

**HOUSING BOARD held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD  
SAFFRON WALDEN at 10.30am on 24 JANUARY 2013**

Present:- Councillor V Ranger – Chairman.  
Councillors J Loughlin, K Mackman, J Menell and D Perry.

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

Officers in attendance: S Baxter (Housing Enabling and Development Officer), R Dobson (Democratic Services Officer), M Donaldson (Accountancy Manager), P Evans (Housing Business & Performance Manager), R Harborough (Director of Public Services), A Liles (Housing Asset Manager), R Millership (Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services), J Snares (Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager) and M Tokley (Principal Accountant – Budgets).

**HB46 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barker, Morson, Redfern and Sadler.

**HB47 MINUTES**

Subject to the following amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2012 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The Minutes were amended to include apologies given by Mr Parish and Councillor Loughlin. Mr Parish said he had also given his apologies for the meeting on 23 October 2012 which had not been recorded in the previous minutes.

**HB48 MATTERS ARISING**

**(i) Minute HB38 – Housing Strategy**

Councillor Menell said she was concerned that the report relating to transfer of land to enable development of a refuge for women fleeing domestic violence would reveal the location of that facility, contrary to the strongly worded request of the CAB that it was imperative not to reveal the location.

The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said the advice received from the Council's solicitor was that this information did not come within any of the exempt categories and could not therefore be kept out of the public domain.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS: RENT AND SERVICE CHARGE 2013/14**

The Board considered a report on the proposed rent and service charge increase for 2013/14.

The Accountancy Manager drew attention to the recommendations to be made to Cabinet. The proposed average rent increase for 2013/14 was 4.57% which was in line with national guideline rent increases and continued to take due consideration of central government guidance for the convergence of local authority rents to Formula Rents by 2015/16. The formula to achieve convergence was based on the application of the Retail Price Index (RPI) of 2.6% plus 0.5% plus a cap of £2.00 for 2013/14.

For garages, sheltered support services and Lifeline, charges were proposed to increase by inflation, 2.6%. All other charges were recharged in line with actual costs and estimated service costs for the forthcoming year.

The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager put forward a further recommendation in relation to Lifeline charges. It was proposed that from 1 April 2013 there should be three levels of Lifeline service, as the Council's new contract with Carecall allowed for an evening and weekend response service for dispersed Lifeline customers. Another reason for this proposal was that the Council was experiencing an increase in the number of customers requesting extra telecare sensors. As each sensor was an additional charge on the monitoring costs, it was proposed to reflect this charge in the cost to the customer.

Councillor Menell declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Lifeline customer. She said she was content with the proposal.

Officers confirmed that the application of charges would not be means tested.

David Parish said the recommendations had been considered and endorsed by the Tenant Forum, and he proposed the recommendations set out in the report and in the additional paper tabled regarding Lifeline charges. Councillor Mackman seconded the proposal.

**RECOMMENDED to Cabinet**

- 1 in line with the Council's Rent and Service Charge Setting Policy, HRA dwelling rents continue to converge with Formula Rents based on the application of the Retail Price Increase (RPI) of 2.6% plus 0.5%, plus a cap of £2.00 for 2013/14. The proposed average rent increase for 2013/14 is 4.57%, bringing the average weekly rent to £93.41 (52 week rent year)
- 2 garage rents are increased by RPI of 2.6%

- 3 heating, service and sewerage charges are increased in line with actual costs
- 4 service charges for common services in sheltered schemes continue to be fully subsidised for tenants at 31 March 2012 who are not in receipt of housing benefit
- 5 the charge for sheltered support services is increased by RPI of 2.6% and that protection be continued for tenants at 31st March 2003 who are ineligible for supporting people grant assistance
- 6 Lifeline charges are increased by RPI of 2.6% and the tiered level of charging for the Dispersed Lifeline Service is implemented as follows:
  - a) Level 1 – Basic Lifeline  
Basic lifeline unit at a cost of £3.94pw
  - b) Level 2 – Extra Sensors (up to a maximum of 4)  
Basic lifeline unit with up to 4 extra sensors £3.94 + £1.00 = £4.94pw  
(Customers requiring more than 4 extra sensors to be charged at the rate of 50p per extra sensor)
  - c) Level 3 – Evening and Weekend Response  
Basic lifeline unit with evening and weekend response service  
£3.94 + £1.00 = £4.94pw  
or £5.94pw with up to 4 extra sensors
  - d) The response service initially to be offered to new customers but any existing customers to be able to opt in by paying the extra £1pw charge.

HP50

## **FINANCIAL REPORTS: HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2013/14 BUDGET AND 5 YEAR BUDGET STRATEGY**

The Board considered the proposed HRA budget and reserves position for 2013/14 and a five year financial forecast for 2013/14 to 2017/18. The Board were invited to determine the 2013/14 budget and medium term financial forecast for consideration by Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Council.

The Accountancy Manager said the HRA was now in the second year of self-financing, that the 2012/13 budget had been taken as a base, and that the report took into account the rent increase just approved. The Council would not until 2017/18 pay back principal on the HRA loan portfolio, but was currently paying interest only on the portfolio. The budget took into account the staffing restructure, and provided for the aspirations set out in the business plan.

The Accountancy Manager said it was also necessary to consider the impact of the welfare benefit reforms which were to take effect in 2013/14. Bad debt provision had therefore been included to take into account the impact of these reforms, and provision was also made to fund a post to support rent collection. Further provision was made regarding the cash incentive scheme to be used to encourage people to move to a smaller property.

The Accountancy Manager explained there was an operating surplus of £2.9 million for 2013/14, which represented 'financial headroom' and was available to finance investment in existing council houses and develop additional affordable housing.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services drew attention to the fact that the installation of air source heat pumps had cost more than anticipated. She reminded the Board that this was a new venture for the Council, and that in future ancillary costs were included in the tender process. These ancillary works included works to block up chimneys, removal of existing oil tanks at properties and compensation for oil in tanks to the homeowner. These additional costs came to £135,000, which would absorb some of the HRA underspend this year. Installing air source heat pumps was still a better option than replacing traditional oil boilers and because there was funding available the process represented good value for money.

The Chairman said the application process for the government grant for installing air source heat pumps had imposed a tight timetable.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said it was also important to look at the potential for saving through investment in the Council's housing stock. She said the painting programme gave the opportunity to replace guttering, soffits and fascias with upvc instead of simply making repairs. In 5 – 6 years this pre-emptive measure would create savings as only externally rendered properties would require painting. She therefore asked the Board for their approval of a suggestion to include a budget in 2013/14 of £200,000 and thereafter £500,000 over the 5 – 6 year period to replace guttering soffits and fascias financed from the projected HRA surplus.

The Board agreed to this suggestion.

The Accountancy Manager said the working balance was £649,000. She said this level was more than sufficient against the minimum balance requirement of £525,000. For 2013/14 it was advisable to keep the working balance at above the minimum level in view of the increased risks associated with welfare reform.

The Accountancy Manager drew attention to the potential projects reserve which was forecast to be £869,000 by the end of 2013/14; to the use of the Change Management Reserve of £23,400 for funding a temporary rent

arrears/debt support officer post; and the forecast balance on this reserve which was expected to be £177,000 as at 31 March 2014 and which would be available for future service reviews.

Councillor Perry said the budget allowed for flexibility and benefitted tenants, and he proposed the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Mackman seconded the proposal.

Mr Sproul asked why rent arrears/debt support officer post was needed.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services explained that once the welfare reforms had come into force, Housing Benefit would go direct to the tenant rather than to the Council. The role of the Rent Collector would therefore be to liaise with people to help them set up a direct debit to pay their rent and to offer advice on how to manage their money. At two pilot authorities where direct payments had already been put into effect rent arrears had increased. This Council aimed to be proactive in addressing the anticipated issues, although she still anticipated that arrears would increase.

The Board agreed that the measures suggested were very prudent.

Mr Parish said the Tenant Forum had agreed with this approach.

Councillor Ranger asked about arrangements for those people who had no bank accounts. The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said everyone would have to have a bank or post office account into which money could be paid.

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet (19 February 2013):

- 1 the 2013/14 budget resulting in a forecast surplus of £144,000 after uPVC scheme.
- 2 The maintenance of an HRA working balance of £534,000 for the period to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014.
- 3 The use of and contribution to HRA earmarked reserves as detailed at Appendix E to the report.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said the Housing Asset Manager would in his report set out some issues which would affect the surplus figure, for the Board to consider.

HB51

## **TRANSFER OF LAND FOR SPECIALIST HOUSING PROJECT**

The Board considered a proposal to transfer land at nil value to Safer Places for the development of a refuge for women suffering from domestic abuse. The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said the

facility which Safer Places proposed building in Uttlesford was something the district had not had before. Safer Places intended to re-configure part of their current provision, located in the neighbouring areas of Harlow, Braintree and Broxbourne. Following discussions with officers a suitable site had been identified which, if the Housing Board agreed, could be recommended to Cabinet to be gifted to Safer Places for providing a refuge facility in Uttlesford.

Councillor Loughlin asked whether there would be provision for men as well as women.

The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said there were very few refuges for men suffering domestic abuse, and although the housing service had made referrals on occasion there was not such a need for men's refuges.

David Parish reiterated his concern that this item should be kept confidential. Officers said legal advice already given was clear that it was not possible to treat the item as one which could be exempt from being dealt with in public, and that planning application requirements would mean no option but to make public the location.

Councillor Mackman proposed the recommendations set out in the report. Councillor Perry seconded the proposal and said domestic abuse was on the increase and that provision of a refuge in the district was long overdue. He asked whether other agencies such as the police could be asked to contribute to costs of the project.

The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said funding contributions was something Safer Places would pursue with the County Council.

Councillor Menell repeated her concern about revealing the location of the refuge, particularly in view of the CAB's request. If the Council followed legal advice the refuge would not be a safe place. She asked that officers go back to the CAB and to the Assistant Chief Executive-Legal to check the position regarding keeping the location confidential.

Councillor Mackman said whilst this facility would be based in Uttlesford it would accept referrals from other districts. Similarly people from Uttlesford could be transferred to provision outside the district.

Councillor Loughlin declared a non-pecuniary interest in that her husband had worked for the company that built the refuge facility in Harlow. She said security arrangements for the refuge meant occupants were quite well-protected.

There was further discussion about whether any measures could be taken to keep the location and purpose of the facility from becoming public. The Director of Public Services said the reason for people being accommodated

in this development would not be material to planning, but that the type of accommodation and facility would be material.

The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said inevitably the local community would find out the purpose for which the site would be used. However it would not necessarily house Uttlesford people, as people from this district might well be referred elsewhere. However the facility would not be advertised.

It was agreed to change the wording of the recommendation to omit details about the purpose of the accommodation.

#### RECOMMENDED to Cabinet

- 1 the transfer of land at Newton Grove, Dunmow to Safer Places for a specialist housing project, subject to planning consent being obtained.
- 2 that land is transferred at nil or less than best consideration for affordable housing subject to full financial details being provided to Members in a future report which will detail the actual terms of the sale.
- 3 Transfer of land would be subject to terms and conditions.

HB52

#### **DRAFT DECANT POLICY**

The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said she would include a verbal update on the under occupation survey as part of the report on the draft decant policy.

The report invited the Housing Board members to agree a new policy on the process that the Council would undertake and the level of compensation that would be given, when it became necessary to re-house a tenant to allow major repairs to be undertaken or where a property was to be demolished or disposed of. The policy also set out details of payments to be made to tenants who decided to downsize from a property larger than their needs.

The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said a telephone survey of tenants had taken place to ask what might encourage them to move from their existing properties. Many said they would wish to stay, even once the 'bedroom tax' came into operation. Some said that if there were to be a sufficiently attractive package to help with the cost of moving that they would consider doing so. She referred members to the disturbance allowance set out in the policy.

With regard to an exceptions policy where tenants were in arrears with their rent, the Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager invited Members to consider three options for how such arrears would be dealt with in decanting tenants.

David Parish said the Tenant Forum supported the option given at paragraph 5.6 of the draft Decant Policy, that is, to deduct any outstanding rent arrears from the disturbance allowance to a maximum of £500. He said this option recognised that although tenants might owe money to the Council, they were being made to move, and this clause enabled a fair approach to be taken. Accordingly he proposed this clause should be included in the policy. Councillor Perry seconded the proposal, which was agreed.

The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager then drew attention to downsizing incentives for under-occupying tenants at paragraph 18 of the draft policy. She said different views had been expressed by members of the Tenant Forum. Tenants were happy that a payment of £2,500 should be paid to an elderly person who was downsizing, but there were different perspectives for general needs tenants. The conclusion reached by the Tenant Forum was that one single payment should be made, regardless of the size of property from which the tenant was downsizing, but they had agreed the Housing Board should be the final arbiter on this point.

Councillor Mackman said the amount payable to tenants downsizing should be tiered as there were different expenses involved for the different sized properties.

Councillor Ranger said moving expenses tended to encompass the same sort of factors regardless of the size of property.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said it was important that people were in the right-sized accommodation for their needs. The Council needed to free up housing of every size and the higher level of incentive for those downsizing by even just one bedroom might encourage people to move. A single payment would also make the process easier to administer. She had compared what other authorities were offering tenants to downsize, and she could confirm that the amount proposed was not overgenerous. She suggested that the amount agreed by the Housing Board could be reviewed after one year.

Members agreed that the amount of the cash payment to downsizing Uttlesford general needs tenants should be a single amount of £2,000 regardless of the size of property being left, and that this amount should be reviewed after one year (paragraph 19 to be amended).

It was agreed that the payment to elderly tenants downsizing would be £2,500.

It was agreed that in order to avoid ambiguity, the policy should explicitly state that house-swapping to a smaller property outside the district would be excluded from the downsizing payment.



Members expressed their support for the policy that rent arrears or the cost of repairing tenants' damage to UDC property would be deducted from downsizing payments. Members agreed this was fair as downsizing tenants were not being forced to move.

Members therefore agreed the policy as drafted, subject to the amendments in the Minute above, should be recommended to Cabinet.

It was noted that the policy would be implemented on 1 April.

HB53

### **VOID MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services presented a report seeking approval of the Void Management Policy and Letting Standard. She said this policy was required by the Council's auditors, and that it tied in well with the downsizing policy. It was desirable to fill void properties as soon as feasible in order not to lose rent. She said the Council had in the past had a re-let standard and this had been reviewed to ensure that properties would be re-let more quickly.

The Housing Asset Manager said the re-letting period was just under 20 days.

Councillor Menell proposed the approval of the Void Management Policy and Letting Standard, and Councillor Mackman seconded the proposal.

Sam Sproul referred to HouseMark benchmarking and said it was important the Council should move towards the ideal.

The Housing Business & Performance Manager said data for the HouseMark standards was available quarterly. The Chairman said this data should be considered first by the regulatory panel so that their intentions could be considered.

The Void Management Policy and Letting Standard was agreed.

HB54

### **SHELTERED HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT**

The Housing Board considered a report tabled by the Housing Asset Manager which set out details of the recent review carried out on sheltered housing by an external consultant. The report included a schedule setting out a "broad brush" appraisal of which properties were deemed suitable for development, retention, modification or disposal. The Housing Asset Manager said if the Council were to take no action it would nevertheless have to spend a significant sum, £20 million, simply to stand still. He also drew attention to what he said was a surprisingly low amount of estimated income if certain properties were disposed of. He suggested that this report be used as a yardstick from which a further more detailed

assessment could be made, provided the Housing Board agreed to this course of action in principle.

Sam Sproul said this report had been discussed in detail by the Tenant Forum. It had suggested that the regulatory panel could look at the listed part of Walden Place. He felt it would also be useful to have a working group to look into how to deal with Reynolds Court and Alexia House which still had bedsit accommodation. Councillor Perry agreed with this approach.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said that the decision to not repay debt for the first five years of self-financing gave the council an opportunity to improve the schemes with the poorest accommodation. If these problems were not tackled now they would persist for another twenty years and people would continue to live in sub-standard accommodation. These properties were not fit for purpose. If the principle of further appraisal was agreed, the Council would instruct the consultant to undertake a further review from which plans could be drawn up. She acknowledged the fact that this process could ultimately mean a major decant of people from these properties, and this would not be easy.

The Chairman said there was a need for more work to be done before any working group could be set up. It was noted that the Housing Board did not have decision-making powers and could not set up a working group itself, as this was a function of Cabinet.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said tenants in the properties for which development or remodelling was proposed would need to be informed at this early stage. The Chairman asked that local members of relevant properties be informed.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said there was capacity in the planned budgets for the in-depth review but improving housing for older people would have revenue and capital implications which would be explored in detail as the programme developed. There was money currently in reserves.

AGREED to accept the principle of pursuing retain/remodel/redevelop sheltered accommodation, and approve further in depth appraisals to be carried out in order to continue with the upgrade of the sheltered programme as follows:

- 1 re-development options for the council's remaining two schemes where bedsits predominate (Reynolds Court and Alexia House)
- 2 modification options for all the remaining schemes and in particular those highlighted as having the highest priority - Hatherley Court and the listed building at Walden Place and Parkside.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman said the new regulatory panel would be looking at the question of whether tenants were getting best value for money. It was agreed that the Chairman of the Panel, Daphne Cornell, should be invited to future Housing Board meetings as a guest.

The Housing Business & Performance Manager gave an update on HousingMark data. She said she would benchmark the data against other authorities and would be working with the corporate performance team to set up a housing performance process and review performance indicators. She suggested that she submit to the Housing Board for review the data relating to Q2, which had only just been released. The regulatory panel would be looking at the data, as it would be a key aspect of their scrutiny of housing. She had also suggested the panel look at the results of the STAR survey to examine the weaker areas of the service. She reported on a training event the team had attended recently with an external consultant, which had been very productive. Further discussions would take place next week to consider how to take this work forward with the consultant's input.

Councillor Menell said she was aware that South Cambridgeshire District Council was able to announce a programme of 100 new houses, and questioned why it could build so many.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said that some authorities were investing more on new build under self-financing. Uttlesford's members and tenants had wanted to see a mix of new build and improved maintenance of existing stock and the business plan reflected this. Uttlesford were already delivering new houses and as well as the Mead Court redevelopment have a 5 year new build programme.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said she would circulate a programme of work to be considered by the Housing Board over the next year.

Councillor Menell said the attendance level of some councillors at these meetings was disappointing.

The meeting ended at 12.10pm.

**Committee:** Housing Board

**Agenda Item**

**Date:** 13 June 2013

**4**

**Title:** Housing Tenant's Regulatory (Scrutiny)  
Panel Update

**Author:** Paula Evans – Housing Business &  
Performance Manager  
Ext: 636

Item for decision

### Summary

1. This report provides an overview of the background to the implementation of the Housing Tenant's Regulatory Panel, their responsibilities and current work plan.

### Recommendations

2. For information only.

### Financial Implications

3. Limited. Through scrutiny reviews the Panel may identify and recommend process and cost efficiencies or propose investment opportunities within the Housing Service.

### Background Papers

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

Localism Act (2011)

### Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	Tenant Regulatory Panel members were recruited through a consultation process. Regular updates on activities are given through the Housing News publication.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	All tenants were able to apply to become members of the panel. Interviews were conducted to select members. Equalities training will be given to all appointed members.

Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The Panel supports the self-regulation principles outlined in the Localism Act (2011).
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

## Situation

6. Many stock retained authorities are currently introducing tenant led Regulatory (Scrutiny) Panels to support the self-regulation principles detailed in the Localism Act (2011). These panels support the idea of moving regulation away from a regulator in the spirit of localism.
7. Previously the Tenant Services Association (TSA) led on regulation type activities but since they were dissolved in 2012 the emphasis has been placed on local authorities and Housing Associations to implement equivalent activities at a local level.
8. The Housing Service have adopted the following principles for their Regulatory Panel:
  - The panel lead on 'bottom-up' self assessments
  - Scrutiny activity should be led by Tenants
  - Tenants and residents are able to hold landlords to account for their performance and behaviour
9. The UDC Housing Tenant's Regulatory panel was recruited in November 2012. All tenants were invited to apply to become a member of the Panel and competency based interviews were conducted to select all members.
10. The panel consists of a Chairperson, 4 Analysts and 4 Inspectors. The analysts role is to review process and procedural activities and analyse performance data, the inspectors role is to conduct work and site inspections to ensure the Housing section provides an adequate level of customer service. As a collective, the Panel conduct formal service reviews to then formulate recommendations for consideration by both the Tenant Forum and the Housing Board.

All of the work and training for the Panel is completed voluntarily by panel members. The only payments made to them are reimbursements for travel and stationery costs.

11. The key aims of the Panel are:

- To improve tenant satisfaction
- To improve day-to-day services
- To help 'quality control' the work of the landlord
- To achieve the best Value for Money (VfM)
- To hold the landlord to account
- To help design service improvements for tenants

12. Scrutiny training has been given to the group in collaboration with Epping Forest DC who recruited their Tenant Panel at a similar time. The Panels are currently being supported by an independent consultant who has been working with them as they establish their groups and progress their first service reviews.

The Panel are also developing connections and working relationships with similar panels from other local authorities so that best practice and learning can be shared.

13. The Panel work as an independent body but are supported by the Housing Business & Performance Manager if required. Communications between the panel and relevant officers and the co-ordination of training and meetings is made through the Housing Business & Performance Manager.

Reports from the Panel will be reviewed and agreed by the Tenant Forum before being presented to the Housing Board for formal approval.

14. The Panel is currently reviewing the Voids (the time that a property is empty between re-lets) process.

## Risk Analysis

15.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That UDC are unable to recruit/retain Panel Members	2 – some risk or impact	Housing Scrutiny activities would be limited	Ensure the work of the panel is regularly communicated and that it emphasises the importance of the group
That Tenant Scrutiny work is not undertaken	2 – some risk or impact	The Housing Service would not be adopting some of the key	Panel fully supported by officers to ensure work is undertaken

		principles of self-regulation	
--	--	----------------------------------	--

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.

**Committee: Housing Board**

**Agenda Item**

**Date: 13 June 2013**

**8**

**Title: Homelessness Update**

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

Item for  
information.

---

### **Summary**

1. This report is to brief members on the homelessness figures for 2012/13.

### **Recommendations**

2. That the Housing Board notes this report

### **Financial Implications**

3. None

### **Background Papers**

4. Housing Performance Indicator Report 2012/13

### **Impact**

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	N/A
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	N/A
Workforce/Workplace	N/A



**Situation**

	2011/2012	2012/2013
Homelessness Presentations	59	74
Homelessness Acceptances	30	42
Homelessness Preventions	155	125
Customers receiving in-depth housing advice	Figures not collected as HPA module only implemented 1/4/2013	406
Numbers in Temporary Accommodation	11	22

- 6. The above table gives the homelessness statistics for 2012/13 compared to 2011/12.
- 7. As can be seen the levels of homelessness last year increased considerably over the previous 12 months.
- 8. The effects of the current economic climate have put individuals and families under increasing pressures, that in some instances have led to homelessness.
- 9. The numbers currently accommodated in temporary accommodation is double that of a year ago. This is why it is important that we are replacing the existing temporary accommodation at Mead Court when the site is re-developed. We are also converting another property at Molehill Green into 2 units of temporary accommodation.
- 10. There has been an increased usage of bed and breakfast over the past year. Although we try to keep the use of B and B to the absolute minimum, the increase in numbers has meant that we have not been able to get a sufficient flow through our other temporary accommodation to be able to avoid this.
- 11. The housing options team have seen a total of 406 in-depth housing advice clients, this figure does not include clients who come in for more generic advice.

12. Although the team have continued to prevent homelessness it is becoming harder, with families more reluctant to keep adult children at home and with many private landlords unwilling to consider applicants on benefits.

13. The picture for the coming year is that the situation is likely to remain difficult with the further welfare reform changes and lack of affordable properties within the private rented sector.

### Risk Analysis

14.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Report for information only			

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.

## Item 11

### Housing Strategy Action Plan 2012-15 (progress update June 2013)

Priority	Action	Timescale	Current Position
<b>Delivering Affordable Housing</b>	<p>Work with the Rural Community Council for Essex to develop new rural housing schemes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver 3 new housing needs surveys in identified parishes with the Rural Housing Enabler</li> <li>• Complete a site search in one of the identified parishes</li> </ul>	<p>September 2014</p> <p>January 2015</p>	<p>One new Housing Needs Survey completed at The Rodings, and further enquiries passed to the Rural Housing Enabler.</p> <p>Site searches carried out in Great and Little Hallingbury.</p>
	Develop LA new build scheme and deliver 15 homes per year.	April 2015	<p>Suitable sites identified and prioritised.</p> <p>SCAPE has been sent a list of sites and will be carrying out feasibility studies based on UDC preferred tenure mix. Under the procurement 'framework' that we have with SCAPE, there will be no charge to UDC for this initial service. Feasibility studies to be reported to the Housing Board.</p> <p>The Housing Development Officer is looking to identify additional land, including gardens, which may have development potential.</p>
	Deliver in partnership with Registered Providers 100 affordable homes per year	April 2013	Delivered 122 affordable homes in 2012/13. Currently on target to provide 97 affordable homes during 2013/14

## Item 11

	<p>Deliver new affordable housing with Stansted Area Housing Partnership funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phase 2 Holloway Crescent</li> <li>Extra Care scheme in Saffron Walden</li> </ul>	<p>June 2013 April 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phase 2 Holloway Crescent due to handover in 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013</li> <li>Extra Care scheme being worked up by East Thames HA, in partnership with Countryside Properties. A bid has been made to the HCA for funding, with results to be known in June 2013.</li> </ul>
	<p>Work with Hastoe to deliver the Growth Area Funding projects in Hatfield Heath and Newport</p>	<p>January 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hatfield Heath – start on site in June 2013</li> <li>Newport – Landowner considering his position on whether to sell. Will confirm in August 2013. Alternative site in Newport has been identified.</li> </ul>
	<p>Work with planning policy to ensure that the new Local Plan compliments the requirements of the housing strategy</p>	<p>October 2012</p>	<p>Completed</p>
	<p>Work with Kift Consulting to look at viability on large scale affordable housing schemes</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>Continuing to work with Kift Consulting to provide viability advice on new developments, as and when required.</p>
	<p>Attend Local Access Group and investigate partnership working to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design guide for bungalows</li> <li>Visits to new development schemes to look at accessibility</li> </ul>	<p>March 2014</p>	<p>To be progressed.</p>
<p><b>Delivering Supported Housing</b></p>	<p>Investigate the re-provision of a new Mental Health facility with Metropolitan housing</p>	<p>January 2013</p>	<p>Re-provision of Mental Health facility identified for Saffron Walden Policy Area 1. Metropolitan Housing is working in partnership with the developer.</p>

## Item 11

	Work with Uttlesford Local Action Group (LAG) to identify future need for supported accommodation for Learning Disabilities	March 2013	Site at Everitt Road, Saffron Walden has been identified for a Learning Disability Scheme in partnership with East Thames Housing Association.
	Work with partners on the delivery of a supported unit for people with learning disabilities with Hastoe and East Thames	January 2014	East Thames has purchased the proposed site at Everitt Road from Hastoe Housing. Initial Project Team meeting planned for 6 <sup>th</sup> June 2013. Funding identified in HRA business plan to support this scheme
	Work with planning policy to identify future provision for Gypsy and travellers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call for sites</li> </ul>	November 2012	Call for sites completed and reported to the LDF Working Group on 12 <sup>th</sup> December 2012
	Implement the findings of the SHMA update	December 2012	Final SHMA document due in June 2013 and findings to be reported to the LDF Working Group.
<b>Older People</b>	Work with partners to deliver an extra care scheme in Saffron Walden	September 2013	Extra Care scheme being worked up by East Thames HA, in partnership with Countryside Properties. A bid has been made to the HCA for funding, with results to be known in June 2013.
	Investigate the potential for a second extra care scheme in Great Dunmow	March 2013	Extra Care scheme being worked up by East Thames HA, in partnership with Crest Nicholson. A bid has been made to the HCA for funding, with results to be known in June 2013.
	On all new developments, request 5% as one and two bedroom bungalows to meet the needs of the ageing population	April 2013	Policy now routinely implemented.

## Item 11

	Review all sheltered housing schemes owned by the Council, and upgrade, or demolish to meet future needs.	April 2014	The Housing Development Officer has visited all the Sheltered Schemes (Alexia House, Reynolds Court, Hatherley Court, Parkside and Walden Place) that are due a feasibility study. Residents have been kept informed. Consultants have been appointed to carry out appraisals of the schemes during June, with their findings and recommendations being reported to Housing Board thereafter.
	Provide Internet cafes in our sheltered schemes for silver surfers.	February 2013	First project at Alan Hasler House completed end of July 2012. Second scheme at Broomfields in Hatfield Heath due to complete summer 2013
	Carry out an under occupation survey and establish what incentives would encourage tenants to move to more appropriate accommodation.	April 2013	Completed in October 2012. New de-cant/ downsizing policy written and implemented
<b>Homelessness</b>	Investigate the provision of additional supported accommodation for vulnerable adults	April 2013	Requirement for a new homeless facility identified for Great Dunmow. Suitable land identified to be part of Great Dunmow Policy Area 1. Continuing to work with partners to progress.
	Investigate the provision of a supported unit in the District for those fleeing Domestic Violence	April 2014	Local Authority owned site at Newton Green, Great Dunmow being made available to our partner (at nil cost), Safer Places Housing Association, for redevelopment.
	Investigate the Government initiative of discharging Homelessness duty into the private sector	Jan 2013	Allocations policy has been updated - changes agreed by Housing Board and Cabinet. Homelessness strategy updated and incorporated in the Housing Strategy

## Item 11

	Investigate the re-provision of temporary accommodation that is currently at Mead Court	January 2013	Site identified on a redundant parking site in Cannons Mead, plans drawn and planning application submitted
<b>Allocations</b>	Establish a Strategic Tenancy Policy that ensures that local need is met.	January 2013	Final Tenancy Strategy approved by housing board and Cabinet October 2012. Local Tenancy Policy approved by Housing Board and Cabinet, implemented April 2013
	Review Anti-Social Behaviour policy and procedures	April 2013	Currently being reviewed
	Update Allocations Policy in accordance with new Government guidance	October 2012	Allocations policy has been reviewed in light of changes from Localism Act - changes agreed by Housing Board and Cabinet, implemented April 2013
<b>Private sector</b>	Employ empty homes officer	October 2012	New job description written and evaluated. Post currently being advertised
	Organise Landlords forum once a year	April 2013	Date to be confirmed
	Work with Papworth Home Improvement Agency (HIA) to engage Occupational Therapist services	April 2013	Papworth HIA has engaged their own Occupational Therapist (OT) service to carry out DFG adaptation assessments – this is currently working well. There is a backlog of assessments for adaptations to council properties due to the OT service being re-structured by Essex County Council. Officers are therefore actively exploring options for an in-house OT who will assess required adaptations for both private and council properties. The options include a joint West Essex Health and Wellbeing Board project with Epping Forest and Harlow councils and the CCG.
	Work with Home Improvement	On-going	Good working relationship with Papworth HIA

## Item 11

	Agency to meet local needs		
<b>The Councils Housing Stock</b>	Implement the agreed action plan of new housing improvements and service enhancements, funded from the additional resources made available by HRA self-financing	April 2013	The authority has delivered a significant programme of investment in the first year of the HRA business plan - the largest annual capital investment in the stock for many years.
	Set up a new framework with development partner to implement the new council house building programme	April 2013	Framework set up with SCAPE
	Implement a more efficient and cost effective supply chain for repair materials	September 2013	Currently being investigated, with guidance from the Council's Procurement Manager.
	Undertake new stock condition survey	September 2013	Currently investigating whether this can be carried out in-house
	Introduce a Tenant Scrutiny Panel to undertake detailed reviews of specific housing services	April 2013	Tenants Regulatory Panel established in January 2013. Support and training being provided by external consultant in early stages of the Panel's development. Updates reported at both Tenant Forum and Housing Board meetings
	Monitor implications of new Right to Buy legislation	April 2013	Reporting schedule implemented to monitor RTB applications from both a development and financial aspect. The status of applications will be monitored and reported to Housing Board meetings.
<b>Sustainable Communities</b>	Investigate levels of Black and Minority Ethnic housing need	March 2013	92.3% population white British, with balance being BME mix. Application forms for housing captures an option for ethnicity. Also reviewing the demographics on 'older people' to



## Item 11

			ensure the right environment, housing and care provision is relevant for future need.
	Undertake equality impact assessments on new and existing housing policies.	October 2012	Equality Impact Assessment carried out on new Policies/Strategies, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenancy Strategy</li> <li>• Tenancy Policy</li> <li>• Allocations Policy</li> <li>• Decant and Downsizing Policy</li> </ul>
	Continue to work towards Equality standards	April 2013	Single Equality Duty 2012-2015 published in April 2012. This sets out the Council's priorities to promote equality in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Delivery</li> <li>• Working Practices</li> <li>• Employment</li> </ul>
	Involve service users in shaping the services that they use and that affect their lives	March 2013	Disability forum and Tenant Regulatory Panel in existence to help shape the Council's services. Service areas can use the council's profiled Citizens Panel to gain feedback on the impact of proposed service changes.
	Work with the LSP to ensure Uttlesford has neighbourhoods in which people can afford and wish to live	On-going	The LSP has an Access to Services project which is aimed at improving access and encouraging the development of sustainable community led services. The LSP is recruiting volunteers to identify community needs and contribute towards planning of voluntary/statutory services to address rural isolation, health inequalities and mental health issues. Housing Policy has a presence on the Health and Wellbeing

## Item 11

			Group and other members of the Housing team work with members of the Crime Safety Partnership.
	Implement the Economic Development Strategy	April 2013	The Economic Development Strategy was approved by Cabinet in October 2012. There is planned to be a revision undertaken in October 2013.
	Set up and work with new Tenants Regulatory Panel	January 2013	Tenants Regulatory Panel established in January 2013. Support and training being provided. Updates reported at both Tenants Forum and Housing Board.
<b>Housing Strategy Review</b>	Organise Housing Strategy conference to review progress, set new targets and celebrate success	September 2013	Housing Strategy Conference to be organised for September 2013.
	Review action plan quarterly and update once a year	Quarterly report to Housing Board	Current review at June 2013.

**HOUSING PROGRAMMES - REVENUE AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - 2012 TO 2013**

	Notes	BUDGET CODE	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS	12 / 13				
				NO OF PROPERTIES	Original Budget £	Revised Budget £	Outturn	
<b>A. REVENUE EXPENDITURE</b>	Ad Hoc	HRE001/2013	Response Repairs	All	786,740	786,740	909,265	
		<b>Ad Hoc Works - Total</b>				<b>786,740</b>	<b>786,740</b>	<b>909,265</b>
	Cyclical Maint	HRE001/2041	External and Internal Decorations	596	280,000	280,000	175,716	
		HRE001/2014	Pre-paint Repairs	596	50,000	50,000	42,898	
		<b>Cyclical Maintenance/Decoration - Total</b>				<b>330,000</b>	<b>330,000</b>	<b>218,614</b>
	Routine Maintenance	HRE001/2042	Service/Maintenance of Central Heating Boilers	All	325,000	325,000	364,266	
		HRE001/2043	Service/Maintenance of Communal Boilers	All	41,500	41,500	57,616	
		HSH001/2012	Service/Maintenance of Communal & Disabled Lifts	All	25,000	25,000	31,715	
		HSH001/4012	Furniture Sheltered Schemes	All	35,000	35,000	31,375	
		1 HRE001/2044	Asbestos Management	All	80,000	80,000	126,998	
		HRE001/2045	Legionella Management	All	55,000	55,000	85,771	
		<b>Routine Maintenance - Total</b>				<b>561,500</b>	<b>561,500</b>	<b>697,741</b>
	<b>SUB TOTAL A : REVENUE REPAIRS &amp; MAINTENANCE</b>					<b>1,678,240</b>	<b>1,678,240</b>	<b>1,825,620</b>
	<b>B. CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</b>	Planned Works	2 CHR212/6812	Adaptations for Disabled (Major)	40	200,900	200,000	174,665
			CHR202/6812	Adaptations for Disabled (Minor)	As per OT	9,100	9,000	11,435
CHR200/6812			Central Heating Boiler Replacement	333	520,550	702,000	715,136	
3 CRH205/6811			Energy Conservation/Plant Replacement	All sheltered	231,050	5,000	18,318	
4 CHR206/6812			Security Programme	All	164,400	165,000	62,506	
CHR214/6812			Bathroom/Kitchen Upgrade	147 / 119	356,200	450,000	530,273	
CHR211/6812			Re-wiring	562	274,000	350,000	394,036	
CHR215/6812			Re-windowing	72	173,500	110,000	144,183	
CHR203/6812			Environmental Improvements	5 schemes	77,600	75,000	138,216	
CHR201/6811			Sheltered Scheme Improvements	0	2,700	8,000	0	
CHR208/6811			Sewerage Plants	All	7,300	15,000	3,392	
5 CHR210/6812			Doors	646	200,900	250,000	87,544	
CHR204/6811			Chimneys	19	27,400	30,000	16,806	
CHR209/6811			Roof Works	18	36,500	100,000	108,151	
CHR207/6811			Structural Works	17	110,000	50,000	177,629	
CHR213/6811		Major Work - Voids	233	277,300	400,000	492,273		
<b>Planned Works - Total</b>				<b>2,669,400</b>	<b>2,919,000</b>	<b>3,074,563</b>		
Additional Works		6 CHR101/6801	Holloway Crescent	Phase 2	678,000	950,000	796,284	
		CHR103/6801	Newport Depot	prelims	0	0	1,776	
		GRTH075	Cash Incentive to move grant	9 grants	20,000	18,000	11,000	
<b>Additional Works - Total</b>				<b>698,000.00</b>	<b>968,000.00</b>	<b>809,060</b>		
Business Plan		CHR221/6801	Internet Cafes	1 scheme	20,000	20,000	17,148	
		CHR104/6801	Mead Court Development	1 scheme	80,000	80,000	56,909	
		7 CHR301/6822	Energy efficiency budget	as programme	300,000	884,000	589,044	
		8 CHR219/6812	Sheltered Housing Alarms Equipment	carried f/wd	100,000	100,000	0	
		CHR222/6812	Additional re-wiring	see above	500,000	500,000	519,869	
<b>Business Plan - Total</b>				<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>1,584,000</b>	<b>1,182,970</b>		
<b>SUB TOTAL B : CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME</b>					<b>4,367,400</b>	<b>5,471,000</b>	<b>5,066,593</b>	
<b>TOTAL REVENUE &amp; CAPITAL PROGRAMME : A+B</b>					<b>6,045,640</b>	<b>7,149,240</b>	<b>6,892,213</b>	

- Notes
- Increase in asbestos surveys due to large increase in planned works
  - Backlog in disabled adaptations due to change in the way OT services are provided
  - Delay in procurement of boiler replacement programme in sheltered schemes - contractor now appointed
  - 4&8 Procurement of new communal equipment for sheltered schemes delayed until new sheltered housing team leader in place
  - Contract on hold due to poor performance of contractor - due to re-commence this month
  - Contract delayed due to poor weather - new completion date of mid July
  - Work due to complete October 2013