



## **Service Planning 2012/15**

### **Housing Service**

**April 2012 – March 2013**

**Head of Service: John Golding**

**Portfolio holders: Cllr Jill Elson & Cllr Stephanie Jones**

**Housing Review Board Chair: Cllr Pauline Stott**

<b>Section 1 – Brief description of service and purpose(s)</b>	
<b>What we do and who we deliver to</b>	In Housing we aim to secure - <b>A decent home for all.</b> We have also adopted the following purposes where we have undertaken Systems Thinking reviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To match the right people with the right home (voids &amp; allocations).</li> <li>➤ Do the right repair at the right time, get it right first time, and stay fixed (responsive repairs).</li> <li>➤ Do the right service/repair at the right time, and leave safe (gas servicing).</li> <li>➤ To collect the right amount of rent at the right time (rent management).</li> <li>➤ Deal with customer emergencies promptly (Home safeguard).</li> <li>➤ Better housing, better health (private sector housing).</li> </ul>
<b>How we deliver and ensure equal access</b>	Service delivery is through a variety of direct or in-house provision and a number of contracts/partnerships with partners. In Landlord Services we work to an adopted specific housing diversity commitments and Housing Customer Charter. We set service standards with customers.
<b>How we compare</b>	We use HouseMark for periodic benchmarking exercises of Landlord Services and report the results to the Housing Review Board. The Devon Housing Options Partnership uses the Quality Standards Framework which we have reported to Cabinet.
<b>Statutory elements of the service</b>	Landlord services Homelessness/Housing Advice Housing Register and Allocations Tenancy Strategy Private sector housing enforcement, Private Water Supply assessment and enforcement, Caravan Site Licensing, Provision of Disabled Facilities Grants, Environmental Pollution associated with Rural Drainage.
<b>Current net budget (excludes Internal support charges and capital budget)</b>	Housing Revenue Account has an annual turnover of £16 million. General Fund budgets are annually circa. £280k for private sector housing; £470k for homelessness; and a net breakeven budget for Home Safeguard.

<b>Section 2 – Key achievements in 2011/12</b>		
	<i>Briefly describe key achievements and what outcomes were created. This will inform Corporate Plan summary at year end.</i>	<i>Strategic link to Corporate Plan priorities</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>Housing Needs and Strategy</b> Built 17 new council homes in Exmouth;	

	<p>Axminster; Lypstone and Waggs Plot.</p> <p>Secured £4.5 million Homes and Communities Agency grant funding towards the development partnership for Stowford Rise, Sidmouth and achieved a start on site. Also secured £13 million for Cranbrook.</p> <p>Target of 100+ new affordable homes exceeded with 108 new affordable homes provided.</p> <p>Further reduction in homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Introduced Devon Home Choice and online housing applications.</p> <p>Improved the tenancy 'sign up' process.</p> <p>Introductory tenancies issued for all new tenants of Council housing.</p> <p>Produced 'Our Commitments to You' setting out our 'local offers' and an Annual Report for Tenants.</p>	<p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Excellent service for our customers</i></p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Landlord Services</b></p> <p>Rent collection performance improved.</p> <p>Maintained a programme of Estate Walkabouts and Blitz Days.</p> <p>Used a Dispersal Order to deal with an Anti-Social Behaviour issue.</p> <p>A range of community development activities undertaken for young people on estates.</p> <p>Activities run for young people such as the homework club at St.Pauls, Honiton.</p> <p>Launched the SWITCH Project for young people in Exmouth.</p> <p>Established a Tenant Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>Introduced Cluster Offices for Mobile Support Officers.</p> <p>Improved support planning and risk assessments for sheltered housing residents.</p> <p>Home Safeguard software upgrade; TSA accreditation; achieved performance indicators; free to chargeable project to increase income.</p> <p>Get Digital project implemented.</p>	<p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Excellent service for our customers</i></p> <p><i>Excellent service for our customers</i></p> <p><i>Excellent service for our customers</i></p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Property and Asset Services</b></p> <p>Re-tendering the responsive repairs and works to void property contract.</p>	<p><i>Excellent service for our</i></p>

	<p>Managed the collapse of one of our contractors and minimised disruption to services.</p> <p>Adopted and implemented new policies on asbestos, disabled adaptations, condensation, downsizing, and tenant repair obligations.</p> <p>Expanded tenant choice on void properties.</p> <p>Used Advantage S.W. procurement club to generate cashable savings.</p> <p>Stock condition survey completed.</p>	<p><i>customers</i></p> <p><i>Excellent service for our customers</i></p> <p><i>Excellent service for our customers</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Private Sector Housing</b></p> <p>Empty homes initiatives progressed and enforcement action taken.</p> <p>Home improvement loan scheme implemented.</p> <p>Private Sector House Condition Survey completed.</p> <p>Improvements made to CosyDevon scheme.</p> <p>Relicensing Houses in Multiple Occupation.</p> <p>Undertaken risk assessments on private water supplies and caravan sites.</p>	<p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p> <p><i>Thriving communities</i></p>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>General</b></p> <p>Systems Thinking review completed resulting in a more customer focused system for 'moving out' and 'moving in' to council homes. Reviews started on rent collection, repairs and private sector housing activities.</p> <p>New community centre in Sidmouth completed.</p> <p>High levels of tenant satisfaction reported.</p> <p>Tenant Conference held.</p> <p>Refreshed and updated the Risk Register.</p> <p>Reviewed the housing formal and informal complaints.</p> <p>Restructured the Service reducing management posts and protecting frontline services.</p>	<p><i>Excellent service for our customers</i></p> <p><i>Excellent service for our customers</i></p> <p><i>Excellent service for our customers</i></p> <p><i>Excellent service for our customers</i></p> <p><i>Excellent service for our customers</i></p> <p><i>Excellent service for our customers</i></p> <p><i>Excellent service for our customers</i></p>

<b>Section 3 – Looking forward : what we will do in 2012/13</b>				
<b>Key Service Objectives (please include consultation or procurement activity required)</b>	<b>Financial/corporate resource</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Start date</b>	<b>End date</b>
<b>a) Living in an outstanding place</b>				
Our Homes & Communities Strategy aims are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide a range of affordable housing to meet housing needs.</li> <li>2. Prevent homelessness wherever possible, and otherwise ensure that accommodation is provided for those who do become homeless.</li> <li>3. Maintain and manage the council owned housing stock to a high standard, actively involving tenants in all aspects of the service.</li> <li>4. Bring sub-standard housing (of all tenures) up to current standards.</li> <li>5. Improve the use and safety of housing.</li> <li>6. Enable elderly persons, disabled people, and people with special needs to live as Independently as possible and remain in their own homes if they so wish.</li> <li>7. Improve the sustainability and energy efficiency of housing and eliminate fuel poverty.</li> <li>8. Widen the choice of housing, especially for those in priority need.</li> <li>9. Support the improvement and regeneration of local communities by encouraging social inclusion, involving children and young people in housing issues, and enabling residents to actively participate in their communities.</li> <li>10. Have consistently satisfied customers.</li> </ol>		DB  DB  SB  MS MS MS/SB  DB  DB SB  All	Ongoing  Ongoing  Ongoing  Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing  Ongoing  Ongoing Ongoing  Ongoing	
<b>Specific Service Actions</b>				
Produce at least 100 new affordable homes per annum.	Capital Plan	DB	April 2012	March 2013
Produce at least one rural affordable scheme per annum.	Capital Plan	DB	April 2012	March 2013
Maintain a healthy Housing Revenue Account, manage debt/loan portfolio, and programmes of maintenance, improvement and adaptations to tenant's homes.	HRA	JG	April 2012	Ongoing
Manage and utilise all housing assets to best effect and consider disposal where assets	HRA	JG	April 2012	Ongoing

are not meeting their purpose.				
Maintain high levels of rental and other income whilst achieving affordable homes and affordable warmth for tenants.	HRA	SB	April 2012	Ongoing
Procure services and programmes efficiently achieving value for money for service users.	HRA	JG	April 2012	Ongoing
Explore opportunities for introducing fair and proportionate service charges.	HRA	SB	April 2012	Sept. 2012
Produce a Tenancy Strategy and use Introductory Tenancies and take faster action on non-secure tenants who breach the terms of their agreement.	HRA	DB	April 2012	Sept. 2012
Re-tender the Partnering Agreement for responsive repairs to tenant's homes and works to void properties.	HRA	JG	Started	April 2012
Comply with the regulatory framework produced by the Tenant Services Authority and evidence achievement of the standards.	HRA	JG	Ongoing	
Support the Tenant Scrutiny process, Tenant Representative Group and Service Review Groups.	HRA	SB	Ongoing	
Undertake quality control/spot checks on client Support Plans and Risk Assessments.	HRA	SB	April 2012	March 2013
Deliver service efficiencies and improvements through the application of Systems Thinking techniques and ensure that we do 'what matters' for customers.	HRA/GF	All	Ongoing	
Upgrade Play Areas where equipment is worn and outdated.	HRA HRA	DB	April 2012	March 2013
Improve the environment on selected estates.	HRA	SB	Ongoing	
Continue the programme of estate walkabouts and BlitzDays.	HRA	SB	Ongoing	
Deliver continuing improvements in communal cleaning.	HRA	SB	Ongoing	
Undertake Fire Risk Assessments in flats and implement any improvements required to comply with good practice advice.	HRA	DB	April 2012	March 2013
Implement the loan scheme to provide alternative assistance through partners for	GF	MS	Ongoing	

elderly and vulnerable home owners to carry out repairs to their properties and to remain in their own homes.				
Set up a Landlords' accreditation scheme.	GF	MS	April 2012	Oct. 2012
Review in the light of future provision, the home improvement agency contract to ensure that we maintain a service for eligible residents.	GF	MS	April 2012	Sept. 2012
Operate the CosyDevon scheme to improve the thermal efficiency of homes in the district.	Capital Plan/GF	MS	Ongoing	
Implement the Empty Homes Strategy and revise the action plan.	GF	MS	April 2012	Oct. 2012
Increase the involvement of young people in the Housing Service.	HRA	SB	Ongoing	
Develop the Switch project for training and employment opportunities for younger people.	HRA	SB	Ongoing	
Develop targeted community projects and facilities for young people to develop their skills.	HRA	SB	Ongoing	
Develop the Devon Home Choice regional Choice Based Lettings scheme and ensure that we match the right people with the right home.	HRA/GF	DB	Ongoing	
Move to a fully mobile housing related support service.	HRA	SB	April 2012	March 2012
Through decommissioning have less sheltered housing.	HRA	SB	April 2012	March 2013
Increase Home Safeguard income and maintain Supporting People income.	GF	SB	April 2012	March 2013
Expand the use of Home Safeguard including lone working and telecare services.	GF	SB	Ongoing	
Support tenants in holding an annual tenant conference.	HRA	SB	April 2012	June 2012
Expand homeless prevention work and have less than 40 units of temporary accommodation in use.	GF	DB	April 2012	March 2013

Continue to reduce the average void times and End to End times.	HRA	DB	April 2012	March 2013
Achieve all responsive repairs within target timescales and at tenant's convenience.	HRA	DB	Ongoing	
Undertake a STAR and maintain high levels of customer satisfaction.	HRA	DB	April 2012	Sept. 2012
Meet the local offers/standards commitments to tenants contained in Our Commitments to You.	HRA	JG	Ongoing	

**Section 3 a – Looking forward: any Service challenges or pressures for the next three years? (Revenue/Capital)**

1. Operating the Housing Revenue Account under the self-financing regime and managing high levels of debt whilst continuously improving services for customers.
2. Managing the transition to Welfare Reform which may lead to the loss of income if tenants struggle to pay their rent and service charges.
3. Improving standards in the private sector.
4. Preventing homelessness and increasing housing options.
5. Loss of Supporting People income.
6. Housing demand increasing faster than our ability to supply housing options.
7. Insufficient subsidy/grant/opportunities to provide new affordable homes.
8. Insufficient resources to achieve our private sector ambitions.
9. Implementing the National Housing Strategy Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England.
10. Assisting the development of a sense of community in Cranbrook.

**Section 3 b– Looking forward: options for doing things differently**

1. Creating East Devon Homes as a standalone business unit of the Council
2. Self-financing of Council housing with the freedoms from government control.
3. Purchasing a new software package for housing, implementation and the introduction of mobile working.
4. Providing a mobile support service in the private sector.
5. Attracting more Home Safeguard business, including Telecare, through marketing and promotion of our services.
6. Facilitating more Localism/Big Society activities through our community development programme.

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7. Introducing a Service Charge regime and considering charging affordable rents. |
| 8. Greater enforcement presence in the private sector.                            |

**Section 3 c – Looking forward: what we will measure, how often and for whom**

<b>Measure/indicator</b>	<b>How often – monthly, quarterly, bi-annually, annually</b>	<b>For whom? Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny</b>	<b>Link to Corporate Priorities (listed on page 3 a,b,c or d)</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Retain this measure (yes/no or new)</b>
1. NI155 Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (LAA)	Quarterly	Overview & Scrutiny	Thriving communities	Paul Lowe	Yes
2. NI156 Number of households living in temporary accommodation	Quarterly	Overview & Scrutiny	Thriving communities	Andrew Mitchell	Yes
3. NI158 % non-decent council homes	Quarterly	Overview & Scrutiny	Excellent service for our customers	John Golding	Yes
4. Capability at Point of Transaction - Ability to deal with customers at first contact	Quarterly	Overview & Scrutiny	Excellent service for our customers	John Golding	Yes
5. Percentage of Customer Satisfaction within the Housing Service	Quarterly	Overview & Scrutiny	Excellent service for our customers	John Golding	Yes
6. Percentage of preventable demand in the Housing Service	Quarterly	Overview & Scrutiny	Excellent service for our customers	John Golding	Yes
7. Rent and other income collected	Quarterly	Housing Review Board	Excellent service for our customers	Peter Richards	Yes
8. End to End times for void turnaround	Quarterly	Housing Review Board	Excellent service for our customers	Dennis Boobier	Yes

9. Responsive repair End to End times.	Quarterly	Housing Review Board	Excellent service for our customers	Jonathan Burns	Yes
10. Number of empty properties returned to use.	Quarterly	Overview & Scrutiny	Thriving communities	Meryl Spencer	Yes

<b>Section 4 – Resources and workforce planning</b>	
<b>Full time equivalents/Headcount*</b>	FTE = 79.01 (as of 30/09/11) Headcount = 87 (as of 30/09/11)
<b>Turnover*</b>	Voluntary Turnover = 5.75% Voluntary & Non Voluntary Turnover = 6.90%
<b>Absence*</b>	Days lost per person: 6.9 days (Jan 11 to Sept 11)
<b>Which posts have you found it difficult to recruit for/retain in last 12 months?</b>	None.
<b>Number of staff rated below Meets in Performance Excellence Review?</b>	<i>5 no. Closer supervision and individual performance monitoring. Setting milestones for prioritised tasks.</i>
<b>Number of 'high potential staff'</b>	<i>7 no. CIH education programmes. Job growth and greater responsibility with a chance to use initiative and enjoy 'light touch' supervision.</i>

<b>Section 5 – Training and development</b>			
<b>Skills/development required</b>	<b>Who for</b>	<b>Expected outcome</b>	<b>When</b>
Treasury and asset management	Senior management & Finance	Healthy Housing Revenue Account with sufficient resources to provide an excellent service for our customers	April 2012
Marketing and business planning	Senior management & Finance	Healthy Housing Revenue Account and Home Safeguard service budget	April 2012
IT	Frontline staff	New software implemented and effective	September 2012

		mobile working	
Scrutiny and tenant involvement	Tenants	Tenant challenge leading to continuous improvement	September 2012
Safeguarding children and adults	Frontline staff	Consistent reporting of incidents	April 2012
Equality and diversity	Frontline staff	Fair and equal treatment for all customers	September 2012
Systems Thinking	Service managers	Check and Redesign carried out across all functions	April 2012
Risk Management	Service managers	Improved risk awareness and effective risk controls	September 2012

#### Section 6– Review Service risks (current and emerging 2012-15)

<b>Current risk description*</b>	<b>Impact [minor, significant serious, major]</b>	<b>Likelihood [remote unlikely, likely, very likely]</b>	<b>How managed/controlled <i>What action are you taking to reduce/minimise risk</i></b>
1. Failure to protect the council and its existing and prospective tenants against tenancy fraud, which may be the granting of a property to an inappropriate person or where a tenant illegally sublets.	Significant	Likely	Implement the policy adopted by the Housing Review Board. New tenancy 'sign up' process. Blitz Days. Whistle blowing.
2. Lack of segregation of officers who create and collect debts gives rise to a potential for fraud.	Significant	Unlikely	Regular reconciliation of rent accounts.
3. An IT failure would result in the Council being unable to receive emergency calls from clients with Home Safeguard alarm equipment installed in their homes. This could result in emergency calls remaining	Significant	Unlikely	Disaster Recovery procedure that is regularly tested. Maintenance contracts on telephone lines and PNC software.

unanswered and the worst case scenario of a death of an elderly or vulnerable client.			
4. Failure to protect staff who are lone working in the community.	Significant	Unlikely	Policy adopted and followed. Home Safeguard monitoring process. Managers monitoring.
5. Significant loss or non collection of rental income will have a major impact on the Housing Revenue Account and our ability to deliver housing services to our tenants.	Significant	Unlikely	Income management policy adopted. Monitoring and reporting monthly. Rent statements sent to tenants. Sign Up process with emphasis on rent payments. Implementing a Financial Inclusion Strategy. Range of rent payment methods offered to tenants.
6. Loss of Supporting People contracts would mean a significant loss of income that part pays for the housing related support service received by our tenants in sheltered housing.	Serious	Likely	Close working with commissioner. Train staff on making claims. TaFF looking at the issue and preparing an exit strategy.
7. A failure to take action when staff suspect a case of abuse of older people having regard to our Safeguarding Older People policy.	Significant	Unlikely	Policy adopted and followed. Regular awareness raising and managers raising at team meetings. Train staff.
8. Major homeless incident caused through fire, flood or some other major incident that stretches our resources and ability to house a large number of homeless households at one time.	Major	Unlikely	Emergency Plan. Rest Centre Plan. Training for staff. Callout/contact list.
9. Housing Strategy not	Major	Unlikely	New Homes and Communities

being 'fit for purpose' and/or targets and actions contained within the action plan are not delivered, damaging our reputation and the housing opportunities for residents.			Strategy being prepared based on up to date research. Wider Housing Strategy Partnership monitoring and acting as a 'sounding board'.
10. Erroneous or incorrect housing advice given which could result in a tenant or owners losing their home and/or the Council failing to fulfil its legal duties. This could result in adverse publicity and/or legal action, or an Ombudsman complaint upheld against us.	Serious	Unlikely	Senior officers undertaking reviews. Training. Devon Housing Options Partnership spreading good practice. Policy and case law updates.
11. Lone working - Housing Needs and Strategy	Serious	Remote	See above.
12. Comply with the legislation and guidance in respect of access to housing through a Housing Register.	Significant	Remote	Policy adopted and followed. Devon Home Choice Steering Group spreading good practice. Training of staff.
13. The risks associated with being a developer of council homes, especially with regards potential abortive costs, cost overruns, failure to obtain planning permission and loss of HCA grant.	Serious	Likely	Joined Peninsular SW consortium. Appoint consultants for specialist advice. Follow HCA guidance.
14. Failure of performance under the Partnering Agreement by one of our responsive repair contractors leading to an inability to perform day to day repairs to tenant's homes.	Serious	Likely	Contracting with two partners. Regular contract meetings. Exor/Creditsafe reports.
15. Failure to notify the responsible authority when staff suspect a child is at	Serious	Likely	Safeguarding policy adopted and followed. Periodic briefings/awareness

risk.			raising.
16. Without appropriate controls on approving grants and monitoring budgets there is risk of fraud and to the Councils finances	Serious	Unlikely	CAPS system monitoring grant approvals, Corporate Finance monitoring of budgets.
17. Lone Working - Private Sector Housing	Minor	Unlikely	Lone Worker Policy Risk Assessment reviewed annually.
<b>New/emerging risk description</b>	<b>Impact</b> [minor, significant, serious, major]	<b>Likelihood</b> [remote, unlikely, likely, very likely]	<b>How managed/controlled</b> <b>What action will you take to reduce/minimise risk</b>
1. Ability to service debt	Major	Unlikely	External Treasury advice Portfolio of low risk loans
2. Loss of the Home Improvement Agency	Significant	Likely	Negotiations with Devon County Council and the Service Provider
3. Loss of Homelessness Grant	Significant	Likely	Plan for the reduction/loss of Government funding
4. Failure to meet our safeguarding children obligations	Major	Unlikely	Raising awareness of the duty, adoption of a safeguarding children policy, reporting incidents and monitoring performance.

<b>Section 7 – Partnerships</b>	
<b>What is in place?</b>	<b>Review date</b>
Housing Review Board	Annual report
Devon Rural Housing Partnership	Annual
Housing Strategic Partnership	Annual
Exeter Empty Homes	Annual
Devon Home Choice	Annual
Devon Housing Options Partnership	Annual
Advantage SW	Annual
Peninsular SW	Annual

<b>Section 8 – Contracts</b>	
<b>What is in place?</b>	<b>Review date</b>
Responsive repairs and work to void property.	April 2012
Gas servicing	October 2015
Home Improvement Agency	March 2011
Empty Homes Service Level Agreement	March 2012
Devon Home Choice/Abritas	Annual
Tunstall/Chubb Home Safeguard maintenance	Annual
West country housing floating support project	June 2012