

The Hastings and St Leonards Homelessness Strategy 2008-13

Foreword

Welcome to our second five year homelessness strategy, developed in partnership with a wide range of agencies and people across the Borough.

Preventing homelessness and ensuring that everyone is able to access a decent, sustainable and affordable home continues to be a high priority for both this Council and the Government. We have made tremendous progress over the last five years in tackling homelessness locally and preventing its occurrence. Nevertheless pressures remain and homelessness, in all its forms, remains a significant problem within the town.

Since the last strategy was implemented the Government has established new targets aimed at bringing about a continued reduction in homelessness nationally through proactive homelessness prevention. We welcome the opportunity to set out how we intend to address these challenges locally through our new homelessness strategy.

This new strategy provides a strategic framework for all local agencies working in this field, be that the voluntary or statutory sectors. Hastings Borough Council is committed to continuing the progress made in recent years and we will continue to work together with our partners in addressing the challenges presented by homelessness in Hastings and St Leonards.

Councillor Peter Finch

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Introduction

This is the Borough's second homelessness strategy. It has been produced in consultation with service users, stakeholders and local agencies and builds on the successes of the first Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008.

Since the first strategy was produced the approach to dealing with homelessness has developed significantly. This has partly been in response to targets set by Central Government in terms of reducing bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation use, but also as result of improved understanding regarding the causes of homelessness and a greater emphasis placed on homelessness prevention.

This strategy will provide a strategic framework for the continued improvement to the housing and support services delivered by the Council, stakeholders and local agencies over the next 5 years.

Our aim is to reduce and prevent homelessness in the Borough by:

- Assisting households in housing need to secure suitable accommodation at a price they can afford
- Providing a range of housing advice and assistance to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping
- Further improving our understanding of the causes and reasons for homelessness in Hastings and enabling us to develop and prioritise new services in response to emerging needs
- Ensuring appropriate housing related support is available for vulnerable households
- Facilitating the improvement and adaptation of existing homes

The strategy will also:

- Help facilitate improved inter agency partnership working to ensure services meet local need
- Ensure resources are maximised and targeted effectively
- Help to develop new and existing services to tackle homelessness
- Ensure fair and equal access to services for all
- Facilitate regional and sub regional working that will assist in meeting needs locally

About the strategy

The document contains three main parts. The first part summarises the outcomes of the homelessness review 2007/8. (The full findings of the review 2007/8 are contained in a separate document available via the Council's website www.hastings.gov.uk) It also explores future challenges for tackling homelessness and details how we have improved services and working arrangements over the last 5 years.

The second part contains the main strategic aims for 2008-13. It explores what needs to be done to improve homelessness prevention services, to reduce temporary accommodation use and to ensure accommodation and support is available to households with a housing need.

The third part of the document provides a detailed action plan. This section sets out the activities that will be undertaken by a range of local agencies, working in partnership to achieve the strategic objectives.

Recognising equality and diversity

The Council has adopted an equal opportunities policy statement which says:

“Hastings Borough Council will actively seek to reflect the diversity of people in Hastings and intends that its service provision and employment policy reflect the needs and priorities of an increasingly diverse population.”

“We actively seek solutions that advance the capacity and resources of people discriminated against in our society. No service user, employee or job applicant will be discriminated against, directly or indirectly, harassed or receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, marital status, family commitments, sexual orientation, age, HIV status, religious or political beliefs, social class, trade union activity or irrelevant spent conviction.”

“The Council is committed to the fostering of good community relations in the Borough and will work through its own services and the partnerships it is involved in to promote equality of opportunity to all.”

We aim to ensure that services are available and accessible to all. We will work to ensure that no group is disadvantaged in terms of access to services we are able to offer. This Strategy and its associated Action Plan have been devised within the framework of the Equalities Statement.

Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the Equality Standard places a general duty on all public authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities and promote good relations between people from different ethnic groups.

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on the Homelessness Strategy's Action Plan to ensure it meets the needs of diverse people in the community. It looks at whether any groups are treated differently, and if so justifies why.

National Context and Performance Indicators

Local Housing Authorities have a statutory duty to provide assistance to all households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, regardless of whether there is a duty to accommodate.

Reducing levels of homelessness is a high priority for the Government.

The Government's homelessness strategy, *Sustainable Homes: settled homes; changing lives* (published in 2005), sets out plans for continuing to reduce homelessness and halve the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010.

The Government's homelessness policy has the following aims:

- Reduce homelessness
- Prevent homelessness
- Prevent repeat homelessness
- Provide support for vulnerable people
- Tackle the wider symptoms and causes of homelessness
- Reduce rough sleeping by two thirds
- Halve the number of households placed in temporary accommodation by the Local Authority by 2010
- No use of bed and breakfast for families with children unless in an emergency and for no more than 6 weeks (enforced with legislation)
- No 16 or 17 year old accommodated in bed and breakfast except in an emergency and for no more than 6 weeks by 2010
- Provide more settled homes

The Government has issued policy briefings with a focus on providing more settled homes, homelessness prevention, domestic violence, youth homelessness, improving the quality of hostels and temporary accommodation, employment and health. This strategy aims to address these areas of need through joint working with partner agencies and stakeholders.

Performance indicators from Central Government

One of the drivers for this strategy is the need to meet national targets. The following are the national indicators (NI) and the best value indicators (BVPI) that have helped shape the strategy.

NI 155: Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)

NI 156: Number of households living in temporary accommodation

BV202: Number of people sleeping rough

BV213: Homelessness prevented through housing advice casework / 1,000 households

Sub regional Context and Local Area Need

The strategy has also been shaped as a result of the following sub regional priorities for tackling homelessness:

The East Sussex Integrated Community Strategy

Pride of Place is the Integrated Sustainable Community Strategy for East Sussex. It has been developed by the six Local Strategic Partnerships in East Sussex (Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes District, Rother, Wealden and East Sussex), in partnership with their Local Authorities.

Pride of Place sets out a shared vision for East Sussex in 2026. The strategy contains our countywide strategic objectives and priorities to help us achieve the vision and improve the quality of life for people in all parts of the county. There are sustainable community strategy chapters for each of the Districts and Boroughs within the county, setting out a clear local vision, local objectives and local priorities.

One of the strategic priorities for 2026 is to provide affordable, good quality and environmentally friendly homes for all.

The key tasks are to:

- Increase and diversify the supply of affordable homes, housing and tenures in all areas, both rural and urban
- Develop high quality, modern and efficient health, social care and housing support services for older people
- Minimise homelessness, especially hidden and youth homelessness
- Improve the quality of existing homes and help bring empty homes back into use to help people in housing need
- Increase energy and water efficiency of new and existing homes
- Plan infrastructure needs alongside housing developments, and ensure new developments do not increase flood risk
- Extend number and range of people receiving housing-related support
- Enable new sites to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers
- Tackle youth homelessness and provide better housing and housing related support for young people

The Local Area Agreement for East Sussex

A Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three year contract negotiated between central government and local government setting out the priorities for a local area and how these will be tackled in partnership. The LAA also provides a way of strengthening partnerships and partnership working, pooling budgets and streamlining performance management systems

The LAA includes 35 indicators drawn from the new National Indicator Set (NIS) of 198 indicators. The LAA housing indicators include:

NI 155: Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)

NI 156: Number of households living in temporary accommodation

NI 159 Supply of ready to develop housing sites

Local Context

The impact of homelessness in Hastings is wide reaching and effects many things including:

The community

Homelessness not only affects individual households but also impacts upon the wider community. Homelessness is commonly linked to crime and fear of crime, health and developmental problems, poor educational attainment, and substance misuse issues.

Regeneration

Housing and employment go hand in hand. People may find themselves unable to afford a suitable home due to lack of employment, or may find themselves unable to access education, employment or training because they do not have a stable home. In order to reduce levels of worklessness and homelessness and contribute to the regeneration of Hastings, the two issues should be tackled together rather than separately.

Financial cost

The Council has a duty to provide homelessness advice and assistance. In addition to the obvious costs of resourcing a service and providing B&B and other temporary accommodation, the issues associated with homelessness such as poor physical and mental health and low educational attainment can also be costly to the public and voluntary sector.

The Key Facts

Hastings is an urban Borough on the south coast of England, surrounded on all landbound sides by the neighbouring District of Rother. Hastings is the most deprived Borough in the South East, and the 29th most deprived Borough in the country (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007) and in 2004 it was 39th out of 354. The total population of the Borough is 86,100 and 94% of the population is white.

The average life expectancy in Hastings is below both the regional and national average, while the infant mortality rate is higher. Estimated smoking rates and teenage pregnancy rates are above the national average.

Due to a decline in traditional industries such as tourism and fishing, Hastings has a greater number of people relying on benefits in comparison to more inland locations. When compared to other coastal towns, Hastings has the third highest level of benefit dependant residents nationally.

An estimated 60% of residents are of working age although only 41% are working. The number of people claiming Job Seeker's Allowance is almost three times the regional average. Residents who are working suffer from a low wage level which is below the regional average by around £100 per week.

The number of people claiming incapacity benefit amounts to over 10% of the population almost double the regional average for the South East. Over 40% of these people list mental health issues as the primary reason for their long term sickness.

Skills base in Hastings is poor and is limiting economic growth and the education and employment opportunities for local people.

Hastings Schools are the third worst in the country for educational attainment of grades A-C at GCSE, with technical and vocational secondary education identified as a particular weakness. 389 16-18 year olds were listed as being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in 2007, the greatest number in East Sussex.

In 2006/07, Hastings had the highest levels of violence against person, sexual offences, burglary, theft from or of a motor vehicle and robbery in the County. Drug supply crimes (such as possession with intent) have also increased steadily since 2005. However, it must be noted there have been continuous successes in reducing crime in the area and that despite the overall high levels, the majority of crime types have seen substantial and noticeable reductions since 2005. A particular success has been the reduction of repeat incidents of domestic violence.

Crime within the Borough is linked to the levels of deprivation experienced with the Borough, with 6 neighbourhoods in the worst 5% nationally for crime and a further 11 neighbourhoods in the worst 20%.

Hastings is one of three areas in the south east region designated as a dispersal area for asylum seekers. The National Asylum Support Service (NASS) provide 50 units of accommodation for 100 asylum seekers in Hastings.

Hastings has 39,202 households and 41,405 homes. The stock condition survey 2007 suggests 60% of housing is in owner occupation, 24% is private rented accommodation and 16% is social housing owned by Registered Social Landlords.

The average house price in Hastings is below the regional average. This has led to a significant number of "second home" purchases, as well as households choosing to buy a home in Hastings and commute to work elsewhere. Both these things impact on the availability and affordability of accommodation for local people. Average incomes for local people are considerably below the regional average.

16% of the stock in the Borough is social rented accommodation compared to a national average of 18%. The demand for social housing in Hastings outweighs the supply as the options of owner occupation or securing private rented sector accommodation are unaffordable and unachievable for many people on low incomes.

Hastings has an unusually high percentage of private rented housing that is more than double the national average. Private rented housing can be difficult to access for a number of reasons including high rent levels, landlord's reluctance to rent to those on benefits and the requirement of references, a deposit, plus rent in advance to secure accommodation.

Almost half the housing stock in Hastings was built before 1919, which is approximately twice the national average. Older properties tend to need more maintenance and are generally less energy efficient. This can lead to affordability issues for tenants and owner occupiers. Older properties also tend to be less suitable for people with mobility problems as they will be harder to adapt.

Hastings' position has been recognised nationally and has attracted significant resources to support the regeneration process. However, there is still a long way to go to achieve the town's 'vision' and 'mission' which are detailed in the next section.

Local strategic links

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

The LSP is a partnership of public agencies, business, voluntary and community sectors working together for the benefit of local people. It includes residents, business leaders, people working in voluntary organisations, representatives from the Council and East Sussex County Council as well as other key agencies such as the police, education and health care providers.

Five Thematic Partnerships support the Strategic Partnership Board, each with their own particular responsibilities in the areas of safety, housing, health, learning and jobs and training. The thematic partnerships comprise of the most senior officers from agencies working to deliver services in Hastings and St Leonards, as well as representatives from business and the voluntary and community sectors.

In 2003 the Hastings and St Leonards LSP agreed a 10 year Community Strategy for Hastings, which described a vision and mission, and set 21 targets for improving the town.

The vision:

“The renaissance of Hastings through social, economic, cultural and environmental regeneration.”

The mission:

“To build on the town’s strong community spirit, culture, diverse population and extraordinary natural environment to create a safer, healthier more sustainable and more prosperous place with lasting opportunities for everybody.”

To achieve the vision, the Community Strategy aims to provide a ‘town with a decent home for everyone’ and sets key targets for improving access to accommodation, improving the condition of housing stock and preventing homelessness.

The strategy has three key targets for homelessness:

1. Ensure 25% of new homes build as affordable homes for young people and others in need
 - Milestone 2008: 400
 - Milestone 2010: 550
 - Target 2013: 825
2. Achieve 50% reduction in numbers accepted as homeless per 1000 households by 2010
 - Milestone 2008: 6.92 per 1000
 - Milestone 2010: 5.4 per 1000
 - Target 2013: 3.12 per 1000
3. Achieve 50% reduction in the numbers of households in temporary accommodation by 2010
 - Milestone 2008: 161
 - Milestone 2010: 102
 - Target 2013: 73

The Homelessness Strategy directly contributes to and is influenced by a number of local strategic documents detailed in appendix A.

Hastings Housing Partnership (HHP)

The Hastings Housing Partnership is one of the five themed groups linked into the LSP. One of their key roles is to oversee the development and delivery of the Homelessness Strategy.

Membership of the HHP is drawn from the Borough Council, East Sussex County Council, neighbourhood (resident and tenant) representatives, housing associations, specialist supported housing providers, the Primary Care Trust, the voluntary sector, local estate or managing agents, private sector landlords, private developers and the Housing Corporation. There is scope to co-opt up to an additional five places from any sector of the community.

There are at present four sub-groups that report to the Housing Partnership:

- Hastings Housing and Support Services Group (HASS)
- Registered Social Landlord (RSL) Development Group
- Hastings and Rother Landlords' Forum
- Empty Homes Forum

Part 1

The Review of Homelessness 2007/08 - The current picture

The part of the strategy summarises the findings of the homelessness review 2007, details key successes over the last five years and considers future challenges for tackling homelessness in the future.

A comprehensive review of homelessness took place in 2007 in order to:

- Identify the levels of homelessness in Hastings
- Identify causes and triggers of homelessness
- Map the current provisions of homelessness services and identify any potential gaps (or duplication of services)
- Map current provision of preventative measures
- Identify likely future levels of homelessness in the Borough
- Inform the Homelessness Strategy and Housing Strategy for Hastings
- Review the current homelessness strategy and direction of travel

Key findings:

Considerable progress was made in meeting the objectives of the first homelessness strategy and this is evidenced in the continued reduction of homelessness applications and acceptances and the increase in homelessness prevention.

Homeless applications, acceptances and homelessness preventions

Homelessness acceptances did not increase year on year as predicted in the first homelessness strategy. The numbers of homelessness applications and acceptances decreased year on year to almost half that of 2003. This can be attributed to successful homelessness prevention activities that have been ongoing over the life of the homeless strategy 2003-8.

Applications 2003-2008

- 2003/04: 1101
- 2004/05: 943
- 2005/06: 690
- 2006/07: 546
- 2007/08: 287

Acceptances 2003-2008

- 2003/04: 439
- 2004/05: 378
- 2005/06: 273
- 2006/07: 241
- 2007/08: 156

The main reasons for homelessness

Since 2003 there has been a substantial reduction in all areas of homelessness. However, the main reasons for homelessness remain unchanged.

The main reasons for homelessness acceptances in order of prevalence are as follows:

1. Friends and relatives no longer willing to accommodate
2. Violent relationship breakdown
3. Termination of Assured Shorthold Tenancy

Numbers of homelessness acceptances for each of these reasons for homelessness has reduced significantly over the last 5 years. The biggest challenge remains in trying to prevent homelessness for households facing eviction from friends or family. (The summary below shows the numbers accepted as homeless for each of the main reasons.)

Youth Homelessness

Although homelessness acceptances have decreased, the proportion of young people accepted as homeless has increased over the last 5 years. The majority of young people presenting as homeless are homeless due to friends or family evictions.

Hastings continues to have a significant number of homelessness applications and acceptances for applicants under the age of 18. 26% of all homeless acceptances in 2007/8 were applicants aged 16 or 17. The national average has been 9% for the last 5 years, recently reducing to 8.5%.

Percentage of acceptances who are 16 or 17 years old in Hastings

- 2003/04: 13%
- 2004/05: 21%
- 2005/06: 24%
- 2006/07: 30%
- 2007/08: 26%

Percentage of acceptances who are 16 or 17 years old nationally

- 2003/04: 9%
- 2004/05: 9%
- 2005/06: 9%
- 2006/07: 9%
- 2007/08: 8.5%

Number of 16/17 year olds accepted as homeless in Hastings

- 2003/04: 59
- 2004/05: 81
- 2005/06: 65
- 2006/07: 73
- 2007/08: 40

Homelessness prevention

In the last 3 years between 2005/6 and 2007/8 homelessness was prevented for 215 households through advice and assistance from the Council. This was the result of a range of interventions including:

- Issuing of deposits and bonds to enable access to the private rented sector
- Mediating with landlords, friends and family to prevent evictions and/or secure alternative accommodation
- Signposting and referring to other local agencies e.g. to access housing support, debt counselling

- Enabling people to remain in their home through intervention from the Secure Accommodation Service (SAS)

Intentional Homelessness

The number of households found to be intentionally homeless has fallen dramatically, from 51 in 2005/06 to 19 in 2007/08. However the percentage of intentional decisions made as a proportion of all decisions made remains unchanged. Intentional homelessness decisions account for 6-7% of all homelessness decisions.

Number of intentionally homeless households 2003-2008

- 2003/04: 43
- 2004/05: 55
- 2005/06: 51
- 2006/07: 38
- 2007/08: 19

Temporary accommodation usage

Any household who is 'statutorily' homeless is accommodated in temporary accommodation until the Council can discharge its homelessness duty. The Council has made significant progress in reducing usage in recent years.

Temporary accommodation in Hastings includes:

- Bed and breakfast accommodation (no cooking facilities)
- Annexe accommodation (self contained units with 1 bedroom)
- Supported accommodation (hostels, refuges etc)
- Private sector accommodation (including Registered Social Landlord leased accommodation through Avenue Lettings)

The Government set a target for all Local Housing Authorities to reduce all temporary accommodation use by 50% by 2010 from a baseline of 2004/5. To achieve this we have established our own local targets with annual milestones to 2010 and beyond. The milestones and progress made is detailed in the table below.

Milestones in reducing TA by 50% by 2010

- December 2004: 203 (baseline)
- December 2005: 183
- December 2006: 163
- December 2007: 143
- December 2008: 123
- December 2009: 102
- December 2010: 82
- December 2011: 80
- December 2012: 80

Progress made in reducing TA by 50% by 2010

- December 2004: 203
- December 2005: 230
- December 2006: 217
- December 2007: 163

The significant contribution to the reduction in numbers of people in temporary accommodation in 2007 can be accounted for by the decommissioning of private sector leased (PSL) accommodation. Since April 2007, leases have not been renewed on approximately ninety units of PSL accommodation. At April 2008 the stock of 60 units of PSL accommodation was considered appropriate for the current demand for this type of temporary accommodation.

As at end of March 2007/8 the Council were on track to achieve the 2010 target with 132 households in temporary accommodation against a target of 123 for December 2008.

Bed and Breakfast accommodation usage

Local Authorities in England are now prohibited from using Bed and Breakfast as temporary accommodation for families or pregnant women, except in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks.

The introduction of other forms of temporary accommodation and the increase in homelessness prevention has led to the Council's use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless households reducing dramatically over the last few years.

B&B placements per year, per quarter

- 2003/04 Quarter 1 to 4
 - 89
 - 76
 - 42
 - 42
- 2004/05 Quarter 1 to 4
 - 56
 - 56
 - 53
 - 55
- 2005/06 Quarter 1 to 4
 - 37
 - 36
 - 24
 - 32
- 2006/07 Quarter 1 to 4
 - 30
 - 27
 - 31
 - 32
- 2007/08 Quarter 1 to 4
 - 16
 - 5
 - 11
 - 14

In accordance with legislation introduced in 2003, the Council's use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families and pregnant women has never exceeded 6 weeks.

Successful homelessness prevention has had a direct impact on reducing temporary accommodation use.

Private Sector Leasing scheme

A private sector leasing scheme was established with Avenue Lettings in 2003 to provide temporary accommodation for homeless households owed a duty by the Council. Avenue Lettings source and lease accommodation from private rented sector landlords in order to accommodate homeless households. In 2005 Avenue Lettings had built up a stock of over 150 properties in order to provide alternatives to bed and breakfast accommodation. The number of units has now decreased to approximately 60 units. This has helped meet the Government's target to reduce all temporary accommodation use. The scheme will continue into the future with a smaller number of units so that suitable accommodation can be provided for homeless households and the use of bed and breakfast accommodation is kept to a minimum.

Access to and Availability of accommodation

There is a shortage of suitable, affordable accommodation for those in housing need. Owner occupation is beyond the means of a great many households and private sector rents are often not affordable with housing benefit levels.

Homelessness can only be prevented if suitable accommodation is made available.

Social rented housing is in great demand. Many households in housing need are unable to access social rented housing as demand far outstrips supply.

Housing Needs Survey 2005 confirmed annually 1,049 affordable housing units are needed, 596 more than existing re-let supply, a new supply requirement of over 14 times current delivery levels.

The information below shows the supply of social rented accommodation:

Number of households on the housing register 2003-2008

- 2003/04: 1482
- 2004/05: 1575
- 2005/06: 1296
- 2006/07: 2175
- 2007/08: 1730

Total RSL lettings 2003-2008

- 2003/04: 482
- 2004/05: 425
- 2005/06: 441
- 2006/07: 393
- 2007/08: 424

Total RSL lettings to homeless households 2003-2008

- 2003/04: 301
- 2004/05: 210
- 2005/06: 204
- 2006/07: 144
- 2007/08: 129

Percentage of lettings to homeless households 2003-2008

- 2003/04: 62.4%
- 2004/05: 49.4%
- 2005/06: 46.3%
- 2006/07: 36.7%
- 2007/08: 30.42%

Alternatives to social rented housing must be sourced if homelessness is to be effectively prevented in Hastings. Hastings has an unusually large stock of private rented accommodation that is often inaccessible for those in housing need due to:

- Rent affordability issues
- Inability to pay a deposit or rent in advance
- Lack of references
- Landlord refusal to accept tenants claiming housing benefit

Initiatives must be developed to enable those in housing need to access the private rented sector in order to prevent homelessness. These initiatives must compliment the successful work carried out by voluntary sector agencies to assist vulnerable people into private rented accommodation.

Housing related support

The Supporting People programme is a Government funded scheme that pays for housing related support services. Housing related support services help a member of the community to access, find, or stay in their own home. This includes help to:

- Manage money
- Claim benefits
- Develop domestic or social skills
- Keep the individual and their home safe

Housing-related support does not include services such as personal help with eating, washing and dressing, or day care.

There is a shortage of 'floating', housing related support that can assist vulnerable households to access and maintain accommodation in Hastings. Current allocation of Supporting People funds enable 200 households to access floating, housing relates support.

The review suggests we need to provide more floating support, particularly for households with issues around substance misuse, mental health, domestic violence and offending behaviour. This is consistent with the Supporting People strategic priorities set out in the Supporting People Strategy 2005-10 (updated in July 2007) and work is ongoing to increase the amount of floating support services available and target them in the areas of most need.

Accommodation based support

There are approximately 250 units of supported accommodation available in Hastings. This short term accommodation is funded by Supporting People and comes with a package of support to enable residents to address various issues that prevent them living independently. The 'Move On' procedure enables residents to

move into alternative accommodation in a planned way with appropriate ongoing support.

Supported accommodation in Hastings is provided for homeless households, people with mental health issues, substance misuse issues, learning disabilities, women at risk of domestic violence and young mothers. It is thought that the provision of accommodation based support is adequate to meet the need. However the amount of floating, housing related support is not adequate to meet current need.

Rough sleeping

Rough sleeping is defined by the Government as 'people sleeping or bedded down, in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters); people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats or stations)'. People who are homeless but manage to stay with friends and family or 'sofa surf' are not classed as rough sleepers.

The number of people rough sleeping remains low. The most recent rough sleeping was not found to be a significant problem in the Borough in 2003. A rough sleeper count in March 2007 found two rough sleepers. The Council is committed to maintaining a low figure and will work with local agencies to ensure incidences of rough sleeping are minimised. This will include investigating the need for specialist forms of accommodation and support.

Equalities

Every household accessing the Council's Housing Services is asked to complete an equalities monitoring form. Information has been recorded since May 2007 and captures information regarding disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and ethnic origin. In depth analysis of this information will be carried out annually beginning in May 08.

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Groups

Since 2004/5 only one or two households were found to be ineligible for homelessness assistance per year. A decision that an applicant is ineligible for assistance will be due to their immigration status.

Ineligible decisions against total decisions 2003-2008

- Ineligible decisions 2003/04: 5
 - Total decisions 2003/04: 1101
- Ineligible decisions 2004/05: 2
 - Total decisions 2004/05: 943
- Ineligible decisions 2005/06: 1
 - Total decisions 2005/06: 690
- Ineligible decisions 2006/07: 2
 - Total decisions 2006/07: 546
- Ineligible decisions 2007/08: 3
 - Total decisions 2007/08: 287

Asylum Seekers

Asylum seekers do not have recourse to public funds and are therefore ineligible for homelessness assistance from the Council. However this does not mean that everyone affected by immigration issues is ineligible for assistance and each case is considered individually. The region has seen an increase in migrant workers as a

result in changes to EU immigration law although very few migrant workers approached the Council for assistance in the last 5 years.

It is important for us to address the needs of the gypsy and traveller community. Joint work with local authorities in East Sussex, East Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council and worked jointly to assess the housing needs of gypsy and travellers. Work is ongoing to identify the appropriate amount of suitably located gypsy and traveller sites to prevent future homelessness. Work to identify sites will be progressed by the Council's planning and environmental services departments.

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Gypsy, traveller and travelling showperson households have made very few approaches to the Council for assistance with housing in the last 5 years. No homeless applications have been made as a result of a shortage of pitches. A shortage of housing related support for gypsy and travellers settled in general needs accommodation has been identified and this is being addressed through the Supporting People commissioning project.

Key Successes 2003-2008

Significant progress has been made over the last 5 years in reducing and preventing homelessness, reducing temporary accommodation use and increasing the amount of housing related support available to vulnerable households.

We improved communication and partnership working

Communication, partnership working and information sharing was improved over the last 5 years to help achieve the strategic objectives of the first homelessness strategy.

A number of projects were undertaken to improve communication with local agencies and service users. We now use the following to aid homelessness prevention:

- A web directory of housing services
- New, improved housing information leaflets
- Improved housing applications forms
- A regularly updated information sheet detailing private rented sector landlord contacts
- Joint training with local agencies
- A housing benefit liaison officer based at the housing office
- A youth homelessness website (www.thinkbeforeyouleave.com)
- Introduction of choice based lettings (www.sussexhomemove.org)

A number of successful, multi agency projects were undertaken to develop tools that will assist with homelessness prevention:

- The Council took homelessness information into schools through the Hastings School's Project
- Joint working agreements were reviewed and developed with a range of local agencies
- A Move On Procedure was developed to effectively utilise supported accommodation and enable a structured and supported move on into suitable accommodation.

Changes were made to the Council's housing advice services

The current Housing Options service was established in November 2005 following a Best Value Review of the former housing advice service and in response to the rise in the number of homeless households coming to the council seeking advice and assistance.

The Housing Options team provides a comprehensive service to those people faced by homelessness, the potentially homeless, and those people in housing need.

The Housing Options Team can provide advice and assistance to try and help prevent households from losing their home. The team also gives advice and helps people consider their options for finding alternative accommodation.

Changes were made to service delivery to prevent homelessness due to domestic violence

The 'Domestic Violence Panel' was introduced in 2003. This multi agency panel pools the expertise and skills of housing officers, the police and domestic violence case workers, to ensure victims of domestic violence have all their housing and support needs met. The panel also ensures any decision regarding homelessness is made taking into account all the available information.

The Hastings Sanctuary Scheme, launched in 2007 allows victims of domestic violence to remain in their own home (when the perpetrator does not have right of access) by creating a safe room within their property or adding other security enhancements.

Homelessness due to domestic violence has decreased by over 50% in the last 5 years

Empty Homes were brought back into use

The Council successfully worked with owners of empty properties to bring them back into use. Over the last 5 years 348 properties have been brought back into use, helping to provide good quality accommodation for those in housing need.

The number of empty properties in Hastings has reduced from 1692 in 2000 to 956 at the end of 2007/8.

New supported accommodation was provided

Bal Edmund was opened in February 2005 and provides 11 units of supported accommodation for single homeless households with complex needs.

Filsham Road opened in January 2007 and provides 12 units of supported accommodation for young people under the age of 25.

A successful Family Intervention Project was provided to tackle anti social behaviour

The CRI Intensive Family Intervention Project has been established to work with families who are persistently perpetrating anti-social behaviour and are at risk of losing their homes or other significant enforcement action.

The project uses a 'twin-track' approach which includes providing help for families to address the causes of their behaviour, alongside support and sanctions to provide them with incentives to change. The success of the intervention is dependent upon a multi-agency approach, to ensure all the necessary services work together to provide a co-ordinated response.

The 'challenge and support' approach of the IFIP has enabled local families to make many positive changes to their lifestyle which then leads to homelessness prevention, safer communities and healthier lives.

We delivered new affordable homes

In each of the last three years (2005/6 – 2007/8) we have exceeded our housing strategy target to deliver 70 new affordable homes with a total of 233 units delivered.

Key Challenges 2008-2013

Tackling youth homelessness

Youth homelessness is identified as an issue across not only Hastings but East Sussex as a whole. Tackling youth homelessness is identified as a key task in the East Sussex Integrated Sustainable Community Strategy. Local housing authorities and Children's Services have a legal duty to work jointly to assess the needs of homeless 16 and 17 year olds and multi agency joint working is essential to meet the needs of all young people facing homelessness.

Youth homelessness in East Sussex is concentrated in the urban coastal towns of Hastings, Bexhill and Eastbourne. Homelessness acceptances for 16 and 17 year olds in these areas are up to three times the national average. Youth homelessness in Hastings is the highest in the South East region.

The causes and triggers of youth homelessness are common across East Sussex. Children's Services and other agencies dealing with young people operate on a county wide basis. An East Sussex Youth Homelessness Strategy has been developed to help us to develop a joined up, consistent approach to tackling and preventing youth homelessness and ensure resources are targeted effectively in the areas of most need.

All agencies in Hastings are committed to tackling and preventing homelessness for young people. Current interventions and initiatives to prevent homelessness will be improved and developed to achieve a positive outcome for young people and help achieve the strategic objectives locally.

Hidden Homelessness

People who do not access services for assistance with housing but are 'sofa surfing' and do not have their own accommodation can be classed as the 'hidden homeless'. Hidden homelessness is recognised as an issue in Hastings. Households that do not present to local agencies for assistance with the housing issues are not recorded. It is therefore very difficult to capture the true picture of homelessness locally and nationally. This presents a challenge for agencies to identify the true need locally.

Offenders

Home Office figures suggest that having stable accommodation can reduce reconviction rates by over 20%. Short-sentenced offenders are not subject to statutory support and supervision from the National Probation Service on release, and often experience barriers to accessing suitable accommodation and support upon release.

The Supporting People needs analysis identified a shortage of accommodation and housing related support for offenders. We are committed to working with the Probation Service to develop ways of enabling offenders to access accommodation and support and prevent homelessness. This must enhance the positive work undertaken by Probation Services and the Seaview Project to accommodate and support offenders.

Substance Misuse

People with substance misuse problems often have housing problems and can find it difficult to access and maintain suitable accommodation. Homelessness can have a direct impact on a person's ability to address their substance misuse problems.

We need to work jointly to ensure advice and support is available for people with substance misuse problems to enable them to find, access and keep accommodation.

Mortgage Repossessions

After a relatively stable mortgage market over the period 2003-2008, the 2008 'credit crunch' could mean that for the foreseeable future, maintaining owner occupation will become much more difficult for households with low incomes.

The Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML) estimates that 45,000 homes in Britain will be repossessed during 2008. Those most vulnerable are first time buyers, those with 100 per cent or sub-prime mortgages, and the million or so coming off fixed-rate mortgages.

Locally, the Shelter Court Advice Desk has reported an increase in the number of people appearing in court in 2007/8 due to difficulties with managing their mortgage. We may see an increase in presentations and homelessness if local households are evicted from their home as a result of mortgage arrears which will need to be managed.

Economic and Social Inclusion

Recent publications from central government acknowledge that housing and economic and social inclusion are intrinsically linked, meaning that future policies should look at developing targeted interventions for both.

It is considered that Housing Options Services should not only assist households in finding the housing of their choice, but should also be able to help them improve their chances of being able to retain that home.

Lack of employment, low educational attainment and lack of a stake in the community are only some of the complex causes behind housing need. As no one challenge can be addressed in isolation, it is important that the implications of remaining workless are discussed with clients and they are actively encouraged into education, employment and training as part of their housing options experience.

We understand and appreciate the implications of this and are committed to working jointly with partner agencies in order to progress the linked economic inclusion and housing agenda.

Overcrowding

In December 2007 the Government confirmed significant progress has been made to prevent homelessness and reduce temporary accommodation use. They now want local authorities to focus on addressing overcrowding issues alongside homelessness to help improve homes for all.

Older Persons

The housing, care and support needs of older people are high on the Government's agenda in response to the challenge of a growing older population. There has been a shift in focus away from targeting services and resources primarily on the most vulnerable older people in acute and residential settings, to an enabling approach to a wider range of older people to live independently in the community. Housing and support services have a key role to play in achieving this.

The Government strategy 'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: Housing in an Ageing Society' published in February 2008 projects that ageing is the major driver in new household growth, accounting for 48% of new households by 2026, and that current housing and neighbourhoods are not designed with ageing in mind.

Hastings has an ageing population and that this may have an impact upon homelessness in the future. The Hastings & Rother Locality Housing and Support Strategy for Older People and Carers 2007/2027 was produced in partnership with the Council, East Sussex County Council and local partner agencies. It will assist in addressing the housing and support needs of an ageing population.

Introduction of the Local Housing Allowance

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is a new way of working out Housing Benefit for private tenants. LHA was introduced nationally from April 2008.

The LHA rate is based on the number and mix of occupiers, and the area in which the tenant lives. Payment will normally be to the tenant, who will then pay the landlord.

LHA will only be paid to new claimants from 2008. We will need to work jointly to ensure people are not at an increased risk of homelessness as a result of failure to pay their rent.

Identifying Homelessness Champions in Housing Associations

The Housing Corporation launched "Tackling Homelessness", its strategy on homelessness, in November 2006. This strategy is based on six themes:

- developing better partnership working with local government;
- working towards sustainable, cohesive and balanced communities where people want to live;
- preventing homelessness by promoting coherent and seamless housing allocation and management and support for tenants;
- encouraging housing associations to make better use of existing stock;
- working with Regional Housing Boards to direct investment towards improving access to housing where there is housing need; and
- promoting good practice to support associations and other landlords in raising performance standards.

The Housing Corporation's strategy identified that housing associations should develop and adopt a homelessness action plan to progress their approach to preventing and tackling homelessness. The strategy also identified that a Homelessness Champion should be identified at a senior level in the Housing Association to promote delivery of the action plan. 1066 Housing Association and other RSLs are working in partnership to ensure they assist in meeting the Borough's strategic objectives for reducing homelessness.

In Summary

Successes:

- The reduction in homelessness applications, homelessness acceptances and temporary accommodation has exceeded expectations
- Homelessness prevention has reached 134 per year in 2007/08

Challenges:

- We need to continue to reduce homelessness applications, acceptances and temporary accommodation use in order to achieve the key grant and Hastings and St Leonards community strategy targets
- Homelessness preventions must continue to increase
- More housing related support is needed for vulnerable households
- We need to tackle and prevent youth homelessness
- We need to assist households in housing need to gain greater access to private rented sector accommodation
- We need to provide education, employment and training advice to households in housing need

Overview of Hastings and St Leonards 2003/04

- 1101 applications
- 439 acceptances
- Zero cases of homelessness prevented
- 188 (33%) of households accepted as homeless aged under 25 years old
- 53 (13%) of households accepted as homeless aged 16 or 17
- There were 141 friend and family evictions which lead to homelessness
- There were 88 violent relationship breakdowns which lead to homelessness
- 50 Assured Shorthold Tenancies ended, which lead to homelessness
 - These four reasons accounted for 67% of acceptances
- There were 119 households in temporary accommodation (snapshot measure)
- There were 60 households in B&B (snapshot measure)

Overview of Hastings and St Leonards 2007/08

- 287 applications
- 156 acceptances
- 134 cases of homelessness prevented
- 82 (53%) of households accepted as homeless aged under 25 years old
- 40 (26%) of households accepted as homeless aged 16 or 17
- There were 72 friend and family evictions which lead to homelessness
- There were 11 violent relationship breakdowns which lead to homelessness
- 24 Assured Shorthold Tenancies ended, which lead to homelessness
 - These three reasons accounted for 69% of acceptances
- There were 163 households in temporary accommodation (snapshot measure)
- There were 11 households in B&B (snapshot measure)

Future Levels of homelessness

An assessment of future likely levels of homelessness

If existing trends continue we would expect to see the following (These projections are based on recent trends and do not take into account unknown variables):

Total applications projections 2005-2010

- 2005/06: 690
- 2006/07: 546
- 2007/08: 287
- 2008/09: 189
- 2009/10: 125
- 2010/11: 82

Total acceptances projections 2005-10

- 2005/06: 273
- 2006/07: 241
- 2007/08: 156
- 2008/09: 120
- 2009/10: 92
- 2010/11: 71

In order to support this projection and actively lower the number of applications made, the number of homelessness preventions must increase as outlined below.

Total preventions 2005-08 and predictions 08-10

- 2005/06: 55
- 2006/07: 96
- 2007/08: 134
- 2008/09: 182
- 2009/10: 240
- 2010/11: 337

Part 2

Addressing homelessness in Hastings over the next five years

This part of the strategy details our strategic objectives and explores what needs to be done to achieve them.

Strategic Priorities and Objectives

Five strategic priorities have been identified from the findings of the homelessness review 2007/8 and taking into account national, regional and local priorities for tackling and preventing homelessness:

Prevent Homelessness

Objectives:

- Ensure 25% of new homes built are affordable homes for young people and others in need, delivering 70 units per year
- Reduce baseline acceptances by 50% by 2010 (per 1000 households) from a 2004/5 baseline
- Maintain low levels and prevent incidences of rough sleeping each year

Reduce Youth Homelessness

Objective:

- Work with young people and local agencies to prevent homelessness for under 25s and source alternative forms of temporary accommodation and stop bed and breakfast placements for 16 and 17 year olds by 2010

Reduce Temporary Accommodation

Objective:

- Reduce the use of all temporary accommodation usage by 50% by 2010 from a baseline of 2004/05

Increase Housing Related Support

Objective:

- Increase the amount of housing related support delivered to vulnerable people to increase homelessness prevention year on year

Enable access to private rented sector accommodation

Objective:

- Enable households in housing need to access the private rented sector

What will be achieved? “An Increase in Homelessness Prevention”

It's important to explain how the Action Plan in Part 3 reflects our objectives and what each target really means. There are a total of 7 objectives. This section contains information on the first three objectives.

Objective 1.1

Objective 1.1 in the action plan is to ensure that 25% of new homes built are affordable for young people and others in need, delivering 75 units per year.

We need to do this because the supply of social rented accommodation is not sufficient to meet demand. People need to be able access affordable housing in order to prevent homelessness.

What will be done:

- We will deliver a minimum of 70 new affordable homes each year
 - The Council, registered social landlords, private housing developers and local agencies will work together to ensure the affordable housing can be delivered to meet local housing need.

Objective 1.2

Objective 1.2 in the action plan is to reduce homelessness acceptances by 50% by 2010 (per 1000 households) from a 2004/5 baseline.

It is recognised homelessness prevention is only effective if the causes and triggers of homelessness are identified and understood. Prevention of homelessness is necessary to reduce homelessness acceptances and reduce temporary accommodation use.

What will be done:

- We will increase the number of homelessness preventions through mediation
 - We will ensure we can provide people with alternatives to making a homelessness application. This will include offering mediation and negotiation to maintain accommodation. We will help people source alternative accommodation, offering financial assistance, tenancy support and advice.
- We will reduce the number of households accepted as homeless due to domestic violence
 - Where appropriate we enable victims of domestic violence to remain in their own home through the Sanctuary scheme.
- We will reduce homelessness due to overcrowding
 - Housing Associations (RSLs) will work with tenants underoccupying accommodation to encourage them to move into smaller units of accommodation. This could free up the larger RSL units for families in overcrowded accommodation.
- We are committed to working with all local agencies to ensure people are aware of their rights and options to enable them to make informed choices regarding their housing situation and prevent homelessness where possible.

How we will do it:

- Improve communication, training opportunities and joint working arrangements across local agencies. We will adopt a consistent approach to preventing

homelessness across all agencies in all sectors. A common approach will enable us to manage the expectations of the community around homelessness and provide good quality services that can work together to effectively prevent homelessness.

- Enable multi agency joint working. We will work jointly to address the housing and support needs of those with mental health problems and substance misuse issues. The PCT will work with local voluntary and statutory agencies to develop operational protocols to prevent homelessness.
- Consider the reasons RSL tenancies fail and establish tenant profiles. We will undertake research to understand why tenancies fail. We can then direct resources appropriately to address the issues that lead to tenancy failure.
- Bring people out of fuel poverty. Affordability is a consideration for anyone maintaining a tenancy/home. Addressing fuel poverty issues will help alleviate affordability issues associated with tenancy failure.
- Ensure the needs of older people are met by continuing to achieve the aims and objectives of the Older Persons Housing Strategy 2007-27. The strategy places emphasis on the social inclusion and wellbeing of older people as a group, and reflects the important role that suitable housing, such as lifetime homes, plays towards a better quality of life. We will continue to work jointly to prevent homelessness for older people.
- Work with the Probation Service to address the housing and support needs of offenders. Getting offenders into stable accommodation is the foundation for successful rehabilitation and for ensuring risk is managed efficiently. Accommodation can provide the anchor for a previously chaotic life and act as a springboard for other crucial steps such as getting and keeping a job, and accessing health care or drug treatment.
 - A key element to the success of reducing homelessness amongst offenders being released from custody is to ensure their housing needs are assessed at point of entry to prison in order to effectively plan for their release. We will develop closer partnerships between the National Offender Management Service, other criminal justice system partners and local housing providers to increase the number of offenders who have stable accommodation to go to.
- Work jointly to address issues of worklessness in the town. Addressing homelessness is the key to addressing worklessness. We will aim to assist people into both housing and employment in order to aid regeneration in the Borough. We will work with Job Centre Plus and other local agencies to link employment, education and training opportunities with housing options advice.

Objective 1.3

Objective 1.3 in the action plan is to reduce and maintain low levels and prevent incidences of rough sleeping in the Borough.

Tackling rough sleeping is a key target for the Government. A rough sleepers unit was established by the Government in 2000 to monitor and tackle rough sleeping nationally.

The Government confirmed they 'believe that people should not in the 21st century have to sleep on the streets, and that the most vulnerable among them need our help, and sometimes specialist support, to give them a lasting solution'.

Although Hastings is not seen to have a significant rough sleeping problem, we must prevent incidences of rough sleeping and assist those that are forced to sleep rough into suitable accommodation.

What will be done:

- We will ensure the number of people rough sleeping is kept to a minimum
 - We will work with local agencies to prevent and monitor rough sleeping in the Borough. We will tackle rough sleeping to ensure it does not become a significant problem in Hastings and will support rough sleepers to secure suitable accommodation.

What will be achieved? “A Reduction in Youth Homelessness”

It's important to explain how the Action Plan in Part 3 reflects our objectives and what each target really means. There are a total of 7 objectives. This section contains information on objective 2.1.

Objective 2.1

Objective 2.1 in the action plan is that we work with young people and local agencies to prevent homelessness for under 25s and source alternative forms of temporary accommodation to stop bed and breakfast placements for 16 and 17 year olds by 2010.

It is recognised that tackling and preventing homelessness amongst young people and families is critical to ensuring young people are able to realise their potential. Experiencing homelessness at a young age can initiate a range of personal and social problems. It can hinder access to training, education or employment and limit future opportunities.

In 2007/8 Hastings accepted more than three times the number of young people as homeless compared to the national average.

What will be done:

- We will reduce the number of 16 and 17 year olds accepted as homeless
 - We will inform young people about their housing options. We will help young people understand the issues of homelessness at a young age so they can make informed choices when they are able to leave home. We will provide a consistent, multi agency approach to providing advice and assistance so young people are supported to make informed choices and gain skills to live independently.

How we will do it:

It is important that we work jointly with East Sussex County Council and local agencies to assess the housing and support needs of young people to prevent homelessness at an early stage and provide suitable, stable accommodation and support where necessary. Some of the ways in which we can do this are to:

- Educate young people about homelessness at a young age. We will provide information on homelessness to schools to help young people to understand housing related issues faced by many households. This will enable them to make informed choices about their current and future housing. We need to manage expectations of both young people and their families with regards to accessing social and private rented sector housing. Preventing homelessness for young people may also help achieve a reduction in the numbers of young people not in education, employment and training (NEET).
- Utilise mediation services to prevent homelessness. The Homelessness Code of Guidance 2006 suggests it is more suitable for young people to live in the family home unless it is unsafe for them to do so. Mediation can enable this to happen and we will enable young people to access mediation services where appropriate to prevent them having to leave the family home.
- Source suitable accommodation for under 16 – 25 year olds. The main challenges for young people accessing accommodation centre around landlord's perceptions of young people being bad tenants, lack of evidence that they are able to sustain a tenancy and the low levels of housing benefit a young person

can claim if they are less than 25 years old. We will ensure young people can access affordable accommodation with support to enable them to sustain tenancies.

- Source alternative accommodation to bed and breakfast for 16 and 17 year old. The Government aims to have no homeless 16 or 17 year olds in B&B accommodation by 2010. In order to achieve this we will source alternative, suitable forms of accommodation for homeless applicants aged 16 and 17.

What will be achieved? “A reduction in Temporary Accommodation use”

It's important to explain how the Action Plan in Part 3 reflects our objectives and what each target really means. There are a total of 7 objectives. This section contains information on objective 3.1.

Objective 3.1

Objective 3.1 in the action plan is to reduce the use of all temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010 from a baseline of 2004/5

The Government set all local housing authorities a target to reduce all temporary accommodation use by 50% by 2010 from a baseline of 2004/5.

The Government's homelessness strategy 2005 confirmed:

'people who are homeless or living in temporary accommodation are more likely to suffer from poor physical, mental and emotional health than the general population, and ill health is often associated with poverty and homelessness. Children from families who have experienced homelessness have an increased risk of a low birth weight and greater likelihood of illness, behavioural problems and delayed development.

Living in a home on a temporary basis can have a negative impact on people's quality of life: it can involve living away from friends or relatives and disrupt access to services such as schools, doctors and health visitors. It can also be unsettling.'

The Council is committed to continuing to reduce temporary accommodation use particularly for 16 and 17 year olds and families with children.

What will be done:

- We will ensure that no homeless families with children remain in B&B for more than 6 weeks
- We will prevent homelessness and reduce temporary accommodation use
- Ensure no 16 and 17 years olds are accommodated in B&B by 2010

How we will do it:

- Analyse accommodation supply and demand data to make informed decisions about sourcing temporary accommodation based on need. We are committed to meeting the Government and local targets to reduce temporary accommodation usage. However, we will also ensure there is a supply of suitable temporary accommodation to meet demand and keep bed and breakfast use to a minimum.
- Continue to work jointly with Avenue Lettings to source good quality private sector leased accommodation that will meet the demand and needs of homeless households. We will ensure homeless households are offered good quality private sector leased accommodation as an alternative to less suitable, short term temporary accommodation and ensure they receive a quality management service.

What will be achieved? “An increase in housing related support”

It's important to explain how the Action Plan in Part 3 reflects our objectives and what each target really means. There are a total of 7 objectives. This section contains information on objective 4.1.

Objective 4.1

Objective 4.1 in the action plan is to increase the amount of housing related support delivered to vulnerable people.

Housing related support can provide a better quality of life for vulnerable people and enable them to live independently. Housing related support can enable people to access and keep accommodation and can assist in preventing homelessness. The review of homelessness confirmed there is a shortage of housing related support available for vulnerable people in Hastings.

What will be done:

- We will prevent repeat homelessness by ensuring people are supported to move into independent living in a planned way.
 - The Supporting People Strategy 2005-10 was updated in July 2007. Supporting People are committed to targeting services that will assist in reducing and preventing homelessness, rough sleeping and the use of B&B accommodation.

How we will do it:

- Work with Supporting People to evidence and map local support needs and improve access to housing related support services. The Supporting People Strategy 2005-10 acknowledges that robust systems must be introduced to capture support needs data and identify gaps in service. We will work with supporting people to ensure local needs data is provided and all client groups are considered.
 - The updated Supporting People strategy 2005-10 confirmed plans to extend floating support services so they reach more vulnerable people and adopt a more flexible approach targeted in the areas of most need.
- Work with Supporting People to maximise housing related support available to available to a wider range of groups including:
 - People who have been homeless or a rough sleeper
 - Ex-offenders and people at risk of offending and imprisonment
 - People with a physical or sensory disability
 - People at risk of domestic violence
 - People with alcohol and drug problems
 - Teenage parents
 - Older people
 - Young people at risk
 - People with HIV and AIDS
 - People with learning disabilities
 - Travellers
 - Homeless families with support needs
- Investigate all sources of funding for housing related support. We will work with the Supporting People team to identify the level of need for housing related support in the Borough and ensure resources are targeted in areas of greatest need. If unmet support needs are identified and demand for support exceeds

the supply, we will investigate other sources of funding to increase the amount of housing related support available for vulnerable people. This will help to prevent repeat homelessness.

What will be achieved? “Greater access to private rented sector accommodation”

It's important to explain how the Action Plan in Part 3 reflects our objectives and what each target really means. There are a total of 7 objectives. This section contains information on the final objective 5.1.

Objective 5.1

Objective 5.1 in the action plan is to enable vulnerable people to access private rented sector accommodation to increase homelessness prevention year on year

A quarter of all the housing in Hastings is private rented sector accommodation and can offer a housing option for households in housing need. We need to ensure people in housing need can access suitable housing in the private rented sector in order to prevent homelessness.

What will be done:

- We will enable vulnerable people with a housing need to access the private rented sector

How we will do it:

- Develop a scheme that will encourage private rented sector landlords to accommodate households at risk of homelessness. We plan to develop an attractive service that will act as an incentive for landlords to accommodate households in housing need to prevent homelessness.
- Provide advice and assistance to landlords. We will offer information to tenants about how to access accommodation and maintain a tenancy. We will also offer information to landlords to explain the role of a good landlord and include details of local agencies that can support them or their tenant.
- Bring empty homes back into use. We will work with landlords to enable them to bring empty properties back into use to enable local people in housing need to access the accommodation and prevent homelessness.
- Provide a Bond scheme. A Bond is a substitute for a cash deposit or rent in advance and acts as a guarantee that money will be paid if damage is caused to the accommodation. We will ensure that local people on low incomes in housing need can access Bonds to secure accommodation in the private rented sector.
- Source vacancies in private rented sector accommodation. We will ensure households in housing need can be directed to vacancies in private rented accommodation. We will also explore the possibility of advertising vacant accommodation across all tenures on a regular basis through the choice based lettings system.

Part 3

Delivery

This part of the strategy considers how we will achieve the strategic objectives, monitor progress and resource the work. An action plan has been produced that details how we will achieve the aims and objectives of the strategy.

Achieving Objectives

It is recognised interventions and activities (actions) carried out to achieve the objectives will need input from local agencies and the community. Partner agencies have demonstrated their commitment to achieving our strategic objectives by taking the lead on a number of actions detailed in the action plan.

A number of actions will have a direct and measurable effect on reducing homelessness. Other actions will assist in achieving the objectives although their impact on achieving the objective is more difficult to measure.

For the purpose of this document, actions that will have a measurable impact on achieving the objectives are 'direct actions'. Actions that do not have a measurable impact on the objective are 'indirect actions'. This is reflected in the action plan.

Monitoring the Strategy

The Hastings Housing Partnership has responsibility for overseeing the progress made in achieving the strategic objectives of the strategy.

The Housing and Support Services Group (HASS) are a subgroup of the Hastings Housing Partnership. The HASS group is a partnership of local agencies responsible for helping to achieve local strategic housing objectives. Progress made on achieving these objectives will be reported to the partnership by the chair of HASS on a six monthly basis.

- HASS will commission new developments within the agreed strategic framework and aim to maximise capital and revenue funding opportunities.
- HASS will attempt to ensure that housing related operational services are aligned to relevant strategies
- HASS will commission or conduct appropriate research into housing need with support services.
- HASS will ensure that supply mapping is co-ordinated and the findings disseminated across agencies
- HASS will function as a vehicle for information exchange and dissemination, especially the sharing of good practice.
- HASS will provide opportunities for networking across agencies
- HASS will provide a link to Supporting People. It will help facilitate processes for the introduction of the Supporting People regime.

Resourcing the strategy

Council Revenue and Capital Funding

Significant resources are allocated to the provision of housing related services.

The Councils Corporate Plan sets out overall investment on council services for the period 2008/9 – 2010/11 and is now linked to a three year strategic planning cycle. Capital and revenue programmes are partly financed by government grant settlements which have also moved to formula based three year allocations. Total net expenditure for 2008/9 on homelessness and housing advice, including staffing and other costs, is anticipated to be around £722,430. The net cost of temporarily accommodating homeless households in Bed & Breakfast establishments accounted for £266,470 of the budget in 2007/8.

In addition to the above approximately £745,380 will be spent in 2008/9 on the provision of other housing services for private sector renewal, the administration of the Housing Register & Choice based lettings scheme and Housing Strategy. The Council's revenue services' discretionary housing payment expenditure during 07/8 totalled £65,472 and £67,497 is allocated for 08/9. These payments assist in the prevention of homelessness

Similar levels of expenditure are anticipated for future years but are subject to annual review and the delivery of efficiency improvements.

In 2007/8 the Council made a £1.6 M capital investment aimed at improving its services to the public. Housing related advice is provided through a new high quality housing information point in the renewal area of Central St Leonards.

Community Partnership Grants

In addition to the above the Council's Community Partnerships Grants were allocated to local voluntary sector agencies to fund services that can aid with homelessness prevention. In 2007/8 £454,525 was allocated to local organisations. This figure is matched for 2008/9.

Homelessness Grant

The Council have been successful in securing an annual homelessness grant from Communities and Local Government since 2002/3. Funding for 2008-11 has been confirmed at £125,000 per year. The allocation provides a vital supplement to the significant level of revenue funding committed by the Council annually to meet the costs of providing housing options services. The bulk of the allocation provides for three additional members of staff to target homelessness prevention.

Supporting People Funding

The East Sussex Supporting People strategy 2005-2010 identifies the need for housing related support for vulnerable people in East Sussex, and states that all client groups remain a priority. In 2007/08, Hastings and St Leonards received £2,725,294 to fund housing related support through the Supporting People programme.

Work will be ongoing through 2008/9 to re-commission services and realign allocations countywide to better reflect areas of higher demand and need. It is anticipated that this will result in an increase in housing related support made available to those with support requirements within Hastings Borough in future years.

Disabled facilities assistance

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) provide financial assistance for the provision of disabled adaptations to enable people to remain in their homes. The Council has an allocation from the CLG of £510,000 in 2008/9 and is providing match funding of £290,000 from its own resources. The total 2008/9 budget stands at £800,000 and similar levels of funding are anticipated for future years. From 2008/9 the scope for use of DFGs funding will be widened. Over time there will be greater flexibility in how the funding can be used to support individuals in need of assistance.

Private Sector Housing Renewal support

In partnership with other East Sussex local authorities, the Council has been successful in attracting housing renewal support funding from the Regional Housing Board for the period 2008-11. Funding for 08/09 totals £1,128M and this is anticipated to rise to £1,474M in 2009/10 and £1,456M in 2010/11. The funding will be used to improve energy efficiency in homes, raise property to the decent homes standard, tackle fuel poverty, bring empty homes back into use and help bring about a better tenure mix of housing within the renewal area of Central St Leonards. Funding helps improve housing conditions for both owner occupiers and those renting privately and contributes towards prevention of homelessness

Housing Corporation funding

In order to deliver a minimum of 70 new affordable housing units per year, it is estimated that approximately £3.5M funding from the National Affordable Housing Programme will be needed each year

Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2008-13

Strategic Priority 1: To Prevent Homelessness

Objectives

- Reduce homelessness acceptances by 50% by 2010 (per 1000 households) from a 2004/5 baseline
- Ensure 25% of new homes built as affordable homes for young people and others in need
- Maintain low levels and prevent incidences of rough sleeping

Five Year Targets

- Reduce homelessness acceptances by 66% (per 1000 households) from a baseline of 9.2 to 3.12 in 2013
- Deliver 375 affordable homes by 2013
- Reduce the number of rough sleepers year on year

Direct Actions

Direct actions will have a direct and measureable effect on preventing homelessness

1. Reduce the number of homelessness acceptances due to family/ friends evictions by 25% over 5 years from a baseline set in 2008/09
 - 2008/09: Establish a baseline for number of homelessness acceptances due to family/ friends evictions
 - We have an opportunity to utilise effective interventions to reduce homelessness when triggers are identified
 - A risk is that there will be no inherent effect
 - HBC will lead on this action
 - It will be done through existing resources and the CLG grant
2. Ensure targeted provisions are in place in order to reduce homelessness due to domestic violence by: annual domestic violence awareness training for local voluntary and statutory agencies, continuing to promote the Sanctuary Scheme as a housing option, providing additional resources to local schools in order that domestic violence awareness can be taught
 - Provide annual training, ensure additional resources are available to schools by September 2009; secure 20 new properties per year to minimum or greater sanctuary provision
 - We have an opportunity to ensure that agencies are sensitive to the issue of domestic violence and approach the issue as part of a routine enquiry process, to ensure that victims of domestic violence have options available to them in order to remain in their own home and to promote awareness of domestic violence in order to minimise the risk and increase incident reporting
 - HBC will lead on this action
 - It will be done through the CLG grant and sanctuary partnership funding
3. Deliver 350 new affordable homes
 - 70 new homes to be delivered per year
 - We have an opportunity to increase the supply of affordable housing and reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast/ temporary accommodation
 - There is a risk due to the target being reliant on developing RSLs and available funding
 - HBC and RSLs on the preferred partners list will lead on this action

- It will be done through the existing resources
4. Incentivise moves for people under occupying RSL stock to free up larger accommodation for families who are experiencing overcrowding
 - 5 households approached to move into smaller accommodation annually
 - We have an opportunity to increase the amount of housing stock available for larger households
 - There is a risk that incentives may not be sufficient to encourage movement
 - 1066 Housing Association will lead on this action
 - It will be done through the existing resources

Indirect Actions

Indirect actions will assist in achieving targets to reduce homelessness

5. Improve communication between housing services, the community and partner agencies to improve housing advice available through the Council's website and assist in preventing homelessness
 - April 2009: Basic content present on web; April 2010: Consultation on content complete; April 2011: Site enhancements complete, August 2011: Shared resources available for use
 - There is an opportunity to strengthen Housing Options service with a transparent, accurate and up to date communication resource and to improve community cohesion through managing expectations
 - There is a risk that without regular updates, cannot be used as reliable resource
 - HBC will lead on this action
 - It will be done through existing resources and the CLG grant
6. Work with partners in order to deliver interventions to reduce and prevent rough sleeping
 - Less than 10 rough sleepers present within the Borough per year in accordance with Government guidance
 - There is an opportunity to reduce rough sleeping through partnership working and to reduce repeat rough sleeping
 - There is a risk that interventions will have no inherent effect
 - HBC will lead on this action with assistance from HASS and the rough sleeper task force
 - It will be done through existing resources and the CLG grant
7. Work with the Shelter court advice desk in order to monitor homelessness due to mortgage arrears
 - Work with RSL partners to consider developing an effective mortgage rescue scheme where those at risk of homelessness through mortgage arrears can have their property bought from them and rented back to them by an RSL in order to prevent homelessness. Work to be completed by September 2009
 - There is an opportunity to accurately measure the number of legal proceedings potentially leading to homelessness and to reduce impact of mortgage repossessions on future homelessness through an effective rescue scheme
 - There is a risk that Interventions could be provided at too late a stage if the case has already reached court and a risk of homelessness through rent arrears if debt management not successful following mortgage rescue
 - HBC will lead on this action with assistance from RSL partners
 - It will be done through existing resources and the CLG grant
8. Commission an in-depth analysis of tenancy failure and worklessness in RSL stock to assist with homelessness prevention

- Tenant profile information to be collated by April 2009
 - There is an opportunity to increase the number of households able to access skills training and employment initiatives
 - There is a risk that interventions could result in no improvement in employment rates, negative economic migration
 - 1066 Housing Association to lead on this target
 - It will be done through existing resources
9. Engage with appointed “Champions” in main RSLs (who will promote good practice in ensuring that the needs of homeless households are catered for in all future provision and policy) to work jointly to achieve our strategic priorities
- “Champions” to be appointed by April 2009
 - There is an opportunity to increase understanding of legislation and options working for improved working relationship with partners and ensure a proactive approach to homelessness prevention taken within RSLs
 - HBC and main RSLs to lead on this target
 - It will be done through the CLG grant
10. Develop an information tool that will enable people to identify early triggers and warning signs of homelessness, identify support needs and access interventions
- Project group to progress the work to be established by April 2009
 - There is an opportunity to create a joined up approach to housing options, creating early interventions
 - There is a risk that if the tool is used improperly could result in misdirection
 - HBC to lead on this target
 - It will be done through the CLG grant
11. Analyse data collected through customer service questionnaires in order to ensure that working practices are effective and client centred and services are accessible for all.
- Data analysed at the end of each quarter
 - There is an opportunity to maintain and improve upon high standards of customer care
 - There is a risk that interventions will be no inherent effect
 - HBC to lead on this target
 - It will be done through existing resources
12. Use housing options statistics to develop additional housing options tools to encourage an understanding of the homelessness processes, manage expectations and encourage myth busting to aid community cohesion
- Produce quarterly statistics to demonstrate how many people are accessing the service, share equalities monitoring data and evidence homelessness applications do not automatically lead to social housing tenancies
 - There is an opportunity to prevent homelessness through managing expectations
 - There is a risk that interventions will be no inherent effect
 - HBC to lead on this target
 - It will be done through the CLG grant
13. Improve energy efficiency across all tenures and work to reduce fuel poverty
- Take 200 households out of fuel poverty per year
 - There is an opportunity to prevent homelessness due to fuel poverty induced hardship
 - There is a risk that lack of awareness of the implications of fuel poverty by the public could lead to low uptake
 - HBC, RSL partners and the Affordable Warmth Group to lead on this target
 - It will be done through existing resources

14. Develop an information sharing protocol with RSLs detailing how information on housing register applicants should be shared and managed
 - Have an agreed protocol in place by December 2008. Monitor it's impact quarterly, setting targets for reduction in failed tenancies
 - There is an opportunity to reduce the incidence of tenancy failure and resulting homelessness
 - There is a risk that it will have a detrimental impact on current resources
 - 1066 HA and HBC to lead on this target
 - It will be done through existing resources
15. Continue to work with East Sussex County Council in order to meet the housing and support needs of Gypsies and Travellers
 - Confirm the number and type of pitches required in the Borough by April 2009; develop a plan to address the need for pitches in the Borough by April 2010
 - There is an opportunity to ensure that the needs of gypsies and travellers are adequately catered for within local and sub regional policy
 - ESCC and HBC to lead on this target
 - It will be done through existing resources
16. Ensure Older people are more aware of housing and support options and their rights across all tenures so they can make informed choices
 - Promote the Housing Advice Service to Older People by targeting GP surgeries, community centres, sheltered housing, holding satellite surgeries by March 2009
 - There is an opportunity to prevent homelessness amongst older people through a variety of housing options
 - There is a risk that adaptations to properties are not always possible in some of the town's older homes
 - ESCC and HBC to lead on this target
 - It will be done through existing resources
17. Develop operational protocols between the NHS partnership, the ESCC Supporting People Team and housing providers
 - First joint working protocol to be launched by July 2009
 - There is an opportunity to improve multi agency working to prevent homelessness
 - PCT to lead on this target
 - It will be done through existing resources

Strategic Priority 2: To Prevent Youth Homelessness

Objectives

- Work with young people and local agencies to prevent homelessness for under 25s and source alternative forms of temporary accommodation and stop bed and breakfast placements for 16 and 17 year olds by 2010

Five Year Target

- No 16-17 year olds to be accommodated in Bed and Breakfast by 2013 (except in an emergency)

Direct Actions

Direct actions will have a direct and measureable impact on reducing youth homelessness

18. Reduce the number of 16 and 17 year olds accepted as homeless by 25% by 2013
 - 2008/09: Establish a baseline for reduction; 5% reduction from the baseline year on year
 - There is an opportunity to provide early interventions for young people at risk of homelessness
 - HBC to lead on this target
 - It will be done through the CLG grant

Indirect Actions

Indirect actions will not have an immediate measurable impact on reducing youth homelessness

19. Work jointly with Children's Services and other local agencies to achieve the aims and objectives of the East Sussex Youth Homelessness Strategy 2008-13
 - Revise the multi agency joint protocol for assessing the housing and support needs of 16 and 17 year olds by July 2009
 - There is an opportunity to reduce youth homelessness county wide
 - There is a risk due to the fact that this requires commitment on a county wide level from all districts and boroughs
 - ESCC to lead on this target
 - It will be done through existing resources
20. Monitor and review the Hastings Schools' Project in order to ensure that it remains fit for purpose by: Providing training for teachers, governors, school PA's and school nurses on identifying and acting upon "triggers" for homelessness; developing a "peer mentor" programme specialising in housing options in schools to manage expectations; operating thrice yearly (one per term) multi agency advice drop in sessions in order that young people can address potential homelessness and aspiration issues
 - September 2008: Submit questionnaires to pupils within Hastings schools in order to evidence level of understanding; June 2009: Submit questionnaires to pupils in Hastings schools in order to establish a baseline for improvements in understanding using current schools provision; August 2009: Review schools project based on this data, phasing in new interventions
 - There is an opportunity to provide early interventions for young people at risk of homelessness; build strong operational relationships between schools and

- the local authority, prevent a number of cases could be prevented through one-stop advice, reduce the number of NEETs in the Borough
- There is a risk that no reduction in the number of homeless young people in the Borough
 - HBC, ESCC, 14-19 Partnership to lead on this target
 - It will be done through CLG grant
21. Promote shared accommodation to the under 25s through Housing Options and the Voluntary Sector, consider how to ensure vacancies in the private sector, particularly HMOs can be advertised for young people under 25
- April 2009: Guidance for accessing the private sector produced and distributed
 - There is an opportunity for young people to be able to enjoy a tenancy in affordable and decent accommodation with a greater scope of choice
 - There is a risk of possible rebound homelessness due to relationship breakdowns with other tenants
 - HBC and private sector landlords to lead on this target
 - It will be done through CLG grant

Strategic Priority 3: To Reduce Temporary Accommodation Usage

Objectives

- Reduce the use of all temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010 from a baseline of 2004/5

Five Year Target

- 73 households to be in temporary accommodation (66% reduction) by 2013 from a baseline of 213 in 2004/5

Direct Actions

Direct actions will have a direct and measureable impact on reducing temporary accommodation use

22. Ensure that no homeless families with children remain in B&B for more than 6 weeks
 - No families in B&B for longer than 6 weeks at the end of each quarter
 - There is an opportunity to ensure no families with children remain in B&B for more than 6 weeks
 - There is a risk that lack of available stock for larger families could limit available housing options
 - HBC to lead on this target
 - It will be done through CLG grant and Bed and Breakfast Budget
23. Continue to prevent homelessness and to reduce temporary accommodation use; Ensure that all households placed in temporary accommodation are visited by options officers in order to access alternative accommodation
 - Number of households in temporary accommodation: 2008/09: 143; 2009/10: 125; 2010/11: 107; 2011/12: 90; 2012/13: 73
 - There is an opportunity to ensure that all households have adequate housing options
 - HBC to lead on this target
 - It will be done through CLG grant

Indirect Actions

Indirect actions will not have an immediate measurable impact on reducing temporary accommodation use

24. Review the private sector leasing scheme to ensure the service meets the needs of the housing department and provides value for money
 - April 2009: Review of the scheme to be completed
 - There is an opportunity to maximise supply of available private sector accommodation
 - HBC to lead on this target
 - It will be done through CLG grant

Strategic Priority 4: Provide Support for Vulnerable People

Objectives

Increase the amount of housing related support delivered to vulnerable people to increase homelessness prevention year on year

5 Year Target

No repeat homelessness by 2013

Direct Actions

Direct actions have a direct and measureable impact on the number of vulnerable people accessing suitable support

25. Ensure effective move on provisions are in place to enable 60 planned move on into independent living make best use of support and prevent cyclical homelessness
 - Enable 20 planned move ons per year
 - There is an opportunity to enable households with a support need to access and maintain suitable housing
 - HBC and Supporting People to lead on this target
 - It will be done through CLG grant
26. Work with Supporting People Core Strategy Group towards achieving the objectives of the Supporting People Strategy 2005-10
 - Adopt a robust, consistent system for capturing needs data by 2010
 - There is an opportunity to ensure that all households in who require support are able to access appropriate Supporting People services
 - HBC housing Policy Officer and Supporting People to lead on this target
 - It will be done through existing resources

Indirect Actions

Indirect actions will not have an immediate measurable impact on the number of vulnerable people accessing suitable support

27. Work with Supporting People and the Probation Service to identify gaps in service for housing related support for offenders
 - April 2010: Identify gaps in service
 - There is an opportunity to ensure that all offenders with a housing support need are able to access appropriate services
 - There is a risk that there will be a low level of interest in information produced
 - HBC housing Policy Officer and Supporting People to lead on this target
 - It will be done through existing resources

Strategic Priority 5: Enable Access to the Private Rented Sector

Objectives

Enable households in housing need to access private rented sector accommodation and maintain low levels of rough sleeping each year

Five Year Target

Enable 80 households to access private rented sector accommodation per year

Direct Actions

Direct actions will have a direct and measureable impact on increasing the number of people able to access the private rented sector

28. Enable vulnerable people with a housing need to access the private rented sector and prevent homelessness; Enable vulnerable people to access the private rented sector by ensuring the future of a sustainable bond scheme in Hastings
- Prevent homelessness by housing 10 people per year (Bigger is Better)
 - There is an opportunity to ensure that the private rented sector is an accessible option for low income households; to provide bonds through a self-sustaining scheme
 - There is a risk that high rents within the private rented sector could present an affordability issue for low income households
 - HBC to lead on this target
 - It will be done through CLG grant

Indirect Actions

Indirect actions will not have an immediate measurable impact on the number of people able to access the private rented sector

29. Increase the number of licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation in Hastings in order to increase the supply of good quality accommodation which can be used to prevent homelessness.
- 34 new HMOs licensed in 07/08; 36 new HMOs licensed in 08/09; 38 new HMOs licensed in 09/10
 - There is an opportunity to increase the supply of suitable accommodation
 - HBC to lead on this target
 - It will be done through existing resources
30. Bring 250 empty homes back into use (by 2013) to increase accommodation available for homeless or potentially homeless households
- 40 empty homes to be brought back into use per year until 2013
 - There is an opportunity to increase the supply of suitable accommodation available to potentially homeless households
 - There is a risk that there will be a low level of interest in information produced
 - HBC to lead on this target
 - It will be done through existing resources
31. Work with the Sussex HomeMove Partnership to examine the possibilities of advertising private rented sector accommodation in the free sheets to assist people in housing need and prevent homelessness
- Advertise private rented sector vacancies online by April 2009

- There is an opportunity to increase the supply of suitable accommodation available to households in housing need
- There is a risk that there will be a low level of interest in information produced
- HBC and 1066 to lead on this target
- It will be done through existing resources

Appendix 1

The East Sussex Local Area Agreement (LAA)

The LAA is a three-year agreement between central government and local authorities and their partners, which deliver national outcomes in a way that reflects local priorities. This contains targets for homelessness and temporary accommodation reduction.

East Sussex Integrated Sustainable Community Strategy

This document brings together the strategic aims of each Borough and District and explores ways of multi agency joint working to achieve a common vision for the County.

County Youth Homelessness Strategy 2008-13

Aims to deliver a consistent approach to tackling and preventing youth homelessness through effective joint working with local housing authorities, Children's Services and other partner agencies.

Supporting People Strategy 2005-10

Recently revised to outline a new approach for meeting the housing related support needs of vulnerable people across the County, including homeless households.

East Sussex Domestic Violence Strategy 2006-9

Aims to continue to improve specialist services by developing stronger partnerships to reduce incidences of domestic violence, reduce repeat incidences and promote awareness of domestic violence.

The Hastings and Rother Locality Housing and Support Strategy for Older People and Carers 2007- 2027

is set within a 20 year framework, reflecting the changing needs, gaps in service, and preferences of an ageing population. The strategy emphasises on the social inclusion and wellbeing of older people as a group, and reflects the important role that suitable housing, such as lifetime homes, plays towards a better quality of life.

Hastings and St Leonards Community Strategy

Outlines how new and imaginative ways of working between organisations and residents will be developed to achieve the long term visions for the town. The Community Strategy aims to provide 'a town with a decent home for all'.

Hastings Corporate Plan

sets out the Council's strategic direction over the next three years to the end of 2009/10. It sets out how priorities will be addressed, how to ensure the needs of the communities are met and ensure there is a strong, dedicated and motivated workforce to deliver the long-term goals of the Community Strategy.

Hastings Housing Strategy 2004-09

Sets out the key housing aims for 2004-09 and outlines plans for developing strong, stable communities with a decent home for all.

Hastings Empty Homes Strategy 2008 -13

Describes how empty properties will be brought back into use to assist in meeting housing need.

Safer Hastings Strategy 2005-8

Outlines how the Safer Hastings Partnership will reduce crime by 23%, tackling burglary, car crime, violent crime, domestic violence and substance misuse.

Adult Drug Treatment Plan

The East Sussex Drug and Alcohol Action Team Adult Drug Treatment Plan 2007/08 is a key element of the overall drugs strategy (2005-2008). The treatment strategy describes the intention to increase capacity of the local treatment system, reduce waiting times to within three weeks and increase access for rural populations.

The treatment plan is expected to help achieve the partnership key treatment priorities:

- Developing a drug treatment commissioning strategy 2008-2011
- Implementing principal objectives of the Harm Reduction strategy
- Commissioning a floating housing support service jointly with Supporting People
- Increasing the proportion of services delivered in primary health care settings
- Increasing the availability of community pharmacy services including needle exchange and supervised administration of controlled drugs
- Developing carer's support groups

Safer Communities Plan 2007

The East Sussex Safer Communities Plan 2007-2010 sets out how partners across East Sussex will work together to reduce crime, disorder, substance misuse and anti-social behaviour. It combines existing East Sussex wide partnership strategies, District and Borough Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) plans into one overarching document. The key aims of the document are:

- Reduce British Crime Survey (BCS) Comparator crimes
- Prevent and reducing public place violent crime
- Reduce repeat offending
- Build respect within the community
- Reduce the harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse
- Support victims of domestic violence and hate crime
- Mainstream Community Safety and Section 17