

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

### Draft Action Plan: July 2010 – June 2011

No	Objective	Action	Measurable Outcomes / Timescales	Lead Responsibility	Resources
1.	Reduce homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all applicants receive housing options and advice to prevent homelessness, including rough sleepers and non-priority groups</li>   <li>• Explore a common format with the Joint Homelessness Strategy Steering Group members to record, and report, to the group incidences of people presenting for advice where the main issue was housing, including 16/17 year olds. Identify potential homelessness through internal and external partners</li>   <li>• Parental eviction: All Local Authorities (LAs) to conduct home visits where necessary and practical</li> </ul>	<p>To maintain reduction in homelessness acceptances (Baseline: no of acceptances July - Sept 2009)</p> <p>Continued increase in homelessness preventions (Baseline: no of preventions in July – Sept 2009)</p> <p>Format for recording incidents of people approaching as homeless or for housing advice set up by June 2010; stats provided by Sept 2010</p> <p>Each LA to carry out at least one parental eviction home visit per month, where appropriate</p>	<p>Housing Needs Managers</p> <p>Housing Needs Managers</p> <p>Housing Needs Managers</p> <p>Housing Options Officers</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources, although there may be some costs incurred by members of the Steering Group</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All LAs to ensure staff are trained to carry out home visits and negotiation with family members</li> <li>All LAs to take part in West Kent trial of Hospital Discharge Protocol, which aims to reduce homelessness amongst people being discharged from hospital</li> </ul>	<p>Training organised by December 2010</p> <p>Provide feedback on protocol to Kent JPPB - timescale to be confirmed</p>	<p>Housing Needs Managers / Housing Options Officers</p> <p>Housing Needs Managers</p>	<p>Additional resources may need to be identified if costs are not contained within existing budgets</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>
2.	Reduce homelessness amongst young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint protocol with Kent County Council Children, Families and Education for 16/17 year olds to be followed (updated Kent protocol currently awaited)</li> <li>16/17 year olds: All LAs to refer 16/17 year olds who are homeless due to parental eviction to a mediation service where appropriate</li> <li>Evaluate effectiveness of existing schools workshops with a view to exploring funding for a schools programme in the West Kent area</li> </ul>	<p>LAs to use protocol once adopted Kent-wide</p> <p>Referral arrangements in place (TMBC and TWBC to assess the viability of delivering a mediation service by December 2010)</p> <p>Schools workshops evaluated and funding explored by December 2010</p>	<p>Housing Needs Managers / Housing Options Officers</p> <p>Housing Needs Managers</p> <p>Housing Needs Managers</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>
3.	Reduce the risk of homelessness amongst those experiencing domestic abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and promote support services for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community and black and minority ethnic (BME) groups at risk of domestic violence</li> <li>Liaise with Police Domestic Abuse Unit and other agencies to better understand the support needs of applicants seeking rehousing as a result of domestic</li> </ul>	<p>Services identified and publicised by December 2010</p> <p>Liaison with Police Domestic Abuse Unit carried out by</p>	<p>Housing Needs Managers</p> <p>Housing Needs Managers</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>

		abuse	December 2010		
4.	Provide clear information on housing options to reduce homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each LA to have a procedure manual to cover housing advice, homelessness prevention and housing register services ensuring quality assurance and monitoring</li> </ul>	Each LA to have procedure manual in place by December 2010	Housing Needs Managers	Within existing resources
5.	Prevent homelessness as a result of eviction or abandonment from RSL accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a sub-regional Rent Arrears protocol to reduce the number of evictions for rent arrears from RSL and supported accommodation</li> </ul>	Rent arrears protocol in place by July 2010. All RSLs and other supported accommodation providers to be encouraged to sign up and put protocol into practice	Housing Needs Managers	Within existing resources
6.	Enable the provision of affordable housing to those with support needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities for developing Night Stop and Crash Pad facilities for use as emergency accommodation</li> </ul>	Research into Night Stop and Crash Pad accommodation completed by December 2010	Housing Needs Managers	Within existing resources
7.	Improve access to permanent affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with RSL partners to reduce the number of households placed in temporary accommodation / B&amp;B</li> </ul>	<p>Allocations policies to be reviewed to take account of new CLG guidance "Fair and Flexible"</p> <p>NI155 targets met for new affordable home provision (by end March 2011)</p> <p>KA2 targets met for new affordable home provision (by end March 2011)</p>	Housing Needs Managers	Within existing resources

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore viability of a tenancy sustainment service for West Kent, including whether floating support services are being provided at an early enough stage to be effective for vulnerable tenants</li> </ul>	<p>Use of existing stock maximised through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximising nomination rights</li> <li>Develop Under-occupation Policy (March 2011)</li> </ul> <p>Tenancy sustainment service researched by June 2010</p>	Housing Needs Managers	Within existing resources
8.	Promoting the appropriate use of the private rented sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All partners to provide comparable data to the Steering Group on the reasons for the loss of ASTs within the first six months</li> <li>Continue to hold regular sub-regional landlord fora every four months</li> <li>Continue to provide rent deposit bond schemes</li> </ul>	<p>Data provided on a quarterly basis from June 2010</p> <p>Three for a to be held per year; next forum is in Jan 2010</p> <p>Subject to funding for 2010/11, to achieve an increase in private rentals arranged through LAs rent deposit bond schemes by June 2011 (Baseline: Rentals arranged during 2009/10)</p>	<p>Housing Needs Managers</p> <p>Housing Needs Managers</p> <p>Housing Options teams</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote awareness of Supporting People rent deposit funding</li> </ul>	Subject to applications from people eligible for the funding, achieve an increase in private rentals for people leaving supported accommodation	Housing Options teams	Within existing resources
9.	Ensure services are equally accessible for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep under review relevant policies and procedures in line with good practice</li> </ul>	Ensure equal access for clients accessing housing services - ongoing	Housing Needs Managers	Within existing resources
10.	Monitor the impact of CBL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to implement the Vulnerable Persons Strategy to ensure that vulnerable households are supported to access accommodation through Kent Homechoice</li> <li>With other Kent Homechoice partners, develop proposals for cross-boundary mobility, on-line registration and the advertising of private rented accommodation</li> </ul>	<p>Each LA to review households on their Vulnerable Persons list by June 2010</p> <p>Timescales to be confirmed by CBL Project Board</p>	<p>Housing Register Officers</p> <p>Housing Needs Managers</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>
11.	Continue to ensure that relevant households have access to appropriate support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain regular contact with homeless households placed into temporary accommodation</li> <li>Refer applicants to Supporting People floating support services where appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>LAs to contact all households in temporary accommodation every six months from March 2010</p> <p>Floating support referrals to be completed within one week of support need being identified</p>	<p>Housing Options Officers</p> <p>Housing Options Officers</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources</p>

12.	Involve service users in service delivery and formation of new policy and strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include representative group of service users in all stakeholder consultation and information events</li> </ul>	<p>To look at a programme for including service users by September 2010. To have service users represented on the Steering Group and/or the Wider Homelessness Group by July 2011</p>	Joint Homelessness Strategy Steering Group	Within existing resources
13.	Ensure that emergency or temporary accommodation is appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All emergency B&amp;B accommodation is regularly inspected to ensure it meets health and safety requirements of HHSRS</li> <li>• Households placed outside of the borough in an emergency will be moved to more appropriate accommodation whenever practicable ( As per Kent agreement being developed by Kent County Council and Kent JPPB as a result of issues raised through use of Hotel Leslie in Thanet)</li> </ul>	<p>All B&amp;Bs inspected annually from July 2010</p> <p>To put agreement into practice within timescales set by JPPB</p>	Housing Needs Managers	Within existing resources
14.	Dealing with the current recession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide advice and assistance to homeowners in mortgage difficulties on how to access the Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme and other support as appropriate</li> <li>• Maximise the use of CLG Repossession Prevention funding to assist households at risk of possession</li> </ul>	<p>Monitoring of use and progress on MRS Action Plan reported to Joint Homelessness Strategy Strategic Group on quarterly basis.</p> <p>All LAs to report back on activity each quarter, starting in July 2010 (quarter 1 data)</p>	<p>Housing Needs Managers</p> <p>Housing Needs</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p> <p>Within existing resources until fully</p>

				Managers	spent
15.	Review West Kent Homelessness Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a timetable from commencement of review through to strategy becoming effective</li> <li>Carry out a review of homelessness services within West Kent with assistance of stakeholders including service users</li> </ul>	<p>Timetable in place by March 2010</p> <p>To commence review from April 2010</p>	<p>Housing Needs Managers</p> <p>Strategic group</p>	<p>Resources to be identified</p> <p>Resources to be identified</p>
16.	Undertake street count of rough sleepers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantify levels of rough sleeping within individual boroughs/district and the sub-region</li> <li>Explore additional methods of verifying and recording instances of rough sleeping</li> </ul>	<p>CLG count carried out as required</p> <p>Additional methods explored by June 2011</p>	Housing Needs Managers	Within existing resources

### Glossary of Abbreviations

CBL	Choice Based Lettings
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
TA	Temporary Accommodation
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment
HHSRS	Housing health and safety rating system
CLG	Communities and Local Government office
SP	Supporting People
AST	Assured shorthold tenancy
JPPB	Joint Policy and Planning Board – deals with Kent wide housing matters