

## HRA BUSINESS PLAN - PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

### PROGRESS TO DATE DECEMBER 2013

Priority	Action	By When	Resources	Progress to Date - December 2013
1. Resident Involvement and Empowerment	Develop Housing Regulation Panel to scrutinise the performance of the Housing Service and to undertake service reviews	Jun-12	5k pa - training for members	Complete - panel now fully established and currently working on review of the Voids process. Recommendations report to be drafted by end September. Working with external consultant, Alan Jones, to ensure focus and team cohesion
	Collect evidence from surveys, questionnaires, estate walkabouts and mystery shoppers	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Ongoing - estate walkabouts completed - Mountfitchet Estate event; working with partners such as the Fire Brigade to provide advice and support to the community; further events planned to encourage tenant participation and feedback
	Link tenant participation with opportunities for skill development	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Ongoing - both Tenant Forum and Tenant Regulatory Panel members are encouraged to attend seminars and conferences that will build their knowledge
	Consult leaseholders on views of current service and participation arrangements	Apr-13	Within existing resources	Complete - leaseholders included in STAR survey distribution
	Undertake new Tenant Satisfaction Survey	May-12	£5k - every 2 years	Complete - repeat of STAR survey planned for 2014. Due to the resource required to manage the whole process effectively, external support may be sourced. All feedback to be managed through independent action plan
	Develop action plan to respond to issues in the Tenant Satisfaction Survey	Aug-12	Within existing resources	Due to time constraints and levels of response no official action plan has been devised following the 2012 survey. High level analysis identified key areas for improvement which have been managed in day-to-day activities
	Develop and Implement new Tenant Involvement Strategy	Apr-13	Within existing resources	Work in progress - work commenced on developing Strategy. Consultation planned to take place with both officers and tenants in December 2013
	Publish annual tenants report	Oct-13	£3k pa	Complete - report produced and published
	Benchmark service with other landlords through Housemark	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Ongoing - working with Corporate Performance Team to produce PI performance reports from both Covalent (UDC Performance Management System) and HouseMark. Quarterly reports to be produced for review by both Housing Board and Tenant Forum
		Develop a housing asset management strategy	Apr-13	Within existing resources
Carry out development appraisals of identified sites and review business plan capacity to develop		Oct-12	£10k pa - architect/planning fees	Complete - sites submitted to planning department for initial feedback Site identification progressing with the collation of location plans and initial sketch ideas created by our framework partners SCAPE Capacity identified in the business plan to develop further sites

## HRA BUSINESS PLAN - PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

### PROGRESS TO DATE DECEMBER 2013

Priority	Action	By When	Resources	Progress to Date - December 2013
<b>2. Home</b>	Respond to changing housing need by making the best use of the Housing Stock to meet local need (Mead Court redevelopment etc)	Apr-14	£2.6m - commencing 2013/14	Holloway Crescent Development completed on budget - 8 new homes Mead Court development tendered and budget approved by Cabinet - confirmed commencement on site January 2014
	Review the potential for undertaking new build schemes on identified garden sites	Apr-17	Approx £600k per annum plus revenue cost of £50k pa for in-house surveyor to co-ordinate works	Work in progress - viability assessments being carried out on potential schemes which will be presented to Housing Board for prioritisation by April 2014
	Improve the information on the housing stock	Apr-13	£50k - one off 2012	Complete - investigated and concluded that this would be better carried out in house Stock Condition Surveyor appointed and work is progressing on collecting stock data - it is anticipated that a 100% stock condition survey will be achieved on a rolling 5 year basis
	Implement planned maintenance/service charge module of Housing System	Apr-14	£100k - one off 2013	Work in progress - planned maintenance module installed - data is in process of being transferred to the system from existing spread sheet based tables
	Review and implement new Schedule of Rates	Apr-13	£20k - one off 2012	Complete - new schedule of rates tested and implemented
	Continue to manage and maintain the housing stock effectively and efficiently ensuring that properties meet, as a minimum, the decent homes standard	Ongoing	within existing resources - approx £2.9m pa	Ongoing - planned works programmes are progressing well with budgets expected to be exhausted by the end of the financial year - the authority is continuing to deliver a significant programme of investment in the first five years of the HRA business plan - the largest annual capital investment in the stock for many years
	Improve average energy efficiency and reduce fuel costs for residents	Apr-17	£300k pa	Work in progress - Phase I and II air source heat pumps contracts now complete, Phase III commenced October 2013 External wall insulation contract for solid wall properties underway but progressing slowly due to electric cabling issues - further properties identified for contracts during the next financial year
	Analyse performance of eco-house in Wendens Ambo	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Ongoing
	Recommend options on the appraisal for the sheltered housing schemes	Apr-13	Within existing resources	Work in progress - residents consulted at sheltered schemes where site appraisals have been carried out (Alexia House, Reynolds Court, Hatherley Court, Parkside and Walden Place). Report presented to the Housing Board and Cabinet giving options for these schemes. It has been recommended that detailed consultation now takes place with residents on range of options for poorly designed schemes in particular those with bedsit accommodation - consultation started Dec 2013

## HRA BUSINESS PLAN - PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

### PROGRESS TO DATE DECEMBER 2013

Priority	Action	By When	Resources	Progress to Date - December 2013
3. Tenancy	Establish a strategic tenancy strategy that ensures that local housing need is met and assets are used effectively, utilising all available flexibilities	Jan-13	£3k - one off 2012	Complete - over-arching tenancy strategy reviewed by housing board and approved by Cabinet Jan 2013
	Consider whether the Council should use the new fixed term tenancies and, if so, formulate a Tenancy Policy setting out the proposed operation of the scheme	Apr-13	Within existing resources	Complete - over-arching tenancy strategy established; options for fixed term tenancies examined by Housing Board; tenancy policy approved by Cabinet and implemented from April 2013: 1 + 9yr fixed term tenancies for 3+ bedroom houses
	Continue to fund disabled adaptations and disabled facilities grants for HRA tenants and private owners and improve the delivery process	Ongoing	within existing resources - approx £280k per year	Ongoing - Unprecedented increase in DFG applications and adaptation work (due to Essex pushing through backlog of OT requests) has resulted in the HRA and general fund budgets for 2013/14 being fully committed already. A Capital growth
	Investigate and implement a better integrated monitoring, response and maintenance service for sheltered schemes and Lifeline users	Oct-12	£42k pa	Complete - Monitoring contract tendered for and awarded to Careline. Contract commenced October 2012 - all equipment has now been re-programmed Maintenance contract tendered and awarded to Cirrus - contract commenced October 2013
	Update the remaining sheltered housing schemes with Piper Haven alarm equipment with the latest Communicall equipment	Mar-14	£100k pa capital; £10k pa revenue	Complete - Equipment/Maintenance contract tendered and awarded to Cirrus for the upgrade of alarm/call out systems at all schemes October 2013 – work on 5 schemes completed by December 2013. Replacement programme now includes work that meets the new BS on fire/smoke detecting
	Undertake fundamental review of policies and procedures to ensure service is 'Fit for Purpose'	Apr-13	Within existing resources	Ongoing - the following policies have been written and reviewed by Housing Board and approved by Cabinet: allocations policy - Jan 2013; void management policy and void letting standard - Jan 2013; rent and service charge setting policy - Apr 2013; downsizing and de-cant policy - Apr 2013; asset management and development strategy - June 2013; tenancy policy - Apr 2013; bed and breakfast charging policy - Nov 2013 Currently consulting on welfare garden and redecoration policy
	Carry out an under occupation survey and establish what incentives would encourage tenants to move to more appropriate accommodation	Apr-13	Within existing resources	Complete - under occupation survey carried out in Dec 2013 and data used to inform new downsizing and decanting policy
Review Housing Strategy	Apr-13	Within existing resources	Complete - new housing and homelessness strategy 2012 -2015 approved by Cabinet and published	
Review Homelessness Strategy	Apr-13	Within existing resources	Complete - new housing and homelessness strategy 2012 -2015 approved by Cabinet and published	

## HRA BUSINESS PLAN - PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

### PROGRESS TO DATE DECEMBER 2013

Priority	Action	By When	Resources	Progress to Date - December 2013
4. Neighbourhood and Community	Establish an older persons strategy that addresses needs of elderly people in the district	Sep-12	Within existing resources	Complete - included within the new housing and homelessness strategy 2012 - 2015 approved by Cabinet and published
	Work with planning policy to identify future provision for the gypsy and traveller community	Sep-12	Within existing resources	Ongoing
	Continue to work with Partners to deliver affordable housing through use of the Stansted Area Housing Partnership and Growth Area Funding	Apr-13	£2.2 million and £725,000	Ongoing
	Investigate re-provision of temporary accommodation following demolition on Mead Court	Apr-13	Within existing resources	Work in progress - site identified in Stansted plans submitted and approved by planning building works due to commence in Jan 2014 as part of the first phase of Mead Court re-development programme Two further new temporary furnished accommodation units at Molehill Green completed in September 2013 and now in use Planning permission obtained to convert another property, work started in November 2013 Entered into a SLA with Supportworks to provide nightly let accommodation in Harlow as alternative to bed and breakfast which should reduce reliance on this type of accommodation despite increase in homelessness
	Work with partners on the delivery of a supported unit for people with learning disabilities	Apr-13	£100k - one off 2013	Work in progress - 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. A scheme has now been drawn up that will provide 6 x 1 bedroom flats along with communal space and sleepover/office for carers; Meetings held with care provider and parents to progress this scheme; a planning application is ready to submit with work due to commence in June 2014; £100,000 HRA funds will enable this to be delivered
	Investigate the provision of additional supported accommodation in the district for vulnerable adults (currently only one facility - Bromfield House)	Apr-13	Within existing resources	A scheme is required in Great Dunmow similar to Bromfield House in Saffron Walden, providing support to vulnerable adults who are homeless. Discussion to be had with Genesis and/or East Thames about funding /support costs
	Investigate the provision of a supported unit in the district for those fleeing domestic violence	Apr-14	Within existing resources	Work in progress - discussions held with Women's Aid as to size and preferred location and suitable site identified; Cabinet have approved transfer of land to Safer Places for delivery of a refuge; architects have been appointed and scheme designs drawn up

## HRA BUSINESS PLAN - PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

### PROGRESS TO DATE DECEMBER 2013

Priority	Action	By When	Resources	Progress to Date - December 2013
	Investigate the reprovion of a new mental health facility	Sep-12	Within existing resources	We remain keen to undertake a reprovion of the mental health scheme in Station Street, Saffron Walden with Granta Housing. It would need to be within the town – on the outskirts would be ok provided it is on a bus route. This is to ensure clients can maximise their opportunities for social inclusion etc. Supporting People and Adult Social Care/Mental Health both provide revenue funding into the existing service and are aware of our aspiration to reprovide our service. Preferred size would be 12 self contained units
	Review anti social behaviour policy and procedures	Apr-13	Within existing resources	Work in progress - working with Council's ASB Officer; work on-going but awaiting enactment of proposed government bill on changes to ASB legislation
	Provide 'internet cafes' in sheltered schemes for silver surfers	Oct-12	20k pa	Work in progress - project tendered for as 'design competition'. Alan Hasler House in Great Dunmow completed July 2012; The Close Hatfield Heath completed December 2013
	Review future contracts to include clauses to require contractor to take action to tackle climate change relevant to work to be carried out	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Ongoing - all contracts contain clauses
i. Value for Money	Continue to develop business plan financial model to inform investment and service planning	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Ongoing - model updated in December 2013
	Prepare for supporting people funding reductions	Aug-12	Within existing resources	Complete - service reviewed - Sheltered Housing Officers(SHOs) now working more generically - to include work in sheltered schemes and in the community (lifeline users)
	Improve performance management and financial planning systems in housing services	Aug-13	£20k in 2012	Complete - review of all PI's and targets completed for 2013/14 collection. Where relevant UDC PI's changed to reflect HouseMark equivalents. PI targets based on a combination of performance of peer LA's in HouseMark benchmarking group and historic UDC performance data. Regular review of PI performance and budget performance at Housing Section Heads meetings
	Maximise income to the HRA by achieving high collection rates for rents, service charges, sewage charges, garage rents and miscellaneous invoices	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Ongoing - rent arrears process reviewed and timescales amended to ensure action taken at an earlier stage to prevent arrears from escalating. Secondment post of Rent Arrears officer in place. Working closely with Housing Management Team to ensure arrears are managed effectively and relevant support provided to tenants. Service charge process and garage management to be implemented on Northgate in the near future. Current invoice process being reviewed to ensure accuracy of budget allocation and improvements in the time taken to process invoices. Tenant and internal re-charge processes currently being reviewed

## HRA BUSINESS PLAN - PRIORITIES FOR ACTION PROGRESS TO DATE DECEMBER 2013

Priority	Action	By When	Resources	Progress to Date - December 2013
4	Ensure rent arrears are kept to a minimum	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Ongoing - additional funding provided to CAB for debt counselling; Rent arrears policy has been reviewed; allocations policy has been changed to reflect welfare reforms (bedroom criteria); all reviews completed and implemented
	Implement service charges for common services for flats	Apr-12	Within existing resources	Complete - service charges calculated and charged for common services
	Access external funding where available to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Ongoing - bids for funding for the financial year 2014-2015 now in application stage
	Ensure the void turnaround figure does not exceed 28 days	Ongoing	£30k pa	Ongoing - new repairs surveyor appointed; review of depot operations is taking place (new offices being created at the depot to bring all the asset management team together); current void figure as at December continues to remain low at 11 days