

# Individual Decisions

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The attached report will be taken as an  
Individual Portfolio Member Decision on:

**19<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

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<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Portfolio Member(s)</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
ID1645	<b>Homelessness Strategy 2008-11</b>	Councillor Alan Law	3 - 85



## Individual Executive Member Decision

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<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011</b>
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	Individual Executive Member Decision
<b>Date on which Decision is to be taken:</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2009
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	ID1645

**Purpose of Report:** To advise on the Homelessness Strategy

**Recommended Action:** To agree the Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011

**Reason for decision to be taken:** Statutory requirement of the Homelessness Act 2002

**Key background documentation:** Homelessness Strategy 2008 - 2011

Portfolio Member Details	
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**Implications**

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**Policy:** N/A  
**Financial:** N/A  
**Personnel:** Individuals in housing will be required to assist with delivery of the Action Plan  
**Legal/Procurement:** N/A  
**Environmental:** N/A  
**Partnering:** Strategy will be delivered in partnership with key delivery agents  
**Property:** May need to assist with Temporary Accommodation  
**Risk Management:** N/A  
**Community Safety:** N/A  
**Equalities:** EIA completed

**Consultation Responses**

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**Members:**

**Leader of Council:** Yes  
**Overview & Scrutiny Commission Chairman:** Yes  
**Policy Development Commission Chairman:** Yes  
**Ward Members:** Yes  
**Opposition Spokesperson:** Yes  
**Local Stakeholders:** Yes  
**Officers Consulted:** Yes  
**Trade Union:** Yes

<b>Is this item subject to call-in.</b>	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Considered or reviewed by OSC or associated Task Groups within preceding 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## **Supporting Information**

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### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to compile a Homelessness Strategy at least every five years. This strategy defines our strategic approach for 2008-11.

### **2. Proposals**

- 2.1 Due to economic downturn and homelessness prevention agenda this Strategy will ensure we keep in line with National and Local priorities and will be reviewed on annual basis and actions and targets will be updated accordingly.

### **3. Conclusion**

- 3.1 The Housing Strategy 2008-2011 ensures compliance with the Homeless Act 2002 and ensures the Housing Operations team can focus on its delivery.

## **Appendices**

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Appendix A - Homelessness Strategy 2008 – 2011



Appendix A




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# HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2008 - 2011

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## Document Control

<b>Document Ref:</b>		<b>Date Created:</b>	July 2008
<b>Version:</b>	2.0	<b>Date Modified:</b>	Nov 2008
<b>Revision due</b>	July 2009 – review action plan		
<b>Author:</b>	Tandra Forster	<b>Sign &amp; Date:</b>	
<b>Owning Service</b>	Housing and Performance		

## Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1.0	2003-2008	1 <sup>st</sup> versions of the strategy	
2.0	2008-2001	2 <sup>nd</sup> version – fully revised and updated (awaiting formal sign off)	

*This Strategy is for publication externally*

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### 1. Foreword

Welcome to our new Homelessness Strategy for the next 3 years.

In line with the National Agenda the West Berkshire focus is around early intervention and prevention of homelessness. Since the last strategy we have reviewed our service and are now offering a customer-focussed pro-active approach to homeless prevention. Tackling homelessness involves strong partnerships with other local authorities, housing associations and other agencies in both the voluntary and statutory sectors; this is reflected throughout this strategy.

We have delivered against the previous strategy, particularly through adopting a more proactive housing options approach, which has achieved significant reductions in homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation. We have already met our target to reduce our use of temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010.

Our Homelessness Strategy for West Berkshire lays out a vision for tackling homelessness over the next 3 years, based on a comprehensive review of the current position and an analysis of future trends. We are particularly conscious of the need to plan to counter the impact of the weakening of the housing market and its potential implications for the levels of homelessness.

I am grateful to the many organisations and individuals who contributed information about current services and how they can be improved and who will help us to deliver our strategy.

I hope you find this document interesting and useful.

If you would like to know more about the services covered in this strategy or would like to discuss any of the issues raised, please contact:

Tracy Hendren, Housing Operations Manager (01635) 519634

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## 2. Executive Summary

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to compile a Homelessness Strategy at least every five years. This strategy defines our strategic approach for 2008-11 and replaces our previous Homelessness Strategy covering 2003-2008. If you do not wish to read the whole of the strategy, this executive summary covers the main points.

### Our Review of Homelessness in West Berkshire

To inform the development of our strategy we have undertaken a homelessness review and consultation to gather together a wide range of evidence to establish the current levels of homelessness in the District, their causes and what more could be done to prevent homelessness.

#### Key Findings from the Review

1. **Levels of Homelessness in West Berkshire** - there has been a 87% reduction in the number of homelessness acceptances by the Council in the 5 years since 2003, due primarily to increased activity in preventing homelessness, rather than a reduction in households in housing need.
2. **Reasons for Homelessness** - the most common causes of homelessness are: having to leave the homes of family or friends (31%); loss of privately rented/tied accommodation not related to rent arrears (15%); the breakdown of relationships (11%) and mortgage repossessions which at 11% is above the national average.
3. **Use of Temporary Accommodation** - there has been a 64% reduction in the number of households staying in temporary accommodation since 2003. There were 57 households at the end of March 2008, compared to 159 in 2003. Use of bed & breakfast accommodation with shared facilities for families has been eliminated as has the use of B&B for 16 and 17 year olds, in line with government targets.
4. **Rough Sleeping** - rough sleeping is not a significant problem in the District, however to ensure it does not become so a Service Level agreement in 2006, between West Berkshire Council and Two Saints Housing Association, providing overnight emergency accommodation to rough sleepers and access to housing advice has been introduced.
5. **Our Housing Advice and Homelessness Service** – prevented 264 households from becoming homeless in 2007/8. Our Threshold Loan and Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme assisted 80 households to access privately rented homes which exceeded our target of 72 and conducting home visits has substantially cut the number of households needing temporary accommodation to just 8 in 2007/8.

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6. **Vulnerable Groups** – Households who were vulnerable and at risk of homelessness were prevented from becoming homeless through floating support services funded by Supporting People and delivered by a range of stakeholders throughout the district.
7. **Permanent Housing and Housing Need** - a lack of affordable housing is one of the key pressures of homelessness in West Berkshire, with entry level home ownership off the agenda for most new households. Some 152 affordable homes were delivered in 2007/08 against the 560 minimum per annum identified as needed in our most recent Housing Market Assessment whilst the number of people on the common housing register has increased to over 4900 in 2008. We aim to improve access to the private rented sector for homeless households through continuing to work with private landlords through the Threshold Loan Scheme and developing a Private Landlord's Forum.
8. **Housing and Financial Markets**- the slowdown in the housing market and the 'credit crunch' have implications for our strategy in terms of repossessions, availability of mortgages and developers' willingness to build and deliver affordable housing. We have already started to see the number of statutory homeless acceptances in 2007/8 increase as a result of mortgage repossessions among owner occupiers as a proportion of the total number of homeless acceptances. To address this we are looking at the feasibility of developing a court desk service.

### National, Regional and Local Agenda

The development of our strategy has also been informed by a consideration of the Government's main national performance priorities for tackling homelessness, which are:

- Bed and breakfast accommodation with shared facilities not to be used for families with children or a pregnant woman except in emergencies and then only for a maximum of 6 weeks. We have already met this target.
- The same restriction on bed and breakfast accommodation to apply to homeless 16 and 17 year old young people by 2010. We have met this target.
- Year on year increase in the number of households prevented from becoming homeless. We are meeting this target.
- A halving of the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation by 2010. We have met this target reducing the number in temporary accommodation in West Berkshire from 190 at the end of 2004 to 57 at the end of March 2008.

Our strategy also links to the regional priorities, including the Local Area Agreement, priorities for the District (particularly the Community Strategy) and the key themes of the Council's own Corporate Plan - especially the emphasis on customer service.

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### 3. Objectives and Key Actions of our Homelessness Strategy

Our review of homelessness and homelessness services in West Berkshire, together with consideration of the central Government agenda and the Council's broader vision, has identified five strategic objectives to be addressed over the next 3 years.

#### 1. Preventing Homelessness

Preventing homelessness remains as the primary aim of our strategy. Our work in this area will centre upon:

- Working with Registered Social Landlords to improve access to social housing:
  - Developing Homechoice West Berkshire to include housing association transfers, mutual exchanges and shared ownership properties.
  - Working with social housing providers to develop a sub-regional approach
  - Addressing overcrowding/under-occupation to ensure best use of social housing stock, developing a range of incentives and promotional material to promote and develop this service
- Improving access to private sector rented housing stock by further developing links with private landlords:
  - Using our Threshold Loan and Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme to assist households access the private rented sector and support them to sustain the tenancy, with at least 76 households to be assisted per year through the scheme.
  - Working with our colleagues in Housing Benefit, Public Protection and Housing Strategy to provide advice and information to landlords about Council services and issues which affect them.
  - Developing a landlord's forum and accreditation scheme.
  - Developing a manual of good practice and advice on Council services for landlords and tenants.
- Working with other agencies to prevent homelessness:
 

We have an excellent track record in partnership working to prevent homelessness which we will strengthen through:

  - The use of the Vulnerable People Protocol.
  - Commissioning an enhanced Court Desk Service to help those facing homelessness through repossession of their home.
  - Establishing service level agreements with external organisations to provide independent advice and counselling as part of our enhanced housing options approach.

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- Developing and promoting homelessness prevention recording with relevant external organisations for the purpose of the P1E statutory return.

### **2. Improving customer service**

Our homelessness prevention strategy relies on good levels of customer service from our Housing Advice and Homelessness Service. The main actions in this area include:

- Embracing the restructure of the Housing Operations Team and reviewing procedures to improve access to the service for people in housing need.
- Support staff in obtaining professional housing qualifications and their continuous professional development.
- Continue our policy of undertaking home visits to people at risk of homelessness and ensure all applicants benefit from this service.
- Continue to improve the content of the housing advice and homelessness pages of the website.
- Establish standards of customer service and continue to monitor customer satisfaction.
- Maximising the use of Discretionary Housing payments to prevent homelessness amongst benefit claimants by administering this service within Housing Operations Team.

### **3. Improving support for vulnerable groups**

- We need to ensure that we are working effectively with our partners in dealing with the needs of all of the vulnerable groups facing homelessness and enabling them to access the support available to them. We already have a range of services available to vulnerable groups and are working in partnership with stakeholders to enhance these to improve their effectiveness and long term outcomes. Further details of this are shown in section 6.

### **4. Improving standards in the provision of temporary accommodation**

Where we do need to use temporary accommodation we will ensure we develop accommodation which is affordable, good quality, and in a location near to facilities, services and support.

### **5. Increasing the supply of affordable housing.**

A lack of affordable housing is one of the key pressures of homelessness in West Berkshire. Initiatives in this area will concentrate upon:

- Delivering more new affordable homes overall and rural affordable homes in particular, by working with developers and RSLs on new development schemes and using the planning policy system to achieve more affordable housing.

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- Making best use of the existing housing stock by bringing empty homes back into use.
- Making best use of existing social housing stock by developing an action plan in partnership with social housing providers to deal with overcrowding and under-occupation

## Resources

Our Strategy will be delivered through a number of sources of funding, including Central Government Grant, Supporting People funding, our own revenue funding and money from affordable housing contributions.

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### 4. Introduction

#### 4.1 West Berkshire's statement on homelessness

West Berkshire Council's first Homelessness Strategy published in 2003 covered the period 2003 – 2008. The Homelessness Act 2002 requires Councils to compile a Homelessness Strategy and to renew this at least every five years. This document replaces the previous Homelessness strategy and defines the approach for the period 2008 – 2011.

The Council and its partner agencies have responded positively to the changing culture of homelessness applications to homelessness prevention. The first West Berkshire Homelessness Strategy raised awareness of the need to become a prevention focussed service.

The overall purpose of this strategy is to set out how the Council and its partners intend to continue tackling homelessness by early intervention and prevention within the borough up until 2011, by:

- Early intervention and prevention of homelessness in the first place
- Maximising the supply of suitable accommodation available for people who are or may become homeless
- Ensuring that appropriate support is provided to people who might otherwise have become homeless
- Ensure the use of good quality accommodation for homeless households and that support is provided to prevent repeat homelessness

The Homelessness Strategy concerns everyone including:

- All homeless people, this includes those who would not be considered to be in priority need for accommodation
- All people at risk of becoming homeless, whether within 28 days or a longer period
- People who might have become homeless intentionally
- Homeless people in the district who might not have a local connection to West Berkshire



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### 4.2 Our purpose & vision

The Local Strategic Partnership monitors the effectiveness of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

'A Breath of Fresh Air' is the second **Sustainable Community Strategy** for West Berkshire, which presents a vision for the district spanning the next 18 years. The guiding principles that underpin the strategy are a community that is:

- Active
- Inclusive and safe
- Well designed and built
- Well connected
- Thriving
- Well served
- Fair for everyone

The strategy is based on 6 themes:

- Prosperous
- Safer
- Stronger
- Accessible
- Healthier
- Greener

The Sustainable Community Strategy draws together the themes from a number of contributing strategies and partnership forums. These include:

**1) Local Area Agreement** which sets out the district-wide vision. It contains 31 priorities (excluding statutory education targets) which form the focus of work for the partnership for the next three years (2008-11). Many of the priorities will assist in the prevention of homelessness. The key ones for this strategy:

NI 154 – Net additional homes provided

NI 155 – Number of affordable homes delivered

NI 141 – Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living

NI 142 – Number of vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living

Enshrining these indicators in the LAA will ensure a strong focus on the more vulnerable groups and the safeguarding of services essential to the prevention of homelessness.

**2) Council Plan.** The Council Plan contains 16 outcomes which include Affordable Housing with a clear reference to the need to reduce homelessness (6 homelessness targets in year one, 5 each in years two and three and 6 in year 4).

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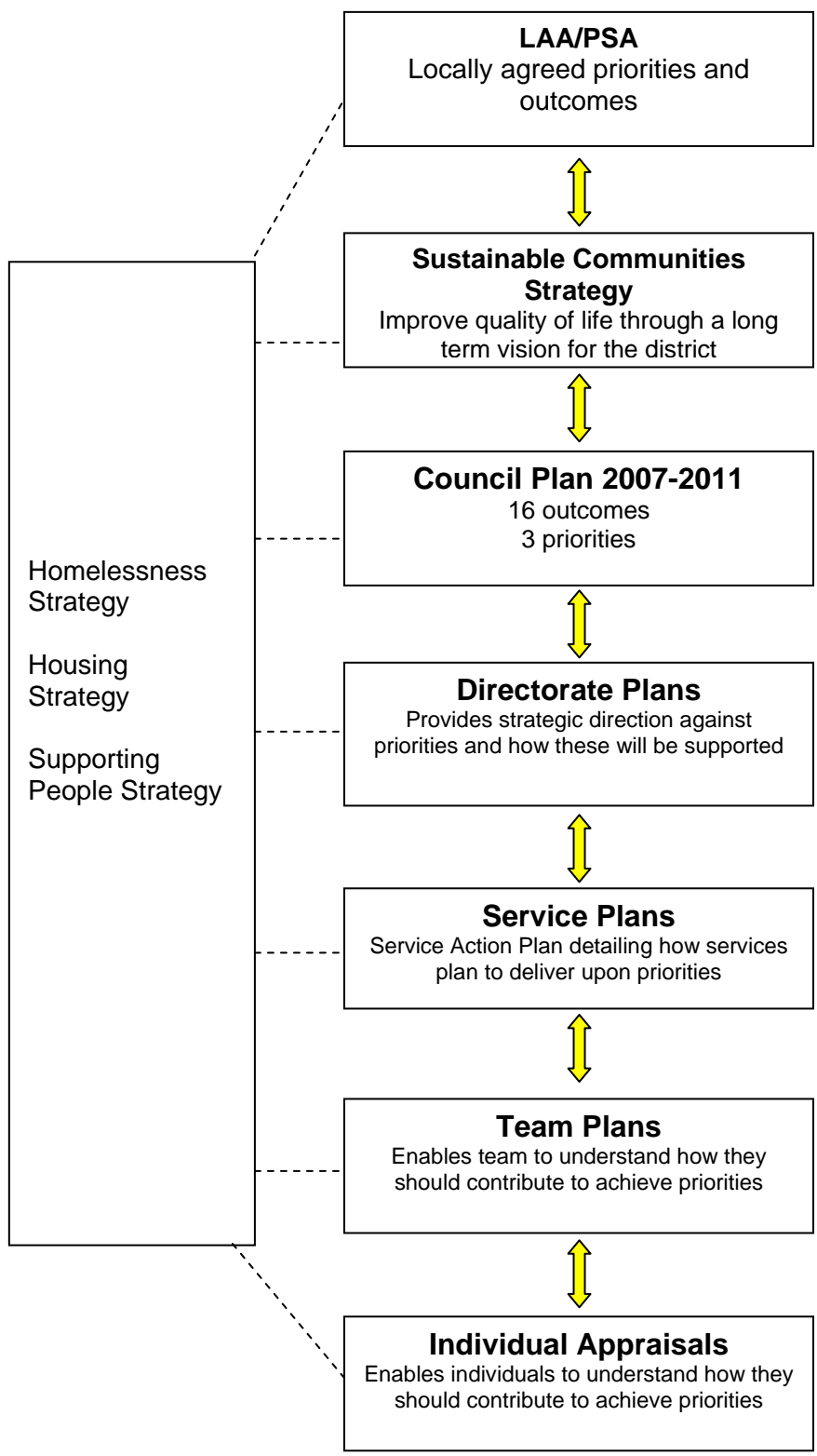
**3) Housing Sub Partnership.** The Supporting People Core Group and the Homelessness Core Group both report to the Sub Partnership which is responsible for monitoring delivery of action plan outcomes.

The purpose of the Homelessness Strategy is to make a better future for homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless by ensuring that sufficient accommodation is available to meet needs, people do not become homeless repeatedly, and homelessness is prevented whenever possible.

Our aims in developing our services to homeless people in West Berkshire are:

- To treat every homeless person with compassion and respect.
- To enable every homeless person or family to secure accommodation that is suitable for their particular needs and to work in partnership to ensure that once re-housed they have the support they need to prevent becoming homeless in the future.
- To provide a holistic service that is centred around the individual to meet all their needs including support, education, employment and training.

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# 5. WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS

Many people can be threatened with homelessness at some point in their life. This can be because they are renting a property from a private landlord and they have been served with a notice asking them to leave. Alternatively, a relationship may break down which results in the family home having to be sold. There may not be enough money from the sale of the home to purchase two alternative properties. Sometimes the loss of a job can result in difficulties with paying the mortgage. In a few cases this can lead to repossession. Some people are actually roofless. They literally have no proper place to stay. Sometimes this can be for a long time; sometimes for a few days.

## 5.1 National Policy

The Governments homelessness policy has the following aims:

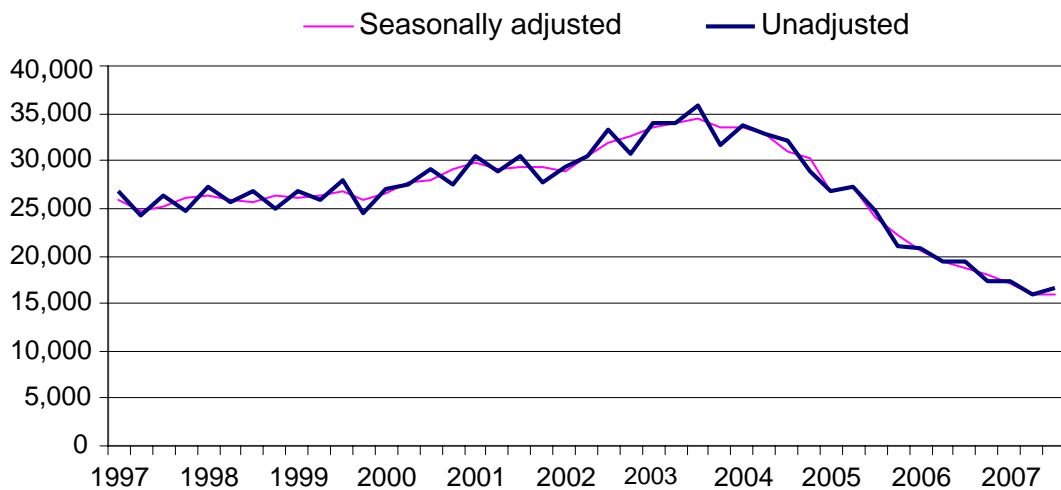
- Reduce homelessness
- Prevent homelessness
- Prevent repeat homelessness
- Reduce rough-sleeping by two thirds
- Produce a new draft Rough Sleeper Strategy
- Halve the number of households placed in temporary accommodation in 2004 by 2010
- Avoid the use of bed and breakfast accommodation
- Not use bed and breakfast accommodation for families unless in an emergency and only for six weeks
- Not use bed and breakfast for 16/17year olds by 2010 unless in an emergency
- Tackling Overcrowding
  - 554,000 overcrowded households including 228,000 in the social rented sector
  - Overcrowding action plan published December 2007
  - Announced £15m investment over 3 years to reduce overcrowding
  - 38 Pathfinders – London and 5 areas experiencing high levels of overcrowding in the social sector; £100k to each
  - Pathfinders to build on early lessons from 5 London pilots and develop a more proactive approach to overcrowded households especially within housing options and advice services
  - Expectation that Pathfinders will use Bedroom Standard as minimum measurement by which to assess overcrowding
- Tackling Worklessness
  - Nationally this has been identified as key policy objective in John Hills Report 'Ends and Means: The Future Roles of Social Housing in England' February 2007. This report suggested that authorities could offer more integrated housing and employment advice to tackle worklessness. This follows research that identified the strong link between housing benefit claimants and social rented tenancies.
  - Locally this is mirrored with 6,036 live housing benefit claimants recorded in

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June 2008, of these 78% live within social housing. To tackle this we will explore ways of linking people into permanent employment.

- **Enhanced Housing Options**
  - Provision of good quality advice around a fuller range of housing options: simple, low-cost, effective intervention
  - How to improve the quality of housing advice and offer it to a broader client group?
  - How to integrate housing and employment-related advice through enhanced housing options services?
  - CLG recently published the vision for Enhanced Housing Options Services and have selected pilot local authorities.
  - We want to promote innovative, personalised advice services which help tackle root causes of housing need

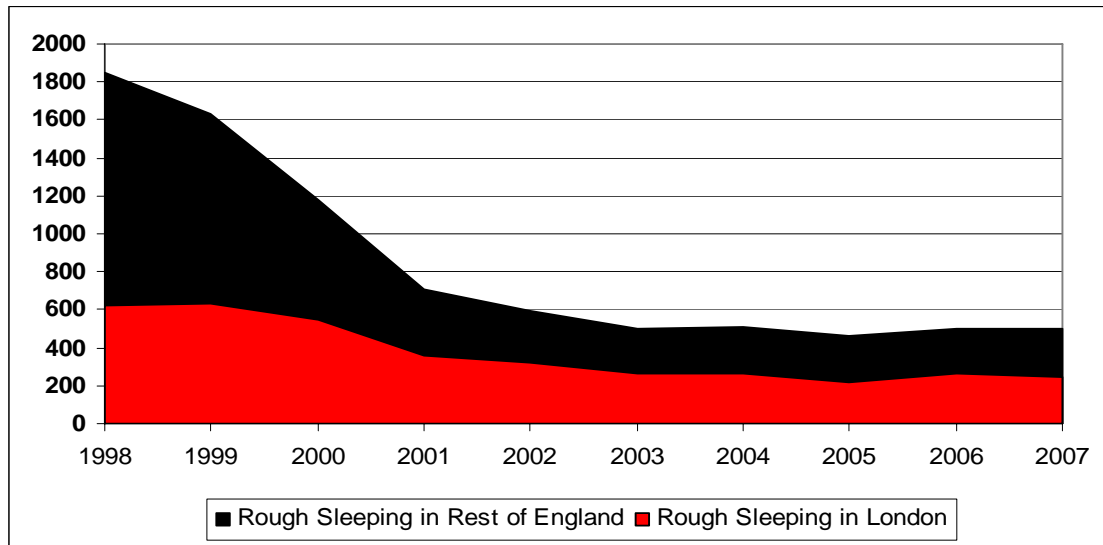
**Households accepted by local authorities as owed a main duty each quarter in England**



- Homelessness acceptances in England are down from around 135,000 in 2003/04 to 73,000 in 2006/07
- 79,500 households were living in temporary accommodation in England on 31 December 2007
- Down by 11% compared to the same time last year and under 80,000 for the first time since 2001

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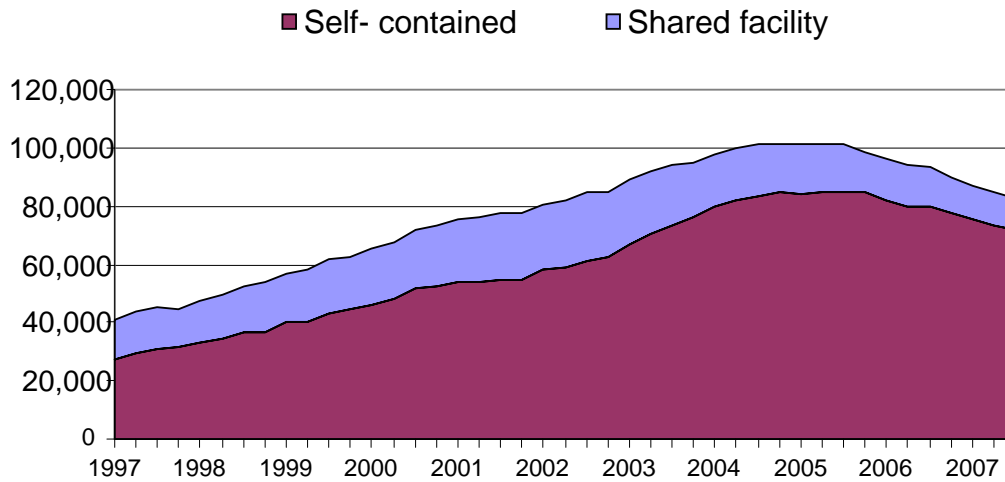
**Rough Sleeping reduction within England**



- Target met to reduce rough sleeping by two thirds by 2002
- Since then, numbers of Rough Sleepers in England have continued to reduce
- The 2007 estimate shows there are 498 people sleeping rough in England on any single night - a 73% reduction on the 1998 baseline
- Reductions are due to a strong partnership working approach between central Government, Local Government, Voluntary organisations and others

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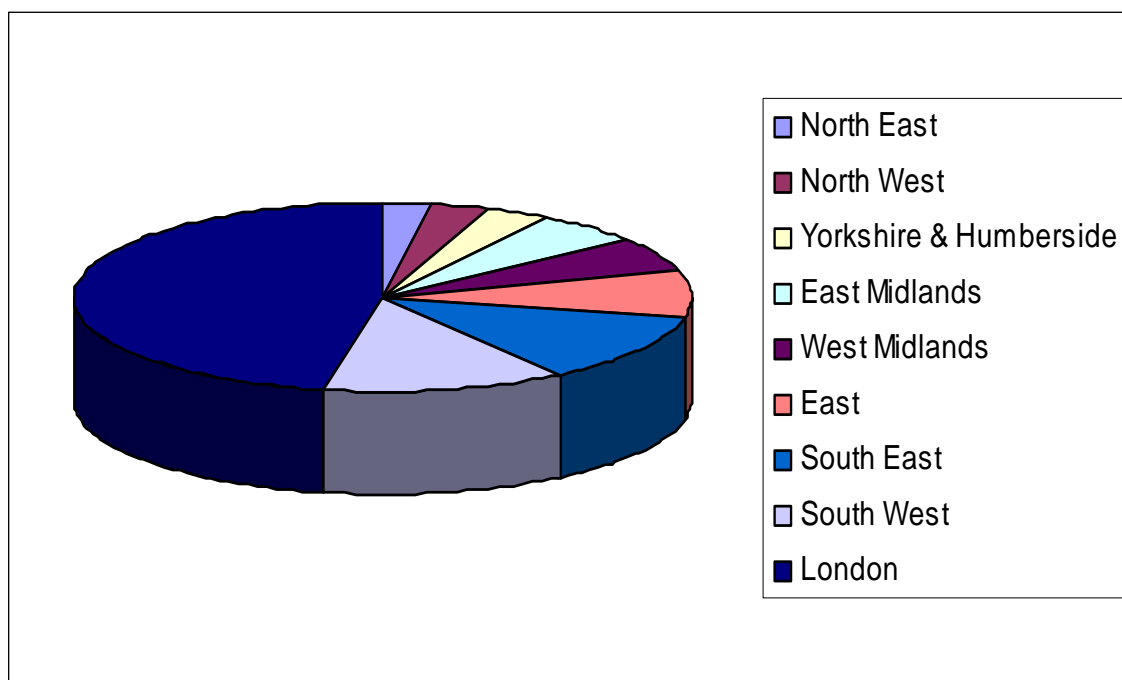
**Households in temporary accommodation at the end of each quarter, by type in England**



- *82,750 households in temporary Accommodation on 30 September 2007, 11 per cent lower than last year*
- *Continued downward trend since 2005*
- *86 per cent of households in TA were in self contained accommodation*
- *On track to meet target to halve numbers (to 50 500) in temporary accommodation by 2010*

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16/17 year olds in B&B within England: June 2007



- In 2006/07 6,380 young people were accepted as homeless, 9% of all acceptances nationally.
- Nationally, 11% of young people acceptances were for care leavers aged 18-20 years.

In March 2005, ODPM (now DCLG) published *Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives*, its strategy for tackling homelessness. The strategy acknowledged the significant achievements of meeting challenging targets to reduce rough sleeping and to end the long-term use of Bed & Breakfast hotels for families with children. In March 2006 they published a 'One Year On' policy briefing, providing a summary of the key actions the Homelessness and Housing Support Directorate has taken towards delivering the strategy's aims.

Statistics published by (the then) ODPM demonstrate the effectiveness of homelessness prevention services. Acceptances during the April - June 2006 quarter were 29% lower than in the same period in 2005. This is the first time the number of acceptances has fallen below 20,000 since the early 1980s. A total of 41,700 homelessness decisions were made on homelessness applications, 32% lower than in the same period last year and the lowest quarterly total since the early 1980s.

Policy Briefing 13 Survey of English Local Authorities About Homelessness projected a 51% decrease in the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010, reducing the current numbers nationally to 50,000.



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The 2006 national rough sleeping estimate indicated that 502 people were sleeping rough in England on any single night.

Central Government requires councils to provide a proactive, planned and preventative approach to homelessness. The preventative approach should aim to work with those threatened with homelessness to either maintain existing housing or assist people in finding alternative housing options. Councils are required to help prevent homelessness whether the household is in 'priority need' or not. The preventative approach contrasts with the previous approach of being more reactive by responding to the crisis of actual homelessness, focusing on the person's rights and applying legal duties of the local authority. The Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) recommends efforts to prevent homelessness at three key stages:

- Firstly – early intervention, for those who may be at risk of homelessness
- Secondly – prevention, when homelessness is imminent
- Thirdly – preventing recurring homelessness, for those who have been resettled

The Council has the overall responsibility of achieving these aims. The Council has the duty to provide advice and assistance to people making homeless enquiries. They also have a duty to accommodate homeless households that are unintentionally homeless and defined as 'priority need' until more settled accommodation is found.

Within these duties, a 'homeless' household is defined as someone who does not have accommodation elsewhere which is available for his or her occupation and which that person has a legal right to occupy.

A person is homeless if they cannot secure entry to such accommodation or if it is unreasonable or unsafe for them to do so. A person is also homeless if their accommodation is a moveable structure such as a boat or caravan and there is nowhere for it to be placed.

The Housing Corporation issued a consultation paper, *Tackling Homelessness Consultation Paper* in early 2006 with the aim of encouraging better partnership working among associations, local housing authorities and other agencies including Supporting People teams, to improve co-operation in delivering local housing strategies and offering alternative housing options. They published a full strategy in November 2006, entitled *Tackling Homelessness: the Housing Corporation strategy*. Its stated aims are to:

- “support local authorities in their leadership role to tackle homelessness;
- ensure housing associations are fulfilling their statutory duty to work with local authorities to contribute to tackling homelessness;
- promote co-operation between housing associations and local authorities in tackling homelessness;
- embed prevention of homelessness and tenancy sustainment as one of housing associations' strategic and operational priorities;
- promote cross-boundary co-operation, choice and mobility for all households;
- promote better use of existing housing stock; and

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- contribute to reducing homelessness in line with our commitment to promoting sustainable and mixed communities.”

### 5.2 Regional Policy

The South East Regional Housing Strategy for 2006 onwards supports and promotes the good practice and new approaches being developed through local authority homelessness strategies to make the most effective use of nominations and lettings to social housing stock.

The strategy also recognises homelessness prevention as a core activity in helping to minimise the number of households on Housing Register, supports and encourages choice-based lettings arrangements, increased access to the private rented sector for households at risk of homelessness and the need to work with regional partners towards meeting the target of halving the numbers in temporary accommodation by 2010.

The Housing Corporation's South East Regional Investment Policy reflects the Regional Housing Strategy and the views of the Regional Housing Board with their 4 investment priorities for schemes which link to:

- Affordability and Homelessness
- Urban Renaissance / Regeneration
- Growth Areas
- Rural Settlements

They also identify 3 client groups that new schemes should be looking to address the housing needs of:

- Key Workers
- Homelessness and other priority groups
- Supported Housing

#### **Berkshire Sub Regional Strategy**

A multi-authority document setting out the priorities for housing in the sub-region. Any local issues will be picked up in our Homelessness and Housing Strategies. You can view a copy on our main website.

#### **Berkshire Strategic Housing Managers Group**

Representing the 6 local authorities within Berkshire, this group meet quarterly to review and monitor the actions identified in the Berkshire Sub Regional Housing Strategies.

#### **Berkshire Housing Needs Manager Group**

This Chief Housing Officer Group is a countywide forum of senior officers which meets quarterly to discuss recent developments concerning homelessness and housing advice. This group feeds into and delivers action points from the Berkshire Strategic Housing Managers Group.

## **Appendix A**

### **Cross Boundary Working on Homelessness**

The Berkshire Authorities are currently working on a Re-connection policy for Rough Sleepers to ensure they receive the support and assistance they need when returning to their home Authority.

West Berkshire, Wokingham and Reading have recently agreed a cross boundary 'Home Improvement Agency' service to assist people to stay in their homes by providing necessary adaptations through grant aided services.

### **Choice**

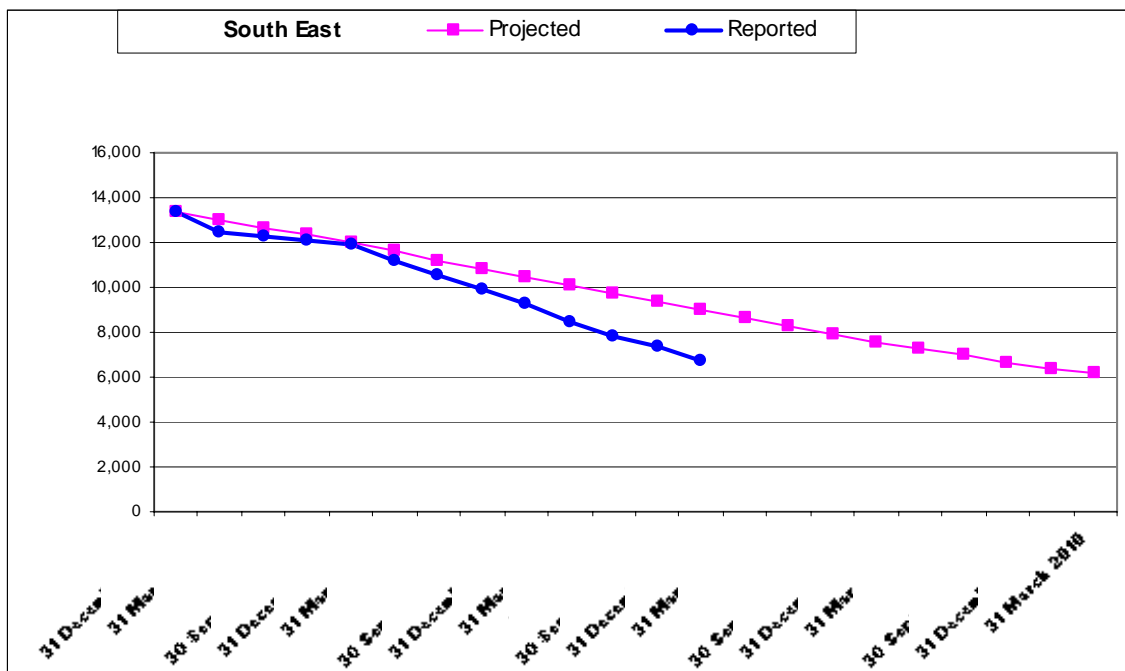
West Berkshire have already successfully implemented a Choice Based Letting Scheme, the Berkshire Housing Needs Management Group is now considering the feasibility of a Sub –Regional scheme, with the assistance of the next sub-regional bid round.

### **Benchmarking**

A sub-group is being considered to work with other Berkshire LA's on a benchmarking group to assist with Berkshire wide homelessness issues.

Appendix A

South East Temporary Accommodation Trajectory

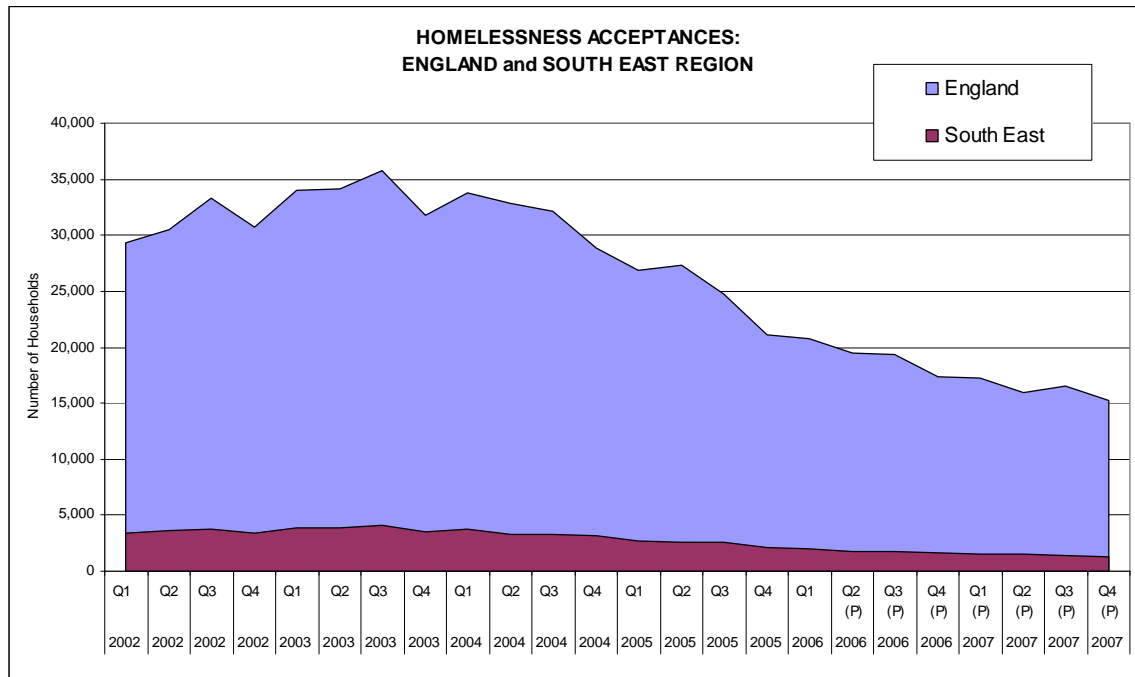


In the South East Region at 31.12.07

- 17 authorities had achieved the target already.
- 46 reduced households in TA
- 4 increased households in TA

Appendix A

Homelessness Acceptances: England & the South East



2007 LA Survey – top ranked activities towards reductions in TA :

- Increased Prevention
- Improved RSL nomination arrangements
- Making use of private sector
- TA visiting programme to provide options advice
- Increasing percentage of lettings to homelessness
- Conversion of own stock TA
- Temporary Accommodation Action Plans
- Supply and Demand Models
- Prevention Toolkit

## Appendix A

### 5.3 Local Policy – West Berkshire

Despite West Berkshire being an affluent area with a high cost of housing, we have been successful in avoiding placing homeless households in Bed & Breakfast except in an emergency for a number of years. The Housing Service was awarded 2 stars by the Housing Inspectorate in 2002. We are committed to developing our homelessness prevention service and the council has already met the Government target for halving the numbers of applicants in temporary accommodation three years ahead of the 2010 deadline.

### 5.4 Key trends

Figures for households accepted as homeless and in priority need have been high across Berkshire since 1999 but 2004/05 figures show a significant fall – suggesting the growing focus and effectiveness of preventative work. This trend is also seen in the numbers of households in temporary accommodation at the end of each year now reducing from a peak in 2002/03.

In West Berkshire there has been a significant reduction in homelessness applications and acceptances since 2005/6. Both applications and acceptances have been reduced by over 80% as a result of the prevention agenda improvements in joint working between agencies:

	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7
Applications	239	239	110	25
Acceptances	172	173	71	20

LA Area	Published figures on the number of people sleeping rough in England							
	Jun 98	Jun 99	Jun 00	Jun 01	Jun02	Jun 03	Jun 04	Jun 05
West Berkshire	11	3	3	0	0	0	0	0

## Appendix A

**6. CURRENT POSITION****6.1 Developments and Achievements from 2003 Homelessness Strategy**

- West Berkshire Council has been committed to tackling and preventing homelessness, and has continued to strengthen its partnerships with a range of statutory, voluntary organisations and Housing providers over the last 5 years. The achievements include:
- Increasing the amount of applicants prevented from becoming homeless from 184 in 2005/6 to 258 in 2007/8.
- Assisting applicants into private rented accommodation: 72 in 2006/7 and 80 in 2007/8.
- Reducing the amount of homeless applications taken from 74 in 2005/6 to 26 in 2007/8
- Reducing the amount of applicants in temporary accommodation from 190 at the end December 2004 to 57 at the end of March 2008.
- Reaching the government target set in December 2004 of reducing the amount of applicants in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010 three years early.
- Setting up off-site surgeries to ensure all applicants can access housing services to assist with the prevention of homelessness
- Implementing a duty rota system, ensuring a housing options officer is always available to speak to potentially homeless applicants at the time of the visit/call.
- Implementing a Housing Options frontline reception service to increase accessibility to customers during office working hours.
- Entering into a Service Level Agreement with Two Saints to ensure all potential rough sleepers have accommodation made available to them.
- Entering into a Service Level Agreement with 'Resolve' to assist with early intervention for potential parental evictions.
- Entering into a Service Level Agreement with Children Services to ensure wider mediation can be offered to families/young people threatened with homelessness through 'Family Group Conferences or Neighbourhood Group Conferences'.

## Appendix A

- Entering into a Service Level Agreement with Berkshire Women's Aid to fund a children's support worker, ensuring appropriate support and assistance is available to children of women fleeing domestic violence.
- Setting up a 'young persons panel' to ensure early intervention and partnership working on all cases where young people may be threatened with homelessness
- Setting up a 'mental health panel' to ensure early intervention and partnership working on all cases involving applicants with mental health needs.
- Assisting the YMCA with alternative accommodation whilst the new foyer is constructed to ensure the needs of young people continue to be met within West Berkshire
- Entering into a nominations agreement with YMCA to ensure potentially homeless young people are prioritised accordingly
- Prior to 2007 the Housing Register was managed jointly with main RSL. To bring clarity to household seeking accommodation within West Berkshire the Common Housing Register is now solely administered by West Berkshire Housing Operations Team.
- Launching Choice Based Lettings within West Berkshire to ensure all new social housing lettings are administered in an open and transparent way
- Extending the Choice Based Lettings system to include Mutual Exchanges to assist current tenants to move to larger/more appropriate accommodation.
- Providing additional funding to 'Pathways to employment' to expand the service to assist vulnerable applicants back into employment, training and education.
- Extending the role of the tenancy support workers to include supporting any potential homeless household needing support and all residents of the Gypsy and Traveller Community on the West Berkshire managed site.
- Re-Structuring the Housing Operations team to focus on prevention and early intervention, rather than the processing of homeless applications

## Current projects

- To develop a Sanctuary scheme, known locally as 'Safer Spaces' to support applicants fleeing domestic abuse with a package of options concerning their future housing needs.



## Appendix A

- To develop a Landlords forum and accreditation scheme to enhance the engagement with private sector landlords and offer alternative housing options to potential homeless applicants.
- To develop a Berkshire wide Re-connection protocol to assist vulnerable applicants in returning to an area they have a local connection to.
- Increase of choice based lettings scheme to include mutual exchanges, transfers, home ownership and private rented.
- To set a service level agreement with the voluntary sector to fund a debt advisor to assist with the prevention of homelessness in the district
- To consider funding a court desk provision to assist home owners and tenants potential faced with eviction.

## 6.2 Specialist Supported Housing

### 6.2.1. Gypsies and Travellers

The Government's objective is that Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community should live together peacefully. Creating and sustaining strong communities is at the heart of the Government's policies. Decent homes are important for health and well-being of the people in them. Poor housing helps an area to get a bad reputation. That makes it an unpopular place to live, which in turn may lead to the breakdown of communities.

Decent homes are a key element of any thriving, sustainable community – this is true for the settled and Gypsy and Traveller communities alike. This means:

- Adequate provision must be made for authorised sites: at the moment there are no authorised pitches available for a quarter of caravans. This means there are unauthorised sites, many of which are a source of friction between the two communities.

In 2006 the Regional Housing Board ring-fenced a sum of £5million to invest in meeting the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities. This funding has delivered 85 new pitches within the South East, and refurbished a further 36 sites including the site leased and managed by West Berkshire Council.

There are two Gypsy Traveller sites in West Berkshire, one privately owned and one managed by the local authority. The local authority managed site, Four Houses Corner, has 18 pitches and is populated by English Travellers. The independent site, Paices Hill, has 15 pitches and is populated by English and Irish Travellers.

#### **Services currently available:**

West Berkshire funds a Traveller Liaison Officer post jointly with Wokingham.

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The Community Council for Berkshire runs an educational project through the Community Education Team at Four Houses Corner using a mobile vehicle. The project has also provided a cabin as a community facility and works on children's projects and skills training for adults at Paices Hill.

A health and equalities group has been established in West Berkshire involving the PCT, district nurses, Traveller Education Service and Children's Services and will be reviewing the health needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

West Berkshire Supporting People team funds two tenancy support officers who both have a remit to provide support to Gypsies and Travellers along with support to homeless households in temporary accommodation.

### 'Resulting Issues'

- **Association of Councils for the Thames Valley Region funded research looking at the housing requirements of the Gypsy and Traveller Community. This identified the total of pitches required in Berkshire is 18, this is subject to review by the Regional Assembly to finalise numbers.**
- **Identified the potential to develop two new pitches.**
- **Further improvements identified to refurbish the site, grant funding applied for**

### 6.2.2. Drug and Alcohol

The Drug and Alcohol Action Team generate an annual Adult Drug Treatment Plan to meet the needs of local problematic drug misusers in West Berkshire. The West Berkshire Treatment Group meets monthly to monitor the implementation of the Drug Treatment Plan, to develop appropriate care pathways and improve partnership working to provide support services for clients of drugs services. The Drug and Alcohol Action Team have recently established an Alcohol and Drugs Strategy Group which will report to the Safer Communities Partnership Strategy Group on performance against local targets in respect of access to treatment, retention and successful discharge from treatment and engagement of drug using offenders in treatment.

The Young People's Substance Misuse Group had generated the first Young People's Drug Treatment Plan for 2008/09 which replaces the annual Young People's Substance Misuse Action Plan. The Young People's Substance Misuse Group meeting quarterly and reports to both the Alcohol and Drugs Strategy Group and the Commissioning and Development Group of the West Berkshire Children and Young People's Trust.

The Drug and Alcohol Action Team commission a wide range of service to meet the needs of problematic drug misusers in West Berkshire including, Specialist Prescribing, Specialist and Pharmacy based Needle Exchange, Shared Care, Structure Day Care, Counselling and Residential Rehabilitation.

## Appendix A

West Berkshire Primary Care Trust commission Berkshire Healthcare Trust to deliver services to meet the needs of alcohol misusers. A Berkshire West Alcohol Strategy has been developed and will be launched during 2008/09. Partners in West Berkshire will develop an Action Plan linked to this strategy and to the Safer Communities Partnership Plan 2008 – 2011.

### **'Resulting issues'**

It is recognised nationally and locally that drug and alcohol misusers are more able to engage in treatment, are more likely to sustain engagement in treatment and to have a successful outcome if they are in suitable accommodation.

- **Develop better links with the DAAT and employment education and training**
- **More specialist service**

### **6.2.3. Ex-Offenders**

The West Berkshire Priority & Other Prolific Offender (PPO) Panel meets every 6 weeks to discuss progress with those offenders who have been identified as being prolific offenders in West Berkshire and they are targeted by the PPO Team which consists of a Police Officer and Probation Tracker Worker, both of whom are currently shared with Wokingham, West Berkshire will be receiving its own dedicated PPO Police Officer in 2008/9. The PPO Panel comprises representatives from Thames Valley Police, Thames Valley Probation, West Berkshire Youth Offending Team, Turning Point and West Berkshire Council Community Safety/Drug & Alcohol Action Team. Those PPOs that wish to engage with the PPO scheme are encouraged into drug treatment, suitable accommodation, training and employment, whereas those who will not engage are targeted by the Police and brought back into the criminal justice system as swiftly as possible.

One of the priorities within the Safer Communities Partnership Plan 2008-11 specifically relates to reducing re-offending through more effective offender management and includes the following initiatives:-

- (i) Improve the effectiveness of sharing of intelligence between West Berkshire and its neighbours.
- (ii) Develop, sustain and mainstream the Prolific & Other Priority Offender (PPO) scheme and work with Pre PPOs.

In addition, there is a Berkshire West Strategic PPO Group, which is chaired by the West Berkshire Council Chief Executive and this group seeks to co-ordinate the strategic operation of the PPO schemes in West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham.

There is also a Local Area Agreement target to reduce the reoffending rate of prolific and priority offenders by 25% (which equates to 19.75 offences) during 2008/9.

## Appendix A

West Berkshire currently has specific supported accommodation for ex-offenders within the district. This accommodation can be accessed through housing or probation services, probation are re-focusing their resources on higher risk groups, which could impact on the hostel provision and potential service users.

### 'Resulting Issues'

- **Need to consider the appropriateness of the current locality of supported accommodation.**
- **Current provision – currently reviewing the provision and need within the district to influence and shape future provision.**
- **Client eligibility - need to consider current client group and how they can be provided for**
- **Use our Vulnerable People Protocol to identify and support vulnerable ex-offenders in managing their tenancies**
- **Develop a new accommodation based specialist service for ex-offenders in need of housing or who are homeless**
- **Enhance advice to include access to employment, education and training**

#### 6.2.4. Mental Health Issues

Nationally 7% of homeless applications from single people result in acceptance due to mental health. In addition there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that mental health can be a contributory factor in many other cases of homelessness.

There have been a number of developments since our last homelessness strategy in our provision of housing and support services for people with mental health problems. In 2005 we developed a Mental Health and Housing Panel in conjunction with the Community Mental Health and Supporting People Teams to consider the housing and support needs of individuals referred and allocate resources. The Panel ensures that vacancies arising in supported housing schemes are allocated according to need and other options, either accommodation based or floating support, are offered where appropriate.

In 2007 we jointly commissioned a short term supported accommodation project for people with mental health needs. The service assists people out of hospital or residential care into independent living and consists of 8 units of self contained accommodation with support. Altogether West Berkshire has access to 43 units of accommodation with support for people with mental health provided through a range of specialist mental health service providers.

### 'Resulting issues'

- **The young persons sub group of the homelessness core group, have highlighted the potential lack of provision for young people with mental health issues. Current provision is being mapped to determine what actions need to be taken.**

## Appendix A

- **Need for the Housing Options team to include a virtual member from the Community Mental Health Team**

### 6.2.5. Young People/Care Leavers

In November 2006 the Government announced a package of measures to tackle youth homelessness. These included:

- A commitment to end, by 2010, the use of bed and breakfast accommodation by local housing authorities in discharging their homelessness duty to secure suitable accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds.
- Improved access to homelessness mediation across the country (including family mediation for young people), so that there is a general expectation of such services.
- The creation of a new national supported lodgings development scheme providing accommodation, advice and mediation services for young people who can no longer stay in the family home.

In response to the national proposals to ensure good practice and appropriate support is provided to young people a website has been launched:

[www.communities.gov.uk/youthhomelessness](http://www.communities.gov.uk/youthhomelessness) . The National Youth Homelessness website provides an accessible point of information on preventing and tackling youth homelessness. It is designed to recognise the lack of experience that some local authority prevention and housing options staff have in terms of providing services to young people and the pressures on their time.

The website produces overviews of approaches and models of services to prevent and tackle youth homelessness.

Nationally, acceptances for 16/17 year olds (and 18-21year old care leavers) were at 9% - which is higher than prevalence in the general population (c. 3%).

During 2007/8 a total of 45 young people were considered by the Young Persons Housing Panel because they were homeless or at risk of homelessness. Current services available:

- Re-development of the YMCA project to provide a foyer
- Young Persons Housing Panel
- Mediation SLA
- Family Group Conferencing SLA
- Specialist Housing Options officer
- Prioritising home visits in the case of parental evictions
- Provision of 10 x units of accommodation for use by YMCA whilst current building under development. This has enabled the development of a nomination agreement between the local authority and the support provider to ensure that the young people with the highest need are able to access this service.

## Appendix A

### **'Resulting Issues'**

- **Development of a supported lodgings scheme**
- **Development of Krash-pad for young people**
- **Collating information on which schools experience high levels of parental evictions**
- **Raising awareness in schools of homelessness**
- **Prioritise home visits for all 16/17 year olds at home who are threatened with homelessness where this is appropriate**
- **Continue to lead on the operation and development of the Young Persons Housing Panel**
- **Monitor the effectiveness of mediation and family group conferencing in preventing young people from becoming homeless**

### **6.2.6. Teenage Parents**

Reducing England's historically high rate of teenage pregnancy is a Government priority. Progress has already been made with the under-18 conception rate down by 11.8% making it the lowest for 20 years. In 2007 the Government published 'Teenage Pregnancy: Accelerating the Strategy 2010', this set out plans to achieve their target to halve the under-18 conception rate by 2010 compared to the 1998 baseline rate.

In addition to reducing the rate of teenage pregnancy the Government are keen to ensure that appropriate support is provided to young women who do become pregnant and decide to go-ahead with their pregnancy. This is a two-pronged approach firstly to assist them with the pressures of motherhood and secondly to avoid any subsequent pregnancies whilst still teenagers.

Teenage Pregnancy is recognised as a priority in West Berkshire's Local Area Agreement:

NI 112 Under 18 conception rate, target to reduce it to 22.3% in 2008/9 from the baseline 23.6%.

Current services available are:

- Supported accommodation project for teenage parents
- 16+ panel
- Family Group Conference SLA
- Mediation SLA

### **'Resulting Issues'**

- **There is a need to raise awareness of educational, employment and training opportunities targeted towards teenage parents.**
- **Raising awareness in schools**

## Appendix A

- **Collating information on which schools are experiencing high levels of teenage pregnancies**
- **Link in with Health Improvement Manager, Children & Young People.**

### 6.2.7. Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse locally accounts for 28% of all violent crime which is well above the national figure of 16%. In 90% of the domestic abuse incidents reported, children were in the same or the next room. 50% of known domestic abuse cases, children were also directly abused.

In West Berkshire 5% of Homeless application within the last quarter were as result of domestic abuse, in comparison with 10% in the South East and 13% nationally.

Work currently underway to reduce domestic abuse in West Berkshire includes:

- A women's refuge providing support and accommodation for up to 16 women fleeing domestic abuse including an outreach service and a children's worker.
- employment of a Domestic Abuse Reduction Co-ordinator,
- effective Domestic Abuse Forum membership is wide ranging and it has developed an action plan which identifies the following housing-related issues:-
  - Develop, launch and promote a sanctuary scheme to enable victims and their children to be more secure in their own home – further information on this is provided at 6.2.15 below.
  - Confirm RSLs to include a specific clause in their tenancy agreements stating that perpetration of domestic abuse by a tenant can be considered grounds for eviction.
- Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee (MARAC) deals with high and medium risk cases and has been in operation in West Berkshire for approximately 18 months. Membership is wide ranging.

Domestic abuse is one of the priorities within the Safer Communities Partnership Plan 2008-11 and includes the following initiatives:-

- Develop an overarching domestic abuse strategy for West Berkshire
- Encourage employers to develop policies for their staff
- Establish the feasibility of developing a multi agency data collection tool
- Provide ongoing support and resources to the West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Forum

### 'Resulting Issues'

- **Requirement to develop a more holistic, inclusive service providing one-stop shop**

## Appendix A

- **Need to review the success of domestic abuse initiatives**
- **Possible development of a 'fast-track' service for vulnerable groups into private rented accommodation links with Private Landlord initiative**
- **Development of a policy initially for West Berkshire staff experiencing domestic abuse including confidential direct line referral mechanism that links to a counselling service, accommodation options and changing work patterns/re-deployment. Once implemented this could be rolled out as good practice to other organisations.**

### 6.2.8. Rough Sleepers

In West Berkshire, the number of rough sleepers is anecdotally reported to be very low compared with the national statistics. This is due to a successful service level agreement with the hostel providing overnight accommodation and assessment for street homeless on a self-referral basis.

All street homeless who access this service are referred to the Local Authority Housing Options Service for a full assessment of need.

#### Resulting issues

- **Implement the draft re-connection policy**
- **To develop a communication strategy raising awareness about street homelessness, services available locally and engaging the public to report actual sightings of street homelessness.**

### 6.2.9. Learning Disability

The Government's White Paper – *Valuing People – a new strategy for Learning Disability for the 21<sup>st</sup> century 2001*, states that:

Learning disability includes the presence of:

- A significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intelligence), with;
- A reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning);
- which started before adulthood, with a lasting effect on development.

It goes on to say that: 'Learning disability' does not include all those who have a 'learning difficulty', which is more broadly defined in education legislation.

For people with Learning Disabilities, homeless is often not seen as a pressing concern. Where service users meet the eligibility criteria for Adult Social Care Services, the Community Team for People with Learning Disabilities will work with housing services and accommodation providers to secure accommodation at the earliest opportunity. However, there are concerns that this may not continue to be the case, with changing needs and changing demographics.



## Appendix A

There are currently 480 people with a learning disability known to services, however national prevalence data would suggest that there could be as many as 3,500 people in West Berkshire.

Funding for the majority of placements away from the family home comes from either the Community Care Budget or Supporting People and in some cases, both.

There are some concerns about people with learning disabilities and the potential to be a significant housing or homeless issue in the future:

- There could be some “hidden homelessness” as there are people who may be inappropriately housed, but do not have the understanding or ability to access the housing system, or know to ask for alternative accommodation.
- There are some families living in inappropriate housing with difficult situations where their son or daughter may have complex needs or behaviour that presents a challenge which can sometimes lead to family members being subjected to violent behaviour. In some cases families continue to manage the situation by taking action to remedy an immediate danger; however the underlying issues still remain.
- The Learning Disability Charity Mencap produced a document called “The Housing Time bomb”. This expressed great concerns about a significant number of older service users living with older parent/carer/relatives and that in general, Councils were not prepared for the future housing needs of this group of people. Their conclusion is that work needs to take place now to prevent a crisis for these people and therefore avoid inappropriate decisions being made about meeting their accommodation needs. If future planning is ignored some of these people could become effectively homeless.
- Some people do not meet the eligibility criteria for adult social care services but may still require support to remain in their accommodation. This group could include people with high functioning autism and Aspergers syndrome who may lack the emotional or social skills to live independently. The possibility of becoming homeless could be prevented with support. This has been identified within the Supporting People Thematic review of learning disabilities as requiring consideration for future funding.
- As people with mild to moderate learning disabilities may be living more independently, some people find friendships with people that are not seen as desirable to others living in the vicinity resulting in complaints and eviction. There are also concerns that this can mean service users are more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation that could also result in them having financial difficulties meaning maintaining their accommodation is difficult and falling into arrears with their rent highly likely.

Learning disability services is developing a commissioning strategy to deal with a range of issues that are significant in the future provision of care services and support in the future as needs and the demographics of West Berkshire changes. The focus will be on self-directed support, individual budgets and direct payments, with a focus on independence and individual choice.

## Appendix A

### 'Resulting Issues'

- **Lack of transparency around membership and functioning of the LD Housing Allocations Panel**
- **Need for the Housing Options team to include a virtual member from the Learning Disability Service**

### 6.2.10. Older People

'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods' – A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society states that an ageing society poses one of our greatest housing challenges. By 2026 older people will account for almost half (48%) of the increase in the total households, resulting in 2.4 million more households than there are today. By 2041 the composition of the older age group will have changed dramatically. There will be a higher proportion of the older age groups, including the over 85s, a greater number of older people from black and minority ethnic groups, and double the number of older disabled people. One in five children born today can expect to live to 100 years old.

Information from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) predicts the numbers of people in different age bands is likely to change over the next 20 years in West Berkshire. By far the most striking statistic is the proportionate increase in the over 65 age group. This age group is expected to increase by 10% between 2007-11 and by a further 27% over the next decade. Overall, this is expected to increase the total number of people aged over 65 by almost two thirds above 2007 numbers by 2029. This will mean just over 33,000 people over 65 in 2029.

West Berkshire has a good supply of Sheltered Housing therefore there are very few older people who would need to pursue a homeless application. The waiting list for sheltered housing is relatively short when compared to the general needs waiting list.

The main sheltered housing stock was part of the original stock transfer to Sovereign Housing Association. As part of their property asset strategy action plan four sheltered schemes were identified to be decommissioned and re-provided in a modern, centrally located scheme. Sovereign are continuing to review the demand for sheltered accommodation and are committed to ensuring sufficient supply is provided.

There is currently one extra care sheltered housing project in West Berkshire, but due to demand there are more planned for the future. Extra care combines the benefits of living independently in sheltered housing with the provision of domiciliary care on site to enable people to maintain their independence and remain in their homes as their needs increase.

### 'Resulting Issues'

- **Supporting People are currently reviewing the support services provided to older people to determine whether it is meeting needs appropriately.**

## Appendix A

- **Working with our RSL partners to ensure best use of social housing by delivering a comprehensive under-occupation scheme**
- **Working in partnership to provide a holistic approach to the provision of extra care and support provided to applicants in extra care schemes**

### 6.2.11. Armed Forces

West Berkshire Council has a small amount of family quarters within the district located in Hermitage. Only a small proportion of those currently housed in armed forces accommodation present to the local authority for housing options or ultimately to make a homeless application.

#### 'Resulting Issues'

- **Need to link with the Welfare Officer for the local Armed Forces to determine the support that is required by armed forces personnel and their families.**
- **Changes to the Housing legislation will enable armed forces personnel to accrue a local connection to an area, this may impact on the amount of presentations made, services required and the statutory duty of the local authority.**

### 6.2.12. Support and preventing homelessness recurrence

West Berkshire Council currently employs two support workers who offer resettlement guidance and support across tenures and landlords. Other agencies in the area also offer support:

- Two Saints
- YMCA
- Berkshire Women's Aid

We intend to seek to maintain this level of support provision and the appropriate funding for it.

It is hoped to set up a 'Sanctuary Scheme' in West Berkshire. This would be aimed at providing security measures for victims of domestic violence to support them in continuing to live in their family home whilst being safe from continued violence. Security measures offered would depend on the circumstances, but can include additional locks, panic alarms linked directly to the police and safe rooms where the victim can lock themselves until help arrives.

We will endeavour to secure in the region of £5,000 funding per annum from Supporting People. The Community Safety Manager will also put together a business case to help draw in additional funding as we have estimated that the £5,000 would cover about 25 referrals per annum. We will also look at the possibility of support work being carried out by our Neighbourhood Wardens.

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**'Resulting Issues'**

**A monitoring tool of all repeat homelessness needs to be developed to ensure support is provided to all client groups.**

## Appendix A

**Reducing Temporary Accommodation - West Berkshire targets**

	<b>31 March 2006</b>	<b>31 March 2007</b>	<b>31 March 2007</b>	<b>31 March 2008</b>	<b>31 March 2009</b>
Estimated number of households likely to be in temporary accommodation	130	110	90	70	69

West Berkshire Council has exceeded the Government target of reducing the total number of households in temporary accommodation to below the 50% 2010 target by:

1. Continuing our current policy of qualifying offers for those assisted in accessing private rented accommodation.
2. Not replacing units of RSL temporary accommodation as they become vacant or converting where possible RSL temporary accommodation into permanent housing.
3. Actively seeking to permanently house existing households in RSL temporary accommodation.
4. Not replacing units of WBC temporary accommodation scheduled for demolition.
5. Continuing to develop the use of nominations and move on agreements with providers of supported housing for vulnerable people to ensure an adequate supply to meet future needs.
6. Developing a system of choice based lettings for RSL rented and shared ownership properties, and extending this to private sector vacancies.
7. Ensuring the system for prioritising applicants in a choice based lettings scheme does not work to promote homelessness or placements in temporary accommodation.
8. Actively seeking to permanently house those currently in private sector tenancies classed as temporary accommodation.
9. Continuing in our efforts to reduce homeless acceptances against main causes.

Appendix A

## 7. Developing our homelessness strategy

The development of this strategy launched through a consultation conference event in 2007.

Voluntary and statutory organisations from in and around West Berkshire were invited to take part in the event. Following on from this the Homelessness Core Group was formed to meet to discuss issues and strategic direction.

At the consultation conference held on 23rd February 2007, internal and external stakeholders attended workshops on specific homelessness issues:

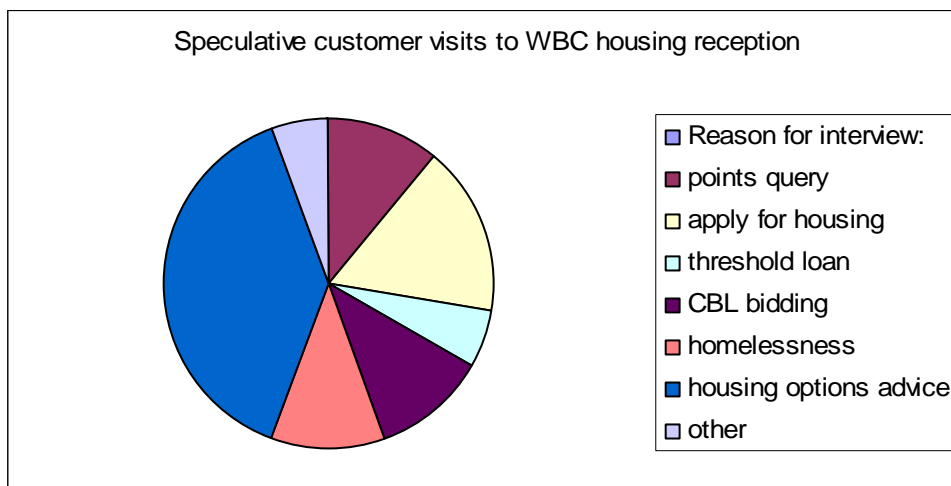
- Youth homelessness – ending the revolving door
- Drug and alcohol – partnership working
- Housing options and choice
- Supporting People
- Empowering the victims of domestic violence
- Registered social landlords and the Housing Corporation homelessness strategy

A report was published following the conference setting out the issues raised and the aspirations of stakeholders for solutions. The key points from this have been incorporated into this strategy.

In late 2007 we carried out a survey by means of a short questionnaire of customers who used our drop in reception and appointment services.

Charts 1 and 2 show the reasons why customers used the drop in reception service at our Market Street offices reception and their satisfaction with that service:

**Chart 1**



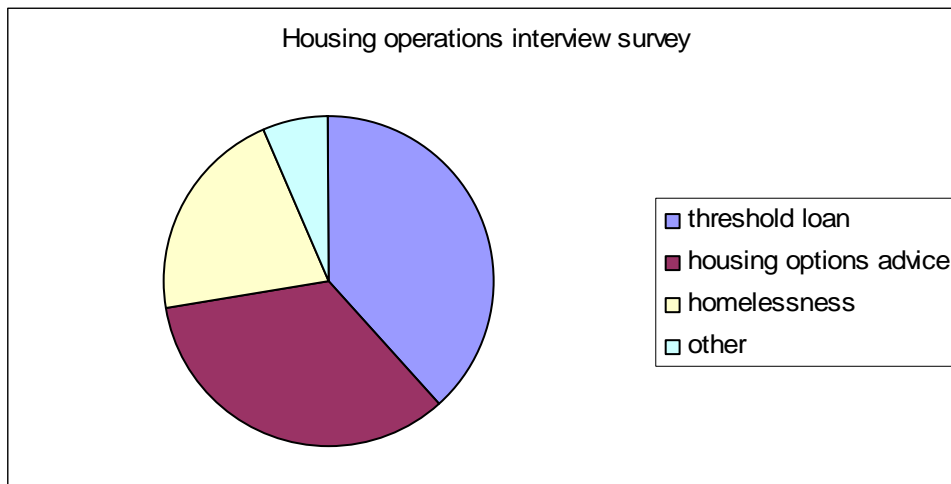
Appendix A

Chart 2



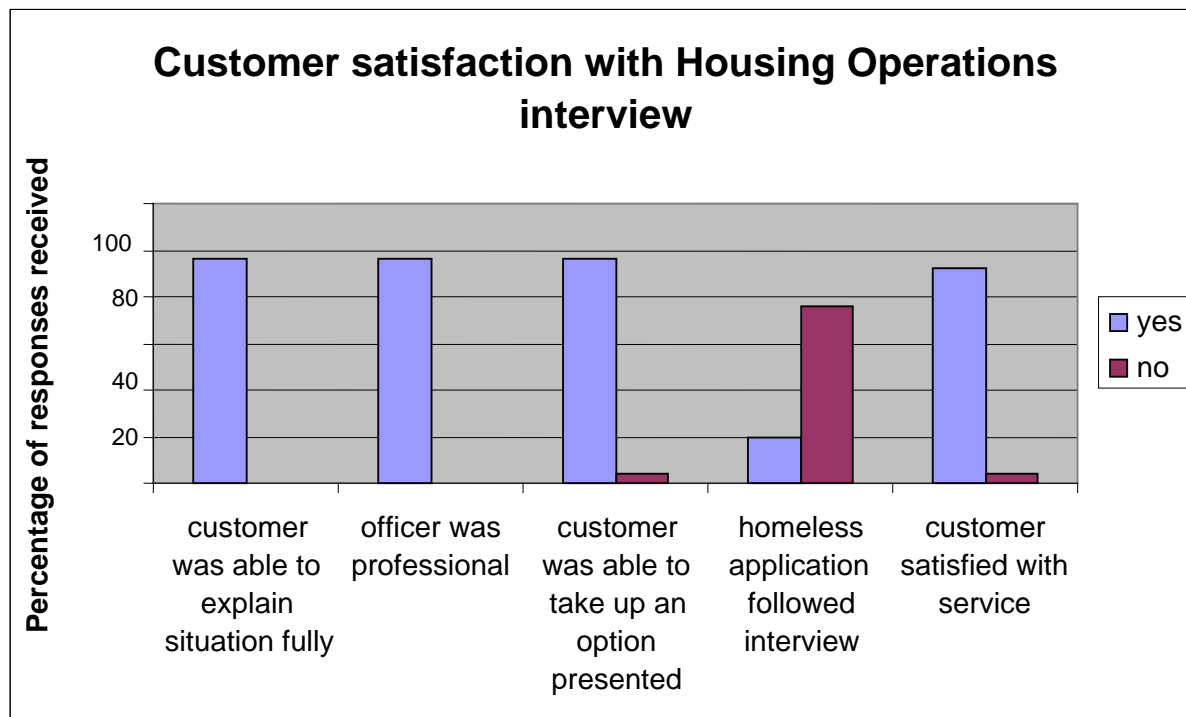
Charts 3 and 4 show the reasons why customers asked for or were offered subsequent appointments with a housing officer and their satisfaction with that interview:

Chart 3



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Chart 4



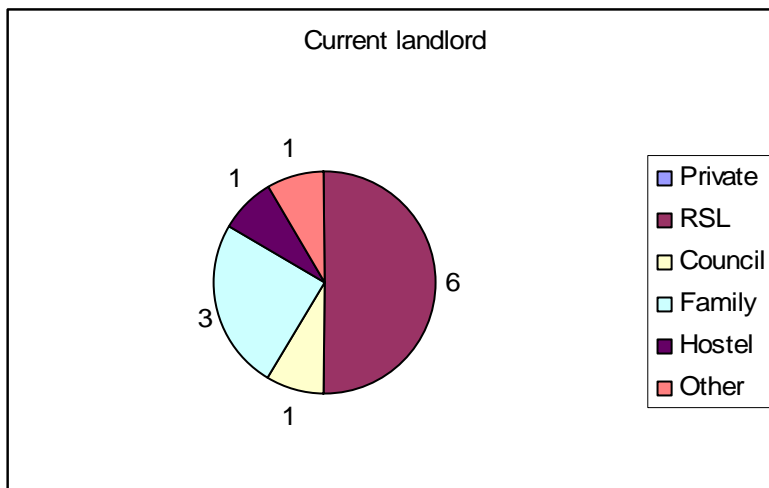
To follow this up in January 2008 we conducted a review of our homelessness service with a focus group of 12 households who had experienced our service. We asked them to complete a longer questionnaire to assess a range of issues including health, income, family composition, accommodation (previous and current), reasons for homelessness, where they sought advice and help, their detailed experience of the council's housing options service and applying for housing, and onward support needs.



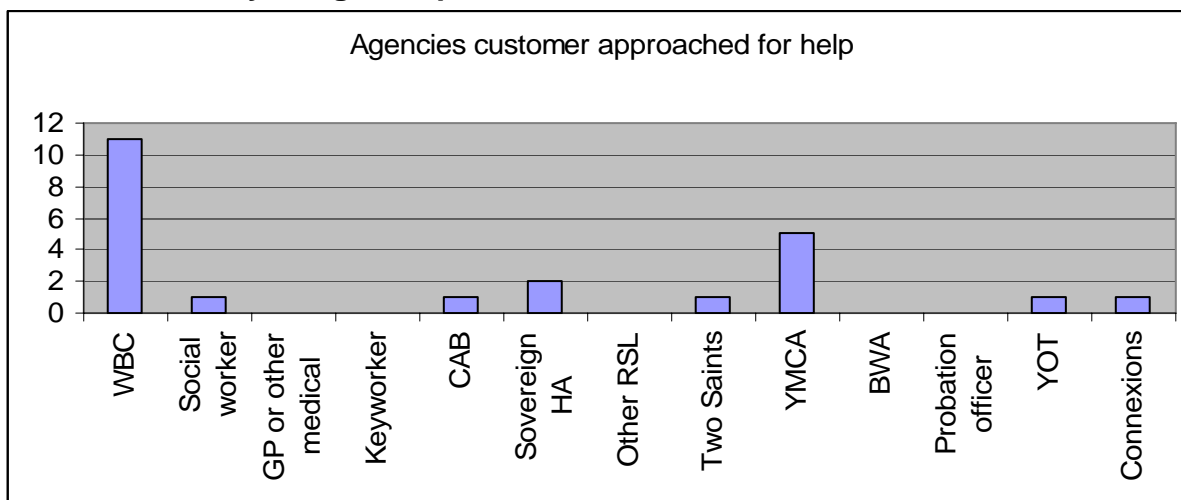
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The following charts show responses that are of particular relevance to this strategy. Some customers did not answer all questions, some had multiple answers.

**Housing circumstance at time of survey**

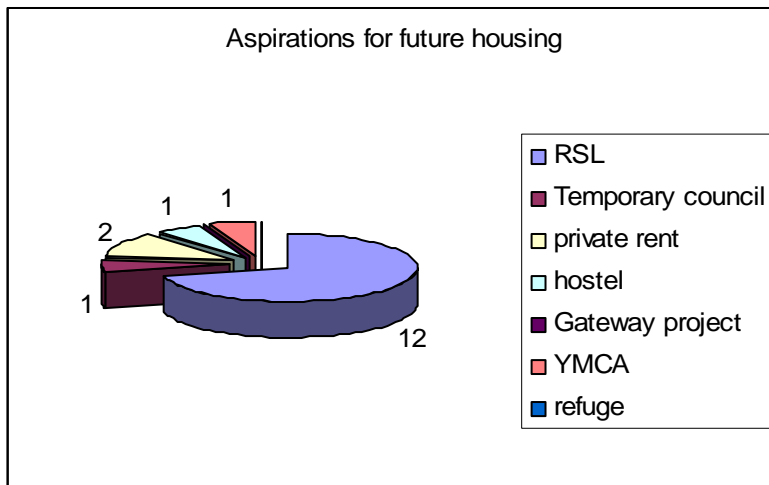


**Where they sought help and advice**

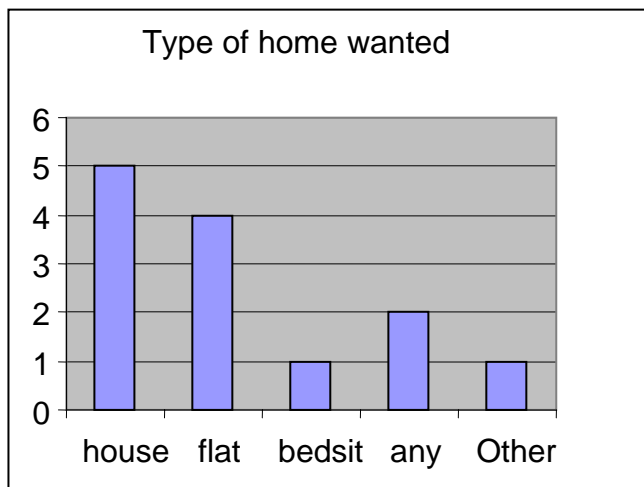


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**Preferred future tenure**



**Type of home preferred**



**7.1 What the homelessness strategy is linked to**

**7.1.1. Other strategies**

This homelessness strategy aims to link with other programmes that address the wide range of problems that cause homelessness including the following:

**National**

- Sustainable Communities Plan
- National Homelessness Strategy

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- E-Government

### Regional/County

- Regional Housing Strategy
- Sub-Regional Housing Strategy
- Supporting People Strategy
- Community Care Plans
- Children and Young People's Partnership
- Sure Start
- Connexions
- Primary Care Group Trust commissioning plans
- Drug and Alcohol Action Team
- Youth Offending Teams
- Anti-poverty Strategies
- Regional Planning Guidance

### Local

- Local Strategic Partnerships and Community Strategy
- Corporate Strategy
- Best Value Performance Plan
- Capital Strategy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Partnership Strategic Assessment and Safer Communities partnership Plan
- Local Plan
- Economic Development Policy
- Housing Strategy
- Community Development Strategy
- Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Strategy
- Empty Homes Strategy
- Gypsy and Traveller Strategy
- Drug Treatment Plans

### 7.1.2. Agencies

The Council recognises that by bringing together partner organisations in both the statutory and voluntary sectors better co-ordinated and more effective services can be achieved for homeless and potentially homeless people.

#### 'Resulting issues'

- **Continue to contribute to the West Berkshire Homelessness Forum**
- **Review membership of the Homelessness Strategy Core Group to ensure membership reflects the links with other strategies and key partners and stakeholders.**
- **Continue to contribute to the Berkshire wide housing managers meetings to ensure links are maintained with the regional and sub-regional authorities.**

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### 7.2 The priorities for this homelessness strategy

The priorities in the action plan for this strategy (see section 6) have been devised from the responses during our consultation and from our day to day communications with groups and agencies with whom we have partnership working arrangements.

We have also had regard for government priorities.

This strategy will have three main items of focus:

#### 7.2.1. Homelessness prevention

In 2007/8 we have exceeded our target for homeless preventions by 30% with 264 households prevented from becoming homeless..

The table below provides a breakdown of prevention by method.

#### Breakdown of homeless preventions 2007/8

Advice & Assistance	67
Threshold Loan	89
Common Housing Register	102
<b>Total</b>	<b>258</b>

#### 7.2.2. Reduction to Temporary Accommodation

In 2004 the Government set a target to halve the number of households living in temporary accommodation by 2010. West Berkshire had 190 households in temporary accommodation in December 2004 and had a target to halve this to 95 by 2010. It can be seen from the table below that we have already achieved this and we are developing a strategy to sustain this improvement

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/8
Number of households in temporary accommodation	198	179	96	66	57

This target has been achieved through:

- Re-focussing our work towards prevention
- Promoting private sector renting as an option
- Qualifying offers for people already housed in temporary accommodation
- Move-on through the Common Housing Register
- Offer of assured tenancies where people are temporarily accommodated in RSL housing

#### 'Resulting issues'

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- **Consider the standard and location of temporary accommodation to**

### 7.2.3. Access to Alternative Housing

#### Private rented sector

Maximising the availability of affordable housing is a key tool in homeless prevention. One way to achieving this is by enhancing the supply of good quality affordable private sector accommodation. We already provide a Threshold Loan and Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme and want to develop our relationship further with private landlords by developing a Landlord's Forum and accreditation scheme with a range of benefits.

#### 'Resulting issues'

- **Developing a landlord accreditation scheme,**
- **Developing a manual of information on best practice,**
- **Developing a plan for communicating with landlords.**

#### Making best use of social housing stock

There are currently over 4900 people registered on the Common Housing Register for affordable accommodation in West Berkshire. Last year, in 2007/8, housing associations let approximately 475 which included the delivery of 152 new affordable homes. It is therefore vital that we manage access to social housing vacancies, provide other housing options to people who have no reasonable prospect of being offered a housing association home to rent, and prevent homelessness through the provision of accessible and good quality advice and assistance.

#### 'Resulting issues'

- **Develop Homechoice scheme to include mutual exchanges in 2008, shared ownership and transfers in 2009, and private rented accommodation in 2010.**
- **With our housing association partners develop schemes to incentivise tenants to move from family accommodation which they are under-occupying, to accommodation which is more suitable to their needs.**

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# 8. Resourcing and delivery of this homelessness strategy

## 8.1 Staffing Restructure

To ensure that a full review of all services available to applicants within West Berkshire was carried out as part of the homelessness strategy review, a consultant was engaged to conduct a study of the Housing Operations Service. A full report including a number of recommendations has been considered and a restructure of the current team is being implemented as part of this process.

A Housing Options team has been created to concentrate on preventative measures. A duty rota system has been implemented to enhance the current service and negotiations are under way with other West Berkshire services to develop a one-stop shop facility throughout the district. Flexi-funding has also been secured to enable the team to use flexible working patterns to ensure appropriate suitable advice can be offered to applicants within their own homes.

We have worked hard to develop a more customer focussed approach, making ourselves more accessible with the daily presence of a Housing Officer in our Customer Service Centre and, given our rural make-up, offering an off-site surgery. We have also increased the number of home visits we complete.

### 'Resulting issues'

- **Develop a range of customer service standards relating to housing advice and options and the administration of the Common Housing Register.**
- **Develop a one-stop shop in partnership with other agencies**

## 8.2 Grant Funding

We have strengthened our range of prevention tools through investment of homelessness grant, and, where possible, additional funding through Supporting People Grant and the Local Strategic Partnership. Highlights include:

- Introduction of two mediation services – Family Group Conferencing and Resolve
- Expansion of the Tenancy Support Service through additional SP funding
- Increased funding of Threshold Loan through SP grant
- Introduction of a Krashpad to avoid use of B&B
- Part funding of a support worker at the Domestic Violence refuge

## 8.3 Partner organisations

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The Council undertook a rigorous and robust selection exercise for preferred development partners in 2006. Consideration was given not just to organisation's ability to acquire land and develop new affordable housing, but also to their ability to manage developments, contribute towards the Council's wider strategic objectives and their long term commitment to the district. The following partners were selected:

- A2 Housing Group
- Bromford Housing Group
- Catalyst Housing Group
- Sovereign Housing Group
- Testway Housing Limited

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## 9. Service Update

(Each area for action covers strengths, areas for improvement & targets)

The Homelessness Strategy action plan sets out the key measures to be implemented over the next five years. The performance targets are ambitious and challenging, but we believe they are achievable.

### 9.1 Access to information & services

We recognise that our customers can seek advice and information from a variety of sources within and around West Berkshire and we have developed our own in-house range of literature. However, our customers have told us that it is not always easy to access good, consistent advice.

#### 'Resulting issues'

- **Produce an accessible guide to agencies and information sources.**
- **Review in-house range of housing advice literature and update housing advice website.**
- **Contribute to information leaflets produced by partner agencies through the West Berkshire Homelessness Forum.**

### 9.2 Housing register

There are currently over 4900 people registered on the Common Housing Register in West Berkshire. In 2007/8 approximately 475 housing association properties were let of which 213 were general needs and advertised through Homechoice. 112 of these had 2 or more bedrooms. 152 new affordable properties were delivered in 2007/8 through the affordable housing development programme.

We developed a Common Housing Register in 2004 and a Choice Based Lettings scheme, Homechoice, in 2006 ahead of government targets.

#### 'Resulting issues'

- **Improve access to housing by expanding the Choice Based Lettings scheme to include advertising mutual exchanges in 2008, shared ownership and housing association transfers in 2009, and privately rented accommodation in 2010.**
- **Develop our relationship with private landlords through a landlords accreditation scheme and a manual of good practice**
- **Working with our partner RSLs to maximise the availability of housing through the development of incentive schemes to combat under-occupancy/overcrowding.**



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### 9.3 Improving the homelessness service

Although we have achieved much in terms of developing our housing options approach, our aim is to continue to work with our stakeholders and partners to develop enhanced housing options services.

#### 'Resulting issues'

- **Develop service level agreements around debt advice and counselling,**
- **Develop links with education, training and employment services,**
- **Develop a furniture move in service to include selection and delivery of furniture and home improvements.**

### 9.4 Advice provision

#### 9.4.1. Support to homeless households and those at risk of homelessness

In addition to the support services provided by Two Saints the Council has provided its own support service to homeless people living in temporary accommodation since 2003, funded by Supporting People. This was extended in 2005 by a second support worker, and again in 2008 by the appointment of a supervisor. As a result of these developments we have been able to extend the service to include people at risk of homelessness living in other tenures and the Council managed Gypsy Traveller site.

#### 'Resulting issues'

- **Expand the Tenancy Support service to meet the needs of the Traveller community at other sites.**

#### 9.4.2. Mediation

Since 2003 Resolve West Berkshire have been providing a mediation service for young people at risk of homelessness as a result of parental eviction.

More recently we have added to this provision by entering into a service level agreement with Family Group Conferencing to provide more intensive mediation to families where young people are at risk of homelessness.

#### 'Resulting issues'

- **Review the effectiveness of these services in terms of value for money and homelessness prevention.**

### 9.5 Temporary accommodation

In our strategy of 2003 we recognised the importance of ensuring an adequate supply of temporary accommodation to meet the needs of a variety of homeless households. We aimed to work with housing providers through nominations and

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move on agreements to increase the supply of supported housing to people at risk of homelessness. We also aimed to increase the supply of accommodation in rural areas and in the east of the district.

Since our last strategy we have helped develop the Mental Health Housing Panel, and the Young Persons Housing Panel which has improved access to short term housing and support services for these client groups. We also have an agreement with Dominion Housing Group which helps us gain access to supported accommodation for young parents and we have a Housing Panel for people with Learning Disabilities.

We recognised the need in our last strategy to maintain a small supply of Council owned temporary accommodation and we have retained ownership of 36 units of self contained accommodation. 20 units of this accommodation are in a block which we aim to refurbish to provide a better mix of accommodation, to improve the quality, and to provide better community facilities.

Since our last strategy we have added to our tenancy support provision by appointing an additional tenancy support worker and a specialist housing support supervisor. This has enabled us to support people who we have prevented from becoming homeless by supporting them in their current accommodation or by supporting them in managing their private sector tenancies.

We currently have a block of temporary accommodation comprising 20 units a mix of 1 & 2 beds. We have identified that it could benefit from refurbishment, plans to include providing 12 units a mix of 1, 2 & 3 beds flats and an enhanced community facility. This can be utilised by other services outside the Housing Operations Service and strengthen the prevention service currently offered to West Berkshire residents.

### **'Resulting issues'**

- **Take forward proposals for the refurbishment of Taceham House.**

## **9.6 Longer term housing options**

### **9.6.1 Tackling Repeat Homelessness**

The statistics for West Berkshire confirm that repeat homelessness is not a feature of the district's homelessness applications. The definition of repeat homelessness is as defined by CLG in the P1E returns; ie homeless within the same district within a two year period.

### **9.6.2 Engaging with the Private-Rented Sector**

The Council Plan requires that 72 households be assisted into privately rented accommodation within the first year, increasing by 2 households per year throughout the life of the Plan.

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We are seeking to develop a Landlords Forum, and, to this end, have started to develop links with private landlords throughout the District.

### **'Resulting Issues'**

- **Part of the package we are seeking to develop will include a Landlord's Accreditation Scheme.**

### **9.6.3 Engaging with Housing Benefit Service**

Responsibility for the delivery and monitoring of Discretionary Housing Payments is to be moved into the Housing Operations Team to ensure vulnerable homeless applicants are given appropriate priority for the available assistance.

Changes to the administration of Housing Benefit has resulted in a 2 person 2 children household now only being entitled to benefit for a 2 bedroomed property where previously they would have been entitled to 3 bed. This has resulted in a growth in demand for 2 bedroomed properties in the private sector.

### **'Resulting Issues'**

- **Need for ongoing training of the Housing Operation Team around Housing Benefits and future changes**

## **9.7 Monitoring delivery of our action plan**

Increasing the understanding of responsibilities and barriers to joint working and service provision across all agencies is key to providing a holistic service to homeless households. It is important that multi-agency working is fostered in West Berkshire and to this end the Housing Sub Forum will regularly monitor and review the strategy, agree any revisions necessary to meet changing needs or service provision, and be responsible for raising housing issues with the West Berkshire Sustainable Communities Partnership.

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**10. Action plan**

The following table sets out action points and targets for easy reference:

Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Target outcome(s)	Target date	Resources	Measures/ Reporting Mechanism
<b>1. Preventing Homelessness</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Working with Registered Social Landlords to improve access to social housing</b></li> </ul>							
Develop Homechoice West Berkshire	Include mutual exchanges (2008) housing association transfers (2009), and shared ownership properties (2009)	WBC	RSLs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mutual exchanges</li> <li>Transfers</li> <li>Shared ownership</li> </ul>	2008 2009 2009	CBL Service Level Agreement	CBL working Group  Homelessness Strategy Core Group
Address overcrowding, and under-occupation in social rented housing stock.	Develop tenants incentive scheme to encourage under-occupying tenants to move to smaller accommodation which better meets their needs and frees up family sized accommodation.	Sovereign	RSLs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheme developed and targets established.</li> <li>Increase in the number of tenants leaving family sized accommodation through the scheme.</li> </ul>	2009  2009	RSL	Core Group  CBL Working Group
Working with social housing providers to develop a sub-regional approach	Develop a sub-regional proposal for the next bidding round	Berkshire Housing Needs  Supporting People	RSLs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enabling wider choice for applicants to access housing</li> <li>Harmonise approach between partners</li> </ul>	2010	Berkshire Authorities  RSLs	CBL Working Group  Berkshire Housing Needs Manager  Homelessness Strategy Core Gp

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Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Target outcome(s)	Target date	Resources	Measures/ Reporting Mechanism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Improving access to private sector rented housing stock by further developing links with private landlords</b></li> </ul>							
Use our Threshold Loan and Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme to assist households access the private rented sector	Provide loans for rent in advance and deposit guarantees to households who meet the eligibility criteria for assistance.	WBC	Private landlords Housing Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist households through the scheme into private rented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>74</li> <li>76</li> <li>78</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	2008/9 2009/10 2010/11	Threshold Loan budget SP funding	Core Group
Working with our colleagues in Housing Benefit, Public Protection and Housing Strategy to provide advice and information to landlords about Council services and issues which affect them.	Develop landlords accreditation scheme	Housing Strategy	HB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landlord accreditation scheme in place.</li> </ul>	2009	Homelessness Grant	Core Group
	Develop Landlords Forum	Housing Strategy	Public Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landlords Forum in place</li> </ul>	2009		Core Group
	Produce manual good practice for landlords with information on council services		Housing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish targets for number of landlords accredited</li> </ul>	2009	Potentially Supporting People Grant	
	Publicise information on the website for private landlords			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landlords manual produced and published on the website.</li> <li>Pages on website developed for private landlords</li> </ul>	2009		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Working with other agencies to prevent homelessness</b></li> </ul>							
Lead on the	To ensure that multi-	WBC	VPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VPP re-launch event</li> </ul>	2008	Homeless grant	Homelessness

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Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Target outcome(s)	Target date	Resources	Measures/ Reporting Mechanism
operation of our Vulnerable Persons Protocol	agency action is taken to sustain the tenancies of vulnerable people.		signatories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baseline established against which to measure RSL performance on arrears</li> <li>Monitoring information reported to Homeless Forum and Core Group</li> <li>Staff training programme with dates established</li> </ul>	2008  2008  2008		Forum  Homelessness Strategy Core Group  CBL Working Group
Commission an enhanced Court Desk Service to help those facing homelessness through repossession of their home.	Establish a service level agreement with voluntary agency	Housing Operations	Housing Operations  Voluntary Agency  RSLs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop protocol setting out working arrangements</li> <li>Agree SLA</li> <li>Robust monitoring embedded in P1E</li> </ul>	Jan 2009	Homelessness Grant  RSL contribution	Core Group
Establish service level agreements with external organisations to provide independent financial advice part of our enhanced housing options approach, they	Establish a service level agreement with voluntary organisation	Housing Operations	Housing Operations  Housing Benefits  RSLs	Review the effectiveness working of these services in terms of value for money and homelessness prevention as part of the monitoring of this strategy.	2010	Supporting People Funding	Core Group

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Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Target outcome(s)	Target date	Resources	Measures/ Reporting Mechanism
will work as part of the Housing Operations Team.							
Develop and promote homelessness prevention recording with relevant external organisations for the purpose of the P1E statutory return.		WBC	RSLs and other partner agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and promote the use of a homelessness prevention monitoring form for partner agencies to use</li> <li>Monitor results from the form and feed into the P1E</li> </ul>	2008	Within existing resources	CBL Working Group  Homelessness Forum  Core group
<b>2. Improving customer service</b>							
Complete implementation of the restructure the Housing Operations Team and review procedures to improve access to the service for people in housing need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete recruitment</li> <li>Provide training</li> <li>Update policies &amp; procedures</li> <li>Appoint Policy &amp; Performance Officer</li> </ul>	WBC	Housing Operations  Supporting People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review stock of housing advice leaflets</li> <li>Review housing pages on the Council's website.</li> </ul>	2008	Existing Housing Budgets  Supporting People	Core group
Support staff in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify suitable</li> </ul>	WBC	Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50% of team pursuing</li> </ul>	2008	Housing	Core group

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Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Target outcome(s)	Target date	Resources	Measures/ Reporting Mechanism
obtaining professional housing qualifications and with their continuous professional development.	training resources		Training	professional housing qualification		Budgets Social Care Training Budgets	
Establish standards of customer service and continue to monitor customer satisfaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with questionnaire and feedback consultation</li> <li>Take forward into agreed standards as part of continuous service improvement</li> </ul>	WBC	Housing Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update and review existing standards</li> <li>Regular performance monitoring with targets</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Existing	Core Group
Manage the transfer of responsibility for the delivery and monitoring of Discretionary Housing Payments into the Housing Operations Team to ensure vulnerable homeless applicants are given appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish responsible post</li> <li>Complete relevant training</li> <li>Develop appropriate policies and procedures</li> </ul>	Housing Operations	Housing Operations Housing Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor the results of changes to Housing Benefit which have resulted in a 2 person 2 children household now only being entitled to benefit for a 2 bed roomed property where previously they would have been entitled to 3 bed.</li> <li>Develop a closer working relationship with the Housing Benefits team to ensure gaps in knowledge addressed.</li> </ul>	Jan 2009	Existing	Core Group



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Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Target outcome(s)	Target date	Resources	Measures/ Reporting Mechanism
priority for the available assistance.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the current process for Housing Benefit claims on temporary accommodation and threshold loan applicants which could result in the development of a function within the Housing Operations service to assess and validate Housing Benefit claims.</li> </ul>			
Continue our policy of undertaking home visits to people at risk of homelessness and ensure all applicants benefit from this service	Housing Options offer a home visit to every applicant who approaches as at risk of Homelessness	Housing Options Team Leader		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable a more holistic approach to assessing the individual 's risk</li> <li>Allows provision of options to reduce risk of homelessness</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Staff	Housing Management meeting  P1E and preventions
Continue to improve the content of the housing advise and homelessness pages of the website	Ensure accurate and accessible information is available to the public	PPO	ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update accurate info that reflects any changes in legislation</li> </ul>	Ongoing	PPO	Housing Operations Management meeting
Enhance advice to include	As part of the P2E scheme agreed investment over the next	Supporting People	P2E Housing Ops	SLA with P2E 175 placements	2011	Supporting People	Homeless Core Group SP Core Group

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Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Target outcome(s)	Target date	Resources	Measures/ Reporting Mechanism
access to employment, education and training	3 years to expand service with a specific focus on group and worklessness						Community Safety Partnership
<b>3. Improving support for vulnerable groups</b>							
● <b>Young People</b>							
Develop a supported lodgings scheme and emergency 'Krash Pad' for young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a supported lodgings service</li> <li>Pilot young persons 'krash pad'</li> </ul>	Supporting People	Housing Operations  Children & Young Peoples Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish service level agreement</li> <li>Set up two hosts with young people</li> <li>Establish service level agreement</li> </ul>	08	Supporting People Grant  Homelessness Grant	Young Persons Housing Panel  Core Group  SP Core Group
Raise awareness in schools of homelessness and collating information on which schools experience high levels of parental evictions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a lead officer within Housing Operations Team to link with CYP</li> <li>Identify which schools would benefit most from training</li> </ul>	Housing Operations	Housing Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collating information on which schools experience high levels of parental evictions</li> </ul>	09	Housing Staff	Core Group
Prioritise home visits for all 16/17 year olds at home who are threatened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish lead within Housing Operations Team</li> </ul>	Housing Operations	CYP  Young Peoples sub –group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the effectiveness of the Joint Protocol for the assessment of homeless young people.</li> </ul>	Dec 09	Existing staff	Core Group

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Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Target outcome(s)	Target date	Resources	Measures/ Reporting Mechanism
with homelessness, where this is appropriate							
Continue to lead on the operation and development of the Young Persons Housing Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take forward existing group and develop further</li> </ul>	Housing Operations	Housing Operations CYP Connexions YOT RSLs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular review of impact of home visits</li> <li>Sustaining tenancies</li> <li>Prioritising vacancies</li> <li>Supporting Young People</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Housing staff	Core Group
Monitor the effectiveness of mediation and family group conferencing in preventing young people from becoming homeless.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Family Group Conferencing (FGC) service level agreement</li> </ul>	Housing Operations	Housing Operations FGC CYP YOT RSLs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homeless prevention</li> <li>Regular monitoring</li> <li>Sustaining tenancies or family set up</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Homelessness Grant	Core Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Domestic Abuse</b></li> </ul>							
Develop a Sanctuary Scheme	There is a need to develop a scheme that would enable victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own home or to access a private rented accommodation and remain safe by	Community Safety Co-ordinator	SP Housing Operations Sovereign Police Lifeline provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish an accessible service that will deliver and implement the security assessment.</li> <li>Develop a survival kit based on established good practice.</li> </ul>	Sept 08	£5K Supporting People Grant  £5k Homelessness Grant	Quarterly reports:  Total number of households accessing the service  Total tenancies

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Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Target outcome(s)	Target date	Resources	Measures/ Reporting Mechanism
	<p>offering a range of security measures.</p> <p>This is going to be two tier approach:</p> <p>Stage1 – assessment of property and appropriate security measures put in place</p> <p>Stage 2 – Develop a survival kit in the event of perpetrator accessing the property</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore feasibility of a 'fast-track' service for vulnerable groups into private rented accommodation links with Private Landlord initiative</li> </ul>			<p>sustained in their home</p> <p>Average cost per households accessing the service</p> <p>Housing sub-partnership</p> <p>Homeless Core Group</p> <p>Domestic Abuse Forum</p> <p>Supporting People Core Group</p> <p>Community Safety Partnership</p>
Develop a perpetrator change of behaviour programme and provision for alternative accommodation	A referral system to a behaviour changing programme and link with RSLs and private landlords to source alternative accommodation.	Police	Landlords Forum Social Care Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a behaviour changing programme</li> <li>Develop a range of measures to assist with alternative accommodation for perpetrators predominantly through private landlords with exceptional cases being assisted through their own RSLs.</li> </ul>	Dec 09	Social Care Training Budget  Rent Deposit Scheme  Homelessness Grant	<p>Quarterly reports</p> <p>Number of perpetrators accessing the service</p> <p>Number of perpetrators who re-offend</p> <p>Domestic Abuse</p>

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Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Target outcome(s)	Target date	Resources	Measures/ Reporting Mechanism
							Forum  Community Safety Partnership  MARAC
Use our Vulnerable People Protocol to support victims who are vulnerable as a result of domestic violence	To identify support necessary to prevent homelessness either through a planned move or Sanctuary Scheme.	Housing Operations	DV Forum  Community Safety  RSLs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gain sign up from BWA and RSLs to protocol.</li> <li>Set up monitoring of DV cases assisted through the protocol and establish baseline against targets can be met.</li> </ul>	2010	Staff	Core Group  Domestic Abuse Forum  MARAC  Community Safety Partnership
Housing options officer will specialise in advising women fleeing domestic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a specialist officer who will link with relevant areas</li> </ul>	Housing Operations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disseminate good practice</li> <li>Respond to changes in legislation</li> <li>Develop effective training to support staff</li> </ul>	2008	Existing	Core Group
Establish an in-house staff policy to support victims of domestic abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To work with Human Resources to look at implementing a policy to support staff</li> </ul>	Housing Operations	Unions  RSLs  Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a policy initially for West Berkshire staff including confidential direct line referral mechanism that links to a counselling service, accommodation options and changing work patterns/re-deployment.</li> </ul>	2010	Existing	Core Group  Human Resources  Policy Group

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Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Target outcome(s)	Target date	Resources	Measures/ Reporting Mechanism
Requirement to develop a more holistic inclusive service providing one stop shop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop service to enable one point of contact that an individual receives all pertinent information and access to support</li> </ul>	Housing Ops	DV Forum Community Safety Housing Benefits RSLs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holistic Service</li> </ul>	2011	Existing	Homelessness Gp DV Forum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Ex-offenders</b></li> </ul>							
Contribute to the management of ex-offenders through the West Berkshire Priority & Other Prolific Offender Panel, and the Multi Agency Public Protection Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A specialist officer to attend</li> </ul>	Housing Operations	Housing RSLs Police Probation Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider the appropriateness of the current locality.</li> <li>Review the provision and need within the district to influence and shape future provision.</li> <li>Consider current client group and how they can be provided for</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Existing	MAPPP Community Safety Partnership Core Group
Use our Vulnerable People Protocol to identify and support vulnerable ex-offenders in managing their tenancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a specialist officer who will link with relevant areas</li> </ul>	Housing Operations	Housing RSLs Police Probation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gain sign up by RSLs to protocol.</li> <li>Set up monitoring of ex-offenders cases assisted through the protocol and establish baseline against targets can be set .</li> </ul>	2010	Existing	MAPPP Community Safety Partnership Core Group
Develop a new accommodation based specialist service for ex-offenders in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a new supported accommodation project based on the revised specification</li> </ul>	Supporting People	Housing Supporting People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish new service</li> <li>Ensure outcomes focus particularly around education, training and</li> </ul>	2011	Supporting People	SP Core Group Homeless Core Group

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Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Target outcome(s)	Target date	Resources	Measures/ Reporting Mechanism
need of housing or who are homeless	developed by the Probation service.		Probation  Police  Voluntary sector	employment			Community Safety Partnership
<b>• Rough sleepers</b>							
Continue to fund the rough sleeper accommodation provided by Two Saints and provide follow up housing advice and guidance to assist rough sleepers in accessing housing and support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review SLA</li> <li>Agree any changes to service delivery</li> </ul>	Housing Operations	Housing  Two Saints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised SLA</li> <li>Enhanced service offering a more holistic assessment of rough sleepers</li> <li>Maintain 0 count</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Homelessness Grant	Homeless Core Group
Implement a re-connection policy	To enable former rough sleepers to access housing and support where they have a local connection	Housing Operations	Berkshire Basingstoke Oxfordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconnection policy</li> <li>Monitoring information</li> </ul>	2011	Existing	Homeless Core Group  Homeless Forum  SP Core Group
Work in partnership with the West Berkshire Homelessness	Develop a marketing campaign to raise awareness and provide referral mechanism for general public	Homeless Core Group	Homeless sector  Two Saints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eliminate rough sleeping</li> </ul>	2011	Existing	Homeless Forum  Homeless Core Group

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Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Target outcome(s)	Target date	Resources	Measures/ Reporting Mechanism
Forum to develop a communication strategy raising awareness about street homelessness, services available locally and engaging the public to report actual sightings of street homelessness through awareness raising initiatives			YMCA DAAT Community Safety				SP Core Group
<b>● Teenage parents</b>							
There is a need to raise awareness of educational, employment and training opportunities targeted towards teenage parents.	Identify a lead officer within Housing Operations Team to link with CYP	Housing Operations	Housing Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness in schools</li> <li>Collate information on which schools are experiencing high levels of teenage pregnancies</li> <li>Link in with Health Improvement Manager, Children &amp; Young People.</li> </ul>	2011	Existing	Children & Young People Homeless Core Group SP Core Group



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Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Target outcome(s)	Target date	Resources	Measures/ Reporting Mechanism
<b>• Drug and alcohol</b>							
It is recognised nationally and locally that drug and alcohol misusers are more able to engage in treatment, are more likely to sustain engagement in treatment and to have a successful outcome if they are in suitable accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish local picture with detailed needs analysis</li> </ul>	Housing Operations	DAAT Community Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop better links with the DAAT and employment education and training</li> <li>Explore opportunities to develop a more specialist service</li> </ul>	2011	Existing	DAAT  SP Core Group  Homeless Core Group
<b>• Older people</b>							
Develop CBL scheme that focuses on under-occupation	Develop incentive scheme	Housing Operations	RSLs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with our RSL partners to ensure best use of social housing by delivering a comprehensive under-occupation scheme</li> <li>Work in partnership to provide a holistic approach to the provision of extra care and support provided to applicants in extra care schemes</li> </ul>	2010	Existing	Core Group CBL working group

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Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Target outcome(s)	Target date	Resources	Measures/ Reporting Mechanism
Supporting People are currently reviewing the support services provided to older people to determine whether it is meeting needs appropriately	Implement changes agreed as a result of the strategic review of the programme	Supporting People	RSLs Housing Ops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased flexibility in support provision that is not tied to a specific accommodation</li> </ul>	2010	SP	SP Core Gp Homeless Core Gp
<b>• Learning disability</b>							
Enhance understanding of CBL in the LD service	Market CBL and establish better understanding of the opportunities it provides	Housing	Housing LD RSLs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review membership and functioning of the LD Housing Allocations Panel</li> <li>Include a virtual member from the Learning Disability Service in housing options.</li> </ul>	2009	Existing	CBL working group
<b>• Armed forces</b>							
Raising awareness of CBL and prevention options with armed forces	Market CBL and establish better understanding of the opportunities it provides	Housing	Housing Operations Armed Forces RSLs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop links with the Welfare Officer for the local Armed Forces to determine the support that is required by armed forces personnel and their families.</li> <li>Monitor the number of homeless presentations from armed forces personnel following changes to the Housing legislation re local</li> </ul>	2011	Existing	CBL working group

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Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Target outcome(s)	Target date	Resources	Measures/ Reporting Mechanism
				connection			
<b>4. Improving standards in the provision of temporary accommodation</b>							
Procure accommodation which is affordable, good quality, and in a location near to facilities, services and support.	Acquire family sized accommodation	Housing Operations	RSLs Housing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take forward plans to redevelop Taceham House</li> <li>Use the planning system and s106 agreements to secure individual units on new developments.</li> <li>Develop the use of an anti-social behaviour contract for residents in Council owned TA.</li> </ul>	2010	S106	Housing sub-partnership  Homeless Core Group
<b>5. Increasing the supply of affordable housing</b>							
Deliver more new affordable homes overall and rural affordable homes in particular	Housing Strategy Team to proactively work with our preferred development partners to bring forward schemes already identified. Continue to liaise with Planning and Developers and enforce joint working with the Housing Partnership Board to use S106 monies and bid through continuous market engagement to realise additional development opportunities.	Housing Strategy	RSL's Developers Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>150 homes per year</li> </ul>	3 years		Housing Strategy Team
Make best use of existing	Implementation of Empty Homes Strategy to bring	Housing Strategy	RSL Private	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18 homes to be bought back into use each year</li> </ul>	2011	Existing Capital fund £75k	Council Plan Homeless Core Gp

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Action	Detail	Lead	Partners	Target outcome(s)	Target date	Resources	Measures/ Reporting Mechanism
housing stock by bringing empty homes back into use	back homes into use by offering grant		Sector Landlords				
Making best use of existing housing stock by developing an action plan in partnership with social housing providers to deal with overcrowding and under-occupation	Develop incentive schemes; eg: Mutual Exchange, financial benefit to promote move-on from properties that are under-occupied.	WBC	RSLs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater variety of property available through CBL</li> </ul>	2011	Existing	CBL Working Gp Homelessness core Gp

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## 10. Appendices

## 10.1 Appendix A - Action plan update from our previous homelessness strategy

Objective	Action	Update
<p>Provide integrated and holistic services which best meet the needs of homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop a joint protocol for the assessment of homeless young people.</li> <li>➤ Create regular opportunities for the joint training of housing, YOT, and social services staff, and organise the first joint training event by October 2003.</li> <li>➤ Fund mediation services to prevent homelessness as a result of eviction by friends or family.</li> <li>➤ Develop a common housing register with targets in respect of the number of homeless households re-housed. Establish mechanisms to monitor these targets.</li> <li>➤ Develop links with the PCTs to improve access to health services for homeless households and produce a list of actions for the two organisations to achieve.</li> <li>➤ Develop links with education and employment agencies and produce a list of actions to ensure that children and adults do not suffer educationally or in employment as a result of homelessness.</li> <li>➤ Encourage RSLs to include a standard clause on domestic violence in their conditions of tenancy.</li> </ul>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>Partially completed. Training was undertaken &amp; YP Panel has become a vehicle for informing staff of processes. Recent event on YP organised by Two Saints.</p> <p>Completed. Resolve funded from Homelessness Grant.</p> <p>CHR implemented followed by Choice Based Lettings. Nominations Agreement in pipeline.</p> <p>Research was undertaken and local groups consulted on needs. Some initiatives were completed e.g. safe sex packs to Two Saints.</p> <p>A number of actions were identified. Jayne Mills from Pathways to Employment was invited to a meeting.</p> <p>Being progressed through DV Forum.</p>
<p>Develop the range of housing options to meet the needs of all homeless households in the district.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Increase the overall supply of temporary accommodation in rural areas, and in the east of the district.</li> <li>➤ Explore opportunities to work with RSLs to create more flexible solutions to the need for temporary accommodation in rural areas.</li> </ul>	<p>This action was superseded by change in government policy requiring a reduction in TA.</p> <p>As above.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop an action plan to implement the new target for DAATs to increase the number of units of accommodation for drug mis-users by 10% annually from 2003/4.</li> <li>➤ Explore further the housing and support needs of young people with higher levels of support than can be provided by existing schemes.</li> <li>➤ Develop the use of a good behaviour contract for young people to sign to obtain housing.</li> <li>➤ Develop the provision of a housing options service to women living in BWA accommodation.</li> <li>➤ Develop a choice based lettings scheme for all permanent affordable homes in West Berkshire.</li> <li>➤ Consider how a CBL system might impact on vulnerable homeless people, and vulnerable people in temporary accommodation, and ensure that mechanisms are put in place to ensure that they can exercise their choice effectively.</li> <li>➤ Establish a baseline against which to measure the length of time people spend in temporary accommodation.</li> <li>➤ Ensure that the length of time people spend in temporary accommodation is not increased as a result of CBL.</li> <li>➤ Further develop links with the private rented sector by:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Setting up mechanisms to obtain feedback from landlords and tenants about the operation of the Threshold Loan Scheme.</li> <li>ii) Seeking information from landlords when they evict tenants about the reasons for the eviction.</li> <li>iii) Monitoring the length of time tenants assisted through the scheme maintain their tenancies.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Review housing operations procedures in respect of cases of</li> </ul>	<p>This DAAT target was dropped but other actions were achieved by the health sub-group around SP and substance misuse.</p> <p>Pilot Supported Lodgings Scheme being set up.</p> <p>Sub-group dropped this action due to Sovereign having Probationary Tenancies.</p> <p>Completed. Housing Options Service + DV Housing Protocol developed.</p> <p>Homechoice scheme launched 2007. Adding mutual exchanges in 2008, Transfers and shared ownership properties in 2009, and private rented in 2010.</p> <p>Completed. Floating Support, VPP, and assistance with bidding by Options officers.</p> <p>Completed. Target of 1 year set. Monitoring systems in place. Currently reviewing who is there.</p> <p>Completed. Allocations Policy based on legislation and systems in place to assist vulnerable people.</p> <p>Mechanisms were set up but have since lapsed.</p> <p>Research into Landlord's Forums completed &amp; report produced.</p> <p>Completed.</p>
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	<p>disrepair.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Improve our stock of housing advice leaflets.</li> <li>➤ Ensure libraries, local housing and council offices, and relevant public information places are regularly supplied with leaflets.</li> <li>➤ Update the information about housing on West Berkshire's website at intervals of 6 months.</li> <li>➤ Set up mechanisms to monitor the extent to which we prevent homelessness through housing advice.</li> <li>➤ Ensure that staff are provided with regular opportunities to receive training on a range of specialist housing advice subjects and customer care and are kept up to date with changes in law and practice.</li> </ul> <p>Ensure that front line reception staff are trained to identify when to give information over the counter and when to refer a customer to a housing officer for more detailed advice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work in partnership to set up a programme of housing education in schools.</li> <li>➤ Explore opportunities to work with the Education Authority to ensure that where children have to move schools as a result of homelessness, they have the support they need to re-integrate effectively.</li> </ul>	<p>New leaflets produced for Homechoice but others need to be reviewed.</p> <p>Completed. Systems in place.</p> <p>Progressing.</p> <p>BVPI 213 established by government. Statistical information collected and reported for BVPI.</p> <p>Progressing.</p> <p>Completed. Front line Housing advice desk established at Market Street. Weekly housing advice surgery at Calcot.</p> <p>Not completed.</p> <p>Completed. Home-School Transport Policy + Pupils at Risk Panel among other things.</p>
<p>Develop the range of support services which prevent people becoming homeless repeatedly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop mechanisms to monitor the number of cases of repeat homelessness in West Berkshire, and the reasons for people becoming homeless repeatedly.</li> <li>➤ Monitor the effectiveness of new schemes funded through Supporting People in preventing homelessness.</li> <li>➤ Establish a baseline against which targets can be set to reduce</li> </ul>	<p>Completed. P1Es &amp; BVPI.</p> <p>Ongoing. KPIs.</p> <p>Completed. BVPI target.</p>

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	<p>levels of repeat homelessness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Establish a baseline against which to set a realistic target of the number of RSL tenancies let to vulnerable homeless people sustained for more than 2 years.</li> <li>➤ Establish mechanisms to monitor the success of ex-prisoners in sustaining permanent tenancies so that meaningful targets can be set for improving on this.</li> <li>➤ Set up mechanisms to ensure that the housing support needs of homeless households are assessed at the time they present to the Council, and that mechanisms are in place to ensure that they are referred to the relevant statutory and non- statutory agencies.</li> <li>➤ Provide continued DAAT support to the West Berkshire floating support service delivered by Two Saints.</li> <li>➤ Ensure that links are made between homeless agencies and the implementation of Models of Care and Integrated Pathways.</li> <li>➤ Ensure that guidance contained within Tackling Drugs in Rented Housing is brought to the attention of the DAAT and an action plan for implementation is developed.</li> <li>➤ Develop an action plan for the implementation of the guidance on commissioning services for homeless people to enable progress to be made on the following:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) All drug services for homeless people and staff working with homeless drug users meet the appropriate standards.</li> <li>ii) Inter-agency work, joint services, commissioning and funding with homeless agencies and the local authority are developed.</li> <li>iii) Access to mainstream drug services by homeless people is improved.</li> <li>iv) A range of specialist services for homeless people are established to meet their needs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Outstanding.</p> <p>Outstanding.</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>Completed.</p> <p>Completed. Services funded by SP - floating support + substance misuse worker at 2 Saints + access to move on accommodation.</p> <p>The sub-group felt that this was covered by VPP and ASBOs.</p> <p>Some work done. Good links between housing and specialist drug agencies. Info being sought from Thames House in Reading re service in West Berks.</p>
<p>Avoid the use of B&amp;B</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop mechanisms to ensure that supported accommodation is</li> </ul>	<p>Young Persons Housing Panel established.</p>



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accommodation,	<p>provided to all homeless young people in an emergency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Furnish 2 units of temporary accommodation for use in emergencies.</li> <li>➤ Develop nominations and move on agreements with providers of supported housing to ensure a regular supply of vacancies.</li> <li>➤ Contribute to the Berkshire wide Housing for Ex-offenders Forum to develop housing advice services and sign post ex-prisoners at the time of discharge.</li> </ul>	<p>Temporary premises to YMCA. Nightstop closed. Supported lodgings being developed.</p> <p>Completed. Although since lost 1 unit.</p> <p>Agreement with Cherwell completed. Allocations Policy reflects need to move people on from supported housing.</p> <p>Forum defunct. Potentially Dangerous ex-offenders dealt with through MAPP.</p>
Keep Homelessness Strategy under regular review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Organise an annual event at the end of Years 1,2,3,4 &amp; 5 to review progress with the implementation of the strategy and obtain feedback.</li> <li>➤ Organise regular customer feedback surveys with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) homeless people</li> <li>ii) clients for housing advice</li> <li>iii) homeless hostel residents</li> <li>iv) private sector landlords and tenants re TLS. &amp; feedback results in annual review.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Monitor the results of feedback surveys against the results of those in Appendix 1 &amp; report findings.</li> </ul>	<p>2 events held.</p> <p>System in place.</p> <p>Completed and reported through sub-group.</p>
Prevent homelessness	Monitor outcome of Homelessness grant.	Ongoing. Recent CLG survey returned.
	Provide supported lodgings for young people by 2008.	Progressing. Funding agreed.
	Increase number of SLAs with voluntary sector.	SLA being developed with Family Group Conferences. Consider for Resolve.
	Increase number of households assisted through the Threshold Loan Scheme.	Annual PIs in Corporate Plan. On target to achieve.
	Review the effectiveness of the Pod by May 2007.	Systems in place to monitor service e.g. feedback forms and spreadsheet.
	Review team structure & processes and implement changes to improve	Review completed. New temporary Senior

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	customer service and staff morale by May 2007.	Tenancy Support Officer appointed. Changes made to Housing Needs Team.
	Implement Duty officer in off-site locations by May 2007.	Weekly housing surgery in Calcot.
	Reduce the number of statutory homeless households in TA by 50% by 2010.	Target met. Temporary Accommodation Review underway to determine new demands.
	Increase quarterly the number of applicants where homelessness has been prevented through housing options.	Monitoring through CLG reporting, Blue Book, and BVPI 213.
	Review arrangement with RSLs re eviction process and WBC early intervention by Aug 07.	Through revision of VPP and raised with RSLs at CBL working group.
	Review voluntary sector SLAs with Two Saints, Resolve & BWA at 6 monthly intervals.	
Temporary Accommodation	Review current accommodation of Taceham House	
	Increase amount of TA by bringing individual properties back into portfolio	Ongoing
	Carry out PAT testing of all white goods in TA + create list confirming dates.	Annually
	Review agreement with YMCA.	6 monthly.
	Review SLA with Sovereign re rents by Aug 07.	Aug 07
Gypsy/Travellers	Budget forecast for TA and Gypsy/Traveller by Aug 07	Aug 07
	Complete refurbishment of site by June 07.	Completed
	Apply for further funding for further improvement to site by June 08.	Application submitted.
Tenancy Support Officers	Reduce case load to 20 clients per officer in line with SP recommendations by July 07.	Senior officer appointed and target met.
	Implement Supporting People Review Action Plan within agreed timescales.	Ongoing
	Implement quarterly monitoring of the Core & Supplementary Framework to maintain/improve SP rating.	Completed.
Common Housing Register	Implement CBL by May 07.	Implemented for rented social housing.
	Highlight and monitor vulnerable applicants by May 08.	Process in place. Link to review of VPP.
	Add mutual exchanges to CBL by May 08.	Project Plan in place and working group established.
	Add Transfers to Choice by May 09.	As above.
	Add Homebuy and private rented to Choice by 2010.	As above.
	Add all procedures in line with Choice by July 07	Completed.
VPP	Promote & Update procedures by Nov 2007.	Difficulties experienced with consultations which has delayed progress. Working to deadline of May 2008

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Homebuy	Manage scheme through Zone Agent. Develop internal procedures for prioritising applicants.	Zone Agent appointed. Procedures developed.
Other	Implement Landlord's Forum by Dec 07	Research undertaken.
	Implement Nominations Agreement by Dec 07.	Currently being consulted on.
	Start dialogue with benefits agency at local level.	Benefits Agency regularly attend bi-monthly Homelessness Forum. This action therefore completed.
	Collate a directory of services for professionals.	Being taken forward by Tandra Forster as part of xborders SP group. Jon Cox passing info he has collected through Homeless Forum to TF.
	Develop supported lodgings for young people.	Funding secured.
	Develop flexible support to meet changing levels of need.	Completed
	Provide early intervention and support for families to help prevent family breakdown resulting in homelessness.	Pilot with Family Group Conferences commencing Nov 2007.
	Provide educational/learning events for parents to help them deal with drug/alcohol issues.	Outstanding
	Improve service from Housing Benefit by implementing programme of ongoing HB training for support workers through social care training. Improve accessibility of advice on benefits.	Not completed.
	Consult with service users on the proposals from the Event.	Completed
	Increase provision of housing advice, and outreach.	Weekly housing advice surgery established in Calcot. Information on housing services on web.
	Implement education in schools programme.	Not completed.
	Develop provision of emergency accommodation for challenging 16-25 year olds.	Joint Protocol in existence. Needs reviewing Supported Lodgings being developed. Young Persons Housing panel established.
	Increase the supply of one bed housing.	Housing needs analysed and provision developed through Housing Strategy.
	Create incentives for people to downsize to smaller accommodation.	RSLs operate own schemes and policies to encourage tenants to downsize.
	Refuge to develop support to women with complex needs.	Individual support plans in place and service monitored through SP programme.
	Carry out a review of prevention work with young people in their homes.	This is being done as part of the pilot with

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		FGC.
	Analyse the housing needs and aftercare services for ex-substance mis-users.	Ongoing
	Consult with homeless young offenders.	Completed
	Consult with single homeless hostel dwellers.	Completed
	Analyse the need for long term support for excluded groups.	SP Strategy
	Analyse the need for emergency accommodation for young people.	Completed.
	Analyse the reasons young people become homeless, which schools they have gone to, look at other prevention activities taking place in the Authority.	Research has been undertaken nationally but not linked to schools. Other prevention activities are FGC, Relateen, Restorative Conferences?
	Develop a target for life skills training for substance mis-users.	SP monitoring
	Carry out a needs analysis of male victims of DV.	Ongoing
	Develop CBL to include mutual exchanges, transfers, shared ownership & PRA.	Ongoing
	Monitor the operation of the VPP through the Core group.	Ongoing

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### 10.2 Appendix B - Organisations consulted

During the course of our various consultations prior to and in drawing up this strategy, we have contacted the following organisations:

- Two Saints
- YMCA
- BWA
- CAB
- WBC – all departments and Councillors
- The Housing Corporation
- Government – CLG department
- Local authorities- Slough, Basingstoke & Deane, Fareham, Swindon, Reading
- RSLs – Sovereign, A2, Jephson, Bromford, Catalyst Communities, Home Group, Warden
- MATCH
- Family Resource Centre
- Newbury User Team
- Thames Valley Police
- Health Authority, PCT, GP surgeries
- Newbury College