

COMMUNITY SERVICES – 1 December 2005

ACTION PLAN

1 ACTION PLAN

Corporate Aims

Key to Corporate Aims	
1	To provide quality cost effective services
2	To work towards a safer and more caring community
3	To promote a green and sustainable environment
4	To encourage thriving economy
5	To improve the quality of life for people in the District
6	To maintain and enhance the local heritage and culture

Key to Lead Team Responsibilities	
HHCC	Housing Health and Community Care
RHM	Revenues and Housing Management
PS	Planning Services

Strategic Priority 1 **To ensure provision of sufficient affordable and sustainable housing for local people including those with special needs, which takes account of cost, size and location of requirements**

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	RESOURCES	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Development of affordable rented RSL homes to help maintain/develop sustainable communities.	49 homes between 2004 - 2006	Housing Corporation ADP 2004 - 2006	HHCC	Supply of additional homes towards meeting general housing need. 27 Former Read's Nursery Site. 22 Former Hardwick House site	Homes due for completion by end of 2006. 22 homes completed October 2005 and in the process of being let.
Target Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) in the private sector to those in greatest need	Budget used in full each year	Funding of £152,000 2004/5 for DFGs	HHCC	Limited resources go to those in greatest need. Estimate 30 grants awarded.	£137,000 paid in 2004/05 – 22 grants Estimated spend for 2005/06 - £162,000 – estimated 33 grants..

Strategic Priority 1 **To ensure provision of sufficient affordable and sustainable housing for local people including those with special needs, which takes account of cost, size and location of requirements**

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	RESOURCES	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Installation of aids & adaptations in Council properties	Ongoing	Capital funding of £60,000 2004/5	RHM	Assists elderly/disabled to live independently in own home. Increased facilities to cater for increasingly ageing population.	Budget increased to £92,000 in order to include large extension for one family, without impact on other homes waiting for adaptations. 51 properties were adapted in 2004/5. 41 properties have been adapted in the period 1 April 2005 – 25 October 2005.

Strategic Priority 1 **To ensure provision of sufficient affordable and sustainable housing for local people including those with special needs, which takes account of cost, size and location of requirements**

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	RESOURCES	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Provision of supported housing for a range of special need groups	By 2005 13 homes for special needs groups	ADP financing of £676,000 through Housing Corporation and revenue funding through 'Supporting People' budget	HHCC	<p>Additional homes towards meeting the housing needs of women escaping domestic violence, those with a learning disability, and move on units</p> <p>5 units – Women fleeing domestic violence - Rayleigh</p> <p>6 units – Learning Disabled – Rayleigh</p> <p>2 units – move on – Rochford</p>	<p>Scheme completed and in use.</p> <p>Scheme completed and in use.</p> <p>Both homes now completed and let.</p>

Strategic Priority 1 **To ensure provision of sufficient affordable and sustainable housing for local people including those with special needs, which takes account of cost, size and location of requirements**

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	RESOURCES	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Seek use of Egan methods of construction in refurbishment and new homes	Ongoing project with one RSL partner to engage in this construction method.	Included in approved RSL funding bid submission	HHCC	Better value for money. Faster building process	Swan Housing Group have been the most active housing association in developing new homes in the district in recent years. The Council has encouraged Swan's moves towards implementing the Egan agenda on partnership working in construction. Swan has signed the Construction Clients' Charter.

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TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	RESOURCES	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Deliver affordable housing through use of Section 106 planning agreements	As planning permissions for larger sites are granted	Land identified by developers	PS	More affordable homes in District to meet local need.	Former Reads Nursery site, Rayleigh – 27 flats due for completion October 2007. Park School, Wimpey site – 43 one and two-bed flats for key workers – start on site due Spring 2006. McCarthy & Stone development, Rochford – committed sum of £180,000 provided by the applicant for use towards affordable housing elsewhere in the district. Updated policy on affordable housing included in the Replacement Local Plan. Work has commenced on the preparation of the LDF Core Strategy and Allocations DPDs.

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TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	RESOURCES	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Identify Council owned sites for affordable housing sites	Three sites by 2007	Land in Council ownership	HHCC & RHM	Additional affordable housing in District.	2 sites at Tylney Avenue, Rochford and Twyford /Mercer Avenue, Great Wakering identified so far. Funding bids being made.
Promote financial schemes to deliver more homes for rent	3 cash incentive moves completed each year	£75,000 for cash incentive scheme to deliver 3 homes for rent in 2004 – 2005.	HHCC	Release of three homes for reletting in 2004/5 and two each year in 2005/6 and 2006/7	2 Cash Incentive Scheme moves 2004/05. Revised budget for 2005/06 = £100,000. One purchase completed so far this year and one further purchase is under negotiation.

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TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	RESOURCES	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Promote financial schemes to deliver more homes for rent	Four Homebuy purchases completed by 2006	Deliver four homes through Homebuy scheme £204,000 funding approved.	HHCC	Encourage owner occupation and release 4 homes for rent.	Scheme managed across 9 LA areas by Estuary Housing Association. No purchases were completed in 2004/05. One is due to complete soon. One further application being pursued. House prices in the district have made the scheme more difficult to operate.
Promote financial schemes to deliver more homes for rent.	Operate Transfer Incentive Scheme in 2004/05, releasing six multi-bedroom properties per year	£20,000 in budget for 2004/05	RHM	Multi bedroom vacancies for re-letting to housing register and transfer list applicants	At 1 st August, two properties released.

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TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	RESOURCES	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Develop a strategy to bring long-term empty homes in the District back into use	Strategy drafted for consideration by Council by April 2005.	£5,000 for consultancy fees	HHCC	Strategy and implications for consideration by the Council.	Not completed. The strategy is being drafted as part of a wider review of private sector renewal.
	To achieve at least 3 rd Quartile BVPI performance in the number of empty homes brought back into use or demolished, by 2007	Will depend on strategy adopted	HHCC	More empty homes brought back into use or demolished	One unfit empty property demolished. Major refurbishment of one property where the owner has failed to act in progress – anticipated completion December 2005.

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TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	RESOURCES	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Work with neighbouring Authorities including those in Thames Gateway South Essex sub region to deliver cross-boundary schemes following completion of sub-regional housing needs and market assessment.	Housing Needs Study/Market Analysis completed by December 2004	£35,000 for Housing Needs Study for Rochford plus financial contribution from 4 other Local Authorities in region.	HHCC	Robust information for use in planning housing market interventions	Joint Housing Needs Study and sub-regional housing market assessment completed.

Strategic Priority 2 To ensure all homes in the District are of a suitable standard for modern housing and for the promotion of safety and good health

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	RESOURCES	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
All Council properties to meet as a minimum the Decent Homes Standard	All Council homes compliant by 2010	Capital Programme	RHM	Decent Homes Standard achieved by 2010.	To be achieved by Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of housing stock (by 2007).
Identify and inspect HMOs	By end of 2006	£10,000 to employ staff/consultants in budget	HHCC	All multiple occupied properties identified and risk rated. Inspection programme in place. Enforcement where needed to ensure satisfactory standards.	Start of project delayed because of staff shortages and pending the implementation of new legislation and new statutory definitions. Guidance expected soon.
Promote high standards with private landlords	Two Private sector landlord forum meetings held each year	From own resources	HHCC	Higher standards in private sector including energy efficiency and gas safety.	Landlord Forum set up and meetings being held twice a year.
Promote financial incentives for owner-occupiers to repair their homes	Award grants to owner-occupiers 25 Grants awarded	Funding of £120,000 for 2004/5 for Home Maintenance and Adaptation Grants	HHCC	Elderly/disabled and low income households assisted to live independently in own home of a decent standard.	Total grants paid 2004/05 = £134,000 (47 grants) Estimated spend 2005/06 = £104,000 = 51 grants.

Strategic Priority 2 To ensure all homes in the District are of a suitable standard for modern housing and for the promotion of safety and good health

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	RESOURCES	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Reduce the number of unfit homes	To achieve at least 3 rd Quartile BVPI performance in the number of unfit homes made fit or demolished by 2007	Home Maintenance and adaptation grant budget	HHCC	Reduce numbers of residents living in unfit properties	No longer a BVPI. New target to be considered when Housing Health & Safety Rating System is implemented and bedded down – estimated end of 2006/early 2007..
Promote energy efficiency by					
(i) Continuity surveys to determine changes in home energy efficiency.	Annually by July. 2000 surveys distributed. Target 400 responses as minimum	Within existing resources	HHCC	Will highlight need and evaluate targets to be more efficient.	Survey completed . 842 responses received.

Strategic Priority 2 To ensure all homes in the District are of a suitable standard for modern housing and for the promotion of safety and good health

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	RESOURCES	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
(ii) Improve energy efficiency in Council homes by providing better loft insulation and by providing more efficient gas central heating boilers.	158 homes identified to be improved in 2004-2006	Capital Programme provision of £200,000 each year	RHM	All properties will meet DHS by 2006 in relation to thermal comfort.	In 2004/05 128 Council homes were provided with energy saving measures. Between April – October 2005, works were completed to a further 498 properties.
(iii) Work with energy supply companies and Essex Energy Advice Centre to develop Projects.	Minimum of one 'Affordable Energy Scheme' with Essex Energy Advice Centre implemented by end of 2005	Resources provided by EEAC	HHCC	More homes with energy efficiency measures installed.	Affordable Energy Scheme in place. Works completed for 82 homes in 2004/05..

Strategic Priority 3 To improve our performance in dealing with homelessness

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	FUNDING	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
To produce proposals for housing advice services for consideration by the Council.	September 2005.	Options to be developed alongside proposals	HHCC	Decision made on most appropriate way for the provision of advice services for inclusion in 2006/7 estimates.	Options for the delivery of housing advice (and other statutory housing functions) are being evaluated as part of the implementation plan for stock transfer. Initial proposals – January 2006, subject to further consideration once a partner RSL is selected.
Faster homelessness application decision making.	85% of applications decided in 33 working days by April 2005.	ODPM funding £19,000 for 2004/5 and 2005/6. Two year funding for additional caseworker agreed	HHCC	Reduced time in making decisions and improved service to applicants.	Target achieved. Currently delivering 100% of decisions in target time.

Strategic Priority 3 To improve our performance in dealing with homelessness

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	FUNDING	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Develop suitable alternatives to hostel and bed/breakfast accommodation	<p>Comply with statutory requirements.</p> <p>Five private tenancies secured p.a.</p>	<p>Revenue budget for accommodation £200,000 2004/5</p> <p>£5,000 for rent/deposit scheme 2004/5</p> <p>ODPM funding £19,000 for 2004/5 and 2005/6</p> <p>New Service Improvement Office post agreed</p>	HHCC	Reduced use of bed & breakfast/hostel.	<p>9 private tenancies secured 2004/05.</p> <p>3 to date for 2005/06.</p> <p>Compliance with statutory requirements re use of B&B for families.</p> <p>Service Improvement Officer in post..</p>
Reduce use of temporary accommodation in Council stock	Three additional properties for nominations from the Council by April 2006	Capital funding £150,000 identified to assist RSLs purchase/develop properties	HHCC/RHM	Provision of permanent homes through RSLs.	Negotiations being undertaken with RSLs.

Strategic Priority 3 To improve our performance in dealing with homelessness

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	FUNDING	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Reconsider the process used to deal with homelessness reviews to try and reduce the time taken	100% of reviews completed with statutory limits by April 2006	Within existing reserves	HHCC	Better service to homeless applicants undergoing review process.	To be considered as part of Member training on homelessness reviews which has been arranged for November 2005.

Strategic Priority 3 To improve our performance in dealing with homelessness

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	FUNDING	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Continue to use floating support to help prevent people from becoming homeless	100 hours per week support provided	Contractual agreement with partner RSL funded through Supporting People.	HHCC/RHM	Homelessness, especially repeat homelessness, prevented.	<p>Appropriate cases being referred to Support Agency as they occur.</p> <p>Floating Support scheme continuing (90 hours per week – error in original action plan). Value Improvement Project review of all floating support schemes being carried out by Essex County Council Supporting People team with a view to rationalising contract arrangements across the County and investing in the highest priority support needs.</p>

Strategic Priority 4 To ensure that older persons housing care and support needs within the District are effectively addressed

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	FUNDING	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
To work with a partner RSL to develop a frail elderly scheme in Rayleigh	March 2006 30 new homes available, with support services	Capital funding of £1.9M secured through ADP and £70,000 revenue funding through 'Supporting People' programme.	HHCC	Will fill gap in supported housing for this 'Special Need' group.	New frail elderly scheme being built with anticipated completion February 2006.
Work with health and social care partners to provide intermediate care facilities in Council sheltered schemes	One scheme in use during 2004/5. Agreement reached with PCT/Social Care on need for further schemes by March 2005	£10,000 from Capital Programme	RHM	Promotes diverse use of accommodation, helps prevent delayed discharge of care and promotes independence.	All-agency agreement to halt this project as PCT unable to identify suitable clients.

Strategic Priority 4 To ensure that older persons housing care and support needs within the District are effectively addressed

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	FUNDING	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
To provide a garden maintenance scheme for vulnerable older people in conjunction with partner organisations.	Average of 8 gardens tidied per week	£10,000 from revenue funding 2004/05; £7,500 from Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership; £3,000 from Social Services	HHCC	Improved services for the elderly to help promote independent living opportunistic crime opportunities reduced	2004/05 – 269 gardens dealt with. Target for 2005/06 = 376 (based on 47 working weeks per year). April – October 2005, 156 jobs completed.
To provide adaptations in Council properties	Budget used in full each year.	£60,000 in 2004 – 2005 programme	RHM	Improved services for those tenants who require adaptations to remain in their own home.	Budget increased to £92,000 in order to include large extension for one family, without impact on other homes waiting for adaptations. 51 properties were adapted in 2004/05. 41 properties have been adapted in the period 1 April 2005 – 25 October 2005.

Strategic Priority 4 To ensure that older persons housing care and support needs within the District are effectively addressed

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	FUNDING	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
To provide Disabled Facilities Grants	Budget used in full 18 grants awarded each year	Budget £152,000 for 2004/5	HHCC	People who are vulnerable able to live independently.	£137,000 paid in 2004/05 = 22 grants. Estimated spend for 2005/06 = £162,000 – estimated 33 grants.
To provide Home Maintenance and Adaptation Grants	Budget used in full each year	Budget £120,000 for 2004/5	HHCC	People who are vulnerable able to live independently.	Total grants paid 2004/05 = £134,000 (47 grants). Estimated spend for 2005/06 = £104,000 – 51 grants.
To provide Handy Persons service in conjunction with partner organisations	Annually	£10,000 revenue funding per annum £6,000 from Social Services £4,000 from PCT	HHCC	People who are vulnerable able to live independently.	Ongoing. 319 jobs completed in 2004/05. 143 enquiries April – September 2005. 125 jobs completed.

Strategic Priority 5 To ensure that the Option Appraisal in relation to the Council's housing stock is completed to timetable

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	FUNDING	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
Carry out a robust housing stock options appraisal in line with ODPM guidance as per key target timetable.	February 2005	HRA Budget provision of £300,000 for overall process	RHM	Deliver options for Council Housing stock.	Completed
(i) Planning project and setup period.	March 2004			Set up achieved to timetable.	Completed
(ii) Set up Options Appraisal Board.	April 2004			Rochford Options Appraisal Board formed to timetable.	Completed
(iii) Develop strategy for addressing local aspirations (Decent Homes Plus)	September 2004			On target.	Completed
(iv) Appoint Independent Tenants Advisor (ITA)	June 2004			ITA appointed to timetable.	Completed

Strategic Priority 5 To ensure that the Option Appraisal in relation to the Council's housing stock is completed to timetable

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	FUNDING	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
(v) Appoint Financial Consultant	September 2004		RHM	Financial Consultant appointed ahead of schedule.	Completed
(vi) Produce Tenant empowerment/ involvement strategy.	July 2004			Produced by August 2004.	Completed
(vii) Develop communications strategy.	July 2004			Produced by August 2004.	Completed
(viii) Carry out Housing Needs Study on sub-regional basis	Draft report by November 2004			On target.	Completed
(ix) Carry out stock condition survey	October 2004			On target.	Completed
(x) Technical and financial options detailed appraisal process.	February 2005			On target.	Completed

Strategic Priority 5 **To ensure that the Option Appraisal in relation to the Council's housing stock is completed to timetable**

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	FUNDING	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
(xi) Submit report to GO-EAST for sign off.	May 2005		RHM	On target.	Completed

Progress Monitoring, Development & Updating of Strategy

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	FUNDING	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
To regularly review the implications of new legislation, changing national, sub regional and local priorities	Ongoing	Within existing resources	HHCC	Updated information in Housing Strategy	<p>The Council has participated in the development of the regional and sub-regional housing strategies and in the Supply Chain Management process for funding through the Housing Corporation National Affordable Housing Programme.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the district Housing Strategy will need updating in 2006 to take account of developing priorities, including the outcomes from the housing needs study and sub-regional housing market assessment.</p>

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	FUNDING	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
To review progress in delivering the Action Plan contained within the Strategy Statement	6 monthly reports to Committee	H	HHCC	Measurement of Performance	This is the first progress report. Next one will be February 2006.
To incorporate the results of surveys and consultation into the Housing Strategy	Ongoing	H	HHCC	Updated information in Housing Strategy	The Thames Gateway South Essex sub-regional housing strategy is being updated to include the joint housing market analysis – target November 2005. The Rochford housing strategy will need to be updated thereafter – target March 2006.

TASK	TARGET/BY WHEN	FUNDING	LEAD TEAM	EXPECTED OUTCOME	PROGRESS
To incorporate the targets contained within the Action Plan into the Council's performance management framework	6 monthly	H	HHCC	Regular progress monitoring	See above re updated strategy. Service Action Plans are being used to manage delivery of new affordable homes, continuous improvement in homelessness services, and reducing vulnerable households in temporary accommodation.