



Winchester
City Council

HEALTH AND HOUSING

DEPARTMENT

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

2003 – 2008

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Contents

	Page
Executive summary	3
Purpose and vision	4
Links with other strategies	4
Winchester City Council – background information	5
Aims and objectives	6
Proposed outputs	7
Joint working	8
Consultation	8
The homelessness review	11
Objectives of the homelessness strategy	13
Resourcing the strategy	15
Monitoring delivery	16
Delivery plan	16

Executive Summary

This is the Council's first ever Homelessness Strategy and it has been published in order to comply with the Homelessness Act 2002. The Act also required the Council to carry out a review of homelessness; this has been done and some of the summary findings are included in this Strategy. The Strategy has three clear aims, drawn from the legislation itself:

- The prevention of homelessness
- Ensuring there is sufficient accommodation available for homeless people
- Ensuring there is satisfactory support for people who are homeless, or who need support to prevent them from becoming homeless again

The Council has worked with others to develop this strategy. In particular, it has carried out a number of consultation exercises, both with colleagues working in partner agencies, and with service users (homeless applicants, those living in temporary accommodation and users of our housing advice service). The Council has learnt a lot from this and wants to be able to feed stakeholders' views into service design on a regular basis.

The Council is pleased to announce that it has met the ODPM's target of not having any families with children and/or pregnant women living in B&B. The challenge for Winchester City Council is to ensure that it continues to avoid the use B&B, except when necessary in cases of emergency and then to ensure use of this is for as short a time span as possible. Emphasis will also be placed upon ensuring that any alternative forms of temporary accommodation secured are of a good quality meeting the objectives of the ODPM's consultation paper. 'Improving standards of accommodation for homeless households placed in temporary accommodation by housing authorities'.

This strategy sets out in the delivery plan, how it intends to work towards meeting the three aims set out above. The key objectives that the Council will be working towards over the life of this strategy – the next five years – are:

- Developing a better range of good quality temporary accommodation
- Working together with other providers/agencies to maximise the potential of the homeless strategy
- Engaging customer feedback so that, in return the Council can provide better information
- To ensure continuous updated training for staff thus maximising the quality of service delivered
- Review the support offered to homeless households in consultation with other agency providers and supported housing providers

1. Purpose and vision

The Council has produced this first homelessness strategy in order to comply with the Homelessness Act 2002.

The Act for the first time places a legal responsibility on local housing authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their areas, and to publish a strategy which states how the authority, in conjunction with other agencies, intends to tackle homelessness and be proactive in its prevention in the future.

The Council recognises the need to take a more strategic long-term view of homelessness having carried out a best value review, and welcomes the legislation in focussing its efforts on doing this. The Council has already started exploring and delivering long-term sustainable solutions to homelessness. In particular, over the last 7 months it has worked with others to carry out a comprehensive review of homelessness and to prepare the foundations for this strategy.

The Council has consulted with many colleagues in partner agencies both in the voluntary and private sector in order to get to where it is today with this strategy. The Council plans to continue to do this to ensure that the strategy is continually reviewed, updated and effectively delivered over the next five years. It is keen to see real improvements in service delivery to meet the changing needs of customers/clients, resulting from working towards the targets the Council has set down in this strategy.

2. Links with other strategies

The homelessness strategy should be viewed in the context of its links with other Council strategies as well as county-wide and national strategies.

Locally there are strong links to a wide range of strategies and information documents. These have been and will continue to be used to inform both the homelessness review and the actions flowing from this strategy document.

Community Strategy
City Council Corporate Plan
City Council Housing Strategy
Health and Housing Department Business Plan
Internal policy and procedures manual
HRA Business Plan
Hampshire Supporting People County Steer (Draft)
Best Value Improvement Plan
Rehousing Policy and Procedure for victims of Harassment (Draft)
Housing Strategy
Empty Property Strategy

In particular there are strong links with the Corporate Strategy, in jointly aiming to meet the following key objectives:

The promotion of inclusion – by encouraging the development of sustainable communities through lettings policies and continuing to resettle and re-integrate homeless households back into the community. The provision of support and work on prevention is critical here, as is developing meaningful working protocols with many partner agencies.

Ensuring services are available to households in temporary accommodation – by working with the primary care trusts to ensure provision is available for those in temporary accommodation as described in the ODPM report, coupled with ensuring support is available to residents to enable them to gain access to the full range of health and social care services.

3. Winchester City Council – Background Information

The Council’s Housing Strategy sets out in detail the demographic issues that are faced in Winchester. However, to make this strategy complete the Council has set out some key facts about the area that impact directly on homelessness and housing need.

Some facts about Winchester based on the 2001 Census:

- The average house price in Winchester is £207,583 compared with the national average price of £119,436
- The average price of a flat is £121,912
- 71% of households live in owner-occupied property, whilst 16% live in social rented housing. 14% rent privately.
- 1.6% of the population are unemployed, compared with the national average of 3.4%.
- The housing needs survey completed in April 2003 indicates strongly that there is an affordability problem arising from the relationship between local incomes and the supply of housing stock making access unaffordable. The survey estimates that a new purchaser would need an annual income of £35,000 to buy a terraced property in Winchester.

The ethnic structure of Winchester is shown in the table below. Figures for England are shown for comparison purposes.

Percentage of resident population in ethnic groups	Winchester	England
White	97.8	90.9
Mixed	0.7	1.3
Asian or Asian British	0.7	4.6
Black or Black British	0.3	2.3
Chinese or other	0.6	0.9

Source:2001 Census, ONS

4. Aims and objectives

The overriding aim of this strategy is to improve homelessness services and the scope of good quality accommodation options in Winchester. Winchester City Council is committed to meeting the aims and criteria provided for in the Homelessness Act 2002, these are:

- The prevention of homelessness

- Ensuring there is sufficient suitable accommodation available for people who are, or may become homeless
- Ensuring there is satisfactory support for people who are or who may become homeless, or who need support to prevent them from becoming homeless again.

The local objectives of Winchesters homelessness strategy are:

- To eliminate the use of B&B for families with children and/or pregnant women, by March 2004 in line with government targets
- To continue to minimise the use of B&B for all other household types
- To address the needs of rough sleepers in the City
- To reduce the levels of repeat homelessness by investigating and tackling the main causes
- To increase and improve the quality of service provided on homelessness prevention
- To ensure adequate support for homeless people placed in temporary accommodation is available
- To make better, more appropriate use of temporary accommodation, in line with the recommendations set out in the ODPM consultation 'Improving Standards of Accommodation for Homeless Households Placed in Temporary Accommodation'
- To ensure all temporary accommodation secured for homeless households meets with recommended standards set out by the ODPM (currently published in consultation format)
- To steer joined up thinking on homelessness and to facilitate the development of joined up solutions in regular consultation with partners/agencies

In drafting this strategy, the Council has made use of three recent publications:

- The Audit Commission national report entitled "Homelessness – responding to the new agenda" (January 2003)
- The ODPM Advice Note entitled "Achieving positive outcomes on homelessness" (April 2003)
- The ODPM consultation paper "Improving standards of accommodation for homeless households placed in temporary accommodation" (May 03)

The Audit Commission report has been used as a benchmark for the Council's services – to make sure homelessness services are developed that respond to the new agenda and identifying what else needs to be achieved over the coming months. This formed a critical part of the Council's homelessness review process.

The Council welcomes the Advice Note on positive outcomes and it has, where possible, drawn up targets that will help to achieve two of the outcomes outlined in the paper. The planned actions on each are set out below:

Reduced levels of repeat homelessness

The Council will set up monitoring systems to identify cases of repeat homelessness. This should provide the Council with information to review the way it tackles any repeat homelessness. Additionally this should provide the Council with information on causes of repeat homelessness in Winchester. The Council will analyse this information and ensure that the annual update of this strategy includes within it, recommendations/actions to tackle these causes directly. The Winchester District Inclusive Housing Forum will take responsibility for developing this, as the Council is confident that a multi-agency response will maximise the effectiveness and output achieved.

Reduced levels of homelessness against main causes

The main causes of homelessness within Winchester are detailed on page 12 and the identified specific courses of actions to tackle these are set out in section 9. The Council wants to reduce applications under each main cause of homelessness by 10% each year using the data for 02/03 as a baseline (see below) by placing more emphasis on preventative work.

Section 9 of this strategy sets out how Winchester City Council plans to meet its objectives.

5. Proposed outputs

The targets set by the Council as part of this homelessness strategy are set out below:

Target	Performance measure
Maximum total number of households placed in B&B in any one year	10
Total number of families with children and/or pregnant women in B&B by March 2004	0
Families assisted into the private rented sector each year through the City Council's rent deposit scheme	12
Number of women fleeing domestic violence that are helped to return to their homes safely should they so wish or moved into suitable alternative accommodation, each year	12
Number of households placed in a property that has been brought back into use via the empty property strategy, per year	8
To reduce homelessness applications due to eviction by relative or friends through preventative work.	By 10% each year, using 2002/2003 data as a baseline
To reduce homelessness applications due to loss of private rented accommodation through preventative work.	By 10% each year, using 2002/2003 data as a baseline
To reduce the number of repeat homelessness cases by maximising quality of advice offered	By 10% each year for 5 years

6. Joint working on homelessness

This strategy has been developed with the help and co-operation of a number of agencies working in the Winchester area. In particular, the following agencies have been involved in pulling together ideas and data as part of the homelessness review, and on commenting on and developing this strategy document ready for publication.

Age Concern.	Housing 21.	Southern Focus Trust.
Alpha Service.	HVHS Housing	Stonham Housing
Assertive Outreach	Group.	Association.
Team.	Keystone – Winchester	Swaythling Housing
CAB.	Churches Housing Group.	Association.
Community Action.	Kingfisher Housing	Wessex Youth Offending
DEFRA.	Association.	Team.
Face to Face.	Langley House Trust –	West Hampshire NHS Trust.
HAAS.	Elderfield.	Winchester Area Community
Hampshire County	Local Solicitors.	Action.
Council.	New Downland HA.	Winchester Housing Group.

In addition the Council has worked closely with all of the main registered social landlords in the area and various colleagues based within Hampshire County Council, including Social Services.

7. Consultation

The Council has been very keen to consult with a range of stakeholders in carrying out the homelessness review and developing this strategy. The Council had developed a clear and planned approach to consultation early on; it identified who it needed to engage with and the best ways of doing this.

The Council has consulted its colleagues in partner agencies and its service users in developing this strategy.

Consulting Users

Since the beginning of the financial year 2002/03 the Councils has engaged in a wide range of consultation with service users. This essentially had three elements to it:

- A postal questionnaire sent to homelessness applicants who have been issued with a decision letter since April 2002,
- A postal questionnaire being sent to housing advice customers, who have visited the City Offices,
- A questionnaire has and continues to be sent to all residents of temporary accommodation, prior to them moving on

Respondents made a number of comments about being homeless in Winchester. Some of those are listed below:-

- The service I received was satisfactory but the Council could offer more outreach working

- I did not hear from WCC for 3 months after I made contact
- Some people may need help in finding suitable accommodation, it isn't easy in Winchester
- I found that WCC were very helpful...the level and standard of service was good
- After my visit with WCC, I was full of hope and didn't feel degraded....the service provided has been more than adequate.
- I appreciate so much that I was given emergency accommodation the moment I became homeless

Within the questionnaire sent to the residents of temporary accommodation, they were asked about what they disliked about their accommodation. They informed the Council:

- Sharing a toilet and a bathroom
- It's mouldy
- The amount of arguments and fights in and around the building
- Drugs are being smoked in the toilet by people who don't live here
- The washing machine doesn't spin clothes and the drier takes too many tokens
- Night time was noisy and it would have helped to have someone around
- Going upstairs for the toilet and the bathroom
- Toilets and showers are always dirty
- Facilities are fine but, it would be nice to have my own bath/shower and toilet
- The noise level can get a bit loud but, under the circumstances this is understandable

The Council has made efforts to address all of these issues in its objectives and delivery plan.

Consulting partner agencies

The Council made a decision to engage with partner agencies as early in the homelessness review process as possible. In March 2003 it sent out an agency survey questionnaire to all those agencies it knew to be working in the City, providing advice on housing issues or working directly with the homeless. The purpose of this survey was to encourage colleagues within these agencies to start thinking about the issues that the homelessness strategy might address and at the same time to identify gaps in or problems with service provision. This survey led to a mapping exercise, which enabled the Council to clearly see what agencies work in the City to tackle homelessness. From this the Council carried out an audit, identifying gaps and areas for future development.

In addition to this the Council spent some time talking in detail with key partners – people it thought may have a real impact on homelessness and homelessness services in Winchester. The Council called these *key player meetings* and these involved working with actual agencies that focussed on the needs of particular client groups. These included:

- Ex-offenders
- Armed forces
- Drugs and alcohol misuse and mental health
- Physical and learning disabilities
- Older people

- Domestic violence
- Young people
- Families

In each of these meetings the Council was able to review and audit current service provision and generate ideas for future action and improvements.

Some of the general feedback on the main gaps in provision and ideas expressed for improvement are set out below:

- The need to tackle housing needs of 16/17 year olds by maximising supported housing links allowing them access to the housing register and further develop protocols with social services to facilitate arrangements to ensure a guarantor/guardian ad litem can be appointed to facilitate, in certain circumstances, other tenancy options
- The homelessness strategy needs to be a working document that all agencies formally sign up to
- There is a need to develop emergency crash / respite care for young people as well as mediation services
- Continue to engage with a wide range of agencies through the Supported Housing Panel to ensure the needs of hard to reach groups are met
- There is a need to provide a “wet house” in the area
- Closer working is required with social services and the youth offending team to meet the needs of young people in a much more co-ordinated way
- There is a need for resettlement support for homeless households being rehoused in both temporary and permanent accommodation, in particular for vulnerable single people
- A directory of services identifying who is doing what in Winchester to tackle homelessness would be useful
- There should be a North Hants homelessness forum to co-ordinate provision across a broader area
- Develop a best practice guide for agencies working with clients suffering from domestic violence/harassment
- A housing advice information leaflet for a wide client range and more specifically young people is needed
- A mediation service to tackle parental eviction is currently being developed in partnership with Relate in Winchester
- Improve choice to housing applicants and consider working towards a more choice based lettings scheme
- The need to simplify the process for clients accessing the homeless services

The Council has tried wherever possible to take on board all feedback and ideas from consultation and include these in the specific objectives in this homelessness strategy. These are set out in section 9 of this strategy.

8. The Homelessness Review

As stated earlier in this document the Homelessness Act 2002 places a new duty on all local authorities to carry out a review of homelessness. This was carried out at Winchester during 2002/3, and built on the work already completed as part of the Best Value Review.

The Best Value Review was conducted between March 2001 and October 2002 and was the first major review of housing services for many years. From that review the Council has

developed a robust improvement plan, and many of those targets will be shared with the targets specifically relating to addressing issues arising from the homelessness review. A copy of the Best Value Review and improvement plan is available at the City Council Offices.

The Council has carried out a thorough examination of all of the data available on homelessness in the City. This has enabled the Council to obtain a wide understanding of homelessness, why it occurs, what the main causes are and what can happen to people who find themselves homeless in Winchester.

The main causes of homelessness amongst those to whom Winchester City Council has accepted a rehousing duty in Winchester are identified from an analysis of its government returns from the last 3 financial years:

Reason for homelessness	00/01	01/02	02/03
Parental exclusion	16	9	9
Eviction by other relative / friend	6	6	13
Relationship breakdown–non-violent	9	4	3
Relationship breakdown – violence from partner	8	8	10
Rent arrears			
Local authority	0	0	0
RSL	3	0	0
Private sector	2	0	2
Loss of tied / MoD / other rented	11	11	11
Loss of AST due to tenancy termination	11	25	6
Discharge from institution	3	2	8

Over the year 02/03, the main causes of homelessness were:

- Eviction by friend or relative
- Loss of rented or tied accommodation (not termination of assured shorthold tenancy)
- Violent relationship breakdown

The following table shows the total number of people approaching Winchester City Council as homeless, and those that the Council accepted a duty to rehouse.

	01/02	02/03
Applications	294	225
Acceptances	71	72

These statistics go some way to demonstrating the emphasis placed on preventative measures once an applicant approaches the City Council. The Council has been maintaining efforts to ensure that it does all it can to prevent homelessness. In the last year it has made a number of improvements to the service it provides, including:

- Examination of the information obtained from the work of the homelessness and advice team to ensure the Council is giving greatest focus to the main causes of homelessness

- Staff training has been a priority within the last financial year to ensure sufficient focus is being placed on preventative work as well as ensuring all staff are fully complying with the Homelessness Act 2002
- Internal procedures have been reviewed and a full and extensive procedure guide is now available and used by all officers
- A list of all supported housing providers in Winchester has been collated to ensure the best use of all vacancies
- All applicants that leave temporary accommodation are now assessed prior to rehousing to ensure appropriate support is provided (if necessary) to sustain the new tenancy
- £5,000 of ODPM funding was used to provide emergency provisions (beds, cutlery, quilts, pots, pans, table and chairs, etc) these provisions are now stored in temporary accommodation thus ensuring B&B is no longer used if an applicant does not have basic provisions
- £15,000 of ODPM money was used to set up a leasing scheme with Drum Housing Group, initially 6 properties are being taken on to assist with housing homeless applicants
- Provision of housing-related support through the Supporting People programme, to assist licensees to maintain their homes, comply with the terms of their licence and be better prepared for a successful move-on.

During 02/03 B&B was used to accommodate 29 households during the year. In total 1,042 nights of B&B were used, making the average stay of 36 nights. The total expenditure on B&B for those was £42,133.

The Council still uses B&B, but is really pleased that at the current time (June 2003) it has no families with children living in B&B accommodation. This means that it has met the ODPM target almost a year early. The Council currently has 1 single applicant using B&B.

The following data shows the number of homeless households accommodated in temporary housing in the City over the last 4 years.

Number of Homeless Households Accommodated by Winchester as at 31 March

	1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003
Average Number	35/36	46	51	66

This strategy aims to tackle some of the issues raised by customers about the standards and quality of temporary accommodation.

In terms of the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation the following data shows how the Council has worked towards meeting the Bed and Breakfast Unit target in the last six months.

Use of Bed and Breakfast

2002/2003	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Families with children in B&B	4	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
Families with children in B&B over a 6 week period	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

9. Objectives of the homelessness strategy

This section of the homelessness strategy sets out the specific objectives that the Council will be working towards over the next 5 years, the life of this strategy. How these will be actioned is detailed in the delivery plan.

These action points have been drawn directly from what the Council has learned from engaging with customers and partner agencies and its own internal review of homelessness. The Council has learned from best practice and taken on board what is coming out of the ODPM, the BBU and from the Beacon Councils. These objectives are the main focus of work on homelessness issues, and form the backbone of the Council's first homelessness strategy.

Objective	Details
Develop a better range of good quality temporary accommodation.	<p>The extension of the private sector leasing scheme</p> <p>Exploring other possible alternatives to B&B</p> <p>Explore the possibility of making use of hard to let sheltered bedsit accommodation for homeless households</p> <p>Improving the existing deposit scheme</p> <p>Ensuring all temporary accommodation meets the minimum standards set out in the ODPM Consultation Paper</p>
Improved joint working	<p>Carry out a fundamental review of temporary accommodation to audit its use and quality</p> <p>Produce a directory of services in the District</p> <p>Develop protocols for inter-agency working to assist vulnerable groups, especially for young people</p> <p>Develop a best practice guide for agencies working with clients suffering from domestic violence/harassment</p>
Improved links with the private rented sector	<p>Ensure there is multi-agency input into the monitoring of the homelessness strategy</p> <p>Build on existing empty homes strategy that will effectively bring empty properties back into use</p> <p>Expand and improve the Council's own rent deposit scheme to assist more homeless families and continue to liaise closely with the voluntary</p>

Winchester Rent Deposit Scheme

Training	Ensure all staff receive regular homelessness training, in particular on homelessness case law and housing advice issues
Provide better information for customers	<p>Provide a full range of housing advice leaflets</p> <p>Provide a comprehensive advice leaflet for young people</p> <p>Improve mechanisms for customer input into service shaping and delivery</p>
Focus the service on the prevention of homelessness	<p>Develop further the mediation service being set up through Relate for use where applicants face homelessness as a result of eviction by family and friends</p> <p>Work with the youth service to develop an education programme for young people, including work in schools and colleges</p> <p>Develop the website to provide a better range of housing advice and information, including details of independent agencies that can provide support and assistance</p> <p>Carry out an annual review of the housing advice service to ensure that it is effectively preventing homelessness</p> <p>Ensure the housing advice service provides services for all homeless people in the city, not just priority needs groups, and monitor the outcomes for these groups too</p> <p>Set up mechanisms to identify repeat homelessness, so as to be able to tackle root causes</p>
Review support available to homeless applicants	<p>The Council offers a floating support service to vulnerable households throughout the District, in conjunction with a number of voluntary sector support providers. This offers an effective means of preventing homelessness through failing to maintain the existing tenancy/licence</p> <p>Ensure that all families in temporary accommodation receive a visit from a health visitor, and access to primary care services and the services of support workers as needed</p> <p>Explore with our partners, the possibilities of developing a wet house in the city</p>

Delivering the strategy

Ensure the strategy remains a living document, continually under review and monitored, and updated on an annual basis

Produce a summary of the homelessness strategy in leaflet form for distribution to all those who contributed to its development, and ensure a copy is available to members of the public

10. Resourcing the homelessness strategy

Winchester City Council has received financial support from the ODPM, which was used to reduce the number of families having to go into bed and breakfast. A supply of emergency items has now been purchased to assist applicants that have no belongings of their own to move directly into unfurnished hostel accommodation. For the year 03/04, the Council has been awarded £20,000. This will be used directly to increase the portfolio of properties that are available through the private sector leasing scheme, operated by Drum Housing Association in partnership with the City Council. The plan is for Drum HA to take on 6 properties in the southern rural areas of this district, an area where the Council finds it difficult to place homeless households from that area.

It is the intention of the ODPM to review the financial support provided to Local Authorities for this purpose on an annual basis.

Due to the Homelessness Act 2002 increasing the priority need categories, laying down a duty for all Local Authorities to produce a homelessness strategy and the emphasis the ODPM is placing on preventative measures the need for extra staffing has been highlighted. Funding was successfully secured to extend the existing two Housing Advice/Homeless Persons Officers to three full time posts and improve the administrative support. This has enabled the team to be more proactive with housing advice and form closer liaisons with other voluntary/private agencies in preventing/tackling homelessness.

11. Monitoring delivery of the strategy

It is the responsibility of the Housing Needs Manager to work with staff in implementing this strategy and ensuring that the Council delivers what it says it will deliver, when it says it will. However, this does involve input and effort from a range of agencies within the district and some of these are identified within the delivery plan.

The homelessness strategy will be monitored in a number of ways.

- Progress on delivering targets set out in the delivery plan
- Progress against the key outputs set out in section 4
- An assessment of the overall impact the strategy is having in Winchester
- Seeking views from stakeholders on changes in services and the impact this has had, particularly on customers

12. Delivery Plan

Set out overleaf is the delivery plan for ensuring that the Council works towards the objectives set in this homelessness strategy.

Strategic objective: Develop a better range of temporary accommodation

Task	Description	Priority	Lead role	Resource implications	Target date	Progress at:
Extend the private sector leasing scheme	Work with Drum Housing Group to acquire homes through this scheme	H	NB/TH	ODPM funding already set aside	March 04	October 03
Explore all other possible alternatives to B&B, for all client groups	Eliminate the use of B&B completely and explore all other alternatives including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless at home scheme • Provision of emergency crash pads for young people • Working towards closer liaison with all other housing providers 	H	Homelessness Team	Make use of existing B&B budgets to fund alternatives	July 04	January 04
Explore the possibility of making use of hard to let sheltered accommodation	Explore options for change of use and, with colleagues in housing management	M	D. Cooper / KTK	Not yet known	June 04	October 03

Homelessness Strategy – Delivery Plan

Winchester City Council

Strategic objective: **Develop a better range of temporary accommodation**

Improve the rent deposit scheme	Review the existing deposit scheme to bring it up to date with landlords requirements. Engage landlords about their needs Review policy and procedure. Produce customer leaflets	M	HT	Use existing resources	March 04	October 03
Ensure all temporary accommodation meets standards set out in ODPM consultation paper	Carry out a review of all T/A using the standards set out as a tool. Identify necessary improvements / alternatives e.g. access, security, location, length of stay, provision of support, move on accommodation. Ensure previous review of temporary accommodation meets standards in ODPM consultation paper	H	DC / LB	Not yet known	March 04	October 03
Ensure link between temporary accommodation and JHR procedure is clear	Review route temporary accommodation applicants obtain permanent accommodation	M	DC	Existing resources	March 04	October 03

Strategic objective: Improve joint working

Task	Description	Priority	Lead role	Resource implications	Target date	Progress at:
Produce a directory of services in the city	Produce a directory for use by all agencies in the city, available electronically. Ensure responsibility for updating is clearly allocated	M	Homelessness Team	Staff time, printing & distribution	March 03	March 04
Develop protocols for inter-agency working to assist vulnerable groups	Identify all agencies that need to be involved in this approach (mental health teams, social services, youth advice agencies etc) Work jointly to develop joint procedures, customer information leaflets and joint training	M	DC	Within existing resources	March 04	October 03
Develop a best practice guide for agencies working with domestic violence	Produce a multi-agency tool that highlights best practise and identifies specific services available locally	M	Homelessness Team		04	October 03

Strategic objective: **Improved links with the private rented sector**

Task	Description	Priority	Lead role	Resource implications	Target date	Progress at:
Use an empty homes strategy to assist homeless families	To build an existing strategy that will effectively bring empty properties back into use for occupation by homeless households	L	NB	No yet known	March 05	March 04

Strategic objective: Provide better information for customers

Task	Description	Priority	Lead role	Resource implications	Target date	Progress at:
Provide a comprehensive range of customer advice leaflets	Produce draft leaflets in consultation with other agencies where relevant and ensure distribution at convenient points eg doctors surgeries, libraries, health visitor surgeries etc)	H	Homelessness Team	Printing and distribution	March 04	October 03
Produce an advice leaflet specifically for young people	Work jointly with other agencies to develop a comprehensive advice pack for young people	L	Homelessness Team	Printing and distribution	March 04	October 03
Improve mechanisms for customer input into shaping service delivery	Continue to use an exit questionnaire in all approaches to the homelessness & advice service Set up an annual survey for customers Consider the possibility of setting up a customer forum	M	Homelessness Team	Within existing resources	March 04	October 03

Strategic objective:

Focus the service on the prevention of homelessness

Task	Description	Priority	Lead role	Resource implications	Target date	Progress at:
Explore the use of a mediation service	Use where applicants face homelessness as a result of eviction by family and friends	H	Homelessness Team	Staff Training	December 03	October 03
Education in schools & colleges	Work with the youth service to develop an education programme for young people Learn from best practice Take a multi-agency approach	L	Homelessness Team	Time resource	July 04	March 04
Develop the website to provide up to date housing advice	Create a web page that provides housing advice, has all of the customer leaflets available on-line and links to other advice agencies in the city.	M	Homelessness Team	Time resource IT and staff	July 04	March 04
Annual review of housing advice service	Develop an annual review mechanism with key PI's that measure how effective the housing advice service is and how it prevents homelessness	M	DC	Unknown	March 04	October 03
Task	Description	Priority	Lead role	Resource implications	Target date	Progress at:
Set up mechanisms to identify repeat homelessness	Ensure the homelessness application form and interview are able to identify cases of repeat homelessness Identify causes of repeat homelessness in	H	Homelessness Team	Existing provisions	March 04	October 03

	all cases Identify action that will reduce repeat homelessness in each case Take the appropriate action to tackle this					
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Strategic objective: Review support available to homeless applicants

Task	Description	Priority	Lead role	Resource implications	Target date	Progress at:
Ensure the existing support scheme within Housing is reviewed	Set up mechanisms for annual review Ensure customers in receipt of support are able to comment on its effectiveness	H	Landlord function	Unknown	March 04	October 03
Ensure all families in T/A receive a visit from a health visitor	Work with the Primary Care Trust to set up referral arrangements Learn from models of best practice	H	Landlord function	Unknown	March 04	October 03
Develop accommodation for street drinkers	Promote the development of accommodation for rough sleepers with substance misuse problems that cannot access existing services	H	WDIHF / Supporting People Co-ordinator	Unknown	March 05	March04