

**GOVERNMENT OFFICE FOR THE EAST OF ENGLAND**

**HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 1999**

**ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Overall summary:**

Lowest percentage of social housing in England. Willing to use special initiatives and pro-active approach to conversion of difficult-to-let sheltered accommodation. Otherwise, weak performers, particularly on establishing priorities, but determined to improve. Housing Needs survey completed recently. Enabling performance has improved. Trying to further develop tenant participation.

**Recent HIP assessments:**

1999 - Below average

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**Strengths and weaknesses:**

**Housing strategy**

Separate strategic housing and housing management roles. LA recognise that they need to improve their information database - first Housing Needs survey recently completed - are collating and looking at robustness of existing information to produce effective investment programmes. New survey on private sector condition needed. Beginning to improve partnerships and enabling role e.g. Enabling Strategy Forum set up and consultation with RSLs. No registration scheme for HMOs but programme of risk assessment inspections planned. Now have an Empty Homes officer. Have received funding for Home Improvement Agency. Scope for improvement on energy efficiency. No options appraisal undertaken.

**Programme delivery**

Little strategic direction to investment. Slight underspend on 1998/99 programme, which was mostly aimed at window replacement and heating improvements. Specific working party to monitor programmes and satisfaction surveys undertaken. Alternative priorities identified. New member budget monitoring group should result in more effective programme monitoring.

**Housing Management**

Services centrally-based - also responsive visits. Service standard standards set annually by Community Services Committee. Housing Services to be reviewed in next 3 years. Low level of under-occupation but LA have effective measures to alleviate it, 100% targets for rent collection and rent rebate and rent allowance claims - not met but high level of achievement, as with all types of repair. Performance reviewed at regular senior officer meetings and reported to members and tenants - LA plan to strengthen monitoring and reporting as part of Best Value regime.

**Tenant involvement**

Recently reviewed TP policy now published. New policy will form framework for Tenant Compact. Approximately 0.25 full-time equivalent staff - this is expected to grow and additional resources have been allocated. Past efforts to increase active membership of 2 Tenants' Associations have not succeeded but LA are trying. Tenants regularly informed about opportunities for TP. Reasonable level of funding, and both training and facilities are provided. No tenant satisfaction survey undertaken within last year.