



**DRAFT HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY  
CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

**2010-2013**

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## **1. This document**

The Homelessness Act 2002 granted new provisions and powers for local authorities' work on homelessness and prevention. It required local authorities to publish a review of homelessness in their area and a strategy for the future, outlining how the council and their partners would work to prevent homelessness and ensure accommodation and support for those who were homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The Act requires that a new and revised strategy be published at least every five years; this is Cheshire East's first Homelessness Strategy following Local Government Review in April 2009 and it will run from 2010 to 2013. This document should be read in conjunction with Cheshire East's Homelessness Review.

The areas identified for action in this strategy are related to analysis of the current situation in Cheshire East as set out in the Review, or were raised through consultation with statutory and voluntary sector organisations, and individuals experiencing homelessness. Full details of the consultation undertaken are available in the Review.

The document begins with an examination of relevant strategies at national, regional and local level and then sets out strategic priorities for Cheshire East under the following headings: prevention, processes, temporary accommodation, tenancy support and permanent housing.

## **2. Strategic context**

This section outlines the national, county and district level strategic context within which the Cheshire East Homelessness Strategy will be placed.

### **2.1 National**

Government policy on homelessness is outlined in the document “*Sustainable communities: settled homes; changing lives*”. This strategy aims to tackle homelessness and to halve the number of people living in insecure temporary accommodation by 2010. It focuses on:

- Preventing Homelessness
- Providing support for vulnerable people
- Tackling the wider causes and symptoms of homelessness
- Helping more people move away from rough sleeping; and
- Providing more settled homes

The strategy builds on the 2003 report “*More than a roof*” and continues to recognise that the personal and social causes of homelessness must be tackled alongside structural issues, such as housing supply.

#### **- Social Housing**

In 2006 the Housing Corporation published “*Tackling Homelessness*”, which outlines the role that Housing Associations are expected to take in preventing and responding to homelessness. The focus is on partnership working with local authorities and relevant stakeholders, with associations requested to prepare homelessness action plans that set out measures they will take around statutory and non-statutory homelessness. The Hills report “*Ends and Means: The Future Role of Social Housing in England*” published in 2007 looked at how we can best meet housing need now and in the future. The report emphasised the importance of a holistic approach to housing need, integrating employment, and training advice to ensure that tenants and homeseekers increase their opportunities for social and financial inclusion. The report also looked at how we can create and sustain mixed communities.

#### **- Places of Change**

The Places of Change programme is the successor to the Government’s Hostel’s Capital Improvement Programme. £160 million is being invested over six years (2005/2006-2010/2011) to improve the quality of hostel accommodation and other homelessness services such as day centres and to create “places for change”. Crewe YMCA has received £2 million from this fund plus £3 million from The Homes and Communities Agency (formerly The Housing Corporation) towards the redevelopment of their project. There will be a complete refurbishment of the front building in Gresty Road, Crewe, which will include facilities such as a gym, learning centre and café. Modern accommodation will be provided in a new building at the back. This redevelopment will result in much improved facilities for young people.

#### **- Rough Sleeping Strategy**

The Government’s new rough sleeping strategy “*No one left out; Communities ending rough sleeping*” was launched in November 2008. This strategy sets out the

new ambitious objective of ending rough sleeping in England by 2010. This new strategy recognises the importance of:

- Preventing people sleeping rough and tackling the flows of new rough sleepers onto the streets
- Diverting people from the streets as quickly as possible, so no-one needs to stay sleeping rough and to avoid people becoming entrenched and developing problems such as poor mental or physical health and substance misuse.
- Sustaining people in accommodation and their communities to prevent them returning to the streets in the future.

### **- Supporting People**

The majority of revenue funding for homelessness services (such as support staff in hostels or floating support in independent tenancies) is supplied nationally by the Supporting People Programme and administered at a local level. A strategy for Supporting People “*Independence and Opportunity*” was published in June 2007 and outlines how the Supporting People programme helps to reduce homelessness by providing support to enable households to remain in their own homes and offering invaluable support services to other vulnerable groups. Its focus is on four key areas:

- Keeping service users at the heart of the programme
- Enhancing partnerships with the Third Sector
- Delivering in the new Local Government Landscape
- Increasing efficiency and reducing bureaucracy

The strategy commits to delivering Supporting People through the new performance framework for local government (Local Area Agreements), with funding delivered via the area based grant from 2009.

### **- Public Service Agreement 16**

The Public Service Agreement 16 enacted in October 2007 aims to increase the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation and employment, education or training. For the purpose of this PSA socially excluded adults include care leavers, adult offenders under probation supervision, adults in contact with secondary mental health services; and adults with moderate to severe learning disabilities.

### **- Strategy and policy documents**

A number of other recent strategy and policy documents also impact directly and indirectly on homelessness. These include:

- *Homes For the future: more affordable, more sustainable*, the housing green paper from Communities and Local Government (CLG), which sets out the Government’s ambitions on the building of and access to private and social housing in England.
- *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society* published by CLG in February 2008 sets out government plans for ensuring the availability of appropriate housing for older people, as an ageing population puts pressure on homes, health and social care services.

- *Reducing Dependency, Increasing Opportunity: Options for the future of Welfare to Work* is a report by David Freud into the future of the welfare system, looking particularly at ways to reduce the number of people on benefits.
- The *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say* White paper sets out a vision to provide people with good quality social care and NHS services in the communities where they live. These services should extend to all members of the community and be readily accessible by homeless individuals.
- *A Five year Strategy for Protecting the Public and Reducing Re-offending* outlines how the National offender Management service (NOMS) will ensure that the Criminal Justice System is effective in changing lives and tackling the factors that make people more likely to reoffend. This includes joint working with a wide range of partners beyond the Criminal Justice System, including among others housing and homelessness services.
- *Drugs; protecting families and communities*, is the Home Office ten year drugs strategy 2008-2018. This strategy focuses on protecting communities, families, young people and children through tackling drug supply, crime, anti-social behaviour, as well as delivering new approaches to drug treatment and public information campaigns.
- The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 promotes the practice of partnership working to reduce crime and disorder and places a statutory duty on police and local authorities to develop and implement a strategy to tackle problems in their area. Section 17 of the Act recognises that there are key stakeholder groups who have responsibility for the provision of a wide and varied range of services to and within the community. In carrying out these functions section 17 places a duty on them to do all it can to reasonably prevent crime and disorder in their area.

## 2.2 Regional

The North West Regional Assembly published its own Regional Homelessness Strategy in 2007. The priorities contained within that strategy include:

### Priority One: Prevent homelessness

- Increase early identification and intervention
- Provide timely and high quality advice and information that enables households to resolve their housing issues
- Prevent evictions from social housing and the private sector
- Prevent repeat homelessness
- Reduce the level of rough sleeping

### Priority Two: Increase access to a choice of settled homes

- Inform activity to increase the supply and access of social rented stock
- Increase the role of the private rented sector
- Increase the rate of successful and sustainable move-on
- Increase the number of homeless people receiving training and/or entering into employment, addressing worklessness and increasing household income
- Support improvements in temporary accommodation to develop into Places of Change
- Offer a range of supported housing options

Priority Three: Develop plans and activity based on a robust understanding of homelessness and housing need

- Increase the understanding of the causes of homelessness, housing need, nature of rough sleeping and the impact of housing markets
- Develop an understanding of temporary and supported housing
- Develop a region-wide minimum standard for collecting data
- Develop an understanding of resources currently used
- Develop a regional standard for engaging service users

It is essential that Cheshire East's Homelessness strategy reflects the overall objectives for the region as a whole whilst focussing on priorities specific to our area.

## **2.3 Sub-regional**

The previous Sub-Regional Homelessness Strategy expired in 2008. The strategy, formulated by the six former Cheshire districts together with Halton and Warrington, achieved a number of successes including:

- Multi-Agency Monitoring
- A co-ordinated countywide rough sleepers count
- Successful Homelessness Innovation bid for the employment of Private Sector Liaison Officers
- Joint training programme
- Sharing of best practice
- Joint countywide Homeless Prevention Group
- Successful grant funding for play equipment for temporary accommodation

It is anticipated that the future delivery of sub-regional homelessness issues will be delivered by a new group incorporating Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington and Halton, this group should be launched early in 2010.

Cheshire East has a Sub-Regional Housing Strategy. The vision of this strategy is to provide a housing offer that supports the creation of balanced, sustainable communities and the regeneration of the sub-region's most deprived neighbourhoods. This is to be achieved through effective lobbying, partnership working and community engagement, to create a sub-region where all residents can achieve independent living in good quality, affordable homes that are appropriate to their needs.

The four priorities listed below have been identified as the key issues for the sub-region:

- Priority one: To increase the supply of affordable housing to support economic growth and development
- Priority two: To make best use of the sub-region's existing housing stock
- Priority three: To meet the housing and accommodation-related support needs of the sub-region's most vulnerable residents
- Priority four: To increase the supply of market housing to support continued economic growth and regeneration and to meet local housing needs

The Cheshire Sub-Regional Housing Strategy action plan is split into the two areas of Cheshire West and East. The Cheshire East action plan will form the basis of the strategic approach to delivering housing services and supply of houses for Cheshire East over the next 3 years.

## 2.4 Local

### - Local Strategic Partnership

The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in Cheshire East brings together, at a local level, all of the different parts of the public, private, business, community and voluntary sectors so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together across Cheshire East. The partnership framework is driven by, and reflects, local circumstances. It includes an Executive board which is able to advise the Partnership and provide capacity to make timely decisions. In addition, five individual thematic partnerships support the Partnership by overseeing and commissioning services relevant to their service area. These thematic partnerships are:

- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP)
- Children's Trust
- Health & Wellbeing
- Learning, Skills and Economic Development
- Environment and Sustainability

### - Local Area Agreements

New delivery and inspection arrangements for local government are increasingly based on Local Area Agreements (LAA). These three year agreements involving central government (represented by the regional government office), the local authority and its partners in the area (working through the Local Strategic Partnership) are aimed at improving public services by promoting joint working at a local level.

Indicators in the Cheshire East LAA which affect or are affected by housing and homelessness are:

SAFER COMMUNITIES	
NI 18	Adult Re-offending For those under Probation Supervision
NI 32	Repeat Incidents of Domestic Violence cases reviewed at MARAC*
LI37	Increasing Non-Police referrals to MARAC *
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
NI 117	Number of Children not in education, employment or training
NI147	Care Leavers in Suitable Accommodation
LOCAL ECONOMY	
NI 154	Net additional homes provided
TACKLING EXCLUSION & PROMOTING EQUALITY	
NI 155	Number of affordable homes delivered
NI 156	Number of households living in temporary accommodation
NI 141	Percentage of vulnerable people achieving independent living
NI 142	Percentage of people who are supported to maintain independent living



\* Multi-agency Risk assessment conferencing- a system for identifying & responding to those at highest risk(342 adults with 463 children in CE 2009-10)

The target for the one specific indicator relating to homelessness, NI 156, is 18 for 2009/2010 reducing to 12 in 2010/2011. In order to achieve this target Cheshire East intends to:

- Work in partnership with stakeholders to proactively prevent homelessness reducing the need for temporary accommodation
- Where the use of temporary accommodation cannot be avoided, we will work in partnership with stakeholders so that suitable alternative accommodation can be found as quickly as possible.

## **- Supporting People**

The Cheshire Supporting People 5 Year Strategy (2005-2010) was published in 2005. The North West Regional Housing Needs analysis, which is currently ongoing, will inform a new strategy for Cheshire East Supporting People.

There are two tiers to the Supporting People partnership in Cheshire East. They are the Commissioning Body and Core Strategy Group. The Commissioning Body is a partnership of:

- Central and Eastern Cheshire Primary Care Trust
- Cheshire East Council
- National Probation Service- Cheshire

This group is responsible for the commissioning of services based on the strategic priority and need. The Core Strategy Group is accountable to the Commissioning Body and is responsible for revising the Cheshire Supporting People Strategy. The membership of the Core Strategy Group includes representatives from:

- The Supporting People Team
- Central & Eastern Primary Care Trust
- National Probation Service-Cheshire
- Provider representative of the National housing Federation
- Drug and Alcohol Action Team
- Youth Offending Team
- Care Leavers Service
- Mental Health Services
- Provider representative of the Cheshire Housing Alliance
- Provider representative from the local provider forums
- Strategic Housing

## **- Cheshire's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy**

Cheshire County Council developed a ten year teenage pregnancy strategy (2001-2011). This strategy aims to reduce the number of unplanned pregnancies, support teenage parents and to encourage young people to defer parenthood until a time when they feel more able to take full responsibility for meeting their own needs and those of their child. The strategic goals are:

- A baseline level of services throughout the county with specific provision in local areas as appropriate
- To take a variety of approaches to meeting need and providing services
- To encourage diversity and creativity, piloting new approaches
- To build and learn from best practice and "what works"
- To ensure that young people have easy access to information on sexual health services, including emergency contraception
- To ensure service providers recognise and meet their responsibilities in respect of teenage pregnancy and parenthood

- To help young people remain in their usual provider of education, continue to have access to full-time education and return to it, with child care support as necessary
- That all young people be assisted through their Connexions personal advisors to be aware of and able to access educational and employment opportunities.

#### **- Drug & Alcohol Action Team**

The Cheshire Drug & Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) is a partnership of organisations that works to co-ordinate and implement the National Drug Strategy in East Cheshire. These organisations work to:

- Prevent young people becoming drug users
- Reduce the supply of illegal drugs
- Reduce drug-related crime and the harm it causes to communities
- Promote treatment and support and reduce drug related deaths
- Encourage drug offenders into treatment and away from involvement in drug-related crime
- Assist drug users to access accommodation, education and employment
- Reduce drug-related issues that have an impact on community morale
- Consult drug users and their carers, as well as those communities affected by drug use.

#### **- Crime and Disorder**

In order to meet the aims of section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Cheshire East Council has established a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP). The CDRP includes the Police, Fire Service, the NHS primary care trusts and Probation service. There is also input from the Youth Offending Team, drug action Team, the community and voluntary sectors and other partners including Housing. The Housing team participates in several operational and strategic groups which aim to tackle reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and work together to manage offenders. These are:

- Reducing Re-Offending group
- Local Risk Management group
- Prolific Offenders group
- MAPPA- high risk offenders
- Task and Co-ordinate

#### **- Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Partnership**

This partnership brings together all statutory and third sector agencies with a responsibility to respond to domestic abuse including the housing sector. Its priorities for this year are:

- Establishing a strategy in which all partners have investment and which informs other strategies particularly LSCB & LSAB's
- Embedding the newly established CE DAP partnership structures
- Ensuring the local strategy is in line with the government's Violence Against Women & Girls strategy, including the identification of a senior "champion" in the area.
- Securing long term commissioning of services, including increase in long term support for lower risk clients
- Improving integrated family work and responses to the overlap of domestic abuse/mental health/substance abuse.
- Embedding new training programmes

- Achieving National targets and accreditation of MARAC process and Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Services (Leading lights)
- Improving & integrating performance reporting from all agencies
- Improving access to services for all communities

### 3. Priorities for Cheshire East

The review of homelessness in Cheshire East and consultation with stakeholders in the statutory and voluntary sectors, as well as with service users has informed a number of priorities for Cheshire East. These are detailed in the following sections, under the following headings:

- Prevention
- Processes
- Temporary Accommodation
- Tenancy Support
- Permanent accommodation

Under each heading the key findings from the review, and where appropriate from consultation, are outlined. Action points follow.

Cheshire East Council is committed to developing this strategy into an action plan that will be taken forward over the next 3 years.

**Action 1:** The Council will work with partner organisations to develop an action plan encompassing each of the points in this strategy, for delivery in the period 2010-2013

**Action 2:** Cheshire East Homelessness Strategy Steering Group will be instrumental in assisting the development of this action plan, and in designing a structure for implementing, monitoring and evaluating progress against the targets set out in the action plan.

**Action 3:** Service users will be involved, via consultation, in development of any new initiatives which are brought forward from delivery of the action plan

## 4. Prevention

Prevention of homelessness is central to this strategy. Whilst overall in Cheshire East, as in the rest of England, rates of homelessness acceptances have been falling, there remains much work to be done to prevent homelessness wherever possible.

This section details Cheshire East Council's strategic actions in a number of prevention areas.

### 4.1 Financial inclusion

#### Findings from the review

Although rates of unemployment in the Borough are below the National & Regional levels there are high rates of worklessness within the social rented sector with only 34.6% of heads of households in some form of employment. Stakeholders identified unemployment and lack of training/education as one of the main contributory factors amongst their homeless clients.

Tackling worklessness is a priority for central Government and the Regional Homelessness Strategy identifies the need to increase the number of homeless people receiving training and/or entering employment and increasing household income as one of its priorities under Priority 2 "Increasing access to a choice of settled homes".

#### Strategic Actions

**Action 4:** The Council will conduct a worklessness survey to look at the areas and types of households most affected by worklessness. These will help to target resources to the most deprived areas and to offer assistance to households who may find it difficult to access services.

**Action 5:** The provision of money advice is essential in the prevention of homelessness and the accessing of employment. Cheshire East Council will continue to support partners in the delivery of this service and will look to extend current provision of debt and welfare rights advice across the Borough.

**Action 6:** Working with partners at local and national levels the Council will seek to improve employment opportunities for homeless clients and those in temporary accommodation.

### 4.2 Youth Homelessness

#### Findings from the review

Despite low levels of homeless acceptances in the Borough amongst young people aged 16-24, the MAM data (Multi-Agency Monitoring project) suggests high levels of homelessness and housing issues amongst this age group. This fact is supported by the numbers of clients accessing the Young Person's Housing Support Worker in Macclesfield and the numbers receiving housing related advice via Connexions across Cheshire East.

Feedback from the consultation exercises indicated that family breakdown was one of the main causes of homelessness amongst young people. This is one of the three main reasons for homelessness collected on the P1E return. Young people also felt that a lack of independent living skills held them back from both accessing and sustaining a tenancy; this was mirrored in the responses from stakeholders. The Regional Homelessness strategy prioritises the need to increase the rate of successful and sustainable move-on from temporary accommodation and the development of pre-tenancy training will go some way towards achieving this aim.

### **Strategic actions**

**Action 7:** The Housing Options Team will continue to carry out home visits in all appropriate homelessness cases, but in particular where parents are no longer willing to accommodate. The possibility of training officers in mediation techniques will be explored.

**Action 8:** Cheshire East Council will endeavour to continue the specialist support provided to Young People with homelessness/ housing issues in Macclesfield and will consider extending the provision to cover Crewe and Congleton.

**Action 9:** The Council will formulate a Joint Protocol for 16/17 year olds, which will set out the responsibilities in different cases, including the roles of Social care, Housing, Connexions YOT, Family support teams and the voluntary sector. It will work closely with partners to prevent homelessness and identify potential youth homelessness at an early stage.

**Action 10:** Services will be developed that give young people access to advice on housing and homeless issues via a range of Medias, in different locations. The Council will work closely with schools and colleges to provide an education programme to students on these subjects.

**Action 11:** The Council will work with partner agencies, particularly supported accommodation providers, to develop a package of training designed for young people covering the independent living skills needed to access and sustain a tenancy

## **4.3 Homelessness from institutions or leaving care**

### **Findings from the review**

The results of the review revealed that the numbers of cases accepted as homeless due to leaving custody was relatively low across Cheshire East, with just 7% of the total acceptances being from this category. The MAM data indicated offending history as a high contributory factor in 2006/07 but by 2007/08 this reason did not figure in the top ten most common factors. This does not reflect the fact that many offenders lose their accommodation due to being taken into custody and work needs to be done to ensure that homelessness is prevented wherever possible. The consultation exercise with stakeholders gave leaving custody as one of the main contributory

factors for their clients, which indicates that offenders may not be accessing statutory services.

The number of care leavers accepted in 2008/09 was also very low, with just 3% having this reason for their homelessness. Following the House of Lord's Ruling on homeless 16 and 17 year olds, "The Southwark Judgment", the numbers of care leavers in Cheshire East could increase significantly if Social Services are required to offer more young people care services. The consultation did not highlight any specific actions around care leavers but the action point relating to a formal protocol to be drafted between Housing and Social care, for dealing with 16/17 year olds should ensure that processes are put in place to deal with any increased demands on services.

People leaving hospital as homeless has not been identified as an issue but it is important to ensure that local hospital discharge co-ordinators are aware of procedures and protocols are in place to deal with potentially homeless patients.

The need for timely and high quality advice to prevent households becoming homeless and prevention of evictions from both social and private tenancies are both priorities in the Regional Homelessness Strategy.

### **Strategic actions**

**Action 12:** Cheshire East will work with partners to ensure that services to those leaving prison have access to locally-based advice services, offering holistic advice relating to housing, benefits advice, employment and sign-posting to specialist services for mental health, substance abuse or any other issues that might affect the clients ability to access or sustain accommodation.

**Action 13:** The Council will ensure that hospitals covering Cheshire East area are aware of the Discharge Protocol. The Housing Options Team will also visit potentially homeless clients in hospital at the earliest opportunity to avoid the need for emergency action.

## **4.4 Preventing rough sleeping**

### **Findings from the review**

Levels of rough sleeping across Cheshire East are low, with the last three formal counts revealing numbers of between 0 and 4. Local knowledge suggests that at different times of the year individuals may be sleeping rough, the official count, conducted on a specified night in the year, does not always show the extent of the problem in the area. There are no services within the Borough specifically for rough sleepers and there is a definite need for a published protocol on how those sleeping outside in cold weather will be dealt with. It would also be helpful to have named contacts for the general public to report incidences of rough sleeping.

The Government's report "No-one left out" includes a good practice guide designed to help local housing authorities and their partners review and plan their strategic approach to preventing and tackling rough sleeping. A self assessment checklist included in the guide can help to assess the comprehensiveness of the services provided, improve partnership working and highlight opportunities for improving services to rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping. It would be beneficial to complete the assessment to identify what, if any, services should be provided.

Stakeholders involved in the consultation exercise indicated that often clients with complex needs are excluded from temporary accommodation projects in the area and these are the types of people that often end up sleeping rough. A client of the Barnabus Centre in Macclesfield (East Cheshire Drugs & alcohol team) highlighted, via a NHS feedback sheet, the need for an outreach service for homeless people, providing equipment for rough sleeper's, a soup kitchen and day centre. The Regional Homelessness Strategy highlights two priorities around rough sleeping; firstly to reduce the numbers of those sleeping rough and to increase understanding of the nature of rough sleeping.

### **Strategic Actions**

**Action 14:** Cheshire East Council will conduct a formal rough sleeper's count bi-annually and will also seek to make information available to residents of the Borough to report incidences of rough sleeping. This will facilitate the building of a better picture of the extent of the problem in the area.

**Action 15:** A protocol outlining the procedure for dealing with rough sleepers in severe weather will be developed and published.

**Action 16:** The Council, together with partners, will undertake an assessment of the services provided to tackle rough sleeping and determine whether a separate strategy is required to address this problem.

## **4.5 Preventing homelessness for families with children**

### **Findings from the review**

In Cheshire East last year families, either single parents or couples with children, accounted for 53% of households accepted as homeless. In 48% of cases the reason for having a priority need was due to having dependent children.

Many of the families accepted are placed into temporary accommodation, and although numbers are fairly low, this can have a detrimental affect on the households concerned. A survey commissioned by the Children's Fund in 2008 revealed that families in temporary accommodation suffer a deterioration in their quality of life with children not attending school, high accommodation costs and a lack of support being some of the issues raised.

Anti-social behaviour is an issue that can result in homelessness for families from both private and social rented accommodation. There are a range of measures that can be used to prevent eviction in these cases and housing options staff need to be aware of the procedures that be implemented and the support on offer.

Problems can arise when a family is found to be intentionally homeless under the legislation. A clear protocol needs to be put in place regarding the responsibilities of housing and social services in these cases.

The review consultation highlighted a lack of low-level support to aid families, who do not meet Social Services criteria for family support. Access to housing/money advice can help to prevent homelessness and address worklessness for this client group. The main issue to come out of the review for this client group was the lack of suitable, supported temporary accommodation.

In order to meet the priorities identified in the Regional Homelessness strategy the provision of high quality, accessible advice to this client group needs to be improved.

## Strategic Actions

**Action 17:** The Council will develop a protocol for dealing with cases for families who are not owed a housing duty. This will outline the responsibilities to these households of Housing & Social Care, including the provision of funding to assist in accessing accommodation.

**Action 18:** Work will be undertaken to develop housing advice services for families with children to provide accessible, local services for this client group.

**Action 19:** Cheshire East Council will work with RSL's and private landlords to resolve anti-social behaviour issues amongst families and will ensure that staff are aware of options available to address this problem.

## 4.6 Homelessness from the Private Sector

### Findings from the review

One of the 3 main reasons for homeless acceptances is the ending of Assured Shorthold tenancies; however instances of homelessness for this reason have reduced considerably, from 74 in 2006/2007 to just 20 in 2008/2009. This is a direct result of interventions by the Private Sector Liaison Officer and Homelessness Prevention Officers based within the Housing Options Teams. These two posts work with clients to resolve issues which may result in the ending of tenancies and act quickly to secure alternative accommodation where notices have been served due to, for example, a landlord selling a property.

The Council operates a Rent Bond scheme, which has been extremely successful in assisting potentially homeless and homeless households to access the private sector. However payments back into the scheme are low, with a collection rate of just 5.5% of the total outlay recovered in the year to date.

Affordability in the private sector for young people, under the age of 25, was highlighted as an issue during the consultation process. Local Housing Allowance rates are such that it is almost impossible for this client group to access privately rented accommodation; a solution to this problem needs to be found.

The standard of accommodation in the private sector is not always good, the introduction of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme across the Borough should help in part to ensure that properties, owned by landlords signing up to the scheme, meet safety requirements and are of a decent standard. Landlords themselves are also been accredited and this will recognise those who operate sound management practices and encourage them to operate within the law when dealing with tenancy issues, which will obviously benefit tenants and reduce the need for interventions by the Housing team.

The Regional Homelessness strategy indicates that Local Authorities should work to prevent evictions from the private sector wherever possible and also increase access to settled homes by utilising this resource.



## Strategic Actions

**Action 20:** Housing will work with the Private Sector Housing Team to implement Landlord accreditation, by ensuring that landlords are aware of the benefits of membership of the scheme. They will also use the scheme to maximise the available accommodation for homeless and potentially homeless households.

**Action 21:** The Council will continue to operate the Rent Bond Scheme and will work to improve collection rates from clients.

**Action 22:** Cheshire East Council will work with partners and private landlords to improve access to private sector accommodation for clients under 25 years old.

## 4.7 Homelessness due to relationship breakdown

### Findings from the review

One of the three main causes of homelessness in the Borough is violent or non-violent breakdown of relationship, accounting for 29% of the total acceptances. The number of cases approaching as homeless due to domestic violence has reduced over the past few years; in 2006/2007 58 acceptances were due to violent breakdown of relationship compared to 19 in 2008/2009. Many high level domestic violence cases are now dealt with by a multi-agency panel called a MARAC. These meetings, which are held once a month, have led to the reduction in the number of cases approaching Housing Options for assistance, as more victims are able to remain in their homes with target-hardening and appropriate support.

The percentage of non-violent breakdown in relationship cases has increased slightly over the past three years; financial pressures can often lead to partnerships breaking down, so it is essential to ensure that families have access to advice regarding debts and rights to benefits at the earliest opportunity. This is addressed at Action point 17. There was little feedback from the review regarding domestic violence and non-violent relationship breakdown. In Macclesfield in particular it has been difficult to engage with both staff and service users accessing the refuge. This needs to be remedied to ensure that the views of this client group are included when developing future initiatives and strategies.

The Local Area Agreement in Cheshire East, which sets out the “deal” between central government and the local authority and their partners on service improvement and quality of life for local people, includes two indicators regarding repeat incidents of domestic violence. It is essential that housing continue to participate in multi-agency work to deliver services to this client group.

## Strategic Actions

**Action 23:** The Council will continue to participate in the MARAC, MARAC Steering Group and Cheshire east Domestic Abuse Partnership to ensure that homelessness due to domestic violence does not increase and to maximise prevention in these cases. This will include engaging in partnership working to make tenancy maintenance a safe option for clients e.g. target hardening and the application of protective legal measures.

**Action 24:** Work to improve stakeholder and service user involvement in issues around domestic violence will be undertaken. Involvement in The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group and any service user focus groups will be encouraged.

## **4.8 Preventing Repossessions**

### **Findings from the review**

Instances of homelessness due to mortgage repossession have reduced over the last 3 years with just 2 homelessness acceptances for this reason in 2008/2009. Despite fears that, with the country in recession, repossessions would increase due to higher levels of unemployment and households facing an income shock, mortgage possession claims in the County court were down by 23% in the third quarter of 2009 compared to the same quarter in 2008. This could be due to the introduction of the Pre-Action Protocol, which was introduced by the Civil Justice Council in November 2008, which makes it clear to lenders that repossession should be a last resort and this protocol is part of a package of measures introduced by the Government to reduce mortgage repossessions.

Cheshire East Council was one of the first authorities to implement a Repossessions Action Plan to prevent repossessions across all tenures. This plan includes the provision of a Repossession Fund and additional resources for court desks. The Council also participates in the Governments Mortgage Rescue Scheme (MRS). As yet there has not been a successful MRS application as many cases fall outside the criteria; however in the period from April 2009 to September 2009 61 cases were assisted with mortgage issues, the majority being referred to money advice or housing options for further advice.

The Housing Options Teams also work to prevent mortgage repossessions by contacting owners quickly when notifications of possession action are received from lenders. 111 clients have been contacted since October 2009, in order to offer advice and assistance prior to court action. This work will continue as will joint working with the CAB to provide an advice service at court on possession hearing days.

**Action 25:** The Council will continue to review and update the Repossession Action Plan and to participate in government initiatives to prevent mortgage repossessions

## 5. Processes

### Findings from the review

People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Cheshire East may approach a number of different agencies for advice and assistance. It is important that these agencies work effectively together and that their respective roles are clearly defined and acknowledged. It is also to be noted that presentations as homeless to the Council do not tell the full story of the extent of homelessness and other sources of data should be strengthened to compliment data on statutorily homeless households. The consultation process confirmed the need for information sharing protocols and for strong partnerships to be developed with stakeholders to address key issues and improve service delivery. There was also the feeling that a common referral form would enable better multi-agency support for individuals. Weaknesses were identified in working practices with mental health services and probation in particular. There is also a need for service users to be involved. This is partially addressed in Action Point 3 but more robust collection of data on customer satisfaction is necessary to inform service improvement.

The Regional Homelessness strategy has the development of the understanding of housing need as one of it's main priorities, with the development of a region-wide minimum standard for collecting data and a standard for engaging service using being part of this action.

### Strategic Actions

**Action 26:** The Council will collect data on approaches to its housing advice service and will use this data to inform service improvement and target resources. It will also seek to compliment this information by recording details about each individual's housing need and the outcomes of housing options interviews.

**Action 27:** The Housing Options Team will undertake regular customer satisfaction surveys with service users, using a variety of methods as opposed to purely paper-based consultation.

**Action 28:** Cheshire East will work with partner agencies to improve data collection on the housing and support needs of non-statutorily homeless clients.

**Action 29:** In order to improve joined up working and ensure appropriate referrals between agencies, the Council will seek to strengthen partnerships that are not currently in place and build on those that already exist. Information-sharing protocols & a common referral form will be introduced.

## 6. Temporary Accommodation

### Findings from the review

In January 2005 the Government set a target, based on December 2004 figures, to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by half by 2010. Cheshire East Council had a total of 224 households in temporary accommodation in December 2004, as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009 there were just 8. The length of time people spend in temporary accommodation is reasonably brief, with an average stay of 7.8 weeks across the Borough in 2008/2009. The main reason for the reduction in placements and residence in temporary accommodation is the increased homelessness prevention and the identification of sustainable housing options for households.

Use of Bed and Breakfast is showing signs of reduction with only 7 placements in total in the first quarter of 2009/2010, with an average stay of 10 days. In November 2006 the Government announced a target to eliminate the use of Bed and Breakfast for 16 and 17 year olds by 2010 and for the last quarter this has been achieved by Cheshire East.

These figures reflect the position for statutorily homeless households, the consultation process revealed other issues for many non-priority homeless households (mainly singles) who access the supported accommodation projects across Cheshire East. Those points highlighted include the need for more direct access accommodation, more support in temporary/supported accommodation to prepare for independent living and facilitate move-on and more specialist accommodation for those clients with complex needs, substance abuse issues and offending history.

In 2010/2011 Cheshire East intends to conduct a comprehensive review of the temporary accommodation in use in the Borough and this process will result in an action plan specifically aimed at improving the overall provision of this type of accommodation in the Borough.

In order to meet regional objectives Cheshire East Council will need to increase the rate of successful move-on, support improvement in temporary accommodation to develop into places for change and offer a range of supported housing options.

### Strategic Actions

**Action 30:** Cheshire East Council will conduct a comprehensive review of temporary accommodation provision, to analyse the way it is accessed, the support available and the standard of accommodation. This review will also consider the need for additional refuge space in the Borough.

**Action 31:** An investigation into the provision of supported accommodation for those clients with complex needs, and direct access accommodation for this group will be investigated.

**Action 32:** The Council will work with supported accommodation providers to improve rates of move-on from temporary accommodation and will work to ensure that clients who move into independent living are able to sustain their tenancies.

**Action 33:** Together with partners Cheshire East will work to ensure that all clients who enter temporary accommodation undergo a formal housing needs assessment and that referrals to appropriate agencies e.g. drug and alcohol services are made so that specialist support is accessed where needed.

## 7. Tenancy Support

### Findings from the review

Provision of appropriate tenancy support maintains individuals in their tenancies, reduces the likelihood of homelessness and allows individuals to move on from temporary accommodation such as hostels. The homelessness review revealed that there are gaps with regards to families receiving tenancy support and relatively low capacity for teenage parents, who quite often leave supported accommodation to move into the private sector and then experience difficulties in sustaining their tenancies. There is also limited support for those leaving temporary accommodation to move into a permanent home.

During the consultation process linked to the review both stakeholders and service users had strong views on the issue of tenancy support. The main findings were that the support should be provided across the full range of tenancy types and client groups. It was felt that there should be a degree of flexibility in the criteria for accessing support, from low level support for those who are assessed as having the skills needed to sustain a tenancy but may need initial set-up support to intensive support for those with complex or special needs. Stakeholders felt that a tailored tenancy skills/training programme should be delivered by all providers and that there should be more emphasis on prevention to help sustain tenancies. Service users expressed a wish for the focus of tenancy support to be on money management and that they would want a support worker to have a good knowledge of services available on benefits, employment and training and health issues.

Addressing all these issues will help to achieve the regional priorities of increasing access to a choice of settled homes and preventing homelessness.

### Strategic Actions

**Action 34:** In partnership with Supporting People the Housing service will seek to increase access to and provision of tenancy support, to prevent homelessness and help to sustain tenancies. In particular it will seek to increase service provision in the private sector and for those with complex needs and those experiencing domestic abuse.

**Action 35:** Cheshire East Council will work to ensure that all new tenancies for statutorily homeless households or those coming from supported accommodation will be accompanied by arrangements for tenancy support from the commencement of the tenancy. Protocols for sharing information and joint risk assessments between the Council, RSL's and voluntary sector agencies will be developed to support this process.

**Action 36:** The Council will work with partners, particularly supported accommodation providers, to ensure that clients in temporary accommodation receive the practical help they need to move into independent living. A pre-tenancy training scheme and help to set up in a new home will be the priorities.

**Action 37:** Multi-agency working to help sustain tenancies will be developed, the introduction of a crisis intervention panel, will prevent overlap of services and encourage agencies to share the workload on preventing homelessness.

## 8. Permanent accommodation

### Findings from the review

The majority of housing stock in Cheshire East is owner occupied but house prices are significantly higher than in many other areas in the North West and almost seven times average incomes. Private renting is also expensive with, in some cases, the cost of a rent being 300% higher than social renting (for a four bedroom house in Macclesfield). People on low incomes would prefer the option of social renting and it is clearly the most affordable option. However the analysis of the number of lets in 2008/2009 by the three main RSL's in Cheshire East compared to the numbers of households on housing registers shows that supply of accommodation falls far below demand. There is a high demand for one and two bedroom properties, with households having significant waiting times for this type of accommodation. There is therefore great pressure on social housing stock, with homeless and potentially homeless households competing with waiting list applicants and newly –formed households for the limited resources. Information from the housing registers shows that both overcrowding and under-occupation are issues.

The review also revealed that there are a large number of properties empty in Cheshire East, with over 4% of the total dwellings unoccupied.

Service users felt that more priority should be given to people in temporary accommodation for social housing and also requested that more information on how to access private rented accommodation should be made available. The lack of move-on options was the main issue for stakeholders, particularly temporary accommodation providers, however previous experience highlights the fact that quite often residents are not registered on social housing registers and this needs to be addressed, particularly with choice-based lettings on the horizon.

Cheshire's Sub-Regional Housing Strategy has four key priorities which are all linked to the provision of permanent accommodation; these are to increase the supply of affordable housing, to make best use of existing stock, to meet the housing and support needs of the sub-regions vulnerable residents and to increase the supply of market housing to meet local housing needs.

The Regional Homelessness Strategy highlights a range of priorities around the provision of permanent accommodation, including increasing the supply of and access to social housing and increasing the role of the private sector in preventing homelessness.

### Strategic actions

**Action 38:** The council will work with RSL partners to increase the supply of and access to social housing stock. It will do this by increasing targets for the provision of social rented housing in new developments, monitoring nomination agreements and by ensuring that the forthcoming Choice Based Lettings scheme (Cheshire Homechoice) retains a focus on priority for homeless, potentially homeless households and those ready to move on from temporary accommodation. Accessibility and support in using the system for vulnerable individuals will be considered and planned for with services working for these groups.

**Action 39:** A range of affordable housing options will continue to be provided by the Council, including an assisted Purchase Scheme, discount for sale schemes and shared ownership via RSL's. The Housing Options Team will ensure that they are familiar with the range of options available.

**Action 40:** Information on renting in the private sector will be made available to service users via a variety of Medias and the work of the Private Sector Liaison Officer will be promoted to inform both stakeholders and clients of what the service can provide.

**Action 41:** The Council's Private Sector team will endeavour to bring empty homes in the Borough back into use, grants for improvements will be offered to owners and wherever possible these properties will be used to help alleviate homelessness. Housing Options staff will be made aware of these options and referral routes.



## **9. Implementation & Monitoring of the Strategy**

The action plan established from the strategy will help evidence the need for investments and/or commissioning of new services within the Borough. In order to ensure that the action plan objectives are met and achieved, structured and comprehensive monitoring of the plan must be completed.

The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group, consisting of statutory and other voluntary agencies, will monitor and review the progress in accordance with the action plan on a quarterly basis. A review of the Homelessness Strategy will be undertaken annually to establish feedback and progress of the action plan.

### **9.1 Future Consultation**

The strategy is a working document and it is therefore essential that it is reviewed and the projects/initiatives contained in the action plan are monitored to ensure that they are carried out.

As one of the priority actions emerging from the consultation is joint working, it is important that regular liaison is carried out with key partners and service users.

The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group is an essential part of the monitoring process and contains a number of key organisations. A full list of the organisations represented on the steering group can be found in Appendix A.

### **9.2 Future Strategy Changes**

As the strategy is a living document it is inevitable that some alterations may occur and that some actions may not be deliverable. The removal or additions of relevant actions, in addition to any changes in funding arrangements should be discussed with key partners and agreed in principle with the majority of the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group.

All key stakeholders will be notified of the changes agreed and will be given 28 days to respond.

### **9.3 Comments & Feedback Relating to this Strategy**

Feedback and updated information from stakeholders, as a result of the distribution of the Homelessness Review, has been taken into account in the formulation of this strategy. If you would like to make any comments about this document or to request any further information or related documents please contact:

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## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

<b>ASBO</b>	Anti Social Behaviour Order
<b>AST</b>	Assured Shorthold Tenancy
<b>BME</b>	Black & Minority Ethnic
<b>BVPI</b>	Best value performance indicator
<b>CAB</b>	Citizen Advice bureau
<b>CBL</b>	Choice Based Lettings
<b>CEC</b>	Cheshire East
<b>CDAP</b>	Cheshire domestic abuse partnership
<b>CLG</b>	Communities and Local Government
<b>CPPHT</b>	Cheshire Peaks & Plains Housing Trust
<b>DAAT</b>	Drug and alcohol action team
<b>GP</b>	General Practitioner
<b>HA</b>	Housing Association
<b>HB</b>	Housing Benefit
<b>HMO</b>	House in Multiple Occupation
<b>HOT</b>	Housing Options Team
<b>HSSA</b>	Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix
<b>IMD</b>	Index of Multiple Deprivation
<b>LA</b>	Local authority
<b>LAA</b>	Local Area Agreement
<b>LGR</b>	Local Government Re-Organisation
<b>LHA</b>	Local Housing Allowance
<b>LSP</b>	Local Strategic Partnership
<b>LSVT</b>	Large scale voluntary Transfer
<b>MAM</b>	Multi agency monitoring
<b>MAPPA</b>	Multi Agency Public Protection Panel
<b>PCT</b>	Primary Care Trust
<b>PPO</b>	Prolific and other priority offender
<b>PSL</b>	Private Sector Leasing
<b>P1E</b>	Statistical return on statutorily homeless households
<b>RDS</b>	Rent Deposit Scheme
<b>RSL</b>	Registered social landlord
<b>SMART</b>	Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time bound
<b>SMHA</b>	Strategic Market Housing Assessment
<b>SOA</b>	Super Output Area
<b>SP</b>	Supporting People
<b>YOT</b>	Youth Offending Team

## **APPENDIX A**

### **List of organisations represented on Homelessness Strategy Steering Group**

English Churches Housing Group  
Regenda Group  
Wulvern  
Cheshire East Council Care Leavers Team  
Youth Offending Team  
Adullam Housing  
Cheshire Police  
Cheshire Peaks & Plains Housing Trust  
Total People  
New Leaf  
Macclesfield Cradle Concern  
Citizen's Advice Bureau  
Connexions  
Jobcentreplus  
Johnnie Johnson Housing  
Shelter  
East Cheshire Drugs Service  
Crewe YMCA  
Cheshire East Council Benefits Section  
Macclesfield Care & Concern  
Macclesfield Women's Aid  
Child & Adolescent Mental Health 16-19 Team  
Probation Service  
Just drop In Macclesfield  
Plus Dane Housing  
Crewe Women's Aid  
Places For People

## HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2010-2013

This action plan is designed to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and have a clear Timescale). It has been based on the 5 main themes and priorities identified in the strategy and the resulting actions.

PREVENTION						
Key Issue	Action	Resources	Lead Officer/Partnership	Measure Of Success	Target Date	Actual Outcome
1.1 Financial Inclusion	Conduct a worklessness survey looking at the areas & types of households most affected by worklessness.	Staff Time £1K CLG grant for printing costs	Policy & Monitoring Officer	Advice surgeries established in key areas and reduction in the numbers of homeless presentations from families.	April 2011	
	Extend the provision of Money Advice across Cheshire East in conjunction with external partners.	£25-30K CLG grant (recession pot)	Housing Options Manager	An increase in the number of cases where homelessness is prevented.	September 2010	
	Encourage RSL's to work with tenants to address financial inclusion issues and help to prevent homelessness.	Staff Time. Possible CLG funds for initiatives.	Policy & Monitoring Officer/ Partner RSL's	A reduction in the number of cases listed for court on rent days and a decrease in evictions from social tenancies.	On-going	
	Work with Job Centre Plus and local employers to address work skills & to offer work trials for clients in temporary accommodation with poor work records/ no references.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer/ JCP	An increase in the numbers of clients who are work ready when they move to independent living.	December 2010	

PREVENTION						
Key Issue	Action	Resources	Lead Officer/Partnership	Measure Of Success	Target Date	Actual Outcome
	Investigate the possibility of providing a PO Box address for clients who are NFA to assist with job search.	Cost of PO Box £65 per year.	Policy & Monitoring Officer	Comparison of numbers using the service & those securing employment.	December 2010	
	Look to assist the Cheshire Neighbours Credit Union to expand into the south of the Borough.	£5k CLG grant + match funding from RSL's	Policy & Monitoring Officer	More resources for homeless clients to access loans and potential for introduction of home starter packs	March 2011	
1.2 Youth Homelessness	Continue to conduct home visits in all cases of parental exclusion and explore the possibility of providing training in mediation techniques to relevant staff.	Staff Time £2K CLG grant training expenses	Housing Options Team Leaders	Reduction in the numbers of homeless acceptances due to parental exclusion and increase in the use of mediation to prevent homelessness.	June 2011 & on-going	
	Consider the continuation of the role of Young Person's Housing Support Worker in Macclesfield and the provision of an additional resource in Congleton/Crewe. Opportunities for joint funding of the posts to be investigated.	Between £40K-£50K CLG grant but less if jointly funded	Housing Options Manager/Policy & Monitoring Officer	Reduction in the number of cases on Connexions caseload for housing related support.	December 2010	
	Formulate a Joint Protocol for 16/17 year olds, which will outline the responsibilities in	Staff Time	Housing Options Manager/Social Services	Reduction in the number of 16/17 year olds placed in Bed & Breakfast.	September 2010	

PREVENTION						
Key Issue	Action	Resources	Lead Officer/Partnership	Measure Of Success	Target Date	Actual Outcome
	different cases, including the roles of Social Care, Housing, Connexions, YOT, Family Support Teams & the voluntary sector.			An increase in the number of prevention cases recorded for this age group.		
	Arrange awareness sessions for Housing, Social Care & other relevant partners on the roles of each with regard to homeless 16/17 year olds.	Staff Time	Housing Options Manager/ Social Services	Fewer inappropriate referrals between agencies and improved staff knowledge.	October 2010	
	Deliver housing and homelessness advice services for young people via schools and colleges. Ensure that information is available in a range of medias.	Staff Time £500-£800 for publicity material	Policy & Monitoring Officer	Fewer instances of homelessness due to parental eviction.	December 2010 and on-going	
	Develop a package of training for young people to deliver the independent living skills needed to access and sustain a tenancy.	Staff Time £5K CLG grant for materials, venues etc.	Policy & Monitoring Officer/ MACC	An increase in the number of young people in temporary accommodation who move successfully into independent living	September 2011 (but pilot at MACC project by December 2010)	
1.3 Homelessness from institutions or leaving care	Work with Probation, YOT & local prisons to ensure that offenders are aware of where to access statutory services. Provide these agencies with the information needed to	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer	An increase in the numbers of clients with offending history accessing Housing Options Advice.	March 2012	

PREVENTION						
Key Issue	Action	Resources	Lead Officer/Partnership	Measure Of Success	Target Date	Actual Outcome
	prevent the loss of accommodation when offenders are taken into custody.					
	Re-launch hospital discharge policy with local hospitals to avoid the need for emergency action in cases of unplanned discharge.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer	The numbers of cases with "left hospital" as the reason for homelessness remain low.	September 2010	
1.4 Rough Sleeping	Rough Sleeper's Count to be conducted Bi-annually.	Staff Time £5K CLG grant	Housing Options Manager/Policy & Monitoring Officer	No rough sleeper's found.	March 2010 & March 2012	
	Introduce monitoring system to record reports of rough sleeping made by stakeholders & members of the public. Make information available on who to contact if rough sleepers are found.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer	A more accurate picture of the extent of rough sleeping in the Borough is established to inform future strategies.	September 2010	
	Publish a protocol outlining the procedure for dealing with rough sleeping in periods of severe weather.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer	Cases of rough sleeping are reported and people accommodated where necessary.	September 2010	
	Undertake an assessment of services provided to tackle rough sleeping and develop a strategy if this is deemed	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer	Opportunities for improving services for rough sleepers are identified and implemented.	June 2011	

PREVENTION						
Key Issue	Action	Resources	Lead Officer/Partnership	Measure Of Success	Target Date	Actual Outcome
	necessary.					
1.5 Homeless families	Develop housing advice services for families with children in accessible locations and at times to suit customers needs.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer/ Social Services	A reduction in the number of homeless acceptances for families and increased prevention outcomes for this group over the next 3 years	December 2010	
	Work with RSL's and private landlords to resolve anti-social behaviour issues amongst families and provide Housing Options staff with information on the options available to tackle this problem.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer/ ASB Co-ordinator	Numbers of families evicted due to ASB reduce and number of homelessness preventions increase.	June 2010 & On-going	
	Formulate a protocol between Housing & Social Care on how families who are found to be intentionally homeless will be assisted and the responsibilities of each service with regard to these cases.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer	Joint-working to ensure that families access alternative accommodation and are supported to ensure that they do not become homeless again in the future.	December 2010	
1.6 Homelessness from the private sector	Introduce landlord accreditation, maximise membership of the scheme and available	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer/ Private Sector Housing Manager	An increase in the number of landlords participating in the Accreditation	December 2010 & on-going	



PREVENTION						
Key Issue	Action	Resources	Lead Officer/Partnership	Measure Of Success	Target Date	Actual Outcome
	accommodation resulting from new contacts made.			Scheme and Rent Bond Scheme		
	Improve collection rates from clients who receive a Rent Bond by time- limiting the bonds and more vigorous monitoring of payments into the Credit Union	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer/PSLO	Increase in collection rate from 5.5% of total outlay to 15% within 12 months.	Monitor quarterly from June 2010	
	Maintain the reduction in the number of cases accepted as homeless due to ending of AST's due to interventions by PSLO's and Homelessness Prevention Officers	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer/Housing Options Team Leaders	No more than 5 cases per quarter accepted due to ending of AST's	Monitor quarterly from June 2010	
1.7 Relationship Breakdown	Continue to participate in MARAC & MARAC steering group.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer	Homelessness acceptances due to domestic violence remain low (under 19 in 2008/2009).	On-going	
	Improve stakeholder & service user involvement in consultation & focus groups dealing with domestic violence issues.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer	Improved attendance at Homelessness Strategy steering Group and service user events.	March 2011	
1.8 Preventing Repossessions	Continue to participate in the full range of Government initiatives to prevent mortgage repossessions,	Staff Time	Housing options Manager	Numbers accepted by Housing Options service as homeless due to mortgage	On-going	

PREVENTION						
Key Issue	Action	Resources	Lead Officer/Partnership	Measure Of Success	Target Date	Actual Outcome
	including MRS, Repossessions Action Plan and court desk			repossession remain at the current low levels		

PROCESSES						
Key Issue	Action	Resources	Lead Officer/Partnership	Measure Of Success	Target Date	Actual Outcome
2.1 Data Collection	Collect data on approaches to Housing options service, to include details of individuals housing need and outcomes of interviews.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer/ Housing Options Team Leaders	The information collected will enable analysis of where resources should be targeted and will inform future strategies/initiatives.	March 2011	
	Work with partner agencies to improve data collection on the housing & support needs of non-statutorily homeless clients.	Staff Time Cost of software	Policy & Monitoring Officer/ All Partners	A better picture of homelessness in the Borough is provided to inform future service delivery.	March 2012	
2.2 Referrals	Introduce information-sharing protocols and a common referral form with partners.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer	A reduction in inappropriate referrals and better multi-agency support for clients.	March 2011	
	Improve partnership working with Probation & Mental Health Team. Continue to work closely with all partners on homelessness & support issues across the full range of client	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer	Successful working practices are established with all partners to enhance service delivery and address key issues.	June 2011	

PROCESSES						
Key Issue	Action	Resources	Lead Officer/Partnership	Measure Of Success	Target Date	Actual Outcome
	groups.					
2.3 Customer Engagement	Develop new ways of gathering feedback on customer satisfaction with Housing Options Service.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer/Housing Options Team Leaders	A clear picture of services users' opinions of The Housing Options Service is obtained to inform improvements and help to target resources.	September 2010	
2.4 Statistics	Remove the need to record clients as "Homeless from Home" on the Government returns, by reviewing current working practices and amending procedures	Staff Time	Housing Options Team Leaders	No use of "Homeless From Home" recorded on P1E except in exceptional circumstances.	September 2010	

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION						
Key Issue	Action	Resources	Lead Officer/Partnership	Measure of Success	Target Date	Actual Outcome
3.1 Provision Of Accommodation	Conduct a comprehensive review of the temporary accommodation available in Cheshire East.	Staff Time	Housing Options Manager/ Policy & Monitoring Officer	Action plan in place with clear vision of the type/location/ standard and support requirements of this type of accommodation in the Borough	March 2011	

	Investigate the provision of supported accommodation for clients with complex needs.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer/ Supporting People	The extent of the need for this type of accommodation is established and required funding is secured.	June 2012	
3.2 Move-On	Monitor the rates of move-on from supported accommodation projects. Ensure that service users are registered on waiting lists of RSL's and have access to advice on their housing options.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer/Supported accommodation providers	Improved rates of move-on and bed-blocking avoided.	March 2011	
3.3 Needs Assessment	Work with partners to ensure that clients entering temporary accommodation undergo a formal housing needs assessment.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer/ Partners	Clients are provided with specialist support from services such as Mental Health when required and there are fewer evictions from temporary accommodation.	December 2012	

## TENANCY SUPPORT

Key Issue	Action	Resources	Lead Officer/Partnership	Measure Of Success	Target Date	Actual Outcome
4.1 Gaps in Provision of Support	Work with Supporting People Team to increase provision of tenancy support across all tenures.	Staff Time & SP funding	Housing Options Manager/ SP Team	A variety of new support is put in place, resulting in better move-on from supported housing projects and a reduction in tenancies lost, particularly in the	September 2011	

TENANCY SUPPORT						
Key Issue	Action	Resources	Lead Officer/Partnership	Measure Of Success	Target Date	Actual Outcome
				private sector.		
4.2 New Tenancies For Homeless Cases	Establish a procedure by which all new tenancies granted to statutorily homeless households or those leaving supported accommodation projects are accompanied by a tenancy support package.	Staff Time & SP Funding	Policy & Monitoring Officer/Housing Options Team Leaders/ Supported Accommodation providers	A reduction in the number of repeat homelessness acceptances and less failed tenancies for those moving from supported projects.	December 2011	
	Introduce joint risk assessments between the Council, RSL's and partner agencies.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer	As above, the introduction of joint working will inform the levels at which tenancy support is required and any specialist requirements for clients.	December 2011	
4.3 Pre-Tenancy Assistance	Roll-out pre-tenancy training scheme (to be piloted at MACC) with all supported accommodation providers and other referring agencies.	Staff Time £15k for admin, materials, venues etc	Policy & Monitoring Officer	Improved move-on from supported housing projects and more non-statutorily homeless cases securing accommodation due to completion of training.	September 2011	
	Consider the provision of a storage facility for furniture for clients in	Staff Time Cost of storage (to be	Policy & Monitoring Officer	Clients are able to move smoothly to independent living,	June 2011	

TENANCY SUPPORT						
Key Issue	Action	Resources	Lead Officer/Partnership	Measure Of Success	Target Date	Actual Outcome
	supported accommodation who receive donations.	determined)		with less reliance on loans from Social fund.		
4.4 Crisis Intervention	Introduce a crisis intervention panel, made up of relevant agencies, to deal with cases where tenancies may be lost and a multi-agency approach is needed.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring Officer	Overlap of services is avoided and more tenancies are sustained due to shared workload on homelessness prevention.	September 2011	

PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION						
Key Issue	Action	Resources	Lead Officer/Partnership	Measure Of Success	Target Date	Actual Outcome
5.1 Social Housing	Work with RSL partners to increase the supply of social housing stock by increasing targets for the provision of this type of accommodation in new developments.	Staff Time	Policy & Monitoring/Housing Strategy Manager	More affordable accommodation available for homeless households & waiting lists reduced	March 2012	
	Nominations agreements with RSL's will be monitored, to ensure quotas are being met and properties from a range of developments are being offered.	Staff time	Policy & Monitoring Officer	The amount of accommodation for homeless households is maximised and homelessness is prevented by an offer of an RSL tenancy	September 2010	

PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION						
Key Issue	Action	Resources	Lead Officer/Partnership	Measure Of Success	Target Date	Actual Outcome
	Monitor the success of the forthcoming Choice-Based Lettings Scheme in meeting the needs of homeless & potentially homeless households & those moving on from supported accommodation.	Staff time	Policy & Monitoring Officer/ CBL Co-ordinator	Accessibility & support in using the scheme is such that a high proportion of vacancies are allocated to those in most need of accommodation.	December 2010 & on-going	
5.2 Affordable Housing	The Council will continue to offer a range of affordable housing options including an assisted purchase scheme, discount for sale schemes and shared ownership via RSL partners. Housing Options Teams will be kept up to date with the range of options available to clients.	Staff Time	Housing Strategy Manager/Housing Options Team Leaders	Households are able to access affordable housing and the use of this option is used more often in homelessness prevention.	On-going	
5.3 Private Sector	The work of the Private Sector Liaison Officers and information on how to access private sector housing will be widely publicised using a variety of Medias	Staff Time Cost of Literature	Private Sector Liaison Officers	Stakeholders and service users are aware of the services available and are able to utilise the private sector to access housing. A reduced number of tenancies in the private sector are lost by the timely	June 2010	

PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION						
Key Issue	Action	Resources	Lead Officer/Partnership	Measure Of Success	Target Date	Actual Outcome
				provision of advice.		
	The number of empty dwellings in the Borough will be reduced by encouraging any non-resident landlords to bring them back into use, grants for improvements will be offered where necessary.	Staff Time Renovation Grant Budget	Private Sector Team	A reduction in the number of empty properties and increase in the amount of accommodation available to help prevent homelessness.	March 2012	