

5. Housing Strategy Action Plan

PRIORITY 1 – MAKING BEST USE OF EXISTING STOCK IN ALL TENURES, INCLUDING IMPROVING ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN HOMES AND REDUCING FUEL POVERTY

Aim	How	Outcome	Resources	Lead Officer	2017 Update	RAG Rating
To make best use of affordable housing	Work with other registered providers to adopt an active approach to mutual exchanges	Increase in the number of mutual exchanges	Staff time Promotional budget (HRA)	Housing Options Coordinator (Special Projects)	Home Swapper event held in partnership with Hightown Housing Association. Increased number of mutual exchanges: 2014/15-28 2015/16-45 2016/17-63	GREEN
To make best use of Council stock through downsizing	Explore options to offer a complete 'Home Mover package'	Increase in the number of family houses available	Staff time HRA budget	Housing Options Coordinator (Special Projects)	Introduced new Tenant's Incentive Scheme to facilitate the number of 'down sizers'.	GREEN

					(12 moves facilitated from April-December 2017 compared to 9 in 2016/2017.)	
Maximising availability of housing stock across all tenures	Explore the scope for developing a private rented sector letting scheme	Discharge homelessness duty and improve housing options	Staff time General Fund	Private Sector Housing Officer	Currently developing proposals for private rented sector access scheme to prepare for Homelessness Reduction Act.	AMBER
Bring empty homes back into use	Investigate a loan scheme to enable owners of empty homes to bring them back into use	Decrease in number of empty homes	General Fund New Homes Bonus	Empty Homes Officer	Loan scheme not considered as best use of funds to bring empty homes back into use. Council taking other enforcement action, including a Compulsory Purchase Order on 3 long term	GREEN

						empty properties.	
Ensure affordable housing in the social and private sector achieve maximum energy efficiency and implement energy efficiency measures (linked to the Corporate Home Energy Conservation Act)	In Council stock maintain Decent Homes Standard - Council Housing Stock Condition Survey to be undertaken January –April 2014 - results to be used to target energy inefficient homes In the private rented sector, work with partner agencies, landlords and tenants to advise and enforce, where necessary, to improve energy efficiency	Reduction in fuel poverty Reduction in district wide carbon dioxide emissions and domestic energy emissions Reduction in need to move from properties that are cold and damp Resource savings as a result of more energy efficient properties - less repairs, less need to	Staff time Housing Investment programme	Asset Management Team Leader Principal Policy and Development Officer	SADC have carried out a number of projects relating to sustainability. These include installing A+ rated condensing boilers, solar panels and cavity/loft insulation. There are no non-decent Council homes in the district. Difficulty engaging with landlords in the private rented sector. No established links between Housing department and		AMBER

		visit tenants - and reduced energy bills			Sustainability Officer regarding ongoing programmes and sources of funding-links to be established.	
Remodel existing stock to make best use according to housing needs of the district	Identify opportunities included in updated Asset Management Strategy to remodel existing stock based on the current condition and resources available	Develop profile of existing stock to best suit the needs of the district	Staff time Housing Investment Programme	Asset Management Team Leader Principal Policy and Development Officer	Programme of disposal of 'one-off' high value properties that are not typical of existing stock. Identifying properties that are suitable for use as temporary accommodation or for disabled adaptations.	GREEN
To continue to improve the condition of Council	To identify properties included in the stock condition survey that require works	A high standard of Council housing stock	Staff time Housing Investment Programme	Asset Management Team Leader	Ongoing investment in stock through the Housing	GREEN

housing stock (linked to the Corporate Home Energy Conservation Act)	to continue to maintain and exceed the decent homes standard			Investment Programme. There are no non-decent Council homes in the district.	
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PRIORITY 2 - INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOMES

Aim	How	Outcome	Resources	Lead Officer	2017 Update	RAG Rating
Make best use of housing land and assets to deliver new housing	Continue with the redevelopment of garage sites and sheltered housing Sopwell regeneration project	Increased housing supply	Staff time Right to Buy (RTB) receipts Registered Provider funding	Principal Policy and Development Officer	147 affordable housing units delivered on former garage and sheltered housing sites during lifetime of this Strategy. A further 162 units on former garage and sheltered housing sites are in the pipeline.	GREEN

Improve partnership working with registered providers	Consider introducing a preferred partnership arrangement	Increase provision of affordable housing	Staff time Registered Providers	Principal Policy and Development Officer	Preferred partnership panel of Registered Providers not considered appropriate due to procurement issues. Need to consider achieving best value when disposing of Council assets.	There are a number of projects that have commenced or are at the early feasibility stage being delivered as part of the Sopwell regeneration project.	
							RED

Plan for an appropriate mix of houses to meet future housing needs	Local Plan Core Strategy Local Plan Sites and Boundaries	Appropriate mix of properties developed to meet community needs	General fund Staff time	Spatial Planning Manager	The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2013, and subsequent updates, sets out the projected need for different tenures. This will need a complete review which will be carried out as part of the development of the new Local Plan. This will be influenced by the proposed methodology contained within the 'Planning for the right	RED
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					homes in the right Places' 2017 DCLG consultation which proposes a needs figure for the District of 913 dwellings per annum.	
Work with Planning to ensure the delivery of affordable housing through Section 106 agreements where viable	Local Plan Policy on minimum levels of Affordable Housing on sites across the district introduced Viability assessments of applications for housing sites across district carried out Affordable and intermediate housing delivered	Increased access to affordable and intermediate housing to meet community needs	General Fund Developers Registered Providers	Principal Policy and Development Officer Spatial Planning Officer	The affordable housing requirement (2004 Supplementary Planning Guidance is, currently of 35% on schemes of 15 or more dwellings), is continually being challenged with the submission of financial	AMBER

					viability assessments. 97 affordable houses were completed in 2015-2016. This was 24% of the total completions. The now abandoned draft Strategic Local Plan (SLP) set a target of 40% affordable dwellings from schemes of 1(gross) or more dwellings. A similar target will likely be proposed in the new Local Plan.
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PRIORITY 3 - MEETING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WHO REQUIRE SUPPORT

Aim	How	Outcome	Resources	Lead Officer	2017 Update	RAG Rating
Ensure the needs of vulnerable groups are considered in development of new build	Ensure planning policy reflects needs of vulnerable groups	Improved accessibility and adaptability of new homes developed	Staff time General Fund	Principal Policy and Development Officer Spatial Planning Officer	Former draft SLP Policy 10 and Detailed Local Plan (DLP) Policy 7 generally supports the provision of specialist accommodation including care homes. Former draft SLP Policy 5 sought to promote mixed and sustainable communities which respect the special needs of particular sectors of the community, and to support proposals that improved equality of	AMBER

					opportunity and equality of access to homes, jobs, key services and community facilities. It Is intended that these elements of the draft policies will be carried forward to the new Local Plan.	
To make best use of existing stock ensuring the needs of vulnerable groups are met	Work with Hertfordshire County Council and Asset Management to identify opportunities to remodel existing stock to provide a range of housing to meet the needs of residents. These include	Develop profile of existing stock to best suit the needs of the district	Staff time Housing Investment Programme	Asset Management Team Leader Principal Policy and Development Officer	Redevelopment of sheltered housing programme considers housing need in redevelopment proposals. For example one scheme for elderly persons will have ground floor flats suitable for adaptations,	GREEN

	bungalows, flexi care (by specialist registered providers) and other supported housing schemes				including purpose built wet rooms. One scheme is being developed by a Housing Association as a mixed age, mixed tenure, extra care scheme following consultation with Hertfordshire County Council. Identify properties when they become void as to their suitability for disabled adaptations, extensions or use as temporary accommodation.	
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Coordinate and steer the delivery of appropriate advice and support to households impacted by the welfare reform agenda	Work with partners to develop services to help those affected by welfare reform	Local Support Framework developed	Staff time Partners' input General Fund Housing Revenue Account	Strategy and Enabling Manager	Appointment of Welfare Reform Project Officer to prepare for roll out of universal Credit in the district. 'Offer' in place to meet the needs of vulnerable customers. Relationships developed with key partners to deliver customer services.	GREEN
Assess housing needs of Gypsy and Travellers	Undertake specialist survey	Housing need identified and used to inform local plan policies	Staff time General fund	Spatial Planning Officer Principal Policy and Development Officer	A Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show people Accommodation Needs Assessment was completed in September 2015.	GREEN

					DCLG published an updated Planning Policy for Traveller Sites paper (PPTS) in August 2015.	The key change is the new definition for a Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showperson, which now does not include persons who have ceased to travel permanently.	The new definition could affect the assessment of need significantly.	An updated study is being commissioned.
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Provision of advice and support for vulnerable groups	Work with partners including CAB, Hertfordshire County Council and Registered Providers	Vulnerable groups have access to appropriate advice and support	Staff time Partners' input General Fund	Strategy and Enabling Manager Tenancy Services and Performance Manager	Have developed an 'offer' to meet the needs of vulnerable customers to prepare for the roll out of Universal Credit in November 2017. This includes Citizens Advice providing budgeting support and the Credit Union providing 'jamjar' accounts. Anyone at risk of homelessness is able to access the budgeting advice service provided by Citizens Advice which is funded by the Council.	GREEN
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					Established links with other voluntary organisations which may provide assistance to our tenants. These included 'Green Aiders' (for assistance with gardening) and 'Care For Freedom' who support and assist people with hoarding issues.	
					Signpost tenants and leaseholders to the Older Peoples Trust if they have one off expenses or financial issues.	

