based on the protected characteristics but on the property type

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:*

9 Is uptake of any services, benefits or opportunities associated with the strategy, policy, project, contract or decision generally representative of diverse groups?

The policy will not be representative of all diverse groups but of certain families that meet the criteria for three bedroom houses

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:*

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

X		
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[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.	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> No* <input 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> <p> <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 </p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> There is insufficient evidence to make a robust judgement. Additional evidence gathering required (go to Q17 on Page 7 below). </p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Inequalities have been identified which cannot be easily addressed. Action planning required (go to Q18 on Page 8 below). </p>
15	<p>If you have any additional comments to make, please include here.</p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None </p>

Completion

16	<p>Name and job title (Assessment lead officer)</p> <p>Judith Snares – Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager</p>
	<p>Name/s of any assisting officers and people consulted during assessment:</p> <p>Natalie Leatham</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>16/11/2012</p> <p>Date of next review:</p> <p>To be reviewed one year after the implementation date</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

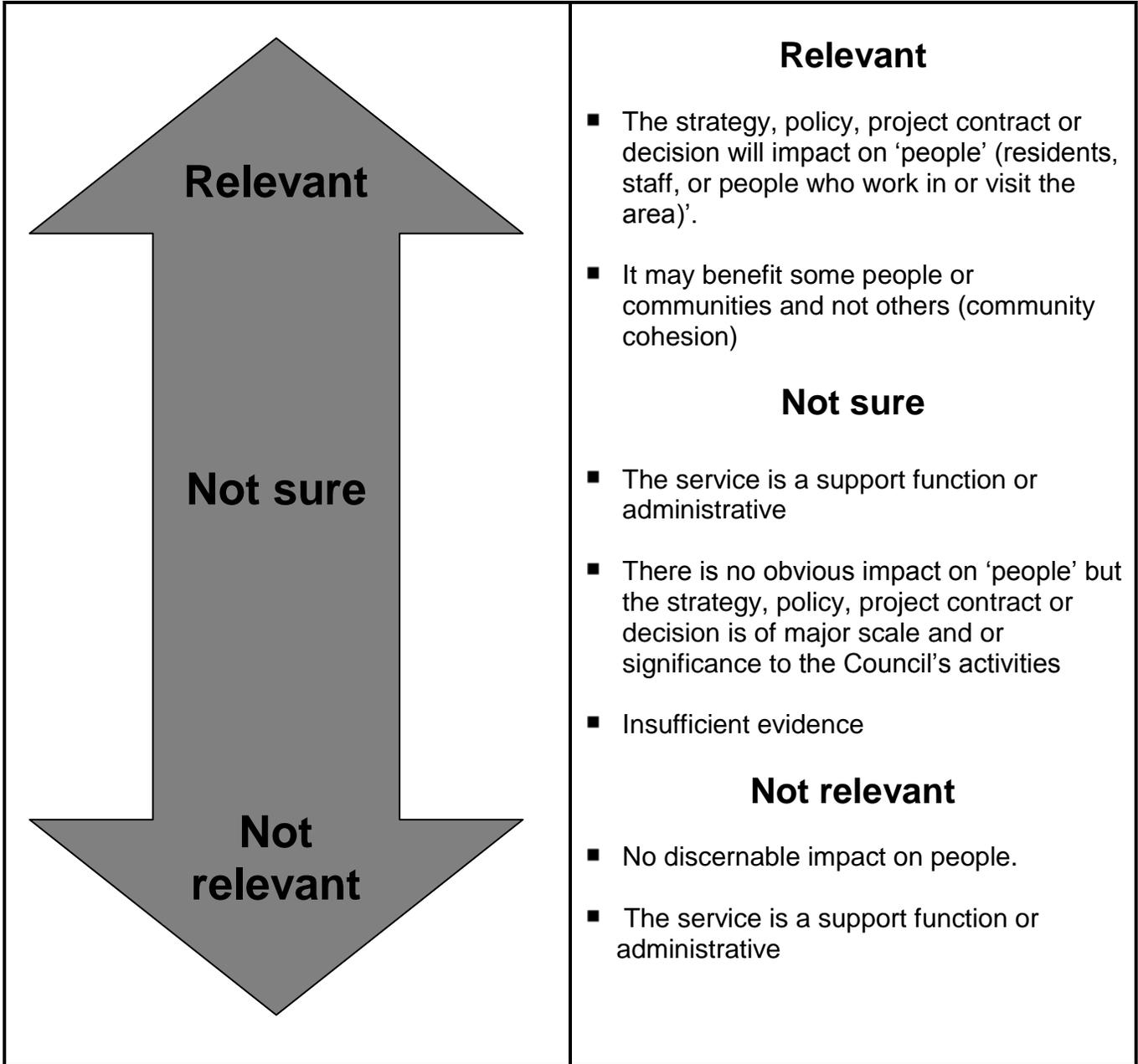
- 17 If your fast-track assessment indicated that **complex issues** or **inequalities** were identified which could not be easily addressed, or you had **insufficient evidence** to make a judgement, you need to undertake an additional evidence gathering and action planning process. This is described 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	<p>The conclusions and agreed proposals: The policy is still in consultation and will be delivered to the Housing Board and Cabinet November 2012</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): West Essex Teanancy Strategy Legal Housing Board RSL Partners Homelessness partnership 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, Housing Board, Website, Openday consultation event.</p> <p>Date proposals to be implemented and lead officer: To be approved by Housing Board and Cabinet will be implemented by 1st April 2012 - Judith Snares</p> <p>Where implementation is not immediate, please state in which service plan or strategy the proposed actions will be integrated: To be implemented after final approval from the Housing Board and Cabinet.</p> <p>Monitor arrangements (please include full details for audit purposes): Continue to monitor through performance indicators and as previously mentioned.</p>
Additional Comments	

19	If you have any additional comments to make, please include here:	<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> None
Completion		
20	Name and job title (Lead Officer): Name/s of other assisting officers: Date: Date of next review (if any):	Judith Snares – Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager. Natalie Leatham. 16/11/2012 Reviewed 01/4/2014
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
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