

Appendix C – Homelessness Strategy 2012 – 2017 Action Plan

Action	Lead	Partners	Outcomes	Target Date	Resources	
1. Continue to prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies						
1a	Continuing to offer Safer Spaces to victims of domestic abuse, where it is appropriate to do so	WBC Housing Service	Safer Communities Partnership Safer Partnerships West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Forum	Safer Spaces is offered to every victim of domestic abuse, where appropriate	Ongoing	Within existing resources
1b	Identifying the reasons for no fault evictions and develop a new approach to negotiating with private sector landlords to prevent homelessness: i) Establish a reportable monitoring process for no fault evictions	WBC Housing Service	Private Landlords Forum	Reasons for no fault evictions identified Consultation with landlords completed Outcomes	March 2015	Within existing resources

	<p>ii) Monitor no fault evictions monthly to identify reasons</p> <p>iii) Survey landlords to identify what could have prevented eviction</p> <p>iv) Run a workshop at the landlords forum to identify approach most likely to succeed in preventing homelessness</p> <p>v) Report outcomes of and recommend new approach</p>			<p>reviewed and new approach recommended</p>		
1c	<p>Enabling people to sustain their tenancies by developing pre-tenancy training delivered through a multi-agency approach, for Care Leavers, people moving-on from short term supported accommodation, and those entering the private rented sector through</p>	WBC Housing	Homelessness Forum	<p>Pool of staff identified and trained</p> <p>Sessions scheduled and Delivered</p> <p>Monitoring Report Completed</p>	March 2017	<p>Costs to be identified for development of training pack and delivery of training, potentially from Homelessness Prevention Grant</p>

	<p>Council schemes</p> <p>i) Identify key staff that will deliver the training</p> <p>ii) Ensure key staff have attended training for trainers</p> <p>iii) Agree and implement a timetable of sessions to be delivered across advice and options service users, care leavers and people moving on from supported housing</p> <p>iv) Track tenancy success after 12 months to monitor effectiveness of scheme and adjust/ amend training where needed</p>			Pre-tenancy training updated		
1d	Looking at the feasibility of introducing accreditation for tenants to recognise responsible tenants and provide them with a competitive edge when seeking new accommodation	WBC Housing	Homelessness Forum Private Landlords	Research completed Report completed and recommendations made	March 2017	Costs to be identified for development and administration of accreditation scheme, potentially from Homelessness Prevention Grant

	<p>i) Research existing schemes and best practice, taking into account the cost and short and longer terms outcomes for tenants and landlords</p> <p>ii) Consult on proposals with clients and private landlords</p> <p>iii) Implement recommendations</p>			Recommendations Implemented		
1e	Ensuring that commissioned housing related support services are accessible to, and meet the needs of, vulnerable households, including young people, households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and victims of domestic abuse	WBC Care Commissioning	WBC Housing Services	Services reviewed and re-tendered as appropriate, with relevant service and service user input	Ongoing	Within existing resources
1f	Working with young people in schools to intervene early by raising	Connexions	WBC Housing Services	Pool of staff identified and trained	March 2014	Costs to be identified for development of training pack and delivery of training,

	<p>awareness of the realities of homelessness and signposting to relevant services that support and assist young people</p> <p>i) Identify key staff that will deliver the training</p> <p>ii) Ensure key staff have attended training for trainers</p> <p>iii) Agree and implement a timetable of sessions to be delivered across schools</p> <p>iv) Track the number of young people aged 16 and 17 who approach the Council for housing advice up to 24 months after receipt of training to monitor effectiveness of scheme and adjust/ amend training where needed</p>		<p>WBC Childrens Services</p> <p>Homelessness Forum</p>	<p>Sessions scheduled and Delivered</p> <p>Monitoring Report Completed</p> <p>School training updated</p>		<p>potentially from Homelessness Prevention Grant</p>
1g	<p>Working with Childrens Services and Connexions to develop a returning home or staying home 'virtual' team to provide</p>	<p>WBC Childrens Services</p>	<p>WBC Housing Services</p> <p>Connexions</p>	<p>Staff to be identified and trained</p> <p>Terms of</p>	<p>March 2013</p>	<p>Training costs to be accommodated within existing resources</p>

	early intervention to young people and families where breakdown appears to be a concern			reference to be agreed Monitoring system to be established		
1h	Minimising evictions of vulnerable tenants by reviewing the Vulnerable Persons Protocol and implementing a revised scheme that meets current needs	WBC Housing Services	Homelessness Forum	Scheme reviewed and revised protocol in place	March 2013	Within existing resources
1i	Working proactively with Registered Providers, sharing good practice and developing ways of reducing evictions from social tenancies through the Registered Providers Forum	WBC Housing Services	Registered Providers	Forum held to discuss best practice to reduce evictions and agree a protocol	March 2014	Within existing resources
1j	Continuing to work with Health Visitors, Social Workers and other professionals to educate them on housing options and homelessness to	WBC Housing Services	Homelessness Forum	Identify training needs Develop training programme	March 2014	Within existing resources

	enable them to prevent homelessness by identifying early signs of problems and through early intervention			Training sessions delivered		
1k	Reviewing our service information to ensure that it is up-to-date and well publicised	WBC Housing Services		All leaflets reviewed Web pages updated Review Locata to consider opportunities to improve system in respect of information and advice	March 2013	Within existing resources
1l	Consulting elected Members on the new powers under the Localism Act and any proposed changes to operations procedures	WBC Housing Services		Member Task group established to oversee review of Allocations Policy	March 2013	Within existing resources

2. Mitigating the negative impacts of the welfare and housing reforms

2a	Working with partner agencies within West Berkshire to ensure that residents are able to access monetary advice and have support to negotiate with landlords to lower rents	WBC Housing Services	CAB Two Saints Berkshire Credit Union	Residents are signposted to agencies that are able to help them with monetary advice and negotiations	Ongoing	Within existing resources
2b	Working with the Revenues & Benefits to identify people negatively affected by the changes to welfare benefits, and with our partners to ensure households receive the help they need to find appropriate solutions	WBC Housing Services	WBC Revenues & Benefits	Households identified and offered advice on managing their new circumstances	March 2013	Within existing resources
2c	Mitigating the impact of the changes to the single room rate by maximising the availability of good quality, well managed single rooms for rent for the under 35's	WBC Housing Services	WBC Environmental Health Landlords Forum	Offer advice on standards for shared accommodation and welfare benefits	Ongoing	Within existing resources

3. Make best use of the District's housing stock

3a	Continuing to work with developers and Registered Providers to maximise the delivery of new affordable housing in the district	WBC Housing Services	WBC Planning Services Developers Registered Providers	Implement new affordable housing policy adopted through the Core Strategy	Ongoing	Within existing resources
3b	Continuing to support and work with the Rural Housing Enabler to identify local housing needs and deliver new rural exceptions schemes	WBC Housing Services	WBC Planning Services Registered Providers Parish Councils Landowners	All rural Parish Councils to be offered a LHNS every year Implement new rural exception site policy adopted through the Core Strategy	Ongoing	Within existing resources
3c	Working with private sector landlords and agents, to promote the benefits of working with West Berkshire Council, building relationships which act as an incentive	WBC Housing Services	WBC Environmental Health WBC Revenues & Benefits	Maintain dialogue with private landlords through the landlords Forum	Ongoing	Within existing resources

	and remove the barriers to procuring and accessing private sector accommodation		Landlords Forum			
3d	Continuing to use the Rent Deposit Guarantee and Discretionary Housing Payment schemes to assist households access the private rented sector and support them to sustain their tenancy	WBC Housing Service		RDGS offered to all eligible clients Information available for landlords and tenants on how the scheme works	Ongoing	Within existing resources
3e	Working with colleagues in WBC Housing Benefit, Public Protection and Housing Strategy to provide advice and information to landlords	WBC Housing	WBC Environmental Health WBC Revenues & Benefits	Review literature currently available and revise or add as appropriate, covering welfare benefits, disrepair and tenancy law	March 2014	Within existing resources
3f	Holding a bi-annual Landlord's Forum and developing a Landlord's Accreditation Scheme	WBC Housing	WBC Environmental Health WBC Revenues &	Bi-annual Landlords Forum is held Accreditation scheme is set up.		Some small costs to be identified for the set up the accreditation scheme and to incentivise landlords to join.

			Benefits Landlords Forum National Landlords Association			
3g	Continuing to work with Adult Social Care, through the Supported Living Development Programme, to bring about a co-ordinated approach for the procurement of accommodation for vulnerable people in need of supported housing	WBC Care Commissioning	WBC Housing WBC Adult Social Care WBC Legal Registered Providers Developers	Professional enabling advice is offered in a timely manner	Ongoing	Each project to be subject to a full financial appraisal
3h	Bringing empty homes back in to use through the Empty Homes Strategy and through effective promotion of the financial support that is available to owners of empty homes	WBC Housing	Flexible Homes Improvement Loans Ltd Real Lettings WBC Legal	30 empty homes to be brought back into use every year	Annual	Funding via Flexible Home Improvement Loans Ltd.

3i	Reviewing the supported housing provision for young people to make sure it meets identified needs, including the needs of young women aged under-16 who are pregnant	WBC Care Commissioning	WBC Housing WBC Childrens Services Step-by-Step Nacro	Needs to be identified and review of existing provision to be completed Negotiations with service providers to remodel existing accommodation to meet identified needs through existing contracts	March 2014	Within existing resources
3j	Working with our Registered Providers, and through the review of the Allocations Policy, to tackle under-occupation, freeing up family-sized accommodation and developing a range of incentives and promotional materials to promote and develop this service	WBC Housing	Registered Providers	Allocations review completed to incorporate revised housing needs points for under-occupation of social tenancies Protocol agreed with registered Partners and promotional materials available to raise awareness	March 2015	Identify resources to be able to offer incentives to tenants who are under-occupying to move.

3k	Consulting with partners and the public to develop and implement a Tenancy Strategy in line with the Localism Act	WBC Housing	Registered Providers	Consultation completed Tenancy Strategy adopted	January 2013	Within existing resources
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4. Improving the life chances of homeless people

4a	Encouraging saving and enabling access to low cost finance by promoting the Community Savings & Loans (Berkshire Credit Union) scheme i) Arrange awareness raising sessions for staff who regularly come into contact with homeless households ii) Identify agencies whose service users may benefit from access to the credit union e.g. supported housing providers, housing managers iii) Ensure leaflets are distributed.	Community Savings & loans	WBC Housing Registered Providers Homelessness Forum	Session delivered Agencies identified Leaflets distributed Information posted on Web site	March 2014	Within existing resources
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	iv) Publicise credit union on the Council's Housing web pages					
4b	Working closely with the educational welfare service to minimise the disruption that may occur when families move to new accommodation i) Work closely with the educational welfare service to ensure moves are facilitated in a way that minimises the potential effects on educational achievement ii) Reduction in days out of school for children in TA	WBC Housing Services	WBC Educational Welfare		March 2015	Within existing resources
4c	Maintaining the number of people attaining and maintaining independent living through Housing Related Support Services	WBC Care Commissioning	Support Providers	TARGET?	Annual	Within existing resources
4d	Working with Real Lettings to facilitate	Real Lettings	WBC Housing	To deliver 20 units a year	Annual	Grant funding has been received to set up and

	procurement of good quality private rented accommodation suitable for people who are ready to move on from supported living into independent living		Homelessness Forum			administer the real lettings scheme
4e	Ensuring that vulnerable adults and children retain their support networks, by working with Children's and Adult Services, ensuring they are notified of housing decisions that affect vulnerable families	WBC Housing	WBC Childrens Services WBC Adult Social care	Referral procedures to be in place	Ongoing	Within existing resources
4f	Reviewing the data we collect so that have a clearer understanding of the health needs of households in temporary accommodation	WBC Housing	Health & Wellbeing Board	Review existing data and identify whether additional health data should be collected Identify trends and areas of concern that need to be addressed	March 2014	Within existing resources

				Liaise with health Services to address identified needs		
4g	Ensuring that the health inequalities faced by homeless households are addressed through the forthcoming Health and Wellbeing Strategy	WBC Housing	Health & Wellbeing Board	Health & Wellbeing Strategy to reflect and address identified needs	DATE?	
4h	Ensuring staff have received training and are aware of safeguarding issues and referral Mechanisms	WBC Housing	Social Care Training	All staff to receive safeguarding training; All training to be refreshed every 3 years	Ongoing	Within existing resources
5. Proactively work with partners to provide a co-ordinated approach to tackling and preventing homelessness						
5a	Continuing to support, and be active participants in, multi-agency forums, including but not exclusively: MARAC, MAPPA, Offender	WBC Housing		All multi-agency forums to be assigned a Housing contact within the Operations team	Ongoing	Within existing resources

	Management Group, West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Forum, child protection conferences, Youth Housing Panel, Mental Health Panel and safeguarding conferences			Where the names contact cannot attend, a substitute to be sent if resources allow		
5b	Maintaining the Homelessness Forum for partners to exchange information and best practice, to ensure that services are co-ordinated, inclusive and have a multi-disciplinary approach to meeting need	WBC Housing	Homelessness Forum members	Hold at least 4 meetings a year.	Ongoing	Within existing resources
5c	Through the Homelessness Forum, seeking opportunities to pool resources, co-locate and avoid duplication to make the best use of our resources; ensuring services are delivered in the most effective way	WBC Housing	Homelessness Forum members	Include joint working as a standing agenda item at the homelessness forum, showcasing good examples of joint working and service delivery and enabling partners to make links that can	Ongoing	Within existing resources

	that gives value for money			lead to efficiencies		
5d	Through the Homelessness Forum, adopting a co-ordinated approach to grant bidding, working collaboratively to identify and share information on funding opportunities to secure additional resources and promote innovation	WBC Housing	Homelessness Forum members	<p>Identify a lead officer to maintain a register of grant bids and bidding activity and be the point of contact for agencies</p> <p>Lead officer identified April 2013</p> <p>Publicise co-ordination of grant bidding through the homelessness forum</p> <p>Ensure the register is kept up to date through quarterly forum bulletins</p> <p>Register established and updated</p>	Ongoing	Within existing resources
5e	Through the Homelessness Forum, working together to	WBC Housing	Homelessness Forum members	Include policy updates as standing agenda	Ongoing	Within existing resources

	address the impacts of national and local changes and their implications for service delivery			<p>item at the Homelessness Forum to generate discussion and collaboration</p> <p>Policy updates delivered</p>		
5f	Ensuring a multi-agency approach to delivering the priorities of this Strategy through the Homelessness Forum	WBC Housing	Homelessness Forum members	<p>Include Action Plan updates as standing agenda item at the Homelessness Forum to generate discussion and collaboration</p> <p>Action Plan delivered</p>	Ongoing	Within existing resources