

14 April 2014

Dear Councillor

HOUSING BOARD

A meeting of the Housing Board will be held in the Committee Room, Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden at **2.30pm** on Thursday 24 April 2014.

Yours faithfully

JOHN MITCHELL

Chief Executive

AGENDA

1	Apologies for absence and declarations of interest	
2	Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2014 (attached)	3
3	Matters arising	
4	Development update (i) Mead Court progress (verbal update) (ii) Sheltered schemes (verbal update) (iii) Development site – Catons Lane, Saffron Walden (iv) Development site – Ravens Crescent, Felsted (v) Development Programme Update	11
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	Date of next meeting: 24 July 2014	

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

Also to: Mr D Parish and Ms D Cornell (Tenant Forum representatives).

Lead Officer: Roz Millership (01799 510516)

Democratic Services Officer: Adam Rees (01799 510548)

**HOUSING BOARD held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN at 2.30pm on 9 JANUARY 2014**

Present: Councillor V Ranger – Chairman
Councillors S Barker, A Dean, J Menell, D Perry and J Redfern
(Portfolio Holder for Housing).

Tenant Forum Representative: Mr D Parish

Officers in attendance: S Baxter (Housing Enabling Officer), R Dobson (Principal Democratic Services Officer), P Evans (Housing Business and Performance Manager), E Fellowes (Accountant), A Knight (Accountancy Manager), D Malins (Housing Strategy Consultant), R Millership (Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services), A Rees (Democratic Services Support Officer), J Snares (Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager) and S Woods (Housing Strategy Manager).

HB25 APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Loughlin and K Mackman and from Mrs D Cornell.

Councillor Ranger and David Parish declared a non-pecuniary interest as tenants of the Council. Councillor Menell declared a non-pecuniary interest as a recipient of Lifeline Charges.

HB26 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2013 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the addition of Councillor Perry to the list of those present.

HB27 MATTERS ARISING

(i) Minute HB15 – Stansted Area Partnership Monies

Councillor Dean asked about funds Colne Housing had stated would be reinvested in housing in the district.

The Housing Strategy Consultant said Colne Housing were looking at a five house site in Great Chesterford. This would be handed to a housing trust.

Councillor Dean asked if the houses needed to be re-provided in Stansted under the terms of the housing trust and that he wanted written clarification of this.

The Housing Strategy Consultant said that there were ongoing discussions about this and that he would update members with clarification of the terms.

(ii) Minute HB19 – Welfare Benefits Reforms

Councillor Perry thanked officers for speaking to the tenant whose case he had referred to them, due to her feeling forced to move as a result of the “spare room subsidy”. He reiterated his concern about the lack of an appeals process, and wished to be sure the tenant had fully understood the position.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said it was the decision of the tenant whether to move or not.

(iii) Minute HB20 – Private Sector Housing

Councillor Menell asked how a parish council would be made aware of empty homes within their parish.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said the new officer was in the process of communicating with a wide range of partners, and would be contacting parishes in due course.

HB28

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

(i) Proposed Rent and Service Charge increase 2014/15

The Accountancy Manager outlined the report, which recommended that HRA dwelling rates rise by an average of 5.05% to progress towards convergence with Formula Rents. The report also recommended that garage rents be increased by 3.2%; that heating, service and sewerage charges be increased in line with actual costs and made further recommendations regarding services charges in sheltered schemes, the charge for sheltered support services, and the Lifeline basic charge. The Tenant Forum had agreed the recommendations.

Councillor Barker asked what happened when convergence was reached.

The Accountant said when convergence was reached, rents would be increased in line with the councils rent setting policy which was currently RPI +0.5%.

The Accountancy Manager said the Formula Rent was currently increased by RPI +0.5% +£2, although this was under consultation by the Government and might be changed to CPI +1%.

Councillor Dean asked what was meant by affordable rent. The Accountant said that affordable rent was 80% of the market rent and that the Formula rate was lower than that rate.

Councillor Dean asked why some rents took longer to converge.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said that when rent convergence were first introduced, some property rents were identified as being further behind the formula rent than others and consequently would take longer to reach convergence. Councillor Ranger said that a paper had been published when the issue was initially looked at, which he would make available to Councillor Dean.

Councillor Dean questioned a reference in the report to a “fairer” system of affordable rents.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said that rent restructuring was introduced to make rents fairer and less confusing for tenants, by applying a consistent formula to align all social rents within districts so that people in the same type of property paid the same level of rent.

The Accountancy Manager highlighted the financial impact of proposed rent increases which showed that rent would increase by an average of £4.73 leading to an average weekly rent of £98.33. She drew attention to the percentage of the HRA’s total tenancies in particular bands of rent increase, an average increase of 3.2% to Garage rents, an increase of 3.2% to each of the three levels of Sheltered Support Service, changes to the eligibility for Transitional Relief Protection and increase of Lifeline Charges by 3.2%. She also said that the Council still managed properties where service and sewerage charges were payable, and that these would be calculated in line with actual costs.

Councillor Menell asked about garage tenancies and notice required to end the tenancy.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said that garage tenancies were short term requiring only a week’s notice.

Councillor Dean asked why the costs of services were increasing.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said that contracts the Council were tied into also rose with inflation and these costs had to be passed on.

AGREED to recommend to Cabinet that

- a. HRA dwelling rents continue to converge with Formula rents, and as such the average rent increase in 2014/15 would be 5.05%.
- b. Garage rents be increased by 3.2%.
- c. Heating, Service and Sewerage charges be increased in line with actual costs.
- d. Service charges for common services in sheltered schemes continue to be subsidised for tenants at 31

- March 2012 who are not in receipt of housing benefit.
- e. Charge for Sheltered Support Services be increased by 3.2%.
 - f. Sheltered Support Services for tenants as at 31 March 2003, who are not eligible for the Supporting People grant, continue to receive Transitional Relief Protection.
 - g. Lifeline Basic Charge be increased by 3.2%.

(ii) HRA Budget Report 2014/15 and Five Year Business Plan Strategy

The Accountancy Manager said the report outlined proposals for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget and reserves for 2014/15, as well as the proposed 5 year financial forecast for the period from 2014/15 to 2018/19.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said referring to the HRA Business Plan and five year strategy, there had been lots of extra investment and that this was being spent on schemes which the Housing Board had identified.

Councillor Dean asked whether extra funding might be found from General Fund reserves.

Councillor Barker asked whether there was any integration with the County Council regarding mental health provision and questioned whether these projects aligned with Council policy. She also asked what targets there were, and said that there should be a reference to homelessness. She also asked about the General Fund Recharge, and asked what was being moved. She considered the HRA should not be subsidised by the General Fund.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said that the action plan did show targets, and that the document before the Housing Board was a summary of progress only. There were specific projects identified to use the headroom provided by self-financing. The Housing Strategy included Homelessness, but the document attached for consideration at this meeting was the HRA Business Plan.

Regarding mental health provision, the District Council was working with the County Council.

The Accountancy Manager explained that the increase in the General Fund recharge of £44,000 was due to increased resources from managerial, treasury and corporate levels due to the self-financing arrangements. This was likely to remain the case in the future.

Councillor Menell said that there should be a report about the eco housing at Wendens Ambo. She also asked whether there were plans to hold another community event like the one at Stansted.

The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said there were no plans for another event at present, but that one might be planned with regards to Dunmow next year.

Councillor Dean asked if there was something in the budget that dealt with the problems that arose with Mountfitchet estate.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said that the issues that had been raised at the event held this year were mainly matters for Highways. Officers were in contact with Highways and with Councillor Evans, and were aiming to ensure Highways gave priority to this area.

Councillor Barker suggested the Highways Rangers could possibly deal with situations regarding the run-down appearance of some estates, for example, Upper Millfield in Great Dunmow.

Councillor Ranger said this kind of initiative was an area for local members to liaise with their parish councils and with the Highways Rangers.

Councillor Menell asked about the possibility of having two teams of Highways Rangers. Councillor Ranger said that although it was possible, it was initially dismissed at full Council.

Councillor Redfern said ward members could use the £2,000 money awarded to each ward for this type of project.

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said that if any housing areas needed regeneration that these needed to be identified and if required could be dealt with as a new priority in the business plan.

Councillor Redfern said that she wanted to see if it was possible to come up with something that went across the entire district.

Councillor Dean said that the Mountfitchet estate was 60 years old and needed regeneration so he was happy with The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services' point.

Councillor Redfern said she would work with the Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services to identify areas requiring regeneration.

AGREED to recommend to Cabinet for approval
a) The 2014/15 Budget set out in the report.

- b) The use of headroom funds for Business Plan Projects.
- c) The Working Balance and Allocation of Earmarked Reserves.

HB29

DRAFT WELFARE GARDEN AND REDECORATION POLICY

The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said that the report proposed changes to the Council's Garden and Redecoration policy, such as making eligibility health related rather than age related. She said that this would minimise the impact of having more people use the service by adding a small charge. She said that the Tenants Forum were happy with changes.

Councillor Menell asked whether when property was let, the Council cleared the gardens. She said that the £3 weekly charge seemed to be small.

The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said that gardens were cleared to be at a functional standard. She also said that the £3 charge was cheap, but this meant it would not be unaffordable whilst still recouping some of the cost.

Councillor Menell asked how this Council compared to others. The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said that prices varied.

Councillor Barker said that the term *growing season* was vague. She also asked how the charge was collected. The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said the growing season varied from year to year. She also said that the charge would be added to the tenants' rent as a service charge. David Parish said that the charge was not as cheap as it initially appeared.

Councillor Perry asked whether tenants with carers qualified and what happened to people who were in hospital.

The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said that it was not the role of carers to look after gardens, and so tenants qualified if they had a carer. She said that this was also true if the tenant was in hospital.

Councillor Dean said that he could see the charge was there to stop service exploitation, but he wanted to know whether the elderly who were without benefits qualified. He asked whether £3 would act as a disincentive.

The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said that discretion would be used when dealing with the elderly. She also said that the £3 charge would be a sufficient disincentive.

Councillor Dean asked whether the service would be discriminatory. The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said that it would not, and that a full equality impact assessment had been carried out.

Councillor Dean said that because the draft policy stated one room would be painted every two years, three bed houses would be unfairly penalised.

Councillor Ranger said that there were no three bed houses under the scheme, there was only up to two bedroom designated accommodation.

Councillor Barker said that people should have to provide their own paint and wallpaper.

The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said that tenants were given a selection of stock colours those were free, but that if they wanted another colour they had to provide it themselves. She said that she would add this amendment to the proposal.

AGREED to recommend to Cabinet that the Welfare Garden and Redecoration Policy be adopted.

HB30

WELFARE REFORM UPDATE

The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said that the report showed the situation was not getting worse. Councillor Dean asked that these reports in future show the amount of people affected by welfare reform who wanted to downsize. The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said that the figure could be calculated for future reports.

Councillor Menell asked whether the Hardship Fund was being used. The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said that it was being used for people who wanted to downsize but were unable to.

Councillor Dean asked whether the Spare Room Subsidy was causing people to go into arrears. The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said that most people affected were already in arrears before the policy came into effect.

Councillor Redfern said the Council was trying to help those affected by the subsidy.

Councillor Barker asked whether tenants who were in arrears could use the two month period where there was no council tax to clear their arrears. The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said it was not possible because most tenants paid over 12 months, not ten months. The Housing Business and Performance Manager said officers were trying to come up with a plan to help those affected.

Councillor Barker asked if there were any refusals to pay the extra charge. The Housing Business and Performance Manager said that there hadn't been any refusals to pay.

The report was noted.

HB31

DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Housing Strategy Consultant said that Holloway Crescent had been handed over. He said that work on Mead Court should start on 27 January. There should be a 42 week period for phase one, and 43 week period for phase 2. He asked the members if they wanted to do any PR events related to Mead Court. Councillor Redfern said that they should do one and was encouraged that other sites were being looked at. Councillor Barker said that Parish councillors should be invited.

The Housing Strategy Consultant said that they were looking at identifying future schemes, and looking at; site layout plans, budget estimates, how projects return the investment and the informal planning view. He said that the Sheltered Schemes such as that at Reynolds Court were priorities. He said that they were also looking at Alexia House and Walden Place.

HB32

AFFORDABLE HOUSING UPDATE

The Housing Enabling Officer said that there was nothing to be added to the Commuted Sum Policy. Councillor Ranger asked when the money would become available from the Commuted Sum Policy. The Housing Strategy Consultant said that it was dependent on the S106 in each case and that there was a trigger point. He said that on smaller units it was fairly early, although it was dependent on properties selling. Councillor Dean noted that Rochford Nurseries had changed name.

HB33

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager said that the Council had agreed in principle to transfer some land to Safer Places in Dunmow. She said that they would make provision for smaller units and that these plans would go to a board of trustees. She said that the Council had agreed to fund an outreach programme by Safer Places in the area. She said that support in the area was at full capacity and that if Safer Places created a base in Dunmow that would improve their services.

Councillor Perry asked if there was still a Sanctuary policy. The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager confirmed that there was.

HB34

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services said that there was no agreed upon date for the next meeting and that she would liaise with Democratic Services in order to circulate a forward plan for the Housing Board's Work Programme. She said that this would be done as soon as possible.

The meeting ended at 4.15pm.

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 24 April 2014

4

Title: Development Site – Catons Lane, Saffron Walden

Portfolio Holder: Doug Malins, Housing Development Manager

Key decision: Yes

Summary

1. This report provides the Housing Board with a detailed development appraisal for the site at Catons Lane, Saffron Walden. There are three options for this site which will be detailed in this report.
2. This site has been identified as having potential for the development of council owned homes, as part of the council's on-going development programme.

Recommendations

3. That the Housing Board:
 - a. Recommends to Cabinet which of the three options is to be progressed.
 - b. Recommends to Cabinet that site is progressed to the planning application stage, having regard to the estimated costs associated with this work.

Financial Implications

4. Financial provision for the development of new Council owned homes is included within the Housing Revenue Account.
5. The Indicative cost for each option has been calculated. These indicative costs will be updated as the proposals are developed towards the submission of a planning application. The final cost will be known following the tender process for the selection of a building contractor.

Background Papers

6. 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.

The Design Partnership Feasibility Report for the Garage Court Re-Development at Catons Lane, Saffron Walden – April 2014

- 7.

Communication/Consultation	Existing tenants, local residents, Town Council and external agencies
Community Safety	Appropriate precautions would be taken during works
Equalities	Equality and diversity is a key issue for the Council with regards to housing provision
Health and Safety	During the management of the project all risks will be constantly reviewed, revised and managed
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Legal team have been consulted
Sustainability	An opportunity to construct new thermally efficient homes for people in housing need.
Ward-specific impacts	Saffron Walden
Workforce/Workplace	There are sufficient resources in the housing team to manage the project

Situation

8. The site is 0.19 hectares and is located behind the properties on Catons Lane and Little Walden Road in Saffron Walden. The land is currently used as a parking court comprising 38 garages which are constructed with concrete bases, concrete panel walls and a metal roof, however many are in a poor condition and are not in use.
9. The site has very narrow access to the side of No 14 Catons Lane, which is a home owned by Uttlesford District Council. The tenant has been approached and is willing to give up part of her garden to acquire the required access width. The tenant has requested that her boundary is reinstated with a close board fence.
10. There are some large trees that are present along the boundary of the site, some on neighbouring land and others within the site. There is also a legal right of way from the rear of No.21 Little Walden Road to both The Green and Catons Lane and an informal public 'right of way' from these two points as well. The occupier of No 21 Little Walden Road has been approached about her "right of way" and negotiations are underway to vary this.
11. A gas main has been identified along the Northern boundary which encroaches into the site, however no other services are evident on the site. As this is a garage court however there could very well be drainage, electricity and water mains running under the site.

12. Saunders Boston architects have been appointed to undertake sketch schemes for the site to provide homes which meet Housing Quality Indicators, Lifetime Homes, Building for Life and Code for Sustainable Homes level 3, and incorporate a fabric first approach. They have provided 3 options that are attached to this report.
13. Option 1 is a development of 6 homes comprising 4 x 2 bedroom 4 person houses, and 2 x 1 bedroom 2 person houses. The total construction cost (including all fees) is estimated to be £696,906.
14. Option 2 is a development of 7 homes comprising 3 x 2 bedroom 4 person houses, 2 x 1 bedroom 2 person houses and 2 x 1 bedroom 2 person flats. The total construction cost (including all fees) is estimated to be £755,696.
15. Option 3 is a development of 8 homes comprising 2 x 2 bedroom 4 person houses, 2 x 1 bedroom 2 person houses and 4 x 1 bedroom 2 person flats. The total construction cost (including all fees) is estimated to be £799,858.
16. The layout of the scheme has also retained all the existing trees with the exception of one adjacent to plot 1 in order to assist with creating a 'sense of place' and to create a mature feel to the development. The designers have also tried to limit overlooking by constructing gable walls to face neighbouring houses and where this is not possible they have obtain 20m distances, building to building.
17. The architects have contacted the planners prior to completing their sketches and have incorporated their requirements for; parking, rear garden sizes and bin collection provisions with in their proposals.
18. In order to submit a full planning application it will be necessary to appoint the designated architects to undertake the planning application, however an arbocultural survey will also be necessary as part of this process as well as obtaining a Site Investigation report and Flood Risk Assessment both of which can be undertaken by the engineers. It will also be necessary to conclude negotiations with the tenant at No 14 Catons Lane, and the occupier of No 21 Little Walden Road.
19. Prior to achieving planning permission for the scheme, it is intended to keep costs to a minimum. The essential costs can be summarised as follows:
 - Architectural Fees £9,341.46
 - Topographical Survey £430.00
 - Engineers £4,650.00
 - Arbocultural Report £661.50
 - Planning Fee £3,080.00
 - **Total costs** **£18,182.96**
20. The site condition, design proposals, costs and risks have all been investigated and show that the development is viable. The build costs are a little high due to the size and shape of the site, and the length of access required. Costs could increase further if underground services are found.

21. Taking all aspect of the schemes into account it may be prudent to proceed on the basis of option 1 for six houses as this is more likely to gain planning approval as the density is lower which should also attract fewer neighbourhood objections. This option provides the same number of bed spaces as the other schemes but for a lower cost per m². The downside of this option is that it will provide housing for fewer households.

Risk Analysis

22.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
No 14 not allowing their side garden to be used for access.	1 Tenant already been approached and is supportive	4 Unable to access site for development purposes	Negotiations with the tenant to be concluded
No 21 not agreeing to vary right of way	1 Occupant already been approached and is supportive	3 Alternative arrangements available	Negotiations with No 21 to be concluded.
Not achieving planning permission	1 Planners supportive	4 Development not possible	Pre-planning discussions with planners
Underground services identified	2 Investigations to be carried out	3 Diversions possible but cost implications	Investigations to be undertaken at the earliest stage

1 = Little or no risk or impact

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

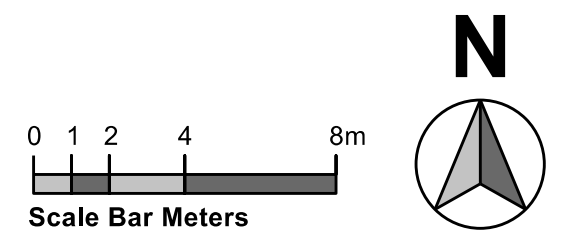
3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

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

Proposed Site Plan



- Notes.**
1. All dimensions to be verified on site by GENERAL CONTRACTOR and any discrepancies to be brought to the attention of the Architect prior to commencing work or setting out or preparing shop drawings.
 2. Drawings not to be scaled. Work to figured dimensions only.
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 5. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all other Consultants drawings and specifications.
 6. Drainage has not been surveyed and all pipe locations and and below ground drainage runs are indicative

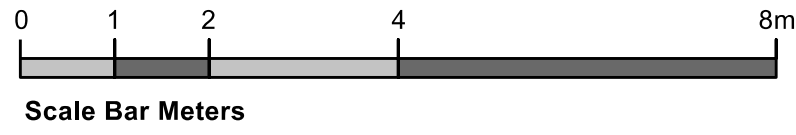


2B4P Elevation
Plots 1 & 2 + Plots 5 & 6



1B4P Elevation
Plots 3 & 4

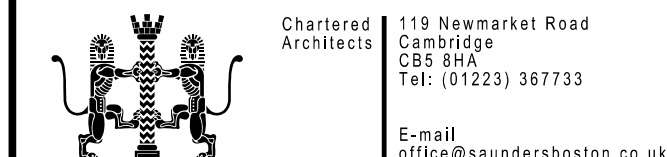
Schedule
4No. 2B4P Houses with 2 No. Parking Spaces
2No. 1B2P Houses With 1 No. Parking Spaces
Site Total: 6 No. Houses
Total Site Area: 0.19 Hectares



PRELIM FOR COMMENT

A	Number 21 Access Shown, General Revisions	30/3/2014	NDMG	NDMG
No.	Revision	Date	Chk	Auth

FOR DISCUSSION



Saunders Boston

Client: **Uttlesford District Council**

Job: **Catons Lane Saffron Walden**

Drawing: **Proposed Site Plan**

Scales	1:200 @ A1, 1:400 @ A3, 1:100 @ A1, 1:200 @ A3	Date	March 2014
Number	1343-SK-001	Checked	LG
		Authorised	NDMG
		Revision	

Option 2
4 Houses, 4 Flats



Option 2 Schedule

- 2No. 2B4P Houses with 2 No. Parking Spaces
- 2No. 1B2P Houses With 1 No. Parking Space
- 4No. 1B2P Flats With 1 No. Parking Space

Site Total: 8 No. Houses and Flats

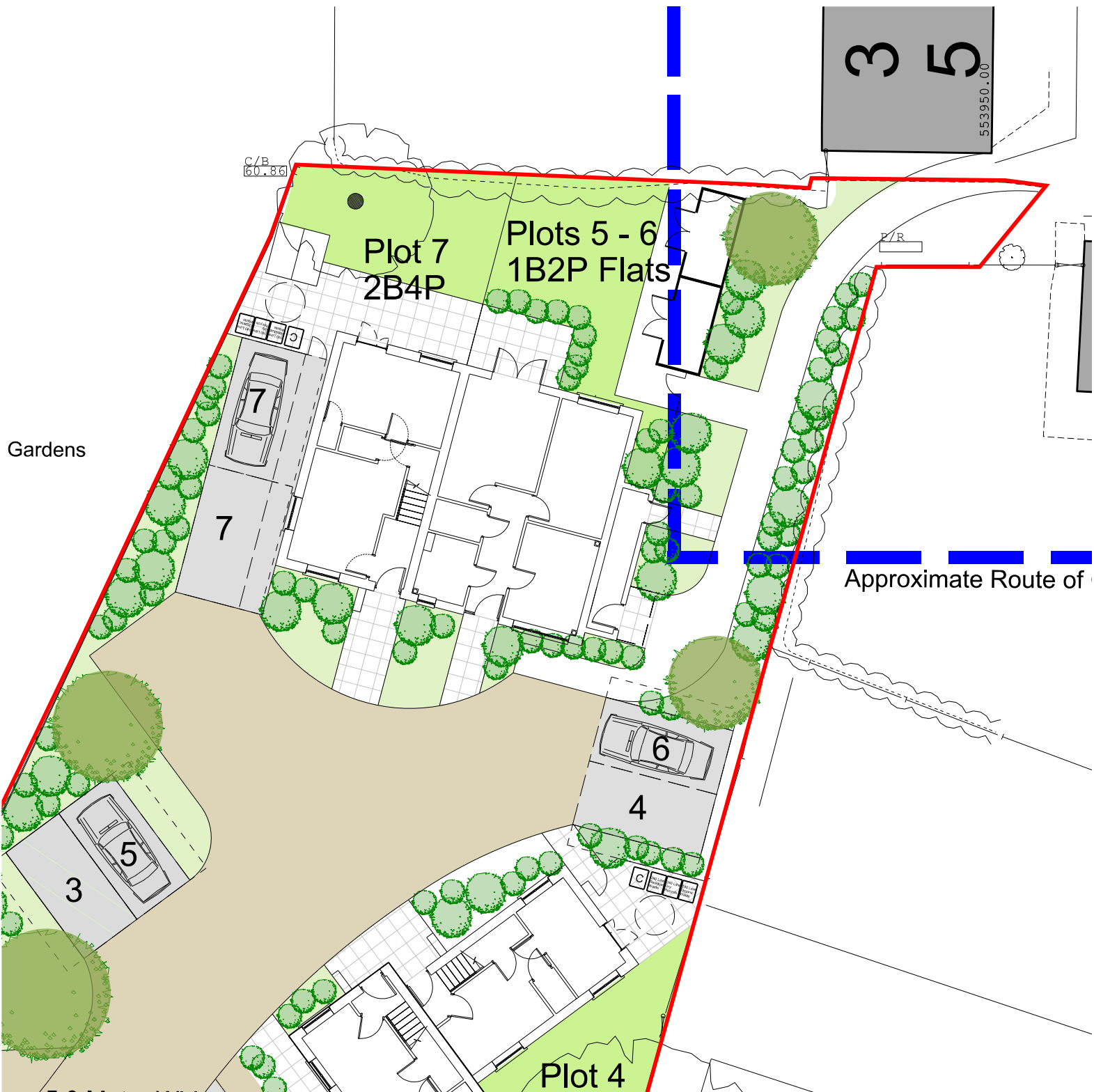
Total Site Area: 0.19 Hectares

Option 2A Schedule

- 3No. 2B4P Houses with 2 No. Parking Spaces
- 2No. 1B2P Houses With 1 No. Parking Space
- 2No. 1B2P Flats With 1 No. Parking Space

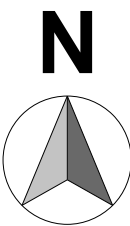
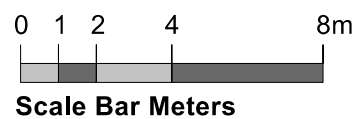
Site Total: 7 No. Houses and Flats

Total Site Area: 0.19 Hectares



Option 2A
5 Houses, 2 Flats

- No. Notes:
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 6. Drainage has not been surveyed and all pipe locations and and below ground drainage runs are indicative



PRELIM FOR COMMENT

No. Revision Date Chk Auth

FOR DISCUSSION

Chartered Architects 119 Newmarket Road Cambridge CB5 8HA Tel: (01223) 367733 E-mail: office@saundersboston.co.uk

Saunders Boston

Client: Uttlesford District Council

Job: Catons Lane Saffron Walden

Drawing: Proposed Site Plan Option 2 and 2 A

Scales: 1:200 @ A1, 1:400 @ A3 1:100 @ A1, 1:200 @ A3

Number: 1343-SK-002

Date: March 2014

Checked: NDMG Authorised: NDMG Revision:

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 24 April 2014

4

Title: Development Site – Ravens Crescent,
Felsted

Portfolio Holder: Doug Malins – Housing Development
Manager

Key decision: Yes

Summary

1. This report provides the Housing Board with a detailed development appraisal for the site at Ravens Crescent, Felsted.
2. This site has been identified as having potential for the development of Council owned homes, as part of our on-going development programme.

Recommendations

3. That the Housing Board:
 - a. Recommends to Cabinet that the site is progressed to the planning application stage, having regard to the estimated costs associated with this work.

Financial Implications

4. Financial provision for the development of new Council owned homes is included within the Housing Revenue Account.
5. The Indicative cost for this proposal has been calculated. This indicative cost will be updated as the proposal is developed towards the submission of a planning application. The final cost will be known following the tender process for the selection of a building contractor.

Background Papers

6. 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.
 - Oxbury and Company Feasibility Report for the Re-Development at Ravens Crescent, Felsted – April 2014

7.

Communication/Consultation	Existing tenants, local residents, Parish Council and external agencies
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Community Safety	Appropriate precautions would be taken during works
Equalities	Equality and diversity is a key issue for the Council with regards to housing provision
Health and Safety	During the management of the project all risks will be constantly reviewed, revised and managed
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Legal team have been consulted
Sustainability	An opportunity to construct new thermally efficient homes for people in housing need.
Ward-specific impacts	Felsted
Workforce/Workplace	There are sufficient resources in the housing team to manage the project

Situation

8. The site is 0.45 hectares and is located behind the properties 18 – 22 Ravens Crescent, Felsted. The site is currently used as play space, although there is no play equipment on site, and usage is minimal.
9. The site has very narrow access to the side of No's. 20 and 21 Ravens Crescent, which will be unsuitable for the proposed development. Therefore, it is proposed that the main body of the site (plots 2-14) will be accessed by the side garden of 19 Ravens Crescent, which is a home owned by Uttlesford District Council. The tenant has been approached and is willing to give up part of her garden to acquire the required access width. The tenant has requested that her boundary is reinstated with a close board fence, and that certain internal improvement works to her home are carried out as part of the development.
10. Plot 1 on the attached sketch layout (2 bedroom 4 person bungalow) is proposed for the rear garden of 18 Ravens Crescent. This Council owned property was recently void which has enabled the garden to be reduced in size to allow the construction and access to this new home.
11. The site is level and currently a well maintained grassed area. There is a mature boundary made up of trees and hedging to the South-East and South-West boundaries of the site. The proposed scheme allows for the retention of these. There is an overhead electricity pole in the proposed entrance to the site (adjacent No. 19 Ravens Crescent) that will need to be relocated. This has been allowed for in the construction cost estimate, and will be progressed with the electricity company.

12. The site is currently leased to the Parish Council as play provision. This lease expires in 2016, but in any case, the lease can be terminated by the Council on the service of 6 months written notice. At the time of writing this report, the Housing Development Manager has arranged to meet with the Parish Council on the 16th April 2014, and will verbally update Members as to the outcome of those discussions.
13. Rees Pryer architects have been appointed to provide a sketch scheme for the site to provide homes which meet Housing Quality Indicators, Lifetime Homes, Building for Life and Code for Sustainable Homes level 3, and incorporate a fabric first approach. Their proposal is attached to this report.
14. The attached sketch layout provides for a development of 14 homes comprising 1 x 2 bedroom 4 person bungalow, 4 x 1 bedroom 2 person houses, and 9 x 2 bedroom 4 person houses. The total construction cost (including all fees) is estimated to be £1,400,500.
15. The architects have contacted the planners prior to completing their sketch and have incorporated their requirements for; parking, rear garden sizes and bin collection provisions with in their proposal.
16. In order to submit a full planning application it will be necessary to appoint the designated architects to undertake the planning application, however an arbocultural survey and ecological survey will be necessary as part of this process. It will also be necessary to obtain a Site Investigation report which can be undertaken by the engineers. The conclusion of negotiations with the tenant at No 19 Ravens Crescent are also critical to the development proposals.
17. Prior to achieving planning permission for the scheme, it is intended to keep costs to a minimum. The essential costs can be summarised as follows:
- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| • Architectural Fees | £17,800.00 |
| • Topographical Survey | £750.00 |
| • Engineers | £3,200.00 |
| • Arbocultural Report | £500.00 |
| • Ecological Survey | £620.00 |
| • Planning Fee | £5,390.00 |
| • Total costs | £28,260.00 |
18. The site condition, design proposals, costs and risks have all been investigated and show that the development is viable. The build costs are at a reasonable level despite the length of the accesses, service connections and the need to relocate an electricity pole. Costs could increase further if issues are found within the ground, and it should be noted that it is likely that an Archaeological Survey will need to be undertaken prior to development.
19. Taking all aspects of the scheme into account, we believe this to be a highly deliverable development site that will provide 14 new homes for people in housing need.

Risk Analysis

20.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
No 19 not allowing their side garden to be used for access.	1 Tenant already been approached and is supportive	4 Unable to access site for development purposes	Negotiations with the tenant to be concluded
Parish Council not supportive due to the site being used as a play area	2 Parish Council have been approached	2 Lease can be terminated	Communication with the Parish Council to be on-going throughout the development process.
Not achieving planning permission	1 Planners supportive	4 Development not possible	Pre-planning discussions with planners

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.

Date: March 2014

Drwg: 14 1391 sk1

Client:

Project:

Proposed Development, Ravens Crescent,
Felsted
Uttlesford District Council

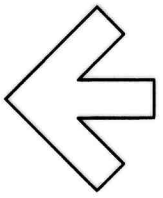
Revision:

Scale: 1 : 500 @A3

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Rees
Pryer
ARCHITECTS

NORTH



ACCOMMODATION

A 1no. 2 BED 4 PERSON BUNGALOW

B 3no. 2 BED 4 PERSON HOUSES

C 4no. 1 BED 2 PERSON HOUSES

TOTAL 14no. DWELLINGS

TOTAL 28no. PARKING SPACES

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 24 April 2014

4

**Title: Development Programme Update
(2013/2014)**

**Author: Stephanie Baxter – Housing Enabling
Officer**

Item for Information

Summary

1. This report sets out the following.
 - The number of affordable homes delivered under the 2013/2014 affordable housing programme by size and tenure.
 - The number of homes expected to be delivered under the 2014/2015 affordable housing development programme.
 - The number of planning permissions granted for affordable homes 2013/2014.

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board notes the information on number of affordable homes delivered as part of the 2013/2014 programme.

Financial Implications

3. No cost associated with the recommendation.

Background Papers

4. None

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	None
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	Yes. Affordable housing ensures the long

	term sustainability of Uttlesford.
Ward-specific impacts	Yes. Provides much needed affordable housing across the district.
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

6. The number of affordable homes delivered between 1st April, 2013 and 31st March, 2014 amounted to 76 units. 66 units were for affordable rent and 10 were shared ownership. This includes a mixture of 1&2 bed flats and bungalows, 2, 3 & 4 bed houses, both for affordable rent and shared ownership.
7. The Council's target is 100 affordable homes per annum. However, we delivered 122 for the year 2012/2013 and expect to deliver 86 units for 2014/2015.
8. Planning permission during 2013/2014 was given for 177 affordable homes which will be delivered as 138 affordable rent and 39 shared ownership. These will include 1 & 2 bed flats and bungalows and 1, 2 & 3 bed houses.

Risk Analysis

9.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Not enough affordable homes delivered across the district	2. Some risk due to delays	2. Increase in numbers on housing waiting list	Will continue to work closely with developers to ensure we meet our target of 100 affordable homes per annum

1 = Little or no risk or impact

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

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

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

Appendix – Affordable Housing Development Programme, 2013-2014

Schemes delivered in 2013-2014

Scheme Name	Area	Affordable Units	% Whole scheme	PP ref no.	Type/lead
The Orchard Station Road	Elsenham	21	40	UTT/2166/11/DFO	s106
Holloway Crescent p2	Leaden Roding	8	100	UTT/1357/11/FUL	UDC
The Street/ Clavering Road	Manuden	4	29	UTT/0692/12/FUL	RES
Ashdon Rd linked to Little Walden Rd (phase 1)	Saffron Walden*	12	40	UTT/0400/09/OP	s106
Little Walden Road (linked to Ashdon Rd)	Saffron Walden*	15	40	UTT/1576/12/DFO	RES
Rochford Nurseries p4b/Forest Hall Park	Stansted Mountfitchet	12	44	UTT/2265/07/DFO	s106
Rochford Nurseries p5/Forest Hall Park**	Stansted Mountfitchet	4	30	UTT/0076/10/FUL	s106
Total		76			

* denotes affordable housing across 3 schemes/phases. Totals 40% overall.

** denotes affordable housing across 6 phases. Totals 30% overall.

Schemes expected to be delivered 2014-2015

Area	Affordable Units	PP ref no.	Type/lead
Arkesden	4	UTT/2427/11/FUL	RES
Chrishall	4	UTT/13/1728/FUL	RES
Hatfield Heath	14	UTT/12/5349/FUL	RES
Saffron Walden	25	UTT/0400/09/OP	s106
Stansted Mountfitchet	29	UTT/13/0749/FUL	UDC
Stansted Mountfitchet	10	UTT/0265/07/DFO	s106
Total	86		

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 24 April 2014

5

Title: Tenant Regulatory (Scrutiny) Panel Update

Author: Paula Evans – Housing Business and
Performance Manager

Ext: 636

Item for Decision

Summary

1. This report provides a summary of the work of the Tenant Regulatory Panel to date as well as presenting the findings and recommendations of the Panel following their recent review of the Voids process.

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board consider recommendations made by the Tenant Regulatory Panel in their Voids Review report.

Financial Implications

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

Background Papers

4. None

Published Papers

5. Localism Act (2011)

Impact

- 6.

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. Initially interviews were conducted to select members. Equalities training is
------------	--

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

Situation

1. The TRP has now been in existence for over a year having been formed in November 2012. The panel currently consists of five members and a Chairperson. The key aim of the TRP is to scrutinise identified Housing processes and procedures whilst acting as an independent body on behalf of Uttlesford District Council's tenants. All work carried out by members of the TRP is on a voluntary basis.
2. The TRP completed in-depth Scrutiny training as part of their formation and have been attending relevant tenant-based training and information sessions to further develop both the team and individual members. Panel members have been continually supported and guided by an external consultant.
3. The Housing Business and Performance Manager is formally recognised as the TRPs main communication point between themselves and the Housing Service, but due to the requirement for the group to remain as independent as possible, this contact is minimal.
4. The first review that the TRP has undertaken is that of Void properties (the time that a property remains empty between re-lets). They have conducted extensive research and have spent time gathering information regarding this process and its current performance levels within Uttlesford. This has involved meeting and interviewing staff at various levels within the organisation as well as conducting site visits to empty properties.
5. The TRP presented their Voids Review Report (copy attached) to the Tenant Forum and Housing Service officers in March.
6. Officers are currently developing an action plan in response to the recommendations made by the TRP in their report. This action plan will be reviewed on a regular basis by both management and the TRP.
7. The TRP are currently drafting and prioritising a schedule of work for future reviews.

Risk Analysis

8.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That UDC are unable to retain and re-recruit TRP members	2 – some risk or impact	Independent Housing Scrutiny activities would be limited	Ensure the work of the Panel is regularly communicated and promoted and that these activities emphasise the importance of the TRP
That Tenant Scrutiny work is not undertaken	2 – some risk or impact	The housing Service would not be adopting some of the key principles of self-regulation	TRP fully supported by officers to ensure work is undertaken

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: 24 April 2014

6

Title: Welfare Reform Update

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

Item for information
only

Summary

1. This report is to update members on figures for the year 2013/14 showing the number of tenants affected by the spare room subsidy and how this is impacting on the level of rent arrears.

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board notes this report.

Financial Implications

3. None

Background Papers

4. None

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

6.

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Number of tenants affected by spare room subsidy	158	153	152	141
Number of above tenants in arrears	97	117	91	79
Average value of arrears	£387.93	£320.49	£373.13	424.96
Number of council tenants on discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)	29	15	19	TBC
Number of tenants subject to benefit cap	0	1	3	3
Number of downsizing grants paid	10	10	14	4
Number of suspension orders	10	17	7	15
Number of evictions	1	0	1	3

7. The above table shows the number of tenants affected by the spare room subsidy and benefit cap for this financial year. It also includes the number of suspension orders that the council has applied for and the number of evictions carried out across all tenancies.

8. The figures show that the number of tenants affected by the spare room subsidy has decreased and that the number in arrears has dropped. The tenants who remain in arrears show an increase in the average amount owed. These tenants had arrears before the spare room subsidy was introduced but it has had the effect of increasing their arrears.

9. The work on encouraging tenants to move and closely supporting those who are choosing to remain to manage their rent accounts has worked well and protected tenants from any threat of eviction.

10. The housing department continues to review the way it manages all tenants in arrears. Last April a new arrears policy was implemented and a debt support officer role was introduced, both these actions have had a positive effect on managing arrears and the overall arrears figure for 2013/14 fell by £50,593.45 from the previous year's figure.

Risk Analysis

11.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Increase in rent arrears	2. Some risk - the longer	2. HRA spending	Monitoring closely the level of rent arrears

	tenants have a shortfall between their rent and their housing benefit the more likely it is that they will not continue to make up that shortfall	would need to be adjusted if there was any continuing decrease in revenues	and proactively working with tenants to help them manage their rent accounts. Revised arrears policy to ensure action is taken sooner if a tenant starts to fall into arrears
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

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

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

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

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 24 April 2014

7

Title: Housing Performance Indicators and Targets 2014/15

Author: Paula Evans – Housing Business and Performance Manager
Ext: 636

Item for Information

Summary

1. This report provides a summary of the performance indicators that will be used to monitor the performance of the Housing Service throughout 2014/15.

It also proposes a timetable for the review of performance against these indicators by the Housing Board throughout the year.

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board review and make comment on all performance indicators and targets set out in the attached appendices.

Financial Implications

3. None. There are no costs associated with this report.

Background Papers

4. Reports from the following systems have been used by the author in the preparation of this report:

Covalent	Uttlesford District Council's corporate Performance Management System
Housemark	Nationally recognised housing benchmarking facility

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	Tenant Forum Members have reviewed the listed indicators
Community Safety	None

Equalities	None beyond service improvement on the equality and diversity performance indicators
Health and Safety	None beyond service improvement on the health and safety performance indicators
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

1. The Housing Service uses a collection of performance indicators (PI's) to manage its performance levels on an on-going basis. Each PI has identified targets which are set at the start of each new financial year. As per corporate standards, the PI's are identified by a pre-fix at either a corporate level (KPI and PI) or local level (for Housing, HSG).
2. The Housing PI's are reviewed and monitored at a corporate level by both CMT and the Performance and Audit committee on a quarterly basis as part of a corporate performance management framework.
3. Where relevant, PI's are linked to the Housing service plan to monitor the progress of specific service plan actions.
4. To support the development of a local Housing performance management framework it is recommended that the Housing Board also review the performance of all Housing PI's on a quarterly basis as follows:

PI performance & Housemark benchmarking	Housing Board meeting
Quarter 1	24 th July 2014
Quarter 2	16 th October 2014
Quarter 3 (plus approval of 2015/16 PI's & targets)	27 th January 2015
Quarter 4 & Annual outturn	TBC

Input and comment on PI performance levels will also be obtained from the Tenant Forum and brought to the attention of the Housing Board as necessary.

5. For relevant PI's, benchmarking data collated from the Housemark system will also be presented for members to make comment on.

6. The PI's and targets that have been identified for data collection and monitoring for 2014/15 are detailed in the attached appendices for Housing Board member's reference.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That performance indicators will not meet quarterly/ annual targets	2 – The majority of Performance Indicators perform on or above target	3 – In some areas the risk of not meeting targets could impact on areas such as customer satisfaction and statutory adherence to government led requirements	Performance is monitored by corporately by CMT and the Performance and Audit committee on a quarterly basis.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

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

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

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

Housing LPIs and Targets 2014-15

Housing Board 24th April 2014

PI Code & Short Name	2013/14	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	2014/15 (Annual)	Ownership Assigned To	Comments
	Target	Target	Target	Target	Target	Target		
HSG 4 (H4) <i>New tenants visits completed within 3 months</i>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Fiona Gardiner	
HSG 5 (BV69) <i>% of rent lost through dwellings being vacant (GN & HfOP)</i>	1.95%	1.90%	1.90%	1.90%	1.90%	1.90%	Robert Patterson-Smith	Realistic improving target set
HSG 9 <i>% of BME applicants on the housing register</i>	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	Becca Collins/ Charmaine Horsfield	Target as per 2011 Census data
HSG 10 <i>Average time taken (days) to process homeless applications</i>	33	33	33	33	33	33	Becca Collins/ Charmaine Horsfield	As per Government targets
HSG 14 (HMGH 60) <i>% of dwellings that are vacant and available to let (GN & HfOP)</i>	0.8%	Not measured for Quarters				0.75%	Roz Millership	Realistic improving target set
HSG 20 (HMPI220) <i>Current tenant rent arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit (excluding HB adjustment)</i>	3.30%	3.29%	3.29%	3.29%	3.29%	3.29%	Robert Patterson-Smith	
HSG 21 <i>Homelessness: Number of people accepted as homeless</i>	35	15	15	15	15	60	Becca Collins/ Charmaine Horsfield	Realistic target set based on current trends

PI Code & Short Name	2013/14	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	2014/15 (Annual)	Ownership Assigned To	Comments
	Target	Target	Target	Target	Target	Target		
HSG 22 <i>Average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation for accepted priority needs families (weeks)</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	Becca Collins/ Charmaine Horsfield	
HSG 23 <i>Average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation for accepted priority needs others (weeks)</i>	4	4	4	4	4	4	Becca Collins/ Charmaine Horsfield	
HSG 24 <i>Average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation for rejected (all groups) (weeks)</i>	5	4	4	4	4	4	Becca Collins/ Charmaine Horsfield	
HSG 27 (a) <i>% of all fire safety actions identified in Fire Risk Assessments implemented by target date - High Priority</i>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Natalie Leatham	
HSG 27 (b) <i>% of all fire safety actions identified in Fire Risk Assessments implemented by target date - Medium Priority</i>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Natalie Leatham	
HSG 27 (c) <i>% of all fire safety actions identified in Fire Risk Assessments implemented by target date - Low Priority</i>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Natalie Leatham	
HSG 28 <i>Average energy efficiency rating of dwellings (based on SAP 2005)</i>	69	Not measured for Quarters				79	Natalie Leatham	

PI Code & Short Name	2013/14	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	2014/15 (Annual)	Ownership Assigned To	Comments
	Target	Target	Target	Target	Target	Target		
HSG 32 (GNPI 19) <i>% of urgent repairs completed within target time</i>	100%	97.5%	97.5%	97.5%	97.5%	97.5%	David Turner	Realistic target set
HSG 34 <i>% of lets to all properties allocated through the allocation scheme to BME applicants</i>	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	Becca Collins/ Charmaine Horsfield	Target as per 2011 Census data
HSG 35 <i>% of Pre-Void Inspections completed on all voids that can be pre-inspected for the period</i>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Fiona Gardiner	
HSG 37 (GNPI 18) <i>% of emergency repairs completed within target time (24hrs)</i>	97%	97.5%	97.5%	97.5%	97.5%	97.5%	David Turner	Realistic target set
HSG 42 (GI5C0) <i>Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate</i>	100.00%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100.00%	Eric Payne	
HSG 43 (HMPI 210) <i>Rent collected as a percentage of rent owed (excluding arrears b/f)</i>	99.10%	98.15%	98.65%	98.90%	99.15%	99.15%	Robert Patterson-Smith	Realistic improving target set

Housing KPI/PIs and Targets 2014-15

Housing Board 24th April 2014

PI Code & Short Name	2013/14	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	2014/15 (Annual)	Ownership Assigned To	Comments
	Target	Target	Target	Target	Target	Target		
KPI 08 (GNPI 36) <i>Average re-let time in days (General Needs only)</i>	21	11	11	11	11	11	Paula Evans	Target brought in line with current performance levels after improvements to Void process
KPI 16 <i>Rent collected as percentage of rent owed (including arrears b/f)</i>	96.30%	88.5%	93.55%	94.55%	96.50%	96.50%	Robert Patterson-Smith	
PI 13 (NI 158) <i>% of homes that are non-decent at the end of the period</i>	0%	Not measured for Quarters				0%	Roz Millership	
PI 14a <i>Homelessness: Number of people presenting as homeless</i>	75	25	25	25	25	100	Becca Collins/ Charmaine Horsfield	Realistic target set based on current trends
PI 14b <i>The number of cases where positive intervention by the Council has prevented homelessness</i>	140	35	35	35	35	140	Becca Collins/ Charmaine Horsfield	Realistic target set based on current trends
PI 15 (HMPI 102) <i>% Residents satisfied with the most recent responsive repair</i>	98.0	98.5%	98.5%	98.5%	98.5%	98.5%	David Turner	Satisfaction levels are currently high. Realistic target set to further improve performance.
PI 16 <i>Number of households living in temporary accommodation</i>	15	15	15	15	15	15	Becca Collins/ Charmaine Horsfield	

PI Code & Short Name	2013/14	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	2014/15 (Annual)	Ownership Assigned To	Comments
	Target	Target	Target	Target	Target	Target		
PI 17 <i>Number of service users who are supported to establish and maintain independent living</i>	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300	Judith Snares	

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 24 April 2014

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 the first three quarters of 2013/14

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board notes this report

Financial Implications

3. The council has a Hardship Fund of £100,000 and Homelessness Fund of £101,000 which are available to meet the increasing costs and/or invest in homelessness-reducing measures

Background Papers

4. None

Published papers

5. Housing Performance Indicator Report 2013/14

Impact

- 6.

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

	Qrt 1 2012/13	Qrt 2 2012/13	Qrt 3 2012/13	Qrt1 2013/14	Qrt 2 2013/14	Qrt 3 2013/14
Homelessness Presentations	16	11	20	24	29	30
Homelessness Acceptances	11	15	6	15	17	18
Homelessness Preventions	44	30	29	13	23	26
Numbers in Temporary Accommodation	18	18	18	14	19	32
Priority accepted homeless families time spent in Bed and Breakfast	0.9 weeks	0.7 weeks	2.4 weeks	0.8 weeks	4.5 weeks	5.7 weeks
Customers received in-depth housing advice	2012/13 first 9 months = 231			2012/14 first 9 months = 325		

7. The above table gives the homelessness statistics for the first three quarters of 2013/14 compared to the first three quarters of 2012/13.
8. As can be seen the levels of homelessness are still increasing, having significantly increased in 2012/13 over the previous 12 months.
9. The effect of the recession continues to put individuals and families under pressure that in some instances has led to homelessness.
10. There was a significant increase in the number of homeless applicants having to be placed in Temporary Accommodation (TA) during quarter 3. This

resulted in people having to stay in Bed and Breakfast accommodation longer and many applicants had to be placed in shared accommodation provided by SupportWorks in Harlow.

11. As reported to Members last November planning permission was gained to convert another council house into two further furnished temporary units. This work is expected to be completed by the end of May 2014. Work at Mead Court is has now commenced and this site will provide 4 new units of furnished temporary accommodation later this year.
12. However 8 of the empty flats at Mead Court are currently being used as TA, so even with the additional converted property the TA stock will decrease by 2 when the demolition of Mead Court occurs later this year. Officers continue to look for other sites/properties to develop for further temporary accommodation and recently a flat in Manor Road Stansted was identified a suitable for this use. The cost of any necessary furnishings and equipment needed can be met from the Hardship/Homelessness fund.
13. The housing options team have seen a total of 325 clients for in-depth housing advice in the first 9 months of 2013/14 compared to 231 for the same period in the last financial year.
14. The prevention of homelessness is still proving difficult particularly with the difficulty in finding people suitable alternative housing options within the private sector. Many private landlords remain unwilling to consider applicants on benefits and Local Housing Allowance rates remain well below market rents in this area.
15. The Council as of the 1st April 2014 has brought the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme in house but it remains to be seen if this will generate an increase in clients being able to access the private rented sector through the help of the scheme.
16. The provisional figures for quarter 4 show that the situation has remained difficult a further report will be brought before the housing board in July which will report on the first 3 months of 2014/15 as well as the final quarter figures for 2013/14.

Risk Analysis

17.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Cost of dealing with homelessness increases	2. The PI's show that homelessness remains on an upward trend	2. There may be a need to increase the amount of money available to	Careful monitoring of the homelessness budget allows for early notification of any potential overspend. The Housing Options

		spend on homelessness	team continue to try to prevent homelessness where ever possible and keep the time that clients have to spend in nightly let accommodation to a minimum
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- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 24th April 2014

9

Title: Housing Strategy

Author: Suzanna Wood, Planning and Housing
Policy Manager, 01799 510543

Item for decision

Summary

1. This report details the changes to be made to the Housing Strategy due to the publication and update of the Developers Contribution Guide.

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board note:
 - a. the update to the Developers Contribution Guide that has been approved and adopted by Cabinet
 - b. that the changes will be incorporated into the Housing Strategy

Financial Implications

3. No costs associated with the recommendation.

Background Papers

4. None

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	Consultation has been carried out with Members, Officers, key partners, Agents Forum and Registered Providers.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	The Housing Strategy has been equality impact assessed.
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	Across the District

Workforce/Workplace	The policy will create additional work for Officers in monitoring the scheme.
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Situation

6. The current Housing Strategy 2012-15 details the Council's requirements of developers when delivering affordable housing.
7. At its meeting in June 2013 Cabinet adopted a new developer contributions guide. Officers have since carried out a 6 month review of the document and have recommended two changes within the document.
8. One of the changes has implications on the delivery of affordable housing which is detailed in the Housing Strategy. This change will mean that the financial contribution expected on schemes of 2-4 homes built in the District is based on a clear calculation and applicants will understand the contribution expected of them before they submit their planning application.
9. The new policy requires the following:
 - 4 unit development – would provide 80% of the build cost of an affordable unit
 - 3 unit development – would provide 60% of the build cost of an affordable unit
 - 2 unit development – would provide 40% of the build cost of an affordable unit

The payment will be index linked.

For the financial year 2013/14 and 2014/15 the build cost of an affordable unit will be set at £125,000. This figure will be reviewed yearly and altered to take into account prevailing build costs.
10. The Policy was approved by Cabinet on 27th March 2014.
11. The Housing Strategy 2012-15 now needs to be updated to reflect this change in policy and published on the Council's website.
12. An update of contributions received will be provided to Housing Board quarterly. These will be used to support new affordable housing provision in the District.

Risk Analysis

- 13.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Developers will not pursue small development schemes as the policy makes them unviable	1 – the contribution suggested has been tested and small schemes still appear to be viable	2 – lack of small scale development	The Policy will be reviewed annually along with the Build cost and contribution data to ensure that small developments continue to be 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.

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 24th April 2014

9

Title: Housing Strategy Update

Author: Suzanna Wood, Planning and Housing
Policy Manager, 01799 510543

Item for information

Summary

1. This report updates the Housing Board on progress with the Housing Strategy Action Plan.

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board notes progress made on the Housing Strategy Action Plan.

Financial Implications

3. No costs associated with the recommendation

Background Papers

4. None

Published Papers

5. Housing Strategy 2012-15

Impact

- 6.

Communication/Consultation	Discussions have been had with relevant Council Officers and partner agencies to update the action plan.
Community Safety	None
Equalities	The Housing Strategy has been equality impact assessed
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None

Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	Across the whole District
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

7. The attached Housing Strategy action plan provides an update for Members on the work carried out in the last 6 months. This includes:
- A start on site at Mead Court and the rural exception site in Hatfield Heath. These will provide much needed affordable housing in 2014.
 - Progress made on the Councils development programme, an options appraisal has been carried out on a further 5 sites, these include garages, sheltered schemes and gardens/open space.
 - 80 affordable homes completed in 2013/14 and a much greater number will complete in 2014/15.
 - Funding gained from Essex County Council to help deliver an extra care scheme in Saffron Walden. A further extra care scheme is being provided at Smiths Farm, Great Dunmow. This is currently in for planning.
 - A scheme for young adults with Learning Disabilities is progressing at Evervitt Road, Saffron Walden.
 - Bungalows being provided as part of the Section 106 housing requirements in market and affordable housing schemes. These will meet the needs of those with a disability and our older residents who need to downsize.
 - Internet cafes continue to be provided in our sheltered schemes.
 - 10 units of temporary accommodation have now been provided, a further 4 will be provided at Cannons Mead (Mead Court) in November 2014
 - Empty Homes Officer started in post in September 2013, an action plan is in place and Parish Councils have been contacted. The new officer is focused on bringing empty homes back into use.
 - A stock condition surveyor has been employed and work is progressing on collating stock condition data. This will ensure that the Council has up to date stock condition information on all of its properties within five years.
 - Landlords Forum being held on 9th July and Housing Strategy Conference on 14th October. Planning work is progressing well.

Risk Analysis

8.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
No progress with Action Plan	1 – little risk, partners and Members were involved in writing the Housing Strategy and are aware of projects progressing	3 – an updated plan is needed and could cause delays to key projects	Ensure that members/partners are updated as projects progress

1 = Little or no risk or impact

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

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

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

Housing Strategy Action Plan 2012-15 (progress update April 2014)

Priority	Action	Timescale	Current Position
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	Housing Needs Surveys being carried out in The Sampfords and Hempstead.
		January 2015	Site searches being carried out in Hatfield Broad Oak and Little Hallingbury.
			Schemes progressing in Wimbish (phase 3) and Great Hallingbury.
			Scheme on site in Hatfield Heath and scheme completed in Manuden.
	Develop LA new build scheme and deliver 15 homes per year.	April 2015	Suitable sites identified and prioritised. The Housing Development Officer is continuing to identify additional land, including gardens, which may have development potential. On site at Mead Court, Stansted. An options appraisal has been carried out for a further 5 sites. This includes garages, sheltered schemes and gardens/open space.
	Deliver in partnership with Registered Providers 100 affordable homes per year	April 2013	Provided 80 affordable homes during 2013/14 with a much greater number due to complete in 2014/15
	Deliver new affordable housing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 2 Holloway Crescent complete

	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra Care scheme being worked up by East Thames HA, in partnership with Countryside Properties. Funding has been obtained from Essex County Council and some commuted sums will be used. Start on site by March 2015
	Work with Hastoe to deliver the Growth Area Funding projects in Hatfield Heath and Newport	January 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hatfield Heath –on site. • Newport - Scheme is progressing and should move towards to a planning application towards the end of the year.
	Work with planning policy to ensure that the new Local Plan compliments the requirements of the housing strategy	October 2012	Completed
	Work with Kift Consulting to look at viability on large scale affordable housing schemes	On-going	Continuing to work with Kift Consulting to provide viability advice on new developments, as and when required.
	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	To be progressed.
Delivering Supported Housing	Investigate the re-provision of a new Mental Health facility with Metropolitan housing	January 2013	Re-provision of Mental Health facility identified for Saffron Walden Policy Area 1. Metropolitan Housing is working in partnership with the developer.
	Work with Uttlesford Local Action Group (LAG) to identify future need for supported	March 2013	Site at Everitt Road, Saffron Walden has been identified for a Learning Disability Scheme in partnership with East Thames Housing Association.

	accommodation for Learning Disabilities		Scheme progressing with a planning application.
	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. Scheme has been submitted for planning.
	Work with planning policy to identify future provision for Gypsy and travellers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call for sites 	November 2012	Housing Needs Survey carried out and results will be published in May 2014
	Implement the findings of the SHMA update	December 2012	Complete
Older People	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. Funding has been obtained from Essex CC and some commuted sums will be used. Start on site by March 2015
	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. Outline planning granted.
	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.
	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. The appraisal has shown that 5 sheltered schemes require further action, 3 require a detailed feasibility. An update will be provided to Housing Board in July 2014.
	Provide Internet cafes in our sheltered schemes for silver surfers.	February 2013	Scheme at Broomfields in Hatfield Heath completed. Two further schemes are currently being updated.
	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.
Homelessness	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. Waiting for funding to be agreed by their Trustees.
	Investigate the Government initiative of discharging Homelessness duty into the private sector	Jan 2013	Completed.

	Investigate the re-provision of temporary accommodation that is currently at Mead Court	January 2013	10 units of temporary accommodation have now been provided, a further 4 will be provided at Cannons Mead (Mead Court) in November 2014. Entered into a SLA with Supportworks to provide nightly let accommodation in Harlow as an alternative to Bed and Breakfast. However due to the increasing numbers of homeless presenting to the Council, we are still using bed and breakfast accommodation.
Allocations	Establish a Strategic Tenancy Policy that ensures that local need is met.	January 2013	Complete
	Review Anti-Social Behaviour policy and procedures	April 2013	New policy about to be reviewed, Anti-social Behaviour Officer is now based in the Housing Department.
	Update Allocations Policy in accordance with new Government guidance	October 2012	Complete. Government has just published new Allocations guidance which Officers will be reviewing and will provide an update to Housing Board in due course.
Private sector	Employ empty homes officer	October 2012	Officer started in post in September 2013, action plan in place and all Parish Councils have been contacted. The new officer is focused on bringing empty homes back into use.
	Organise Landlords forum once a year	April 2013	Event planned for July 9 th at the Saffron Walden Town Hall
	Work with Papworth Home Improvement Agency (HIA) to engage Occupational Therapist services	April 2013	Essex County Council are currently reviewing OT services. We are waiting to hear of their new proposals for the service.

	Work with Home Improvement Agency to meet local needs	On-going	Good working relationship with Papworth HIA
The Councils Housing Stock	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 since the introduction of self-financing. This is detailed in the Business Plan Action Plan.
	Set up a new framework with development partner to implement the new council house building programme	April 2013	Framework set up with SCAPE which focuses on large development projects. Smaller frameworks have been set up to deliver the small development projects.
	Implement a more efficient and cost effective supply chain for repair materials	September 2013	Completed
	Undertake new stock condition survey	September 2013	A stock condition surveyor has been employed and work is progressing on collating stock condition data.
	Introduce a Tenant Regulatory Panel to undertake detailed reviews of specific housing services	April 2013	Tenants Regulatory Panel established in January 2013. The Panel have just reported on their first review, the void process.
	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.
Sustainable Communities	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

			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	Completed, assessments are carried out when new policies are published.
	Continue to work towards Equality standards	April 2013	A Peer Review has recently been carried out, this has provided a focused workplan for officers and will guide us in working towards Achieving standard.
	Involve service users in shaping the services that they use and that affect their lives	March 2013	<p>The yearly Housing Conference allows us to involve key partners, service users and Councillors in shaping future services. This will also set the focus for the new Housing Strategy which will be published in 2015.</p> <p>Officers also attend the Disability forum, Local Action Group for Learning Disabilities, Access Group and Tenant Forum to help shape the Council's services.</p>
	Work with the LSP to ensure Uttlesford has neighbourhoods in which people can afford and wish to live	On-going	Officers work with all parts of the LSP to shape future services in Uttlesford. This includes the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Community Safety Partnership. The LSP through its members are asked to help shape future services and priorities through the Housing Strategy Conference each year.
	Implement the Economic Development Strategy	April 2013	The Economic Development Strategy is currently being updated and will be published in May 2014

Housing Strategy Review	Organise Housing Strategy conference to review progress, set new targets and celebrate success	September 2013	The Housing Strategy Conference is organised for 14 th October. This will help shape the new Housing Strategy which will be published in 2015.
	Review action plan quarterly and update once a year	Quarterly report to Housing Board and Tenant Forum.	Current review at April 2014.

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 24 April 2014

10

Title: Allocations Policy Update

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

Item for information
only

Summary

1. This report is to bring to member's attention the new supplementary statutory guidance on social housing for local authorities that was published at the end of last year.

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board considers this guidance document and at the next meeting of the housing board indicates to officers if they wish to see any further amendments to the council's Housing Allocation Policy.

Financial Implications

3. None

Background Papers

4. None

Published Papers

5. Providing social housing for local people. Statutory Guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities – DCLG December 2013
6. Uttlesford District Council's Housing Allocations Policy

Impact

- 7.

Communication/Consultation	Any changes will require full consultation
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	Any changes will need to be equality impact assessed
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal	The new government guidance is not

Implications	mandatory but members must have regard to it and must justify any departure from it
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

8. The council implemented its current Housing Allocation Policy in January 2013.
9. This policy took into account the flexibilities given to local authorities in the writing of their allocations policy by the government's 2012 statutory guidance document and followed a period of extensive consultation.
10. The government has now issued further guidance which particularly highlights their view that local authorities should ensure that they prioritise applicants who can demonstrate a close association with their local area. They suggest that one way to do this is to have a minimum residency period of two years.
11. Under the current housing allocations policy anyone who meets the eligibility criteria can join the housing register regardless of where they live or how long they have lived in the area. However applicants who cannot demonstrate a local connection or who have lived in the area for only a limited time, less than six months, are down banded by one band from those applicants in similar housing circumstances but who have a local connection. This gives a degree of priority to people with a local connection but less than is suggested by the new government guidance.
12. Members need to consider the new guidance and whether they feel that local conditions would be better served by amending the current policy in light of the new guidance or whether the current policy reflects the needs of the area.
13. It is proposed that members have time to study this new guidance and its recommendations before discussing with officers whether they would like to commence wider consultation on possible changes to the housing allocation policy.

Risk Analysis

14.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The council pays no heed to new government guidance on local allocations	1 Little or no risk as guidance will be considered fully and the outcome of these deliberations will be fully documented	2 Some Risk. There is a risk of legal challenge if members depart from the guidance without having good grounds for doing so	The Guidance document has been brought before members so that reasons for either amending the allocations policy or keeping the policy unchanged can be fully considered and debated

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: 24 April 2014

11

Title: Tenancy Fraud Initiatives

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

Item for information
only

Summary

1. This report is to inform members on the work that the Housing Department are doing to combat tenancy fraud.

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board notes this report.

Financial Implications

3. None

Background Papers

4. None

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	Publicised through the tenants newsletter
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	All wards
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

6. The introduction of The Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013 made important changes to both the civil and criminal law relating to tenancy fraud it:-
 - created new criminal offences of unlawful subletting by assured and secure tenants in social housing
 - gave local authorities powers to prosecute in cases of unlawful subletting
 - enabled the courts to order the recovery of any profit made from unlawful subletting from tenants
 - provided that assured tenants who unlawfully sublet the whole of their dwelling cannot subsequently regain their security of tenure.
7. The housing department has always investigated alleged acts of tenancy fraud but these have usually relied on information coming to light on an ad-hoc basis.
8. The department is now implementing initiatives that will actively look for cases of tenancy fraud within the council's own stock, as well as working with other social housing providers across Essex to publicise tenancy fraud more generally.
9. The department has purchased a system called 'Who's Home' which takes the data held on all the council's tenants and runs it through a series of data matches. This then gives a report highlighting the instances where data held by other organisations does not match the councils. A list of priority cases can be produced and further enquiries made to see if tenancy fraud is taking place. This data can also be used by the council's benefits department and enforcement team.
10. The system has highlighted 47 cases where there may either be fraud or where there is a serious mismatch in the data, these are only the preliminary findings. Once the system is fully implemented it will flag up any new data mismatches as they occur.
11. The system will also enable the housing options team to see 'Who's Coming' as the system can be used to provide data matching on applicants before they are offered a social housing property or when they present as homeless.
12. Housing officers have also commenced a programme of annual tenancy checks which will be a further way of identifying cases of tenancy fraud.
13. The tenant's newsletter has been used to publicise the issue of tenancy fraud as well as the council's website. This is raising awareness of tenancy fraud and encouraging people to report suspected cases.

14. The Housing Needs and Landlord Services Manager is representing the council on the Essex Tenancy Fraud Forum where joint initiatives across Essex and joint training opportunities are being discussed.

Risk Analysis

15.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Tenancy Fraud remains undetected within Council stock	3. Significant risk – there have been proven cases of tenancy fraud	2. Properties are unavailable to those in most need	Housing Officer inspections/tenancy checks. The use of the Who's Home system to identify the most likely cases of tenancy fraud. Publicising the issue to encourage people to report cases of tenancy fraud

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: 24 April 2014

12

Title: Future Funding of Disabled Facilities Grants

Author: Geoff Smith, Head of Environmental Health

Information Item

Summary

1. This report informs the Housing Board on the Better Care Fund (formerly the Integration Transformation Fund) and its implications for the future funding of Disabled Facilities Grants (private sector).

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board notes
 - a. Essex County Council's intention to review the provision of Disabled Grant Funding
 - b. Officers will participate in any review or consultation process to ensure that the needs and requirements of residents requiring adaptation works continues to be met

Financial Implications

3. Grant funding is to be provided for the next two years after which it will be subject to the outcome of a proposed review by Essex County Council.

Background Papers

4. None

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	N/A
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	There are significant implications in relation to the way the Council utilises DFG which need to be reviewed on an ongoing basis
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	There is a statutory duty on the Council to provide Disabled Facilities Grants under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	N/A
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

6. What is the Better Care Fund (BCF)?

In the autumn of 2013 the government announced £3.8bn of funding nationally to support the integration of health and social care. Called the Better Care Fund it is intended to be 'a single pooled budget for health and social care services to work closely together in local areas, based on a plan agreed between the NHS and local authorities'. The money will be allocated regionally and paid into a joint budget administered by Clinical Commissioning Groups (West Essex CCG) and Upper Tier LA's (Essex County Council) and spent in accordance with their agreed plan.

7. Disabled Facilities Grant funding (DFG)

Included within the total BCF is the funding previously allocated to LA's by the DCLG for private sector DFG's. Across the UK the government has allocated £220m for DFGs of which Uttlesford has been allocated £73,857 in 2014/15 rising to £103,000 in 2015/16.

The statutory duty to provide DFGs remains with district councils and the DFG money therefore has to be transferred from the pooled budget to this Council. Legislation has been enacted to ensure this is done in a timely manner.

From 2015/16 onwards WECCG and ECC have to agree their further spending plans and have advised that while they are not proposing changes to the DFG funding at this time they believe the BCF provides an opportunity to explore a holistic approach to improving the process from OT assessment through to DFG delivery and will be carrying out a review over the next year.

8. The Essex Allocation

The chart below shows the overall Essex BCF budget for 2015/16 of £94,956,000 and how that is going to be allocated between the different CCG's and the proposed DFG allocations per LA.

Total £000	Social Care Capital Grant £000	Revenue Funding for the BCF £000 per CCG	Disabilities Facilities Grant (Capital) £000
94,956	3,296	West Essex CCG 17,435	Basildon 552
		North East Essex 20,987	Braintree 418
		Mid Essex 21,651	Brentwood 165
		Castle Point/ Rochford 10,833	Castle Point 346
		Basildon/ Brentwood 16,041	Chelmsford 418
			Colchester 543
			Epping Forest

			363
			Harlow 323
			Maldon 233
			Rochford 219
			Tendring 1,030
			Uttlesford 103

9. DFG spending by UDC

The DFG grant provided by national government for local housing authorities has never been intended to meet 100% of local adaptations expenditure. Owing to the varying but generally increasing levels of demand, the capital funding provided by UDC for DFG's has fluctuated over recent years.

	Forecast 2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10
Gvt Grant (including in year top up)	69,717	98,134	81,587	60,000	60,000
UDC funding	163,506	37,571	42,419	54,000	179,000
Total Spend	275,000	93,928	124,006	114,000	239,000
Original Budget	175,000	120,000	200,000	110,000	110,000
B/f grant from previous year	41,777	-	-	-	
Allocated in year	-				
	41,777	-	-	-	
Unused grant amount c/f	-	41,777	-	-	-

In October 2013 it became apparent that the council were likely to exceed the budget and a bid was made for a further £100,000 capital expenditure which was agreed. The outturn for 2013/14 is projected to be £233,233. The actual UDC contribution therefore was £122,258.

10. Historic DFG budget allocation

At Uttlesford the relatively low level of our DFG allocation from the Government has been a matter of concern for some time.

UDC's 2014/15 allocation is the third lowest in the country just above the Scilly Islands and the City of London both of which have very small resident populations.

The council's funding allocation for a population of 83,000 people for 2013/14 is £73,857 (less than £1 per head) which can be compared to our similar neighbouring authorities of Braintree (population 147,000) who's allocation is £331,066 (£2.25 per head) and Maldon (population 59,000) with an allocation of £190,000 (£3.22 per head).

Why this discrepancy has arisen is unclear however it is believed to relate to the historic 'honesty' of this Council by not including in its bid for DFG funding the allocation it makes for disabled facility improvements to our own housing stock. Despite many attempts to have this figure revised there has been no willingness from the Government to do so.

11. Next Steps

The announcement of the BCF and the proposals for a review of DFG funding has prompted officers to make contact with Clare Hardy, Head of Commissioning Vulnerable People at Essex CC and explain the council's position. Officers have asked that any proposed review of the DFG process across Essex includes a complete budgetary review of the allocations to make sure they are equitable and not just reliant on previous historical allocations. Ms Hardy has advised that she is aware that several areas within the County do not consider the allocations within the DFG to be sufficient and that many councils are also in the position of having to increasingly top the grant up from their own resources.

At present there is no national intention to revise the funding formula for DFGs so what will come into the Essex Better Care Fund will be based on existing district grants. If locally ECC was to make a decision to reconsider the allocation formula it would need to be in conjunction with all the district level authorities as inevitably there will be those who gain and those who lose.

It is essential that the council are included in any review or consultation process regarding proposed changes to DFG provision instigated by the CCG/ECC.

Risk Analysis

12.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Gvt Grant funding is reduced	2 present advice is that funding will continue at existing level.	3 additional capital budget may be required to satisfy demand	Seek to ensure grant funding is maintained at current level and/or increased

DFGs are transferred out of LA control	2 subject to outcome of proposed review by ECC	2 loss of local control/delivery though potential savings on capital budget as current scheme is under funded	Participate in ECC review process
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

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

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

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