Homeless and Homeless Prevention Strategy Action Plan 2008-2013

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Actions	Outputs and targets	Lead	Progress	Target date	Key Partners			
Objective 1: Prevent homelessness through early intervention and targeted Housing Advice								
Develop best practice procedures to assist private tenants being illegally evicted	-Set up an internal working group -Review procedures for previous illegal evictions -Develop agreed protocol -Consult and distribute protocol with partner agencies	East Herts	Delay in starting project due to oter service priorities. Revise start date September 2009.	Sep-09 Nov-09 Dec-09 Mar-10	East Herts Legal Services, Environmental Health, Housing Options, CAB			
Make available accessible housing options literature and protocols to our partners and service users to support prevention and sustain tenancies	-Develop separate service user and partner literature -Promote advice services available from the Council and other agencies eg by advertising & links to other partner's websites	East Herts Housing Service	- Literature for service users and partners on Homelessness, Homeless Reviews, Housing Register and shared ownership. Developing literature on general advice available from Council's Housing Options Service. Links to other RSL websites on Council's website and County Council Supporting people Services. Also national and local advice agencies.	completed and ongoing Completed	East Herts Housing Service, RSLs, East Herts Homeless Strategy Group			
Continue to maintain and extend relevant housing advice services that are accessible to all sections of the community	-Continue to monitor the causes of homelessness - Develop a recording mechanism to review social housing evictions.	East Herts Housing Service	Monitoring of causes of homelessness kept up to date and discussed internally and also with Homeless Strategy Group. Top three housing associations to be requested at next Homeless Strategy Group to provide number and reason social housing evictions for 08/09.	Ongoing Jul-09	East Herts Housing Service, RSLs, East Herts Homeless Strategy Group			
	-Identify barriers and improvements to the service by working with other agencies		Communities and Local Government have provided a grant of £53,000, for 2009/10 to prevent re-possessions, evictions and lessen the impact of the recession on homelessness. Housing Options team have attended meetings with Homelessness Directorate on how to best spend grant for maximum impact. Housing Service working with County Council on a Hertfordshire wide project researching and identifying solutions to barriers to moving on from supported housing.	Ongoing				
	- Review existing preventions options and ensure they continue to be relevant.		Data regarding homeless preventions options are collated by the Housing Options Service and monitored by the Homelessness Directorate.	Completed and ongoing				
Continue to ensure money advice services and other services offering help with financial problems are available to all those who need them	-Continue to support the funding of the joint working CAB and East Herts debt advice worker	East Herts Housing Service	Debt Advice provided under agreement by CAB from within the Housing Options Service. Due to high volume of enquiries and case load the Housing Options Service has recently purchased an additional 2 hours a week of debt advice from the CAB.	Completed and ongoing	East Herts Housing Service, CAB			
	- Monitor value for money of the Debt Advice Service		The Housing Options Service provide an annual Grant of £11,500 and the Debt advisor has an average case load of 25 clients at anyone time. Average time spent with a client and number of interviews varies depending on complexity and clients ability to act on advice. Resolved debt issues for approximately 40 clients in 2008/09 of which more than half were private owner occupiers.	Ongoing				

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Ensure all agencies are aware of referral routes for access to floating support services.	- Support and influence Herts County Council's development of floating support service provision.	,	Senior Officer had sight of and influenced the tender brief for the service as developed by Herts County Supporting People Team	Completed	East Herts Housing Services, Herts County Council
	- Disseminate information made available by Herts County Council to our partners agencies.		Presentation by Herts Young Homeless Group regarding the 16-25 Floating Support Service given at the Homeless Strategy Group October 2008. Information, referral processes and documents for the general Floating Support Service provided by SP Housing also disseminated.	Completed	·
	- Obtain data from County Council to monitor take- up of services for East Herts residents		Supporting People monitor the use and take up of the Floating Support Service and all supported accommodation in Hertfordshire. Information regarding East Herts included in monitoring information discussed at the Supporting People Commissioning Body meetings. Supporting People representative also attends the Council's Homeless Strategy Group.	Ongoing	

Actions	Outputs and targets	Lead	Progress		Target date	Key Partners	
Objective 2. Develop and improve services to young people							
Support the effective working of the Young Persons Protocol	- Ensure East Herts are represented at protocol development meetings and publicise content to partners	Council	Senior Homelessness Officer attends county wide protocol development meetings. Protocol currently being reviewed following a House of Lords judgment on the roles of Children, Schools and Families and Housing Services for Homeless 16/17 year olds.		Completed and ongoing	Herts County Council, Herts Young Homeless Group, East Herts Housing Services	
	- Ensure East Herts representation on training & monitoring of protocol		Protocol training arranged by County Council. Officers from the Council have attended the training and also carried out some of the training on the roles and responsibilities of the Council's Housing Services.		Completed and ongoing		

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7. Support the County Council's LAA one	- Continue to collate figures from partners RSLs &	Herts County	Figures collated from the Housing Associations annually and passed to County	Completed and	Herts County
, 51 1	send to HCC	,	when requested.	ongoing	Council, Herts Young
sustaining their tenancy for longer than 6		Young			Homeless Group,
months	- Ensure, when needed, Floating Support referral	Homeless	All young people placed in temporary accommodation are referred to the HYHG	Completed and	RSLS, East Herts
	processes are accessible for young people placed in RSL accommodation.	Group (HYHG)	floating support service. This service also manages the transition from temporary to permanent accommodation.	ongoing	Housing Services
Continue to seek initiatives for the	- Support Herts County and the Crouchfield Trust	Fact Herts and	Council agreed in October 2008 to the development of the Young person Scheme	Ongoing -	Herts County
	to increase amount of supported accommodation		and also to sell a development site owned by the Council for £1 to a Aldwyck HA.	anticipate	Council, Crouchfield
I:	for young people in East Herts including the		Aldwyck currently carrying out a site feasibility study.	completed	Trust, East Herts,
	development of a young persons hostel.	004	, sanyan sansan, sansyang sara she isasaban,	project earley 2011	RSL(s),
	- Continue to monitor outcomes and support the	East Herts	The Council provides a grant to the YMCA to provide up to 4 young 16/17 year	Completed and	East Herts Housing
	YMCA project for 16 and 17 year olds. '	Housing Service	olds with 6 months intensive supported tenancies each year. A review of the project is included in the 2009/10 Health and Housing Service Plan. In 2008/09 4 young people went through the project of which 2 completed the training moved into the main YMCA project and 2 found alternative accommodation outside of the YMCA.	ongoing	Services, YMCA
	- Support partner agencies and HCC with initiatives such as supported lodgings, crash pad etc.	Council (HCC)	The Council has agreed a Housing Register Protocol for Care leavers with HCC and has inputted in to the Care leavers Accommodation Strategy being developed by Children, Schools and Families.	Ongoing	Herts County Council, East Herts Hosing Services

Actions	Outputs and targets	Lead	Progress	Target date	Key Partners
9. Work with HYHG, Aldwyck Housing Association and the County Council to increase the homeless prevention initiatives available for young people including awareness events at school.	- To reduce the number of 16 and 17 year olds placed in the Council's Homeless Hostels - 12 placements 07/08. - Reduce the number of 16 and 17 year olds who present as homeless. Baseline of 12 presentations in 07/08	East Herts Housing Services	In 2008/09 there were 10 placements of 16 and 17 year olds in the Council hostel. In 2008/09 the Housing Options team had 10 presentations from 16 and 17 year olds of which 8 were accepted for re-housing. The Council's Housing Option Team have provided £5,000 of funding to HYHG, with 4 other LAs in the County and the County Council, to support an awareness training of homelessness in schools aimed at 14 year olds. Targeting schools that have a high exclusion rates. To date carried out 6 sessions in Birchwood school in Bishop's Stortford and have been requested to attend John Warner School as the schools has pupils from Stanstead Abbotts.	Ongoing	East Herts Housing Services

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Objective 3: Improve the type and					
Work in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council Supporting People to develop suitable Housing/Housing Support for identified groups	- Attendance at Supporting People consultation and decision making meetings. Continue to engage with Hertfordshire SP regarding de- commissioning and commissioning SP funded services in East Herts.	Council	The Head of Health and Housing, Housing Strategy Manager and Housing Development Manager regularly attend Supporting People Commission Body, Programme Development Group and Older Persons Accommodation Project Board respectively and other appropriate meeting as required.	Ongoing	Herts County Council, East Herts Council
Halve the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010 - National Indicator	- Develop a supply and demand model, based on the London Commuter Belt framework, that helps to plan the future supply needs of temporary accommodation balanced against the availability of social housing.	London Commuter Belt Strategy Officers	No longer required as have met indicator a year early.	Not applicable	London Commuter Belt Housing Strategy Group, East Herts Housing Services

Actions	Outputs and targets	Lead	Progress	Target date	Key Partners
	Monitor and measure the number of households on quarterly basis and report to Homeless Strategy Group and Homeless Directorate. Target of 33 households by March 2010	East Herts Housing services	Monitored quarterly on Covalent and Homeless Strategy Group. At 31 March 2009 the Council had 32 homeless households in temporary accommodation thereby meeting the target of 33 households a year early. At June 2009 the Council had 32 homeless households in temporary accommodation.	Completed	East Herts Housing services
12. Ensure we continue to provide B&B accommodation only in an emergency and not more than 6 weeks and not for 16/17 year olds.	- Monitor and measure the number of households on quarterly basis and report to Homeless Strategy Group and the Governments Homeless Directorate. In 2007/08 the Council placed a total of 13 households in B&B for an average of ten nights	East Herts Housing Services	For 2008-09 we have placed 15 Households in B&B accommodation for an average of 11 nights. The actual number ranges from 1 night emergency accommodation to 5 weeks as our hostel accommodation was inappropriate. No one has been placed for more than 6 weeks. The Housing Options Team placed one 17 year old at the request of Childrens, Schools and Families (CSF) prior to a custodial sentence and a second who abandoned the accommodation and presented to another LA.	Ongoing	East Herts Housing Services, East Herts Homeless Strategy Group, RSLs
13. Continue to improve the quality and appropriateness of temporary accommodation available	- Continue to review the type and amount of temporary accommodation required to ensure it meets demand	East Herts Housing Services	Both Hillcrest and Thele Hostels returned to Council management November 08. Have employed a dedicated Hostel Officer who works within the Housing Options Team.	Ongoing	East Herts Council, Herts County Council
	- De-commission of Thele House as a temporary accommodation hostel.		Anticipate de-commissioning Thele Housie as homeless accommodation July 2009. Currently reviewing future use with Property Services.	Jul-09	
	- Re-develop Hillcrest to make the accommodation self contained.		Hillcrest has been remodeled into 11 units of flexible self- contained accommodation. Anticipate will be available for Homeless households early July 2009.	Jul-09	

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Objective 4: Improve services to homeless households and households in housing need							
14. Continue to make good use of Discretionary Housing payments	- Provide reports on spend and situations where DHP used.	East Herts Benefits Service	Figures for 2008/09 subject to confirmation.		Ongoing	East Herts Benefits Service	

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Actions	Outputs and targets	Lead	Progress	Target date	Key Partners
15. Enhance & Improve Choice Based Lettings in East Herts	Monitor the impact of CBL on Homeless prevention and Homeless households being housed and compare to previous years data.	East Herts Housing Services	Homeless prevention continues to work well . Points revised for homeless households in council Hostel Accommodation to ensure that after 3 months they are likely to make a successful bid to ensure continual movement through hostel. Average length of stay in hostel accommodation 15 weeks from Nov 08 to Mar 09 compared to 22 weeks from march 08 to October 08. Hostel management brought back in house and revised Housing Register Policy effective from November 08.	Completed and ongoing	East Herts Housing Services, RSLs
	- Review implementation of CBL and present report to Community Scrutiny Committee		Following consultation with main partners CBL reviewed and report presented to both Community Scrutiny and Executive October 2008. Some minor amendments made to the Housing Register Policy as a result.	Completed	
	- Consider widening the scope of CBL for example include private sector rented properties		For future consideration.	Mar-10	
	- Commence an Equality Impact Assessment on the Housing Register Policy and Allocations Policy to ensure policy does not have a detrimental impact on particular client groups accessibility to social housing; amend policy as required.		Initial screening carried out of the Housing Register Policy. Draft full assessment, following revised Corporate Guidance published May 09, to be completed and passed to Corporate Diversity Group for consideration July 2009.	Jul-09	
16. Increase capacity of rent deposit scheme	Continue to promote the scheme to private landlords particularly through the Council's Private Sector Landlord Forum to build and maintain a base of landlords.	East Herts Housing Services	- Senior Housing Options Officer attend private Sector Landlords forum to discuss scheme and foster relationships with private sector landlords.	Completed and ongoing	East Herts Housing Services, Environmental Health,
	Strengthen recovery procedures and monitoring on the Rent Deposit scheme to ensure the Council are maximising the financial benefit and re-cycling of money.		Recovery procedure strengthened and now able to use the Council's Sundry Debtor system for recovery.	Completed and ongoing	
	- Develop a tracking system to monitor the number and reason where tenancies fail within first 6 months.		Each case is monitored by a dedicated officer from the Housing Options Team. However the landlord/tenant rarely advise the Housing Options Team if a tenancy is not renewed. Only become aware if there is an issue during the tenancy.	Ongoing	

Actions	Outputs and targets	Lead	Progress	Target date	Key Partners
17. Monitor trends, identify demand and provide evidence for services for 'Rough Sleepers' and 'Hidden Homeless' households.	Continue to carry out annual surveys of 'Rough Sleepers' and 'Hidden Homeless' households to monitor needs Publicise count/ survey results to Homeless Directorate and Homeless Strategy Group.	Herts Homeless	Rough Sleepers Count carried out February 2009. The partner agencies reported 3 rough sleepers of which they were all 18 to 25 years old. Bi -annual Hidden Homeless Survey due autumn/winter 2009. Figures discussed April 09.	Ongoing Annual Completed and ongoing	East Herts Housing Service, East Herts Homeless Strategy Group
18. Improve communication with homeless households	-Housing Options staff to maintain a schedule of visits to hostels that is publicised - Review the role of the Floating Support Officer to maximise communication with homeless	East Herts Housing services	- No longer applicable as Council have taken service back in house. In addition the Council have employed a dedicated Hostel Officer who is based in the Housing Options Team but works at the hostel. The St Pancreas Housing and HYHG Floating Support Services are engaging with residents on a regular basis. Referral systems in place for new residents.	Completed Completed	East Herts Housing services
	households - Relaunch the Homeless User Survey.		To be re-drafted.	Mar-10	

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Objective 5: Develop and improve partnership working to maximise benefits to homeless households							
19. Ensure links are made and influence	- Each partner on the East Herts Homeless		Meetings with the East Herts Homeless Strategy Group continue to be held		Completed and	•	
sought in all relevant published	Strategy Group to make aware to the Group		quarterly. Regular update of information passed between agencies and recorded.		ongoing	Services, East Herts	
	, , ,	Strategy Group				Homeless Strategy	
agencies.	that may have an impact on homelessness or					Group	
	Homeless prevention.						

Actions	Outputs and targets	Lead	Progress	Target date	Key Partners
20. Ensure existing services are working together effectively and meeting the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.	- Ensure the Homeless Strategy Group is as fully representative of agencies in the District as possible by expanding the membership through targeted promotion	East Herts Housing Services	Current active membership includes CAB, YMCA, PCT, Aldwyck, Riversmead and Circleanglia Housing Associations, Vale House, Children Schools and Families. Other agencies are on the circulation list but are not active members.	Ongoing	East Herts Housing Services, East Herts Homeless Strategy Group
	Develop a page on the Council's website promoting the Homeless Strategy Group and publishing minutes.		Homeless Strategy is on the website and contact information. Minutes are currently not published.	Sep-09	
	-Agree a rolling timetable of training and topic discussions at the East Herts Homeless Strategy Group		Topics for future discussions now regular part of Agenda for next two meetings i.e. 6 months in advance. Topics have included, Floating Support, care leavers and County Council Move-on project. Future topics include review of the Homeless Action Plan and County Council Offenders project.	Completed and ongoing	
21. Agree an information sharing protocol for relevant partners within data	and tailor for Housing Options Service	East Herts Council	Housing Strategy and Policy Manager attended in-house Data Sharing training late January 2009.	Completed and ongoing	East Herts Council, RSLs, advocacy
protection guidelines for the prevention of homelessness and the Housing Options Service	-Agree scope of information to be shared & draft protocol		Scope of protocol discussed with Information Manager. Protocol to be drafted.	Sep-09	groups in East Herts, Statutory and Voluntary agencies
	-Consult and distribute protocol with partner agencies for signing			Oct-09	
22. Encourage RSLs to develop their role in Homeless prevention	- Request a nominated Homeless Champion from each RSLs and invite them to East Herts Homeless Strategy Group	RSLs	Regular representation on the Homeless Strategy Group from Riversmead and Aldwyck housing associations. Circleanglia included on the circulation list for the group. All three have nominated staff who are their Homeless Champions.	Completed	East Herts Housing Services, RSLs
	- Commence involvement in the development of each RSLs Homeless Action Plan as proposed by Housing Corporation in November 06.		To request copies of each organisations Homeless Strategy and review in conjunction with the East Herts Homeless and Homeless Prevention Strategy.	Ongoing	
23. Improve information exchange and planning across local authority boundaries.	- Ensure representation by East Herts in key government and sub-regional working/information sharing groups for example the London Commuter Belt Homeless Group.	East Herts Housing services	Senior staff in the Housing Service continue to engage in a wide range of County, Sub-Regional groups including, Herts County Council, Commissioning Body, London Commuter Belt Head of Housing, Strategy and Development officer Groups, Young person project Boards, Choice based letting Group, Herts Homeless officers Group, Stansted Housing Area Partnership (SAHP) and Herts Heads of Housing.	Ongoing	East Herts Housing Services

Actions	Outputs and targets	Lead	Progress	Target date	Key Partners
24. Consider adopting the National Homeless Advice Service model for joint working between local authorities and independent advice agencies on the prevention of homelessness.	- Assess the implications and consider adopting with partner agencies	National Homeless Advice Service	Awaiting further input/guidance from NHAS.	Not applicable	East Herts Housing Services, CAB, Shelter

Actions	Outputs and targets	Lead	Progress		Target date	Key Partners
Objective 6. Increase the supply of appropriate, good quality affordable housing						
25. Monitor the number of new affordable homes in the District NI 155	-Maximise number of units produced & monitor percentage of affordable housing on schemes eligible for affordable housing. Target of up to 40% on eligible sites.	Services	Monitored by the Council's Housing Enabling Manager and also included on the Council's Service Plan for 2009/10. 2008/09 completed 53 units for social rent and 45 units for shared ownership. Predict 119 units for social rent, 43 for shared ownership and 16 for intermediate rent in 2009/10.		Completed and ongoing	East Herts Housing Services
26. Continue to work with the LCB Empty Homes Group to maximise the number of empty homes brought back into use and offered to rent	- Publicise scheme to identify suitable properties	Environmental	Web page available and reports received from members of the public via online reporting. Publicity in Link magazine and Press release taken up for article in Herts Observer leading to increased public awareness and additional properties reported as empty. (Herts Observer article on PLACE scheme adjoining article on Dunmow Road property enforcement action by Development Control)		Ongoing	East Herts Council, LCB Empty Homes Group
	- Monitor the number of properties brought back into use via the scheme. No target set.		Completed first property on PLACE Scheme (Empty property renovated and tenanted with rent at just below 75% of Local Housing Allowance level for 2 bed property)		Ongoing	
27. Encourage private landlords to engage with the Housing Options Team and provide accommodation for households on low incomes	Attend the Council's Private Sector Landlords Forum to establish options for working together, advising of changes in legislation and generally improving relationship.	East Herts Council Environmental Health Service	Housing Options staff continue to do presentations and attend the Council Private Sector Landlords Forum; last Forum March 2009.		Ongoing	East Herts Council Environmental Health Service and Housing Services

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Actions	Outputs and targets	Lead	Progress	Target date	Key Partners
28. Ensure Council receives at least its legal entitlement of tenancies from RSLs and other not for profit landlords	- Strengthened the Council's monitoring procedures for the size and type of properties offered to East Herts Housing Register applicants for the smaller RSLs in the district	Council Housing services	Housing Strategy and policy Manager continues to monitor the number of nominations compared to the number of HA vacancies. Both Riversmead and Circleanglia give 100% of their vacancies to the Council to provide nominations through Choice Based Lettings.	Annual and ongoing	East Herts Council Housing services, RSLs
	- Provide an annual report to each RSL on their performance		Likely to provide annual report to the 3 main HAs - South Anglia, Aldwyck, and Riversmead. Need the Memorandum of Understanding to be agreed so that performance targets are agreed.	Mar-10	
29. Improve the current approach to reducing under occupation	- Ask RSLs to provide estimates of the current levels of under occupation and where it is concentrated.	RSLs	To be put on the Agenda with the Memorandum of Understanding (regarding nominations and CBL) when meet all partner housing associations summer 2009.	Oct-09	East Herts Council Housing services, RSLs
	- Research good practice in effective under occupation schemes		National research shows that money incentives have little impact on encouraging applicants to move to smaller social housing accommodation but that the type and quality of accommodation is more of an incentive.	Oct-09	
	- Work with RSLs to develop initiatives/ incentives to reduce under occupation.		The Council's Housing Register Policy provides the same level of points for each bedroom a transfer applicant wishes to give up as for those that are lacking bedrooms.	Mar-10	
30. Implement a District Wide Common Housing Register (CHR) and maximise the number of HAs that are participating in CHR	- Promote the benefits of a CHR to those landlords not yet participating	Housing Services	Both the two main stock holding authorities now part of the Common Housing Register and Housing Register Policy amended to allow existing social tenants needing a transfer to be pointed suitably. All housing associations with stock in the district now able to refer their existing tenants needing a transfer to the Council Housing Register.	Completed	East Herts Council Housing services, RSLs
	- Develop a CHR protocol for all participating RSLs to sign up to.		CHR protocol included within the Memorandum of Understanding on Choice Based Lettings. Document to be consulted on with partner housing associations with stock in the District summer 2009.	Oct-09	
31. Action around the Repossession and Eviction Prevention grant provided by central government.	To be agreed with partners.		Confirmation from Communities and Local Government that East Herts has been awarded a grant o £47,500.		

Updated June 2009