

Joint Homelessness Strategy for West Kent: Towards 2010 (2007)

Action Plan – progress update to 30 June 2009

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009						
1.	Prevent homelessness *	<p>Ensure all applicants receive housing options and advice to prevent homelessness, including rough sleepers and non-priority groups *</p> <p>Produce a reconnection policy where non-priority groups do not have a local connection to the Council they applied to, to ensure they are supported in the area to which they have a connection*</p>	Year on year decrease in homelessness acceptances to meet 2010 target	<p>Reduce numbers of homelessness acceptances by 50% by 2010 from baseline year of acceptances in 2005/06:</p> <p>TMBC = 186 Baseline: 93</p> <p>Adopt policy during 2008/09</p>	<p>TMBC Homelessness acceptances to March 2009:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1301 501 1644 564"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="1301 501 1413 533">06/07</th> <th data-bbox="1413 501 1525 533">07/08</th> <th data-bbox="1525 501 1644 533">08/09</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="1301 533 1413 564">184</td> <td data-bbox="1413 533 1525 564">173</td> <td data-bbox="1525 533 1644 564">32</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Since the homelessness and housing register services came back in-house in March 2008, there has been a marked decrease in homelessness acceptances. The housing options team have taken a more proactive approach, providing housing advice and options to customers as soon as possible.</p> <p>From April 2008, the P1E statistics have included a requirement to provide data on the number of cases where homelessness has been prevented or relieved. In 2008/9, homelessness was prevented or relieved for 176 households.</p> <p>Kent wide reconnection policy developed in partnership with the Supporting People Team and the Joint Policy and Planning Board for Housing. Adopted December 2007.</p>	06/07	07/08	08/09	184	173	32
06/07	07/08	08/09									
184	173	32									

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009												
2.	Prevent homelessness as a result of parental eviction	Produce home visit procedure note	Procedure note produced by September 2007	Conduct home visits as a result of parental eviction (where appropriate) to prevent homelessness	Deferred pending completion of lone worker training for staff by March 2010, and capacity within the Options Team to resource home visits. Currently, home visits are undertaken if requested by the customer or if eviction is imminent.												
3.	Prevent homelessness amongst 16/17 year olds*	<p>Evaluate current mediation services and ensure effective service in place*</p> <p>Re-visit Supported Lodgings scheme and consider options available*</p> <p>Explore funding for programme of schools workshops across West Kent Councils to prevent homelessness amongst young people*</p>	<p>Scheme cost appraisal to be conducted in partnership with Rainer 16 + and the Bridge Trust by September 2007</p> <p>School workshops programme established by April 2008</p> <p>Explore funding</p>	<p>Maximise opportunities for referring cases to mediation services where appropriate</p> <p>Year-on-year reduction in homelessness amongst 16/17 year olds to 2010</p>	<p>Discussions ongoing with two providers - West Kent Mediation and the Bridge Trust, to evaluate the services provided and establish the demand amongst this age group.</p> <p>The supporting lodging scheme has not yet been re-visited however a site for nine units of accommodation-based support has been identified in Tonbridge for 16-24 year olds. TWBC and SDC are working on similar schemes in their areas.</p> <p>Numbers of 16/17 year olds accepted as homeless:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>06/07</th> <th>07/08</th> <th>08/09</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>5</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Number of 16/17 year olds contacting the Council for housing options and advice:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>06/07</th> <th>07/08/</th> <th>08/09</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>11</td> <td>11</td> <td>61</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Work on a countywide schools programme was commissioned by the JPPB and carried out by a researcher employed by TWBC, who is in the process of collating the work. Final report expected within the next six months.</p>	06/07	07/08	08/09	2	5	2	06/07	07/08/	08/09	11	11	61
06/07	07/08	08/09															
2	5	2															
06/07	07/08/	08/09															
11	11	61															

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
			opportunities to run 'Theatre Active' workshops in West Kent schools by April 2008		Deferred pending outcome of research into schools programme.
		<p>Explore scope for specialist housing advice service and advocacy for young people</p> <p>Explore feasibility of specialist housing benefit advisor for young people</p> <p>Encourage advice providers to record incidences of young people presenting for advice</p>	<p>Meeting held with Connexions and other relevant agencies to consider options by March 2008</p> <p>Liaise with respective Housing Benefit Managers by April 2008 to consider the issues and options</p> <p>Develop common monitoring form and seek adoption by providers by April 2008</p>	Year-on-year reduction in homelessness amongst 16/17 year olds to 2010	<p>Deferred until in-house service returned and settled. Existing support agencies are already providing specialist housing advice to young people, most notably Connexions and Catch 22. The Housing Options Team has good links with these and other support organisations.</p> <p>Some progress made but not yet fully implemented.</p> <p>NB: All customers are assisted with housing benefit claims and the options team work closely with the benefits section. E.g. Housing Benefit payable direct to landlord if a customer such as a young person is vulnerable. Customers also assisted to apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment to top up benefit payments when this can help prevent homelessness.</p> <p>Some progress made but not yet fully implemented.</p>
4.	Prevent homelessness amongst those at risk of domestic violence*	<p>Ensure LSVT RSLs and other key RSLs in West Kent have a clause in their tenancy agreements to take possession action against perpetrators of domestic violence</p> <p>Develop protocol with RSLs for cases of threatened homelessness involving tenants who are victims of domestic violence, including sub-regional reciprocal arrangements</p>	<p>Liaise with all RSL partners during 2007/08 and seek amendment to tenancy agreements as appropriate</p> <p>Hold meeting with RSL partners during 2007/08 to take forward</p>	Homelessness prevented amongst those at risk of domestic violence by September 2009	<p>Contact with RSLs to be undertaken by March 2010.</p> <p>MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee) established in West Kent and is attended by the Housing Needs and Strategy Manager. High risk domestic violence cases are considered at this panel and additional priority on welfare grounds will be awarded to housing register applicants who need an urgent move.</p>

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
		<p>Identify common areas for improvement within BVPI 225 and seek to address areas of weakness</p> <p>Analyse the need for support services for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community and BME groups at risk of domestic violence</p>	<p>Cross borough meeting held to consider performance against requirements under the BVPI, by April 2008</p> <p>Liaise with Police Domestic Violence unit and other agencies to better understand the support needs of the groups by March 2008</p>		<p>The Sanctuary Scheme has been revived since the services returned in-house. So far, two households have been assisted to remain in their homes with additional security measures put in place.</p>
5.	Prevent homelessness amongst ex-offenders	Liaise with Maidstone BC over their scheme to assist ex-offenders through empty homes initiatives	Cross borough meeting held with Maidstone BC by April 2008	(tbc)	<p>Ex offenders can now access a rent deposit scheme provided by the Probation Service in addition to the Council's own scheme. Kent wide ex - offenders' protocol was launched in June 2008 to re-settle and rehabilitate offenders, and to reduce crime in the community.</p>
6.	Provide clear information on people's housing options to prevent homelessness*	<p>Adopt standard housing options interview procedures and checklist for housing advisers</p> <p>Produce an options checklist for clients*</p> <p>Produce a procedure manual to cover housing advice, homelessness prevention and housing register services, ensuring quality assurance and monitoring</p> <p>Set joint service standards</p>	<p>By September 2007 NB: Milestones for objective 6 reviewed in May 2009 by sub-regional monitoring group, and amended to September 2009.</p> <p>By December 2007</p> <p>By end of March 2008</p> <p>By end of March 2008</p>	<p>Accurate advice and information booklets/fact sheets provided and handed out by March 2008</p>	<p>Interview procedures have been drafted as part of full housing options procedure guide.</p> <p>25 Housing advice factsheets are also available online.</p> <p>Checklist being devised as part of a housing options action plan which will be given to customers following a housing options appointment.</p> <p>Full set of housing options procedures almost complete. There have been a number of procedural changes to working practice since the service returned in-house in March 2008, and these will be reflected in the reviewed procedures.</p> <p>Service standards across the sub-region have been compared and</p>

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
		in conjunction with stakeholders and service users*			are all broadly the same.
		Produce standard and up-to-date factsheets and booklets on housing options and prevention across the three Councils, available in other languages and formats as appropriate, such as Braille and large print	Where booklets/factsheets in place – ongoing update. Where booklets/factsheet to be produced – by March 2008		Individual fact sheets maintained for the present time. Whilst there has been little demand for documents to be translated into other languages the Housing Options Team are currently identifying translation services that will provide this service as required.
7.	Ensure those involved in the prevention of homelessness are appropriately trained	Arrange joint training events across West Kent , including: diversity awareness; race equality; disability equality; and customer services training	Assessed training needs by July 2008	Joint training events held	Joint training events held on assessing medical and welfare cases and lone worker training. Diversity awareness and other training to be scheduled by March 2010.
8.	Target prevention at the true 'front line' agencies who might be the first point of contact for those at risk of homelessness	Identify relevant agencies across West Kent and provide them with information on prevention services, including advice for rough sleepers Attend external agency team meetings to promote homeless prevention services	Relevant agencies identified by April 2008 and information provided Commence from March 2008	Housing Services prevention agenda promoted to all front line agencies by April 2008	Local agencies have been advised of prevention services available through local forums and attendance at agency team meetings.

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
9.	Produce a 'spend to save' policy and identify the most cost effective homeless prevention tools	Analyse costs to each Council of taking a homeless application compared with the cost of a homelessness prevention case, including: staff costs, travel, floating support, B&B, storage, etc Produce a policy on how 'spend to save' will be used to prevent homelessness	Joint analysis carried out by January 2008 Policy developed by April 2008	Spend to save policy in place by April 2008	Cost comparisons have not yet been undertaken, however the Housing Options Team are aware that homelessness prevention is better for the household and less costly than the use of temporary accommodation. The Housing Options Team follows CLG guidance and good practice on homelessness prevention. The Spend to Save Budget is primarily used to fund deposit bonds.
10.	Ensure that comprehensive welfare rights and benefits and debt counselling are easily available in the area	Explore funding opportunities for West Kent debt counselling service	Liaised with Legal Services Commission /CLG/National Lottery and any others to determine potential funding sources, by April 2008	(tbc)	The housing options team have met with Tonbridge Debt Advice Centre to discuss referrals and several customers have been referred to this service. This has also been discussed with Tonbridge CAB and the housing options team have CAB debt packs in the office to give to customers who are referred to the CAB for debt advice. Further discussions have taken place with CAB caseworkers who provide advice surgeries in Snodland and Kings Hill.
11.	Prevent homelessness as a result of eviction or abandonment from RSL accommodation	Analyse tenancy management data from all local RSLs on tenancy terminations and enforcement activity to inform and target homeless prevention priorities	All RSLs contacted for details of evictions and abandonment during 2006/07 by September/October 2007 RSLs to implement any agreed revisions to procedures by July 2008	Reduction in RSL tenants becoming homeless by March 2010	The housing options team have an arrangement with Russet Homes, Hyde HA and Orbit HA to assist tenants facing eviction. The team is advised when the RSL is to apply for a bailiff's warrant and the tenant is contacted in the first instance by letter. If no response is received, a home visit is made to provide further advice. A folder containing information and useful paperwork including a 'stay' application is provided to the tenant at this stage. At least 10 evictions have been prevented as a direct result of our assistance during 2008/09.
12.	Provide more affordable accommodation to those with a supported housing	Explore opportunities for developing Night stop and Crash Pad facilities for use as emergency accommodation	Liaise with beacon and homelessness regional champions to determine the scope for developing such	To increase the level of provision of supported housing in	Initial discussions held with the Bridge Trust but this type of emergency accommodation was not considered viable due to the absence of suitable move-on accommodation.

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009												
	need		schemes in West Kent by April 2008	West Kent by 2010													
		Identify new build opportunities to provide housing and support for young people at risk Seek to prioritise the development of accommodation based supported housing for people with mental health issues in Tonbridge Aim to secure small self-contained units for young people through S106 agreements	To be progressed in advance of bid round Housing Corporation autumn 2007 Subject to affordable housing development opportunities arising in the area Work in partnership with RSLs and developers to secure units		Scheme for 16-24 year-olds identified (see item 3). Six further units of accommodation made available by Russet Homes spring 2009, bringing the total number of units to 10. See item 3 and above.												
13.	Improve access to permanent affordable housing*	Work with RSL partners to reduce the number of households placed in temporary accommodation/ B&B* Reviewing allocations policies to ensure reasonable preference is provided to those in housing need Explore ways to facilitate 'tenancy in trust' and	Numbers of homeless households in temporary accommodation reduced annually Review policies by April 2008 Seek legal advice and liaise with RSL	Halve the use of temporary accommodation by 2010 in line with BVPI 203	The housing options team have an ongoing commitment to reduce the numbers of customers having to access Bed & Breakfast accommodation and there has been a significant reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year end</th> <th>06</th> <th>07</th> <th>08</th> <th>09</th> <th>June 09</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Numbers</td> <td>72</td> <td>79</td> <td>78</td> <td>39</td> <td>44</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> The baseline figure submitted to CLG in 2005/06 was 81 . The 2010 Target is 41 . Allocations policy reviewed April 2009.	Year end	06	07	08	09	June 09	Numbers	72	79	78	39	44
Year end	06	07	08	09	June 09												
Numbers	72	79	78	39	44												

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
		guarantors for 16/17 year olds	partners by April 2008		
14.	Develop standard nomination and move-on agreements with housing providers including RSLs, supported housing providers and voluntary organisations	Produce standard nominations agreements and local lettings policies (where appropriate) for all new developments and historic developments where no agreement in place Roll out move-on agreements for accommodation providers not already signed up	Liaised with RSL partners and produce standard agreements Complete roll out during 2008/09	To have standard nominations agreements, local lettings policies (where appropriate) and move-on agreements in place by March April 2009	Local lettings plans produced for all schemes in excess of twenty units. Previous move-on agreements with the Bridge Trust and Christian Alliance (now known as Chapter One) no longer required following review of allocation policy, which gives reasonable preference to housing register applicants leaving supported accommodation.
15.	Explore options for a tenancy sustainment service, either jointly or individually for each District Council	Work towards developing a tenancy sustainment service for West Kent Explore provision of compulsory life skills training for young people as part of homelessness assessment process and before tenancy granted	Develop project brief and person specification by April 2008 and seek to identify potential funding sources Determine position with Supporting People Team and Connexions by April 2008	To identify the need for a tenancy sustainment service and explore funding opportunities by March 2010	Pre-tenancy training currently being trialled with YWCA (Young Women' Christian Alliance) and Russet Homes for young people currently registered on the Council's waiting list.
16.	Ensure existing support services are monitored to measure their	Liaise with Kent Supporting People Team to ensure support providers are being effective in helping to	Outcome analysis from Supporting People reviews to be provided by Kent Supporting	To have a system in place by March 2010 to	Supporting People prioritise referrals for floating support according to the level of need of the service user. When the housing options team indicates that support is required as soon as possible, the SP team ensure the referral is treated as urgent.

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
	effectiveness and support is targeted where it is most needed	sustain peoples tenancies	People Team to the districts to allow monitoring to take place by April 2008	ensure that existing support services are effective and support is targeted where it is most needed	
17.	Monitor tenancy sustainment in the private rented sector	Seek to better understand the reasons for the loss of ASTs by carrying out a review	Develop checklist of reasons for loss of AST (e.g. because of Housing Benefit shortfalls) by December 2007	To have a system in place to monitor tenancy sustainment in the private rented sector by March 2008	Checklist to be developed. Currently, where a customer becomes homeless as a result of the loss of an AST the Options Team contact the landlord to ascertain why, and whether particular problems such as rent arrears can be resolved through intervention.
18.	Ensure that vulnerable households are supported to access accommodation through the Kent Choice-based Lettings (CBL) scheme (subject to its implementation)*	Work with the Joint Policy and Planning Board (JPPB) and all agencies supporting vulnerable households to implement the vulnerable persons strategy for the Kent CBL scheme*	Vulnerable persons strategy completed in line with CBL project plan	To ensure that vulnerable households are supported to access accommodation through the Kent Choice-based Lettings (CBL) scheme from implementation of CBL scheme	Countywide Vulnerable Persons Strategy adopted by the CBL Project Board. Currently, 15 vulnerable applicants are being assisted to make bids for accommodation through Kent Homechoice.

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
19.	Ensure that all households accessing housing options and homelessness services receive appropriate and timely support	<p>Agree 'fast-track' service for clients at imminent risk of homelessness with Supporting People Team</p> <p>Agree ring-fenced pool of support for young people at risk of homelessness, particularly 16/17 year olds</p> <p>Monitor information on the vulnerability and disability of service users to ensure they are able to access appropriate advice and support</p> <p>Maintain regular contact with homeless households placed into temporary accommodation through floating support</p>	<p>By March 2009</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	To ensure that all households accessing housing options and homelessness services receive appropriate and timely support	<p>Floating support is prioritised for clients who need urgent assistance (see item 16).</p> <p>Prior to the introduction of CBL in April 2009, all applicants were invited to complete a Vulnerable Persons form to identify those with difficulties in accessing the service. Currently, 15 vulnerable applicants are being assisted to make bids for accommodation through Kent Homechoice.</p> <p>Households in temporary accommodation are not contacted on a regular basis as resources within the Housing Options Team do not permit this level of contact.</p>
20.	Keep housing register applicants fully informed of their position on the housing register and provide an easily accessible indication of the likelihood and timeframe of them	<p>Review standard letters sent with all new registrations to ensure realistic advice and information is given</p> <p>Conduct annual/bi-annual reviews of all applicants on the housing register</p>	<p>By April 2008</p> <p>System of annual/bi-annual reviews introduced by all three District Councils by</p>	To ensure that housing register applicants are fully informed of their position on the housing register and have an	<p>Letters sent to new housing register applicants provide contact details for the Housing Options Team so that customers facing homelessness can make contact to discuss their situation.</p> <p>Housing register reviewed March 2008 and March 2009</p>

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
	being rehoused		April 2008	understanding of the likelihood and timeframe of them being rehoused	
21.	Develop an understanding of the ownership structure of private rented housing across the sub region, including the buy-to-let market	<p>Liaise with Housing Benefit Services for list of largest landlords/letting agents receiving Housing Benefit (other than RSLs)</p> <p>Contact all landlords and letting agents in receipt of Housing Benefit on this list and set up bi-annual liaison meetings</p> <p>Contact all letting agents to request number of private rented sector properties on their books</p>	<p>Information obtained and analysis of sub region completed by April 2008</p> <p>By December 2007</p> <p>By December 2007</p>	To develop an understanding of the ownership structure of private rented housing across the sub region by July 2008	<p>Deferred due to other priorities.</p> <p>As above</p> <p>Not fully achieved although the Housing Options Team are collating this information gradually through ongoing contact with letting agents.</p>
22.	Encourage greater acceptance of clients referred from the Councils to private landlords/letting agents	Contact all letting agents across the sub-region and request a meeting to discuss the benefits of accepting Housing Benefit clients, the Councils' rent deposit schemes, tenancy support, introductory service and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)	By March 2008	Increase the number of clients referred from the Councils housed by private landlords/letting agents year-on-year	The number of landlords contacting the Council to offer properties for rent has increased. Currently, several letting agents will consider housing benefit claimants, particularly if they have a guarantor in place.

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
23.	Set up an introductory service to match prospective tenants with private tenancies	Formalise work already undertaken on a small scale with private landlords willing to engage with the Councils, into an introductory service for landlords	By March 2008	Increase the number of clients referred from the Councils housed by private landlords/ letting agents year-on-year	Landlord accreditation schemes currently being evaluated.
24.	Review existing rent deposit / bond schemes in light of tenancy deposit legislation and expand to provide a range of additional incentives for private landlords*	<p>Carry out review of existing policies to reflect the legislative changes, considering implications for the Councils</p> <p>Introduce 'guarantor' scheme as additional protection for landlords, using existing 'bond' schemes</p> <p>Visit all lettings agents in the sub-region to promote the rent deposit schemes and any changes made as a result of the legislation</p> <p>Provide named officer for landlords accepting clients through rent deposit schemes to contact in the event of any tenancy-related issue*</p>	<p>By March 2008</p> <p>By June 2008</p> <p>Visits started from December 2007 – ongoing</p> <p>September 2007</p>	Increase the number of clients referred from the Councils housed by private landlords/ letting agents year-on-year	<p>A full review of the rent deposit bond scheme was carried out in April 2009. In the majority of instances deposit bonds are provided rather than rent in advance and deposits, as was previously the case.</p> <p>The Deposit Bond Scheme has been reviewed and reported to SHAB on 18 May 2009.</p> <p>Deferred.</p> <p>Contact between Officer and Landlord is ongoing as required.</p>

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
		Explore ways of offering additional incentives to landlords, to help secure 12 month fixed term tenancies on 20% of rent deposits given	By March 2008		Funding insufficient for incentives to landlords. The Options Team usually arrange twelve months fixed term tenancies, as this allows the tenant to put money aside to build up their own deposit at a more affordable level than six month tenancies.
25.	Promote the private rented sector as a tenure of choice amongst those accessing housing options services*	Explore ways to offer rent deposit as a grant, instead of loan Offer additional incentives such as payment of letting agents' fees and guarantor Offer facilities for clients to seek and select accommodation in the private rented sector through internet access in Council offices with support from housing advisers to liaise with landlords to secure accommodation*	By March 2008	Increase the number of clients referred from the Councils housed by private landlords/ letting agents year-on-year	The Deposit Bond Scheme has been reviewed and reported to SHAB on 18 May 2009. Internet access at Kings Hill is limited but the new Tonbridge Gateway will have internet access for customers. The Housing Options Team are carrying out internet searches for customers to help them find privately rented properties and will contact letting agents and prospective landlords to try and secure suitable properties.
26.	Ensure services are equally accessible to minority ethnic communities and that any specific needs are taken into account in the planning and	Consult with ethnic minority groups when planning the future delivery of the service, e.g. engage with the Gypsy and traveller community through KCC Gypsy & Traveller Unit*	By March 2010	Services equally accessible to minority ethnic communities	A needs survey for gypsies and travellers was carried out in 2006.

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
	delivery of services*	Put in place joint racial equality strategies with the West Kent LSVT RSLs			
27.	Promote diversity issues e.g. awareness of issues affecting the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community*	Review policies and procedures in line with good practice to ensure equal access for clients accessing housing services*	By March 2008	Increased awareness of diversity issues	Work is currently underway on a corporate diversity policy.
28.	Ensure robust evidence of need is collated from all partners to plan for future service delivery and support any case made for additional provision	Develop a common monitoring system through the Joint Homelessness Strategy partnership to record levels of homelessness amongst different client groups across the three District Council areas	By January 2008	Improved evidence of need	Collation of statistics on homelessness currently underway, with particular focus on 16/17 year olds
29.	Determine the demand and supply case for sheltered housing and provision for frail elderly	Commission a West Kent research project	Meeting held with key agencies to progress review by March 2008	Older Persons Accommodation Review	Strategic Housing Market Assessment completed December 2008. West Kent research project now established.
30.	Ensure other agencies' strategies, policies and practices seek to minimise the risk of homelessness occurring	Carry out an impact assessment on key policy and practice Assess whether key partners' strategies and priorities have been influenced by the	Liaised with partner agencies and identified relevant policies and practices by March 2009.	Reduced homelessness resulting from other agencies strategies, policies and practices	Deferred. NB: The Housing Options Team has good working relationships with other agencies and the emphasis on prevention of homelessness is well understood. This is reaffirmed on a case by case basis. For example - staff dealing with clients with mental health problems that are due to be discharged from hospital are encouraged to contact the Housing Options Team as soon as they identify a potentially homeless patient with a local connection to this Borough

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
		prevention agenda and improve links to prevention			using the Kent wide In Patient referral form, as opposed to phoning the team on the day of discharged.
31.	Involve service users in service delivery and formation of new policy and strategy	<p>Arrange further service user involvement events to consult on the West Kent Homelessness Strategy</p> <p>Ensure service users involved are representative of the community and racial equality issues are taken into account</p> <p>Produce a customer satisfaction survey for use within housing options services across West Kent</p>	<p>By September 2007</p> <p>By September 2007</p> <p>By September 2007</p>	Increased awareness amongst of and influence of service users on Homelessness Strategy	<p>Involving service users in ongoing work on the homelessness strategy remains a priority. Further consultation is being organised and will take place by March 2010.</p> <p>Housing options clients are sent a customer satisfaction questionnaire following contact with the team. Comments and suggestions are recorded and acted upon where appropriate.</p>
32.	Identify potential homelessness through internal and external partners	Produce a common referral form to refer clients at risk of homelessness into each District Council's housing options teams	By September 2008	Improved recording and referral of potential homelessness to increase prevention	No common referral form has been created as yet. Agencies involved with a client at risk of homelessness normally make contact by phone in the first instance and a member of the Options Team will then start dealing with the case. This is working well at the moment.
33.	Develop protocols to liaise with partner agencies to prevent homelessness and	<p>Develop protocols in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital discharge • Release from prison 	By September 2009	Improved homelessness prevention and minimise use of B&B	<p>A countywide hospital discharge protocol is being developed and TMBC are represented on the working group that is taking this forward.</p> <p>Ex offenders protocol launched in June 09.</p>

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
	the use of B&B accommodation	<p>and ex-offenders / those on licence and supervised by probation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local courts for those on remand or who received a short sentence Domestic violence reciprocal arrangements Learning disability 		accommodation / build upon existing protocols in place for 16/17s, mental health hospital discharge and intentionally homeless families	<p>There are no plans to develop a protocol for those on remand or who have received a short sentence</p> <p>No formal domestic violence or learning disability protocol in place currently. To be re-visited as part of the action plan review.</p>
34.	Ensure that the standard of temporary accommodation meets the requirements of the Housing Health and Safety Rating system (HHSRS)	Set up agreements with other Kent local authorities to ensure that B&B / temporary accommodation is inspected regularly by the authority where the accommodation is located and any concerns are fed back to all local authorities through the Kent Homelessness Group	By September 2008	Ensure that B&B / temporary accommodation is of the required standard	B&B placements at the Hotel Leslie in East Kent have been investigated closely because the hotel obtained a reputation for having significant numbers of vulnerable people placed there from various parts of Kent. TMBC has not used this hotel but will apply the findings of the investigation when inspecting the B&B accommodation that it uses.
35.	Ensure that where emergency accommodation is required, vulnerable households are appropriately placed	Set up common monitoring arrangements similar to 'BABIE' across Kent and East Sussex to share information on current placements in emergency accommodation	By September 2009	Ensure that B&B / temporary accommodation used for vulnerable households is of the required standard	The emergency accommodation that is used is situated outside the borough. The Housing Options Team maintains regular telephone contact with all customers in emergency accommodation and undertakes visits when necessary.