

Draft
Worcestershire
Joint
Homelessness
Strategy v3

2011-2016

Bromsgrove District Council

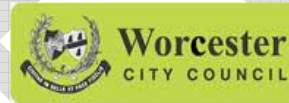
Malvern Hills District Council

Redditch Borough Council

Worcester City Council

Wychavon District Council

Wyre Forest District Council



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The full homelessness review document will be available shortly via the districts websites.

Foreword

As Chairman of the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Officers Group (WSHOG) I am very proud to introduce this update to the Countywide Homelessness Strategy which will guide service development within Worcestershire over the next 5 years.

The vision for Worcestershire is **'to ensure that everyone has access to a place they can call home, where they can close their door and feel safe'**. We know that this is an ambitious vision and will only be achieved by working together.

To achieve this vision we are focussing on preventing homelessness from happening at all. Where homelessness cannot be prevented, we aim to ensure that appropriate support is in place for people whilst finding a new home and beyond, to ensure that people have a firm foundation from which to create a new home and develop the skills to make it sustainable.

We have strong working relationships within the County with our key partner agencies including Supporting People, Housing Associations, Social Care, Primary Care Trusts, Police, voluntary sector partners and others. This means that we can achieve holistic outcomes for our customers and deliver efficiencies by ensuring that services compliment each other.

We have made sure that our customers have been able to influence the priorities within this strategy through consultation. They have been able to tell us about the things we have

done well and where we could do better. They have also told us about their fears and aspirations so that we can understand what causes people's accommodation situation to break down or helps them sustain it. This means we can put into place the support and services our customers need to ensure that their future is secure.

We believe that in order to tackle the root causes of homelessness we need to ensure that services are person centred for each individual and provide a holistic approach to meeting their needs.

I am confident that the outcomes from this strategy and our working together will positively change people's lives.

Elaine Salter

Chairman

Worcestershire Strategic Housing Officers Group

1. Executive Summary

To be finalised once consultation responses have been taken into account

3. Development of the strategy

This strategy was developed by a Project Team of senior housing staff from each of the local authorities in Worcestershire, commissioned by the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Officers Group (WSHOG).

The strategy has been produced in accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002, the Code of Guidance (2007), Homelessness Strategies: A good practice handbook (2002), and more recently a CLG specialist advisors circular entitled "36 things to think about – developing a homelessness strategy in a changing world."

Homelessness review

A comprehensive review of information has been carried out by the Project Team during 2011 to analyse the nature and extent of homelessness across the County.

This included Local Authority data, partner agency data, and research into the areas of need and resources available.

This review is available as a separate document and can be viewed at _____. A summary of the main conclusions of the review is included in this document.

Home Truths Event

To ensure stakeholders were central to developing the strategy, a consultation event was held on 12th July 2011. The event was well attended by key partners and commissioners. Also people who have lived through the experience of homelessness, shared their stories and ideas to improve the delivery of services. Workshops were held to get direct feedback, which has been fed into the strategy and delivery plan.

Homeless Journey Mapping

The Project Team were pleased to secure additional funding from each of the district housing departments to carry out in depth research into the journeys of homeless households. This provided a real opportunity to place the customer at the centre of the strategy development.

RRR Consultancy, a social research company, was commissioned to deliver the report on behalf of the Project Team. A copy of the report can be found at Appendix ?.

Customer and stakeholder surveys

In addition to the face to face feedback received via the Home Truths event and the Homeless Journey Mapping, a survey was sent out to both customers and stakeholders.

Key messages and analysis of feedback from the Home Truths event, Homeless Journey Mapping and the surveys are contained within the homelessness review document.

4. Strategic framework

The national framework - the Comprehensive Spending Review

The Comprehensive Spending Review has a number of implications on Government Departmental budgets and expenditure on welfare and tax credits. The key changes are:

- A national 7.1% decrease in annual council funding, leading to a cumulative £28.4% cut by 2014/15
- End to ring fencing of all Local Authority grants (few exceptions) including Supporting People funding no longer being ring fenced
- Supporting People funding cuts, locally this equates to 20%
- Homelessness Grant funding remains stable at approximately £400m between 2011-15
- A new, smaller Places of Change scheme with £37.5m additional investment from April 2012
- Increasing the age threshold for the Shared Room Rate in Housing Benefit from 25 to 35 years old
- Potential increase in social housing rents to 80% of market rents for new tenancies, alongside substantial 74% cut in affordable housing budget.
- 19 million fund 2012/13 to enable local authorities to help homeowners at risk of repossession

In light of the unprecedented cuts to public spending, which were announced in the last

Comprehensive Spending Review in 2010, Local Authorities are experiencing considerable pressure on their finances.

Some Local Authorities within the Worcestershire area need to make difficult decisions regarding where spending should be cut and that has resulted in a growing need to engage with local people by giving them a say in decisions that affect them and the services they use.

Localism and the Big Society

The Coalition Programme for Government 2010 set out the Coalition Government's commitment to the devolution of power from Central Government to those at a more local level. Integral to their approach is their wish to reduce social expenditure and develop local services that better reflect the needs of local people.

To do that they believe that local people need to be more actively involved in the communities where they live and work and that this will best enable them to address the perceived culture of welfare dependency in the United Kingdom and strengthen civil society by improving community relations.

The proposals for how change can be driven are detailed in the Localism Act and Welfare Reform Bill.

The Localism Act includes the introduction of directly elected mayors and police commissioners, greater devolved financial

powers to local governments and reforms to the social housing market.

Proposals in the Welfare Reform Bill include the introduction of a 'Universal Credit' to replace a range of existing means-tested benefits and tax credits for people of working age; the introduction of Personal Independence Payments (PIPs) to replace Disability Living Allowance; restrictions on housing benefit entitlement for social housing tenants in under-occupied accommodation and overall benefit caps on the amount that households can claim.

The Government's 'Big Society Agenda' is being coordinated through the Cabinet Office which works across all government departments to deliver policies which aim to engage more citizens in developing their communities and offers support to community groups wishing to assume greater control in public service delivery. The involvement of the Third Sector has been further encouraged by the creation of the Big Society Bank which offers charities, social enterprises and neighbourhood groups additional funding.

Impact for Worcestershire

The key policy and resource changes announced by the Government which will have a direct impact upon Homelessness in Worcestershire and the delivery of the strategy are:

Resources

- Government funding to Local Authorities will go down by 28% over the next four years
- Councils no longer have to monitor Local Area Agreement targets
- Homelessness Grant was confirmed to Local Authorities for 2011-12 and 2012-13 with the majority of Worcestershire local authorities receiving a substantial increase, however it is no longer ring fenced.
- Nationally £6bn has been allocated to funding the Supporting People programme over four years. However, this is not ring fenced and the allocation has been made to Worcestershire County Council.
- Provision for Disabled Facilities Grants will rise with inflation but Local Authorities will be given more discretion for their allocation
- The Regional Growth Fund will be extended to three years and increased to £1.4bn
- The Homes and Communities Agency will provide capital investment to support the building of up to 150,000 new affordable homes over the next 4 years
- Introduction of the New Homes Bonus scheme will mean communities benefit from new housing and economic development – matching the additional council tax from each new home for each of the following 6 years. Permission for homes granted now will count for the bonus and the Government are consulting on whether reuse of empty homes will also qualify them to develop policies regarding the type and length of tenancy granted and the circumstances relating to this.

- Investment via the Decent Homes programme will continue

Localism

- Citizens and volunteers will be supported to play a bigger role in shaping and providing services within communities
- Local Enterprise Partnerships have been set up to help drive growth and develop the local economy in partnership with local business and communities
- The creation of a 'Big Society Bank' will provide charities, neighbourhood groups and social enterprises with sustainable funding and allow them to play a greater role in delivering public services and tackling deep-rooted social problems
- Reform of the planning system will put local authorities and local people in charge of decisions on new house-building in their local areas, increasing housing supply

Homelessness

- The changes to the way that rough sleepers are counted will assist in providing a more accurate picture of the number of people in need.
- The Government has given Local Authorities more scope to discharge their Statutory Homeless Duty through placing households into private sector accommodation.

Social Housing

- The Government wants to make social housing more responsive, flexible and fair so that a greater number of people are able to access social housing in a way that reflects their needs and changing circumstances. Under the

Localism Act there is a requirement for Local Authorities to develop Tenancy Strategies to provide Registered Providers with guidance to enable

- Social housing will be reformed to provide a more tailored response to individual need at a low cost
- Housing associations will introduce a new intermediate rent tenure called 'affordable rent' to social tenants
- Government reform of the National Register of Social Housing will reduce reporting requirements on social landlords

Welfare Reform and Local Housing Allowance Changes

- £2 billion will be allocated over the next four years to fund the implementation of a Universal Credit aimed at simplifying the benefit system
- Household benefit payments for families will be capped at around £500 per week from 2013
- The age threshold for the Shared Room Rate in Housing Benefit has increased from 25 to 25 year olds.
- A one-year time limit will be introduced for contributory Employment and Support Allowance for those in the Work Related Activity Group
- The Warm Front Programme is being scaled down over the next two years with a budget of £110 million in 2011/-12 and £100 million in 2012-13

Fuel Poverty

- From 2013, the Green Deal will replace Warm Front, and a new obligation will be imposed on energy providers – this will help households improve their energy efficiency with no up-front

costs. Phasing out Warm Front is estimated to save £345 million by 2013-14.

- The Government has also announced an independent review of the fuel poverty target and definition before the end of the year

regular review as the true impact of social reforms unfold.

The cuts to public sector finances and legislative reforms are far reaching and will have a significant impact on both the housing market overall and homelessness within Worcestershire. In particular benefit reforms such as the reduced Local Area allowance rate for single applicants aged between 25 and 35 years old, proposals to include Housing Benefit in the new 'Universal Credit' and the introduction of an overall benefit cap. These proposals have been met with criticism from many who believe that reforms on this scale and so quickly, will likely mean an increase in homelessness.

Reduced public sector investment is also likely to result in reduced delivery of new affordable housing in Worcestershire, and reduced public revenue spending may impact upon the number of public sector staff available to support those at risk of homelessness. It remains to be seen whether the increased resources within the voluntary sector that are generated through the Big Society Agenda will be able to meet the increased demand for services to assist those at risk of homelessness. The strategy has been developed at a time of unprecedented change and uncertainty within the housing market and the action plan attached will require

Links with Other Strategies

National Policy Framework	Regional Policy	Worcestershire Strategies
Sustainable Communities Plan 2003 Housing Act 2004 Homelessness Act 2002 Localism Act 2011 Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) Homes for the future, more affordable, more sustainable. Housing & Regeneration Act 2008 Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities 2008 Council Housing: A Real Future (2010) No Second Night Out – policy to end Rough Sleeping Drug Strategy Breaking the cycle: Reducing re-offending green paper Welfare Reform Bill 2011 Big Society Agenda	West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy West Midlands Spatial Strategy West Midlands Leaders Board Priorities Local Enterprise Partnerships HCA Single Conversation Regional Economic Strategy Regional Homelessness Strategy	County Housing Strategy 2007-11 Worcester City Rough Sleepers Strategy 2007-11 County Housing Strategy Sustainable Community Strategy Local Investment Plan Supporting People Strategy and strategic reviews (inc. domestic abuse, young people, people with chaotic lifestyles, single homeless people and mental health) Children & Young Persons Strategy Telecare Strategy Older Persons Strategy Mental Health Strategy Housing Strategy – Learning Disabilities Domestic Abuse Strategy Joint Commissioning Strategy Substance Misuse Strategy County Council’s Corporate Plan 2011-16 Community Safety Partnership Plans 2008-11

5. Homelessness review conclusions and new strategic objectives

During 2011 the Project Team responsible for the development of the strategy carried out a homelessness review into the nature and extent of homelessness in Worcestershire. This is a statutory requirement within the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Code of Guidance.

The key positive findings of the review are;

- Worcestershire has a good track record in preventing homelessness.
- The Redditch Trailblazer has led to a huge decrease in statutory homelessness in Redditch.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation has decreased dramatically since 2007, and customers experience a relatively short length of time in temporary accommodation today.
- There is good customer satisfaction with housing advice services across the County.
- Partners say there is good access to housing options services in Worcestershire

- Homeless Pathways Research participants were generally positive about the support they received from agencies across the County.

It is important to bear in mind when considering these positive findings that homelessness is on the increase locally and nationally. Therefore it is essential that we maintain and improve on our work in these areas to rise to the challenge of increased demand for our services.

The key areas that pose a new or continuing challenge will be summarised under the four goals of the strategy;

- 1. Providing a pathway to a housing solution for everyone that accesses our services**
- 2. Creating strong partnerships to tackle homelessness**
- 3. Taking effective action to prevent anyone new to the streets, having to sleep out for more than one night**
- 4. Tackling the financial deprivation of those affected by benefit reform, welfare reform and worklessness**

Within these goals, a number of overarching objectives have been set out to meet the challenge of key areas identified for change. These are outlined in more detail within the delivery plan in Appendix ?.

It has become apparent throughout the development of this strategy that there are many changes on the horizon e.g changes to government policy and legislation, as well as the shifting financial landscape and the continuing threat of recession.

Therefore, this aims to be a very flexible strategy, able to respond to any changes efficiently. The overarching goals and vision will remain the same, but it is likely that the actions within the deliver plan and possibly the objectives will change over the life of the strategy.

Goal 1 – Providing a pathway to a housing solution for everyone that accesses our services

The first goal we have set to achieve our vision centres around building on our successes in preventing homelessness and creating efficiencies. We want to achieve consistency in preventing homelessness across **all** client groups and empower our customers to take an active part in finding their own housing pathway. This is particularly important in the face and increased demand for our services with local and national increases in homeless decisions and acceptances.

In order to do this, however, we need to ensure that

- there are a range of credible, and “barrier free” housing pathways for people to access
- there is wide knowledge of these services amongst agencies and especially front line housing teams
- the homelessness prevention culture is truly embodied by front line staff, regardless of whether someone is priority or non priority homeless

- on line housing advice and assistance is of high quality and widely promoted

By empowering customers needing only low level advice and assistance to prevent their homelessness, we will ensure that we free up time to make sure that vulnerable people receive the higher level of advice and support that they need.

The main conclusions from the review that led to the forming of this goal are;

1. Although there are some similarities in the way in which housing advice teams across the county operate, there are also some real differences. This makes it difficult to compare the efficiency of services.
2. There is a gap in the knowledge of how each of the districts works, and what data each authority collects in order to inform working practices, policy and homelessness grant spend. Redditch works in a very different way to the rest of the County and has dramatically reduced their homeless decisions and acceptances over recent years. Therefore lessons can be learnt from this way of working.
3. We do not know enough about the homeless prevention pathways for all

the different client groups that we work with across the County. Due to reduced budgets we need to prioritise resources which will mean that there will be changes to how services are delivered and potentially some service reductions or closures. Therefore, we need to remodel existing provision.

4. The Localism Act offers the opportunity for a fundamental change to allocations policies which need to be considered across the County. Changes to be considered include
5. Customer and stakeholder feedback is not collected and analysed on a regular basis consistently across the county.
6. The Homelessness Pathways Research identified that information that would assist customers in preventing their own homelessness is not presented in a consistent way and easily accessible.
7. The Homeless Pathways Research also identified a need for officers to be more empathetic and to communicate more effectively.
8. A large proportion of customers are still approaching housing advice services as “homeless on the day.” This suggests that customers still don’t know how we can prevent their

homelessness and why we need as much time as possible. We need to consider a marketing strategy to combat this.

9. More and more customers are experiencing barriers to accessing accommodation due to poor tenancy histories, not just financial barriers such as lack of a deposit.
10. Anecdotally, housing advice teams are reporting that they are dealing with more and more vulnerable customers. This could be a result of cuts to other support services (both statutory and non statutory). Supporting People hasn't cut capacity of services, but some charities have lost grants and cuts to other funding they receive. We need to consider ways of demonstrating the impact of this to partner agencies and working together to tackle the needs of those to whom we have joint responsibility.
11. The Homelessness Pathways Research identified that many of our customers have mental and physical health problems but do not meet the threshold of social care services.
12. Analysis of the Home Choice Plus housing register and Redditch Home Choice shows that demand for social

housing is high in all districts but most acute in Worcester City, Wychavon and Wyre Forest. Therefore, there is a need to improve customers understanding of the demands on social housing and also the Choice Based Lettings system as a whole in order to get a realistic picture. We need to provide statistics on the numbers of properties becoming available for relet on an annual basis, and broken down by district so people's expectations are reasonable.

13. There has been a downward trend in lettings to statutory homeless households. This could be attributed to prevention methods but does warrant further investigation.
14. Analysis of CORE data shows that a high proportion of tenants vacating social housing tenancies do so to go into the private rented sector. Homeless Pathways Research suggests that Social Housing makes customers feel more secure about their future than Private Rented housing. This demonstrates the need for further investigation into this area through a survey of tenants.
15. There are more social housing evictions in Wyre Forest and Worcester City. We need to expand

on existing proactive evictions policies and procedures on a county wide basis across supported and general needs accommodation.

16. Addressing the root causes of homelessness continues to be a challenge in times of reduced budgets and staffing levels. The benefits of more proactive work need to be widely promoted.
17. The Homeless Pathways Research highlighted the need to be more of a focus on the individual (life events, support needs) to make an accurate assessment of their needs, provide a holistic approach to their situation and to understand how we can effectively prevent their homelessness.
18. Accessing to training, education or employment is essential for customers once primary housing need is addressed. We need to improve links with Job Centre Plus. Few of the clients interviewed as part of the Homeless Pathways research were employed and those that were, received relatively low incomes. Aspirational outcomes are the key to tenancy sustainment and preventing the cycle of future homelessness.

We will address these findings through the following strategic objectives;

- Ensure housing options services provide Value For Money in order to attract and retain investment to maintain and improve service levels.
- Increase the number of households prevented from becoming homeless by making housing options services as accessible and effective as possible.
- Ensure there is a pathway for each group of people accessing our services which is developed and supported by partners
- Maximise the supply and use of new and existing accommodation.
- Develop a range of holistic initiatives to tackle the root causes of homelessness

Goal 2 - Creating strong partnerships to tackle homelessness

If we are to truly tackle the root causes of homelessness, it is vital to create strong and effective partnerships, especially at a time of real pressure on resources.

This goal aims to strengthen existing partnerships, forge new partnerships and maximise synergies to meet the diverse needs of homeless people.

We want to ensure that each organisation and sector with a role in tackling homelessness in Worcestershire is clear about the contribution they make to the delivery of the strategy, as well as our contribution to their related strategies.

The main conclusions from the review that led to the forming of this goal are;

1. Many of our customers experience mental health problems, and indeed this is often an underlying cause of their homelessness. The Homelessness Pathways Research identified that many of the social economic or health problems faced by participants had roots in early life. In addition debt and money

issues were a source of emotional problems and family conflict.

2. It is not clear if front line staff in housing advice teams fully aware of how to recognise the signs of mental ill health and what services to signpost people to for help.
3. There appears to be an increasing demand for housing from customers with autistic spectrum personality disorders, ADHD, and
4. Substance Misuse
5. There are some examples of good joint working across the county for some client groups e.g. 16/17 year old protocol, MAPPA and MARAC. However, further protocols & liaison meetings are needed particularly with – multiple needs, mental health, substance misuse, housing benefit and Registered Social Landlords
6. Many vulnerable adults are presenting with complex needs and dual diagnosis. There is no consistent way of meeting their needs across the county as there is with the Common Assessment Framework for children and young people. We need to consider implementing an Adult CAF style

framework in line with the Every Adult Matters framework being piloted.

7. From discussions with participants through the Homeless Pathways Research, it became evident that a range of factors let or contributed to homelessness: including domestic abuse, family conflict and Breakdown, mental health and substance misuse.
8. Supporting People Strategic Reviews including single homelessness, young people, mental health, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, domestic abuse and chaotic lifestyles will have a major impact on how we work together to prevent homelessness.
9. More than one third of the Homelessness Pathways Research participants were victims of domestic abuse which influenced the ways in which they formed relationships.
10. A major cause of homelessness continues to be the loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancies. However it is clear that we need to increase our use of the private rented sector in

order to meet demand for housing. We need to investigate ways to make these tenancies more sustainable.

11. Customers are more receptive to accessing private rented accommodation than originally thought (according to the customer survey) but often a lack of life skills and poor mental health causes the loss of it. The Homeless Pathways Research highlighted that many of the participants housing situations had in the past changed frequently and that all participants emphasised the importance of having a secure tenancy. In addition participants' relationships with the local areas, and proximity to support networks, played a significant role in determining feelings of security
12. There are many barriers to accessing private rented accommodation e.g. financial, poor tenancy histories, fear of poor landlord or property, and affordability.
13. Figures suggest that Landlord repossession is on the increase. There has also been an increase in landlords selling their buy to let

properties due to the downturn in the economy.

14. Private rented accommodation is not accessible in some parts of county where it has become unaffordable.
15. Single people who are affected by the Under 35 LHA rate will find self contained private rented accommodation unaffordable.
16. Communities and Local Government recommend that 40% of officer time should be spent sourcing accommodation, and less resources should be directed at casework.
17. Social lettings agencies and deposit bond schemes are proving to be very successful in locating and maintaining private sector tenancies.
18. The key to good partnerships is agreeing common principles and objectives. Therefore, we need to consider a single county logo or branding, a county marketing campaign throughout the year with activities to raise awareness, a single county homelessness prevention assessment and action plan template (completed on

individual basis), a greater consistency standard information on websites.

19. We need to develop our strategic work including joint strategic reviews to plan services through joint commissioning and joint funding of services. We need to have multi agency project teams to deliver projects and services to meet the challenge of Localism.

We will address these findings through the following strategic objectives;

- Demonstrate the links between homelessness and partner agency responsibilities to ensure joint working and commissioning of services.
- Ensure effective cross agency working through a range of protocols and liaison meetings to rise to the challenge of Localism
- Engage with the Private Rented Sector to create housing opportunities and tackle homelessness from Assured Shorthold Tenancies

Goal 3 – Taking effective action to prevent anyone new to the streets, having to sleep out for more than one night.

This goal will bring Worcestershire into line with the governments No Second Night Out agenda.

Unfortunately, homelessness amongst single people appears to be on the increase nationally and in some areas of the County. Furthermore, the impact of Housing Benefit and welfare reform is likely to hit this client group the hardest.

We need to work on having a credible housing offer or pathway for everyone that walks through our door regardless of whether they are deemed to be statutory priority homeless or not.

If we do this successfully, it will avoid the revolving door syndrome and a pathway to priority need in the future e.g. a single person who sleeps rough will in a large proportion of cases end up becoming statutory priority homeless at some point in the future.

The main conclusions from the review that led to the forming of this goal are;

1. There has been an increase in rough sleeping across the county, with approximately 40 cases across the county. The largest

proportions of these are situated in Worcester City and Wychavon. We need to collect more in depth data especially on the district/area/country of origin.

2. Rough sleeping is on the increase across the county, despite the fact that provision for this client group has been increased throughout the life of the previous homeless strategy. One reason for this increase is the increasing number of Eastern Europeans sleeping rough, especially in Wychavon. In addition to the information coming out of the SP single homeless review, we need to consider carrying out a Prompt Analysis (Homeless Link) to identify if there are gaps in provision or if the provision is sufficient but needs remodelling. We also need to review if there are there (well intentioned) existing incentives in operation that enable a street lifestyle. The potential data on this client group that can be generated from Worcestershire Link Up is vital to informing service provision, policy and attracting funding. Therefore continuation of this service is also vital.

3. How can we increase the strategic response to this across the county and implement a No Second Night Out Standard? We need all partners to understand and sign up to a protocol.
4. The Move On Plan Protocol is still outstanding from the previous strategy. Bed blocking in hostel and supported accommodation continues to be an issue and needs to be addressed. The use of private rented sector accommodation for those moving from supported housing should be increased.
5. Information sharing and access to accommodation and support for single homeless people has been improved through the implementation of Worcestershire Link Up. However, this does need to be built upon as there was a general feeling throughout the research carried out that agencies are still working in silos.
6. Partners feel that there is too much of a concentration of services for single people in Worcester City. We need to ensure there is adequate provision across the County and robust reconnection policies are

implemented. We also need to consider decentralisation of services from Worcester City to smaller scale satellite services across the county.

7. The No Second Night Out standard does not address the needs of entrenched rough sleepers across the county. The county should research good practice to address this client group, this could include personalisation budgets.

National research indicates an increase in rough sleepers with mental health complaints. The county will be required to work closely with other partner agencies such as the mental health trust and the Primary Care Trust to address these issues.

Female rough sleepers have specific needs and can find unisex services intimidating; this can disadvantage female rough sleepers from using a unisex service. Worcestershire should investigate female rough sleepers needs and potential services to address the findings.

We will address these findings through the following strategic objectives;

- Develop a No Second Night Out standard for Worcestershire
- Reduce the incentives for people to remain in a street lifestyle
- Make the best use of existing resources to ensure a flow through supported accommodation
- Tackle entrenched rough sleeping

Goal 4 – Tackling the financial deprivation of those affected by benefit reform, welfare reform and worklessness.

We are experiencing a time of unprecedented change

The main conclusions from the review that led to the forming of this goal are;

1. Affordability of maintaining their homes is a major concern for our customers for a variety of reasons such as debt, benefit changes, and the cost of utilities. All 30 participants interviewed for the Homeless Pathways Research identified themselves as experiencing financial difficulties.
2. An analysis of the economic status of the households in social housing across the county demonstrate that a higher proportion of tenants in Malvern, Redditch and Wychavon are working full time, whilst in Bromsgrove and Worcester a higher proportion of tenants are unemployed or job seeking, and in Wyre Forest it is

those not seeking work. The Homelessness Pathways Research identified that families containing working members were as equally likely to face financial problems as those without.

3. Wyre Forest also have the highest proportion of social housing tenants on the lowest income of £40-£59 per week.
4. Single people living in social housing tenancies in Redditch, Wychavon and Wyre Forest have seen a drop in their income over time – this ties in with the areas which have been most hit by redundancies. Lone parents across the county have the second lowest average income, only greater than single people.
5. We need to do more to target those who perhaps have not used our services before – but who are being affected by the economic downturn and cuts to services
6. Benefit reform will have a major impact on customers accessing and maintaining accommodation. Especially in the case of the Under 35 rate.

7. Better joint working to mitigate the impact of benefit reform across the County
8. We need to improve joint working between housing advice teams and housing benefit departments. workshops with HB & housing officers, targeting those at risk, open day for landlords
9. Customers are worried about debts, benefit reform, increased costs of living, utilities
10. Economic factors – worklessness, unemployment especially in young people, redundancy, low incomes will all impact on levels of homelessness. The Homelessness Pathways Research identified that debt and money issues were a source of emotional problems and family conflict.
11. Mortgage rescue
12. Debt appears to be on the increase across the County according to figures from the CAB.

We will address these findings through the following strategic objectives;

- **Identify of those at risk of homelessness due to the reforms and the downturn in the economy**
- **Minimise the effects of welfare reform, housing benefit reform and the downturn in the economy on levels of homelessness.**
- **Provide good quality advice and sign posting at the right time**
- **Assist customers to maintain accommodation at risk due to financial factors**
- **Tackle worklessness to minimise its effect on levels of homelessness.**

6. Governance of the strategy

The Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership will be responsible for managing the implementation of the strategy.

The County Homelessness Implementation Group will be responsible for implementing operational actions.

Both Groups will consist of a core team of local authority strategic housing officers and officers from Registered Social Landlords who are contracted on behalf of Local Authorities to carry out the housing advice function.

Both groups will have wider membership from other agencies with a responsibility for tackling homelessness.

It is also likely that specific task and finish groups will be set up to carry out specialised or intensive tasks.

- Increase the number of cases where positive action is successful in preventing homelessness
- Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation
- Reduce the number of households in bed and breakfast accommodation
- Reduce the number of rough sleepers
- Reduce repeat homelessness by ?

Regular communication on the success of the strategy will be via the County Homeless Strategy Steering Group reports, each individual districts homeless forums and websites.

Performance indicators to measure the success of the strategy are;

Appendix ? The Strategy Delivery Plan (Years 1&2)[Back](#)

Key	
B&B	Bed and Breakfast
CHIG	County Homeless Implementation Group
CHSC	County Homeless Strategy Co-ordinator
CLG	Communities and Local Government
DAAT	Drug and Alcohol Action Team
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payments
DWP	Department of Work and Pensions
FIP	Family Intervention Project
HB	Housing Benefit
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency
HCP	Home Choice Plus
HQN	Housing Quality Network
LA	Local Authority
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnerships
LHA	Local Housing Allowance
NAC	Night Assessment Centre
NSNO	No Second Night Out
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
SAR	Shared Accommodation Rate
SP	Supporting People
TA	Temporary Accommodation
UC	Universal Credit
WHABAC	Worcester Housing And Benefit Advice Centre
WHSP	Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership

Goal 1 – Providing a pathway to a housing solution for everyone that accesses our services

Strategic links– Worcestershire Housing Strategy, Worcestershire Strategic Market Assessment, Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy, ST Housing Service Plans, Homelessness Code of Guidance, Home Choice Plus and Allocations Policies, Worcestershire Tenancy Strategy
PI’s: The number of cases where positive action was successful in preventing homelessness per quarter (E10). the number of statutory household temporary accommodation at the end of each quarter (E6), the number of rough sleepers.

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Change
1.	Ensure housing options services provide Value For Money in order to attract and retain investment to maintain and improve service levels.	Implement the HQN toolkit to benchmark cost effectiveness of services and obtain better understanding of cost, customer satisfaction and performance.	Existing staff resources	Worcester City	Year 1	Homelessness funding
2	Increase the number of households prevented from becoming homeless by making housing options services as accessible and effective as possible.	Implement the CLG DIY diagnostic tool to ensure we are getting the basics right and identify gaps in services.	Existing staff resources	All Local Authorities	Years 1&2	CLG grant
		Align practices across the County with the CLG Housing Options Toolkit model	Existing staff resources	All Local Authorities	Years 1&2	CLG grant
		Consider implementation of the Enhanced Housing Options Model on a countywide basis to free up resources to assist those vulnerable clients who need handholding.	Existing staff resources, cost of software packages	All LA's	Years 1&2	CLG grant
		Enhance the range of advice and information on housing options, using a variety of media, and ensure it is continually reviewed and updated.	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Years 1&2	
		Agree a consistent logo/branding for homelessness prevention across the county.	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Years 1&2	
		Improve online information on all district websites (including agreeing one set of generic information about homelessness prevention with different local elements)	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Years 1&2	
		Develop existing customer satisfaction feedback methods, capturing relevant information & used in a meaningful way.	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Year 1	
		Investigate ways to assist customers to overcome the barriers to accessing accommodation e.g. life skills training, tenant accreditation scheme	Existing staff resources, homelessness grant	CHIG	Years 1&2	

Goal 1 – Providing a pathway to a housing solution for everyone that accesses our services

Strategic links– Worcestershire Housing Strategy, Worcestershire Strategic Market Assessment, Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy, ST Housing Service Plans, Homelessness Code of Guidance, Home Choice Plus and Allocations Policies, Worcestershire Tenancy Strategy

PI's: The number of cases where positive action was successful in preventing homelessness per quarter (E10). the number of statutory household temporary accommodation at the end of each quarter (E6), the number of rough sleepers.

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Change
		Develop access to mediation services across the county	Existing staff resources, CLG grant funding	CHIG, CHSC	Years 1&2	
		Develop a front line staff training programme to ensure culture change of preventing homelessness regardless of priority need.	County training group	CHIG	Year 1	
3	Ensure there is a pathway for each group of people accessing our services which is developed and supported by partners	<p>Review the prevention pathways (housing and support) for;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • families • people with mental health issues (intermediate housing) • people with a physical disability (to include temporary accommodation) • people with a learning disability • ex forces personnel with support needs • teenage parents • migrant workers <p>Groups not mentioned either have existing protocols to be reviewed or new ones to be developed (covered in Goal 2)</p>	Existing staff resources, homelessness grant funding,	SP WSHP	Years 2-5	
		Investigate the feasibility of county wide Rent Deposit Scheme for those people who without early intervention may become statutory priority homeless.	Homelessness & prevention grant funding	CHIG WHABAC	Year 1	
4	Maximise the supply and use of new and existing accommodation.	Develop agreements with RSL's to ensure that their response to flexible tenancies and affordable rent schemes does not increase homelessness.	Existing staff resources	WSHOG, HCP Steering Group	Years 1&2	-
		Enable more shared accommodation particularly for under 35's, such as HMOs, lodging schemes or shared social housing initiatives.	Social lettings agency and Homelessness Grant Funding	CHIG	Years 2-5	Welfare reform

Goal 1 – Providing a pathway to a housing solution for everyone that accesses our services

Strategic links– Worcestershire Housing Strategy, Worcestershire Strategic Market Assessment, Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy, ST Housing Service Plans, Homelessness Code of Guidance, Home Choice Plus and Allocations Policies, Worcestershire Tenancy Strategy

PI's: The number of cases where positive action was successful in preventing homelessness per quarter (E10). the number of statutory household temporary accommodation at the end of each quarter (E6), the number of rough sleepers.

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Change
5	Develop a range of holistic initiatives to tackle the root causes of homelessness	Support the Working Families Everywhere pilot delivered through the WFIP supporting families with multiple and complex needs access education, training and employment by encouraging housing providers to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Identify families with multiple needs with intergenerational benefit dependency •Link in with shared training opportunities around benefits and welfare advice. 	Existing staff resources	SP FIP	Years 1&2	
		Develop joint training for staff and other agencies, both locally and county-wide	Existing staff resources	County Training Group	Years 1&2	-
		Look at developing county-wide education project based on existing pilot in North Worcestershire run by St Basils	Existing staff resources, Homelessness Grant funding	CHIG, St Basils	Years 1&2	-

Goal 2 – Creating strong partnerships to tackle homelessness

Strategic links: Supporting People Strategy, Worcestershire Mental Health Strategy, Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse Strategy, Homelessness Benefit Service Plans, Local Private Sector Renewal Strategies

PI's: Supporting People Outcomes, the number of homelessness preventions through access to private rented sector (E10)

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Change
1	Demonstrate the links between homelessness and partner agency responsibilities to ensure joint working and commissioning of services.	Develop a communication strategy to demonstrate how better relations with different directorates and partner agencies will result in tackling the holistic needs of joint client groups.	Existing staff resources	WSHP and WSHOG	Years 1&2	
		Mental health Develop links to Increased Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) across the County to signpost vulnerable clients.	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Year 1	Health wellbeing agenda
		Raise awareness of mental health issues to help signposting to other services and identify risks to frontline workers and other clients	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Years 1&2	
		Investigate opportunities for Mental Health First Aid training for front line officers.	Existing staff resources, County Training Group	County Training Group	Year 1	
		Physical health Undertake the Homeless Link Health and Homelessness Audit	Existing staff resources	CHSC, SP	Year 1	Health wellbeing board
		Work with PCT to role out Health Chat programme across County.	Existing staff and training resources	CHIG and PCT	Year 1	
Young people Snapshot survey Universal access to all components						
Substance Misuse and Alcohol Continue to identify the gaps in accommodation and support provision across the County.	Existing staff and key partners	CHIG, SP, DAAT and LinkUP	Year 1	-		

Goal 2 – Creating strong partnerships to tackle homelessness

Strategic links: Supporting People Strategy, Worcestershire Mental Health Strategy, Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse Strategy, Housing Benefit Service Plans, Local Private Sector Renewal Strategies

PI's: Supporting People Outcomes, the number of homelessness preventions through access to private rented sector (E10)

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Change
		<p>Conduct a mapping exercise across the County to identify the numbers and needs of those accessing drug & alcohol treatment, but not accessing housing advice.</p> <p>Collection of data relating to housing need and or drug or alcohol use, to identify areas of highest need, profiled by district. Analysis of this data will allow for planning and commissioning of future services.</p> <p>Co ordination of accommodation, treatment and mental health services to ensure successful sustainment of tenancies.</p>	<p>Existing staff and key partners</p> <p>Existing staff and key partners</p> <p>Existing Staff and resources</p>	<p>SP, DAAT, CHIG and LinkUP</p> <p>CHIG, SP,DAAT and LinkUP</p> <p>CHIG, DAAT, PCT and SP</p>	<p>Year 1</p> <p>Years 1-2</p> <p>Years 2-3</p>	
		<p>Prison leavers Research incentives given to landlords to encourage them to house offenders into private rented accommodation (Walsall model)</p> <p>Roll out Redditch offender info packs across County.</p>	<p>Existing staff and key partners</p>	<p>WSHOG CHIG</p>	<p>Year 1</p>	-
2	Ensuring effective cross agency working through a range of protocols and liaison meetings to rise to the challenge of Localism	<p>Devlop protocols</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health and housing • Substance misuse and housing • Housing Benefit and Strategic Housing Departments 	<p>Existing staff resources</p>	<p>WSHP, CHSC</p>	<p>Years 2&3</p>	-
3	Engage with the Private Rented Sector to create housing opportunities and tackle homelessness from Assured Shorthold Tenancies	<p>Investigate the feasibility of developing more private tenancy leasing schemes to improve access private landlords and encourage them to work with local authorities.</p> <p>Develop an accreditation scheme (already in operation in some districts) for lettings agents and private landlords.</p> <p>Maximise the potential of Home Choice Plus by offering private landlords an opportunity to advertise properties.</p>	<p>Existing staff resources</p> <p>Existing staff resources</p> <p>Existing staff resources</p>	<p>All Local Authorities</p> <p>All Local Authorities</p> <p>HCP Partnership</p>	<p>Years 1-3</p> <p>Years 1-3</p> <p>Year 1</p>	-

Goal 3 – Taking effective action to prevent anyone new to the streets, having to sleep out for more than one night

Strategic links – No Second Night Out National Strategy, Worcestershire Community Safety Action Plan, Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy

PI's: Rough sleepers counts and estimates, Number of referrals to Worcestershire Link Up, Number of users accessing the Night Assessment Centre

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Change
1	Developing a No Second Night Out standard for Worcestershire	Development of a single homeless hub (with accommodation provision and satellite provision for rural areas) to provide a coordinated and holistic response to tackling rough sleeping.	HCA funding, LA Homelessness Grant, SP funding, DAAT funding,	NAC Project Team	Year 1-3	NSNO
		Development and implementation of No Second Night Out policy and reconnection policy in each of the districts.	Existing staff resources, successful provider for NAC	NAC Project Team	Year 1	NSNO
		Improve the visibility of the outreach team and public rough sleeping support systems	Existing staff resources	St Paul's Hostel, Link Up, CHIG	Year 1	
		Create a county wide single homelessness forum	Existing staff resources, successful provider for NAC	NAC Project Team	Year 1	
2	Reduce the incentives for people to remain in a street lifestyle	Map the provision of free food and provisions across the county to see how services can link more effectively.			Year 1	
		Consider a "Killing with kindness" marketing strategy in line with Thames Reach to reduce begging and enablement of a street lifestyle.			Year 2	
3	Make the best use of existing resources to ensure a flow through supported accommodation	Carry out PROMPT analysis (Homeless Link) to identify where they may be gaps in services	Existing staff resources	NAC Project Team	Year 1	
		Work with partners to implement the Move On Protocol Plan (MOPP).	Existing staff resources	CHSC	Year 1	
4	Tackle entrenched rough sleeping	Develop a Countywide Rough Sleepers action plan (to include tackling A8 rough sleeping).	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Year 1	
		Set up a personalisation project				
		Ensure the ongoing funding for the WHIT service post Jan 13.	Existing staff resources	NAC Project Team	Year 4	

Goal 4 – Tackling financial deprivation of those affected by benefit reform, welfare reform and worklessness

Strategic links – Worcestershire Financial Inclusion Strategy, Housing Benefit Department Service Plans,

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Change
1	Identify of those at risk of homelessness due to the reforms and the downturn in the economy	Make links with local employers who are making major redundancies, and strengthen links with LEP's.	Existing staff resources	All LA's Chamber of Commerce, LEP	Year 1&2	-
		Provide targeted housing advice for first time Housing Benefit claimants				-
2	Minimise the effects of welfare reform, housing benefit reform and the downturn in the economy on levels of homelessness.	Develop a county wide action plan to minimise the effects of welfare reform	Existing staff resources	CHSC	Year 1	- Welfare Reform
		Information and education campaign on welfare reform including universal credit and housing benefit changes.	Existing staff and publication resources	CHIG	Year 1&2	
		<p>Improve joint working with Housing Benefit Departments;</p> <p>Implement good practice identified by CLG in responding to benefit reform.</p> <p>Promote on line resources to calculate the local housing allowance for those accessing the Private Rented Sector</p> <p>Work with Housing Benefits about issuing a notice of entitlement to Local Housing Allowance</p> <p>Ensure that all front-line staff have welfare benefits awareness training.</p> <p>Develop an effective referral process with housing benefit to ensure that all DHP claimants have gone through housing options service.</p>	Existing staff resources	Redditch Borough Council, CHSC	Year 1	Welfare benefit reform
		To raise awareness amongst members of the importance of the delivery of the Social Fund for supporting homeless people in Worcestershire. – make this clearer	Existing staff resources	WHSP, CHIG	Year 1&2	-

Goal 4 – Tackling financial deprivation of those affected by benefit reform, welfare reform and worklessness

Strategic links – Worcestershire Financial Inclusion Strategy, Housing Benefit Department Service Plans,

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Change
		Develop a common process for administering the social fund in all Local Authority Areas within Worcestershire				-
		Investigate new funding opportunities such as the Big Society Bank to fund additional resources in the Voluntary sector required to support vulnerable households applying for universal credit				-
3	Provide good quality advice and sign posting at the right time	The promotion of benefits and support available to a new client group who are affected by the economic downturn.	Existing staff and publication resources	CHIG	Year 1&2	-
		Undertake more pro-active work linking people into money advice earlier, offer advice sessions outside normal office hours, make information available on line.	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Year 1&2	-
		Signpost to alternatives that will fill the gap left by the Credit Union	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Year 2	-
		Increase provision and quality for debt advice within the County	Existing staff resources, LA homelessness grant	CHIG	Year 2	-
		Provide more opportunities to increase budgeting skills	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Year 2	-
		Develop a partnership arrangement with a suitable lender to ensure easier opening of a bank account				
5	Tackle worklessness to minimise its effect on levels of homelessness.	Improving access to employment and training opportunities	Existing staff resources to link in with key partners	CHIG	Year 1&2	-
		Promotion of care to learn childcare support and other childcare provision to support parents back into education training or employment.	Existing staff resources to link in with key partners	CHIG	Years 2&3	-

Future considerations for the delivery plan from years 3-5

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As detailed throughout this document, the delivery plan needs to be achievable and flexible enough to respond to changes in the economic and political climate. Therefore this section sets out actions that are planned for the future, but which will be reviewed on an annual basis to decide if and when they should feature in the delivery plan.

Goal 1

Investigate the feasibility of expanding the out of hours homeless emergency service to link with emergency support.	Current provider contracts	WHSP	Years 2&3	
As a result of the prevention pathways review, develop or remodel existing provision of accommodation and support services for homeless or potentially homeless clients with additional needs. This could include the provision of dispersed units of accommodation.		WSHP	Years 3-5	
To continue to provide and expand re-settlement packages appropriate to peoples needs (including e.g. furniture and white goods).	Existing staff resources, SP funding	CHIG SP	Years 3&4	Welfar
Investigate the feasibility of extending the countywide tenant matching service based on Both Ways model.	Existing staff resources	CHIG SP	Years 3&4	-
Work with the Home Improvement Agency to: make better use of existing adapted accommodation through use of current database of clients and adapted properties; and to ensure those who may otherwise become or are currently homeless are offered appropriate accommodation to meet their needs.	Existing staff and stock, HIA	All Local Authorities HIA	Years 3&4	
Consider ways to expand the Family Intervention Project service cross tenure	Existing staff resources	SP, FIP	Years 3&4	-

Goal 2

Behavioural - Investigate the feasibility to increase the provision of outreach workers for clients with autistic spectrum, personality disorders, ADHD, and Aspergers.	Investigate potential funding streams	SPCB WSHP CHIG	Years 3&4	Health wellb
Domestic abuse - Work with Community Safety to review Sanctuary Scheme and Homesafe				
Consider the implementation of a Countywide Clean Break module.	Existing Staff, Homelessness Grant and other funding streams	CHSC, SP and DAAT	Years 3-5	-

Introduce multi agency assessments for vulnerable adults similar to Common Assessment Framework	Existing staff resources, Worcestershire Link Up	Link Up Vulnerable Adults Team	Years 3-5	-
Investigate the feasibility of a County-wide co-ordinator post to work with LA's and the Voluntary Sector regarding the Localism Agenda & Big Society	Investigate funding streams with key partners	All Local Authorities	Year 3	

Goal 3

Investigate the potential for social enterprise projects led by service users.	Existing staff resource, HIA	SP Voluntary Sector	Years 3&4	-
Develop Supporting People positive activities for street homeless and substance misusers etc.	Existing staff resources, SP funding	NAC Project Group	Years 3&4	-

Goal 4

Look at different models of accommodation and support relating to affordability and disincentives to work through subsidised rents or use of DHP.	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Years 2&3	-
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Ongoing commitments

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There are a number of commitments identified during the development of the strategy that will be assumed as everyday work. These will not be specifically included in the action plan as they are not SMART, however, they are listed below to ensure continued commitment;


- Monitor and respond to allocations policy changes and the challenges this may present for customers and in terms of preventing homelessness, in the light of draft revised Code of Guidance on Allocations and changes arising from the Localism Act
- Monitor and respond to threats to LA Homelessness Grant (exit strategies).
- Identify and bid for relevant funding opportunities in conjunction with statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Support the work of the Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse
- Support Worcestershire Link Up in the development of a web based directory of housing and health related services for Worcestershire.
- Work with existing advocacy services to raise awareness of their services across the county, and increase signposting.
- Improve relationship with council/RSL housing management teams to try and prevent homelessness through evictions
- Continue to support the development and sustainability of the Family Intervention Project by encouraging housing providers to identify families with complex needs who may be facing eviction due to ASB or rent arrears, and assist in addressing issues.
- Work with Supporting People to identify the need for Countywide Homelessness Mental Health Workers.
- Promote integrated working between housing and substance misuse services, ensuring the continuing engagement of housing professionals accessing drug and alcohol training.
- Manage supporting people budget reductions by supporting strategic service reviews including single homeless, mental health, learning disability, physical disabilities, domestic abuse and chaotic lifestyles.
- Support the implementation of the Supporting People Strategy
- Ensure the continuation of Worcestershire Link Up to ensure a single point of access to accommodation and support for single homeless people.
- Consider the impact of the personalisation agenda when developing or reviewing strategic housing procedures, policies, service improvement plans and strategies.

Appendix ? – Achievements from the last strategy



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Action Plan – Year One (2007-08)





Goal	Priority	Lead & Partners	Opportunities & Risks	Resources	Milestones & Target Timescales	Expected Outcomes	Achieved/Comments
Establish a County wide Multi Agency Homelessness Strategy Steering Group	To develop joint working processes and strategic partnerships to improve the delivery of services	Lead: CHOG Partners: CHOG Plus Nacro/ Probation Community Mental Health Teams, Women's Aid Voluntary Agency reps	Opportunities: To monitor and evaluate the successful implementation of the action plan and improve service delivery to the customer Risks: To fail to achieve comprehensive multi agency representation	Officer Time	Target: Paper written and circulated for discussion May 2007. Agreement to new structure July 2007. Quarterly meetings est. Bi-annual progress report on the action plan to be prepared	To provide a formalised approach between agencies on homelessness. To deliver a seamless service to homeless or potentially homeless customers.	 Group was set up to monitor last strategy and is now working on revising document.
Develop and implement joint protocols and regular liaison meetings with key agencies	To develop joint working processes and strategic partnerships to improve the delivery of services	Lead: CHOG/HOG Partners: PCT, Probation, Nacro, CMHTs, Women's Aid, refuges, Supporting People	Opportunities: Better working relationship with partners. Improved service for customers Risks: Clients not being correctly signposted to services. Increased Homelessness due to prevention mechanisms not being accessed at an early enough stage. Regular training and ensuring use of protocols	Officer Time	Target: Hospital Discharge Protocol - April 2007. Housing and Probation Protocol – July 2007	Improved access to services and customer satisfaction. Improved performance in prevention of homelessness.	 Carry this item over Different groups have been set up to develop and monitor various protocols and working practices, and liaise with different agencies. As a result a number of documents have been produced and a range of meetings take place, but others are still needed (more specific details further on).
Develop joint training and job shadowing initiatives across the county	To share good practice and knowledge of the delivery of housing advice, homeless prevention and other related services	Lead: HOG Partner agencies County Training Group	Opportunities Improved relations and understanding of roles Risks Having time available to organise and release staff	Officer time	Target: July 2008 scope project with ES and HOG. August contact relevant organisations. September 2008 begin training and shadowing initiatives	Improved working relationships between statutory and voluntary organisations. Improved knowledge of services on offer to people who are threatened with homelessness for all providers involved.	 Carried out through County Training Group. Also initiatives take place such as mystery shopping.






Goal	Priority	Lead & Partners	Opportunities & Risks	Resources	Milestones & Target Timescales	Expected Outcomes	Achieved/Comments
Investigate provision of another direct access hostel, Nightstop and Foyer in the county to address differences in current provision	Support the development of appropriate types of temporary, permanent and move on accommodation for a variety of client groups	Lead: WFDC/ Wychavon Partners: Supporting People, Nightstop, Bromsgrove Youth Homeless Forum, Centrepoint Foyer Federation, Connexions	Opportunities: Improve supply of accommodation with training and support Risks: Targeted group remaining in unsuitable TA Risk of tenancy failure	SP Budget Housing Corporation	Supported accommodation bids to HC – June 2007. Ongoing research into needs. Target: March 2008 Completion of SP homelessness review – Target: March 2008	Expansion of Nightstop in South Worcestershire Provision of at least 1 new Foyer in County	 Nightstop set up in south of county, and foyer in Bromsgrove

Action Plan – Year Two (2008-09)

Goal	Priority	Lead & Partners	Opportunities & Risks	Resources	Milestones & Target Timescales	Expected Outcomes	Achieved/Comments
Introduce a county wide, cross agency web based data collection package for single homeless people	To develop a countywide methodology and system of data collection for homelessness information	Lead: WCC Partners: Centrepoint WHABAC	Opportunities; Improve data collection for the county to inform strategies, work plans and bids inc removing double counting Risks; IT package, current data	Officer time	Target: August 2007 website to go live. September 2007 training to all users. March 2008 end of first 6 month report.	To support bids for funding from other organisations based on empirical evidence. Improved understanding of issues enabling for co-ordinated service delivery across agencies.	 Achieved as part of Worcestershire LinkUp project – also will be expanded to collect more info re all single homeless
Develop a county wide data capture system for standardised housing and homelessness information	To develop a countywide methodology and system of data collection for homelessness information	Lead: County Homeless Strategy Group Partners: County Council Research & Intelligence Unit	Opportunities; Improve data collection for the county to inform, update & monitor success of the strategy and actions Risks; Difficulties in developing services flexible enough to cope with changing demands	Officer time	Target: Establish sub-group to examine current data collection methods and agree type and system by December 2007. Ongoing quarterly reporting to strategy group.	Regular meetings to update statistical data. Measure the success of the County Homeless Strategy by seeing decreasing numbers of approaches and acceptances. Development of data recording system to inform policy decisions.	 Achieved through Worcestershire LinkUp project, and data is also available through HomeChoicePlus





Goal	Priority	Lead & Partners	Opportunities & Risks	Resources	Milestones & Target Timescales	Expected Outcomes	Achieved/Comments
Develop the existing customer satisfaction survey to capture information from all homeless clients	To develop a countywide methodology and system of data collection for homelessness information	Lead: County Homeless Strategy Group	Opportunities; Improved data on service users perceptions that will led to real engagement and improvement in service delivery Risks; Difficulties in developing services flexible enough to cope with changing demands	Officer time Prize money to encourage participation - £100 per authority	Target: December 2007 once P1Es for 2006/07 completed. September to meet to discuss format. October to distribute and collate responses. November to produce report. December to feedback responses to strategy group / committee.	Data captured on homeless households not accepted for statutory re-housing. Production of standardised customer information to assist with service delivery options.	 Although surveys have been carried out, most recently as part of the consultation for the Strategy, they need to be undertaken on a regular basis Needs to be carried over
Review the homeless application process	To develop joint working processes and strategic partnerships to improve the delivery of services	Lead: Bromsgrove Partners: All district LAs	Opportunities: Improvements in accessibility and consistency. Risks: None	Officer Time	Target: To review the current homeless application process across the county by September 2007. To identify appropriate changes and produce report by December 2007. To implement changes by March 2008.	Improved application or applications tailored to client groups as appropriate and compliant with equalities requirements. Ensure efficiency and practicality of system	 Needs to be undertaken to develop good practice and to include Equality Impact Assessment Needs to be carried forward
Develop resettlement packages appropriate to people's needs	To empower customers to make a positive change to their lives	Lead: Supporting People Partners: County Homeless Strategy Group HOG	Opportunities Increasing the sustainability of tenancies and longer term homelessness prevention Risks Lack of resources to develop new services	Supporting People budget	Completion of supporting people homeless review Target: 2008-09	Reduction in the number of failed tenancies.	 Although a number of initiatives have been developed, to cover budgeting, life skills, accessing Social Fund etc, more work needs to be done in this area Needs to be carried over
Work with support providers and to key strategies to equip people with the skills to sustain a tenancy.	To empower customers to make a positive change to their lives	Lead: Worcester City Council Partners: HOG	Opportunities Increasing the sustainability of tenancies and longer term homelessness prevention Risks Lack of resources to provide courses	Officer time Cost of delivering training courses	Target: To undertake research in county with group of homeless households by July 2008. Identify training providers and costs by October 2008. Evaluation and feedback by February 2009 with view to establishing rolling programme and securing funding.	Improved experiences of households in temporary accommodation Reduction in the number of repeat or cross-generational homelessness Equipping people with the skills to make a house a home, avoid debt , be effective parents and have a healthy and happy life	 As above Needs to be carried over





Goal	Priority	Lead & Partners	Opportunities & Risks	Resources	Milestones & Target Timescales	Expected Outcomes	Achieved/Comments
Encourage the best use of existing stock by - increasing the % of RSL lettings to homeless households and other vulnerable groups (ASB) - tackling under occupation and empty homes - reducing the number of evictions/abandonments	Support the development of appropriate types of temporary, permanent and move on accommodation for a variety of client groups	Lead: Wychavon Partners: Other LAs, partner RSLs, Private Sector Fora, North Worcs Care and Repair Agency	Opportunities: Increase supply and provision of Affordable Housing Risks: Vulnerable groups will remain in unsuitable accommodation	Officer time	Work with prevention officers group to look at best practice examples. Target: September 2008 Under-occupation schemes set up across the county. Target: March 2009	Ensure that a minimum of 30% general needs lettings going to homeless households across County. Empty homes back into use – targets according to each local authority. Reduce the number of homeless approaches due to eviction to less than 5 per annum across the county.	 Information on lettings collected from CORE data Empty homes data collected as part of county Housing Strategy Difficult to achieve as dependant on factors outside realm/scope of this strategy
Ensure all temporary accommodation provided is good quality, self contained and where support can be accessed if required.	Support the development of appropriate types of temporary, permanent and move on accommodation for a variety of client groups	Lead: Malvern/ Bromsgrove Partners: Other LAs, Supporting People/ support providers, RSLs	Opportunities: Standardise quality of temporary accommodation across County Risks: Unsuitable accommodation without support remaining	Officer time	Mapping exercise completed by July 2008. Further research to follow after above completed	Reduction in the number of failed tenancies. People able to maintain employment, education etc whilst occupying temporary accommodation. No detrimental effects on health and well being through occupying temporary accommodation.	
Improve mechanisms to record the longer term outcomes of homelessness prevention	To develop a countywide methodology and system of data collection for homelessness information	Lead: Prevention officers group Partners: Support providers Voluntary & community agencies	Opportunities; Improve data collection for the county to inform and update the strategy Risks; Difficulties in developing services flexible enough to cope with changing demands	Officer time	Target: Attend prevention officers group to launch project by July 2008. Identify remit of project and analyse information by Dec 2008. Produce report for consideration by strategy group by March 2009.	Monitor the long term effectiveness of homelessness prevention across the county to inform use of resources and policy decisions	 Through Abrisas and P1E information
Encourage the best use of existing stock by - remodelling/re-designation of stock - loft conversions	Support the development of appropriate types of temporary, permanent and move on accommodation for a variety of client groups	Lead: Wychavon Partners: Other LAs, partner RSLs, Private Sector Fora, North Worcs Care and Repair Agency	Opportunities: Increase supply and provision of Affordable Housing Risks: Vulnerable groups will remain in unsuitable accommodation	Officer time	Work with RSLs to consider remodelling options. Target: March 2009 Work with private sector officers group to look at best practice examples. Target: September 2008	Less popular stock remodelled for alternative client groups / supported accommodation. Families able to remain in own home and extend living space to reduce overcrowding through	 Although some districts have done this, others haven't Needs to be carried over

						loft conversion grants.		
Goal	Priority	Lead & Partners	Opportunities & Risks	Resources	Milestones & Target Timescales	Expected Outcomes	Achieved/Comments	
Research and improve links with private sector landlords to prevent homelessness and overcome issues of access	To better understand the needs of key client groups for the delivery of appropriate housing services and to prevent homelessness	Lead Worcester CC Partners Other DC's HB teams Private Sector Landlord Forums County Council	Opportunities Increasing the availability and quality of private rented stock Risks Increasing number of vulnerable homeless	Officer time	Target: Autumn 2008	Reducing the number of homeless acceptances due to the end of AST's and preventing homelessness through improving access to the PRS	 Has been achieved, but needs to be updated for next Strategy, to include initiatives such as Social Lettings Agency Needs to be carried over	
Investigate the feasibility of a countywide youth homelessness service for young people	To better understand the needs of key client groups for the delivery of appropriate housing services and to prevent homelessness	Lead Worcester CC & Wyre Forest DC Partners Bromsgrove Youth Homeless Forum Centrepoint, YMCA Nightstop Other DCs, Connexions	Opportunities Increasing range of affordable housing Risks Failure to identify a provider or resources	Officer time	Target: Spring 2008	Reduction in youth homelessness across the district A better, more co-ordinated and holistic service for young people	 Feasibility work was undertaken as part of SP Young People Strategic Review – led to development of The Bubble in the south, & St Basils/foyer in the north	
Consider the need to develop support services to tackle social exclusion for those who fall through the net of statutory agencies	To better understand the needs of key client groups for the delivery of appropriate housing services and to prevent homelessness	Lead Worcester CC Partners Other DC SP Social Services	Opportunities Tackling rough sleeping & chaotic clients with complex needs and thereby reduce costs incurred by PCT, Police etc Risks Increasing numbers of homelessness, particularly rough sleepers	Officer time initially Financial resources from Supporting People, Community Safety and Voluntary Agencies	Outcomes from SP Homeless Review Target: December 2008	Reduction in social exclusion and homelessness for chaotic client groups. Reduction in costs for PCT, Police etc	 Range of initiatives have been developed e.g. LinkUp, WHIT, Night Assessment Centre, SP single homeless review. NB Needs to be carried over (for continuation of NAC and work around "No Second Night Out")	
Develop and implement joint protocols and regular liaison meetings with key agencies	To develop joint working processes and strategic partnerships to improve the delivery of services	Lead: CHOG/HOG Partners: PCT, Probation, Nacro, CMHTs, Women's Aid, refuges, Supporting People	Opportunities: Better working relationship with partners. Improved service for customers Risks: Clients not being correctly signposted to services. Increased Homelessness due to prevention mechanisms not being accessed at an	Officer Time	Target: Mental Health and Housing Protocol – 2008 / 09 Domestic Violence Protocol – 2008 / 09 Adult Services protocol – 2008 /09	Improved access to services and customer satisfaction. Improved performance in prevention of homelessness.	 Although some protocols have been produced (probation, domestic abuse, 16/17 year olds, hospital discharge) others are still needed (countywide rough sleepers/NAC, mental health, severe weather, ex-servicemen) Needs to be carried over	





			early enough stage. Regular training and ensuring use of protocols				
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Action Plan – Year Four (2009-10)

Goal	Priority	Lead & Partners	Opportunities & Risks	Resources	Milestones & Target Timescales	Expected Outcomes	Achieved/Comments
To develop a housing advice toolkit (to include homelessness prevention and good practice directory)	To share good practice and knowledge of the delivery of housing advice and homeless prevention services	Lead: Malvern Hills District Council / Elgar Housing Partners: County Homeless Strategy Officers Group	Opportunities Comprehensive & consistent range of services available across the county Risks Officer time to develop	Officer time Printing costs	Target: To meet with MHDC and review progress on their housing advice toolkit by July 2009 To consider research into prevention methods undertaken in previous year. To develop draft by January 2010. To circulate to each council by February 2010. Toolkit agreed by March 2010.	Comprehensive and consistent county wide housing advice delivered to service users through a variety of organisations across the county Increase in officer knowledge of cross boundary services	 Needs to be carried forward – develop along lines of Homeless Link orange pages?
Develop comprehensive homelessness awareness raising in schools	To share good practice and knowledge of the delivery of housing advice and homeless prevention services	Lead: Homeless Officers Group Partners Centrepoin, Schools, Connexions	Opportunities Early prevention Risks Officer time / resources may not be available Schools not interested in delivering training	Officer time Training materials	Develop appropriate training package by June 2009. Contact schools for new academic year by September 2009. Deliver sessions throughout December – March 2010.	A reduction in the number of under 25 approaching as homeless and increasing the number of preventions to this age group	 Needs to be carried forward – also liaise with Education Department at County Hall, to ensure put on to curriculum for PHSE
Use knowledge to develop specialised projects such as good practice in DHP and HB administration, mediation services across all client groups etc.	To share good practice and knowledge of the delivery of housing advice and homeless prevention services	Lead: Wychavon County Homeless Strategy Officers Group	Opportunities Early intervention and prevention Risks Barriers from other departments and organisations	Officer time Resources for new schemes e.g. £60k for relate mediation project	To develop in conjunction with prevention toolkit. Target: 2009 - 10	Developing a range of services to support the prevention toolkit. Delivery of high quality and consistent services across the county.	 Although some projects were set up e.g. for mediation, these weren't maintained (but now being re-established). Other issues increased priority due to impending welfare reform Needs to be carried forward
Undertake regular county benchmarking exercises	To develop a countywide methodology and system of data collection for	Lead: County Homeless Strategy Officers Group	Opportunities Ensure cost effectiveness of services Risks Service becomes to	Officer time	Develop new set of measures that are activity based. December 2009 Collect data and analyse by March 2010	Possible cost savings and efficiencies identified	 Although this has been undertaken as part of the homeless review, needs to be carried out regularly e.g. by using HQN package and

	homelessness information		cost driven					reviewing Action Plan annually Carry over
Goal	Priority	Lead & Partners	Opportunities & Risks	Resources	Milestones & Target Timescales	Expected Outcomes	Achieved/Comments	
Work with Supporting People to review the support provision specifically to homeless households	To develop joint working processes and strategic partnerships to improve the delivery of services	Lead: Worcestershire Supporting People Partners: DCs RSLs Other Statutory and Voluntary Sector organisations	Opportunities: Timely strategic review Risks: To transform services may be long term	Staff time Realignment of funding Worcestershire hire Supporting People funding	Participation in the strategic review Joint ownership of the strategic targets Target: March 2010	No pre-determined outcomes Strategic targets will be based on partnership and customer feedback to the review team		Carried out on ongoing basis, and will continue into new strategy Needs to be carried over
Develop a comprehensive range of supported housing options	To empower customers to make a positive change to their lives	Lead: SP & CHOG		Supporting People	3 SP schemes to secure HC capital funding in the 2008-10 bidding round	To meet the objectives of the Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy		Projects set up such as foyer in Bromsgrove and accommodation in Worcester. Needs to be carried over as ideas include wet hostel
Increase the supply of supported move-on accommodation for victims of domestic violence	Support the development of appropriate types of temporary, permanent and move on accommodation for a variety of client groups	Lead: Redditch/ Bromsgrove DC. Partners: Other LAs, County DV Forum, Supporting People, Women's Aid	Opportunities: More suitable and appropriate accommodation Risks: To remain in unsuitable temporary accommodation	SP Strategic Review	Target: July 2009	Need to await outcome of SP reviews – increase in types of accommodation available to occupy including refuge spaces, self-contained safe houses and sanctuary schemes.		Safe houses and sanctuary scheme have been set up
Implement Choice Based Lettings model based on Wychavon's model throughout the county	To develop joint working processes and strategic partnerships to improve the delivery of services	Lead: Wychavon D C Partners: DCs RSLs	Opportunities: DCLG funding To build on success of existing scheme Risks: Managing the changeover to CBL scheme on an individual district basis	Staff time DCLG funding and direct funding from DCs and RSL partners	Gaining support of politicians and stakeholders Bid submission Partnership approach to developing model and implementation Target: March 2010	Successful implementation of the CBL scheme across the county Increased choice for local people People having sufficient understanding of housing issues and a range of options to be able to exercise choice effectively		HomeChoicePlus has been implemented across the county

Action Plan – Year Four (2010-11)

Goal	Priority	Lead & Partners	Opportunities & Risks	Resources	Milestones & Target Timescales	Expected Outcomes	Achieved/Comments
Increase the supply of move-on accommodation for substance misusers	Support the development of appropriate types of temporary, permanent and move on accommodation for a variety of client groups	Lead: Worcester Partners: Other LAs, CDT, Supporting People, SMAT	Opportunities: More suitable and appropriate accommodation Risks: To remain in unsuitable temporary accommodation	SP Strategic Review	Feasibility work completed Target: March 2011	Need to await outcome of SP reviews. Reduce the use of inappropriate accommodation, including where people are occupying supported or emergency accommodation they no longer require.	 Ongoing - projects established through WHABAC and bids have gone in to HCA Needs to be carried over
To support the development and delivery of related strategies to ensure strategic relevance	To develop joint working processes and strategic partnerships to improve the delivery of services	Lead: HOG	Opportunities: Improved service for clients Risks: Conflict with district council priorities could lead to failure to deliver objectives	Officer time	As per individual strategy	Ensure strategic fit with Supporting People 5 year plan, Children and Young persons plan, Domestic Violence strategy, Worcestershire Youth Homeless Partnership strategy, Teenage pregnancy strategy, county parenting strategy. Ensure strategic ownership of the strategy	 County Homeless Strategy Steering Group and other partnership working mean have contributed to new strategies and action plans
Develop appropriate housing services for migrant workers and gypsies based on outcome of the SHMA research	To better understand the needs of key client groups for the delivery of appropriate housing services and to prevent homelessness	Lead Wychavon DC Partners Other DC Planning sections County Council	Opportunities To utilise resources effectively across the county Risks Additional service demands but limited resources	£3,000 per district and county	Target: December 2007 for research to be completed. Sites identified as part of Joint Core Strategy July 2008 – October 2010. Submitted to secretary of sites in January 2009. District councils to develop policies for dealing with migrant workers and gypsies and travellers by March 2011.	South HMA Partnership to work together to consider and develop additional sites and services relating to housing and health based on identified need.	 MIRA project set up for migrant workers/no recourse to public funds.  Need for sites for permanent pitches Needs to be carried over

