



# Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy

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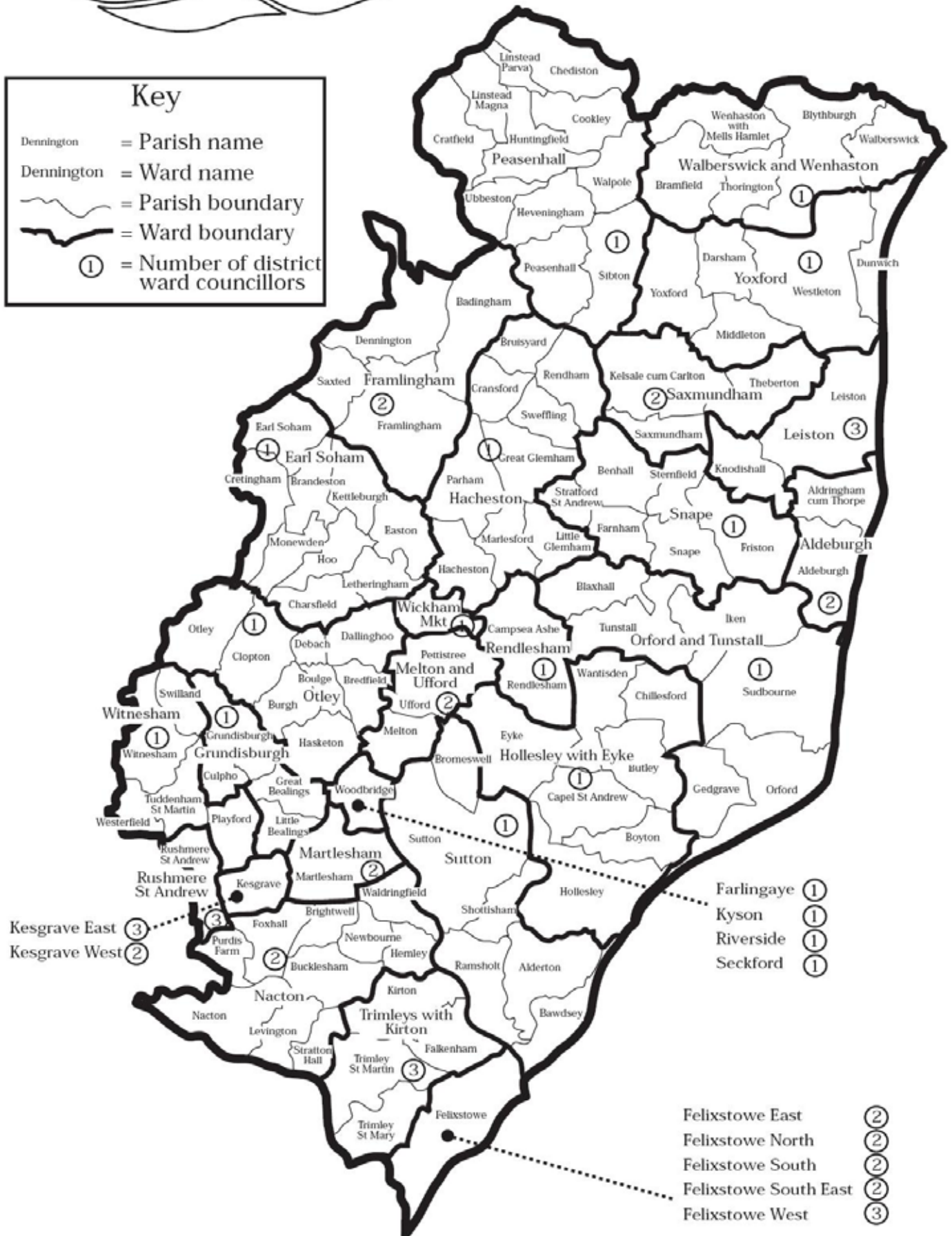
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# Parishes and Wards in Suffolk Coastal District

**Key**

Dennington = Parish name  
 Dennington = Ward name  
 ~~~~~ = Parish boundary  
 - - - - - = Ward boundary  
 ① = Number of district ward councillors



# **Suffolk Coastal District Council Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy**

## **1. Introduction**

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 requires the Council to have a private sector renewal strategy for their area. This policy must set out the local priorities, the nature of assistance given by the Council to meet those priorities and who is eligible to receive it.

This document sets out the Council's policies in respect of Private Sector Housing.

These policies are largely based on the findings of a House Condition and Housing needs survey carried out in 2006. Further background information can be found in the report that resulted from that survey "Suffolk Coastal Local Housing Assessment".

The Strategy sets out how the Council will address private sector housing issues in the district and link with wider sub regional strategies and statutory duties.

## **2. Wider Priorities and Strategic Objectives**

In developing a housing renewal strategy the local authority is required to consider other strategic objectives that either relate directly or otherwise impinge on the Council's actions in respect of housing.

### **2.1. National Issues**

#### **2.1.1. Housing Act 2004**

The Housing Act 2004 was the most comprehensive review of housing enforcement legislation for 50 years. The Act introduced a fundamental change to the way local authorities deal with house condition problems. Until the Housing Act 2004 the Housing Fitness Standard was the measure of whether a dwelling met minimum legal standards. The Housing Act 2004 has meant that since April 2006 the new Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), introduced under Part 1 of the Act, has replaced the previous statutory standard of fitness for habitation.

The new system moves away from a prescriptive standard and replaces it with the risk assessing of "hazards" within dwellings. Under HHSRS these are then categorised into Category 1 and Category 2 hazards. Local Authorities now have a duty to take action to deal with Category 1 hazards.

The Act also introduced a mandatory requirement for licensing of larger Houses in Multiple Occupation and new powers to deal with vacant properties – Empty Dwelling Management Orders.

#### **2.1.2. Decent Homes**

A decent home is one which:

- Meets the current minimum statutory standard for housing: i.e. it is free of significant health and safety hazards under the HHSRS;
- Is in a reasonable state of repair;
- Has reasonably modern facilities, - mainly relating to the age of the kitchen or bathroom; and
- Provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort, with effective insulation and efficient heating

The Government has set a target in respect of properties in the private sector meeting the decent homes standard. This target is set out PSA 7. It requires that 65% of all dwellings occupied by vulnerable residents should be made decent by 2006/07 and that 70% should be that standard by 2010/11.

In this respect a vulnerable resident is one who is in receipt of specified, means tested benefits.

#### **2.1.3 Energy Efficiency**

Local Authorities continue to have statutory duties in respect of energy conservation in domestic dwellings under the Home Energy Conservation Act.

#### **2.1.4. Vacant Properties**

The Best Value regime, which seeks improvements in service from local authorities, requires reporting of progress on the number of private sector vacant dwellings that are returned into occupation or demolished as a direct result of action by the local authority. (BVPI 64).

#### **2.1.5. Comprehensive Performance Assessments**

Councils are assessed in relation to their work in helping to balance their local and sub-regional housing markets as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. This assessment is looked at under three key inter-linking questions.

- How well does the Council understand its housing market and from its understanding has the Council developed the right proposals to help balance its housing markets?
- What are the Council's actions and what outcomes has it achieved in helping to balance housing markets?
- How well does the Council monitor its progress and impact in helping to balance housing markets and how effectively does this feed into future strategies and plans?

Clearly any strategy for Suffolk Coastal will need to tie in with these national issues which are also fed through into regional strategies.

## **2.2 Regional Issues**

Suffolk Coastal is part of the Greater Haven Gateway sub region. The Greater Haven Gateway is one of nine housing sub regions in the East of England, and consists of Babergh, Braintree, Colchester, Ipswich, Maldon, Mid Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal and Tendring borough and district councils.

The Greater Haven Gateway published its Housing Strategy for the Sub Region in May 2006. This strategy sets out areas of priority for the private sector. These are:-

- Improve private sector housing conditions for vulnerable people living in the private sector
- Support people who are more vulnerable in our society
- Contribute to ensuring housing in the sub region is high quality and sustainable.

These priorities in turn focus on four main areas namely:

### **2.2.1. Housing conditions**

Action points identified:

- Achieve the Government's decent homes target to improve housing conditions for vulnerable households living in private homes.
- Seek to secure investment and an increase in resources to address unfitness, serious disrepair and fuel poverty and use new tools and mechanisms to achieve this such as hazard ratings.
- Compare stock condition survey data across the sub region and build information on the decent homes standard in private homes.
- Work to promote interventions to tackle fuel poverty.

### **2.2.2. Disabled facilities grants, aids and adaptations**

Action points identified:

- Secure additional resources to meet the needs of people with disabilities in the sub region and work together to ensure we get best value from all resources.
- Work in partnership with other organisations to ensure that the housing needs of disabled people and people with mobility impairments are assessed quickly and expertly, in order to achieve a better level of health and well being in the sub region.
- Ensure our choice based lettings systems enable us to make best use of DFGs when adapted properties are re-let, including creating a register of properties for people with disabilities.

### **2.2.3. Empty homes**

Action points identified:

- Explore options for a sub-regional leasing scheme to assist with homelessness and bring properties back into use, including using the new powers and toolkit set out in the Housing Act 2004 to initiate a compulsory leasing scheme.
- Share good practice on empty homes across the sub region through the newly created private sector housing sub group, particularly through the new legislative powers under the Housing Act 2004.
- Link our work to bring empty homes back into use to revitalising our town centres and to any regeneration initiatives.

### **2.2.4. Decent homes and communities.**

Action points identified:

- Achieve the decent homes standard by 2010 or sooner for all affordable housing and work towards delivering “decent homes plus”.
- Share good practice on partnering and procurement and explore joint procurement opportunities.
- Maintain the commitment to work in partnership with tenants and residents and increase their involvement in decision making regarding their homes.

As can be seen, and to be expected there is a significant correlation between national and regional aims and objectives. This strategy will enable implementation of the action points at a local level.

## **2.3 The Council’s Priorities**

‘Achieving a balanced supply of appropriate housing throughout the district to meet varied needs’ is one of the Council’s Corporate Objectives.

As at March 2007 the Council has also set seven key medium term priorities of which three are specifically linked to housing issues, namely:

- Increasing access to housing to meet local needs.
- Feeling safe and being safe from crime.
- Develop and promote green policies and improved environmental management in the district.

As can be seen from the details above under National and Regional Issues there is a whole raft of ways in which action in respect of housing in the private sector will help to achieve these priorities. These priorities as well as being set out at corporate level are fed through our balanced scorecard system right down to individual targets to ensure that our work contributes to achieving these goals.



### **3. The Local Issues, Needs and Expectations**

The main source of information on which this strategy is based is the Local Housing Assessment. This was a joint housing need and stock condition survey carried out in 2006 and reported in early 2007. The assessment was based on 1517 interviews and 1016 physical surveys of private sector dwellings. Secondary information sources included data from the Housing Corporation, Land Registry and the English House Condition Survey. In respect of the current housing stock the survey had the following key findings:

**The dwelling stock is more modern than the national average, but also with more owner occupied dwellings and more detached houses.**

**Overall 14,240 dwellings are non decent (26.1% of the stock compared to 30.1% national average).**

**290 homes that are occupied by vulnerable households need to be made decent to meet the Public Service Agreement 7 target of 70% decent homes by 2010.**

**An estimated 5,010 dwellings contain a Category 1 hazard. This equates to 9.2% of the stock (similar to the national average).**

**There is a strong association between low income, low council tax band and non decent dwellings. 68% of non decent homes are in Council Tax band A-C with a household income of under £15,000.**

**The grant policy extant at the time of the survey was robust but needed to be reviewed to take account of the changes introduced by the Housing Act 2004, principally the Decent Home Standard and Safety Hazards.**

**An estimated 1,340 private sector dwellings are vacant of which 640 are long-term vacant (1.3% of the private sector stock).**

**There are estimated to be about 100 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in the district under the 2004 definition of which about 30 are subject to mandatory licensing.**

**An estimated 4,590 (8.4%) households are in fuel poverty and need improvements in their energy efficiency of their dwellings to move out of fuel poverty.**

**Linked with the stock finding were the following key aspects of the Housing Need element of the survey:**

**The age structure of the population of Suffolk Coastal shows that there are far fewer young families in the area than in England as a whole, with a disproportionately high number of older persons living in the area. The household structure follows from its slightly older population, with more pensioner households when compared with England as a whole;**

**The health of the population of Suffolk Coastal appears to be very similar to the Eastern region and England as a whole. 31.8% of all households in Suffolk Coastal contain a member with a limiting long-term illness and 17.2% of all people suffer from limiting long-term illnesses;**

**University College Suffolk is indirectly likely to lead to more households seeking to live in Suffolk Coastal, more of Suffolk Coastal's young population being retained in the area and more economic opportunities in the area.**

**In the second quarter of 2000, over 40% of all completed property sales were priced at less than £80,000 – this figure was below 5% of all sales in 2005. Over the same period, the number of houses selling for over £150,000 has risen from 20% of all completions to around 60% of the total;**

**5,193 (10.3%) of Suffolk Coastal's established households are currently living in unsuitable housing, of which 316 need to move within the area to resolve their housing problems and cannot afford to buy or rent market housing – they are in housing need;**

The Local Housing Assessment estimated that 5,193 households were living in housing need: households lacking their own housing or living in housing which is inadequate or unsuitable, who are unlikely to be able to meet their needs in the housing market without some form of assistance. The unsuitability problems experienced are shown below.

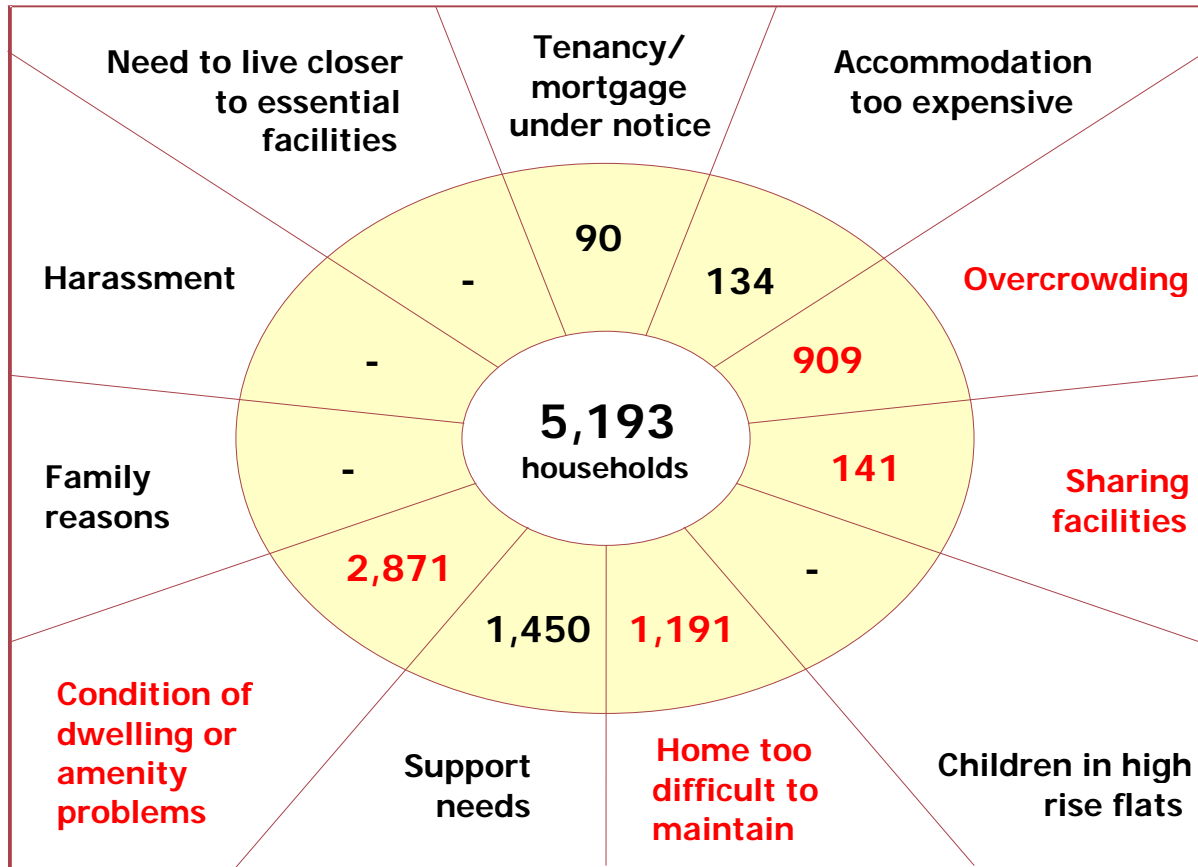


Figure 1: Established Households Living in Unsuitable Housing  
Source: Suffolk Coastal Household & Physical Survey 2006

Of the 5,193 households in housing need the vast majority, shown in red, relate to issues where intervention using Private Sector Housing Strategies can directly influence and thus alleviate demands in other areas particularly costly new build.

*“Whilst in practice it is important to resolve the housing needs of individual households, a strategic analysis is primarily concerned with addressing overall housing need. In this context, it is particularly relevant to consider housing suitability issues concerned directly with the dwelling stock – such as major disrepair or unfitness. Resolving such individual household needs (through enabling a move to alternative housing) will not reduce the overall level of housing need because the vacancy that arises will inevitably (over time) be occupied by another household, who will once again be in housing need. In such cases, it is investment in the existing stock (or in extreme cases, clearance and redevelopment) that is required to reduce the numbers unsuitably housed.” - Suffolk Coastal Housing Assessment.*

As well as being a statutory requirement, this the fundamental reason why it is essential that Suffolk Coastal has a suitable Private Sector Housing Strategy. If the existing housing stock is ignored the level of housing need will increase significantly which is likely to result in much more expensive solutions needing to be instigated.

Having regard to the Local Housing Assessment, the Council's objectives and National and Regional Issues, four key priorities that this policy will address have been identified, these will be:

- **Decent homes for vulnerable people**
- **Provision of affordable housing**
- **Energy conservation**
- **Helping the elderly to stay in their own homes.**

These are very similar to the priorities that were identified in the previous Private Sector Renewal Strategy but substituting decent home for the now no longer used standard of fitness.

## **ACHIEVING KEY PRIORITIES**

The following sections give details of the methods that the Council will use to meet the key priorities. They are listed under three headings that are not mutually exclusive of each other they are:

**Enforcement**

**Advice and Assistance**

**Financial Assistance.**

In addition to this there is a separate section specifically relating to vacant properties.

## 4. Enforcement

The Council has adopted an Enforcement Policy and will work in accordance with this policy in respect of enforcement of housing matters. The Enforcement Policy is set out in Appendix A.

### 4.1 Housing Hazard Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

The Housing Act 2004 introduced the Housing Hazard Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The HHSRS replaced the Housing Fitness Standard. It is a new way of assessing the potential risks to health and safety in dwellings. The HHSRS is based on the likelihood of an occurrence that could cause harm and an assessment of the severity of that potential harm. This produces a score for each hazard in the dwelling. There is no longer an overall assessment of the property.

The hazard scores are banded from A to J, Band A being the highest risk. Hazards that are in bands A-C are classified as Category 1 Hazards, the remainder are Category 2 Hazards. There are 29 hazards that can now be assessed in a dwelling, many of which could not previously be considered under the Fitness Standard.

Local Authorities must take appropriate action where there is a Category 1 Hazard and have a discretionary power to act in the case of Category 2 Hazards.

There is a range of enforcement options available in the Act:

- (a) Service of hazard awareness notice,
- (b) Service of an improvement notice,
- (c) Making prohibition order,
- (d) Emergency remedial action notice, and
- (e) Service of an emergency prohibition order.

In addition, under the Housing Act 1985 there is also the power to serve demolition orders.

The Local Housing Assessment estimated that 5010 dwellings (9.2% of the stock) have a category 1 hazard.

The Act does not differentiate between tenanted properties and owner occupied as it is the hazard that has to be resolved regardless of the occupation of the dwelling. Other than in exceptional circumstances owner-occupiers will be expected to remedy hazards in their own premises and the most appropriate action is likely to be a hazard awareness notice. The Principal Environmental Health Officer (Housing) or the Head of Housing and Benefits determine whether there are exceptional circumstances that would warrant any of the other enforcement options to be taken against owner-occupiers.

For category 2 hazards the power for the local authority to act is discretionary. The Council will not normally take action in respect of category 2 hazards unless once again there are exceptional circumstances. Again determination of exceptional circumstance will be made by the Principal Environmental Health Officer (Housing) or the Head of Housing and Benefits. Instances where it is more likely that action will be taken is where there is a flagrant breach of a landlords repairing obligations giving

rise to the hazard, or where there are more than one category 2 hazards in bands D or E.

## **4.2 Charges in Respect of Enforcement Action**

Under section 49 Housing Act 2004 the Council has a discretionary power to charge for enforcement action.

- i) Reasonable charges for the cost of enforcement will be made in accordance with Section 49 of the Housing Act 2004 in respect of the following actions:
  - Serving an improvement notice under section 11 or 12 of the Act - (determining whether to serve the notice, identifying any action to be specified in the notice, and serving the notice);
  - Making a prohibition order under section 20 or 21 of the Act - (determining whether to make the order, and serving copies of the order on persons as owners of premises);
  - Serving a hazard awareness notice under section 28 or 29 - (determining whether to serve the notice, identifying any action to be specified in the notice, and serving the notice);
  - Taking emergency remedial action under section 40 – (determining whether to take such action, and serving the notice required by section (7) of that section);
  - Making an emergency prohibition order under section 43 – (determining whether to make the order, and serving copies of the order on persons as owners of premises);
  - Making a demolition order under section 265 of the Housing Act 1985 – (determining whether to make the order, and serving copies of the order on persons as owners of premises).
- ii) Where the Local Authority carry out any remedial works themselves, either in default of an improvement notice or as a result of emergency action, they will recover their expenses in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Housing Act 2004.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer (Housing) or the Head of Housing and Benefits will have the discretion not to charge for enforcement action (or charge for only part of the cost). In determining whether or not to charge they will have regard to:

- The personal circumstance of the person against whom enforcement action is being taken.
- The gravity of the hazard.
- The response to informal requests for action.
- Whether persons other than the owner are likely to be affected by the hazard.

Assessment of costs: Where specialist reports have been necessary e.g. structural or electrical engineers reports, these will be charged at the cost to the Council. The hourly rate of the member of staff involved in the case will be included in the charge together with any other applicable costs as allowed under the Act.

## **4.3 Licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)**

The definition of HMO was changed by the Housing Act 2004. The definition is complex and for precise detail one should refer to the Act. In general terms an HMO is a building occupied by persons who do not form a single household, so this now

likely to include all buildings that are being occupied regardless of whether they were originally built or adapted for residential use. Perhaps more importantly, the definition of household has also changed; this is now closely linked to members of the same family. Therefore houses that are shared by a group of friends are likely to be HMOs and in certain circumstances will require licensing.

HMOs of three or more storeys that are occupied by five or more individuals, will, subject to specified exemptions in the Act, be required to be licensed. Licences can last for up to five years and will contain conditions in respect of gas and electrical safety and smoke detection. Further conditions will be added relating to management, use and occupation of the specific HMO.

The Act enables local housing authorities to make a charge for the licensing of HMOs. These charges were agreed by Cabinet in May 2006 and are subject to inflationary rise each April based on the Retail Price Index. The charges for HMO licenses as of April 2007 are as follows:

(a) HMOs already known to the Council where we have already inspected and fire protection works have already been carried out to a satisfactory standard: £266

(b) New HMOs that the Council is not already aware of: £381

These figures are based on a five-year licence. Where officers feel it is appropriate to issue a license for a shorter period the fee will be proportioned accordingly.

Where landlords prevaricate in making an application or the work involved by the Council is far more than normally expected, these charges may be increased by the Head of Housing and Benefits following consultation with the Cabinet member with responsibility for housing.

#### **4.4 Standards for HMOs**

The Housing Act 2004 changed the way that local authorities assess properties for their suitability including houses that are in multiple occupation. Minimum standards are now laid down in Schedule 3 of The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulation 2006. As well as this the HHSRS assessment requires the local authority to assess individual properties in respect of their suitability for occupation rather than having prescribed standards.

In determining suitability for occupation the Council will generally have regard to the space standards published by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health "Amenity Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation". For the guidance of landlords and developers these standards as they relate to bedsits and self contained flats are produced in Appendix B.

The standards of means of escape from fire and other fire precautions are as set out in the Houses in Multiple Occupation Joint Protocol for Suffolk. Details of this are available from the Council's Private Sector Housing Team or from the Council's website. These standards have been agreed with the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service and all of the Suffolk Authorities so that landlords and tenants will get a consistent approach to fire safety issues throughout Suffolk.

In relation to bathroom and kitchen amenities the standards will generally be as follows:



### **1 – 5 persons**

At least 1 bathroom and 1 WC. Where there are 5 persons the bathroom and WC must be separate, although the bathroom may also contain a WC.

At least 1 kitchen, not more than 1 floor distant from furthest bedroom. Where there is more than 1 floor distance an additional kitchen should be provided, or, a dining room provided on the same floor as the kitchen.

### **6 – 10 persons**

At least 2 kitchens not more than 1 floor distant from furthest bedroom. Where there is more than 1 floor distance a dining room should be provided on the same floor as the kitchen.

Or

1 large kitchen with dining room, with 2 sets of facilities - dependent upon the actual number of tenants.

2 bathrooms AND

2 separate WCs with WHBs (but one of the WCs can be contained within one of the bathrooms)

### **10 + persons**

At least 2 kitchens not more than 1 floor distant from furthest bedroom. Where there is more than 1 floor distance a dining room should be provided on the same floor as the kitchen.

Or

1 large kitchen with dining room, with sets of facilities dependent upon the actual number of tenants.

3 bathrooms AND

3 separate WCs with WHBs (but the WHBs can be contained within 2 of the bathrooms)

## **4.5 University Campus Suffolk Accreditation Scheme**

University Campus Suffolk (UCS) will be opening its doors to students in September 2007. As a result, demand for student accommodation will increase. The private sector will play a significant role in the provision of accommodation for the students through purpose built student accommodation sited both on-campus and off-campus. Other accommodation will be provided by traditional private rented sector housing in and around Ipswich. This is expected to include a significant number of properties within Suffolk Coastal area particularly where there are good public transport links into Ipswich. The Accreditation Scheme operated by University Campus Suffolk in partnership with various statutory authorities including Suffolk Coastal aims to ensure that the property occupied by the students is safe and is to an acceptable standard. All parties signed up to the scheme wish to work together with responsible landlords to promote that standard. In so doing the aim is to bring about better living accommodation for students.

Accreditation is the voluntary compliance by private landlords with good standards in the condition and management of their properties and their relationship with tenants.

Although accreditation is voluntary, students will be actively discouraged from renting unaccredited properties

The Code of Practice for the Accreditation Scheme is contained in Appendix C.

## 5. Advice & Assistance

### 5.1 Helping Hand Home Improvement Agency

The Council operates its own in-house Home Improvement Agency, Suffolk Coastal Helping Hand.

Helping Hand helps owner-occupiers or private tenants to get works carried out to their homes. The agency gives priority to helping people who are vulnerable (elderly, sick, disabled or distressed). The service helps to eliminate 'rogue traders' by independently advising clients in respect of what works are necessary to their property and contracting reputable builders to carry out the work. We link in with the County Home Shield Scheme as a referral agency to assist those who have recognised to be in need by other professionals working in Suffolk.

Helping Hand will make applications for grants, loans or other financial assistance on behalf of their clients. The agency team will also:

- Identify essential works that should be carried out and also those that the client may wish to have done at the same time.
- Draw up a detailed specification of works including plans, if necessary, so that builders can price the work.
- Obtain all statutory consents where applicable such as planning permission and building control approval.
- Help applicants to apply for any benefits or alternative funding that they are entitled to.
- Obtain tendered estimates for works from reliable contractors to ensure a good price for the work.
- Arrange a convenient start date for the work and supervise progress on site.
- Ensure that the work is completed satisfactorily, finalise paperwork and organise payments.

The cost of the agency service is 12% of the total cost of works (VAT is added if the client is not vulnerable). If clients choose not to go ahead with works they will only pay a £50 fee plus any drawing or consent fees which have been separately detailed to them. In cases of hardship, these fees may be waived or reduced at the discretion of the Head of Housing and Benefits.

Suffolk Coastal Helping Hand HIA service is part funded by Supporting People and contracted by them for this purpose.

### 5.2 Small Repairs

Running in conjunction with Helping Hand is the HandyHelp small repair service. The service is operated by Orbit Housing Association and covers the whole of Suffolk. There is a small hourly charge for labour and no call out charge. Any materials used are charged for but estimates of the costs will be given beforehand.

The service is available for homeowners or private tenants who are over the age of 60 or are disabled or vulnerable.

Examples of the types of work covered are:

- Putting up shelves or curtain rails
- Minor plumbing repairs
- Fitting smoke alarms
- Fitting security locks to doors and windows
- Repairs to tiling and grouting

- Fitting security lighting
- Re-hanging doors
- Fitting smoke and carbon monoxide detectors

Small Gardening jobs can also be undertaken such as:

- Light pruning,
- Mowing of lawns
- Clearing weeds
- Repairing gates or small areas of fencing

Decorating

- Making good minor defects to plaster and woodwork
- Preparing and painting walls, ceilings, woodwork

The service will not undertake repairs that are the responsibility of the landlord, extensive works or work from ladders above first floor level.

### **5.3 Energy Efficiency**

The Council has active involvement in a number of initiatives aimed at meeting its obligations under the Home Energy Conservation Act and for the reduction of fuel poverty. There are also a number of grants for energy efficiency from the Council – see Financial Assistance section below.

#### **5.3.1. Warm Front**

Warm Front is the national energy efficiency grant; it is administered by Energy Action Grants Agency (EAGA). The Council is able to make referrals directly to the Warm Front portal system.

The Warm Front scheme offers grants of up to £2700 for energy efficiency and home insulation measures including, in some cases, the installation of central heating systems (where there is only oil fired heating the grant can increase to £4000).

These grants are available to households, with children under 16, that also receive income-related benefit; pregnant women in receipt of income-related benefit; and to households receiving disability benefit.

We work with the Warm Front scheme in the promotion of these grants sending out advisory letters to potential applicants. We also partake in various promotional campaigns including working with doctors surgeries during their flu clinics and roadshows.

#### **5.3.2 SEAL (Suffolk Energy Action Link)**

Suffolk Coastal is the lead authority in this Suffolk-wide scheme. SEAL was initially set up following a successful application for £180k funding from the Energy Saving Trust. The SEAL scheme promotes the installation of solar water heating systems and insulation measures at competitive prices and installed by a qualified and approved company.

SEAL also operates a “Climate Change and Energy Helpline” in conjunction with CRed Suffolk. SEAL can be contacted on 0800 02 88 938 or [seal@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](mailto:seal@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk) .

#### **5.3.3. CRed Suffolk**

Suffolk Coastal District Council is part of the CRed Suffolk Climate Change Partnership and contributes to the aims and objectives of this partnership through promotional work, talks, meetings and work towards the enhancement of existing schemes such as SEAL.

### **5.3.4 Energy Efficiency Commitment**

Power supply companies operate discount schemes for energy efficiency measures these schemes are known as Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC). The Council will continue to work in partnership with such organisations to the benefit of its residents. Many of these schemes are available to all sectors of the community and are not means tested. What is available tends to change over time, we therefore work with the Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre Anglia who are better equipped to track the various offers available and refer members of the public to them. Their telephone number is 0800 512 012.

In addition we work with British Gas on their EEC2 Funding Scheme. Through this scheme the Council is able to claim back from British Gas part of the cost of various energy efficiency improvements that we have helped to facilitate through our grant programme. This money is then used for further energy efficiency initiatives.

### **5.3.5. Warmer Homes, Better Health**

This referral scheme has been developed to particularly try and reach rural communities. It is a partnership with Health and Welfare professionals who will visit clients who may be in fuel poverty and could benefit from the various initiatives that the Council's Private Sector Housing team operate or partner in. The scheme will be developed by identifying those parishes with highest excess winter deaths and concentrating our efforts in those areas.

### **5.3.6. Education**

The Council's Private Sector Housing Team participates in numerous educational campaigns. A pilot schools project has been developed to teach children the energy efficiency message that is then taken home to parents and grandparents. The project is particularly designed for rural communities and is seen as an effective way to access that sector.

### **5.3.7. General Advice**

There are 3 qualified energy surveyors and one energy assessor in the Council's Private Sector Housing Team. Accordingly the team can offer specific advice on energy efficiency measures to all homes where Helping Hand are acting as agent. Promotional campaigns are regularly held and again the intention is to include the smaller rural communities in these initiatives. As well as energy efficiency advice these campaigns will cover renewable energies and grants that are available for these e.g. Low Carbon Buildings Programme.

## **5.4 Landlords and Tenants**

### **5.4.1. Housing Advice**

The Council's Housing Section will advise both landlords and tenants in respect of their obligations under the various statutes.

Housing Advisors are available everyday at the Council Offices at Melton Hill and on Monday and Wednesday afternoons at the Council's Felixstowe sub-office. Home visits are carried out by appointment for anybody that is unable to get to these venues. As well as advocacy work between landlords and tenants the Housing Advisors also offer debt counselling.

#### **5.4.2. Landlords Forum**

The landlords' forum meets three times a year to advise and discuss relevant matters of interest to landlords and particularly changes in legislation. The Forum was consulted in respect of the previous Private Sector Renewal Strategy and specifically how the grant programme changed to be more effective in providing affordable rented accommodation in the private sector.

The forum is co-ordinated by [Sarah Thompson](#) who can be contacted on 01394 444464 or e-mail [sarah.thompson@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.thompson@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk) .

#### **5.4.3. Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme**

The Council operates a rent deposit guarantee scheme. This scheme helps low income people who live or work in the area to access the private rented sector. The Council guarantees to pay the landlord for any damage done to the property up to the equivalent of one month's rent. Officers from the Council's Private Sector Housing Team will inspect the property at the start and end of the tenancy to assess the suitability of the property for occupation and confirm details on the landlord's inventory. The tenant must agree to pay the Council for any damage done.

#### **5.4.4. Coastal Lettings Plus**

The Coastal Lettings Plus scheme provides people on a low income with the opportunity to move into the home of their choice and to avoid homelessness.

Under the scheme the Council will loan families the damage deposit and rent-in-advance that they are required to pay to the landlord in order to take up the tenancy. It is expected that the loan will be repaid on a weekly/monthly basis within the duration of the tenancy. To qualify for the scheme, families must have a local connection with Suffolk Coastal, have become homeless through no fault of their own and satisfy the Council that they can sustain a home in the private rented sector.

Further information on the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme and Coastal Lettings Plus can be obtained from the Housing Advice and Prevention Team, telephone 01394 444613 e-mail [homelessness@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](mailto:homelessness@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk) .

## **6. Financial Assistance**

This section sets out the type of grants that are currently available from the Council. There are three types of grant; Renovation Grant, Minor Works Grant and Disabled Facilities. Disabled Facilities Grants are mandatory and have their own statutory provisions the other grants will be covered by the conditions outlined in this section.

### **6.1 Preliminary Conditions**

#### **6.1.1. Ownership**

Where the application is for an owner-occupiers grant or landlords grant the Council will require proof of ownership of the property. Where the property is subject to a mortgage this will be required from the mortgage provider who will also be required to state that they have no objection to the grant application and any registration of the grant as a local land charge.

Owner-occupiers will need to have an owner's interest in every parcel of land on which the relevant works are to be carried out. The Council may relax this requirement for services being provided to or from the property, or in relation to works to common parts e.g. drains and water supply.

The Council will not accept applications for grant from people under the age of 18.

#### **6.1.2. Tenants Grants**

Tenants grants will not normally be considered unless they are accompanied by written approval from the owner of the property.

#### **6.1.3. Maximum Grant**

At approval stage there will be a maximum of £20,000 grant aid per property. (This excludes any works on a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) but not works given on a Minor Works Grant given subsequent to this policy). Any unforeseen works that exceed this limit following grant approval will be subject to approval by the Head of Housing and Benefits up to £22,000. Unforeseen works that go above this will be subject to approval by the Cabinet Member for Housing.

Where the cost of works is less than £1000 it would not normally be expected that a Renovation Grant would be entertained.

#### **6.1.4. Documentary Requirements**

The Council will not approve any grant until it has documentary evidence covering all of the criteria relating to the grant, for avoidance of doubt this includes all means testing information as required under The Housing Renovation etc. Grants (Reduction of Grant) Regulations 1994 - as amended.

Applications for grant will not be entertained unless accompanied by a certificate stating that the applicant will comply with the grant conditions and will repay the grant if they cease to comply with those conditions.

Applications for grant are to be made in writing. All forms necessary for making an application will be available from the Private Sector Housing Team. The Helping Hand agency will help anybody who by virtue of a disability or infirmity is unable to complete the forms on their own. Large print format will be available on request.

## 6.2 Types of Grant Available

### 6.2.1 Renovation Grant

Renovation Grants will be available for houses that do not meet the decent homes standard.

Eligible works will be those needed to bring the property up to the decent home standard. Where this standard is used in the table below it will also include the following:

- In respect of bathroom and kitchen fittings the amount of eligible expense will be limited to a prime cost of £1000 per property.
- Insulation and heating efficiency improvements above the decent homes standard will be included, these will be allowed to maximum of £5,000. All lofts will need to have at least 150mm of insulation and any cavity walls capable of being insulated, that are not to current building control standard should be so insulated.
- In addition sound insulation between dwellings can also be included as eligible works although not in itself a qualifying criterion.

-

### 6.2.2. First Time Buyers

To assist first time buyers, grants will be available to bring homes up to the decent homes standard. Amount of grant will be assessed using the following formula:

Single person

Y = Amount of mortgage that could be raised based on 4.25 x total salary for 35 year term

Couple

Y = Amount of mortgage that could be raised based on 3.75 x total salary for 35 year term

Z = Amount of mortgage actually borrowed (converted to 35 year term) i.e. what current repayment would fund over 35 years.

Grant = Cost of eligible works – (Y – Z)

The maximum grant by this calculation would be 100% of the eligible works.

### 6.2.3. Eligibility Table for Renovation Grant

| Eligible Applicant                 | Eligible Property and Works                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Qualifying Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Conditions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Owner Occupier                     | Council Tax A-C<br><br>Works required to bring property up to the decent homes* standard.                                                                                                                                                                                  | Means tested.<br><br>Owned and lived in property for the last 3 years.                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Repayable on transfer of property or applicant ceasing to live at the property.                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| First Time Buyers (Owner Occupier) | Council Tax A-C<br><br>Works to bring property up to the decent homes* standard.                                                                                                                                                                                           | Applicant(s) must be first time buyers who have lived or worked in Suffolk Coastal for the last 3 years.<br><br>Application must be submitted within 2 years of date of transfer of the property to the applicant.<br><br>Grant level calculated using formula given above. | Repayable on transfer of property by the applicant or applicant ceasing to live at the property.                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Charities                          | Works to bring property up to the decent homes* standard.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Charity would be required to show proof of why they cannot fund the works themselves.<br><br>100% grant to maximum of £8,000 all eligible works to be carried out.                                                                                                          | None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Landlords                          | Works to bring existing rented property up to the decent homes* standard.<br><br>Improvement of vacant homes up to the decent homes* standard. **<br><br>Conversion of properties to smaller dwellings.**<br><br>Conversion of non-residential property to residential. ** | Property will be let at restricted rent level.<br>i.e. at not more than 10% above the indicative rent level (or at or below the local housing allowance level when introduced).<br><br>100% grant to maximum of £8,000 all eligible works to be carried out.                | Repayable when:<br><br>a) rent is above the indicative rent level (or local housing allowance when introduced) – or any subsequent statutory replacement. Or,<br><br>b) a failure to provide details of rent levels to the Council. Or,<br><br>c) a transfer of the property. |

\* for decent home standard see para. 2.1.2.

\*\* There should be proven need for the accommodation in the area concerned – based on Local Housing Assessment.

### 6.2.4. Common Parts

Where works are to the common parts of building containing flats then a Renovation Grant should be applied for in the normal way, if more than one resident wishes to apply they will need to make separate applications. The amount of grant will relate only to the portion of works that the applicant is responsible for and the conditions referred to above will apply. Proof that the applicant has a responsibility to carry out and pay for the works will be required prior to approval.



**6.2.5. Minor Works Grant - Energy Efficiency** - This grant will cease to be available from 1 December 2010 - Executive Decision dated 05/11/2010.

| Eligible Applicant   | Eligible Property and works                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Qualifying Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Conditions                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Owner Occupier       | Council Tax Band A-C<br>Loft and Wall Insulation for properties that meet all aspects of the decent home standard apart from insulation.<br>Max. grant £500 (£1000 where solid walls)                                                                                                                                                                                          | Applicant (and Spouse) is (are) over 65 years of age or are in receipt of Council Tax Benefit.<br><br>Applicant must have applied for any other generally available grants for energy efficiency.                                                                                                                                             | Works must be completed within 12 months of grant approval.                                                                                           |
| Landlord             | Loft and Wall Insulation. Only for properties that meet all aspects of the decent home standard apart from insulation.<br>Max. grant £500. (£1000 where solid walls)<br><b>Eligibility extended by Executive decision dated 12/12/2008: Any privately tenanted property where current loft insulation level is less than 150mm grant available to increase level to 250mm.</b> | Works aren't required under other provisions e.g. building regulations.<br>Tenants must have applied for any other generally available grants for energy efficiency.                                                                                                                                                                          | Works must be completed within 12 months of approval.<br><br><b>Contractor must be working under Carbon Emission Reduction Trading (CERT) scheme.</b> |
| Warm Front applicant | Insulation or heating improvements in line with Warm Front criteria to cover any excess not met by Warm Front to a maximum of £800.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Any property where the applicant has qualified for Warm Front.<br>Applicant must have applied for any other generally available grants for energy efficiency that are applicable.<br><b>Executive decision of 11/07/2008 limiting eligibility to people qualifying for Warm Front by virtue of being in receipt of means tested benefits.</b> | Works must be completed within 12 months of grant approval.                                                                                           |

Insulation Standard for decent homes:

- **Dwellings with gas/oil programmable heating:** cavity wall insulation (if there are cavities that can be insulated effectively\*) or at least 50mm loft insulation (if there is a loft space);
- **Dwellings heated by electric storage radiators/LPG/programmable solid fuel central heating:** at least 200mm of loft insulation (if there is a loft) and cavity wall insulation (if there are cavities that can be insulated effectively\*).

\* where there are thermally inefficient solid walls, grant of up to £1000 towards the insulation of all external walls.

## **6.3 Supplementary Matters**

### **6.3.1. Preliminary or Ancillary Services and Charges**

Preliminary and ancillary fees may be included on the grant. The maximum amount of any such fees will be 12% of the cost of works prior to VAT.

Fees can be paid for agency arrangements; architects, legal, planning and building control costs that directly relate to the works; structural, electrical or similar engineers reports. Other fees will be at the discretion of the Head of Housing and Benefits.

### **6.3.2. Contractors**

The Council, unless otherwise agreed, will require two independent prices for the works from contractors.

It will be a requirement that the works are carried out by one of the contractors whose estimates formed part of the application. If for some reason this cannot be achieved the Council will consider varying this requirement but an application for this will need to be made in writing to the Head of Housing and Benefits.

Where the contractor is related to the applicant or is a company that the applicant or his/her family member is a director or employee of that contractor/company, the grant will only cover the costs of materials used.

### **6.3.3. Notification**

Applicants will be notified in writing of the amount of grant, if any, that they have been awarded. The notification will state

- I. the works that are eligible for grant
- II. the amount of expense that in the Council's opinion are properly to be incurred in the carrying out of the eligible works
- III. the amount of the costs which in the opinion of the Council have been or will be incurred in relation to preliminary or ancillary fees
- IV. the amount of grant.

In the case of a refusal the applicant will be advised of the reason for such refusal.

### **6.3.4. Commencement of Works**

The applicant must advise the Council in writing of when the works are due to start. Failure to do so may result in the grant not being paid.

No grant will be payable in respect of works that have already been started prior to an application being made.

In exceptional circumstances the Council may give applicants written approval to start works prior to grant approval but this in no way obligates the Council to give such a grant and the applicant will be proceeding at their own risk.

### **6.3.5. Quality of Works**

The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the works are carried out to an acceptable standard.

### **6.3.6. Grant Payment**

Grants will be paid directly to the contractor on receipt of a suitable invoice. In exceptional circumstances the grant may be paid to the grant applicant subject to provision of a suitable receipt.

The grant may be paid in whole at the completion of the eligible works or in part by instalments as the work progresses however the amount of payments by instalments prior to the works being completed shall not exceed 90% of the grant. Where there is a contribution to be paid by the applicant this will need to be paid prior to any grant payments being made.

#### **6.3.7. Unforeseen Costs and Grant Reassessment**

If during the course of works it appears to the Council that

- (a) the works could not have been carried out without carrying out some additional unforeseen works
- (b) or through no fault of the applicant the works could not have been carried out (including preliminary or ancillary charges) for the amount specified in the grant approval,

then the Council may increase the grant to cover such works/costs. Approval to carry out such work will be given in writing by the Head of Housing and Benefits.

#### **6.3.8. Local Land Charges and Repayment**

Grant conditions for Renovation Grants will be registered on the Local Land Charge Register and will last for 20 years from the date of completion of works (the certified date) unless fully repaid prior to this.

No interest will be added unless a demand for repayment due to breach of condition, (including transfer), is not repaid within 6 months of that demand. In this instance interest at 4% above bank base rate will apply from date of original demand to date of payment calculated after each full month since that 6 month anniversary.

The Head of Housing and Benefits, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to have the discretion to waive or vary the repayable amount in exceptional circumstances, e.g. where repayment is likely to result in homelessness.

#### **6.3.9. Grant Expiry**

Grants will automatically lapse one year after approval unless they have been previously extended. Any time extension to grants will be at the discretion of the Head of Housing and Benefits and any such extension or refusal to extend will be given in writing.

#### **6.3.10. Applicants Ceasing to be Entitled to Grant**

Where an applicant ceases to be entitled to a grant prior to payment the Council may refuse to pay the grant and/or require repayment of any instalments paid. The Council may add interest at 4% above base rate to any such instalments and such interest will be from the date that or those instalments were paid. Ceasing to be entitled to grant may for example be because the grant applicant no longer has the owner's interest in the property or because inaccurate or incomplete information was provided to the Council for purposes of the means testing.

#### **6.3.11. Repayment of Grant**

It is a condition of every grant that the applicant accepts that they are entering a contractual agreement to repay the grant whenever the conditions are breached and that this agreement will last for 20 years from the date of completion of the works. For the sake of clarity transfer of the property means transfer of the whole or part of the property but excludes transfer to the applicants spouse under a will or intestacy. Where the applicant's spouse becomes the owner grant conditions will similarly transfer and remain in force.

### **6.3.12. Applications That Fall Outside Of Policy**

Some applications for assistance will fail because they fall outside of this policy. Where the applicant is elderly or otherwise vulnerable the Helping Hand Agency may make an application for charitable funding on the clients behalf.

Appeals against refusal to give grant for circumstances falling outside of this policy will be considered by the Cabinet Member for Housing. Applications should be made in writing and detail

- the required works;
- their costs;
- why the applicant is unable to finance the works themselves, including documentary proof of a refusal of loan from a financial institution, and
- how the giving of grant is compliant with the Council's housing strategy or other strategic objectives.

If the Council receives an application which generally complies with this strategy but it is felt to be outside of the spirit of the strategy this will be referred on an individual basis to the Cabinet Member for Housing to determine whether it should be refused.

### **6.3.13. Making An Application**

The Council will work towards making applications for assistance as accessible as possible to all members of the community.

Initial enquiries can be made by post, in person at the Council Offices at Melton Hill, telephone or e-mail; information is also available on the Council's website:

Private Sector Housing Team  
Suffolk Coastal District Council  
Council Offices  
Melton Hill  
Woodbridge  
Suffolk  
IP12 1AU

Office hours 8.45 - 17.15.

Telephone 01394 444506

e-mail: [PS.Housing@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](mailto:PS.Housing@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk)

website: [www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk)

### **6.3.14. Preliminary Enquiries**

For grants that are subject to a means test an informal assessment can be given over the telephone.

For means testing purposes please have the following information available when you telephone us:

- The value of capital that you or your partner possess including cash, investments, bank or building society accounts, stocks, shares, land (excluding the value of the property that you are applying for).
- Any benefits that you or your partner receives.
- Details of any income including salaries, rent, one off payments.

- Details of tax, National Insurance and pension contributions paid.

For Minor Works Energy Efficiency Grants to give an indication of eligibility the Council will need to know:

- The age of construction of the property.
- How space heating is provided.
- The depth of any loft insulation.
- Whether the walls to the property are solid, filled cavities or unfilled cavities.

#### **6.3.15. Property Inspection**

Once the grants officer has carried out the preliminary enquiries he/she will arrange to inspect the property. This will normally be done within 10 working days. Once inspected the grants officer will draw up a schedule of works and this will be sent out to the applicant together with an application pack within 30 days of the inspection.

#### **6.3.16. Approval of Application**

The Council will endeavour to approve/refuse each grant application within 4 months of receipt of the completed paperwork and requested supporting information. In all cases grants will be approved or refused within 6 months of the complete application. The approval pack will include the necessary paperwork for advising of commencement of works and for claiming payment.

The Council's performance target is to have an average time for approval of 12 weeks.

#### **6.3.17. Payments**

The Council will endeavour to make payment of all grants within 10 days of receipt of all necessary paperwork. Applicants should note that particularly when making a final payment this will include any confirmation of statutory consents and this can prolong the payment period from the date of invoice. The Council will advise of all non-agreed invoices within 10 days.

## 7. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT

Disabled Facilities Grants are available for mandatory works as set out in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

These grants are means tested. Applicants should in the first instance contact the Occupational Therapist at Suffolk County Council who will assess their needs. Telephone Customer First on 08456 023 023 and ask for an assessment of need by an Occupational Therapist. The County Council will then make a referral to this Council for any appropriate works. The Council's Private Sector Housing Team will carry out an informal means test over the telephone to give applicants an idea of what, if anything they will need to pay towards the works.

Works costing under £1000 are normally paid for by Suffolk County Council.

Where the scope of work may require building of an extension (other than a small shower room) the case will be reviewed by a panel of senior officers from both the District and County Councils. In the first instance it is expected that facilities will be provided by internal alterations to the existing structure of the dwelling.

**Executive decision of 11/07/2008 imposes repayment conditions for owner-occupiers for grants of over £5000. This requires grants to be repaid where the property is disposed of within a ten year period, with a maximum repayment of £10,000.**

### 7.1 Adaptation for Tenants of Housing Associations

The consultation document from the Department of Communities and Local Government on the Disabled Facilities Grant Programme stated the following in respect of adaptations to homes of housing association tenants: Housing Associations as socially responsible landlords, should ensure as a principle of good business practice that their tenants receive the best possible adaptation service. The Housing Corporation advise that whilst there is no statutory requirement on Housing Associations to provide adaptations, "As good social landlords the Corporation would expect Housing Associations to provide their tenants with adaptations where required" (extract from the Housing Corporation's Capital Funding Guide). This is especially so as disabled people make up a large proportion of their rental market. To this effect associations should include provision for adaptations in their business plans and ensure that their adaptation services are well publicised. The Housing Corporation and the National Housing Federation advocate local agreements on adaptations, encouraging wider discussions on accessibility issues and planning for the future. These local agreements will take into account situations where the Housing Association's contribution may be small and will not assume that they are able to fund everything, or in some cases anything.

Suffolk Coastal District Council has a local agreement with Suffolk Heritage Housing Association that we will jointly fund disabled facilities grants for their tenants. Furthermore any means test contribution up to £1000 will be funded by SHHA. Where the property may require extending, such cases will be referred back to SHHA for them to fund or other options considered.

Regular meetings to discuss this arrangement and procedural issues, are held with representatives from Suffolk Heritage, including tenants reps, Suffolk County Council Adult Care Services and Suffolk Coastal

We would be happy to come to a similar agreement with other Registered Social Landlords.

## **8. Policy in Respect Vacant Properties**

In Suffolk Coastal perhaps more so than in many other areas of the country it is difficult to gauge with any confidence the number of homes that are vacant. At the end of April 2007 there were 714 homes listed with our Council Tax Section as having been vacant for more than 6 months. Whilst there is some verification of this list by staff it is a list that is initially dependant on the Council Taxpayer's correct registration of the property. Suffolk Coastal also has around 2,500 second homes and this leads to a greater potential error in correct registration.

As part of the Local Housing Assessment cross checking of physical surveys with Council Tax records indicated that the number of long-term vacant properties was 640 (1.3% of the stock). It further indicated that the vast majority of these had been vacant for between 6 and 12 months leaving a core of 150 dwellings that are intractable long term vacant. Whilst in any buoyant housing market there will be a certain number of homes that are vacant for various reasons it is not acceptable for homes to remain empty without good reason particularly when affordable homes are such an issue.

The Housing Act 2004 has introduced the use of Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO's) these provide an additional enforcement tool to assist with bringing empty homes back into use.

### **8.1 Aim of Policy**

The aim of this policy is to reduce the number of long-term vacant properties and to reduce the number of properties that become vacant in the first instance.

### **8.2 Objectives**

Provide assistance and guidance to owners of properties to prevent properties becoming vacant.

Provide advice and assistance, wherever possible, to those wishing to bring empty homes back into use.

Where necessary, use appropriate enforcement action to return the property into use.

### **8.3 Targeting**

One of the aims of this policy is to prevent a property being left empty in the first place.

Some houses will naturally be vacant for a period of time for example whilst probate is concluded, or simply because they are for sale. By promoting the empty homes policy and the powers available to it, the Council hopes to discourage owners from leaving a property vacant for longer than is usually necessary.

Furthermore some owners are uncertain how to go about letting their property and have particular concerns about tenants who might damage their property and/or eviction of problem tenants, which would either not possible or expensive. The Rent Deposit Guarantee scheme and Coastal Lettings Plus together with advice from our Housing Options Team is fundamental in prevention of homes being left empty.

BVPI 64 measures the number of houses that have been empty for longer than six months that the Council has caused to become occupied. This indicator specifically includes properties where help has been given to a landlord through a rent-and-deposit guarantee scheme, leasing, acquisition (whether by compulsory purchase or by voluntary agreement), giving grants, referral to a housing association for leasing or purchase.

The Council's target (2007/8) is to bring 65 houses back into use in the year.

The Council will identify potentially long-term vacant properties by reference to the Council Tax list of vacant properties. This will be reviewed on a quarterly basis in order to effectively monitor properties that become occupied as a result of the Council's involvement. Similarly those intractably vacant properties, usually more than two years, will be readily identified.

Those properties that have been vacant for more than 2 years, particularly where they are in areas of high housing need or where nuisance is being caused to neighbouring property or where there is anti social behaviour, will be given priority for action. The following action will be taken dependant on the circumstances of each case.

N.B. Because of the rural nature of large areas of the district there will inevitably be some vacant homes which are so isolated or dilapidated that involvement of the Council would not be justified. What action to take if any would be determined on a case by case basis and be dependant on the costs involved, both in financial and staffing terms, compared to the benefit derived.

## **8.4 Options for Bringing Properties Back Into Use**

### **8.4.1. Initial Visit and Advice**

The property will be visited by a member of the Private Sector Housing team in order to confirm its condition and any potential nuisance or vandalism.

Owners will be contacted and advised of the various options for bringing the property back into use.

Owners of houses that appear to be in a habitable condition will be offered assistance from our housing advice team on tenancy arrangements, our rent deposit guarantee scheme, Coastal Lettings Plus and letting agreements generally. Where landlords are elderly or infirm the services of the Helping Hand HIA will be offered to the landlord to help get repairs and improvements carried out.

### **8.4.2. Housing Associations**

Owners of suitable properties will be advised about leasing arrangements with housing association partners. This can be a particularly attractive option for owners who, for whatever reasons, do not want to sell the property but equally cannot face the prospect of renting the property out and the responsibilities that go with it. The housing association will take over management responsibility for the property for a fixed term number of years. The length of time that such arrangements run for will normally depend on the amount of work needed to be undertaken by the housing association in order to render the property habitable. The longer the lease the more attractive this option will be to the housing association. Once the property is let the rent will be paid to the housing association who will take out their management and maintenance fee prior to passing the remainder to the owner.

The Council will also continue to work with housing association partners to facilitate their purchase of suitable properties.

### **8.4.3. Enforcement Action and Enforced Sale**

Houses that are vulnerable to unauthorised entry and/or being vandalised may be subject to enforcement action to board up and secure the premises.

The Council will consider enforcement to remedy any health and safety hazards at the vacant property. Where works are not completed by the owner it is likely that works will be carried out in default and the owner charged for the costs incurred. If



settlement of the debt is not made the Council will consider the enforced sale of the property which will not only recover the debt but also lead to the property's re-use. The enforced sale option may also be considered for other debts such as Council Tax arrears.

#### **8.4.4. Grant Aid**

This Private Sector Renewal Strategy contains details of when, where and how much grant aid will be given in respect of vacant properties – see the chapter on Financial Assistance above. This is principally for first time buyers or landlords who are willing to rent out the property at housing benefit rent levels.

#### **8.4.5. Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO)**

EDMOs are principally designed to deal with properties that have been vacant for years. The Council would need to prove to the Residential Property Tribunal that there is little likelihood of the property coming back into use before an interim EDMO could be made. The Government see the use of EDMOs as a last resort.

An EDMO allows the Council to take over management of the property, it does not take away the owners right to sell the property. The costs of any work needed to make the property habitable have to be paid for by the Council and recouped from the rent. It is for this reason that EDMO use is likely to be confined to properties that are in habitable condition or the cost of making them habitable is low.

#### **8.4.6. Compulsory Purchase**

The Council will consider the compulsory purchase of a property where it is satisfied that the house is in a poor state of repair, is unlikely to be brought back into use by the owner and a clear public benefit would be achieved. Such a benefit would include provision of affordable housing, improving the appearance of the neighbourhood and reducing anti-social behaviour.

## 9. Capital Resources and Performance Monitoring

### 9.1 Capital Resources

The Council's current Capital budget for Private Sector Housing grants is as follows:

| 2007/8   | 2008/9   | 2009/10  | 2010/11  |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| £300,000 | £413,000 | £240,000 | £246,000 |

This is the amount of money that the Council has put into housing grants for this year and its intention for the next three years. It includes money that the Government has given to the local authority for dealing with non-decent homes, this amounted to £404,000 in 2006/7 and £204,000 in 2007/8. The money from the Government has to be committed to be spent within two years.

In addition to this the Council receives a Specified Capital Grant for eligible works for Disabled Facilities Grants this is a 60% grant from the Government of £243,000 for 2007/8. With the Council's contribution added this brings the amount of money available for Disabled Facilities Grants to £405,000.

If the available budget is heading towards a potential overspend, the discretionary grant element of the policy will be temporarily suspended following consultation with the Cabinet member responsible for housing.

The Council has committed £18,000 towards the running of the Small Repair Service.

### 9.2 Monitoring Progress and Performance

The Council operates a Balanced Scorecard method for monitoring progress toward strategic aims. The Scorecard for Private Sector Housing is shown in Appendix D below. This includes targets for most of the main functions carried out by the team.

There is currently only one BVPI 64 - The number of private sector vacant dwellings that are returned into occupation or demolished as a direct result of action by the local authority.

The Government have set a time limit for disabled facilities grants to be approved within 6 months of a completed application having been received. The Private Sector Housing team has set its own target in respect of this namely that the average time taken to approve grants is 12 weeks.

### 9.3 Key Service Standards

The Council will work towards the follow key service standards:

Initial response to any service request will be made within 5 working days.

- telephone call
- personal visit to complainant
- acknowledgement or reply to a letter (a full reply letter within 28 days of acknowledgement).

Commence action in response to a service request within 5 days of initial response. Same day response will be given in respect of major nuisance or risk to health.

- inspection of premises complained of.
- inspection of premises for grant purposes.

Initial notification to owner of premises within 2 weeks of inspection, where appropriate.

- letter
- notice
- meeting.

90% of all grant schedules to be issued within 1 calendar month of inspection.

- Note that in the case of HMOs this schedule will be issued to the Fire Officer for consultation purposes in accordance with the HMO Protocol, and not at that stage given to any third party.

90% of all grant payments to be authorised within 10 working days.

- 'authorised' means passed through to the Accounts Section for payment (this normally takes a further 3 days for cheques to be sent out or BACS credits issued).
- any contested invoices will be notified to the contractor within 10 working days.
- 

The Helping Hand Home Improvement Agency will issue 75% of all building contracts to builders within 2 weeks of a grant approval, or alternative funding being confirmed. 100% of such contracts to be issued within 4 weeks.

Supporting People as contractors of the Home Improvement Agency service have also set service targets to be achieved the principal standards are as follows, most of these are included in the scorecard (Appendix D) but there are also targets for completion times for major and minor works. These are as follows:

- Small jobs (<£1000) median time taken from first visit to completion 17 weeks,
- Large jobs (>£1000) median time taken from first visit to completion 53 weeks.

#### **9.4 Who To Contact**

Initially comments about the Private Sector Housing Service or this strategy can be made to:

Peter Kerridge  
Principal Environmental Health Officer (Housing)  
Council Offices  
Melton Hill  
Woodbridge  
IP12 1AU

Telephone 01394 444273

e-mail [Peter.Kerridge@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](mailto:Peter.Kerridge@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk)

Enquiries about grant availability can be sent to the same address or telephone:

Jayne Howlett  
Administrative Officer 01394 444506

#### **9.5 Complaints About The Policy**

Any complaints about this policy should be addresses to:

Mike Eaton  
Head of Housing and Benefits  
Suffolk Coastal District Council

Melton Hill  
Woodbridge  
IP12 1AU

e-mail: [m.j.eaton@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](mailto:m.j.eaton@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk)

Telephone 01394 444210.

Complainants will receive an acknowledgement within 7 days and a substantive response within 28 days.

#### **9.6 Policy Implementation Plan**

It is intended, subject to approval by the Council's Cabinet, to implement this policy from the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2007 when it will be available both as a published document and on the Council's website.

Monitoring of the policy will be carried out on a day to day basis by the Principal Environmental Health Officer (Housing). Best Value Performance indicators will be reported to Members twice yearly.

It is proposed that a substantial review will be carried out following the next Local Housing Assessment, scheduled for 2011. It may be necessary to review the policy earlier if there are substantive changes in: legislation, the Council's strategy, Regional or Sub Regional Housing Strategies, available resources including funding, or it is felt that the policy is failing to effectively address the key priorities.

**SUFFOLK COASTAL DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

In March 1998 the Government's Better Regulation Unit published an Enforcement Concordat which sets out a blueprint for fair, practical and consistent enforcement across the country. The Concordat has been developed jointly by representatives of businesses, local authorities and central government and has been circulated for adoption by enforcement agencies. The Concordat draws on good practice already operated by many local authorities and other agencies.

Suffolk Coastal District Council fully supports this initiative and has set out within this Enforcement Policy the principles to be adopted by all departments and officers exercising any enforcement functions. In signing the Concordat and adopting this Enforcement Policy the Council is stating its commitment to an enforcement service which is courteous and helpful and which works with individuals and businesses, wherever possible, to help them comply with the law. The Council nevertheless acknowledges the need for firm action against those that flout the law and put consumers and others at risk.

In drafting this policy the council has taken the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 into account. In the Council's view this Enforcement Policy is compatible with Convention Rights.

**2. ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY**

The Council has a duty to enforce a wide range of statutes relating to public health and safety, quality of life, preservation of public and residential amenity maintenance of the environment and protection of public funds. All of these activities will be carried out having regard to the general principles of good enforcement practice outlined in this Policy document. The services falling within the scope of this policy include:

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chief Executives Department:    | Licensing of taxis, premises, boats and beaches.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Finance Department:             | Revenue recovery and the investigation of housing benefit, Council tax and national non domestic rate fraud.                                                                                                      |
| Environmental Services          | Pollution Control, Environmental Protection, Health and Safety, Public Health, Food Safety, Imported Food Control and other Port Health functions, House Conditions, Animal Welfare and Unauthorised encampments. |
| Planning and Leisure Department | Planning Control, Building Control                                                                                                                                                                                |

Although primary responsibility for compliance with the law rests with individuals and business, the Council will provide free information to help them to understand legal requirements and will seek to raise awareness about the need to comply.

### **3. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY**

The Council's Scheme of Delegation specifies the extent to which enforcement powers are delegated to officers. Whilst delegation may often be to officers, in certain circumstances the decision to take enforcement action lies with the relevant Council Committee, for example refusal to grant or renew a Public Entertainments Licence.

### **4. PRINCIPLES OF ENFORCEMENT**

The Council believes in firm but fair regulation. Underlying the policy are the principles of proportionality in the application of the law and in securing compliance; consistency of approach; openness about how the Council operates and what those customers may expect, and targeting of enforcement action.

#### **4.1 Proportionality**

The enforcement action taken by the Council will be proportionate to the risks posed and to the seriousness of any breach of the law.

Some incidents or breaches of regulatory requirements have the potential to cause serious risks to public health and safety, environmental damage or loss of public or residential amenity. One of the Council's responsibilities is to protect the public and prevent harm to the environment from occurring or continuing. There may be occasions when the breach of regulations will justify statutory action. Any such action will only be taken in accordance with the law, and after due consideration has been given to any Convention Rights, under the Human Rights Act 1998, that may be affected by such action.

#### **4.2 Consistency**

The Council aims to achieve consistency in advice tendered, the response to complaints and other incidents, the use of powers and decisions on whether to prosecute.

However, the Council recognises that consistency does not mean simple uniformity. Officers need to take account of many variables; the scale of the breach; the attitude and actions of management, and the history of previous incidents or breaches. Decisions on enforcement action are a matter of professional judgement and the Council, through its officers, needs to exercise discretion. The Council will continue to develop arrangements to promote consistency including effective arrangements for liaison with other enforcing authorities.

#### **4.3 Openness**

Openness is important in maintaining public confidence in the Council's ability to regulate. It means helping all customers to understand what is expected of

them and what they should expect from the Council. It also means making clear why an officer intends to or has taken enforcement action.

Openness is an integral part of the role of Council officers and the Council continues to train its staff and to develop its procedures to ensure that:

- where remedial action is required, it is clearly explained (in writing if requested) why the action is necessary and when it must be carried out; a distinction being made between best practice advice and legal requirements;
- opportunity is provided to discuss what is required to comply with the law before formal enforcement action is taken, unless urgent action is required, for example, to protect the environment, to prevent evidence being destroyed or in the course of an investigation into fraud which may lead to prosecution;
- where urgent action is required, a written explanation of the reasons is provided as soon as practicable after the event;
- written explanation is given on any rights of appeal against formal enforcement action at the time the action is taken;

#### 4.4 Targeting

Targeting means making sure that regulatory effort is directed primarily towards those who are responsible for risk to health and safety or whose activity gives rise to serious environmental damage, where the risks are least well controlled or against deliberate or organised crime. Action will be primarily focused on lawbreakers or those directly responsible for the risk and who are best placed to control it.

The Council has systems for prioritising regulatory effort. They include the response to complaints from the public about regulated activities, the assessment of the risks posed by business operation and the gathering and acting on intelligence about illegal activity.

In the case of regulated industries, management actions are important. Repeated incidents or breaches of regulatory requirements which are related may be an indication of an unwillingness to change behaviour or an inability to achieve sufficient control, and may require a review of the regulatory requirements, the actions of the operator and additional investment. A relatively low hazard site or activity, poorly managed, has potential for greater risk to the environment than a higher hazard site or activity where proper control measures are in place.

The Council will always seek to recover the costs of investigation and Court proceedings.

## 5. ENFORCEMENT OPTIONS

The Council recognises the importance of achieving and maintaining consistency in its approach to enforcement. For many areas of our enforcement activity government guidance already exists in the form of Codes of Practice, Planning Policy Guidance, Government Circulars etc. There may also be local

or regional Codes of Practice such as the Charter and Code of Practice for the collection of debts which have been produced locally to promote consistency in our enforcement activity. When making enforcement decisions officers must have regard to any relevant national or local guidance as well as the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and this Enforcement Policy.

Enforcement decisions must be consistent, balanced, fair and relate to common standards that ensure the public or environment is adequately protected. The criteria to be considered will include:

- the seriousness of the offence;
- the history of the activity;
- confidence in achieving compliance;
- consequences of non-compliance; and
- likely effectiveness of the various enforcement options.

The criteria are not exhaustive and those which apply will depend on the particular circumstances of each case. This does not mean that all factors must be in favour of enforcement action, rather that, on balance, the preponderance is in favour.

Having considered the enforcement criteria the following options are available:

- to take no action; or
- to take informal action: or
- to serve statutory notices; or
- to issue formal cautions; or
- to suspend, revoke or refuse to renew a licence; or
- to impose an administrative penalty; or
- to prosecute or apply for a Court Order.

Where appropriate a staged approach to enforcement should be adopted and in the first instance business should be given the opportunity to discuss and remedy problems before action is taken, unless immediate action is required.

## 5.1 Informal Action

Informal Action will be taken when:

- the act or omission is not serious enough to warrant formal action; or
- from the individual's or business's past history it can be reasonably expected that informal action will achieve compliance; or
- the confidence in an individual or business proprietor is high; or
- the consequences of non-compliance will not pose a significant risk to public health, public safety or the environment.

When an informal approach is used to secure compliance with regulations, confirmation of what action is required must be confirmed in writing. All correspondence must clearly differentiate between legal requirements and recommendations of good practice and must indicate the regulations contravened and the measures which will enable compliance.

## 5.2 Statutory Notices

Statutory Notices will be issued where one of the following criteria apply:



- where there is a statutory duty to do so;
- there are significant contraventions of legislation;
- there is a lack of confidence in the proprietor or enterprise to respond to an informal approach;
- there is a history of non-compliance;
- standards are generally poor with little management awareness of statutory requirements;
- the consequences of non-compliance could be potentially serious to public health, or cause public nuisance, or be irreversible; or
- where, in addition to prosecution, measures need to be taken to remedy conditions that are serious, deteriorating or where the service of a notice is needed to support a prosecution.

Failure to comply with a statutory notice will, in general and where relevant, result in prosecution and/or works in default where appropriate.

### 5.3 Prohibition Notices

It will be necessary to consider the service of a Prohibition Notice, stop notice or injunction in one or more of the following circumstances:

- an imminent risk of injury to health or safety can be demonstrated;
- an imminent risk of serious pollution to the environment can be demonstrated;
- the consequences of not taking immediate and decisive action to protect the public would be unacceptable.
- where an unauthorised development is unacceptable and immediate remedial action is required because the breach is causing serious harm to public amenity in the neighbourhood of the site or where there has been breach of a condition notice;
- where unauthorised development is unacceptable and continuing works are causing irreversible damage and remedial action is not a satisfactory option;
- the guidance criteria concerning the conditions when prohibition may be appropriate are fulfilled;
- there is no confidence in the integrity of an un-prompted offer made by a proprietor to voluntarily close premises or cease the use of any equipment, process or treatment associated with the imminent risk; or
- a proprietor is unwilling to confirm in writing his/her un-prompted offer of a voluntary prohibition.
- where it would be the most effective remedy available.

### 5.4 Prosecution

The Council recognises that the decision to prosecute is significant and could have far reaching consequences on the offender.

The decision to undertake a prosecution will normally be taken by the relevant Director in consultation with the Council's Solicitor. The criteria for the issue of proceedings are:

- the alleged offence involves a flagrant breach of the law such that public health, safety or well being is or has been put at risk or irreversible damage had resulted;

- there has been a reckless disregard for the environment;
- the alleged offence involves deception which may or may not result in a loss or potential loss of public funds;
- the integrity of the licensing framework is threatened;
- the alleged offence involves a failure by the suspected offender to correct an identified serious potential risk having been given a reasonable opportunity to comply with the lawful requirements of an authorised officer;
- the alleged offence involves a failure to comply in full or in part with the requirements of a statutory notice;
- there is a history of similar offences;
- the alleged offence causes public alarm and it is desirable to reassure the public and deter other offenders; or
- a prosecution is in the public interest, there is realistic prospect of conviction and sufficient evidence to support proceedings;

All relevant evidence and information will be considered before deciding upon a prosecution in order to enable a consistent, fair and objective decision to be made.

#### 5.5 Prosecution Without Warning

As a general rule a person or a company will be given a reasonable opportunity to comply with the law, although in some circumstances prosecution may be undertaken without giving prior warning, e.g.

- the contravention is a particularly serious one;
- there has been a particularly blatant disregard of the law;
- a statutory notice has been previously issued for a similar offence; or
- the integrity of the licensing framework is threatened.

#### 5.6 Formal Cautions

A formal caution may be issued as an alternative to a prosecution. Formal cautions will be issued to:

- deal quickly and simply with less serious offences;
- divert less serious offences away from the courts; or
- reduce the chances of repeat offences.

To safeguard the suspected offender's interests the following conditions will be fulfilled before a caution is administered:-

- there must be evidence of the suspected offender's guilt sufficient to give a realistic prospect of conviction; and
- the suspected offender must admit the offence; and
- the suspected offender must understand the significance of a formal caution and give an informed consent to being cautioned.

No pressure will be applied to a person to accept a formal caution.

Should a person decline the offer of a formal caution a prosecution will be pursued.

## 5.7 Non Compliance with Policy

If any person is unhappy with the action taken, or information or advice given they will be given the opportunity of discussing the matter with the relevant line manager or Assistant Director. This is without prejudice to any formal appeals mechanism or to the Council's formal complaints procedure.

## 6. TRAINING AND APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

All officers undertaking enforcement duties will be suitably trained and qualified so as to ensure that they are fully competent to undertake their enforcement activities.

All officers will be formally authorised by the relevant Council committee or delegated officer to exercise specified powers under relevant statutes. The level of authorisation for each officer will be determined by their qualifications, experience and competence having regard to any relevant national guidelines. Authorisation will be in writing and in a form which can be shown on request. A copy of an officer's authorisation will be held in their personal file.

The Council support the principle of continuing professional development and will ensure that all officers are given additional in-post training to maintain up to date knowledge and skills.

## 7. MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Staff competency and the consistency of enforcement will be reviewed by each department on a regular basis.

The Council will maintain management systems to monitor the quality and nature of enforcement activities undertaken, so as to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, a uniform and consistent approach. Where local or national coordinating bodies exist such as LACOTS and the Suffolk Food Liaison Group, the Council will ensure that wherever possible its enforcement practices are consistent with best practice. The review of the enforcement services may involve any of the following activities:

- Review of enforcement standards by members of the Council;
- Quality Assurance systems such as ISO9002;
- supervising officer for enforcement action;
- monitoring visits by line managers;
- shadowing visits by colleagues;
- monitoring of correspondence and statutory notices;
- peer review exercises;
- internal training sessions and workshops on enforcement issues;
- customer satisfaction surveys;
- business focus groups;
- quality assurance.

## 8. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

This policy document will be reviewed on a regular basis.

**SUFFOLK COASTAL DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**STANDARDS FOR HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION  
FOR THE PURPOSES OF PART XI HOUSING ACT 1985  
(These standards are for guidance only. Housing Act 2004 requires  
Housing Health & Safety Rating System assessment to be carried out)**

**CATEGORY A HOUSES** - Houses occupied as flatlets, bedsitters and rooms, which are fully self-catering, with some degree of self-containment.

**SPACE STANDARDS**

One person units of accommodation:

- |      |                           |                                               |
|------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| (i)  | One room units            | 13m <sup>2</sup> including kitchen facilities |
|      |                           |                                               |
| (ii) | Two or more roomed units: |                                               |
|      | Each kitchen              | 4.5m <sup>2</sup>                             |
|      | Each living/kitchen       | 11m <sup>2</sup>                              |
|      | Each living room          | 9m <sup>2</sup>                               |
|      | Each bedroom              | 6.5m <sup>2</sup>                             |

Two or more person units of accommodation:

- |      |                           |                                                                                                                     |
|------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (ii) | One room units:           | not normally suitable for two or more persons who are married couples or cohabitees. In other cases for two persons |
|      |                           | only 20.5m <sup>2</sup> .                                                                                           |
|      |                           |                                                                                                                     |
| (ii) | Two or more roomed units: |                                                                                                                     |
|      | Each kitchen              | 7m <sup>2</sup>                                                                                                     |
|      | Each living/kitchen       | 15m <sup>2</sup>                                                                                                    |
|      | Each living room          | 12m <sup>2</sup>                                                                                                    |
|      | Each living/bedroom       | 14m <sup>2</sup>                                                                                                    |
|      | Each bedroom              | 10m <sup>2</sup>                                                                                                    |

These figures are based on a two person occupancy. For occupancies of more than two persons reference should be made when considering the permitted number to use the house for sleeping to sections 325 and 326, Housing Act 1985.

## **CATEGORY F HOUSES**

*Most houses or other building which by erection or conversion comprise dwellings which are self-contained, all such dwellings comprising accommodation to which access is had via a single "front door" from any common area. Such dwellings would normally contain all the standard amenities but where any might not – and be in an "unimproved" state – there would nevertheless be no sharing of amenities with the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings.*

### **SPACE STANDARDS**

#### **Minimum floor areas for conversion of existing buildings into self-contained flats**

*One person, four roomed flat:*

|                            |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Bedroom                    | 7m <sup>2</sup>    |
| Living room                | 11.5m <sup>2</sup> |
| Kitchen                    | 5.5m <sup>2</sup>  |
| Total habitable floor area | 24m <sup>2</sup>   |

*One person flatlet with separate kitchen:*

|                            |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Bed/living room            | 14m <sup>2</sup>   |
| Kitchen                    | 5.5m <sup>2</sup>  |
| Total habitable floor area | 19.5m <sup>2</sup> |

*One person flatlet with separate bedroom:*

|                            |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Bedroom                    | 7m <sup>2</sup>    |
| Kitchen/living room        | 14.5m <sup>2</sup> |
| Total habitable floor area | 21.5m <sup>2</sup> |

*Two person, one bedroom flat:*

|                            |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Bedroom                    | 10.5m <sup>2</sup> |
| Living room                | 13m <sup>2</sup>   |
| Kitchen                    | 5.5m <sup>2</sup>  |
| Total habitable floor area | 31.5m <sup>2</sup> |

## Minimum floor area for new-build self-contained flats

### *One person, four roomed flat:*

|                             |                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Bedroom                     | 7m <sup>2</sup>    |
| Living room                 | 11.5m <sup>2</sup> |
| Kitchen                     | 5.5m <sup>2</sup>  |
| Total habitable floor space | 24m <sup>2</sup>   |

### *One person flatlet with separate kitchen:*

|                             |                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Bed/living room             | 14m <sup>2</sup> |
| Kitchen                     | 5m <sup>2</sup>  |
| Total habitable floor space | 19m <sup>2</sup> |

### *One person flatlet with separate bedroom:*

|                            |                  |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Bedroom                    | 7m <sup>2</sup>  |
| Kitchen/living room        | 14m <sup>2</sup> |
| Total habitable floor area | 21m <sup>2</sup> |

### *Two person, one bedroom flat:*

|                             |                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Bedroom                     | 10.5m <sup>2</sup> |
| Living room                 | 13m <sup>2</sup>   |
| Kitchen                     | 5m <sup>2</sup>    |
| Total habitable floor space | 28.5m <sup>2</sup> |

## Further space standards for conversion of existing building and for new build

### *Three person, two bedroom flat:*

|                                        |                  |
|----------------------------------------|------------------|
| Main bedroom (not more than 2 persons) | 10m <sup>2</sup> |
| Second bedroom (single person)         | 7m <sup>2</sup>  |
| Living room                            | 16m <sup>2</sup> |
| Kitchen                                | 7m <sup>2</sup>  |
| Total habitable floor area             | 40m <sup>2</sup> |

### *Four person, three bedroom flat:*

|                                          |                  |
|------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Main bedroom (not more than 2 persons)   | 10m <sup>2</sup> |
| Second and third bedroom (single person) | 7m <sup>2</sup>  |
| Living room                              | 18m <sup>2</sup> |
| Kitchen                                  | 7m <sup>2</sup>  |
| Total habitable floor area               | 49m <sup>2</sup> |

For a two bedroom, four person flat the bedroom floor space must comply with the main bedroom criteria.

All bedrooms, living rooms and bathrooms are to be directly accessible from a common access lobby and not from another room.

Flats provided with more than one bedroom should provide bedrooms of minimum sizes in accordance with the relevant provisions above. In all cases “habitable floor area” is the useable floor area of any room used as a bedroom, living room, or kitchen. It does not include the area of any bathroom, staircase, passageway, landing or access lobby.

**UNIVERSITY CAMPUS SUFFOLK  
STUDENT HOUSING ACCREDITATION SCHEME**

**CODE OF PRACTICE**

**A code of practice agreed by:**

**University Campus Suffolk  
Ipswich Borough Council (& District & Borough Councils)  
Suffolk County Council  
Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service  
Suffolk Constabulary**



**INTRODUCTION**

**Aim**

- 1.1 The aim of the code of practice is to set out the minimum standards to be achieved by landlords who wish to become members of the accreditation scheme.

**How the code of practice works:**

- 1.2 The code of practice specifies physical standards for the property, and service standards for management.
- 1.3 Any person who wishes to make their accommodation available to students through UCS has to comply with the code of practice.
- 1.4 For landlords, whether as individuals or organisations, who wish to join the scheme there is an application and a fee. The application form and fee structure are available from the College and University. Persons or organisations who subscribe to the scheme are referred to as "members".
- 1.5 Users of the accreditation scheme whether as landlords or tenants, should note that whilst the statutory authorities and UCS have tried to provide guidance concerning compliance with the law, ultimately it is the landlord and his agent who must ensure that the property is safe and the law complied with.

**Compliance with the code will mean that:**

- 1.6 A high standard of repair, safety and amenity has been achieved.
- 1.7 A high level of housing management is maintained.
- 1.8 Disputes between students and members of the scheme should be few in number.

**Promotion of accredited property**

- 1.9 On being accepted on to the scheme the details of the properties will be advertised within UCS and via the internet.
- 1.10 The relevant institute will produce a "Notice of Accreditation" to display in the offices and student houses.

## THE CODE OF PRACTICE

### **Physical attributes of a "student accredited house"**

- 2.1 “Accredited” accommodation will achieve the standards described below.

Housing law distinguishes between houses occupied by a single household and houses occupied by more than one household (houses in multiple occupation). For the purposes of the accreditation scheme all properties shall be dealt with as HMO’s and the relative legislative requirements for HMO’s will apply even for those properties in single occupation.

### **Repair and physical condition**

- 2.2 All dwellings will meet the decent homes standard. The decent homes standard requires that a dwelling meets the following four criteria:

- a) It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing
- b) It is in a reasonable state of repair
- c) It has reasonably modern facilities and services
- d) It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

- 2.3 *Electrical wiring.* Because of the associated risks of fire and electrocution, a condition of the code of practice is that an inspection report be provided by a competent electrician. This may be provided by either a member of the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contractors or a member of the Electrical Contractors Association. The report should have been carried out within the last 5 years and shall state that the electrical installation is safe to use.

- 2.4 *Gas appliances.* All gas appliances and flues shall be subject to a service check by a CORGI registered installer every 12 months. Records of the inspection must be forwarded to UCS’s accommodation officer within 2 weeks of the inspection. A copy of the most recent report should be on display in the dwelling and shall state that the appliance is safe to use.

## **Fire Safety**

2.5 The following are minimum fire safety requirements dependant on the size of property and number of tenants. For self-contained flats compliance with the 1991 Building Regulations is sufficient. For single-storey dwellings and dwellings of any size which are of an unusual layout landlords are advised to seek advice from UCS Accommodation Office.

### 2.6 **2 Storey property with no floor area over 200m<sup>2</sup>**

#### **Up to and including 3 persons**

- Mains wired interlinked optical type smoke detectors/alarms in common parts and in all habitable rooms and a heat detector in the kitchen (BS 5839-6:2004 LD2, Grade D)
- Smoke stopping doors (standard/existing doors fitted with smoke seals to the top and both sides and a self closing device)
- Sound general construction to partition walls , floors and ceilings
- Provision of a fire blanket and dry powder fire extinguisher in the kitchen
- Escape windows (to current building regulation standard)

2.7

#### **4 persons and above**

- Fire alarm system with optical type smoke alarms in common parts and habitable rooms, heat detectors in kitchens, break glass call points and control panel (BS 5839-6:2004 LD1, Grade A)
- 30 minute fire resisting structure to walls and ceilings separating habitable rooms from other habitable rooms, kitchens and the common escape route.
- Fire doors with 30 minute fire resistance, complete with intumescent smoke seals and an overhead self-closing device (FD30S)
- Emergency lighting to common parts (BS5266)
- Fire escape signage
- Provision of a fire blanket and dry powder fire extinguisher in the kitchen and a 9 litre water extinguisher to each floor level

Or

- A fire sprinkler system (BS 9251:2005) with relaxations on the above requirements

2.8

### **3 Storey property**

#### **Any number of tenants**

- Fire alarm system with optical type smoke alarms in common parts and habitable rooms, heat detectors in kitchens, break glass call points and control panel (BS 5839-6:2004 LD1, Grade A)
- 30 minute fire resisting structure to walls and ceilings separating habitable rooms from other habitable rooms, kitchens and the common escape route.
- Fire doors with 30 minute fire resistance, complete with intumescent smoke seals and an overhead self-closing device (FD30S)
- Emergency lighting to common parts (BS5266)
- Fire escape signage
- Provision of a fire blanket and dry powder fire extinguisher in the kitchen and a 9 litre water extinguisher to each floor level

Or

A fire sprinkler system (BS 9251:2005) with relaxations on the above requirements.

2.9

### **4 Storey property**

Specific requirements dependant on individual property in consultation with the local authority and fire service.

## **Amenities**

### 2.10 **Schedule of amenity provisions in relation to number of persons**

1 – 5 persons

At least 1 bathroom and 1 WC. Where there are 5 persons the bathroom and WC must be separate, although the bathroom may also contain a WC.

At least 1 kitchen, not more than 1 floor distance from furthest bedroom. Where there is more than 1 floor distance an additional kitchen should be provided, or, a dining room provided on the same floor as the kitchen.

6 – 10 persons

At least 2 kitchens, not more than 1 floor distance from furthest bedroom. Where there is more than 1 floor distance a dining room should be provided on the same floor as the kitchen.

Or

1 large kitchen with dining room, with 2 sets of facilities - dependant upon the actual number of tenants.

2 bathrooms AND

2 separate WCs with WHBs (but one of the WCs can be contained within one of the bathrooms)

10 + persons

At least 2 kitchens, not more than 1 floor distance from furthest bedroom. Where there is more than 1 floor distance a dining room should be provided on the same floor as the kitchen.

Or

1 large kitchen with dining room, with sets of facilities dependant upon the actual number of tenants.

3 bathrooms AND

3 separate WCs with WHBs (but the WHBs can be contained within 2 of the bathrooms)

## **Water Closet**

- 2.11 In accordance with the above schedule the minimum number of water closets required shall either open off a hallway, landing or passageway, or be entered via a ventilated lobby. It shall not open off a bedroom, or directly off a kitchen or living room. (This requirement is not applicable to WC's above the minimum number e.g. en-suites). A wash hand basin shall be provided in the same room as the water closet. All surfaces should be clean and be capable of being kept clean.

### **Bathroom or Shower**

- 2.12 In accordance with the above schedule the minimum number of bathrooms or shower rooms should either open off a hallway, landing or passageway or be entered via a ventilated lobby. It shall not open off a bedroom, or directly off a kitchen or living room. (This requirement is not applicable to bathrooms or showers above the minimum number e.g. en-suites). All surfaces should be clean and be capable of being kept clean.

### **Kitchen**

- 2.13 The kitchen shall be equipped with a cooker, sink and drainer, fridge-freezer, microwave, kettle, storage space and work surfaces. The layout of the kitchen shall not be prejudicial to safety. All surfaces shall be clean and be capable of being kept clean.

### **Bedrooms**

- 2.14 Bedrooms will contain a bed, mattress, clothes storage space, chest of drawers, desk or desk surface, chair, shelving and curtains, and adequate circulation space.

### **Sitting Rooms/Dining Rooms**

- 2.15 For shared housing there shall be a sitting room and at least the same number of easy chairs as residents, there shall be a dining table and chairs with at least the same number of places as residents. (N.B there is no requirement to have a separate dining room unless required to comply with paragraph 2.10).

### **Overcrowding**

- 2.16 The landlord shall not knowingly allow a house to be statutorily overcrowded. Sharing of rooms is prohibited unless the tenants are co-habiting and the room is large enough for two persons. Each bedroom shall be directly off a circulation area and shall not be needed to be used as a thoroughfare to access other parts of the property.

### **Yard areas or gardens**

- 2.17 Ensure suitable receptacles are provided for local authority waste collection. Provide a clothes line.

### **Furniture and appliances - safety**

- 2.18 All furniture and furnishings will comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988.
- 2.19 All electrical appliances will have been checked to make sure that they are not chipped, broken, or otherwise showing undue wear and tear, and to make sure

that the correct fuse has been used.

### **Appliances and Instructions**

- 2.20 Within the dwelling simple instructions will be provided on the use and any necessary user maintenance of any of the following:

Vacuum cleaner

Shower

Cooker

Microwave oven

Washing machine

Clothes iron

Hot water, and heating controls

Domestic smoke alarm

### **Heating**

- 2.21 Programmable central heating shall be installed so that there is a radiator in every room. All radiators must be fitted with Thermostatic Radiator Valves
- 2.22 Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG) and paraffin heaters are not permitted
- 2.23 Where there is a loft this shall be insulated with a minimum of 270mm of loft insulation. All hot water pipes should be lagged.

### **Security**

- 2.24 Doors not forming part of a means of escape shall be fitted with door viewer, door-bar or chain and 2 morticed key operated security bolts and be 44mm thick and in good repair.
- 2.25 All ground floor windows shall be fitted with security locks to the opening sash.
- 2.26 Any first floor windows accessible from a flat roof shall be fitted with security locks to the opening sash.

## **Management of the Accommodation**

### **Advertising and introductions**

- 3.1 Members will ensure that:
1. an accurate description of the property and its contents is provided to avoid misrepresentation to prospective tenants.
  2. all prospective tenants will be given the opportunity to view the property, with consideration being given to any existing tenants.
  3. a copy of all contractual matters is provided to prospective tenants and they will be granted a minimum of 24 hours to seek independent advice on the contractual terms.
  4. no monies for deposits or rent are demanded prior to the signing and exchange of any letting agreement.
  5. any contractual documentation is presented in clear form and use understandable phraseology. It shall not include any unfair contract terms. Where legal statements are made then an explanatory sheet could be issued to clarify points of practice.

### **Rents and Charges**

- 3.2 Clear and precise statements will be provided including annual rental values, dates and how payments will be made. The value and purpose of any deposits held will be clearly stated.
- 3.3 A clear statement will be made in respect of which party will pay water rates.
- 3.4 Details of the responsibility for payment of other utility payments and any division of those payments will be stated.
- 3.5 Should any other charges require detailing, they will be specific and any division of those payments will be stated.
- 3.6 Receipts will be issued for all payments of rent, deposit or charges.

### **Standard Procedures for new tenants**

- 3.7 Members will ensure:
1. That any statutory notices relevant to repossession of the property are served on existing tenants to avoid any undue delay to incoming tenants.



2. The property will be complete and ready for occupation at the commencement of the tenancy.
3. That prospective tenants will be allowed to view the property and room prior to being issued a contract.
4. That clear details are presented or displayed within the property of how contact is to be made with the landlord/agent or his/her nominee in the case of emergency and that contingency plans are in place when the member is unavailable.
5. That a comprehensive inventory is provided which details items present within the property and some measure of their condition to allow proper assessment of any dilapidation or damage, which will be agreed and signed by both parties as soon as possible after occupation.
6. That where access for routine inspection is required, not less than 24 hours notice is given and that access for other reasons will be in the case of repairs or emergency only.
7. Where access is required for viewing purposes, 24 hours notice shall be given or other reasonable arrangements agreed prior with the residents.
8. That they conduct themselves in a courteous, considerate and professional manner at all times.
9. The member will make student tenants aware that the UCS operates a programme of house visits and that a member of the UCS accommodation office may wish to monitor standards.
10. Reasonable access will be arranged on request for the following officials:  
  
Environmental Health Officer  
Fire Officer  
Trading Standards Officer  
Police Officer  
  
and any person accompanying them or acting on their behalf.
11. An ongoing commitment to safety and security by undertaking to disseminate information provided from time to time by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, Suffolk Constabulary, Suffolk County Council and Ipswich Borough Council (other Suffolk Local Authorities).

### **Maintenance and Repair**

- 3.8 The member (or landlord) will have made sure that the property and its contents comply with the requirements in the first part of the code. In some cases certificates will have been obtained. There is an ongoing commitment to make sure that the property and its contents are maintained in a satisfactory condition as far as is reasonably practicable.

### **Testing, Maintenance and Record Keeping of Fire Precautions**

- 3.9 Alarms installed to BS5839: Part 6 should be tested monthly and the inside of smoke alarms should be cleaned using a vacuum cleaner annually to ensure that dust is not blocking the sensor.
- 3.10 Fire warning systems installed to BS5839: Part 1 should be tested at least weekly using a different call point for each successive test. The duration of the test should be sufficient to check that the system is operating satisfactorily. Any defects should receive immediate attention. The date, result and the signature of the person carrying out the test should be recorded.
- 3.11 Fire warning systems installed to BS5839: Part 1 shall be overhauled and tested annually and a form to BS7671 for 'Fire Detection and Alarm System Periodic Testing Certificate' should be obtained from the contractor responsible for the work.
- 3.12 Emergency lighting systems installed to BS5266 shall be tested by a competent person at regular intervals not exceeding six months. Any defects should receive immediate attention. The date, result and signature of the person carrying out the test should be recorded.
- 3.13 Where provided, firefighting equipment shall be examined annually by the manufacturers or other competent persons and maintained and tested in accordance with BS5306-3.

### **Response to disrepair**

- 3.14 Where a complaint about disrepair is received the following service standards should be met:

|                       |                                                      |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Emergencies           | Remedy within 24 hours                               |
| Urgent repairs        | Remedy within 3 working days                         |
| Priority repairs      | Remedy within 7 working days                         |
| None priority repairs | Remedy within 28 working days or longer if necessary |

- 3.15 Emergencies include:
- Total loss of electric power
  - Unsafe lighting socket or electrical fitting
  - Blocked or leaking foul drain
  - Toilet not flushing
  - Leak from water or heating system

Blocked flue to open fire or boiler  
Insecure external window, door or lock

- 3.16 Urgent repairs include: Partial loss of electric power, e.g. light socket  
Blocked sink, bath or basin  
Tap which cannot be turned on or off  
Loss of space heating or hot water supply  
Loose or detached banister or hand rail
- 3.17 Priority repairs include: Leaking roof
- 3.18 Planned or routine maintenance should be carried out with respect and consideration to the convenience of the students.
- 3.19 Where possible reasonable notice will be given to tenants for the commencement of works or visits by contractors, and that following works of repairs all debris and waste materials will be cleared from the building in a clean and tidy manner. It is expected that all tradesmen will behave in a courteous and professional manner at all times.
- 3.20 All repairs reported shall be recorded in a log which can be used to confirm dates of referral.

### **Responsibility to neighbourhood**

- 3.21 A notice will be provided which describes the refuse storage arrangements for the dwelling and the refuse collection arrangements for the locality.
- 3.22 Members will ensure that any front gardens are kept tidy and that any litter is cleared away. Similarly rear gates and alleyways should be kept in a clean and tidy manner.
- 3.23 Members will be expected to respond to complaints about the behaviour of the tenants, and to notify the UCS accommodation officers who may liaise with the appropriate statutory body.

### **At the end of the tenancy**

- 3.24 Members will ensure that:
1. tenants are issued with details on what liabilities they may have incurred and that clear guidelines are issued on what cleaning and other arrangements are necessary.
  2. all deposits are only use for the purpose for which they were levied.
  3. where a member has control of up to 5 properties, deposits are returned within 4 weeks of the end of the tenancy.
  4. where a member has control of 6 or more properties, deposits are returned within 6 weeks of the end of the tenancy.

5. where monies are withheld for reasonable costs incurred by the Landlord/Agent that a supporting statement of those costs are provided on the return of the deposit within the time scale mentioned in 6.14.3 - 6.14.4.
6. There is an adequate period between tenancies (no less than 4 weeks) to ensure that essential maintenance work can be carried out and the necessary deep clean completed.

### **Disputes**

- 3.25 Should a dispute between a member and student occur, then it is expected that members will deal with that dispute in a reasonable manner at all times.

Therefore members will agree to:

1. Respond reasonably and promptly to any complaints raised by tenants or their representatives.
2. Ensure written response to correspondence from tenants or their representative within 2 weeks of receipt.
3. Ensure that all settlements and agreements reached are actioned within 3 weeks of the settlement being agreed.

### **Complaints and Appeals**

- 3.26 Members will undertake:

*to acknowledge complaints about a breach of the code of practice; and to respond to repairs in the time scales specified in para 3.14 – 3.17.*

- 3.27 If a breach of the Code is confirmed, then accreditation and all advertising for that landlord or agent may be suspended until the matter has been resolved. If the landlord is of the opinion that these actions are unreasonable then an appeal may be submitted to a panel comprising of members taken from the signatories to the code of practice. The final decision will remain with the UCS. This procedure does not affect any statutory rights that may be consequent to any action taken by one of the statutory bodies.

### **Participation in the Scheme**

- 4.1 If you think that your accommodation meets the standards required by the scheme and you are prepared to agree to the management arrangements, then you may apply to join and, if accepted, your property details will be advertised.

The standard that landlords are asked to achieve may be more than that which can be enforced in law.

### **Notice of Accreditation**

- 4.2 Ipswich Borough Council (and other Suffolk Local Authorities) has undertaken to inspect all properties for which an application and fee is submitted. Where properties have been inspected and found to be satisfactory for their purposes, then the property will be accredited.
- 4.3 A separate application form and fee is required for each property. The property and not the landlord is to be accredited.
- 4.4 The code of practice has been prepared in conjunction with the statutory bodies and who will offer advice to either party.
- 4.5 When an application has been accepted the property details will be advertised with the University.
- 4.6 The University or College will produce an 'Accredited Notice' for display in the offices and student houses.
- 4.7 Compliance with the code of practice does not mean a particular property complies with local authority standards, which will be subject to inspection and to current legal requirements and official guidance at the time of the inspection.
- 4.8 To cover the costs of additional administration and promotion an annual charge will be made.

## **CHECK LIST BEFORE SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION**

1. The property is in good repair.
2. The decoration is in good order.
3. All rooms and surfaces are clean.
4. Gas appliances new (less than 12 months) or serviced within last 12 months.
5. Electrical installation inspected
6. Automatic fire detection in place.
7. Fire blanket fixed in easy reach.
8. Fire extinguisher where provided fixed in easy reach.
9. WC has wash hand basin.
10. Kitchen safe layout, all amenities.
11. Bedrooms - all amenities.
12. Sitting room/dining room - all amenities.
13. Furniture and furnishings - all labelled for safety.
14. Appliances - all checked for safety.
15. Heating - provided for each room.
16. Insulation - roof insulated, pipes lagged.
17. Security - measures in place.
18. Refuse bin provided.
19. Clothes line provided.
20. Planning permission has been obtained for the proposed use of the dwelling.
21. The dwelling will not be overcrowded.

## **NOTICES TO DISPLAY IN HOUSE**

1. Latest gas appliances report.
2. Use of fire extinguisher.
3. All appliances have easy to use instructions.
4. Refuse collection details.
5. Contact details for emergencies.

## **DOCUMENTS**

1. Electrical report including readings, whole dwelling, supplied by member of NICEIC or ECA.
2. Service record of gas appliance (last 2 years i.e. last 2 reports).
3. Electrical report describing the automatic fire detection system, supplied by member of NICEIC or ECA.
4. Tenancy Agreement
5. Brief description of house and amenities.
6. Inventory of fixtures, fittings and contents. Comment on condition where appropriate.

# APPENDIX D

## Private Sector Housing Scorecard - Progress Report

| Corporate Objective                                                                                     | Key Process / Activity                                                                                                | Measures                                                                                       | Short Term Targets                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.7 - Achieve a balanced supply of appropriate housing throughout the District to meet the varied needs | Increase the number of private sector homes in the District which meet the statutory standards                        | Number of complaints investigated annually                                                     | 250 complaints investigated annually                                                                                |
|                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                       | Number of HMO's licensed under Mandatory scheme                                                | To license all HMOs that require licences or take other action appropriate statutory action (likely number 10 HMOs) |
|                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                       | Vacant properties brought back into use per year includes RDGS and CLP action                  | 65 vacant properties brought back into use per year                                                                 |
|                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                       | Number of Category 1 hazards improved                                                          | For monitoring purposes only                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                       | Number of homes occupied by vulnerable people that are brought up to the Decent Homes standard | 71 per annum to meet PSA7 target of 70% by 2011                                                                     |
|                                                                                                         | Enable people to remain in their homes through effective allocation of grant aid for repair or adaptation of property | Number of DFG (Private Sector) grants approved                                                 | 50 DFG (private Sector) grants approved                                                                             |
|                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                       | Number of DFG (RSL) grants approved                                                            | 60 DFG (RSL) grants approved                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                       | Number of Renovation and other grants approved                                                 | 20 Renovation and other grants approved                                                                             |
|                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                       | Non Helping Hand Fee income raised (incl VAT)                                                  | £12,000                                                                                                             |



| Corporate Objective                                                                                     | Key Process / Activity                                                                    | Measures                                                                        | Short Term Targets                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                         | Manage Helping Hand home improvement agency to support vulnerable people in the community | Number of enquiries generated per year                                          | 140 enquiries generated per year         |
|                                                                                                         |                                                                                           | Number of completed Helping Hands jobs per year                                 | 90 Helping Hands jobs completed per year |
|                                                                                                         |                                                                                           | Income generated per year                                                       | £36,507 (ex VAT)                         |
|                                                                                                         |                                                                                           | Value of Helping Hands work                                                     | £385,000.00                              |
|                                                                                                         |                                                                                           | Amount of charitable funding received                                           | £20,000.00                               |
|                                                                                                         |                                                                                           |                                                                                 | Annuities                                |
|                                                                                                         |                                                                                           | Number of private jobs completed                                                | 20 private jobs completed                |
| 1.7 - Achieve a balanced supply of appropriate housing throughout the District to meet the varied needs | Increase/maintain the number of affordable homes in the District                          | Number of existing housing units which have been improved and remain affordable | Total of 10 units provided               |