

# MASTER HOUSING SERVICE ACTION PLAN 2024

Ref:	Priority/ Action:	*Action Owner:	*Target Date:	*What success will look like:
1	<b>+ BABERGH &amp; MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS: MASTER HOUSING SERVICE ACTION PLAN - 2024</b>			
7	<b>- THEME 1 : SHAPING THE HOUSING MARKET WITHIN THE DISTRICTS</b>			
8	<b>- PRIORITY ONE: PROVIDING HOMES THAT ARE AS AFFORDABLE AS POSSIBLE THROUGH AN EFFECTIVELY FUNCTIONING HOUSING MARKET</b>			
9	1.1.a. Determine whether and how the Council can identify and bring forward land to increase the supply of self-build plots, with a targeted strategy to be put in place.	Holly Brett and Robert Feakes.	TBC. Needs to be linked to Budget Setting rounds.	1. Initially completion of report on land. 2. More work on self-build list and vetting. 3. Spec for what we would provide on a site.
10	1.1.b. Adopt an Affordable Housing SPD to detail the circumstances in which we would take a flexible approach to tenure mix to maximise delivery.	Robert Feakes	31/12/24	Adoption and publication of the SPD.
11	1.1.c. Work with partners to produce an enhanced affordable housing stock database, to support housing enabling and development decisions	Robert Feakes	Dec 24 (For initial contact with RPs re: framework etc).	1. Initial contacts with RPs about working together on this, regulatory requirement. 2. Database set up. 3. Annual updating of database (BAU).
12	1.1.d. Update the published Infrastructure Delivery Plan to ensure that the Joint Local Plan can be delivered, by working with partners to assess infrastructure needs and delivery mechanisms, in line with the Joint Local Plan timescales.	Robert Hobbs	In line with JLP timescales.	Infrastructure Delivery Plan updated and published.
15	1.1.e. Set out recommendations for what steps the Councils can take to provide additional support for the delivery of Community Led Housing.	Robert Feakes	31/10/24	Recommendations set out and agreed.
16	1.1.f. Prepare and adopt Joint Local Plan part 2 in line with Local Development Scheme timetables.	Robert Hobbs	In line with JLP timescales.	JLP Part 2 adopted.
17	1.1.g. Monitor and review the Housing Markets within the districts to aid understanding of needs, inform future Homes and Housing Strategy actions and to act as additional evidence alongside the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).	Robert Feakes	31/07/25	Evidence Document published.
18	<b>- PRIORITY TWO: MAKING BEST USE OF PRIVATE SECTOR LAND AND PRIVATE ACCOMODATION ACROSS THE DISTRICTS</b>			
19	1.2.a. Produce a brief to clarify and commission further research into the role of the Private Rented Sector in preventing and relieving homelessness in Babergh and Mid Suffolk, to help direct future activity for Central Suffolk Lettings and to inform housing enabling decisions.	Amma Antwi-Yeboah	TBC - Amma speaking to Justin King to clarify timescales.	Publication of report.
21	1.2.b. Review our approach to HMO and HMO licensing and develop a targeted approach to engaging with a broader range of properties and ensure that we are ready for the implementation of the Supported Housing Regulatory Oversight Act.	Amma Antwi-Yeboah	31/03/25	Review completed.
22	1.2.c. Review the current system of Grants to Private Landlords to maximise opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and the energy efficiency of homes.	Amma Antwi-Yeboah	31/12/24	Review completed.
23	1.2.d. BMSDC to take active part in the Suffolk-wide Private Rented Sector Pathfinder Programme to improve conditions for tenants.	Amma Antwi-Yeboah	31/03/25	Project completed.
24	<b>- THEME 2: BEING AN EFFECTIVE SOCIAL LANDLORD</b>			
25	<b>- PRIORITY ONE: INVESTING IN OUR CURRENT HOMES</b>			

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26	2.1.a.	Carry out 100% stock condition surveys to help us understand our stock and develop accurate programmes of work.	Richard Spencer	31/12/24	100% stock condition data captured.
27	2.1.b.	Develop an Asset Register, informed by current Stock Condition Survey, to help decisions on our future stock profile, alongside a Disposals Policy to set out the framework under which the poorest/ worst performing stock would be redeveloped/ sold.	Richard Spencer	31/07/25	To ensure value for money on our investment into our assets and reducing the costs per unit.
29	2.1.c.	Develop a ten-year Capital Investment Programme (2024 – 2034), to accurately predict where investment needs to take place and enable us to inform tenants of exactly what improvements they can expect and when these will take place.	Richard Spencer	30/04/25	A programme of works is developed and tenants are aware of when improvements works will take place to their homes and our finances are managed effectively, reducing maintenance costs.
31	2.1.d.	Implement a programme of upgrades to heating systems in council stock, replacing oil systems wherever possible and prioritising heat pumps and gas boilers where appropriate. (Building fabric and insulation will inform the approach taken).	Richard Spencer	31/03/26	Improved EPC ratings for properties, reduced bills for tenants and progress towards net zero targets.
32	<b>☐ PRIORITY TWO: TACKLING AND ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE</b>				
33	2.2.a.	Begin a pilot program of retrofit works to a selection of properties in line with the PAS2035 methodology. Works are to be co-funded, where possible, through the Social Housing Decarbonisations fund.	Richard Spencer	30/06/25	100 properties retrofitted as per the programme.
34	2.2.b.	Using data from 2a. Determine the feasibility and cost of a range of retrofit energy efficiency measures in line with PAS2035, to improve environmental performance, reduce operating costs and/or enhance the customer experience and support vulnerable tenants.	Richard Spencer	31/12/25	Improved EPC ratings for properties, reduced bills for tenants and progress towards net zero targets.
35	2.2.c.	Develop a program of works to help ensure we meet our obligations to have all housing stock at EPC C by 2030.	Richard Spencer	31/12/27	Increasing number of properties at EPC or above and 100% by 2030.
36	2.2.d.	Educate tenants in how to be energy efficient within their homes: to encourage and support with minimising energy bills and reducing the risk of damp and mould.	Richard Spencer	Ongoing	Tenant handbook piece to be done by end of September 2024. Reduction in damp and mould reports/cases.
38	2.2.e.	Work with partners to increase the availability of electric vehicle charging points within our council owned neighbourhoods.	Richard Spencer	TBC	TBC
39	2.2.f.	Work with Public Realm to encourage greater levels of Biodiversity within our estates and neighbourhoods; by planting wildflowers, reducing grass cutting and using natural solutions.	Robert Longfoot	Ongoing	Land is identified within the HRA to assist the councils biodiversity and rewilding targets.
40	<b>☐ PRIORITY THREE: DELIVERING NEW COUNCIL HOUSING</b>				
41	2.3.a.	Work with partners to provide new homes at affordable rent or for affordable home ownership, and where financially viable, social rent. Utilising all available funding routes.	Holly Brett	Ongoing	Increase in Affordable Housing delivery.
42	2.3.b.	Refresh the New Build Design Guide in line with member aspirations around the environment and sustainability. Ensuring that it meets the future homes standard to enable it to be adopted by the market, where not already in place.	Holly Brett	31/03/25	Design Guide published.
43	2.3.c.	Increase the delivery of new homes in line with environmental and sustainability aspirations.	Holly Brett	Ongoing	New homes are built in line with our new design guide.
44	<b>☐ PRIORITY FOUR: IMPROVING THE SERVICES THAT WE PROVIDE TO OUR TENANTS</b>				
45	2.4.a.	Benchmark our performance and report on it. This will ensure that we learn from those performing well in the sector, continuously improve in the areas in need of development and celebrate our successes.	David White	31/10/24	Embedded Continuous Improvement Framework within Housing.

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46	2.4.b.	Learn from every Complaint and ensure that everyone has their complaints dealt with promptly and fairly and has access to a strong ombudsman who will provide swift and fair redress when needed.	David White	31/03/25	Publishing results of Complaints Taskforce. Ensuring self-assessment against code of guidance is completed and reported annually. Improved complaints performance overall.
49	2.4.c.	Ensure efficient use of the Council's housing stock by creating a cohesive plan (considering occupancy levels, trends and BMSDC's housing stock) to address overcrowding and meeting the needs of larger families alongside the creation of a scheme to identify, incentivize, support and encourage tenants to downsize.	Amma Antwi-Yeboah and Robert Longfoot	31/10/24	Publish a position statement on this - so all in one place? Might not be sufficient for regulator? Plus Comms plan - make sure its in the right place etc
51	2.4.d.	Establish compliance with the Social Housing Regulations, including Consumer Standards and Building Safety Regulations; to ensure that we are a compliant landlord and tenants are able to see how we are performing against the standards.	David White	31/07/25	Will have carried out independent review of our compliance position with the standards which will provide us with a comprehensive action plan.
52	2.4.e.	Continually review our income processes to ensure that we are maximizing our income, helping tenants to sustain the tenancies and preventing unnecessary evictions.	Robert Longfoot	31/07/25	Rent collected as a percentage of the debit at 100% by July 2025
53	2.4.f.	Implement revised methods of service charging for tenants which improve equity and enable tenants to see clearly what they are paying for and to ensure that Housing Service costs are covered by our income.	Robert Longfoot	30/04/25	Tenants are engaged with and aware of services they can expect to receive and that services provided by HRA funding is recouped.
54	2.4.g.	Babergh Mid Suffolk Building Services to undergo a full diagnostic assessment leading to transformation of the service, to ensure that Building Services is in an optimised position to meet the requirements of the Building Safety Act and to contribute to meeting Climate Emergency objectives.	Deborah Fenton	31/12/24	Compliance with the Consumer Standards, increase in tenant satisfaction around repairs and feeling safe.
55	2.4.h.	Ensure we deliver a quality repairs and planned works service by holding our contractors to account. Making sure they respond to works orders in a timely manner as set out in their contract KPIs and our tenancy agreements.	Jane Branch	30/04/25	Improved customer satisfaction with our repairs service as measured through the TSMs.
56	2.4.i.	Commission an Older People's Homes Development Strategy; including analysis of housing needs for older and vulnerable people; focusing on mix, type, numbers required and spatial distribution. Analysis to include downsizing opportunities and to consider alternatives to Extra Care Housing and to inform redevelopment opportunities for Council sheltered accommodation.	Amma Antwi-Yeboah	TBC	Strategy approved and published, and recommendations/ direction of travel set out.
57	2.4.j.	Carry out a health check on our current lettings and allocation policy to ensure that the current arrangements continue to meet the needs of the council's and our residents.	Amma Antwi-Yeboah	30/11/24	Health Check Completed.
58	2.4.k.	Increase tenant demographic and vulnerability data held within our system to enable us to ensure we are delivering equitable outcomes for our tenants by ensuring this data is reviewed and updated at appropriate opportunities.	David White	31/12/24	Reduction in Data Gaps.
59	2.4.l.	Review our Sheltered Housing offer to ensure our provision of independent housing for older people meets the needs and requirements of our residents and our organisation.	Robert Longfoot	TBC	Sheltered housing offer is reviewed and the service is providing value for money to our residents and the Councils.
60	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>PRIORITY FIVE: IMPROVING THE NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT WE MANAGE</b>				

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61	2.5.a. Review each of our larger estates and actively engage tenants and stakeholders in how we could develop solutions to improve the environment and create neighbourhoods that are attractive and desirable to all using capital funding through our HRA Greater Places scheme.	Robert Longfoot	30/04/25	Improvements are identified through resident engagement and are completed with funding from the Greater Places scheme and tenant satisfaction increases with Contribution to Neighbourhood.
62	2.5.b. Develop a new approach to housing management which is proactive, community focussed and is more responsive to the needs and vulnerabilities of our tenants.	Robert Longfoot	30/04/25	Our Housing Management offer enables us to provide a modern housing service to our tenants and we know who are tenants are and how we need to deliver services to them inline with the requirements of the Consumer Standards.
63	2.5.c. Working with public realm, develop a Service Level Agreement for the provision of grounds maintenance services to council estates, within budget communicated to residents.	Robert Longfoot	31/10/24	Service Level Agreement is communicated to residents and monitored and reported to enable residents to hold us to account.
65	2.5.d. Increase tenant satisfaction with where they live. We will continually review whether the improvements improve the happiness and well-being of tenants, residents, and communities.	David White	31/10/25	Increase in Tenant Satisfaction score with contribution to Neighbourhood.
66	2.5.e. Utilise available data to inform a plan for the future alternative uses for low demand or unsuitable garage sites and deliver a report to both Cabinets with recommendations for those sites.	Robert Longfoot and Richard Spencer	TBC	Data is utilised to inform a planned programme of works to improve garage sites, helping us to maximise income to the HRA.
68	2.5.f. Carry out Greater Places projects across both districts, led by tenant data and consultation to make improvements to communal HRA land.	David White	31/10/25	Increase in Tenant Satisfaction score with contribution to Neighbourhood.
69	<b><u>PRIORITY SIX: INVOLVING TENANTS IN THE RUNNING OF THE SERVICE</u></b>			
70	2.6.a. Listen to tenants to ensure they have their voices heard. This will be through regular meetings, scrutiny panels and being part of decision making	David White	30/09/25	At least 2 scrutiny projects direct by the Tenant Board will be carried out and the recommendations from the scrutiny will be actioned.
72	2.6.b. Increase levels of satisfaction that we listen to tenant views and act upon them. We will then regularly monitor progress by making improvements to what we do and how we do it.	David White	Ongoing	Increase in Satisfaction that we listen and act scores.
73	2.6.c. Increase the pride tenant's feel living in our council owned homes and communities by carrying out our 'tenant respect and fairness campaign' and using our internal communication channels to share positive news stories about our tenants.	David White	31/03/25	Increase in TSM score for being treated fairly and with respect and training for staff is completed.
76	2.6.d. Gain Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) accreditation	David White	TBC	Accreditation gained.
78	2.6.e. Create a set of service standards, across the whole housing service, with colleagues and tenants to ensure tenants are aware of the level of service that they can expect and can hold us to account.	David White	31/03/25	All our service standards are recorded and published on our website for tenants to hold us to account.
79	2.6.f. Carry-out bi-annual 1:2:1s with tenant board members; to capture training needs and assess effectiveness.	David White	31/03/25	Tenant Board will have at least one 1:2:1. by that time and training needs have been identified.
80	2.6.g. Undertake Tenant Board Scrutiny projects. to deep dive into areas where we are underperforming.	David White	31/10/25	At least 2 scrutiny projects have been carried annually and recommendations implemented.
81	2.6.h. Recruit to and utilise the Tenant Complaint Experts role within the housing complaints process to create the tenant voice and scrutiny in complaint escalation.	David White	30/06/25	Tenants are involved in our complaint performance and improvement work.

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82	2.6.i. Ensure that all new tenants are aware of their rights and responsibilities, including how they can get involved in the management of their homes and communities.	David White	30/09/24	Handbook is produced and issued to all tenants at sign up and available for existing tenants.
83	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>PRIORITY SEVEN: IMPLEMENTING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION</b>			
84	2.7.a. Ensure our housing management systems are fit for purpose and enable us to deliver a modern housing service that our tenants and staff expect.	David White	TBC	A requirements exercise is carried out and a decision made about the future of our Housing Management Systems.
88	2.7.b. Ensure that we are capturing and using performance data in our performance management system, Pentana, to enable us to make informed decisions and continually improve	David White	Ongoing	Tenant Engagement measures are created and recorded in Pentana so that we can evidence the levels of engagement within the housing service.
92	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>PRIORITY EIGHT: ENSURING SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF OUR COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES</b>			
93	2.8.a. Annually review the HRA business plan to reflect our current position and our mid-term financial position.	Deborah Fenton	Ongoing	Our Business Plan remains solvent.
94	2.8.b. Create a defined plan for actions that could alleviate financial stress on the housing revenue account.	Deborah Fenton	Ongoing	An Action Plan of Savings and Income is completed.
96	2.8.c. Improve the financial data we provide to cabinet and members, so they are aware of the status of the HRA account.	Deborah Fenton	Ongoing	Cabinet receive regular briefings on our financial position and what we are doing to improve it.