

Stevenage Borough Council and North Hertfordshire District Council Homelessness Strategy Action Plan July 2009/10 - updated April 2011

Priority 1: Prevention of Homelessness						
Objective: To ensure a joint working approach to prevent homelessness and provide good quality advice about alternative options						
Ref:	Tasks	Lead Organisation/ Partnership	Funding	Expected Outcome	How is success measured	Target date
1.1	Monitor numbers of cases involving mortgage arrears or possession action	SBC,NHDC, CAB	Within existing resources	Assess impact of current economic recession	Feed findings into sub-regional group and CLG	Achieved Trends monitored on an ongoing basis. RSL reports on MRS cases to CLG
1.2	Improve links with Housing Benefit Section to ensure high take up of eligible benefits including Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)	North Quadrant Homelessness Forum Members	Within existing resources	Increased take up of benefit entitlement and full use of DHP budget	a) Benefit Liaison meeting initiated b) Entire DHP Budget spent	Achieved - a) Working relationships with HB improved Periodic meetings to discuss mutual concerns b) entire DHP spent
1.3	Improve partnership working with private landlords and letting agents	NHDC, SBC, Landlord Forum	Within existing resources	Improved supply and better quality private rented accommodation	a) Regular Landlord Forums hosted by NHDC & SBC. b) Private Sector Liaison Officer in post (SBC only)	a) Still outstanding b) SBC – section restructure March 2011. New team to be appointed. Key role in creating Private landlord Forum. Housing Options Officer post to be

						recruited and filled end May
1.4	Implement the Government Mortgage Rescue Scheme	SBC, CAB, NHDC	CLG Recession Impact Funding and additional resources to be agreed	Provide relief against mortgage repossession	New scheme launched	Achieved – CAB implementing scheme on behalf of SBC. 10 cases referred to CAB, 3 eligible and referred on to Aldwyck.
1.5	Continue to monitor the impact of the economic recession on homelessness	North Quadrant Homelessness Forum Members	Within existing resources	Improved understanding of local impact	Data collected monthly and reported to CLG	Ongoing - CAB to provide info of their activity at Forum meetings.
1.6	Use analysis from economic recession monitoring to focus CLG Repossessions Prevention Fund	SBC, NHDC	Within existing resources	Minimise risk of repossessions across all tenures	A reduction in the number of repossessions	Ongoing - SBC targeting Repossession Prevention Fund to Credit Union. 15 cases to date have been assisted with MRS and prevention fund. North Herts also working with Credit Union and also provides grants in some cases.
1.7	Produce qualifying criteria for CLG Repossessions Fund	SBC. NHDC	Within existing resources	Enable effective use of funds and assistance to priority cases	A reduction in the number of repossessions	Achieved

Priority 2:Tackling Youth Homelessness

Objective: To provide good quality specialist housing advice and homelessness services to young people

Ref:	Tasks	Lead Organisation/ Partnership	Funding	Expected Outcome	How is success measured	Target date
2.1	Link effectively with HYHG young person services	HYHG, SBC, NHDC, CSF	Within existing resources	More sustainable solutions for young people through efficient case management	Monitor outcomes at HYHG steering group meetings	Achieved Ongoing regular monitoring and communication with SBC/NHDC
2.2	Monitor floating support schemes for young people	Herts SP, RSLs, SHL	Within SP funds	Increase in number of young people sustaining tenancies	SP to confirm target for 2010/11	Achieved Ongoing Contract between SBC and SP is for support for 50 young people. SHL provide quarterly monitoring report to SP team on voids, lettings and outcomes.
2.3	Monitor move on from temporary accommodation and ensure it is accompanied with support	SP, SHL, RSLs, HYHG	Within existing resources	Reduce the number of young people leaving supported accommodation in an unplanned way	SP to confirm target for 2010/11	April 2010 Achieved Ongoing AM reports 100% planned move-on
2.4	Explore availability and access to counselling services for parents of young people	CSF, HYHG	Within existing resources	Increase parental awareness on impact of homelessness on young people	Available services publicised and utilised	HYHG have advised that the service is no longer available due to funding cuts.
2.5	Monitor effectiveness of HYHG Education Project	SBC, NHDC, HYHG	Within existing resources	Increase awareness of homelessness and housing options at school	A minimum of 3 secondary schools targeted	Achieved. Programme of educating young people in Stevenage and

						North Herts schools ongoing. Regular monitoring meetings held by HYHG, attended by SBC and NHDC and regular progress reports received from HYHG.
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Priority 3: Single People and Vulnerable Groups

Objective: To ensure the provision of effective advice and assistance for those who need support in identifying housing solutions

Ref:	Tasks	Lead Organisation/ Partnership	Funding	Expected Outcome	How is success measured	Target date
3.1	Explore a joint protocol with CDAT	NHDC,SBC, CDAT, Turning Point	Within existing resources	Improved information sharing between agencies in line with regional objectives	Protocol agreed/or deemed not viable with reasons cited from viability report	Item currently being reviewed and will be completed by June 2011
3.2	To implement the accommodation provision for people with poor mental health in North Hertfordshire	SP, NHH, Aldwyck HA, NHDC, HPCHA	Supporting People Programme	Availability of cluster and satellite units	Scheme launched	Scheme implemented to be finalised Summer 2011.
3.3	Develop a response to the Government's Rough Sleepers Strategy	NHDC,SBC, The Haven, NH Sanctuary	Within existing resources	Improved partnership working providing long term services to end rough sleeping	Strategy or Protocol agreed	NHDC strategy completed. NHDC and SBC responded to CLG Rough Sleeper Estimate Count in

						November 2010
3.4	Contribute to the development of the Hertfordshire Ex Offender Protocol	NHDC, SBC, Turning Point	Within existing resources	Improved accommodation and support services for MDOs, PPOs and MAPPA cases	Protocol launched and adopted by the North Quadrant Homelessness Forum	Achieved - NHDC and SBC signed up to the Adult Offenders Accommodation Protocol
3.5	To explore opportunities for the redevelopment of the Sanctuary and to identify and support bids for funding	St Mungo's, NH Sanctuary, NHDC, SP, HCA	Tbc	More appropriate accommodation and facilities for rough sleepers	New scheme agreed and fully funded	April 2012

Priority 4: Reducing the use of temporary accommodation

Objective: To maximise the opportunity for homeless households to access settled accommodation

Ref:	Tasks	Lead Organisation/ Partnership	Funding	Expected Outcome	How is success measured	Target date
4.1	Monitor the effectiveness of allocation policies in relation to the proportion of lets to homeless households	NHDC, SBC, SHL	Within existing resources	Higher proportion of lets to homeless households in temporary accommodation	Assessment completed and presented to the North Quadrant Homelessness Forum	Achieved and reported to Forum.
4.2	Produce temporary accommodation remodelling report	NHDC, NHH, Aldwyck HA, SP	Within existing resources	Agreed plan that ties together partner priorities	Report finalised	Priorities agreed between Registered Providers and NHDC – report no longer required
4.3	Explore opportunities for development of new affordable housing	NHDC, SBC, RSLs	HCA, NHDC, SBC, Developer subsidy	Affordable homes delivered or enabled	SBC target 150 units pa NHDC target 131 units	Achieved

4.4	Review levels of under-occupation in social housing	SBC, NHDC, SHL, RSLs	Within existing resources	Extent of under-occupation assessed and incentives devised to make best use of housing stock	Report produced and incentives package developed if appropriate	<p>SBC - Underoccupation review undertaken and reported as part of the review of implementation of the allocations scheme.</p> <p>Incentive Scheme to considered as part of the review of older persons services</p> <p>STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT COMPLETE</p> <p>ASSET REVIEW COMPLETE</p> <p>2 STAGE CONSULTATION ON SERVICE PROVISION NOW UNDERWAY.</p> <p>EXPECT TO REPORT TO JULY EXEC.</p> <p>The North Herts Housing Partnership has commissioned Cambridge University to undertake study, final report due end April 2011</p>
4.5	Review effectiveness of CBL Scheme for	SBC, SHL	Within existing resources	Equal opportunities and	Report produced and presented to the	AM asked to provide report to

	homeless households			choice of accommodation for homeless households	North Quadrant Homelessness Forum	SR as soon as possible. REPORT FROM AM PASSED TO SR 30/3/11
4.6	Promote low cost Home Ownership Schemes	NHDC, SBC, SHL, Aldwyck HA	Within existing resources	Increased awareness of schemes and enhanced housing options	Marketing campaign agreed and launched	Lea Valley Homes marketing and promoting all Homebuy products. SBC/NHDC to discuss with SHL ongoing advertising in Home4U? RN/SR TO DISCUSS WITH JAINE CRESSER and Karen Freimanis at NHDC
4.7	Undertake review of temporary accommodation	SBC, SHL	Within existing resources	Improved accommodation options for homeless households and more cost efficient services	Temporary Accommodation review complete and report produced	Review completed, North Road, decommissioned and feasibility study commenced. Longmeadow Green site redeveloped. Feasibility study for Cartref site has commenced.

Priority 5: Partnership working

Objective: The members of the North Quadrant Homelessness Forum will seek to develop appropriate partnerships in order to deliver high quality services that offer value for money

Ref:	Tasks	Lead Organisation/ Partnership	Funding	Expected Outcome	How is success measured	Target date
5.1	Monitor the effectiveness of partnership working through the North Quadrant Homelessness Forum	North Quadrant Homelessness Forum Members	Within existing resources	Better understanding of partner roles	Feedback from members/case studies presented	ongoing
5.2	Forum membership to be regularly reviewed to increase agency representation	North Quadrant Homelessness Forum Members	Within existing resources	More effective forum with relevant representation from partner agencies	Progress discussed and relevant agencies recruited	Ongoing – All members of the Forum to encourage other agencies to attend regularly
5.3	Link employment and housing issues	North Quadrant Homelessness Forum Members	Within existing resources	Better understanding of economic/employment issues relevant to housing	Job Centre Plus and Connexions representatives	SR attending So-Stevenage Economic Task Force (SSET) meetings. Representation also from Job Centre Plus and Connexions
5.4	Contribute to the review of the joint housing protocol with CSF and HYHG	SBC, NHDC, CSF, HYHG	Within existing resources	More cost efficient services and enhanced joined up working for the benefit of the client	New Protocol agreed and launched	Achieved – new protocol launched July 2010
5.5	All front line staff to undertake joint CSF training when Protocol has been agreed	SBC, NHDC, CSF, HYHG	Within existing resources	All organisations embedded with new practices	Training completed by all front line staff	Training programme completed

Priority 6: Continuous Improvement

Objective: The members of the North Quadrant Homelessness Forum will monitor the performance of the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan, identify areas of improvement and oversee the delivery of enhanced services

Ref:	Tasks	Lead Organisation/ Partnership	Funding	Expected Outcome	How is success measured	Target date
6.1	Benchmark performance of Housing Advice and Homelessness services against other LAs in Hertfordshire	SBC, NHDC	Within existing resources	Identify best practise	Updates at Forum meetings	Ongoing
6.2	Update websites to raise awareness of services	North Quadrant Homelessness Forum Members	Within existing resources	Up to date information readily available to service users	Quarterly reviews of all literature/website information undertaken	Ongoing
6.3	Introduce monitoring systems for disability, sexual orientation and religion/belief	NHDC	Within existing resources	To link customer circumstances to outcome	Update standard forms to include monitoring information	Achieved
6.4	Research into lower levels of homelessness preventions amongst clients aged 25-44 and 45-59	NHDC	Within existing resources	Identify reasons for disparity	Introduce monitoring for comparison	Action currently being reviewed – to be completed by June 2011
6.5	Undertake an inspection of housing advice services to maintain the CLS Quality Mark Accreditation	SBC	Within existing resources	High quality and specialist housing advice service for the benefit of the customer	Successful inspection and actions completed	Achieved – CLS accreditation achieved June 2010
6.6	Front line staff to undertake Child Protection training	SBC, NHDC	Within existing resources	Minimise risk to vulnerable children	Safeguarding Children training completed by all front line staff	Achieved. All staff trained
6.7	Front line staff to undertake Safeguarding Adults training	SBC, NHDC	Within existing resources	Minimise risk to vulnerable adults	Training completed by all staff	SBC - Training to commence in summer 2011
6.8	CLG Specialist	SBC, NHDC	Within existing	More efficient and	Review completed	Audit carried out

	Advisor to undertake review of homelessness and housing advice services		resources	effective services delivered to customers	and actions incorporated into Action Plan for 2010/11	October 2009. Outcome letter sent to NHDC.
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