

<p><b>SERVICE VISION</b></p> <p>Together we will make the changes to provide better homes and communities</p>	
<p><b>DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocations and lettings of social housing; the management of the authority’s retained stock – income collection, tenancy enforcement, the management of nuisance &amp; anti-social behaviour, Right to Buy sales</li> <li>• The Council has a contractual relationship with tenants, which derives from the tenancy agreement. There are specific explicit rights, powers and obligations which arise from parliamentary legislation and these are above those conveyed by the contract. Various Acts of parliament have created different types of tenancy and specifying the rights and obligations relating to each type of tenancy.</li> <li>• The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is the regulator of social housing and Registered Providers of Social Housing such as the Council are expected to comply with the provisions of the Regulatory Framework which is comprised of a number of National Standards. The Standards which apply to the Council relate to Home; Tenancy; Tenant Involvement &amp; Empowerment; and Neighbourhood &amp; Community</li> </ul>	
<p><b>OBJECTIVES</b></p>	
<p><b>Short Term</b> (specific to this financial year)</p> <p>Delivery of a number of new homes at various schemes throughout the District; in particular, 22 new homes at Well Parks in Crediton</p> <p>Meeting targets including those relating to income collection, management of ASB, the management of void properties and customer contact</p> <p>Making best use of stock by issuing flexible tenancies, as appropriate; by ensuring that approximately 1000 properties are visited and Tenancy Home Checks are completed; by ensuring that adapted homes are allocated to those who need them; and by taking action to minimise tenancy fraud.</p> <p>The Housing Services Manager is currently reviewing the Housing Strategy which is due to be launched in April 2014</p>	<p><b>Medium and Long Term</b> (targets you are working towards beyond this financial year to achieve vision and corporate aims)</p> <p>Managing the impact of an aging population</p> <p>Managing the impact of welfare reform</p>
<p><b>POLICY FRAMEWORK</b></p> <p>Leaseholder handbook – to be launched May 2013</p> <p>ASB summary leaflet – to be complete by end of May 2013</p>	

Aids and adaptations policy – July 2013

Review cash incentive scheme – July 2013

HRA Business Plan – July 2013

Pets policy – amendment needed to take account of RSPCA guidance and to manage dangerous dogs – September 2013

Hoarding policy – November 2013

Compensation policy – November 2013

Tenant Involvement Policy – September 2013

Tenant Involvement Strategy – November 2013

Review of tenancy agreement – December 2013

Tenancy policy – review by April 2014

**CONSULTATION**

The Housing Allocations team administers Devon Home Choice and there are approximately 1700 housing applicants registered for rehousing in Mid Devon. The Housing Service has over 3000 homes in management and needs to be responsive to the needs of tenants.

The Housing Service offers a wide range of opportunities for tenants to get involved:

- The Scrutiny and Improvement Group
- Housing News 4U : editorial panel
- Tenant Inspectors who inspect void properties and assist with reviewing work undertaken as part of the planned maintenance contract
- Estate Representatives
- Complaints Panel
- Local Voice Events
- Devon Housing Options Events
- Focus Groups (such as the one which reviewed the ASB policy and procedures in 2012)

- Tenant training

During 2013, we plan to run a number of “Making Your Money Go Further” events involving different agencies eg DWP, Children’s Centres, CHAT to enable us to consult with tenants and also to provide them with money-saving tips and help and advice about how to maximise income, and to respond to welfare reform.

The HCA expects Registered Providers to have on-going discussions with tenants about their offer and this is why the SIG routinely analyses performance data, reviews policies and procedures and is about to commence work on a service review relating to rechargeable repairs.

**RESOURCES**

<b>Staffing</b> (Workforce Plan)	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Other</b>
<p><i>Housing Services Manager:</i> 1 x FTE</p> <p><i>Neighbourhood Teams :</i></p> <p>9 x FTE including 3 x Neighbourhood Team Leaders 1 x 0.67 FTE</p> <p><i>Housing Allocations Team:</i></p> <p>2 x FTE including Allocations Team Leader 2 x 0.5 FTE</p> <p><i>Housing Policy Officer:</i> 1 x FTE</p> <p><i>Tenant Involvement Co-ordinator:</i> 1 x FTE</p> <p><i>Finance &amp; Performance Team:</i></p> <p>3 x FTE including F&amp; P Manager 1 x 0.75 FTE 1 x 0.7 FTE</p> <p><i>Housing Business Support Team:</i></p> <p>Team Leader: 1 x 0.6 FTE</p> <p>1 x FTE</p> <p>1 x 0.81 FTE</p>	<p>Base Budget</p> <p>Income and expenditure forecast</p> <p>Most of the projects detailed within this plan can be contained within existing budgets.</p> <p>However, additional resources may be required to fund the following:</p> <p>1 x 0.4 FTE Grade 5 (assumed) Officer to implement revised letters for income collection</p> <p>1 x FTE Grade 7 (assumed) Officer to support establishment of dedicated resource to help mitigate the impact of welfare reform</p> <p>NB the cost of rent collection may decrease once telephone direct debits are implemented if more tenants opt to take up this method of rent collection.</p>	<p>Devon Home Choice</p> <p>Devon Area Action Plan</p> <p>Devon Strategic Housing Group</p> <p>Devon Social Housing Fraud Forum</p> <p>Devon Mediation Service (SLA expires 31/03/14)</p> <p>Local Area Groups (Tiverton, Crediton &amp; Cullompton)</p> <p>Citizen’s Advice Bureau</p> <p>CHAT</p> <p>Age UK</p> <p>HomeSwappers (annual membership fee)</p> <p>SLCNG (annual membership fee)</p> <p>TPAS (annual membership fee)</p> <p>Involve Devon</p> <p>Targeted Family Support</p> <p>Community Safety Partnership</p> <p>Devon &amp; Cornwall Training Network (annual membership fee)</p> <p>Housing Quality Network (annual membership fee)</p>

<p>1 x 0.7 FTE 1 x 0.4 Temp and 0.6 perm</p> <p>Establishment of a dedicated resource to recover high level debt and to provide advice and support to tenants experiencing financial difficulties</p> <p>One Neighbourhood Officer (0.67 FTE) and one Housing Needs Officer are due to go on Maternity Leave during the year. They are both likely to go on leave during September. One Housing Needs Assistant is due to return from Maternity Leave in July 2013. One Housing Business Support Assistant (0.81 FTE) is currently on Maternity Leave and is likely to return to work in January 2014.</p>		<p>HouseMark (annual membership fee) Sanctuary Carr Gomm We subscribe to CloH Practice on-line</p>
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**CONTINGENCY PLANS**

What plans do you have in place to continue to meet service obligations should there be a disruption to service resources (eg staffing, equipment, contractor)

The Council uses an integrated housing management system and is a partner in the Devon Home Choice scheme. Devon Home Choice uses the Abrisas system to administer the housing register. In both cases, if there was a system failure, the normal business recovery procedures would apply. Our own ICT team would be able to recover records relating to the Orchard system and Exeter City Council, which hosts Devon Home Choice, have in place procedures to enable them to recover the records held on Abrisas.

In recent years, efforts have been made to ensure that there is cover available in the event of the absence of different members of staff. The Housing Service operates a generic system of housing management and this means that Officers in the Neighbourhood teams can be moved around to cover any absences. The Homelessness team can provide cover for the Housing Allocations team and some Members of the Housing Business Support team also have knowledge of the working of Devon Home Choice and the Abrisas system. In the Finance and Performance team, the procedures relating to each routine task associated with rent accountancy have been documented and team members have been provided with training to enable them to cover each other, if necessary.

In recent years, when significant numbers of staff have been unable to travel to and from work due to snow, those Officers who live in Tiverton have been able to provide office cover whilst those unable to travel have worked at home and accessed all relevant systems using Citrix fobs.

ACTION PLAN								
	Objective and Description of Project(s)	Expected Outcome	Potential Impacts (+/-)			Risk Score		
			Public, Staff, Service Users	Other Services (maximum of three)	Sustainability	I	L	Total
1.	Implementation of “traffic light” letters for income collection	Flag up awareness of increasing rent debt to tenants, prompting them to make contact	Increased volume of calls from concerned tenants; increased costs in terms of transactions; greater awareness of debt	Customer First and the Housing Benefit team may receive more queries	Once implemented, the letters will form part of the procedures used to recover income from tenants and other debtors	3	2	6
2.	Establishment of a dedicated resource to recover high level debt and to provide advice and support to tenants experiencing financial difficulties	This would help to mitigate against the impact of the spare bedroom deduction and other welfare reforms and potentially stop rent arrears and other debts increasing	The Neighbourhood teams will have more time to devote to tenancy and estate management and tenants will be able to discuss their financial and other problems with a dedicated professional trained to give welfare rights advice.	Housing Benefits may receive more claims from Housing tenants but may find that the dedicated Officer is able to reduce their workloads by giving tenants assistance with form-filling etc	This team would be a pilot project and the outcomes would be monitored. If it fails to make an impact it would be disbanded.	1	2	2
3.	To continually improve the database that contains information of our property attributes to increase the quality of our adverts on Devon Home Choice (DHC).	Quality adverts, reduced refusal rates.	Reduction in enquiries relating to properties being advertised. Reduction in refusal rates to minimise rent loss.	Reduced enquiries with Customer First/Housing Needs and Business Support Team	Regular updates and maintenance should ensure accuracy and quality assurance.	1	1	2

4.	To review the amended Supplementary Planning Document.	To ensure it is fit for purpose and to ensure houses being built in rural exception sites are allocated to those with a strong local connection.	To assist RP's in allocating properties in accordance with the 106 Agreement quickly and efficiently. The potential for negative PR if the changes do not meet with support from the public must be taken into account.	Reduce involvement/consultation between the Housing Needs Team and RP's	Once reviewed and approved will ensure a consistent approach and customer satisfaction.	3	2	6
5.	Review the Aids and Adaptations Policy	To ensure it is fit for purpose and reduce unnecessary expenditure on adaptations. To ensure we assist disabled applicants fairly and ensure adapted properties are allocated to those who need them.	To ensure adapted council property is allocated to those who need them.	To assist the Private Sector Team/Housing Needs Team and Tenants.		1	1	2
6.	Reviewing and streamlining the sign-up process and pack	To ensure all verification documentation is recorded and attached.	Ensure quality assurance and comply with audit requirements.	Neighbourhood Teams/Business Support Team/Housing Needs Team.		1	1	2
7.	To update the procedure manual with information relating to flexible tenancies/updated offer letters etc	To ensure the correct type of tenancy is given where a new tenancy is being created.	To provide guidance for staff. The consequence of issuing the wrong tenancy in error could	Housing Needs Team/Business Support Team/Neighbourhood Team		1	1	2

			be protracted, complicated and expensive legal action.					
8.	Implementation of telephone Direct Debits for rent payments	The Housing Service promotes payments by Direct Debit due to the significant cost savings which can be made. We hope to increase take-up by making it easier to join the scheme.	Potentially, this will cause additional work for staff in the Finance and Performance team.	Customer First may see a reduction in the number of cash payments received.	The Housing Service needs to encourage payment by offering as many different payment methods as possible.	1	1	2
9.	Publication of the annual report to tenants	To publish an annual report by October 2013	There is an impact in terms of Officer time as the publication of such a document is quite time-consuming. The SIG is involved in discussions around the theme and design. There is also a cost involved.	Customer First may receive more queries.	This used to be a regulatory requirement. Although this requirement has been dropped, it is seen as good practice for registered providers to demonstrate to tenants and other stakeholders their offer to them and to show how they are meeting the national standards. Potentially, this project could be dropped if the resources were not available to deliver it.	1	1	2

10	Review of the tenancy agreement	To ensure that the tenancy agreement reflects changes in legislation and to strengthen some clauses	This is a resource-heavy project which will take a great deal of time. The Council is obliged to consult tenants on any changes to the tenancy agreement and this project must be undertaken in a way that reflects good practice. Some tenants and Councillors will be involved in discussions about possible changes and this could impact upon their time. Expenses will be payable to tenants who get involved in accordance with our policy.	The Legal Service will be involved in discussions about changes and with drafting new conditions. Customer First could experience an increased volume of calls arising from queries relating to the consultation.	It is good practice to revise the tenancy agreement on a regular basis and so the revised terms and conditions will be reviewed periodically.	3	2	6
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**APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Service Work Plans

Appendix B: Service Risk Report (all service risks should be on SPAR)

Appendix C: Service Performance Report (all service standards and KPIs should be on SPAR) - to include progress on previous year's targets as well as targets for this year

Appendix D: Service Training Plan

Appendix E: Service Financial Savings Plan (see example below)

Appendix F: Service Marketing Plan (if applicable) – who are your competitors and how do you compare? What are your plans for increasing custom/use and income?


Appendix G: Service Benchmarking Information (if available)


**ACTION PLAN – PROGRESS UPDATE**

<b>1) OBJECTIVE</b>		<b>Lead Officer:</b>	
Activity		<b>Project Status:</b>	(RAG Smiley)
<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Completed Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
1.1 Example milestone	31/01/2013		75% Complete
1.2			
1.3			
1.4			

<b>2) OBJECTIVE</b>		<b>Lead Officer:</b>	
Activity		<b>Project Status:</b>	(RAG Smiley)
<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Completed Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
2.1 Example milestone	31/01/2013		75% Complete
2.2			
2.3			
2.4			

**Project Status:**  Completed and evaluated

 On target for completion by due date

 Behind target