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**Action Plan 2007-09 Priority 4**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Achieved</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
<b>To bring empty homes into use</b>	Rentstart is no longer managing family-sized accommodation, only working with single persons and couples without children. The rent deposit scheme has been taken in-house. Inspection criteria for family-size accommodation have been agreed with housing options, and families are now being placed in suitable properties.	June 2007	To bring empty homes back into use	<b>Yes and ongoing</b>	<b>TW-F</b>
<b>To bring empty homes back into use</b>	Members are not in favour of using Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs). SBC was part of a successful partnership bid for GOSE funding for work which includes an element about empty homes. A report is due to go to Cabinet in summer 2009 outlining the issue and possible options.	October 2007	36 homes brought back into use.	<b>Taken forward into the 2010-14 Strategy</b>	<b>TW-F</b>

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<p><b>Increase the number of homes in the private sector that can be used for homeless people (would also deal with some empty homes)</b></p>	<p>Funding for landlord grants is made available through the Decent Homes grant. Promotion of SBC's home improvement grant scheme has commenced. Information will be included about the availability of improvement grants for landlords.</p>	<p>March 2008</p>	<p>3 private sector homes to be used for homeless people.</p>	<p><b>This will be taken forward in the 2010-2014 Strategy in relation to empty homes and the Decent Homes grant for improving private rented properties.</b></p>	<p><b>TW-F</b></p>

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<b>Adaptations for the disabled to enable their continued independence</b>	Disabled facilities grants (DFGs) continue to be processed. The Council is on track to meet its annual target spending. As at 20 April 2009, 104 homes have been adapted.	June 2009	140 homes adapted.	<b>Yes</b>	<b>TW-F</b>
<b>Increase the number of homes occupied by vulnerable people that meet the Decent Homes Standard</b>	A means-tested, owner-occupiers' grant has been introduced. As of 20 April 2009, 15 homes have been improved to meet the Decent Homes Standard. A marketing plan is being drawn up to improve the take-up of these grants.	July 2009	40 homes brought up to standard.	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>TW-F</b>
<b>Reduce the number of homes that are rated Category 1 hazards by HHSRS</b>	As above. The grant is aimed at homes where a category 1 hazard exists, e.g. excess cold, falls on stairs, fire safety and mandatory action is required.	Devise scheme by July 2007; target achieved by July 09	Included in the 40 homes improved by renewal grant.	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>TW-F</b>

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<p><b>Investigate need for small works grants/hospital discharge scheme</b></p>	<p>Age Concern runs the 'Home from hospital' scheme and A2Dominion Housing group has its own scheme, therefore there is no need for the Council to operate such a scheme. SBC has been part of a successful partnership bid for GOSE funding for work which includes an element for the improvement and enhancement of the Handyperson Service (see final Objective below).</p>	<p>June 2008</p>	<p>Small works grants dispensed and hospital discharge scheme introduced.</p>	<p><b>Yes – by agencies other than the Council.</b></p>	<p><b>TW-F</b></p>

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<p><b>Assist over-60s owner occupiers to maintain their homes to enable independence</b></p>	<p>The Council operates the 'Houseproud' scheme. The Home Improvement Trust administers the scheme on the Council's behalf for the over-60s whose income is too high for a Decent Homes grant. The current downturn in the housing market and the 'credit crunch' will have a direct impact on this measure. Research will be undertaken to assess the options available to increase take-up.</p>	<p>June 2009</p>	<p>5 owner-occupied homes maintained.</p>	<p><b>This issue will be monitored through the 2010-14 Strategy.</b></p>	<p><b>TW-F</b></p>
<p><b>A private Landlords Accreditation Scheme in Spelthorne</b></p>	<p>Research is being undertaken to determine the viability of implementing this scheme in Spelthorne and a decision is due in July 2009.</p>	<p>June 2008</p>	<p>Formal accreditation scheme for landlords.</p>	<p><b>The Council will support a national scheme when it is introduced by the Government.</b></p>	<p><b>TW-F</b></p>
<p><b>Develop and maintain an improved Care and Repair service Home Improvement Agency (HIA)</b></p>	<p>The scheme is now fully established and there are noticeable improvements in the service. An action plan has been developed to further improve the service. This is being taken forward by the HIA and SBC.</p>	<p>September 2007</p>	<p>A Care and Repair service that provides a better service for Spelthorne residents.</p>	<p><b>Yes and ongoing.</b></p>	<p><b>TW-F</b></p>

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<b>Ensure all Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) that require mandatory licensing are licensed</b>	Extra consultancy time has been employed to help process the outstanding applications. The last remaining licence will be issued before the end of June 2009.	October 2007	Increased number of HMOs brought up to minimum standards.	<b>This item will be carried forward to the 2010-14 Strategy.</b>	<b>TW-F</b>
<b>Develop and maintain a list of premises that have been adapted for the disabled</b>	Disabled-adapted properties will be identified in the CBL scheme.	Ongoing	Adapted properties identified more quickly and thereby a reduction in grant expenditure.	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>GH</b>

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<p><b>Reduce the number of complaints from A2 tenants re. poor housing conditions</b></p>	<p>Liaison with A2Dominion staff is going very well. There are regular meetings with A2Dominion staff who are able to respond directly to concerns and specific examples raised by Council staff. The number of visits to properties by Council staff has reduced. Further improvements are currently being sought.</p>	<p>September 2007</p>	<p>Reduced number of complaints from A2 tenants and better liaison with A2.</p>	<p><b>Yes and ongoing. This item is also being carried forward to the 2010-14 Strategy.</b></p>	<p><b>TW-F</b></p>
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<p><b>Improve communication with private sector Landlords</b></p>	<p>A comprehensive database of Spelthorne landlords has been drawn up. Landlords' views have been sought on the way they would like the Council to communicate with them. Landlords said they would welcome a regular newsletter updating them on any new developments and legislation. The landlords' forum will be held as and when there is a specific topic/issue which landlords need to know about. Two newsletters a year to be produced. Research will be carried out during 2009 to determine the benefits of the Council becoming a member of the National Landlords Association (NLA).</p>	<p>December 2007</p>	<p>More effective communication between the Council and private Landlords.</p>	<p><b>Government is consulting on a national accreditation scheme for landlords and the 2010-14 Strategy aims to encourage more landlords to provide decent, safe and affordable rented accommodation within the Borough.</b></p>	<p><b>TW-F</b></p>

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<p><b>Information about Houseproud, HMO licensing, empty homes, and proposed new grants to be made available and accessible to relevant client groups</b></p>	<p>Spelthorne has completed its work with other Surrey authorities to provide a website for information about, and a reporting facility for, empty homes. <a href="http://www.everyhomecounts.info">http://www.everyhomecounts.info</a> A press release was issued about this website in May 2009. Information about Spelthorne's grants for disabled adaptations, the Houseproud scheme and the Decent Homes scheme was featured in the January 2009 Borough Bulletin. A press release was issued about the Warmth for 1000 grant in April 2009. Further publicity about SBC's home improvement/adaptation grants is planned for 2009. These will include the improvement/updating of the SBC website regarding all aspects of private sector housing and housing grants; the development of leaflets and posters for distribution around the Borough.</p>	<p>July 2007</p>	<p>Increased take up of initiatives on empty homes, proposed grants, Houseproud and HMO licensing.</p>	<p><b>Ongoing</b></p>	<p><b>TW-F</b></p>
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<b>Improve working relationships with other local authorities and agencies</b>	The Council, working with the other 10 Surrey authorities, has secured grant funding of £9,200 from CLG to develop and enhance the Handyman service.	October 2007	Improved service delivery to clients.	<b>Yes and ongoing</b>	<b>TW-F</b>

Last updated: **18.12.2009**