

**CABINET**  
**17 DECEMBER 2013**  
**HOUSING STRATEGY ANNUAL REVIEW**

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Howard Doe, Housing and Community Services

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration Community and Culture

Author: Matthew Gough, Head of Strategic Housing Services

**Summary**

The Housing Strategy 2011-14 was approved by Cabinet in October 2011. The strategy contains a commitment to annually review and assess progress against the targets, which this report seeks to do.

**1. Budget and Policy Framework**

- 1.1 The Housing Strategy was developed in partnership with the Strategic Housing Partnership Board and a diverse range of partners and stakeholders. The Strategy sits alongside a number of other Council policies including the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Strategic Plan for Older People and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 1.2 The Housing Strategy is consistent with the Policy Framework and a review of progress is a matter for Cabinet.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The Housing Strategy was approved in October 2011. It contains a commitment to annually review and assess progress against the targets, which this report seeks to do.
- 2.2 The Housing Strategy aims to reflect policies and priorities at national, regional and local level. It will help to deliver the strategic housing priorities for Medway and sets the direction for housing in Medway until 2014. It is designed around three aims and has seven outcomes.

<b>Theme One – Bridging the Gap</b> Working to create a pathway into suitable housing and home ownership by increasing choice	
Outcome One	Deliver a range of tenures, properties and locations to meet need
Outcome Two	Make the best use of existing housing
Outcome Three	Contribute to sustainable and cohesive communities
<b>Theme Two – Early Prevention</b> Providing suitable, appropriate and timely housing advice to help people make the right housing choice	
Outcome Four	Provide advice across agencies to prevent crisis and increase choice and access
Outcome Five	Improve housing offer to better meet a range of housing needs
<b>Theme Three - Health and Housing</b> Improving health through quality housing and places	
Outcome Six	Ensure good quality homes, which are energy efficient
Outcome Seven	Improve and maintain independence and inclusion by providing effective support

2.3 The Strategic Housing Partnership Board is responsible for monitoring the performance against the Housing Strategy and the progress of the Action Plan on a quarterly basis.

2.4 The Board includes representation from a wide range of stakeholder and partner organisations and receives quarterly monitoring reports detailing progress against the Action Plan. An updated copy of the Housing Strategy Action Plan 2011-14 is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

### 3 Achievements

3.1 Across all themes there has been significant progress against the 46 priority actions. A total of 17 actions have been completed and 23 are on target to be delivered by 2014. A detailed report of the progress against each of the aims is given below.

<b>Theme One – Bridging the Gap</b>			
<b>Outcome One - Deliver the Properties and Tenures in Shortage</b>			
<b>Total Action Points</b>	<b>Actions Completed</b>	<b>Actions on Target</b>	<b>Actions off Target</b>
4	n/a	2	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secured at least 25% of newly built homes as affordable on every site, meeting the Council's size threshold</li> <li>Delivered 500 affordable homes across Medway from October 2011 to date</li> <li>£53million investment secured to deliver affordable housing</li> <li>156 shared ownership units delivered over the life of the strategy</li> <li>Estimated that 180 affordable units will be delivered in 2013-14. The</li> </ul>			

transition period between the Social Rent and Affordable Rent Programmes have lead to delays with Registered Providers getting into contract with the Homes and Communities Agency. This in turn has resulted in delays to starts on site

**Outcome Two - Make the best use of existing homes**

Total Action Points	Actions Completed	Actions on Target	Actions off Target
8	3	5	-

- 311 empty properties brought back into use resulting in the level of empty homes in Medway currently being 0.87% (as of October 2013)
- The new allocations policy went live on 9 September 2013. As for October 2013, there were 5,341 people on the housing register
- 163 Extra Care units have been delivered and a further 103 units are planned for delivery

**Outcome Three - Contribute to sustainable and cohesive communities**

Total Action Points	Actions Completed	Actions on Target	Actions off Target
7	2	5	-

- Currently working on a revised master plan and development brief for Rochester Riverside
- Local lettings plans are now in place for all developments over 10 units
- Working in partnership with the Community Engagement Team to target selected streets over a three week period to help tackle deprivation, housing issues, unemployment and crime

**Theme Two – Early Prevention**

**Outcome Four - Provide advice across agencies to prevent crisis and increase choice and access**

Total Action Points	Actions Completed	Actions on Target	Actions off Target
6	4	2	-

- A common set of standards has been agreed with Housing Associations to support clients through benefit changes. An early warning system is now in place where evictions may ensue
- Working in partnership with Social Care to provide a “Local Offer” for people with learning disabilities
- Operational joint homelessness protocol for young people is in place. Homelessness Prevention actions to be taken forward are part of the new Homelessness Prevention Strategy (due 2014)
- Working in partnership with Citizens Advice Bureau across Medway to provide debt and financial advice

**Outcome Five - Improve the housing offer to better meet a range of housing needs**

Total Action Points	Actions Completed	Actions on Target	Actions off Target
6	3	2	1

- Over 2,200 referrals have been made through the Supported Housing Gateway during the lift of the strategy helping to improve the accommodation options available to vulnerable people

- The increase in the number of people approaching as homeless has had an impact on the amount of people placed in temporary accommodation. There are currently 158 housed in temporary accommodation. We are continuing to intensively work with applicants being accommodated by the Council to move them on or prevent them entering temporary accommodation wherever possible
- A joint needs assessment has been completed with Children and Adult Services and will be used to commission services in the future
- Continuing to work with private landlords through the Landlords Accreditation Scheme and Landlords Forum. A Tenant Accreditation Scheme has been developed
- The use of the HomeBond scheme has been revised and a new scheme put in place to help improve access to private rented accommodation

<b>Theme Three – Health and Housing</b>			
<b>Outcome Six - Ensure good quality homes, which are energy efficient</b>			
<b>Total Action Points</b>	<b>Actions Completed</b>	<b>Actions on Target</b>	<b>Actions off Target</b>
7	3	4	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to licence or take legal enforcement action against licensable HMOs. There are currently 111 HMOs licensed.</li> <li>• A program of inspections are in place for non-licensable HMOs</li> <li>• The licensing arrangements of residential mobile home sites have been reviewed</li> <li>• A Continued Professional Development scheme has been developed for accredited landlords and courses are held regularly at Gun Wharf. These help accredited landlords improve standards and professionalism.</li> <li>• Due to changes in funding we are no longer able to assist households via energy efficiency loans. This target has been removed from the Action Plan.</li> </ul>			
<b>Outcome Seven - Improve and maintain independence and inclusion by providing effective support</b>			
<b>Total Action Points</b>	<b>Actions Completed</b>	<b>Actions on Target</b>	<b>Actions off Target</b>
7	2	2	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are currently 12 affordable housing wheelchair units under construction in Medway</li> <li>• 134 households have received major adaptations to their homes via the Home Adaptation Service to ensure that their homes are suitable to their needs</li> <li>• Working in partnership with Social Care to undertake housing needs analysis on a range of client groups including those with dementia and learning disabilities</li> <li>• A total of 163 extra care units have been completed across three schemes; Victory Pier, Bellerophon House and Montgomery Court</li> </ul>			

#### **4. Advice and analysis**

- 4.1 The Housing Strategy has proved a useful and effective framework in delivering real improvement to lives of people within Medway by:-
- helping people to *benefit from the areas regeneration*, whilst
  - assisting *older and vulnerable people maintain their independence* and,
  - creating a *cleaner and greener environment*, and where
  - people feel *safer in their community*.
- 4.2 The Housing Strategy is relevant and useful and provides the basis on which to continue to improve services, attract resources and invest in Medway.

#### **5. Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 5.1 The Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered this on 5 December 2013.
- 5.2 The Head of Strategic Housing introduced the annual review of the Housing Strategy 2011-14 and outlined progress against the targets within the Housing Strategy Action Plan.
- 5.3 Members then raised a number of issues and questions including:
- a request for a briefing note to all Members of the Committee projecting the number of Extra Care Units required in Medway over the next ten years in response to the rapidly ageing population and how this might be achieved.
  - a request for a briefing note for the Committee on the breakdown of the mix of affordable housing between rented and shared ownership units, noting that the Council had met its target of 60% rented and 40% shared ownership over the last five years. Members suggested there is an opportunity to include an emphasis on the provision of affordable housing across Medway in the Local Plan when refreshed.
  - a request for a briefing note on the number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) visited under the Council's Inspection framework and in response to complaints and setting out performance in relation to inspection targets.
  - the view that that the links between poor quality HMOs and health need to be recognised and a strategic lead taken by the Council on this.
  - a request for ward members in All Saints, Luton and North Gillingham wards to be advised of the work that is being undertaken in relation to address housing issues within these areas in particularly through partnership working in the communities.
  - the ongoing challenges involved in persuading Landlords to let accommodation to tenants under the Home Bond scheme

noting that a new funding system for the Home Bond scheme is being piloted aimed at achieving better take-up.

- the importance of local analysis of the impact of changes to energy efficiency funding and commissioning with feedback to Central Government to assist with targeting of resources
- The need to monitor the impact of the changes to the spare bedroom subsidy on Medway residents in the context of the Council's equalities duties. Members were assured that the housing allocations policy gives priority to those affected and that advice and assistance is on offer
- a request for the report to the next meeting of the Committee on long term empty properties to address the impact of no longer having any empty homes officers. Members were advised that the number of empty homes in Medway was at its lowest for ten years and that the forthcoming report would describe a number of initiatives underway to further improve the position.

5.4 The Committee noted the progress against the aims of the Housing Strategy

5.5 The Committee requested briefing notes on:

- i) the number of Extra Care Units likely to be required in Medway over the next ten years in response to the rapidly ageing population and how this might be achieved
- ii) the breakdown of the mix of affordable housing between rented and shared ownership units
- iii) the number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) visited under the Council's Inspection framework and in response to complaints, setting out performance in relation to inspection targets.

### **Director's Comments**

5.6 The Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee have raised a number of useful issues during their consideration of the report and officers will undertake the various actions as outlined above as soon as possible.

## 6. Risk Management

- 6.1 Risk management is an integral part of good governance. The Council has a responsibility to identify and manage threats and risks to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
Changes to the environment in which the strategy operates	Possible impact on service demand, funding and opportunities for intervention	Action Plan reviewed quarterly through the Strategic Housing Partnership Board, with action being taken to mitigate risk

## 7. Financial and legal implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising from the review. The Housing Strategy and Action Plan are used to direct and provide evidence to attract external funding primarily from the Homes and Community Agency.

## 8. Recommendation

- 8.1 The Cabinet notes the progress against the aims of the Housing Strategy.

## 9. Suggested Reasons for Decision

- 9.1 The Housing Strategy and its Action Plan sets the strategic direction for Housing Services in Medway, contributing to the Council's core values and strategic priorities and giving context for the attraction and investment of resources.

### Lead officer contact

Matthew Gough, Head of Strategic Housing  
[matthew.gough@medway.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.gough@medway.gov.uk)  
01634 333177

### Background papers

Housing Strategy 2011-14  
<http://www.medway.gov.uk/housing/housingstrategy.aspx>





# **Housing Strategy Action Plan 2011-14**

**Update November 2013**

## **Delivery and Monitoring**

---

The Medway Strategic Housing Partnership Board was established in 2007 as a dynamic forum of key public and private players involved in housing, brought together to help deliver decent and safe homes for all residents living in Medway.

The action plan sets out the actions we will take, and each action has a timescale and a target or performance indicator to achieve. Actions may have one or more organisation leading or contributing to its implementation.

The actions are flexible and may alter to meet changing circumstances, but are all based on achieving the vision and priorities. Many actions and projects are well underway and some have already been noted within this strategy.

It is important that the action plan is monitored to ensure that progress is on target, (especially in these changing times), and to ensure that our actions remain the right ones.

The Strategic Housing Partnership Board will monitor progress of the action plan on a quarterly basis and separate task and finish groups will be set up to carry out specific projects meet the outcomes of the strategy.





Action Point	ACTION	Target Date	TARGET OUTCOME	ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE	2012/13				2013/14			
					Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep
2.5	Maintain the number of long term private sector empty homes below 1.6% of all private sector stock	Ongoing	Maintain and Monitor the level of empty homes below 1.6%	0.87% of the private sector stock is currently long term empty	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
2.6	Consult, develop and implement a new Allocations Policy for Medway	April 2013	Allocations policy developed and implemented	New policy to went live on 9 September 2013	Action Completed							
2.7	Develop a delivery programme for Extra Care and Sheltered Housing to meet demand	April 2012	Meet the number of units of Extra Care Housing identified by Adult Social Care of 550 units	Liberty Park Scheme is due for completion in December 2013. This brings the total extra care units delivered to 163 units. 62 units are now planned for St Mary's Island and 41 for Horsted Park	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
2.8	Undertake a review of accommodation for older people in Medway	April 2012	Work ongoing	Joint need assessment completed	Action Completed							

## Outcome Three - Contribute to Sustainable and Cohesive Communities



Green

Working to create a pathway into suitable housing and home ownership by increasing choice

Action Point	ACTION	Target Date	TARGET OUTCOME	ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE	2012/13				2013/14			
					Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep
3.1	Achieve a balanced approach with regards to tenure with 60% social rented homes and 40% intermediate homes	Ongoing	Achieve a split of 60% social rented homes and 40% intermediate homes on all sites	Target Achieved	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
3.2	100% of affordable housing schemes to meet Secured by Design standard	Ongoing	All affordable homes meet Secured by Design standard	Target Achieved	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
3.3	Lead on the development of the affordable element of Development Briefs for all major residential sites in Medway	Ongoing	Lead on developments briefs on all major residential sites	Currently working on a revised master plan and development brief for Rochester Riverside	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
3.4	Ensure new affordable housing schemes meet the standards set out within the "Creating Sustainable Communities in Kent and Medway" protocol	Ongoing	Re-written now called <i>Creating Successful Communities</i>	Target Achieved	Action Completed							









## Outcome Five – Improve the Housing Offer to Better Meet a Range of Housing Needs



Green

Providing suitable, appropriate and timely housing advice to help people make the right housing choice

Action Point	ACTION	Target Date	TARGET OUTCOME	ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE	2012/13				2013/14				
					Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	
5.1	In partnership with Registered Providers and Children's Services implement an initiative which will deliver at least 10 homes for Looked After Children	Ongoing	Deliver 10 or more homes for Looked After Children	The Rights have been secured for 16 units with mhs, Moat, Hyde and L&Q	Action Completed								
5.2	Maintain the Supported Housing Gateway with 1,200 referrals made per year to promote the most effective use of accommodation and support funded by Supporting People	Ongoing	1,200 or more referrals to be made per year	2,240 referrals have been made since October 2011 to date	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊
5.3	Work with HomeChoice to improve the move on of clients out of Temporary Accommodation	Ongoing	Reduction of clients housed in temporary accommodation	There are currently 158 housed in temporary accommodation. We are continuing to intensively work with applicants being accommodated by the Council to move them on or prevent them entering temporary accommodation wherever possible	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😞	😞	😞	😞

5.4	In association with Children's Services, identify the resources required to ensure young vulnerable persons are being offered suitable housing options and choices	April 2012	Resources identified	Joint needs analysis being undertaken with children and adults services which is now drawing to a close and will be used to commissioning services	Action Completed							
5.5	Maintain the Landlord Accreditation Scheme and Landlords' Forum to encourage and support private landlords	Ongoing	Provide ongoing support to Private Landlords	Landlord Accreditation Scheme and Landlords Forum Running work ongoing. Tenants Accreditation Scheme being developed	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊
5.6	Review the use of the HomeBond scheme to help improve access to private rented accommodation	April 2012	Revised Scheme in Place	Completed - revised scheme in place	Action Completed							



6.4	Review the site licensing arrangements of residential mobile home sites	April 2012	Review all agreements	Completed successfully	Action Completed							
6.5	Reduce vulnerable households living in non-decent sub-standard accommodation by 350 per annum	April 2013	Reduction in vulnerable households living in non-decent sub-standard accommodation	The Private Sector Housing Team work with tenants and landlords to improve the standards in the private sector	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊
6.6	Provide financial assistance to 250 vulnerable and low income homeowners and tenants to meet minimum standards	April 2013	Assist vulnerable and low income homeowners and tenants to meet minimum standards	The Private Sector Housing Team work with tenants and landlords to improve the standards in the private sector	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊
6.7	Develop a scheme of professional development courses for accredited landlords to improve standards and professionalism	April 2012	Better Private Sector Landlords	Continued Professional Development (CPD) course's for landlords are held regularly at Gun Wharf	Action Completed							
6.8	Assist 35 households per year via energy efficiency loans and grants and give advice to 1,500 people via the Energy Savings Trust Advice Centre		Provide assistance and advice	Due to changes in funding we are no longer taking this action point forward	Cancelled							

**Outcome Seven – Improve and maintain independence and inclusion by providing effective support**



Green

**Improving health through quality housing and places**

Action Point	ACTION	Target Date	TARGET OUTCOME	AHIIEVEMENTS TO DATE	2012/13				2013/14			
					Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep
7.1	Deliver 10 fully wheelchair compliant homes per year	April 2013	10 or more fully wheelchair compliant homes per year	25 fully adapted wheelchair units have been delivered. A further 306 accessible units have been delivered as bungalows, ground floor flats and lifetime compliant homes	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
7.2	Deliver 9 homes specifically designed for clients with Learning Disabilities	April 2012	9 or more homes designed for clients with Learning Disabilities	9 specifically designed units delivered on Marlborough road	Action Completed							
7.3	Provide at least 150 households with major adaptations within their home through our Home Adaptations Service	April 2013	Assist 150 or more households per year	134 households have received major adaptations to their homes via the Home Adaptation Service to ensure that their homes are suitable to their needs	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☹	☹	☹
7.4	Through the HomeSafe scheme provide minor works, safety and security checks to allow 2,700 vulnerable people to feel safe within their own homes	Annually	2700 household to be assisted to remain and feel safe in their home	Although 744 vulnerable households were assisted in Quarter 2 of 2013/14, the overall target was not meet	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☹	☹	☹

Action Point	ACTION	Target Date	TARGET OUTCOME	AHIIEVEMENTS TO DATE	2012/13				2013/14			
					Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep
7.5	Assist 3,940 vulnerable households to undertake adaptations, repairs and improvements to their home	Annually	3,940 vulnerable household assisted	Although 830 vulnerable households assisted in Quarter 2 of 2013/14, the overall target was not meet	☺	☺	☺	☺	☹	☹	☹	☹
7.6	Work with the Institute of Public Care and Adult Social Care to undertake housing needs analysis on a range of client groups including those with dementia and learning disabilities	April 2013	Assessment completed	Work now being led by Adult Social Care work ongoing	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
7.7	Deliver a minimum of 100 extra care units by 2013	April 2013	Delivery of 100 or more Extra Care units.	Units Delivered	Action Completed							