



# Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Peter Holt

## Housing Board

**Date:** Tuesday, 15th March, 2022

**Time:** 11.00 am

**Venue:** Zoom - <https://zoom.us/>

**Chair:** Councillor P Lees

**Members:** Councillors A Armstrong, A Coote, A Dean, G Driscoll, M Foley, A Khan, M Lemon, S Merifield and N Reeve.

**Tenant and Leaseholder Panel Representatives:** Carole Mandy (Chair) and Simon Trimnell.

### AGENDA PART 1

#### Open to Public and Press

**1 Election of Chair for this meeting**

Councillor Lees has sent her apologies to this meeting. Chair to be elected for this meeting.

**2 Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**

To receive any apologies for absence and declarations of interest.

**3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

3 - 9

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting.

**4 Empty Homes Policy**

10 - 34

- To consider the Empty Homes Policy report.
- 5 Section 106 Contributions** 35 - 36
- To consider the Section 106 Contributions report.
- 6 HRA Business Plan - Verbal Update**
- To receive a verbal update on the HRA Business Plan.
- 7 Development Update** 37 - 41
- To receive the Development Programme update.
- 8 Assistance Policy - Verbal Update**
- To receive a verbal update on the Assistance Policy.
- 9 Housing Strategy Action Plan** 42 - 60
- To consider the Housing Strategy Action Plan report.
- 10 Uttlesford Norse Partnership Update - Verbal Update**
- To receive a verbal update on the Uttlesford Norse partnership.
- 11 Housing Board Forward Programme** 61
- To note the Housing Board Forward Programme.

**For information about this meeting please contact Democratic Services**

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# Agenda Item 3

**HOUSING BOARD held at ZOOM on TUESDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2021  
at 2.00 pm**

Present: Councillor P Lees (Chair)  
Councillors A Dean, G Driscoll, A Khan, M Lemon, S Merifield  
and N Reeve

Officers in attendance: C Edwards (Democratic Services Officer), P Lock (Housing Enabling and Development Officer), D Malins (Development Manager), R Millership (Assistant Director - Housing, Health and Communities) and J Snares (Housing Strategy and Operations Manager)

Also present: C Mandy (Chair of Tenant and Leaseholder Panel) and S Ovel (Member of Tenant and Leaseholder Panel).

## HB1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Coote and Foley.

## HB2 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020 were approved.

It was agreed that meetings would be held more frequently going forward

## HB3 **HOUSING STRATEGY**

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager presented the report and highlighted the following: -

- There had been a 6 week public consultation, as well as the report being shared with Essex County Council; stakeholders; internal colleagues and the Local Plan team.
- There had been feedback and the document had been amended appropriately and all responses had been acknowledged.
- She thanked the Housing Enabling and Development Officer for all his work on the document.
- It was an interim document until the Local Plan was in place.
- There was an action plan which would be monitored by the Housing Board.

The recommendation was for this document to go forward to Cabinet and for it to be adopted by the end of the year.

In response to a query from Councillor Khan, the Housing Enabling and Development Officer said that a section at the end of the document would be added to capture and incorporate details of the feedback and responses given.

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager said the report had been changed in places because of the feedback but agreed, in order to make it clearer, to circulate a revised document which would include the responses.

Councillor Khan said that more council homes were desperately needed and there had been a commitment from the administration to build more homes.

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager said that the report set out a clear strategy of what was needed within the district and an action plan to increase the number of council homes, but this involved investment and it was up to Members to decide how they would fund the extra homes.

The Housing Strategy Manager said that there had been new council homes built but there was no more council owned land apart from the odd single plot. The Local Plan made it more difficult due to the current 'call for sites' which Landowners and Developers were focused on and were therefore less likely to engage with negotiations with the Council to invest in council houses.

Other Members agreed that more social housing was needed.

Councillor Lemon said there was a need for more bungalows to be built but he said there was a misalignment between Planning and Housing who needed to work together and communicate so that Planning was not allowing owners of bungalows to demolish and rebuild or extend upwards.

The Chair said that once the strategy was adopted the next step would be to try and implement the action plan which would include funding for social housing. It would be looked at as an administration and this would be within the Investment Board's remit.

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager said that the strategy provided the framework to move things forward and this would include discussion at future Housing Board meetings.

Councillor Merifield said that there was a requirement for developers to provide 40% affordable housing within each development. This would feed into the Local Plan and she said it would be up to the Council what percentage of affordable housing would be required going forward. It could be increased.

In response to a question from Councillor Reeve the Housing Enabling and Development Officer said that the 5% target to build bungalows could not be enforced until it was part of the Local Plan, but discussions did take place with developers. An action point from the report was to investigate through the census data the local requirements for bungalows. He agreed that this would be followed up with the Local Plan team.

The Housing Enabling and Development Officer said that the change in definition of the gypsy and traveller sites had been considered and Essex County Council (ECC) had provided the data in the report. He said he was also liaising with the Local Plan team.

Councillor Khan said that Uttlesford District Council (UDC) needed to be clear on the correct numbers for the gypsy and traveller sites and asked that this was fed into the Local Plan team. The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager said this data had been provided to the Local Plan team and they had received no indication that there were any problems.

Councillor Reeve said that UDC had a high level of fuel poverty, the Housing Enabling and Development Officer said that the Environmental Health department had fed into the document and the action and wording was taken from their information and knowledge of the district. There was funding available for residents with low incomes.

Councillor Dean asked about community led housing and whether the action plan addressed this.

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager said it was a fairly new concept, and that there were grants set up to support groups to get started. She said that a Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) Enabling Officer and the Housing Enabling and Development Officer from UDC were available for help. There had been funding for the Eastern Homes hub which provided information and support. She said there had been interest from some parishes.

The Chair recommended that the document was taken onto Cabinet with the feedback responses added to the report and the policy about gypsy and traveller sites clarified with the Local Plan team. There was also a commitment given from Housing and Planning, via Councillor Merifield, to work together and have a joint understanding on bungalows.

**RESOLVED:** That the Housing Board recommend the report to Cabinet with the following changes: -

- Feedback responses added
- Gypsy and traveller sites clarified with the Local Plan team.

*Councillor Driscoll left the meeting at 3:30pm*

#### **HB4 DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager provided a summary of the report that detailed the progress on the development programme. She outlined the current positions in respect of developments at:

- The Moors, Little Dunmow – ready to handover in the next 6 weeks.
- Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden – ready to handover summer 2022.
- Bartholomew Close, Great Chesterford – ready to handover summer 2022.
- Parkside, Saffron Walden – planning application would be submitted in the new year.
- Gold Close, Elsenham – built for a specific family and they should be moved in before Christmas.

- Auton Croft, Saffron Walden – the planning application had gone to Planning Committee with a recommendation to approve from the Officers but had been deferred for a site visit. The Housing Board needed to decide whether to go ahead or withdraw the application. There were several objections from residents.
- St Martin's Close, White Roding – heritage said they could not support the application on the site and therefore it would not go ahead.
- Alexia House, Great Dunmow – due to be changed to apartments for over 60's an architect was drawing up plans. The planning application would go forward in the new year.
- Walden Place – planning permission granted.
- Takeley Day Centre Garage Site – in consultation with an architect to draw up plans, early stages.
- Garden reduction sites – some of UDC properties had big gardens and when they were relet half of the garden was being kept back for possible development in the future. Currently 3 sites have outline planning applications and 2 further sites had been identified.

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager said there were no further development sites identified, but there were some possible S106 opportunities. She said there had been discussion with Barrett's to buy 18, 1 bedroom apartments on a site in Great Dunmow, they had accepted UDC's offer but it had not been approved by the Barrett board yet.

Councillor Khan said that the Auton Croft planning application should continue forward, members of the planning committee were not able to comment but there was general consensus to go ahead.

The Housing Strategy Manager said it met all the policy requirements and the objections received had focused around the fact that it was on a green field site.

Members said the garden reduction site should be developed by UDC rather than sold.

**RESOLVED:** To continue with the Auton Croft planning application and for UDC to keep hold of the garden reduction sites for future development.

*The Development Manager left the meeting at 4pm.*

HB5

## **AFFORDABLE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTIONS**

The Housing Enabling and Development Officer presented the report which set out the projected affordable completions for this financial year. He said that this year was low due to the pandemic, but there were several sites due for completion including Woodlands Park, Dunmow, the Barrett site and Land West of Woodside Way which would boost the figures but was out of the Council's direct control. He said that the figures should pick up from this year onwards.

Councillor Reeve asked for a list of approved properties to get a clear picture of what had been through the Planning Committee as he was surprised the figures were so low.

Councillor Lemon asked about Cox Ley in Hatfield Heath, the Housing Enabling and Development Officer said there had been a hold up with the S106 application.

## **HB6 HOMELESSNESS UPDATE**

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager gave a verbal update. She said the Housing Options team had been busy, and there were 55 open cases. The length of time that people were in temporary accommodation had increased and this was an issue going forward. The longest wait had been almost a year.

There had been 85 cases of homelessness so far this year, but this did not reflect the people that the team had managed to prevent becoming homeless and had rehoused.

UDC were part of a consortium led by Essex County Council who had received government Rough Sleeping initiative funding this gave UDC access to a homelessness outreach service run by an organisation called Chess. If there were reports of people sleeping on the streets a representative came out and tried to find them and help them get into accommodation.

Two new members of staff had been recruited to the Housing Options team.

The first Afghan family were due to move into the district shortly and one other property would be made available for the Afghan Resettlement Programme.

Evictions were starting again, and this was likely to increase homelessness.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Housing Strategy and Operations Manager said that one of the Performance Indicators that went to Members every quarter was how many people had been prevented from becoming homeless.

In response to a question from Councillor Khan, the Housing Strategy and Operations Manager confirmed that there were no homeless people being funded to live outside the district.

## **HB7 HOUSING BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE AND RENT SETTING REPORT**

The Assistant Director - Housing and Environmental Services said that the final business plan would come to the next Housing Board meeting, as it was not yet a finished document. She said she was waiting for further government guidance on funding through the HRA. All the current development opportunities were mostly funded as they were already in the budget, she said it was borrowing going forward that needed to be looked at.

She said that the rent setting report had recommended an uplift in rent as this was necessary in order to have a sustainable business plan. The rise would be 4.9% which was Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1%, the tenant forum had approved this at their last meeting. Garage rent and Lifeline services were also being raised by 4.9% in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI). Intensive housing management charges, housing related support, heating service and sewage charges would be increased in line with actual costs. Removal of garden waste costs would also be raised slightly.

Councillor Khan said that he could not sign up to the rent increase because of the current difficult economic situation which included the reduction in payment to those on Universal Credit. The Assistant Director - Housing and Environmental Services said that people on Universal Credit would have their housing element increased to cover the rise, but it was those people on low incomes who may suffer but there had not been a rent increase for 4 years.

In response to a question from Councillor Khan, the Assistant Director - Housing and Environmental Services said she would come back with figures regarding the total cost of the rent increase to UDC.

Carole Mandy from the tenant's forum said the meeting had reluctantly agreed to the rise in rents. Susan Ovel said that other costs were going up as well, but she felt that UDC did a good job and understood why the increase needed to happen.

The Chair recommended that the report was approved and that the next step would be that it was presented to the Scrutiny Committee. Members agreed to approve the document to be taken onto Scrutiny with the financial information added to the document before the meeting.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to approve the document to be taken onto Scrutiny with the additional financial information added to the document.

HB8

## **UTTLESFORD NORSE PARTNERSHIP UPDATE**

The Assistant Director - Housing and Environmental Services said that Internal Audit had concerns about the partnership. There had been a contract meeting and Norse had acknowledged the issues, however some decisions needed to be made about how to go forward and make the partnership work better for UDC.

Councillor Dean was disappointed about the problems within the Partnership and would have liked a written report.

The Assistant Director - Housing and Environmental Services said that the audit report was not available yet, but she would share as soon as possible. She said she just wanted to make the Housing Board aware of the issue.

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager said that Norse had staff shortages and problems recruiting and therefore had not resourced the contract as well as they should have done. There was not an obvious alternative, so the partnership needed to be worked on to try and get the best from the service.

The Chair said there had been regular operational meetings and she recognised that there had been problems and the pandemic had affected services up to a point, but serious decisions now needed to be made.

Councillor Lemon suggested that this was put on the agenda for the next meeting.

*Councillor Khan left the meeting at 4:50pm*

HB9

## **LIFELINE UPDATE**

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager said that unfortunately UDC could not continue to maintain the Lifeline service. The technology was moving fast, and the equipment was becoming more expensive as it changed from analogue to digital. ECC had also stopped funding the equipment which meant there was no 12 week free period and no free equipment. The service had managed to fund equipment for this year but it was not going to be viable to run the service in the long term. NHS Provide, who already provided the monitoring and response service for Uttlesford Lifeline and ran a similar service across many districts of Essex, had agreed to take over the full running of the Uttlesford service going forward and this switch would be made from April next year. When details have been finalised with NHS Provide she said that all UDC customers would be contacted to let them know and give them all the necessary information about the change.

*The meeting finished at 5.00pm.*

# Agenda Item 4

**Committee:** Housing Board

**Date:**

**Title:** Empty Homes Policy

Tuesday, 15 March  
2022

**Report Author:** Marcus Watts, Environmental Health Manager  
- Protection

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Tel: 01799 510595

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## Summary

1. Making best use of existing homes is a key action in the Council's Housing Strategy 2021 -2026. The Council has a strong commitment to bringing long-term empty homes back into use. Each empty home denies a household somewhere to live and returning empty homes to use has social, environmental, and financial benefits.
2. The proposed Empty Homes Policy reflects the local and national perspective and outlines all available options to bring empty homes back into use.
3. The Council recognises that there are different reasons why properties remain empty and likewise there needs to be a range of options available to owners of empty homes to bring them back into use. The Council will initially work informally with owners, however formal enforcement options are available when this approach fails.

## Recommendations

4. That the Housing Board considers and approves the attached policy document

## Financial Implications

5. There remains a financial incentive for returning empty homes to use, as these continue to be rewarded via the New Homes Bonus grant system.

## 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.
  - **Corporate plan 2021 -2025**
  - **Housing Strategy 2021 – 26**

## Impact

7.

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Communication/Consultation      | This is an internal policy and therefore has not been subject to consultation   |
| Community Safety                | There are community safety benefits of returning empty properties back into use   |
| Equalities                      | Returning long-term empty homes to use will impact on a small number of owners. Owners of empty homes come from across all strands and do not make up a specific group. This policy will not disadvantage any specific group. |
| Health and Safety               | There are no Health & Safety considerations, other than those encountered by inspecting officers  |
| Human Rights/Legal Implications | There are human right and legal implications that need to be considered. Enforcement decisions will be made on a case by case basis taking into account representations made by the property owner                            |
| Sustainability                  | Bringing back into use empty properties has a positive sustainable impact when compared to new builds.  |
| Ward-specific impacts           | None  |
| Workforce/Workplace             | This is managed within existing resources. However, it is a non-statutory function so will be prioritised against statutory duties  |

### Situation

8. Making best use of existing homes is a key objective in the Council's Housing Strategy. The Council has a strong commitment to bringing long-term empty homes back into use. There is a national shortage of residential accommodation available as housing demand outstrips housing supply. There is a shortage of accommodation available to buy or occupy at a reasonable rent.
9. Each empty home denies a household somewhere to live and returning an empty home to use has social, environmental and financial benefits.
10. In recent years the council's approach to empty homes has come under close scrutiny and a policy on this non statutory service is overdue. The proposed

policy seeks to provide clarity on the councils formal and informal approach to successfully bring empty homes back into use. It is important to engage positively with owners of empty homes and neighbours who are also affected by them to raise general awareness of the Councils commitment.

11. Homes lying empty not only deny individuals and families somewhere to live they can also impact on the environment and cause neighbourhood problems including attracting antisocial behaviour and other nuisances.
12. Returning empty homes to use has a significant benefit for owners, neighbours and the local economy. Removing rundown eyesore properties can positively improve the neighbourhood and reverse a feeling of neglect.
13. Furthermore, there are financial benefits to the authority. The New Homes Bonus includes a financial incentive to the Council for returning empty homes to use. DCLG will match fund the additional Council Tax raised for empty homes brought back into use, for the following four years. However, it is anticipated this will change in 22/23.
14. The Council recognises that there many are different reasons why properties are left vacant and will explore these issues as part of the process to return empty homes into use. The Council recognises that there are different options available to owners of empty homes to bring them back into use. The Council will initially work informally with owners to re-use homes however formal enforcement options are available when the informal approach fails.
15. As the reasons why a property remains empty can be complicated and difficult to resolve, a level of officer discretion will need to apply when judging action to be taken to bring a property back into use.
16. In all cases an informal route will be pursued in the first instance. This includes provision of advice and assistance to owners as well as financial assistance can also be offered in the form of loans to refurbish empty homes to bring them up to a habitable standard.
17. There is no current capital budget to offer financial assistance to owners in the form of loans to refurbish empty homes and bring them back into use. However, some financial assistance is offered through the PLACE scheme of loans. This scheme is made up from a consortium of local authorities who historically won government funding for empty homes renovation. This funding can be used to support enforcement, but in the main is used to provide interest free loans of up to £25,000 to renovate a dwelling to the decent homes standard in order for it to be let or sold.
18. By offering a selection of informal options to the owners of empty homes the Council hopes to avoid using compulsorily purchase powers. The Council recognises that this power must be used only as a last resort when all other options have been exhausted.
19. Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO's) are a power that is available under the Housing Act 2004. This is an option that is less likely to be used as

homes have to have been empty for at least two years before the order can be issued. Furthermore, and more importantly, the administration of these orders is very time consuming with on-going resource obligations requiring the council to act as management agent. Only a small number of these orders have been made nationally, and for the reasons given above it the service is unlikely to pursue this enforcement option.

20. Where Empty homes are in such a condition that they are detrimental to the local community the council can use its powers under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to clear the land. Other action can be taken to deal with pest infestations and unsecured dwellings.

21. Failure to comply with notices when pursuing enforcement action can result in works in default being undertaken by the Council, which in turn can lead to enforced sale of the home to repay the charge. This is an option that is available to the Council and has been used successfully to bring empty homes into use in other parts of the Country.

## Risk Analysis

22.

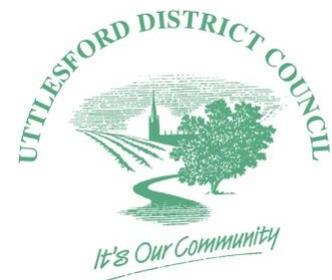
| Risk   | Likelihood  | Impact   | Mitigating actions |
|--|---|--|--------------------|
| 2. There are risks of financial and reputational damage should the council chose not tackle empty homes. | 2. The service is able to meet its obligations with existing resources. expertise be absent | 1. There is little to no impact from the approval of this policy | None required      |

1 = Little or no risk or impact

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

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

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



# **Uttlesford District Council Empty Homes Policy**

**February 2022**

**Version 0.1 2.3.21**

## Contents Page

| Heading  | Page No   |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Forward</b>                                       | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>1. Introduction</b>                               | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>2. National Context</b>                           | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>3. Local Context</b>                              | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>4. Background</b>                                 | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>5. Uttlesford's Approach to Empty Homes</b>       | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>6. Finding Empty Homes</b>                        | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>7. Empty Homes and Council Tax</b>                | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>8. Procedure for Identifying Empty Homes</b>      | <b>11</b> |
| <b>9. Investigating Interests</b>                    | <b>12</b> |
| <b>10. Advice &amp; Support</b>                      | <b>12</b> |
| <b>11. Engagement &amp; Enforcement</b>              | <b>13</b> |
| <b>12. Formal Enforcement Measures</b>               | <b>14</b> |
| <b>13. Compulsory Purchase Orders</b>                | <b>15</b> |
| <b>14. Enforced Sale Procedure</b>                   | <b>18</b> |
| <b>15. Empty Dwelling Management Orders</b>          | <b>18</b> |
| <b>16. Raising Awareness</b>                         | <b>19</b> |
| <br>   |           |
| <b>Appendix 1 Empty Homes Impact Assessment form</b> | <b>20</b> |

**Forward by Cllr Petrina Lees, Portfolio Holder, Housing**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to outline the council's approach to bringing back into occupation private residential homes in the district which have become empty.
- 1.2 In defining its approach to dealing with empty homes in Uttlesford, the council seeks to:
  - a) Bring as many privately-owned empty homes as possible back into full and continuous residential occupation
  - b) Minimise the length of time a privately owned home stands empty
  - c) Reduce blight and nuisance caused by empty privately owned homes
  - d) Help meet local housing need in Uttlesford District Council

## **2. National Context**

- 2.1 The Government has set out its commitment to bringing empty homes back into use in its 2011 "Housing Strategy for England, Laying the Foundations". Key actions contained within this strategy included:
  - a) awarding the New Homes Bonus (NHB) to empty homes brought back into use
  - b) investing £100 million funding to bring problematic empty homes back into use and
  - c) announcing £50 million of further funding to tackle some of the worst concentrations of empty homes
  - d) empowering local authorities to implement a levy or 'empty homes premium' on the Council Tax payable for those properties which have been registered as being empty for 2-years or more.
  - e) Changes to Empty Dwelling Management Orders to target their use on the very worst long-term empty homes which have become dangerous or are causing a nuisance to neighbours and the wider community.
- 2.2 In response to further pressure to fix the Countries housing market, In 2018 the government introduced The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act, allowing councils to charge double the rate of Council Tax on homes left empty for two years or more.

### 3. Local Context

- 3.1 The Government has set a national target for 300,000 new homes to be built each year to tackle the acute shortage of housing across the country. It aims to end the housing crisis, tackle homelessness, and provide aspiring homeowners with a step onto the housing ladder.
- 3.2 The Councils Housing Strategy 2021 -2026 sets out the vision for delivering housing, particular for affordable housing in the district. It also acknowledges the work of the councils Environmental Health (Protection) service in improving private sector housing conditions and tackling empty homes.
- 3.3 The strategy confirms that the council will continue to intervene to ensure that empty properties in private ownership are returned to occupation. This commitment links in with the councils Corporate Plan priorities. The Corporate Plan 2021-2025 not only recognises the importance of delivering more affordable homes for the district but the need for the Council's actions and influence to contribute to the economic growth of the district and to protect the character of Uttlesford. Under the corporate plans key action to be an 'Active place-maker for our towns and villages, it commits to reducing the number of empty homes.
- 3.4 The service continues to provide a commitment to this work. Between April 2016 and March 2021, direction action by officers have resulted in 798 empty properties being brought back into occupation.
- 3.5 Statistics from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities show that UDC performs well in the number of empty homes within the district. Recent statistics published in September 2021 showed that Uttlesford performs well and has the lowest number of Empty Homes in any district is Essex.

| <b>District</b> | <b>Number of Empty Homes</b> |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Uttlesford      | 235                          |
| Maldon          | 238                          |
| Castlepoint     | 326                          |
| Brentwood       | 369                          |
| Rochford        | 370                          |
| Harlow          | 438                          |
| Chelmsford      | 479                          |
| Basildon        | 510                          |
| Epping Forrest  | 543                          |
| Braintree       | 618                          |
| South End       | 652                          |
| Tending         | 855                          |

Table 1 Number of dwellings that are classed as empty on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and have been for more than 6 months.

## **4. Background**

4.1 The following paragraphs set out the definition of empty privately owned home, reasons why these homes become empty and unused for long periods of time and the impact they have at a local level. It also covers the benefits of bringing privately owned empty homes back into use for owners, neighbours and neighbourhoods and the Council. It should be noted that the actions by the council to bring empty homes back in to use, applies to the private sector and does not apply to any property owned or managed by the Council Housing Services or any Registered Social Landlord.

### **4.2 Empty Homes Definition**

4.2.1 There is no absolute legal or case law definition for how long a home in the private sector needs to be empty before a local authority can take action to bring it back into use. Uttlesford Council will follow Government guidance and will concentrate on properties which have been empty for 6 months or more.

### **4.3 Why homes become empty and may stay empty**

4.3.1 Residential homes become empty for a number of reasons. In the majority of cases, they become empty for relatively short periods of time because there are:

- changes of ownership following the sale of a home
- gaps in time between lettings of a home to different tenants

These changes are referred to as “transactional changes” and are a normal part of the housing market.

4.3.2 The range of reasons why homes become and stay empty over a long period of time include where the owner:

- is trying to sell the home but is unable to do so
- has died and their beneficiaries or executors are resolving their estate through probate
- is living or working abroad
- is using the property as an investment and does not want it occupied. This is commonly referred to as “buy to leave empty”.
- is wary of selling as they may be liable to Capital Gains Tax
- cannot afford to carry out repairs before enabling the home to become habitable available for re-occupation or sale.

- does not know how to let the empty home or perceives problems with this option
- has totally abandoned the home
- has inherited the property and does not know or hasn't decided what to do with it
- has gone into long term residential care
- has an emotional attachment to the home and finds it difficult to sell or rent
- wants to rent or sell it but the home may be inconveniently located and pose particular problems to bring it back into use. For example, the home can only be reached through ground floor commercial premises or via a dangerous rear access

#### **4.4 The impact of empty homes**

4.4.1 Some empty homes will show no signs of being unoccupied whilst others will be severely dilapidated. The latter can cause distress to neighbours and blight a neighbourhood. They can pose a number of problems including:

- attracting vermin
- being squatted in or being vulnerable to squatting
- being subject to or vulnerable to vandalism, graffiti, and arson
- accumulating dumped litter and rubbish, overgrown gardens and attracting fly tipping
- providing a focal point for anti-social behaviour

4.4.2 The Council will prioritise dealing with empty homes deemed to be detrimental to the neighbourhood and those, which according to its knowledge, have been empty the longest.

#### **4.5 Benefits of bringing empty homes back into occupation**

4.5.1 The benefits for owners of bringing back into use empty homes they own include:

- Realising a stable income from letting an empty home
- Release from the obligations of maintenance and repairs if the home is sold
- Release from the increased insurance and Council Tax premiums which are attached to empty homes
- Increasing financial security from the sale of their empty home
- Satisfaction with helping to improve the local neighbourhood and helping local households who need the empty home

4.5.2 The benefits of bringing empty homes back into use for neighbours and neighbourhoods include:

- reducing blight for surrounding homes
- reducing the potential for anti-social behaviour through squatting and criminal damage of empty homes
- reduces the potential loss of market value of surrounding homes
- increases the desirability of a neighbourhood
- increases a community spirit and social cohesion

4.5.3 The Council's proactive approach in tackling empty homes also makes an important contribution towards delivering its Housing Strategy. In particular, it supports its aims of:

- Increasing housing supply to meet the needs of local people
- Improving the quality of homes and neighbourhoods.
- discourages anti-social behaviour related to empty homes
- reduces complaints to the Council about empty homes
- can help to create stronger communities

## **5. Uttlesford's Approach to Empty Homes**

5.1 In taking action to bring empty homes back into use, the council adheres to the following key principles:

- To be compliant legally and with government guidance and other accepted protocols.
- To act in accordance with the principles of the Councils Corporate Enforcement Policy
- To be fair and consistent
- To be transparent, easy to understand and straightforward

5.2 In delivering its promises, the service will pursue three main strands of activity:

- Locating empty homes and identifying out who owns them
- Information action through the provision of advice, support and where necessary, escalated warnings.
- Formal enforcement action as a last resort when all voluntary processes have been exhausted

The following section provides information on these activities in more detail.

## **6. Finding empty homes**

- 6.1 This Council will always seek new and innovative ways of locating empty properties on rare occasions this can include use a tracing agent. New methods will be assessed and may be adopted if they are found to improve the effectiveness of the current procedure.
- 6.2 In targeting resources for tackling empty homes effectively. The possible sources of information for finding empty homes and establishing ownership include the following:
- Council Tax records
  - Other Council records
  - Land Registry
  - Utility companies
  - Contacting neighbours
  - Contacting other external partners
  - Use of a tracing agency
  - Investigating who has an interest in an empty home
- 6.3 In fulfilling its function the service have long maintained a “database” (spreadsheet and E files) of empty homes in the district. The “database” is primarily sourced from Council Tax data.

## **7. Empty Homes and Council Tax**

- 7.1 Not all empty homes qualify for an exemption from paying Council Tax. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 and associated regulations sets out the mechanism for levying council tax on domestic properties. Section 11A of the regulations give Councils some discretion in setting the level of council tax charged in respect of unoccupied properties and second homes .
- 7.2 The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 allows Councils to levy a higher amount of Council Tax for long-term empty dwellings that are unoccupied and unfurnished. This is known as an empty property premium.

7.3 With effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 the Council has resolved to charge Council Tax for empty (unoccupied and unfurnished properties) and second homes as follows;

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Properties empty (unoccupied and unfurnished) for up to 6 months   | 50% Discount   |
| Properties empty (unoccupied and unfurnished) for 6 months and up to 2 years   | 0% Discount (full charge)  |
| Properties empty requiring structural or major repair work (unoccupied and unfurnished) for up to 12 months                | 50% Discount   |
| Properties empty requiring structural and major repair work (unoccupied and unfurnished) for over 1 year and up to 2 years | 0% Discount (full charge)  |
| Furnished properties and second homes  | 0% Discount (full charge)<br>(This does not apply to dwellings regarded as Job-Related where the 50% discount will still apply.) |
| Properties empty (unoccupied and unfurnished) for 2 years or more  | 200% charge (includes 100% empty property premium)   |

7.4 Any periods of occupation of six weeks or less will be disregarded when considering how long a property has been empty.

7.5 When considering the above, there are a number of exemptions the need to be considered. No empty property premium can be applied to properties under the following circumstances;

- Properties which would be the sole or main residence of an individual who is residing in armed forces accommodation that is job-related
- Properties which form part of a single property including at least one other dwelling and is being used by a resident of the other dwelling as their sole or main residence

7.6 Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 also gives the Council the discretionary power to reduce liability for council tax in relation to particular cases .

## **8. Procedure For Identifying Empty Homes.**

- 8.1 Each quarter, the Environmental Health (Protection) service receives details of properties homes on the Council Tax Register known to be empty, but which are not attracting an exemption from paying Council Tax. These are targeted for further investigation.
- 8.2 It should be noted that Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2003 inserted a new clause (18A) into Schedule 2 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 which specifically allows local authorities to disclose personal Council Tax data for use in undertaking work around bringing empty homes back into use. This is limited to an individual's name or an address or telephone number for communicating with them and provides the first step in identifying who the Team can begin working with about a long-term empty home.
- 8.2 Internal Council teams such as Planning and Building Control may come into contact with empty properties and their owners. Close ties are established with these departments to allow for information to be shared.
- 8.3 Although there is no mechanism for empty properties to be identified directly via data from the Land Registry, their records do present an important starting point in enabling an empty property owner to be identified in respect of registered land. Over 80% of land in England & Wales is registered but when dealing with unregistered land, tracing the owner can be a lot harder and additional checks are required.
- 8.4 Neighbours living next door or within the vicinity of an empty property are the people most likely to suffer from the negative impact which are often associated with such properties. They are also the most likely people to hold information about the owner's whereabouts and details which may enable the Environmental Health Team to contact a missing owner.
- 8.5 Where identifying owners is proving to be difficult contact will also be made with utility services (gas, electricity, water) subject to following data protection protocols.
- 8.6 The various types of primary and secondary data outlined above, are in most cases enough to enable an empty property owner to be traced and contacted. However, where all attempts to find an owner have failed then the use of a tracing agency will be considered. It is usual practice that a tracing agency will not charge the Council for its services and will welcome the opportunity to be able to negotiate directly with an owner if they are able to locate them.

## **9. Investigating Interests**

9.1 There are Legal powers available to the Council which can be utilised to obtain the details of owners or those who may have in interest in a particular property. Such legislation includes:

- Section 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
- Section 235 of the Housing Act 2004

## **10. Advice and support**

10.1 We will always try and establish the particular circumstances which have led to a property becoming empty. This will enable appropriate solutions to be offered to owners. The following list of measures are to be offered to assist owners bring empty homes they own back into use:

### **PLACE Scheme loans**

10.2 UDC is part of a consortium of authorities across Hertfordshire & Essex to develop a scheme that offers funding and support to owners to bring properties back into use. There are two types of loan assistance available.

1. Interest free (as long as terms and condition are adhered to) loans up to £25,000 (per unit of accommodation). The owner can choose their own contractor and to allow the property to be;
  - a) sold (repayable up to two years)
  - b) or let (repayable up to five years) upon completion of the works.

10.3 Where empty properties are provided with assistance, it is expected that the property will conform to the Decent Homes Standard before it is re-occupied. The Decent Homes Assessment Criteria stipulates that a dwelling should be free from unnecessary and avoidable hazards, in a reasonable state of repair, have reasonably modern facilities and services and provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

### **VAT reduction**

10.4 A further mechanism to support a voluntary pathway is a "VAT reduction". If a property is two years or more empty, team can send the liable party a letter,

reducing VAT to 5% for building contractor(s) working on the property. This can aid/empower liable parties financially in addressing empty properties.

### **Sale of the property**

- 10.5 Should the above measures not be deemed sufficient and where owners have not previously considered selling, advice will be offered about the various options available. In certain cases, e.g., where a property is in a derelict condition, it may be beneficial to consider sale by auction. Owners will be advised to seek independent financial advice where it is likely they may be subject to a Capital Gains Tax liability.

### **Letting Properties Privately**

- 10.5 There is a significant demand for housing and letting an empty property can provide owners with an income stream. We are able to offer advice and support to owners who are considering letting their empty properties and what is involved. However, it should clearly be understood that becoming a landlord is a business opportunity and must be considered in this context. If an empty property owner has no business experience and limited time, then serious consideration should be made as to whether becoming a landlord is a suitable option.

## **11 Engagement & Enforcement**

- 11.1 A voluntary process is initially followed to return empty property to an occupied status. Information is presented to the Environmental Health service from Council Tax on a quarterly basis. Initial Letters are sent to the owners of potentially empty homes informing them of the importance of returning their property to occupation and the responsibilities of the Council. We also offer the owner assistance in the form of loans (PLACE scheme) to assist with repairs.
- 11.2 If no reply is received after 28 days and after checking with Council Tax that the property has not been reoccupied, the property is visited, its appearance is recorded, and its impact is assessed using our Empty Homes Impact Assessment form]. This produces an arithmetic score and provides a way in which the empty homes that we identify can be prioritised for further action. [see appendix 1]
- 11.3 A second letter can be sent seeking dialogue and reiterating the PLACE scheme offer. At this stage and in the third and final letter it states that if no dialogue is achieved, then enforcement powers will be considered having regard to the priority banding scores.

- 11.4 If there is still no response is received with 28 days, then a formal notice is served under either Section 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 or Section 235 of the Housing Act. The covering letter advises the owner that the department is now considering options for enforcement. The letter reiterates that a voluntary path is preferred, but that if this is not possible, and the property is deemed suitable for formal enforcement, that this pathway may be followed. It considering this course of action the team will have regard to the Councils Enforcement Policy.
- 11.5 In addition to the above the Council has set a for long-term empty properties. Properties which have been unoccupied for over two years are required to pay 200% of the normal Council Tax (Empty Homes Premium).
- 11.6 It is recognised that sustained pressure, additional council tax charges and later threats of enforcement action more often than not have the desired effect in returning properties to occupation.

## **12. Formal Enforcement Measures**

- 12.1 Enforcement is an important part of the empty property procedure and will only be used for properties where voluntary approaches have been exhausted. The aim of enforcement action will always be to ensure that the outcome is for an empty property to be re-occupied and/or renovated as quickly as possible.

### **Powers to enter and inspect**

- 12.2 The Environmental Health Team will always try to negotiate with an owner for access to a property. In instances where negotiation has not been successful legal powers can be used to gain entry. If necessary, the Council can obtain a warrant from the courts to enter.

### **Powers to take immediate action**

- 12.3 Should there be immediate concerns that pose a risk to the public and/or cause a nuisance, general enforcement powers are available to officers to board up a property or treat a vermin infestation.
- 12.4 In addition the Environmental Health uses the Housing Health and Safety Rating Systems (HHSRS) tool which assesses the potential risks and hazards to human health and safety which might be found in homes occupied or not. Serious hazards and risks are called Category 1 hazards and less serious ones are called Category 2 hazards. Category 1 and 2 hazards cannot be defined as such as they are based upon an assessment of the risks posed by a combination of factors. The factors include what kind of hazards are observed,

how severe they are and what effect they are having or could have on the health and safety of current or future occupants or visitors to the property being examined. The available options for dealing with identified hazards include:

- Serving an improvement notice
- Serving a suspended improvement notice
- Making a prohibition order
- Taking emergency remedial action
- Making an emergency prohibition
- serving a hazard awareness Notice

12.5 Following the inspection of an empty property each case will be individually assessed to ensure the most appropriate course of action is taken.

12.6 Should officers reach an impasse and have exhausted all voluntary means, government guidance Circular 06/04 16 states that Local Authorities, before embarking on compulsory purchase and throughout the preparation and procedural stages should seek to acquire a property by negotiation wherever practicable. It is the intention of this Council to avoid unnecessary costs and to achieve value for money. Therefore, it will always try to acquire a property by agreement.

12.7 Should all measures fail to address the empty property status, more robust enforcement measures will be considered; namely

- Obtaining a Compulsory Purchase Order
- Enforcing the sale of the property
- Obtaining an Empty Dwelling Management Order

### **13. Compulsory Purchase Order (CPOs)**

13.1 Power to compulsory purchase a property exists under two pieces of legislation contained in both housing and planning law. Under housing law, CPOs are carried out pursuant to section 17 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended). This power can only be used where a qualitative and/or quantitative housing gain is demonstrated.

13.2 Section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), grants the Council with power (subject to Secretary of State Authority) to compulsory purchase any land (which includes property) for the purpose of improving the social environmental or economic well-being of their area. CPOs will be used as

an action of last resort after all other options have been exhausted. The main drawback with carrying out a CPO is that the actual procedure can take a long time, in fact the Governments own guidance states that CPO procedure may take up to two years to complete.

- 13.3 It has been found that the threat of a CPO can act as an effective means to encourage owners of empty properties to take action to bring the property back into residential use.
- 13.4 The Council will consider taking CPO action on a property when:-
- All reasonable efforts to encourage an owner to voluntarily bring their property back into use have failed; and/or
  - Following extensive enquiries, it has not been possible to identify the owner of the property; and/or
  - Purchasing a property by voluntary agreement is not a viable option.
- 13.5 The Environmental Team has a well-established procedure for processing CPOs on privately owned empty properties. This has proved to be an effective enforcement tool. The authority has completed on 3 x CPO's since 2011. However, this has proven to be a time consuming and complex process and in future we would consider the use of a specialist external legal practice to undertake this on the councils behalf, which would be a more efficient way of proceeding.
- 13.6 The final decision to carry out a CPO on an empty property is taken by the Cabinet Committee, who consider and authorise making and proceeding with a CPO together with the acquisition and onward disposal where they are satisfied there is a compelling case in the public interest to make the order, as justified by the supporting statement of reasons and assessed on a case by case basis.
- 13.7 Once a CPO has been made and sealed by the Council, notice is published, served and site notices affixed, with time allowed for objection, in accordance with statutory requirements. Thereafter, it is sent for confirmation to the Secretary of State. If a valid objection is received, the objection may be dealt with by written representations or a Public Local Inquiry (PLI). The financial implications of this eventuality will be taken into consideration when the decision to make the CPO is undertaken.
- 13.8 If the Order is unopposed or where no valid objections are received and the Secretary of State is satisfied that the proper procedures have been observed, the CPO will be confirmed. (This is also the case where the Inspector's report from an Inquiry recommends confirmation). Following confirmation, notice is published, served and site notices affixed, with time allowed for challenge. Provided there is no challenge, the Council can make arrangements to vest the legal title to the property by serving notice of intent to proceed and then making a general vesting declaration (GVD).

- 13.9 Officers will continue to seek dialogue with an owner will throughout the CPO process. Where an owner agrees, it is the policy of the council to enter into a 'cross-undertaking' with the owner. This is a legally binding agreement by which the Council undertakes not to implement a confirmed Order while the owner undertakes to complete any necessary repairs to meet the Decent Homes Standard and also arranges to bring the property back to full continuous residential occupation within a mutually agreed period of time. If the property is sold, then the terms of the cross undertaking will be re-negotiated with the new owner. If the new owner does not carry out these actions or delays in carrying them out, the Council can then seek to implement the Order under the terms of the agreement.
- 13.10 Owners are entitled to compensation on a property once the property has vested in the Council. This will be based on the market value of the house minus any outstanding charges which are registered on the property. Owners are also entitled to receive reasonable costs for any surveyors and legal fees.
- 13.11 It is the policy of this Council to only pay one set of legal and/or surveyor fees per property. This will be applied even if there are multiple or joint owners of the property. The Council will only pay reasonable fees which have been agreed prior to the owner submitting their claim and parties are recommended to liaise with the Environmental Health (Protection) service to discuss this.
- 13.12 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced an entitlement for former owners to claim basic loss payments. The amount is 7.5% of the value of the person's interest in the land, subject to a maximum of £75,000. There are a number of exemptions to having to make this payment, such as where a statutory Notice or Order has been served on the property and not been complied with by the time the CPO is confirmed.
- 13.13 Once the Council takes possession of a compulsory purchased property it will endeavour to dispose of it as quickly as possible. This is to keep any financial and other risks to the Council to a minimum. The primary option available to the Council would be to place the property for sale on the open market to achieve best price. Before disposal, a valuation of the property is obtained. If going to auction a reserve price will be placed on the property.
- 13.14 The Council has responsibility for the property for the period of time between taking possession and its disposal. Each property will be assessed for the potential risks it may pose during this period.

## **14. Enforced Sale Procedure**

14.1 The Law of Property Act 1925 enables a local authority to enforce the sale of a property. There are two situations where these powers can be used: -

- Where there is a registered charge on the property
- Where Council tax is owed on the property

14.2 The Law of Property Act 1925 – section 103 allows the Council to bring about the sale of a privately owned house which has a local land charge registered on it because the owner owes money to the Council e.g., Council Tax. This debt is usually as a result of the owner's failure to comply with a statutory notice for example where the Council has then been forced to carry out works.

14.3 All costs incurred by the Council can be recovered from the proceeds of a sale. Any other charges on the property are than paid before the balance is paid to the owner. This method has the advantage that not only is a debt recovered but the property is also usually returned into occupation. This procedure can be used to achieve a similar result as a Compulsory Purchase Order.

14.4 An enforced sale can also be carried out for outstanding Council Tax debt where the Council may apply to the courts to obtain a charging order. This has the effect of registering the debt onto the property, similar to a land debt above. The process of sale follows the same procedure.

14.5 The Council may consider pursuing an enforced sale in parallel with or instead of a CPO. The approach used is dependent upon what is considered to be the best course of action.

## **15. Empty dwelling management orders**

15.1 This action tends to be reserved for the most problematic empty properties. EDMOs are a discretionary local authority power, introduced under section 132 of the Housing Act 2004. An EDMO gives the power to a Council to carry out any necessary repairs and then facilitate the management of the property as rental accommodation.

15.2 Before the Council can take such action where the following conditions apply in that the property:

- has been empty for over two years
- has been shown to be e a focal point for anti-social behaviour

15.3 The objective of an EDMO is to provide more rented accommodation. However, the major disadvantage to the Council is that it takes all the financial risk for the

period of the order and then hands the property it back to the owner. Therefore, to prevent a possible financial risk to the Council, EDMOs will not be considered on properties that need substantive repairs carried out before they can be occupied. Furthermore, the process takes a long time to complete and is complex in nature to follow. There have been few incidents of LAs taking this approach due the complex procedure and ability to finance the repairs and manage the property. Therefore, the Council will only use this power under exceptional circumstances.

## **16. Raising awareness**

- 15.1 Publicity plays an important role in encouraging others to provide information about possible empty properties within the district. The Environmental Health Protection service will initiate publicity campaigns to raise awareness.
- 15.2 The service will seek opportunities to raise awareness during the annual Empty Homes week. It will also make contact with all Town and Parish Councils annually to encourage reporting of empty properties.
- 15.3 This policy and services offered by the Council will be made available on its website. This information will be updated at regular intervals as and when policies and practices change over time.

## Appendix 1 Empty Home Impact Assessment form and Score Boundaries

### Empty Homes Impact Assessment

Property Address \_\_\_\_\_

Inspection Date \_\_\_\_\_ Officer \_\_\_\_\_

| <u>Nature Of Impact</u>  | <u>Impact Assessment</u>  | <u>Score</u> |
|--|---|--------------|
| <b>1) Length of time Vacant</b><br><i>On what date did the house become vacant?</i>  | Under 6 months 0 points<br>6 – 12 months 1 point<br>1 point for each additional 6 months  |              |
| <b>2) Property condition</b><br>Problem affecting health<br><i>problem which affects other property?</i><br><i>Unightly property</i> | Affecting others health up to 5 points<br>Affecting neighbours property up to 5 points<br>Affecting street scene up to 5 points                                       |              |
| <b>3) Pests / health risks</b><br><i>Is the property a source of verminous pests?</i>  | No = 0 points<br>Minor = 1 point<br>Medium = 3 points<br>Major = 5 points   |              |
| <b>4) Unightly / overgrown gardens</b><br><i>Does the property have gardens which are untended and unsightly?</i>                    | No = 0 points<br>Minor = 1 point<br>Medium = 3 points<br>Major = 5 points   |              |
| <b>5) Accumulation of rubbish / Fly tipping</b><br><i>Are there problems with accumulations of rubbish or fly tipping?</i>           | No = 0 points<br>Minor = 1 point<br>Medium = 3 points<br>Major = 5 points   |              |
| <b>6) Insecure Boundaries</b><br><i>Are the walls and fences effective, and suitable for purpose?</i>                                | No = 0 points<br>Minor = 1 point<br>Medium = 3 points<br>Major = 5 points   |              |
| <b>7) Complaints received</b><br>Number of complaints?   | No complaints = 0 points<br>1 – 3 complaints = 5 point<br>4 – 6 complaints = 10 points<br>1 point for each additional complaint + 5 points for each member complaints |              |
| <b>8) Statutory Notices Served</b><br>Number   | No notices = 0 points<br>1-3 notices = 5 point<br>4-6 notices = 10 points<br>5 point for each additional notice   |              |
| <b>9) Works In Default</b><br>Number   | No occasions = 0 points<br>1-3 occasions = 5 point<br>4-6 occasions = 10 points<br>1 point for each additional occasion<br>Prosecutions = 20 points each              |              |
| <b>10) Total Council Tax or other Debts Owed</b><br>Value  | £0-500 = 1 point<br>£501-1000 = 2 points<br>£1001-1500 = 3 points<br>£1501-2000 = 4 points<br>1 point for each additional £500  |              |

## Empty Home Impact Assessment Score Boundaries

- 1) Low level impact 0-30 points\*: Voluntary engagement only and monitor from time to time i.e., sent PLACE 1 letter and received reply outlining plans for property. This type of property should be empty for a relatively short period of time and become occupied generally within 6 months to 2 years. Offer PLACE Loan (to let or sell).
  
- 2) Medium Level Impact 30-60 points\*: Voluntary engagement plus increased urgency with owner, notify them that they need to actively consider their options to remedy the medium-term empty nature of their property. Warn owner their property will be assessed for formal enforcement action. Check for any Council Tax debt/other Council debt. Offer VAT reduction letter (2+ years empty) and PLACE loan (to let or sell).
  
- 3) High Level Impact 60+ points\*: If the owner fails to respond to initial Voluntary negotiations; and as the property is in very poor condition with a high impact on other properties and/or on street scene. The owner will be warned that their property will be assessed for enforcement action. A VAT reduction letter and PLACE loan (to let or sell) will also be offered

\*The above point score boundaries are general guidelines which permit a “triage” of an empty property, so that it can be broadly classified and prioritised for action in terms of its impacts. The score each property achieves is indicative of its impact but does not preclude action if close to the top of the point boundary, conversely no action may be taken if the property is close to the bottom of the point boundary i.e., there is an inherent degree of flexibility and discretion in the impact assessment process and action taken based upon the score achieved.

# Agenda Item 5

**Committee:** Housing Board

**Date:**

**Title:** Section 106 Affordable Housing Funds

15<sup>th</sup> March 2022

**Report Author:** Judith Snares – Housing Strategy and Operations Manager - 01799 510671

**Item for decision:**  
Yes

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## Summary

This report provides detail of the proposed use of the Section 106 commuted sums with the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) development programme

## Recommendation

1. Housing Boards recommends to Cabinet that the Section 106 Affordable Housing contributions are utilised within the HRA development programme

## Financial Implications

2. Detailed in report.

## Background Papers

3. HRA business plan

## Impact

- 4.

|                                 |                     |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Communication/Consultation      | Parish Councils     |
| 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                 |
| Workforce/Workplace             | Housing Development |

## Situation

5. The council currently has Section 106 contributions or approx. £946K which is for use on the delivery of affordable housing within the district.
6. It is proposed to utilising these contributions, when appropriate, within the council's Housing Development Programme.
7. The S106 contributions will allow the HRA to reduce the HRA funding element on future developments. Reducing HRA borrowing requirements will release money that can be used to invest in the council's current stock.
8. This report does not propose specific details on which development schemes these contributions will be used, but rather to gain Member approval for the in principle decision that Section 106 contributions are utilised by the HRA development programme.
9. The exact use of the contributions will be detailed as proposed schemes are brought before Members to agree their funding,

## Risk Analysis

9.

| Risk  | Likelihood  | Impact  | Mitigating actions   |
|---|---|---|--|
| Increased costs of borrowing within the HRA | 3 There is currently a projected requirement to be able to complete future planned Schemes (subject to planning permission) | 3 To continue the development programme would require funding be curtailed on planned and responsive maintenance work within current stock, or increased borrowing, the alternative is to curtail the development programme | By utilising Section 106 affordable housing contributions the development programme can continue with reduced need of funding from HRA |

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.

■

|                   |  |                          |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------|
| <b>Committee:</b> | <b>Housing Board</b>   | <b>Agenda Item</b>       |
| <b>Date:</b>      | <b>15<sup>th</sup> March 2022</b>                            |                          |
| <b>Title:</b>     | <b>Development Programme</b>                                 |                          |
| <b>Officer:</b>   | <b>Judith Snares Housing Strategy and Operations Manager</b> | <b>Key decision: Yes</b> |

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## Summary

1. This report provides the Housing Board with an update on the proposed development by the HRA across the District.

## Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board:
  - i. Notes the contents of this report

## Financial Implications

3. Financial provision for the development of new council owned homes is included within the Housing Revenue Account. The development of these sites will also enable the use of Right to Buy capital receipts. Homes England grant will be sort on future developments where appropriate.
4. Re-development of Walden Place already has an agreed budget.

## Background Papers

5. None
- 6.

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| 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           | Various as detailed in report   |
| Workforce/Workplace             | There are sufficient resources in the housing team to manage the project              |

## Situation

### 7. **The Moors, Little Dunmow**

Work is completed on this site which has delivered 8 affordable rented 2 bed houses and 8 social rented 1 bed flats. Final handover occurred in January 2022, and all dwellings are fully let.

### 8. **Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden**

Work is progressing well on site with handover anticipated September 2022. This site will deliver 14 homes.

### 9. **Batholomew Close, Great Chesterford**

Work is progressing well on site with handover anticipated July 2022. The site will deliver 13 new homes including a 3 bed bungalow specifically adapted to meet an identified family's needs.

### 10. **Parkside, Saffron Walden**

The site is now empty. Plans are progressing well towards submitting a planning application in April 2022. Survey work is currently being carried out which will form part of that application. Consultation with the Town Council and nearby residents will be undertaken prior to submission. The Architects for this project have developed a scheme of 24 flats for the over 60s with a mixture of 1 and 2 bedrooms, and also including 2 wheelchair standard flats. The current budget estimate is £3.7 million, and this will be continually reviewed as our proposal for the site is firmed up. If planning permission is obtained, a report will be taken to Cabinet to agree funding for this project. We will look to obtain some grant funding from Homes England for this scheme with the remainder borrowed through the HRA

### 11. **Gold Close, Elsenham**

This site is a small parking area at the above location where we have constructed a 3 bedroom fully wheelchair compliant bungalow for an identified family in housing need. The project is completed and the family moved in their new home in December 2021.

## **12. Auton Croft, Saffron Walden**

A planning application for 14 dwellings, consisting of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom houses, and a 2 bedroom wheelchair compliant bungalow was taken to Planning Committee with a recommendation for approval earlier in 2021. This application received considerable objection from neighbours and Members of the Committee were concerned about the reduction of amenity space. The Committee deferred the application for a site visit. Following the site visit the report was withdrawn to enable officers to consult further with Housing Board Members as to the way forward with this site. Upon instruction from Housing Board Members, the application by the Planning Committee in April 2022, where it will be finally determined.

## **13. Alexia House, Great Dunmow**

The proposal here is to demolish the existing building to provide new self-contained apartments for the over 60s. There are currently only 2 residents left within the building. Our architects and officers have met with planning for a pre-app meeting and it is anticipated that a full planning application will be submitted in May 2022. The scheme is for 24 apartments, a mixture of 1 and 2 bed including some fully wheelchair accessible units. Surveys are currently being carried out in support of the planning application. If planning permission is obtained a report will be taken to Cabinet to agree funding for this project. We will look to obtain some grant funding from Homes England for this scheme with the remainder borrowed through the HRA.

## **14. Walden Place**

Planning approval has been granted for this scheme and the contractor procurement process is underway. A start on site is anticipated in May/June 2022. The scheme will see the detaching of the listed building from the rest of the sheltered scheme and a build of 2 new flats and new communal facilities. The estimated cost for the building works is £2.3 million and funding has already approved for this through the HRA. A report will be brought to Members on the disposal of the listed building in due course.

## **15. Takeley Day Centre/Garage Site**

Architects have been appointed for this scheme which is looking to deliver up to 8 properties. Officers are exploring with our architects the potential to deliver this scheme using Modern Methods of Construction. This would be with the intention of delivering low carbon homes. A pre planning application has been submitted to the Planning Department.

## **16. Garden Reduction Sites**

Officers have identified a possible 4 garden reduction sites which have potential as single building plots. Three outline planning applications have

been submitted with two of these approved to date. One is undergoing further consultation. A further site is having plans drawn up by architects. At the

previous Housing Board meeting it was agreed that these sites will be developed by the council to deliver new affordable homes using up RTB receipts and HRA borrowing.

### 17. Section 106 Opportunities

The council has made an offer to Barratts Homes for 18 one bedroom apartments on their site in Great Dunmow. This offer has been accepted subject to Board approval by Barratts and Member approval by the Council. Once we hear from Barratts that they wish to proceed with our offer Cabinet approval will be sought to fund this purchase from HRA borrowing. There is no timetable for delivery of these properties at this time.

We have had an offer accepted for one affordable rented 3 bedroom house on a S106 site in Saffron Walden. We are awaiting a delivery time table for this dwelling from the developer.

### Risk Analysis

21.

| Risk   | Likelihood                             | Impact   | Mitigating actions  |
|--|--|--|---|
| Not achieving planning permission on re-development sites        | 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   |
| Further "abnormal costs" identified.                             | 2. Surveys being undertaken            | 3 Potential cost implications  | Contingency already included with cost estimate   |
| Not meeting RTB receipts expenditure as per government agreement | 3 Failure to achieve planning approval | 3 RTB proceeds would have to be returned to government with interest | Investment strategy agreed by council to enable purchase of market sites. Single plot sites held back for council redevelopment |

- 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.

# Agenda Item 9

**Committee:** Housing Board  
**Date:** 15 March 2022  
**Title:** Housing Strategy 2021 -2026 Action Plan Update 2  
**Author:** Judith Snares – Housing Strategy and Operations Manager

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## Summary

1. The Council's Housing Strategy was adopted by the Council in December 2021. The Action Plan is the delivery vehicle for the strategy and this document will be regularly updated with the progress that is being made on the action points within the plan.

## Recommendation

2. That the Housing Board notes the progress updates within the Housing Strategy Action Plan.

## Financial Implications

3. There are financial implications for some actions within the Action Plan and separate reports will be brought forward at the appropriate time for any future spending decisions.

## Impact

- 4.

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Communication/Consultation      | Members, tenants, all partner agencies and public consultation via the website |
| Community Safety                | N/A  |
| Equalities                      | Equality impact assessment has been completed                                  |
| Health and Safety               | N/A  |
| Human Rights/Legal Implications | N/A  |

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Sustainability        | N/A                                     |
| Ward-specific impacts | All wards                               |
| Workforce/Workplace   | Housing, Planning, Environmental Health |

### Situation

5. The Housing Strategy Action Plan will be updated annually, and report brought to Housing Board following each review of the Plan.
6. Although the Action Plan was only adopted in December a light touch review of the Plan has been carried out and the updated Action Plan, with initial progress made, is now presented to Housing Board.
7. The Action Plan will be reviewed again towards the end of this year and then annually thereafter.

### Risk Analysis

8.

| Risk   | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigating actions   |
|--|------------|--------|--|
| That the Action Plan of the Housing Strategy is not regularly monitored and progress on the action points contained within are not met | 2          | 2      | Annual reviews of the Action will take place and reported to Housing Board |

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 2021-26

| Housing Strategy response:<br>Demographics |                                 |   |   |              |                           |   |   |
|--|---------------------------------|---|---|--------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| Activity title                             | Outcomes                        | Activities  | Output measures/milestones  | Timescale    | Resources                 | Key Officer   | Progress  |
| Census 2021                                | Census data that informs policy | Use census 2021 data, upon it being made available, to consider whether policy changes are required in response to the demographics of the district | Assess whether the percentage of bungalows and fully wheelchair user homes delivered on market-led sites needs revising and if so, use this information to inform the emerging Local Plan | June 2022    | Within existing resources | Housing Enabling & Development Officer                        | 24/2/22 - Census data due to be published June 2022 & so it will be reviewed then |
|  |                                 |   | Ensure that 5% of new homes upon market-led sites are developed to wheelchair adaptable M4(3) standard and the remainder developed to wheelchair accessible M4(2) standard.               | Ongoing      | Within existing resources | Housing Enabling & Development Officer/Planning Case Officers | Existing planning condition   |
|  |                                 |   | Upon the new Local Plan being in place, ensure that 5% of new homes upon market-led sites are bungalows irrespective of tenure  | 2024 onwards | Within existing resources | Housing Enabling & Development Officer/Planning Case Officers |   |

|  |   |  |  |                                     |                                    |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Market-led schemes   | Housing mix matching the identified housing need                  | Ensure that the tenure and housing mix on market-led schemes matches the identified need in the Strategic Market Housing Assessment (SHMA), the emerging Local Plan and Housing Register requirements. | Agree the housing mix for each individual market-led scheme based upon the identified need   | Ongoing                             | Within existing resources          | Housing Enabling & Development Officer |  |
| Downsizing   | Making best use of Council housing stock                          | Continue to promote and encourage downsizing within the Council's own housing stock thereby making best use of the stock ie rightsizing  | Continue to ensure that eligible applicants are aware of the grant available to assist them with downsizing thereby releasing the property for another applicant in need of it | Ongoing                             | Downsizing budget already in place | Housing management team                |  |
| Demolition of sheltered schemes no longer fit for purpose and replace with | Provide 21 <sup>st</sup> century homes for those age 60 and above | General needs housing for those aged 60 and over to replace sheltered schemes no   | Re-modelling of Walden Place , Saffron Walden and demolition and re-build of Alexia House, Dunmow, and Parkside, Saffron Walden to be completed                                | Each scheme to be completed by 2026 | Budget agreed and in place         | Housing Strategy & Operations Manager  | 24/2/22 -Planning permission received for Walden Place currently going through |

|  |  |  |  |                        |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|------------------------|--|--|--|
| new build general needs housing for those aged 60 and over       |  | longer fit for purpose in Saffron Walden and Dunmow                |  |                        |  |  | procurement process. Planning applications due to be submitted for schemes at Parkside & Alexia House by end of March 22   |
| Assisting people to remain in their current homes<br><br>Page 46 | Preventing the need for elderly and disabled people to move from their homes when staying in their home is the best option | Make use of assistive technology<br><br>Disabled Facilities Grants | Look at the delivery of assistive technology in Uttlesford and understand who will be best placed to deliver the services that will enable people to remain in their homes for longer in a digital technology future<br><br>Continue to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG), Home Improvement Grants and Energy Efficiency Grants to assist people to remain in their homes | Ongoing<br><br>Ongoing | Within existing resources<br><br>Budget resources in place | Sheltered Housing Team Leader<br><br>Environmental Health Manager (Protection) | 24/2/22 – UDC Lifeline service being transferred to NHS Provide from 1/4/22 as they will be in a better position to fully digitise the service going forward<br><br>3/3/22-the service is on course to spend £190k of its £270k DFG allocation. £5k has been spent on discretionary grants. The service facilitates but does not approve Energy Efficiency grants. |
| Specialist housing   | Meeting the identified   | Support Essex County Council                                       | Assist ECC to meet the specialist housing need   | Ongoing                | Partnership approach                                       | Housing Strategy &   | 24/2/22 – ECC currently  |

|  |  |  |  |  |                                     |                    |   |
|--|--|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------|---|
|  | specialist housing need within the Uttlesford district | (ECC) with delivering the specialist housing required within the Uttlesford district | including extra-care requirements, those living with dementia, Gypsy and Traveller provision, people fleeing violence and persecution eg Syrian and Afghan refugees; people experiencing domestic violence |  | to securing the necessary resources | Operations Manager | undertaking a review of extra care service requirements in Essex. 2 Afghan families offered accommodation in Uttlesford |
|--|--|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------|---|

| Housing Strategy response:<br><b>Affordability and housing choice</b> |  |   |   |           |   |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|-----------|---|---|---|
| Activity title  | Outcomes   | Activities  | Output/<br>measures/milestones  | Timescale | Resources                                       | Key officer   | Progress  |
| Affordable housing provision  | Achieve an optimum level of affordable housing provision upon market-led sites | Continue to require 40% affordable housing provision upon market-led sites    | 40% affordable housing provision upon market-led sites achieved unless an alternative proportion is agreed on viability grounds | Ongoing   | Applicant to fund the viability assessment      | Housing Enabling & Development Officer/Planning case Officers | 24/2/22 – Being achieved currently, although still being challenged on developments |
| Rural Exception Sites (RES)   | Additional affordable housing provision  | Support Registered Provider partners in the delivery of Rural Exception Sites | Assist Registered Providers, Parish Councils and the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) in delivering RES                  | Ongoing   | Housing needs surveys funded by Parish Councils | Housing Enabling & Development Officer                        | 24/2/22 – RES delivered at High Easter; scheme ongoing at Hatfield Heath            |

|   |   |   |   |                |                                       |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|----------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <p>Additions to Council owned stock</p> | <p>Use RTB receipts, commuted sums and grant funding to fund additions to Council owned stock</p> | <p>Continue to use Right to Buy receipts and grant funding to deliver a programme of new build Council homes and acquisitions</p> | <p>Use RTB receipts &amp; commuted sums within the permitted timescales</p>   | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>RTB receipts and grant funding</p> | <p>Housing Strategy &amp; Operations Manager/Development Manager (Housing)</p> | <p>24/2/22 – 17 New homes delivered since Nov 2021. 27 currently under construction. Other schemes at various stages of the planning process. Potential for the purchase of a 3BH on a Sect 106 site in SW</p> |
| <p>Housing Allocations Policy</p>       | <p>Achieving sustainable communities</p>  | <p>Review the Council's Housing Allocations Policy</p>  | <p>Review the Council's Housing Allocations Policy with regard to the eligibility criteria for people living and working within the district</p> <p>Consider whether a key worker policy should be introduced</p> | <p>2023/24</p> | <p>Within existing resources</p>      | <p>Housing Options Team Leader/Housing Strategy &amp; Operations Manager</p>   | <p>24/2/22 – This work will need to be co-ordinated with the emerging Local Plan</p>   |
| <p>Housing Options service</p>          | <p>Deliver a tailored Housing Options service</p>   | <p>Provide a Housing Options service that provides service users with tailored advice regarding their</p>                         | <p>Consider creating a one-stop shop housing options service to promote the full range of housing choices and tenures, alongside homelessness prevention</p>  | <p>2022/23</p> | <p>Additional resources required</p>  | <p>Housing Options Team Leader/Housing Strategy &amp; Operations Manager</p>   |  |

|         |             |   |   |   |   |                             |  |  |
|---------|-------------|---|---|---|---|-----------------------------|--|--|
|         |             | housing options within the district               | Continue to make use of the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme to assist those in need of it to secure suitable accommodation in the private rented sector | Ongoing   | Budget in place for the Rent Deposit Guarantee scheme | Housing Options Team Leader |  |  |
| Page 49 | First Homes | Assist first-time buyers onto the property ladder | First Homes successfully commenced within the district  | Scheme eligibility criteria, level of discount and revised tenure mix agreed prior to the commencement of First Homes upon market-led schemes | By 28/12/21   | Within existing resources   | Local Plan & New Communities Manager (Planning)/Housing Enabling & Development Officer | 3/3/22 - Draft First Homes PAN being taken to LPLG on 9 March.               |
|         |             |   |   | Revised S106 agreements in place  | By 28/12/21   |                             | Legal Team   | 24/2/22-Model clauses received from DLUHC and forwarded to the Legal Section |
|         |             |   |   | Ensure that 25% of new homes upon market-led sites are First Homes for  | Ongoing from 28/12/21                                 |                             | Planning Case Officers   |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|
|  |  |  | <p>new applications without significant pre-application engagement with effect from 28/12/21</p> <p>Re-assess the level of discount within the district for First Homes if sufficient evidence to support it is gathered as part of the Local Plan process</p> | <p>Considered as part of adopting the new Local Plan by 2024</p> |  | <p>Local Plan &amp; New Communities Manager</p> | <p>3/3/22- No update at this point – monitoring to be undertaken as the government's First Home policy is implemented.</p> |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|

| Housing Strategy response:<br><b>Housing delivery and choice</b> |   |   |  |                        |   |  |  |
|--|---|---|--|------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Activity title</b>  | <b>Outcomes</b>   | <b>Activities</b>   | <b>Output/ measures/milestones</b>   | <b>Timescale</b>       | <b>Resources</b>  | <b>Key Officer</b>                     | <b>Progress</b>  |
| Supply of housing  | Broad range of tenures & delivery methods to meet the identified housing need | Work with developers and Planners to ensure that a supply of housing across a broad range of tenures & delivery | The range of tenures within the district broadened to include Community Led Housing (CLH), build to rent and First Homes | Ongoing<br><br>Ongoing | Specialist support for CLH from Eastern Community Homes | Housing Enabling & Development Officer | 24/2/22 - Thaxted CLT fully constituted & exploring site options |

|                                  |   |  |   |         |   |  |  |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---|---------|---|--|--|
|                                  |   | methods is enabled   | Alternative delivery methods including Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) considered as part of the Council's own development programme |         |   | Development Manager                    | 24/2/22- MMC being considered for UDC Takeley site   |
| Community Led Housing (CLH)      | Additional affordable housing delivered within the district via CLH | Support the Eastern Community Homes (ECH) Hub & the Rural & Community Led Housing Enabler to provide specialist advice and assistance to groups seeking to deliver CLH | CLH contributing towards the number of affordable housing properties completed within the district by 2026                                | Ongoing | One off grant contribution of £3k to ECH and start-up grants for CLH groups funded from funds received from central government specifically for CLH | Housing Enabling & Development Officer | 24/2/22 - Thaxted CLT fully constituted & exploring site options. Saffron Walden CLT being established. Self/custom build units being included as part of the mix on some S106 sites |
| Housing needs of major employers | Meet the identified housing need of                                 | Identify the housing need of major   | Meet with the major employers to identify their   | 2022/23 | Within existing resources   | Housing Strategy & Operations          |  |

|                                |   |  |   |         |   |  |   |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|---------|---|--|---|
|                                | the major employers within the district   | employers and establish how the Council can assist towards meeting this need   | employees housing requirements<br><br>Ensure the range of tenures within the district responds to the identified need eg build to rent          | Ongoing |   | Manager/Housing Enabling & Development Officer<br><br>Housing Enabling & Development Officer |   |
| Investment/development partner | Decision made as to whether to appoint an investment/development partner or not | Explore the option of appointing an investment/development partner to work with the Council to create a forward supply of schemes, and then design and construct the homes | Establish whether there is the appetite to commit the necessary financial resources to expanding the Council's own development programme or not | 2021/22 | Additional financial resources required | Housing Strategy & Operations Manager  | 24/2/22 – currently financial constraints prevent this being a viable option; will be kept under review |
|                                |   |  | Business case to be compiled and considered at Housing Board if there is the appetite to expand the programme                                   | 2021/22 |   | Housing Strategy & Operations Manager  |   |
| Private rented sector          | Improve the condition of private rented sector stock                            | Provide grants & assistance for private landlords looking to bring good quality homes into the   | Ongoing programme monitored to ensure its effectiveness   | Ongoing | Budget resources in place               | Environmental Health Manager (Protection)  | 3/3/20- Loan offers are made available and promoted   |

|        |   |  |  |   |           |                              |   |
|--------|---|--|--|---|-----------|------------------------------|---|
| Page 5 |   | private rented sector                              |  |   |           |                              | to owners of empty properties. There is limited take up and consideration is being given to increase the scope of the loan, subject to PLACE consortium agreement |
|        | Emergency homeless accommodation (this activity also sits within the homelessness strategy) | Secure additional emergency homeless accommodation | Identify opportunities to deliver more units of emergency homeless accommodation for specialist groups | Increased provision of suitable and secure emergency homelessness accommodation with less reliance on emergency bed and breakfast usage | 2022/2023 | Potential budget implication | Housing Strategy and Operations Manager   |

|   |                 |                   |                                    |                  |                  |                    |                 |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Housing Strategy response:<br><b>Quality of housing</b> |                 |                   |                                    |                  |                  |                    |                 |
| <b>Activity title</b>                                   | <b>Outcomes</b> | <b>Activities</b> | <b>Output/ measures/milestones</b> | <b>Timescale</b> | <b>Resources</b> | <b>Key Officer</b> | <b>Progress</b> |

|                                |  |   |  |         |                           |  |   |
|--------------------------------|--|---|--|---------|---------------------------|--|---|
| Energy efficiency              | Improve the energy efficiency of homes, save residents money & reduce fuel poverty | Continue initiatives/partnerships that improve EPC ratings, reduce energy consumption, save residents money and reduce fuel poverty | EPC ratings for the district improve year on year, reduction in the level of carbon emissions from domestic properties and less residents considered to be in fuel poverty | Ongoing | Within existing resources | Climate Change Project Officer           | 28/2/22- For residents of non-UDC properties, UDC are currently distributing over £1million in government grants to low income households for energy efficiency measures. |
| Private sector stock condition | Improve the quality of the private sector stock                                    | Continue to facilitate a range of home improvement services to owners, including private landlords, helping with home repairs,      | Ongoing programme monitored to ensure its effectiveness  | Ongoing | Budget resources in place | Environmental Health Manager (Protection | 3/3/20- there is limited take up of discretionary assistance loans. The service is  |

|  |  |                              |  |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|------------------------------|--|--|--|--|---|
|  |  | improvements and adaptations |  |  |  |  | currently reviewing the assistance available. |
|--|--|------------------------------|--|--|--|--|---|



|                                 |   |   |  |   |  |   |   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--|---|--|---|---|
|                                 | Council owned stock                               | stock thereby reducing energy consumption, save tenants money & reduce fuel poverty                   |  |   | budget agreed as part of the Uttlesford Norse/UDC partnering arrangement |   | reviewed as part of the next LAHS submission  |
| Private sector empty properties | Return empty properties back into occupation      | Continue to intervene to ensure that empty properties in private ownership are returned to occupation | Ongoing programme monitored to ensure its effectiveness  | Ongoing                                     | Within existing resources  | Environmental Health Manager (Protection) | 3/3/20- approx 250 property owners are contacted each quarter. Figures on the total number of empties returned to occupation are provided annually. |
| New build space standards       | Adherence to Nationally Described Space Standards | Require that the NDSS are met by all developers upon market-led                                       | Requirement within the Local Plan for the NDSS to be met | Upon adoption of the new Local Plan in 2024 | Within existing resources  | Local Plan & New Communities Manager      | 3/3/20- No update at this point, the  |

|         |  |   |   |  |                        |                              |   |
|---------|--|---|---|--|------------------------|------------------------------|---|
|         | (NDSS) by all developers within the district | sites by including a requirement to do so within the Local pLan |   |  |                        |                              | emerging Local Plan will include appropriate policies     |
| Page 56 | Permitted Development Rights (PDR)           | Minimise any adverse effects from PDR within the district       | Monitor and report upon any adverse implications from PDR allowing conversion of office/shop buildings into residential accommodation | Monitoring the impact of PDR   | Ongoing                | Within existing resources    | Development Control Team                                  |
|         | Innovation Demonstrator Project              | Council owned Innovation Demonstrator Project undertaken        | Explore the option of the Council delivering an Innovation Demonstrator Project upon a strategic development site                     | Obtain a decision from Housing Board as to whether to proceed or not with the project.<br><br>Consider working with Eastern New Energy to deliver an Innovation Demonstrator Project | 2023/24<br><br>2023/24 | Potential budget implication | Development Manager/Housing Strategy & Operations manager |

|   |                 |                   |                |                  |                  |                    |                 |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Housing Strategy response:<br><b>Local Plan</b> |                 |                   |                |                  |                  |                    |                 |
| <b>Activity title</b>                           | <b>Outcomes</b> | <b>Activities</b> | <b>Output/</b> | <b>Timescale</b> | <b>Resources</b> | <b>Key Officer</b> | <b>Progress</b> |

|                          |                                  |  |  |                          |                           |  |  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
|                          |                                  |  | <b>measures/milestones</b>   |                          |                           |  |  |
| Housing Strategy 2021-26 | Revised/updated Housing Strategy | Review & revise the Housing Strategy if required upon adoption of the Local Plan | Housing Strategy correlating with the Local Plan due to be adopted in 2024<br><br>Planning consultation responses to follow the planning policy contained within the Local Plan 2024 | 2024<br><br>2024 onwards | Within existing resources | Housing Enabling & Development Officer | 24/2/22 – Strategy will be reviewed in line with the emerging Local Plan |

|  |   |  |  |                        |   |   |                 |
|--|---|--|--|------------------------|---|---|-----------------|
| Housing Strategy response:<br><b>Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic</b> |   |  |  |                        |   |   |                 |
| <b>Activity title</b>  | <b>Outcomes</b>   | <b>Activities</b>  | <b>Output/<br/>measures/milestones</b>   | <b>Timescale</b>       | <b>Resources</b>                                      | <b>Key Officer</b>  | <b>Progress</b> |
| Design of new Council homes  | Design of homes matches post-Covid requirements                     | Ensure that the design of new Council homes takes account of changing work practices such as working from home | Consider the design brief for each proposed scheme<br><br>Identify, monitor & respond to any longer-term trends resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic | Ongoing<br><br>Ongoing | Within the budget allocation for each specific scheme | Development Manager/Housing Strategy & Operations manager |                 |
| Location of new Council homes  | New Council homes to be predominantly built in areas identified for | Review the areas identified for growth within the new Local Plan   | New Local Plan due to be adopted 2024  | 2024 onwards           | Within existing resources                             | Housing Strategy & Operations Manager                     |                 |

|                     |   |   |   |         |                              |                             |  |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
|                     | growth within the new Local Plan  | upon it being adopted   |   |         |                              |                             |  |
| Homelessness trends | Homelessness service to respond to any adverse trends resulting from the pandemic | Monitor and respond to any adverse homelessness trends having regard to the resources available | Adverse trends monitored and responded to | Ongoing | Potential budget implication | Housing Options Team Leader | 24/2/22 – reviewed within the Homelessness Strategy and via the Homelessness Partnership |

## HOUSING BOARD FORWARD PROGRAMME

| Housing Board | 15 March 2022  | 14 June 2022  | 27 September 2022   | 13 December 2022   |
|---------------|--|---|---|--|
|               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 106 Monies</li> <li>• HRA Business Plan</li> <li>• Development update</li> <li>• Empty Homes Policy</li> <li>• Assistance Policy</li> <li>• Housing Strategy Action Plan</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development update</li> <li>• Business Plan update</li> <li>• Performance Update</li> <li>• Housing Enabling Update</li> <li>• Homelessness Strategy Action Plan Review</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Update</li> <li>• Tenant and Leaseholder Panel Report</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent Setting/HRA budget</li> <li>• Development update</li> <li>• Housing Strategy Action Plan Review</li> </ul> |