

Agenda Item No: 4
Report To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 26th July 2016
Report Title: Annual Report
Report Author: Jennifer Shaw, Housing Strategy Manager
Portfolio Holder: Cllr Clokie



Summary:	The report provides an update of achievements during 2015/16 against the actions set out in the Housing Framework 2013-2018. The report outlines a review of the Housing Frameworks priorities to respond to national and local challenges and aspirations.
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Key Decision: NO

Affected Wards: All

Recommendations: **The Committee be asked to:-
 Approve the Annual Report for publication on the Council's website.
 To note the forthcoming refresh of the Housing Framework priorities to reflect legislative changes, funding pressures and a review of the Housing Service.**

Policy Overview: Housing Framework 2013-18 sets the overarching priorities for the Housing Service.

Financial Implications: NO

Risk Assessment NO

Equalities Impact Assessment Undertaken for the Housing Framework 2013-18

Other Material Implications: None

Exemption Clauses: N/A

Background Papers:

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Report Title: Annual Report 2016 of the Housing Framework 2013-2018

Purpose of the Report

1. To update members on progress against the actions of the Housing Framework 2013-2018 during 2015-16
2. To provide examples of the work in the year 2015/16 that has contributed to the priorities of the Housing Framework 2013-2018
3. To outline a review/refresh of the Housing Framework to take account of recent legislative changes and funding pressures on the Housing Service

Issue to be Decided

4. Members to approve the Annual Report for publication on the Council's website, attached at appendix 1.
5. Members to note the forthcoming refresh of the Housing Framework priorities to reflect legislative changes, funding pressures and a review of the Housing Service.

Background

6. The Housing Framework 2013-2018 was adopted in July 2013. The Housing Framework can be accessed at <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/our-strategic-approach-to-housing>
7. Previous Annual Reports from 2014 and 2015 can also be found at <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/our-strategic-approach-to-housing>
8. The five priorities of the Housing Framework are:
 1. Improve the supply of affordable housing to meet local housing needs in Ashford borough's urban and rural areas
 2. Improve environmental quality of homes and address fuel poverty in all tenures
 3. Increase availability and choice of accommodation including for vulnerable people
 4. Increase resident satisfaction with homes and neighbourhoods and increase opportunities for resident involvement
 5. Prevent and reduce homelessness and increase access to settled accommodation for homeless households and those at risk of homelessness

9. Members also receive a quarterly report from the Housing Service that provides a statistical update on performance covering:
- The housing waiting list and the numbers of housing applicants living in bed and breakfast
 - Rent collection and arrears levels for council tenants
 - The number of tenants who have exercised their 'Right to Buy'
 - The wider housing situation in Ashford, including 'Affordable' housing numbers and house prices
- Previous quarterly performance reports are available on the ABC website.
<http://www.ashford.gov.uk/housing-services-quarterly-performance-report>

Summary of the Housing Framework Annual Report 2016

10. The full Annual Report 2016 is attached at Appendix 1
11. Priority 1. Improve the supply of affordable housing to meet local housing needs in Ashford borough's urban and rural areas

Although site viability can reduce the affordable housing delivered on s106 sites, in total 247 affordable homes were completed in the borough in 2015/16. This included the Council first venture into purchasing rented and shared ownership homes directly from a developer by effectively utilising funding available and the ability to increase the HRA debt cap.

The property company acquired 10 homes, adding to its portfolio of properties and increasing the stock of well managed rented homes.

The efficient use of stock is maintained through improved void turnaround to 18 days, use of fixed term tenancies and the assisted moves initiative enabling 35 older households to downsize.

31 homes were lost through the right to buy with receipts being used to part fund new affordable housing.

A successful bid was made to the social mobility fund - a scheme to incentivise tenants to purchase a home on the open market but no tenants took up the offer within the limited time the fund was available.

12. Priority 2. Improve environmental quality of homes and address fuel poverty in all tenures

The Government fuel poverty (updated May 2015) indicator remains at 7.6% of households in fuel poverty.

Officers have worked collectively across Kent to develop an updated Affordable Warmth Strategy for the County which has recently been out to consultation.

Council owned properties are maintained to be as energy efficient as possible and measures such as loft and wall insulation continue to be installed as well as boiler and heating upgrades. This improves the thermal comfort of the

home and reduces space and water heating costs for tenants and contributes to broader climate change targets.

In the private sector action is taken where a tenant notifies that they have no heating and the landlord is not responding. A range of tools, including enforcement action are used by the Private Sector Housing Officers to ensure properties are free from hazards and safe for the tenants to reside in.

During 2015/16 Council Officer involvement has assisted in bringing 2 empty homes back into use which prevents the property falling into disrepair.

13. Priority 3. Increase availability and choice of accommodation including for vulnerable people

The provision of accommodation for vulnerable groups has continued. The Kent PFI completed 11 units of move-on accommodation at Lantern House. The older persons extra care accommodation at Chamberlain Manor and phase 1 of Farrow Court, are both fully occupied providing modern, spacious accommodation and support services to assist older people to retain their independence for longer.

Adaptions to the home assist disabled people to remain living independently range from simple measures such as grab rails to complete bathroom refits to provide accessible washing/toilet facilities. Across the borough, in Council owned homes and the private sector a total of 381 adaptions were completed costing over just over £1m. Adaptions in council stock accounted for 85% of measures and 42% of the spending.

14. Priority 4. Increase resident satisfaction with homes and neighbourhoods and increase opportunities for resident involvement

The housing services' excellent record for rent collection rates remains high at over 98%. This funds services to tenants including maintaining the decent homes standard at 100%. Tenant satisfaction with responsive repairs has increased.

Neighbourhood improvements and community events continue to enhance community relations. Tenants work with the area managers in deciding what events/projects to undertake. The Tenant Panel is involved in scrutinising the services and suggesting improvements.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Policy for Ashford Borough Council Tenants has been reviewed and confirms the Council's overall approach to taking firm but fair action as appropriate to resolve any issues.

The Ashford Promise is used where those tenants in breach of their tenancy have certain planned maintenance improvements withheld.

15. Priority 5. Prevent and reduce homelessness and increase access to settled accommodation for homeless households and those at risk of homelessness

Vulnerable tenants are supported by the area managers who will refer them to services to help them sustain their tenancy. In the private sector the landlord liaison officers work with both tenants and landlords to resolve issues and prevent loss of accommodation. The landlord Liaison officers continue to foster good relations with private sector landlords to increase access to well managed quality private rented homes for people with lower incomes.

The Homelessness Strategy has been reviewed during 2015/16 and the priorities set to work towards meeting the 10 challenges set out by government to achieve the gold standard for homelessness services.

Initiatives to work with other agencies to reduce and prevent homelessness resulted in a night shelter run by the Ashford Churches and Porchlight. This will be reviewed to learn from and decide if the approach was effective in tackling homelessness.

Review of the Housing Framework

16. The Housing Framework will be reviewed during 2016/17 with an expectation to present a draft strategy and priorities in 2017. The revised Strategy will reflect the Corporate Plan aspiration set out in priority 2: Quality Housing and Homes for All, 'To secure quality homes across the borough, catering for a range of ages, tenures and need, in well planned and attractive new places'.
17. Since the Housing Framework 2013-18 was adopted a new government has been elected and introduced new legislation and initiatives that now need to be considered. Some of the detail is yet to be confirmed but the review will incorporate new announcements as they materialise.
18. The Housing Service (HRA functions) is to be reviewed and outcomes from this will inform the revised strategy and priorities going forward.
19. The Housing Framework review will commence by gathering data and evidence to provide the background required to shape the direction of the strategy and the priorities emanating from that.

Handling

20. Following Members approval the Annual Report 2016 will be published on the Council's website. Further to this a link of where to access the report will be sent to Members, partners and stakeholders.
21. A review of the priorities will commence as outlined above to reflect changes to legislation and the review of the Housing Service.

Conclusion

22. The report demonstrates that even with the challenges of changing legislation and funding pressures the Housing Service continues to deliver positive outcomes for residents.
23. A review of the Housing Framework will ensure going forwards the Housing Service identifies how best to meet local housing needs and contribute to the delivery of the Corporate Plan within the constraints of national policy and funding pressures.

Portfolio Holder's Views

24. 'The Housing Service continues to deliver positive outcomes under the 5 priorities set out in the Housing Framework. It is testament to their hard work in an often challenging environment that an efficient and effective service is delivered across the borough to tenants and wider residents, providing safe, secure housing and communities. The forthcoming review of the housing framework will reflect changes being implemented from new legislation and the reduction of resources for the service. With potential changes to government policy the review will need to consider these, as they arise, and how our resources can be most efficiently deployed in the future'.

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Housing Framework 2013-2018

Annual Report 2016

Jennifer Shaw
Housing Strategy Manager

Introduction

This Annual Report covers the period from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016. A table updating progress against each action set out in the Housing Framework 2013-2018 can be found at the end.

The following commentary seeks to highlight that the work of the Housing Service goes beyond the 'bricks and mortar' and how good quality, secure homes benefit residents, communities and the local economy by creating stable, safe, inclusive communities.

Adopted in July 2013, The Housing Framework's five priorities are:

1. Improve the supply of affordable housing to meet local housing needs in Ashford borough's urban and rural areas
2. Improve environmental quality of homes and address fuel poverty in all tenures
3. Increase availability and choice of accommodation including for vulnerable people
4. Increase resident satisfaction with homes and neighbourhoods and increase opportunities for resident involvement
5. Prevent and reduce homelessness and increase access to settled accommodation for homeless households and those at risk of homelessness

The Housing Framework 2013-18 document is available at:

<http://www.ashford.gov.uk/our-strategic-approach-to-housing>

Delivery of the Housing Framework's Priorities are overseen by the Housing Service working together with a range of other organisations in the Borough and across Kent.

The Housing Services has several functions:

- Letting, management, maintenance and improvement of the Council's own housing stock, including sheltered housing, the Chilmington gypsy site and garages
- Management of the Housing Register and Kent Homechoice (choice based lettings system) for the allocation of social and affordable rented homes let by the Council and Housing Associations
- Housing advice and the prevention of homelessness
- Running the private sector leasing scheme and the social lettings agency
- Assistance to households in private rented and owner occupier homes, including park homes
- Managing the disabled facilities grant budget
- Enabling the development of new build affordable and supported housing through the Councils own programme and with Housing Associations
- Syrian refugee resettlement project

As of end of 2015/16 the Housing Service was responsible for:

- 5030 properties (including 317 at Stanhope managed by Moat, the Stanhope Hub, Christchurch House and 3 units at Brookfield Court - managed by the YMCA and 8 shared ownership homes)
- 16 plots at the Chilmington Gypsy site
- 255 Leaseholders
- 1689 garages
- 57 properties in the Private Sector Leasing scheme
- 73 properties in the Social Lettings Agency scheme
- 17 properties in the property company portfolio

Priority 1: Improve the supply of affordable housing to meet local housing needs in Ashford borough's urban and rural areas

A total of 247 affordable homes were completed in 2015/16. This is an increase on the 142 affordable homes completed during 2014/15 but is still below the 368 needed each year as identified by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

	Affordable Rent	Shared Ownership	
ABC Urban	33		Farrow Court (phase 1) – care-ready scheme
ABC Rural (s106 site)	13	8	Charing
Housing Association Urban (s106 sites)	47	32	Included 1 wheelchair home for rent
Housing Association Urban (s106 sites)	34	33	Chamberlain Manor – extra care
Housing Association Rural (s106 sites)	17	7	Chilham, Hamstreet
Housing Association Urban (Kent PFI)	11		Supported Housing
Housing Association (exception site)	11	1	Bethersden
	166	81	

At Charing the purchase of 21 homes from David Wilson Homes was the first time the Council has acquired new affordable homes from a developer as part of their s106 obligations. This is also the Council's first venture into purchasing and leasing shared ownership properties.

Right to Buy receipt monies have to date been used to part fund a number of affordable housing developments in the Borough. These include Poppy Fields (Charing), Farrow Court and other one-off purchases.

31 Council owned homes were lost through their tenants exercising the Right to Buy.

The property company purchased 10 homes during 2015/16, taking the total portfolio to 17 properties. Although not affordable as let at market rates these homes provide good quality market rented homes and are managed by the Council's Social Lettings Agency Team.

In addition to the provision of new homes, the efficient use of existing stock is vital to ensure as many homes as possible are available and let appropriately. The average void turnaround in ABC homes is 18 days. Fixed term tenancies are issued in line with the Tenancy Policy which enables a review and option not to renew should the households circumstances have changed that means they could move to suitable alternative accommodation.

35 older person households downsized through the assisted moves initiative, freeing up larger accommodation.

The Council worked with neighbouring authorities and successfully bid for funding to offer a cash incentive of £40,000 to tenants to purchase a home on the open market (£20,000 grant plus equivalent match funding from the Council). Despite considerable promotion and marketing of 'the social mobility fund' to tenants none took up the offer prior to the March 2016 deadline. The general thought is that the £40,000 incentive was not necessarily enough to make a private purchase affordable in this part of the country.

Priority 2: Improve environmental quality of homes and address fuel poverty in all tenures

Fuel Poverty is measured by the low income high costs indicator. The government statistics updated in May 2015 show 7.6% of the Borough's households are fuel poor. The Kent wide figure is 8.6%.

The Council has been involved in the development of Delivering Affordable Warmth – A Fuel Poverty Strategy for Kent, through its membership of the Kent Energy Efficiency Partnership. The aim of the Strategy is to fully understand who vulnerable residents in fuel poverty are and to effectively target them with meaningful interventions that address the three main causes of fuel poverty: Poor energy efficiency of dwellings; low household incomes and the high cost of fuel.

The Council continues through its planned maintenance programme to make tenants homes easier to heat through installing and updating a range of measures.

- 45 properties received quantum heaters (electric storage heaters) which are 30% more efficient than the standard heaters fitted.
- 1 property received quantum heaters and a photo voltaic array.
- 8 properties received A rated oil boilers and controls to Part L (Building Regulations)
- 174 properties received A rated gas boilers and controls to Part L (Building Regulations)

In addition the programme of insulation upgrades for lofts and cavity walls continued with 98 properties benefiting from one or both upgrades. The external wall insulation work completed to the non-traditional concrete panel Airy Houses makes a significant improvement to the cost of heating these homes and their thermal comfort.

In the private sector officers will assist tenants to resolve issues of cold damp homes with their landlords when requested to do so or alerted to housing in poor condition. The Private Sector Housing Team dealt with 232 complaints and served 8 Housing Act Notices to address hazards/poor conditions.

Empty homes if left empty for a prolonged period can fall into disrepair leading to neighbourhood nuisance. During 2015/16 Council Officer involvement has assisted in bringing 2 empty homes back into use.

Priority 3: Increase availability and choice of accommodation including for vulnerable people

There has been a 28% increase in the number of applicants on the housing register between March 2015 (1215) and March 2016 (1556). On average 89 applicants on the register each month are homeless. With limited availability of social and affordable rented accommodation and the number of applicants on the housing register growing accessing property within the private rented sector provides another option to meet local housing needs where it is well managed and affordable.

The Council continues to operate a Private Sector Leasing (PSL) Scheme and the Social Lettings Agency (SLA) to maximise these opportunities. At end of March 2016 there were 57 households living in a PSL property and 61 properties within the Ashford SLA. The Landlord Liaison Officers continue to foster better relations with private sector landlords. Events are held to update local landlords of opportunities to work with the Council and any legislative changes that could affect them. The landlord forum run in November 2015 included representatives from the National Landlord Forum, members of Ashford landlord working group and over 70 landlords attended.

Supporting disabled people to remain living well at home can often be achieved through adaptations to their home environment. These can be minor works such as grab rails or major works such as flush floor showers.

In Council properties, 324 adaptations were completed with a total spend of £435,883. The average spend per adaptation is £1,345. Small adaptations such as grab rails and half steps with a modest cost account for about 25% of all adaptations. Larger items such as stair-lifts and flush floor showers range in cost from £2,000 - £5,000.

In the private sector, 57 disabled adaptations were completed, costing £589,588. Flush floor showers, ramps/access and stair lifts were the most frequently installed adaptations. Some households required several adaptations within the property.

Supported housing offers a home for people who are unable to live independently. The aim of supported housing is to empower the person to maintain or regain as much independence as possible. This may be long term, e.g. for a frail, elderly person or for a short time to regain independence after a crisis or illness.

Extra care offers independent living, with support, for older people. During 2015/16 Chamberlain Manor was completed with 67 flats and communal spaces, phase 1 of the redevelopment of the Council's sheltered scheme at Farrow Court was handed over and construction of the extra care scheme on the Little Hill site continued through the Kent PFI. In Aldington the first extra care scheme on a rural exception site held its topping out ceremony in December with the Mayor ascending the scaffold to place a tile on the roof. A bid was made to the Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund round 2 in May 2015 and awarded £1.9m to support the redevelopment of Danemore Sheltered Housing scheme in Tenterden.

Move on accommodation provides a stepping stone to independent living. Lantern House was completed through the Kent PFI providing 11 units of accommodation and support services for people leaving short term temporary accommodation. Each one bedroom flat is self contained. There is communal space for meetings and a garden area. To be eligible to live at the scheme you need to be aged 16 and over, be registered as homeless and be eligible for assistance and also be registered for housing with Ashford Borough Council. Lantern House provides accommodation for up to 2 years, whilst residents receive the support needed to achieve independence.

The 8 unit supported housing scheme for young people being built at The Limes stalled during 2015 due to archaeology found on site and subsequently the contractor going into

administration. The work has now been retendered and the building work restarted with completion expected in November 2016.

Priority 4: Increase resident satisfaction with homes and neighbourhoods and increase opportunities for resident involvement

The Area Managers roles were realigned in 2015 and split into the arrears team, to concentrate on rental income and managing arrears and the neighbourhood team who deal with tenancy issues, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and estate management.

Rent collection remains high with month on month collection rate remaining at over 98%. Figures are reported quarterly to members. The number of tenants with rent arrears continues to fall. Tenants with more than 13 weeks arrears has halved to 26 and those with more than 7 weeks arrears has fallen by a third to 131.

With income from rent being reduced over the next 4 years due to the rent reduction programme, introduced by the government, it is vital to maintain high levels of rent collection to retain services to tenants and keep the housing stock in good repair.

The Ashford Promise incentivises tenants to adhere to their tenancy conditions and maintain their home. It is currently being used as a tool to address a breach of tenancy by withholding certain planned maintenance works.

Housing Area Managers attend the Community Safety Unit and work in partnership with other organisations to address any incidents of anti-social behaviour. Tackling any offences early and utilising mediation services wherever possible can often resolve neighbour problems reducing the need for intervention from the Council. The Anti-Social Behaviour Policy has been redrafted and sets out that a firm but fair approach will be used and enforcement action taken where appropriate to do so.

The Tenant Panel has been reviewed and a new panel of existing and new members formed following a recruitment process. Training has been undertaken so panel members can be confident in their role of scrutinising the services offered and contributing constructively to policy reviews.

Communicating with Tenants is moving to have a greater digital focus. Over 500 tenants receive the 'tellus' email which each month highlights two key topics, provides essential information or links, and seeks feedback. We offer incentives and are recording regular responses. The Housing News publication has been produced digitally for the first time in a page turning format which can be accessed on a range of devices.

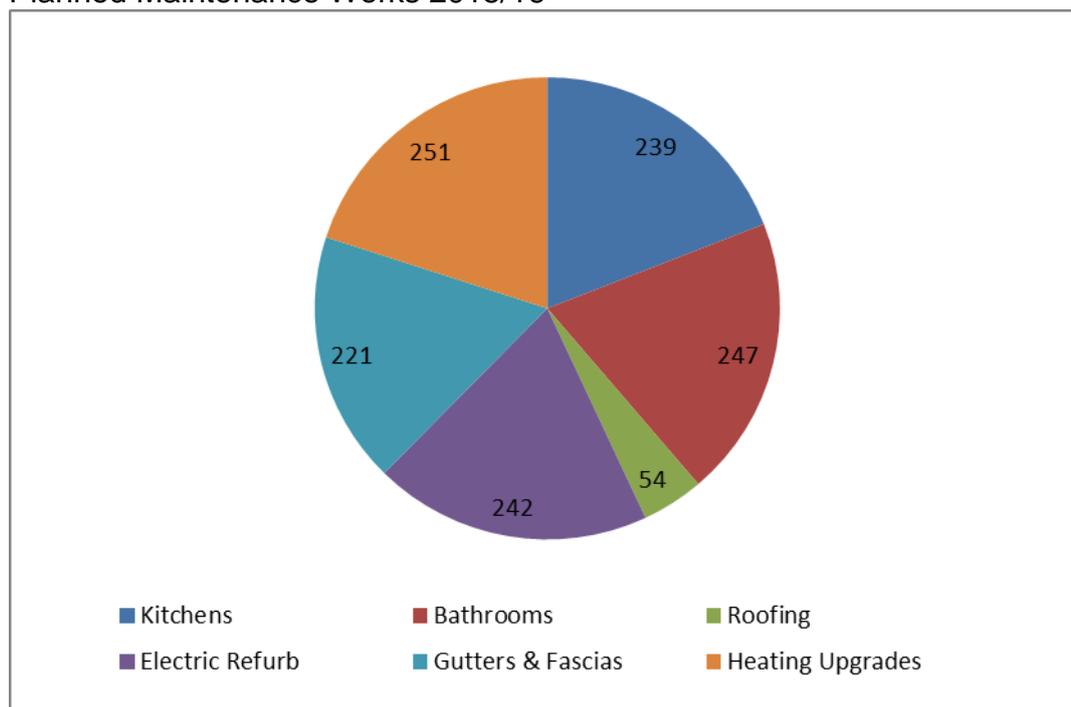
Good community relations are a key part of estate management. An excellent example of this is from May 2015. A community day in Newtown was attended by more than 400 residents. Ideas for what residents wanted to see on the day had been gathered in April. Welfare Advice Officers were present to help with money budgeting and benefit enquiries. Bulk rubbish and dog fouling were serious issues in the area, so all visitors received a packet of dog poo bags and Sir Litternot spread the word about bulk collections and picking up litter. This has resulted in reduction of 31% on both bulk rubbish and dog fouling. In recognition of the success of this event and his work with the community, the Area Manager, Danny Regan, was presented with a community champion award by the South Willesborough and Newtown Community Forum.

Even low key improvements such as a drying area at Baileys Field can make a considerable difference to tenants' enjoyment and use of an area, particularly when the residents have initiated the project.

The condition of homes is important in maintaining the value of properties themselves but an efficient and effective repairs service contributes to tenant satisfaction levels. During 2015/16 – 11745 responsive repairs and 377 void properties repairs were completed. Average tenant satisfaction levels for repairs were 93.71% representing an improvement over 92.05% levels of 2014/15.

The Planned Maintenance programme continues to see all the Council owned homes meet the decent homes standard. All council managed homes have an up to date gas safety certificate. The chart below shows the number of planned maintenance works completed in 2015/16, accounting for nearly £2.8m of spending.

Planned Maintenance Works 2015/16



Priority 5: Prevent and reduce homelessness and increase access to settled accommodation for homeless households and those at risk of homelessness

The Homelessness Service has signed up to working towards achieving the government’s gold standard. During 2015/16 a review of the homelessness strategy as been undertaken building on from the networking event for stakeholders held in 2014. The review provides evidence to identify how the 10 challenges set by government to prevent and reduce homelessness could be meet in Ashford. This has shaped the draft strategy and informed the priorities and actions proposed in the draft homelessness strategy which is currently out for consultation.

Prevention of homelessness is key and the Housing Options Officers wherever possible work to find solutions to prevent homelessness occurring. In 2015/16 there were 204 homelessness applications received with 139 acceptances, a decrease on the previous year’s totals of 225 and 151 respectively.

128 households were living in temporary accommodation in March 2016, with 17 households in bed and breakfast. Over the past year there was an average of 13 households in bed and breakfast per month.

Vulnerable council tenants are supported by the area managers who will refer them to services to help them sustain their tenancy. This results in few homelessness acceptances from social housing. Before an area manager applies for a warrant of eviction it is considered by the serious arrears officer and the senior housing options officer to consider if there is any additional advice or support that could help the household to prevent their homelessness.

In the private sector the landlord liaison officers work with both tenants and landlords to resolve issues and where possible prevent loss of accommodation.

Ashford Churches Together, in partnership with Ashford Borough Council and Porchlight, piloted a winter night shelter for 6 weeks from February 2016. The scheme relied on donations and Sainsbury kindly donated food that was about to go out of date. Six churches participated and between them provided shelter every night. Although uptake was slow, by the end of the pilot all 12 bed spaces were being used. Porchlight and Ashford Borough Council are continuing to work with the clients who used the night shelter to secure permanent accommodation. Lessons learnt from the pilot will be used to assess whether the scheme should be run again.

Looking Ahead

The Housing Frameworks priorities will be reviewed in the forthcoming months to reflect recent legislative changes introduced when the Housing and Planning Act received Royal Assent on 12th May 2016. Other measures such as the rent reduction programme and changes to grant funding for affordable housing will also influence the priorities and ways of working moving forwards.

The revised priorities will take account of the Corporate Plan Priority: Quality Housing and Homes for All and the aspiration: *To secure quality homes across the borough, catering for a range of ages, tenures and need, in well planned and attractive new places.*

The Local Plan policies are instrumental in the delivery of new homes and housing will continue through the revised priorities to work closely with planning policy and development teams to deliver homes in the borough to meet the needs of existing and future residents.

Housing Framework 2013-2018 Action Plan - progress 2016

Timeframe: Short = within 2 years, Medium = 3 – 5 years, Long = more than 5 years

Status Achieved ✓
 On target ◇
 Missed ✕
 To be progressed *

Priority 1: IMPROVE THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO MEET LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS IN ASHFORD BOROUGH'S URBAN AND RURAL AREAS			
Action	Timeframe	Summary update	Status
a) Wherever possible maximise the number of section106 sites achieving 30 or 35 per cent affordable housing in urban and rural areas respectively	Ongoing	Housing Services continues to work closely with planning to wherever possible achieve the policy target. This included the Council purchasing 21 homes at Charing. Overall a total of 247 affordable homes were completed in 2015/16 on all sites. The tenure split was 166 homes for affordable rent and 81 for shared ownership.	◇
b) Deliver a minimum of 59 new homes through the local authority new build programme	Medium (by 2018)	Target achieved in 14/15 with further sites and designs are being worked up as part of the 2015 -18 affordable homes programme.	✓
c) Create a local housing and regeneration company	Short (by 2015)	Company formed and operational from April 2014.	✓
d) Housing company to develop private and affordable housing to an initial value of £10 million to meet local needs	Medium (by 2018)	10 properties added to the portfolio in 15/16.	◇
e) Make best use of existing stock including ensuring appropriate accommodation used to meet housing needs, reduce under occupation and	Ongoing	Void times reduced on previous year to an average of 18 days. Assisted moves assisted 35 older tenants to downsize. Tenancy fraud investigations continue. The Social Mobility Fund was promoted but no tenants took up the offer to receive a cash incentive to assist them into open market purchase.	◇

meet void targets, continue tenancy fraud investigations			
f) Support Housing Association led developments to create mixed communities in urban and rural areas	Ongoing	Local Lettings plans continue to be used to help create mixed communities and mixed tenure HA developments are supported.	◇
g) Develop innovative ways to improve delivery of local needs housing, including a cross subsidy approach and land purchase options	Short (by 2015)	Cross subsidy policy drafted for inclusion in local plan consultation Use of Community Land Trusts being explored with support of the Rural Housing Enabler.	✓
h) Utilise receipts from the right to buy to develop more affordable homes	Medium (by 2018)	Right to Buy receipt monies have been used to part fund affordable housing, including Poppy Fields (Charing), Farrow Court and other one off purchases. 31 homes were sold under the Right to Buy	◇
i) Support self - build homes	Ongoing	Liaison with planning regarding the implementation of self build register	◇
j) Identify and return to use long term empty properties	Ongoing	Commencement of first Empty Dwelling Management Order 2 empty properties returned to use as result of officer intervention.	✓

Priority 2: IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF HOMES AND ADDRESS FUEL POVERTY IN ALL TENURES

Action	Timeframe	Summary update	Status
a) Develop and implement a private sector housing strategy	Short (by 2015)	Private sector housing will be included within the refreshed housing strategy. Private Sector Housing Enforcement and Prosecution Policy drafted	*
b) Promote uptake of energy efficiency measures across all tenures	Ongoing	Upgrades to tenants boilers, insulation and reducing use of oil and LPG in off gas properties by replacement with more efficient heating and renewable energy sources. In private sector, landlord accreditation scheme has resulted in one boiler replacement.	◇
c) Work to reduce fuel poverty across all tenures	Ongoing	Fuel poverty indicator remained 7.6% as updated in May 2015. Signposting to schemes available – Winter Warmth Grant and Public Health Winter Warmth programme	✗

d) Continue trial to insulate hard to heat homes in ABC stock and roll out main programme in 2015	Long	13 homes received external wall insulation. The pilot in 14/15 has enabled improvements to be made to how the system is installed. The tenants have noticed a marked improvement in heating their homes.	◊
e) Promote uptake of renewable energy measures	Ongoing	In local authority and housing association homes renewable energy measures are installed mainly on new build properties. Renewable energy measures are not actively promoted to the private sector.	◊ ✗
f) Undertake private sector stock condition survey	Short (by 2015)	Not progressed due to high costs involved. Enquiries being undertaken into the use of BRE data to identify stock condition in the area.	✗
g) Maximise resources by linking with other agencies	Ongoing	Work with DWP at Hub providing information and advice to move people back into work Work with Porchlight to provide homelessness advice service Work with Mediation to resolve tenant disputes	◊

Priority 3: INCREASE AVAILABILITY AND CHOICE OF ACCOMMODATION INCLUDING FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Action	Timeframe	Summary update	Status
a) Increase availability of well managed private rented homes	Ongoing	Social Lettings Agency and Private Sector Leasing scheme continue to provide housing options in the private rented managed by ABC. The landlord liaison officers and private sector housing team identify and resolve issues in private rented sector and regular landlord working group and forum held.	◊
b) Continue to increase the number of homes within the Ashford Better Choice social lettings agency portfolio	Ongoing	73 homes now on full management option in the Social Lettings Agency including the properties managed on behalf of Shepway DC.	✓
c) Identify and develop bespoke properties for disabled families through local authority new build programme	Medium (by 2018)	No specific bespoke needs identified in 15/16, new build total included 33 units at Farrow Court which are wheelchair accessible meeting modern standards of good practice for older persons accommodation and dementia friendly	✓
d) Provide disabled adaptations for ABC tenants	Ongoing	324 disabled adaptations completed	◊

e) Work with partners to identify and increase range of supported housing for vulnerable people to meet local needs (including ex service personnel), seek alternative ways to generate revenue funding	Ongoing	8 unit supported housing scheme for young people stalled due to archeology and contractor going in to administration. Now due for completion November 2016 11 units of Move-On accommodation completed via Kent PFI 67 unit extra care scheme completed	◊
f) Manage the Disabled Facilities Grant budget to maximise assistance provided	Ongoing	57 households received adaptations.	◊
g) Remodel and improve council-owned sheltered housing accommodation	Long	Phase 1 of remodelling Farrow Court completed with phase 2 under construction. Plans for second scheme being developed to remodel Danemore Remodelling of Little Hill via Kent PFI underway	◊
h) Provide increased provision of gypsy and traveller sites	Medium (by 2018)	Number of plots on Council owned site remain constant. Further provision most likely to come via planning policy in local plan and individual planning applications.	*
i) Develop Older Persons Framework	Medium (by 2018)	To be progressed, concern over impact on supported housing of rent reduction programme and what may happen after April 2017 if not exempted	*
j) Increase the number of well planned and managed shared houses (HMOs)	Long	8 new licences for HMOs were issued	◊

Priority 4: INCREASE RESIDENT SATISFACTION WITH HOMES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS AND INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

Action	Timeframe	Summary update	Status
a) Encourage housing providers to be actively involved in good housing management	Ongoing	Quarterly meetings have been held for RP Development and Management Forum to ensure delivery of high quality properties and high quality management of properties and their occupants	◊
b) Regenerate Brookfield Road and Bybrook areas	Medium (By 2018)	The Bybrook scheme is periodically being reviewed based upon the community consultation and mandate.	*

		<p>7 properties have been completed, 4 in Brookfield Road and 3 in Beaver Road which improved the street scene and stopped up a cut through and removed areas of anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>A solution for Halstow Way is being worked on further to the HA finding the scheme unviable.</p> <p>At The Poplars there has been some work to make the communal space more private, which has improved the tenants wellbeing.</p>	◊
c) Review sheltered housing service	Short (By 2015)	Completed 13/14	✓
d) Joint working with agencies to deliver neighbourhood improvements	Ongoing	Range of community activities undertaken, including the successful Newtown funday and smaller scale improvements in specific areas identified by tenants.	✓
e) Address poor standards in private sector, including park homes and investigate options for self funded improvements e.g. equity release	Ongoing	<p>Where necessary enforcement action taken to improve private rented properties. Enforcement and prosecution policy drafted Park homes monitored and complaints addressed through appropriate action.</p> <p>Equity release to be progressed.</p>	◊ *
f) Maintain decent homes standard in council-owned stock	Ongoing	ABC stock 100% compliant.	✓
g) Increase tenant involvement and responsibility through tenant panel and tenant scrutiny	Ongoing	Tenant panel reviewed , new members recruited and actively engaged in scrutiny work	◊

Priority 5: PREVENT AND REDUCE HOMELESSNESS AND INCREASE ACCESS TO SETTLED ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS AND THOSE AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

Action	Timeframe	Summary update	Status
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<p>a) Implement the homelessness strategy focus on: Preventing homelessness wherever possible Providing quality housing services and suitable accommodation for homeless people Homes with support, settled and sustainable homes</p>	<p>Short (by 2015)</p>	<p>Prevention of homelessness a priority. In 2015/16 there were 204 homelessness application received with 139 acceptances, a decrease on the previous years totals of 225 and 151 respectively.</p> <p>Homelessness review undertaken and draft strategy published for consultation.</p> <p>There has been a 28% increase in the number of applicants on the housing register between March 2015 (1215) and March 2016 (1556). On average 89 applicants on the register each month are homeless.</p> <p>128 households were living in temporary accommodation in March 2016, with 17 households in bed and breakfast. Over the year there is an average of 13 households in bed and breakfast per month.</p>	
<p>b) Raise awareness of the implications of welfare reform to tenants</p>	<p>Short (by 2015)</p>	<p>Continue to use local media and tenants newsletter to update tenants and provide information on where to seek advice</p>	
<p>c) Identify tenants who will lose benefit and advise of choices to manage reduced income</p>	<p>Short (by 2015)</p>	<p>Area managers continue to identify tenants who may face difficulties due to welfare reform and work closely with the Welfare Reform Officers. Landlord Liaison Officers and Housing Options Team offer advice in the private sector.</p>	
<p>d) Monitor external influences, identify pressures on meeting housing needs and respond to minimise any negative effects</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Draft Homelessness Strategy considers pressures on service and opportunities for joint working to make effective use of limited resources</p>	