

## HRA BUSINESS PLAN – PRIORITIES FOR ACTION 2016–2021

Action	Timescale	Resources	Outcome	Update Q3 2017-2018
<b>1. Operate a sound and viable housing business in a professional and cost effective manner</b>				
Continue to develop business plan financial model to inform investment and service planning	Ongoing	Within existing resources	HRA that continues to be managed on sound business principles	<p>Government housing policy changes have affected the HRA Business Plan, both in the short term and in future years. The imposition of a 1% annual rent cut for four years from 1st April 2016 has had a significant effect on available resources over the life of the plan</p> <p>The HRA Business plan and financial model has been updated and shows that there will be pressures on the HRA from 2020 if the current level of expenditure on stock and new build continues as modelled.</p> <p>The HRA Business Plan allows the Council to have flexibility as to when loans are repaid and consideration will need to be given to refinancing the loans in order to both meet investment opportunities, and to balance the gap in the financial plan that is a result of the effect of these changes in housing policy</p>
Prepare for supporting people funding	Mar-17	Within existing resources	Options identified to enable key services to continue to be delivered	Complete. New delivery model for sheltered housing in place. Tenants

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reductions				<p>have been written to and new charges explained. All costs are now fully recoverable from tenants since the ending of support grant funding from county</p> <p>Introduced new Intensive Housing Management (IHM) charge – this can be included in Housing Benefit claim to reduce impact on residents receiving this service</p>
Improve performance management systems in Housing Services	Mar-17	Within existing resources	PI targets based on a combination of performance of peer LA's in HouseMark benchmarking group and historic UDC performance data	The Housing Service has developed a suite of Performance Indicators to monitor services against its own targets, and to provide customers with information on how our services are performing. These indicators are monitored by managers on a monthly basis, with key indicators reported to CMT
Maximise income to the HRA by achieving high collection rates for rents, service charges, sewage charges, garage rents and miscellaneous invoices	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Rent arrears action taken at an earlier stage to prevent arrears from escalating. Providing debt support and signposting to tenants/leaseholders who are struggling. Corporate approach to rent collection to ensure join-up with individual cases	Income collection has been separated from the debt support work resulting in a significant reduction in rent arrears
Implement re-	Apr-16	Within existing	Improve recovery of costs of repairs	Complete. A new re-charge policy has

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chargeable repairs policy		resources	which are tenants' responsibility	<p>been written to clarify the definition of rechargeable repairs and to improve the recovery of costs associated with rechargeable repairs and to deter misuse or negligence of Council property by tenants</p> <p>By identifying and recovering these costs, it enables the council to reinvest the money to help improve services and properties which will ultimately benefit tenants</p>
Evaluate the alternative options available for the delivery of housing services through strategic and /or operational partnerships	Apr-17	Within existing resources	Options identified for step change improvement in value for money	Options for expanding the repairs service currently provided to UDC tenants to other housing providers through Aspire Property Services have been evaluated. It is proposed to re-visit this option next year
Review the arrangements for the management of non-housing assets	Oct-16	Within existing resources	Rationalisation of management responsibilities and clarification of development potential	Complete. Asset Management and Development Strategy in place
Ensure the void turnaround figures do not exceed targets to minimise rent losses	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Rent loss through voids minimalised	Further review of the void processes carried out in August 2017 following recommendations from the Tenant Regulatory Panel (TRP). Review shows that new processes that have been implemented are working well

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<b>2. Ensure that all the council's tenants live in a decent home in settled communities for as long as needed, consistent with the council's Tenant Strategy</b>				
Review tenant strategy to ensure that local housing need is met and assets are used effectively, utilising all available flexibilities	Apr-17	Within existing resources	Updated strategy	Complete. Strategy has been reviewed. No change to policy recommended at this time
Create a tenancy sustainment team	Aug-16	Within existing resources	Increased support for vulnerable tenants. A failed tenancy costs the Council several thousands of pounds so the success of this team will ultimately save money for re-investment in the housing stock	Complete. Team in place. Successful Tenancy Sustainment Programme implemented. We have been able to prevent evictions, organise sustainable repayment programmes and tenancies, and help individuals who have been previously unable to engage with us and many other support organisations. The service has been nominated for a Partnership Working Award in this year's You Make the Difference in Essex Awards
Improve the information on the housing stock	Apr-17	Within existing resources	Accessible up to date stock data	Complete. New stock data management system (SAM) has been implemented. Work is progressing on collecting stock data - it is anticipated that a 100% stock condition survey will be achieved on a rolling 5 year basis
Continue to manage	Ongoing	Within	Well maintained homes and assets	Planned works programmes are

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and maintain the housing stock effectively and efficiently ensuring that properties meet, as a minimum, the decent homes standard		identified resources - approximately £5.3m pa	to minimum decent homes standard	<p>progressing well. The authority is continuing to deliver a significant programme of investment in the stock.</p> <p>A robust monthly budget monitoring process has been implemented to ensure that projects are delivered on budget</p>
<p>Deliver an improved repairs and maintenance service through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enhancement of mobile technology for repairs and voids teams;</li> <li>2. Electronic van stocking of operatives' vehicles</li> <li>3. Online reporting of repairs</li> </ol>	Aug-16	£120k	<p>Homes well maintained</p> <p>Improved tenant satisfaction</p> <p>More efficient and responsive deployment of personnel</p>	<p>Complete. Project plan to deliver IT improvements implemented</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mobile technology has been rolled out to all Surveyors and Operatives who can now raise and receive works orders/job tickets electronically</li> <li>2. Decision made not to implement new electronic stock system following unsuccessful trials</li> <li>3. Schedule Board being used by Repairs Planners to enable on-line scheduling of repairs jobs</li> </ol>
Improve average energy efficiency for council properties	Apr-17	£530k	Reduced fuel costs for residents	<p>Complete. All works identified in Phase I, II and III now complete and included: air source heat pumps/external wall cladding/solar panels</p> <p>Further properties identified for improvement works and budgets being prepared for works to be carried out in</p>

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				2018/19. Potential project identified to install solar panels on all remaining council houses and flats – currently under evaluation
Continue to fund disabled adaptations for tenants and improve the delivery process	Ongoing	£260k pa	Reduction in the time people have to wait for adaptations	Disabled adaptations continue at a high demand – currently able to meet all requests within a reasonable timescale
Undertake fundamental review of policies and procedures to ensure service is 'Fit for Purpose'	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Policies in place that reflect best practice/current legislation	All policies and procedures along with equality impact assessments regularly reviewed. Changes identified are brought to the tenant forum and housing board for approval
<b>3. Help tenants and leaseholders get involved with decisions about their housing</b>				
Continue to develop Housing Regulatory Panel to scrutinise the performance of the Housing Service and to undertake service reviews	Ongoing	5k pa - training for members	A Housing Regulatory Panel that deliver in-depth challenging inspections - achieving improvements that really matter to tenants	The TRP have carried out a review of the sheltered housing service following their successful review of the Void process. Report has been presented to officers and progress with implementing the recommendations will be reported to the TRP and Housing Board
Review the approach to gathering tenant feedback and satisfaction	Mar-17	Within existing resources	Refreshed approach to assessing tenant satisfaction to inform service improvement planning	Complete. Online satisfaction survey has been designed so that tenants can feed back immediately after repair is carried out

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				New STAR tenant satisfaction/feedback survey sent to all tenants in March 2017. Results have been analysed and show an overall improvement in satisfaction with housing services (see below)
Link tenant participation with opportunities for skill development	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Skilled Tenant Forum and Tenant Regulatory Panel members	Training programme in place
Publish annual tenants report	Ongoing	£3k pa	Annual report published	Annual report published in November 2017
Benchmark service with other landlords through HouseMark	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Core benchmarking data uploaded to HouseMark for full organisational review	<p>The Housing Service uses Housemark to benchmark its performance against other landlords</p> <p>Latest core benchmarking data has been submitted – performance data and comparison with other authorities is reviewed by officers at section heads meeting</p> <p>Performance compares well to other councils, with indicators relating to rent collection and repairs sitting within the top quartile. Compared to the previous year, costs have remained roughly the same in all areas except lettings which has marginally increased, whilst</p>

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				<p>performance has improved in repairs and tenancy management</p> <p>Whilst Performance Indicators are instrumental in assessing performance, the opinion and views of tenants adds an extra depth and validity to the council's performance and service improvement works. In 2017 the council carried out its third district wide survey of tenants and residents (STAR) following surveys completed in 2012 and 2008.</p> <p>Using a core questions set compiled by HouseMark comparative data has been obtained on the services offered to tenants. In addition the inclusion of additional questions has provided information regarding the wider determinants of health associated with housing and neighbourhood interaction.</p> <p>Results of STAR 2017 show that levels of satisfaction are mostly positive amongst all service areas within housing services. Performance has remained stable over the 5 year period as have the priorities of the tenants. The survey shows that 83.5% of out tenants are satisfied with the service</p>



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<b>4. Regenerate the stock/estates and build new affordable rented council housing in an efficient and effective manner</b>				
Deliver the new homes programme	Mar-21	£6.898m	New homes to replace those lost through RTB sales - approximately 6-10 per year	<p>Development programme on track:</p> <p>Holloway Crescent Phase I &amp; II - 13 properties  Mead Court Phase I &amp; II – 29 properties  Catons Lane – 6 properties  <b>48 properties completed to date</b></p> <p>Planning permission obtained for development of garage sites in Sheds Lane – 3 properties (due to complete July 2018)  <b>3 properties</b></p> <p>Also investigating possibility of UDC becoming delivery partner on some S106 sites - subject to RTB receipts</p>
Deliver Sheltered scheme re-development programme	Mar-18	£11.5m	Fit for purpose accommodation for the elderly	<p>Development programme on track:</p> <p>Reynolds Court Phase I – 15 properties  <b>15 properties completed to date</b></p> <p>Reynolds Court Phase II – 26 properties (due to complete August 2018)  <b>26 properties</b></p> <p>Hatherley Court – remodelling (<b>26 properties</b>) and new build (<b>1 property</b>) – (due to complete August 2018)</p>

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Review housing asset management strategy	Apr-18	Within existing resources	Established a clear policy on the use of HRA assets, regeneration and development	Strategy is being reviewed and will be presented to the Housing Board for comment at Housing Board meeting in June/July 2018
Develop and implement initiatives for improving estates	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Delivery of new estate improvement/regeneration initiatives as part of the housing asset management strategy. Delivery of resident led improvements	Regular trailer events being held with more agencies offering to attend / estate inspection; projects identified for estate regeneration
Carry out development appraisals of identified sites and review business plan capacity to develop	Mar-21	Revenue cost of £50k pa for surveyor to co-ordinate works	Established housing development programme	<p>Proposals/plans being drawn up for sites at The Moors, Little Dunmow (<b>16 properties</b>); Newton Grove, Great Dunmow (<b>4 properties</b> – planning permission gained September 2017); Frambury Lane, Newport (5 properties)  <b>Total: 25 properties</b></p> <p>A number of garage and infill sites and excess garden land are being assessed for development viability, or for the opportunity to sell in order to cross-subsidise the development programme  <b>Total: 20 properties</b></p>