

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

Action Plan – progress update to 30 June 2010

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 2010 :</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <thead> <tr> <th>06/07</th> <th>07/08</th> <th>08/09</th> <th>09/10</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>184</td> <td>173</td> <td>32</td> <td>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. 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 2009/10, homelessness was prevented or relieved for 183 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	09/10	184	173	32	32
06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10										
184	173	32	32										
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	Home Visit procedure note now completed. Lone worker training ongoing.								

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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>Explore scope for specialist housing advice service and advocacy for 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 opportunities to run 'Theatre Active' workshops in West Kent schools by April 2008</p> <p>Meeting held with Connexions and other relevant agencies to</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>TMBC and TWBC are working to assess the viability of delivering a mediation service by December 2010.</p> <p>The supporting lodging scheme was not re-visited however a scheme of nine units of accommodation-based support for young people is now on site with completion scheduled for 2010/11. 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" data-bbox="1301 667 1760 730"> <thead> <tr> <th>06/07</th> <th>07/08</th> <th>08/09</th> <th>09/10</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>5</td> <td>2</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" data-bbox="1301 855 1736 919"> <thead> <tr> <th>06/07</th> <th>07/08/</th> <th>08/09</th> <th>09/10</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>11</td> <td>11</td> <td>61</td> <td>65</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Members of the Housing Options Team have visited Wrotham School to deliver TMBC's existing schools programme. Using funding provided by the CLG, TMBC has now joined nine other local authorities across Kent to take part in the Porchlight Schools Programme which will run during the 2010/11 academic year.</p> <p>Existing support agencies provide specialist housing advice to young people, most notably Connexions and Catch 22. The Housing Options Team has good links with these and other support</p>	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	2	5	2	2	06/07	07/08/	08/09	09/10	11	11	61	65
06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10																		
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No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
		<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>consider options by March 2008 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>	<p>Year-on-year reduction in homelessness amongst 16/17 year olds to 2010</p>	<p>organisations.</p> <p>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>	<p>Homelessness prevented amongst those at risk of domestic violence by September 2009</p>	<p>Limited progress. NB: Russet Homes can already take possession proceedings on nuisance grounds if a tenant has perpetrated domestic abuse.</p> <p>MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee) established in West Kent and is attended by the Housing Needs 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>
		<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</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</p>		<p>Home Safety measures have been implemented and to date two households have been assisted.</p>

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
		Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community and BME groups at risk of domestic violence	and other agencies to better understand the support needs of the groups by March 2008		
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		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.
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 in conjunction with stakeholders and service users*</p> <p>Produce standard and up-to-date factsheets and booklets on housing options and prevention across the three Councils, available in</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>Where booklets/factsheets in place – ongoing update. Where booklets/factsheet to</p>	Accurate advice and information booklets/factsheets provided and handed out by March 2008	<p>Interview procedures have now been completed.</p> <p>25 Housing advice factsheets are also available online.</p> <p>A Housing Options interview action plan is currently being trialled, in response to customer feedback.</p> <p>Full set of housing options procedures now complete.</p> <p>Service standards across the sub-region have been compared and are all broadly the same.</p> <p>Individual fact sheets fully updated in June 2009.</p> <p>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</p>

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
		other languages and formats as appropriate, such as Braille and large print	be produced – by March 2008		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, lone worker training and assisting vulnerable adults. The Housing Options Team will also be attending training on the joint protocol for 16/17 year olds once this is launched (September 2010 onwards).
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. Ongoing
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 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 CLG provided the Council with funding of £38k in June 2009, so a Repossession Prevention fund could be set up to help households at risk of eviction. So far, 9 households have been assisted using this scheme.
10.	Ensure that comprehensive	Explore funding opportunities for West Kent	Liaised with Legal Services Commission		The housing options team have met with Tonbridge Debt Advice Centre to discuss referrals and several customers have been referred

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
	welfare rights and benefits and debt counselling are easily available in the area	debt counselling service	/CLG/National Lottery and any others to determine potential funding sources, by April 2008		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 15 evictions were prevented as a direct result of our assistance during 2009/10.
12.	Provide more affordable accommodation to those with a supported housing need	Explore opportunities for developing Night stop and Crash Pad facilities for use as emergency accommodation 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	Liaise with beacon and homelessness regional champions to determine the scope for developing such schemes in West Kent by April 2008 To be progressed in advance of bid round Housing Corporation autumn 2007 Subject to affordable housing development opportunities arising in the area	To increase the level of provision of supported housing in West Kent by 2010	Initial discussions held with the Bridge Trust but this type of emergency accommodation was not considered viable due to the cost, and absence of suitable move-on accommodation. 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.

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009												
		Aim to secure small self-contained units for young people through S106 agreements	Work in partnership with RSLs and developers to secure units		See item 3 and above.												
13.	Improve access to permanent affordable housing*	<p>Work with RSL partners to reduce the number of households placed in temporary accommodation/ B&B*</p> <p>Reviewing allocations policies to ensure reasonable preference is provided to those in housing need</p> <p>Explore ways to facilitate 'tenancy in trust' and guarantors for 16/17 year olds</p>	<p>Numbers of homeless households in temporary accommodation reduced annually</p> <p>Review policies by April 2008</p> <p>Seek legal advice and liaise with RSL partners by April 2008</p>	Halve the use of temporary accommodation by 2010 in line with BVPI 203	<p>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:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year end</th> <th>03.06</th> <th>03.07</th> <th>03.08</th> <th>03.09</th> <th>03.10</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Numbers</td> <td>72</td> <td>79</td> <td>78</td> <td>39</td> <td>19</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The baseline figure submitted to CLG in 2005/06 was 81. The 2010 Target was 41, which has been achieved.</p> <p>Allocations policy reviewed April 2009.</p>	Year end	03.06	03.07	03.08	03.09	03.10	Numbers	72	79	78	39	19
Year end	03.06	03.07	03.08	03.09	03.10												
Numbers	72	79	78	39	19												
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	Liaised with RSL partners and produce standard agreements	To have standard nominations agreements, local lettings policies (where appropriate) and move-on agreements in place by	Local lettings plans produced for all schemes in excess of twenty units.												

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
		Roll out move-on agreements for accommodation providers not already signed up	Complete roll out during 2008/09	March April 2009	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 effectiveness and support is targeted where it is most needed	Liaise with Kent Supporting People Team to ensure support providers are being effective in helping to sustain peoples tenancies	Outcome analysis from Supporting People reviews to be provided by Kent Supporting People Team to the districts to allow monitoring to take place by April 2008	To have a system in place by March 2010 to ensure that existing support services are effective and support is targeted where it is most needed	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.
17.	Monitor tenancy sustainment in the private rented	Seek to better understand the reasons for the loss of ASTs by carrying out a	Develop checklist of reasons for loss of AST (e.g. because of	To have a system in place to	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

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
	sector	review	Housing Benefit shortfalls) by December 2007	monitor tenancy sustainment in the private rented sector by March 2008	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, 31 vulnerable applicants are being assisted to make bids for accommodation through Kent Homechoice.
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>	By March 2009	To ensure that all households accessing housing options and homelessness services receive appropriate and timely support	Floating support is prioritised for clients who need urgent assistance (see item 16).

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
		<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>	Ongoing		<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, 31 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.	<p>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 being rehoused</p>	<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 April 2008</p>	<p>To ensure that housing register applicants are fully informed of their position on the housing register and have an understanding of the likelihood and timeframe of them being rehoused</p>	<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. Annual rolling review commenced April 2010.</p>
21.	<p>Develop an understanding of the ownership structure of private rented housing across the sub region, including the buy-to-let market</p>	<p>Liaise with Housing Benefit Services for list of largest landlords/letting agents receiving Housing Benefit (other than RSLs)</p>	<p>Information obtained and analysis of sub region completed by April 2008</p>	<p>To develop an understanding of the ownership structure of private rented housing across the sub region by July</p>	<p>Deferred due to other priorities.</p>

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
		<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>By December 2007</p> <p>By December 2007</p>	2008	<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.
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	Carry out review of existing policies to reflect the legislative changes, considering implications for the Councils	By March 2008	Increase the number of clients referred from the Councils	A full review of the rent deposit bond scheme was carried out in April 2009. Where possible, deposit bonds are provided rather than rent in advance and deposits. During 2009/10, there were a total of 11 bonds, 8 cash deposits and 23 households housed without financial cost to TMBC.

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
	expand to provide a range of additional incentives for private landlords*	<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>Explore ways of offering additional incentives to landlords, to help secure 12 month fixed term tenancies on 20% of rent deposits given</p>	<p>By June 2008</p> <p>Visits started from December 2007 – ongoing</p> <p>September 2007</p> <p>By March 2008</p>	housed by private landlords/ letting agents year-on-year	<p>The Deposit Bond Scheme was reviewed and reported to SHAB on 18 May 2009. Further review due November 2010.</p> <p>Deferred.</p> <p>Contact between Officer and Landlord is ongoing as required.</p> <p>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.</p>
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	By March 2008	Increase the number of clients referred from the Councils housed by private landlords/ letting agents	The Deposit Bond Scheme was reviewed and reported to SHAB on 18 May 2009. Further review due November 2010.

No.	Objective	Actions	Milestones	Target	Progress to 30 June 2009
		<p>Offer additional incentives such as payment of letting agents' fees and guarantor</p> <p>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*</p>		year-on-year	<p>Internet access at Kings Hill is limited but the Tonbridge Gateway has 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.</p>
26.	<p>Ensure services are equally accessible to minority ethnic communities and that any specific needs are taken into account in the planning and delivery of services*</p>	<p>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*</p> <p>Put in place joint racial equality strategies with the West Kent LSVT RSLs</p>	By March 2010	<p>Services equally accessible to minority ethnic communities</p>	<p>A needs survey for gypsies and travellers was carried out in 2006.</p>
27.	<p>Promote diversity issues e.g. awareness of issues affecting the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community*</p>	<p>Review policies and procedures in line with good practice to ensure equal access for clients accessing housing services*</p>	By March 2008	<p>Increased awareness of diversity issues</p>	<p>Work is currently underway on a corporate diversity policy. An officer steering group has been set up and will be carrying out an impact assessment on the housing needs functions during 2010/11.</p>

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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 in place, 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 prevention agenda and improve links to prevention	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 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	Arrange further service user involvement events to consult on the West Kent Homelessness Strategy	By September 2007	Increased awareness amongst of and influence of service users on Homelessness Strategy	Ongoing.

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		<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>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 the use of B&B accommodation	<p>Develop protocols in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital discharge • Release from prison and ex-offenders / those on licence and supervised by probation • Local courts for those on remand or who received a short sentence • Domestic violence reciprocal arrangements • Learning disability 	By September 2009	Improved homelessness prevention and minimise use of B&B accommodation / build upon existing protocols in place for 16/17s, mental health hospital discharge and intentionally homeless families	<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> <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>

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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	<p>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.</p> <p>B&B hotels used by TMBC were inspected in March 2010 and all were passed.</p>
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.