

East Kent Housing Delivery Plan 2011/12

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1. Overview and Challenges. In setting up East Kent Housing (EKH), the four councils set clear objectives for the new organisation. These included delivering excellent customer service, realising efficiencies, encouraging stronger and prosperous communities, improving procurement capacity, developing a stronger role for tenants in shaping the housing service and improving opportunities for staff.

Whilst our key objectives for the long-term are about improving efficiency and the quality of the service to our tenants, the first year will inevitably be focused on establishing the new organisation. There are significant challenges to be addressed in the first year including:

- Establish the new organisation and its management structure
- Developing the Board so that it can give clear and decisive leadership to the organisation
- Establish the principles of good governance at all levels in the management of the organisation
- Establishing robust systems and processes that ensure that the organisation is both effective and using its resources efficiently
- Integrating four different housing organisations into a single team with a clear focus on service improvement
- Developing a productive relationship with the four councils so that they understand the challenges faced by EKH in the first year and support our development
- Establishing working interfaces with the councils' financial system and other systems
- Maintaining performance and service standards at existing levels while creating a structure and environment for sustained improvements in the years ahead

In designing and creating the new organisation we need to be mindful at all times of our mandate to improve services and efficiency and build an organisation that will be capable of delivering this.

2. Delivery Plan

Objective one: - Excellent Customer Service. East Kent Housing aims to provide the highest possible standard of customer service and care. To deliver excellence in customer service we will:

	Task	Actions	By	Lead	Comments & notes
1.1	Work towards the Customer Service Excellence Standard	Appoint project team and area champions	June 2011		The Customer Service Excellence Standard replaced the old Charter Mark. Canterbury are fully accredited to this standard
		Establish a consistent methodology for collecting information about the customer experience	Oct 2011		i.e. complaints, surveys, focus groups, e mail groups etc
		Conduct audit and gap analysis against the standard	Dec 2011		Establish how each far each area has to go to reach the standard
		Detailed project and implementation plan (incorporating actions in the 2012 Delivery Plan)	Mar 2011		
1.2	Develop a robust complaints procedure	Board to approve outline policy and principles	Apr 2011		The existing complaints procedures inherited from the four councils are varied but have been adopted for the initial period of operation
		Consult tenants/leaseholders and the councils on revised proposals	Jun 2011		Councils need to be happy that process meets their requirements
		Board to approve final policy	Jul 2011		
1.3	Improve opportunities for tenants to feedback on the services they receive	Establish systematic approach to capture and collate information and feedback from tenants	Mar 2012		Links to the need to enhance the role of tenant participation to capture and assess what tenants think about our services

		Introduce a system for capturing comments and informal complaints from tenants	Mar 2012		Most complaints and observations from tenants go unrecorded
		Produce regular reports to Area Boards and the Management team on feedback from tenants including analysis of complaints	Dec 2011		
1.4	Ensure that the service remains accountable to elected members/ward councillors	Publish contact details of EKH staff for councillors and MPs	Jun 2011		Need to provide all councillors details following May elections
		Agree and publish a protocol for handling enquires from councillors and MPs	Jun 2011		
		Provide regular briefings for elected members	Jun 2011		Consider quarterly e mail bulletin
		Contact all new councillors after the May election	May 2011		
1.5	Develop a systematic approach to customer profiling	Investigate good practice from other ALMOs and social landlords	Oct 2011		
		Agree common questionnaire to be used for information gathering	Oct 2011		
		Establish mechanism for retaining and managing the information	Oct 2011		
1.6	Develop new ways that tenants can access information on services and communicate with us	Explore how other ALMOs and social landlords are using the internet and means of communication to improve access to services for tenants	Nov 2011		Explore -On line appointments , improved repair reporting, complaints handling, incoming text messaging, reporting graffiti ,rubbish/fly tipping communal repairs, H&S concerns
1.7	Ensure that there are robust systems to protect the health and safety of our tenants in their homes	Review existing processes to ensure that there are consistent processes across all four areas that conform to	Sept 2011		Gas safety/Fire risks/ asbestos/Legionella/Communal areas

	and on their estates	good practice			
		Ensure that there are appropriate methods to record inspections and tests	Nov 2011		Preliminary review of insurance claims suggest poor recording of inspections is a weakness
		Review insurance claims history and establish action plan to reduce risks	Nov 2011		Will help reduce future insurance premiums
		Introduce system of grading/scoring for estate inspections	Dec 2011		Allows estates to be assessed against agreed standards and continuous improvement to be monitored
		Expand system of tenant inspectors to all areas	Dec 2011		
1.8	Establish the EKH identity with our tenants	Use tenant newsletters, the website and contractors' vehicles to promote the new identify of EKH	Jun 2011		
1.9	Make information about EKH and our housing service more accessible to our tenants	Identify good practice from ALMOs and other social landlords	Jun 2011		
1.10	Develop and embed a culture of excellent customer service through agreed common values	Establish common set of values between staff and Board	April 2011		
		Develop code of conduct and competencies based on agreed values	Sept 2011		

Objective two: - Integrating four services into one. For East Kent Housing to work efficiently and deliver the efficiencies required of us, it's important to streamline processes and establish common procedures across all four areas of the operation. To develop a single integrated service we will:

	Task	Actions	By	Lead	Comments & notes
2.1	Establish common working procedures for key activities and functions	Agree priority activities to be included in the review	May 2011		To include H&S, and safeguarding
		Launch new set of processes	Dec 2011		
2.2	Establish a scheme of delegations	Board to consider and agree scheme	Apr 2011		
2.3	Establish a risk management system	Establish a risk register and risk management process	Aug 2011		
2.4	Plan to have a single integrated housing IT system	Work with EK Services to draft options and strategy	Mar 2012		Target for implementation 2013/14
2.5	Develop an integrated IT policy	Develop policy in conjunction with EK services	Dec 2011		To cover security, usage, equipment disposal, recovery and back up, software usage/licences
2.6	Establish a fair and transparent charging system for the calculation of the management fee	Explore and introduce activity based costing as method to establish unit management cost	Mar 2012		

Objective three: - Supporting the Councils' strategic objectives. East Kent Housing is committed to working with the four councils to make their districts a better and safer place to live. To support the councils we will:

	Task	Actions	By	Lead	Comments & notes
3.1	Continue to develop robust approaches to tackling anti social behaviour (ASB)	Establish consistent and robust procedures and ASB toolkit for all four areas	Dec 2011		Consider single ASB champion for EKH
		Undertake surveys of complainants and perpetrators involved in ASB and neighbour disputes	Mar 2012		
		Establish protocols and liaison arrangements with the community safety partnerships	Jun 2011		
		Promote greater use of mediation services to resolve ASB and Neighbour disputes	Dec 2011		
		Evaluate effectiveness of mediation in ASB and neighbour disputes	Mar 2012		
		Agree definitions for a Good Neighbour standard with tenants representatives	Mar 2011		
3.2	Work with the four councils to explore ways of making better use of the housing stock	Investigate initiatives from other ALMOs and landlords to reduce under occupation and help tenants move to more suitable accommodation	Mar 2012		
		Consult Area Boards and tenant representatives on potential initiatives to reduce under occupation	May 2012		
		Agree strategy to reduce under occupation with the four councils	July 2012		
		Agree with councils strategy and measures to tackle tenancy fraud	Mar 2012		

3.3	Support the councils in the regeneration of their districts and help reduce deprivation on our estates	Agree with councils regeneration priorities for 2012 Delivery Plan	Dec 2011		
3.4	Promote opportunities for residents to access training and employment	Review and evaluate initiatives from other ALMOs and social landlords to promote social and economic inclusion	Dec 2011		Discussion paper to Board and council representatives by Feb 2012
		Evaluate the role of the income recovery team in providing financial advice and support to tenants	Mar 2012		
		Develop apprenticeship and training schemes with contractors	Mar 2012		
		Explore opportunities/initiatives to reduce tenants energy costs	Mar 2012		Potential for procurement agreements with suppliers. Energy advice to tenants.
3.5	Support the councils in a joint response to the government's housing policy	Evaluate options for new forms of tenancies with the four councils	Oct 2010		Councils to decide on application of fixed term tenancies etc but EKH will want to influence decisions
3.6	Deliver the councils' capital investment programme for its housing stock	Publish to tenants the five year investment programme for their areas.	Dec 2011		
		Establish appropriate systems for monitoring and reporting on the delivery of the improvement and planned maintenance programmes	Oct 2011		
3.7	Work with the councils to promote and support their environmental and sustainability strategies	Consult councils on environmental and sustainability implications and activities in 2012/13 Delivery Plan	Dec 2011		
3.8	Ensure that EKH discharges its statutory duties to children and vulnerable adults	Adopt policy and procedures for the protection of children and vulnerable adults	Dec 2011		Existing council policies and practices will continue to apply until policy is in place

Objective four: - Value for money (VFM). The four councils agreed to establish East Kent Housing based on a business case that indicated that improved efficiencies could be achieved through four councils working together. East Kent Housing is tasked with delivering reductions in operating costs in excess of £500,000 per year, while delivering the improved services that have been promised to tenants. The cost reductions are consistent with those required of other council services. To improve value for money we will:

	Task	Actions	By	Lead	Comments & notes
4.1	Review staffing arrangements to gain the benefits and efficiencies of a larger organisation	Senior management structure to be reviewed	Jun 2011		
		Review the functional staffing arrangements to maximise the benefits and economies of scale from 4 into 1	Sept 2011		Review to be completed by Jun and implementation of any changes to structures and working arrangements to be completed by end of Sept
4.2	Work with the councils to implement rent restructuring and respond to the opportunities of self financing	Develop the business case for HRA accounting to transfer to EKH in future tranches of shared services	Dec 2011		
4.3	Develop appropriate systems of internal controls supported by the EK Audit Partnership	Agree financial standing orders and regulations	Apr 2011		
4.4	Conduct systematic VFM/efficiency reviews for all services	Board to agree programme of reviews for 2012-14	Dec 2011		

Objective five: - Resident involvement and Empowerment. Tenants and leaseholders will play a vital part in helping us raise standards and improve services. We support the enhanced role of tenants in the regulation and monitoring of their housing service. To maximise the benefits of tenant involvement and empowerment we will:

	Task	Actions	By	Lead	Comments & notes
5.1	Establish local Area Boards	Agree with JTLG and other tenant representatives terms of reference	May 2011		Workshops have taken place in Feb and Mar
		Board to agree final terms of reference and nominees to each Area Board	June 2011		
		First Meetings of Area Boards	Jul 2011		
		Agree with Area Boards and tenants' groups programme of training for Area Board members	Aug 2011		
		Hold annual meeting between the Board and tenant representatives	Mar 2012		
5.2	Build on the success of the JTLG to create new opportunities for tenants from different areas to work together in service	Hold first annual event /conference for tenant representatives on the Area Boards	Nov 2011		To include consultation on 2012/13 Delivery Plan
		Establish regular liaison meetings between the Chairs of Area Boards	Sept 2011		
		Establish cross boundary Communications sub group	Sept 2011		
5.3	Respond to the revised regulatory framework for tenants involvement and scrutiny	Review compliance with the six TSA standards across the four areas to ensure a consistent approach in the future	Dec 2011		
		Establish the role of Area Boards in monitoring the six TSA standards and the delivery of the local offers	Sept 2011		

5.4	Improve information available to all tenants	Provide all tenants with an annual report	Oct 2011		
		Make performance information, the Delivery Plan, services standards and local offers available to tenants through a variety of media	Dec 2011		
5.5	Improve opportunities for new channels of feedback from tenants	Explore the use of social networking to gather feedback from tenants/leaseholders	Dec 2012		

Objective six: - High quality workforce. Around 220 employees will transfer from the four councils to East Kent Housing. Each of the four councils have different ways of working, different processes and procedures, different cultures and approaches to the service. The challenge for EKH is to develop a common commitment from staff to the organisation and to our values, aims and goals. To create a quality workforce we will:

	Task	Actions	By	Lead	Comments & notes
6.1	Have a clear purpose and strong set of values to guide our work	Agree with staff and the board a mission statement and set of values	April 2011		Board away day Feb 2011 Staff workshops March 2011
		Embed the values into the staff development framework	June 2011		
		Develop and agree a set of competencies to reflect the values	June 2011		
6.2	Establish formal processes and structure to consult and involve staff	Set up work place forum/ Staff consultative group	June 2011		
6.3	Establish supportive and clear leadership for the staff team	Undertake collective leadership training for the Management team	Oct 2011		
		Explore the using of coaching to improve skills and embed the values	Oct 2011		
6.4	Develop staff skills to support the mission and values	Set out a training programme to support the work of EKH in achieving the Customer Service Excellence standard	Dec 2011		

6.5	Use the liP choices standards to improve organisational training and development	Commission a gap analysis and action plan from EKHRP	Mar 2012		Work to achieving liP in 2012/13
6.6	Have a set of clear and comprehensive HR policies and procedures	Research and adopt a set of HR Procedures using best practice from East Kent	Apr 2011		To include, Job Evaluation, staff appraisals, Sickness management, leave recording ,
6.7	Work toward being a Times top 100, values driven company	Research and agree long term staffing plan	Mar 2012		

Objective seven: - Good Governance. Establishing principles of good governance within the board and management of the organisation is critical to the success of the new organisation. To ensure the good governance of East Kent Housing we will:

	Task	Actions	By	Lead	Comments & notes
7.1	Ensure that the Board has the skills and experience to effectively manage the organisation	Deliver induction programme for the new Board of EKH	Aug 2011		Pre- board meeting bite sized training slots identified until Dec 2011 – see Board forward plan
		Undertake an skills audit of the Board	June 2011		
		Agree revised Board training programme following skills audit	Sept 2011		
		Introduce review system for individual board members	Apr 2011		
		Provide all Board members with a governance handbook	May 2011		
7.2	Develop local accountability through Area Boards	Consult with tenant representatives on operation and parameters of Area Boards	Apr 2011		Workshops help in February & March 2011
		Board to agree terms of reference for Area Boards	May 2011		
		Councils to nominate representatives to the Area Boards	June 2011		

		Area Boards operational	Jul 2011		
7.3	Ensure that EKH is open and transparent in the conduct of its business	Board to consider policy of open board meetings	April 2011		
		Agendas, minutes and forward plan of Board to be published on the website	May 2011		
7.4	Ensure that EKH fully meets its statutory obligations as a company	Agree Company Secretary arrangements	April 2011		
		Training Exec Team and support staff in requirements of company secretary role	May 2011		
7.5	Ensure that EKH has robust systems of internal controls and checks	Agree internal audit programme for 2011 with councils	Apr 2011		
		Appoint external auditors	Jul 2011		
7.6	Ensure that EKH has a fit for purpose and robust financial system	Upgrade from Sage 50 to Sage 200 financial management and accounting package	Dec 2011		

Objective eight: Equality and Diversity. East Kent Housing is committed to embracing diversity and providing its services in a fair and equitable manner free from discrimination and prejudice. To achieve this we will:

	Task	Actions	By	Lead	Comments & notes
8.1	Develop and adopt an Equality and Diversity strategy	Establish an Equality and Diversity group to monitor compliance with equality duty and establish priorities	June 2011		As per policy agreed by Board 14 th March
		Agree with Area Board arrangements for tenants involvement in policy development			CCC already have a tenants' diversity group- could be expanded to an all area group
		Appoint Board champion for Equality and Diversity group	May 2011		
		Review compliance with Equalities Act 2010	Oct 2011		
		Review arrangements for translations and interpretation services to ensure a clear and consistent approach	Dec 2011		
		Board to agree strategy	Mar 2012		
8.2	Ensure we have Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)/Customer Access Reviews (CAR) on all our policies and services	Prioritise these and agree a timetable for completion	May 2012		
		Complete EIAs/CARs on priority services	July 2012		
	Ensure all staff have attended equalities training	Provide refresher training for all staff and the Board	Dec 2012		

Lead Officers.

3. Performance Plan

It has been agreed that in year one EKH will be expected to maintain existing standards of service and performance, recognising the focus of management activity will be on establishing the new organisation and merging the four services into one. For the councils the level and standard of performance will be a critical measure of the success of EK Housing. We will:

	Task	Actions	By	Lead	Comments & notes
9.1	Develop and implement a Performance management framework	First Performance report to be presented to Board at July meeting	Jul 20 11		
9.2	Develop role of Area Boards in scrutinising performance	Agree with Tenant representatives and their advisors format for reporting to Area Boards	May 20 11		
	Establish monitoring arrangements with the four councils	Liaison arrangements with council representatives to be put in place	May 20 11		
		Format of performance data for councils to be agreed	May 20 11		
		Review existing benchmarking data and apply consistent approach within performance monitoring	Mar 20		Establish consistency in membership of

			12		benchmarking clubs
9.3	Ensure that services delivered through contractors are to standards expected by EKH	Review existing monitoring arrangements including performance data provided by contractors	Sept 2011		
9.4	Assess baseline levels of tenant satisfaction with the service	Undertake sample survey of tenant satisfaction	Sept 2011		Subject to budget. Commitment in the Shepway decision making
Actual Performance for year 2009/10		Canterbury	Dover	Shepway	Thanet
	Stock-rented	5,221	4,589	3,455	3,110
	Stock -Leasehold	337	437	202	361
	Rent arrears at 31 st Mar 2010	£297,664.	£311,889	£169,458	£300,711
	Rent arrears as at 31 Mar 2009	£324,700.	£330,336	£166,904	£316,966
	% change 2009 to 2010	-8.3%	-5.58%	1.53%	-5.13%
	Rent arrears per rented unit as at 31 st March 2010	£57.01	£67.96	£49.05	£96.69
	Rent arrears as % of annual debit (Mar 2010)	1.43%	1.83%	1.3%	2.81%
	No. Evictions 2009/10	14	8	3	14
	Former tenant arrears at 31 st Mar 10	£309,017	£74,958	£94,053	£232,661
	Garage arrears as at 31 st March 2010	£3,636.	£1,176	£3,270	£984
	No. of garages	1,236	945	835	576
	Debt per unit- garages	£2.94	£1.24	£3.92	£1.71
	Leasehold service charges outstanding at 31 st Mar 2010	£37,000	£74,310.61	n/a	£190,551.77
	Amount of former tenant arrears written off in year ending Mar 10	£81,334	£33,302	£49,965	£26,215
	Former tenant arrears at 31 st Mar 10	£309,017	£74,958	£94,053	£232,661
	Average time to re-let empty properties (year ending Mar 10)	20 days	29.79 days	28 days	17 days
	Average time to re-let empty Properties (excl Sheltered housing	20days	28.37 days	23.3 days	17 days

and specialist housing)				
% of repairs done by appointment and appointment kept	99%	93.13%	99.2%	97%
% of Emergency repairs completed within time	99%	95.7%	100%	99.9%
Average number of days for non urgent repairs	7 days	11.2 days	n/a	8.4 days
% of responsive repairs completed n time	98%	90.7%	99.6%	97%
% of tenants satisfied or very satisfied with housing service	82.7% (2008-09)	84.3% (2008-09)	78.2% (2008-09)	80.8% (2008-09)
Number of Complaints received in year ending Mar 2010	108	93	21	25

4. Local Offers

To be added