



# Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013

## **Foreword**

### **Our Strategic Approach to Homelessness**

**By Councillor Roger Bayliss  
Portfolio Holder for Housing**



It's five years since we reviewed the causes and other trends around homelessness in North West Leicestershire and published our strategy for addressing homelessness. In the early part of 2008 we reviewed the strategy - not just because it was a government requirement, but because trends over the last 5 years have changed dramatically.

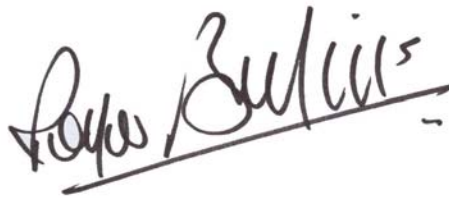
Homelessness has a huge effect on individuals and on communities. For those experiencing homelessness as young persons, it can affect their whole future. Stable housing is fundamental to general well-being. Problems with housing, be it the lack of accommodation or non-decent accommodation, can undermine progress made in education, employment or other aspects of an individual's life.

We would like to thank the following key partners not only for their assistance in developing the new district-wide strategy, but for their commitment in helping us to deliver the strategy and monitor the Action Plan over the next 5 years.

- Social Services
- Citizen's Advice Bureau – including Money Advice
- Supporting People commissioners
- NWL Domestic Violence Outreach Project and Women's Aid
- Service users
- North West Leicestershire Council for Voluntary Services
- Neighbouring local housing authorities
- Local housing associations
- Staff at both the Durban House and Veronica House Projects
- NWL Homelessness Project
- Probation service
- NWLDC Private Sector Housing and Housing Landlord service colleagues
- Youth Offending Service

- NWL Council for Voluntary Services
- Connexions
- Government Office – East Midlands
- HM Prison service
- Homestart (NWL)
- REACT Furniture Scheme
- Straw & Pearce Solicitors
- Rethink, Mental Health Service

The new strategy and Action Plan that have been developed through this partnership working are something of which we can all be justly proud and I feel certain that the future success of the strategy will be assured if we continue to develop and strengthen these links.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Royce Sullivan", written over a horizontal line.

If you would like this document in  
a different format or language please  
ring the Housing Advice Team on

01530 454813

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# 1 Introduction

1.1 Our first Homelessness Strategy was published in 2003. At the time around 350 households were presenting to the Council as homeless each year with 160 acceptances and the key causes were parental eviction and domestic violence. The strategy identified three main priorities to:

- Prevent homelessness
- Ensure that accommodation is and will be available for homeless people or those at risk of homelessness
- Provide support to homeless people.

The following two years saw an increase in the number of applications and acceptances but we are proud to have achieved a significant reduction in homelessness in the last three years. We believe that the efforts made by all agencies concerned in preventing homelessness have been successful in achieving this reduction.

1.2 As well as the changes that have occurred in recent years, we are now facing uncertainty around the future trends in house prices and availability of mortgages to enable people to buy a home. These factors mean we need to review the causes of homelessness in North West Leicestershire and develop a strategy to take us forward over the next five years.

1.3 The government has continued to see the prevention of homelessness as a priority within its housing agenda. The guidance issued to local authorities in 2006 reiterated the need for new homelessness strategies to be developed by July 2008 and required a greater focus on prevention, inter-agency working and service user involvement. Hence our review of homelessness locally and our new strategy is timely in addressing these requirements.

1.4 This document considers the trends in homelessness in North West Leicestershire and outlines the steps taken to engage all stakeholders in developing our future plans to prevent homelessness and to provide a better service to those for whom it cannot be avoided. A detailed action plan has been developed by the Housing Futures Forum and this is available as an appendix to the strategy (A1).

## 2 The national and regional picture and local strategic links

### *National and regional picture*

- 2.1 Ever since the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977, local authorities have been expected to prevent, as well as to respond to, homelessness. However since the Homelessness Act, 2002, the government has increasingly encouraged local authorities to become more pro-active in tackling homelessness. This focus on prevention was reiterated in the Code of Guidance issued in 2006.
- 2.2 The aims of homelessness legislation and national policy in the UK are:
- To strengthen help to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
  - To develop more strategic approaches to tackling homelessness
  - To encourage new responses to tackling homelessness
  - To reduce the use of bed and breakfast (B&B) hotels for homeless families with children and for 16/17 year olds
  - To reduce the use of temporary accommodation
  - To sustain the two-thirds reduction in rough sleeping
  - To ensure the opportunity of a decent home for all.
- 2.3 The government sees clear links between homelessness and other key planks of national policy including delivery of new housing and the development of sustainable communities as well as the current worklessness agenda and the need to support vulnerable people to live independently. The various links are outlined in more detail in a separate appendix to this strategy (A2).
- 2.4 The national focus on homelessness has resulted in significant reductions in rough sleeping, homelessness acceptances and the number of households living in temporary accommodation in recent years. In addition over a million vulnerable people have been helped each year through Supporting People.
- 2.5 Similar improvements have been seen in the East Midlands with the number of homelessness acceptances reduced by a third since 2004 and the use of temporary accommodation already halved two years ahead of the government target of 2010. The East Midlands Homelessness Strategy published in 2007 recommended that:
- Capital funding allocations should take account of homelessness pressures
  - Housing associations should have homelessness action plan
  - Agencies work together to ensure a continuum of service provision to the most vulnerable homeless households
  - Prevention services should be better publicised and targeted

- Links with other agencies, particularly across sectors, be strengthened
- Service users should be at the heart of service development.

The Strategy also suggested the development of sub regional homelessness forums would help to achieve better services for homeless households. The focus on homelessness in capital allocations across the region provides a good opportunity for local authorities wishing to enhance bricks and mortar services for homeless households.

### ***Sub regional priorities***

2.6 Opportunities for joint working with our neighbouring authorities on homelessness are being explored. Two priorities have been agreed as:

- Improving prevention and transition work with young people
- Developing the role of housing associations in prevention of homelessness.

2.7 In working to improve prevention and transition work with young people there is already a strong platform of joint working on young people's issues, particularly in the delivery of the Local Area Agreement. Clear outcome targets for achievement by 2010 have been agreed as:

- By 2010 we are no longer using B&B for young people, we have reduced the numbers of young people approaching agencies in crisis (target to be set for this) and where young people have to move from home the most vulnerable have a planned journey which helps them to sustain their first tenancy for at least 12 months (target to be set)
- Where it is safe to do so young people are being helped and supported to stay at home and make a planned move to independence in a sustainable way
- Young people have an understanding of the impact of leaving home in an unplanned way and have thought through the consequences of an early move from home

This builds on current work on the single referral point and creates opportunity for early intervention and prevention programmes in school, etc.

2.8 Work has already begun to engage with housing associations and to promote their role in both primary and secondary homelessness prevention. This work will be extended jointly and will focus on a small number of the most influential housing association partners and on a number of key areas including nominations, allocations and prevention work. The Housing Corporation guidance to housing associations will be a useful tool in delivering this priority. Outcome targets for 2010 under this priority are:

- Five of the biggest or most influential housing association will have developed robust Homelessness Prevention Plans

- Homelessness Champions in a further five housing association will have been brought on board and lessons learned from the initial work will be applied
- Evidence that housing associations are contributing to primary and secondary prevention will be available
- Evidence of improved use of nominations and allocations to improve prevention outcomes will be available.

### **Local strategic links**

2.9 This strategy sits within a hierarchy of local plans from the Community Strategy, down through the Council plans and the Housing Strategy. The four priorities identified in the Housing Strategy, all having a direct impact on homelessness in the district, are:

- Increasing the supply of affordable housing
- Improving standards in the private sector
- Improving services and standards for council tenants
- Housing and support for vulnerable people.

2.10 Our Homelessness Strategy has clear links to the Community Strategy and the Council's priorities for the next three years. Children and young people and safer communities feature highly in both, and the delivery of affordable housing is a priority for the Community Strategy.

2.11 Within the Local Area Agreement (LAA) housing is a cross cutting theme and the homelessness aspects of this relate to the children and young people and safer communities blocks. Two indicators directly linked to homelessness have been agreed as stretch targets within the LAA and these are:

- **Target 4 – Children and Young People:** the number of 16 and 17 year olds for which decisions are taken in relation to homelessness as a result of family breakdown and published as part of the quarterly P1E homelessness statistics – stretch target to reduce to 100 by year three. An aspiration of the LAA is to replicate successful pilots to all areas of Leicestershire including the establishment of multi agency support networks to young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness
- **Target 7 – Safer Communities:** the number of reported domestic violence incidents – stretch target to increase reported incidents to 6187 in year three, increasing by 5% each year prior to this.

### **3 Housing and homelessness in North West Leicestershire**

#### ***Housing needs***

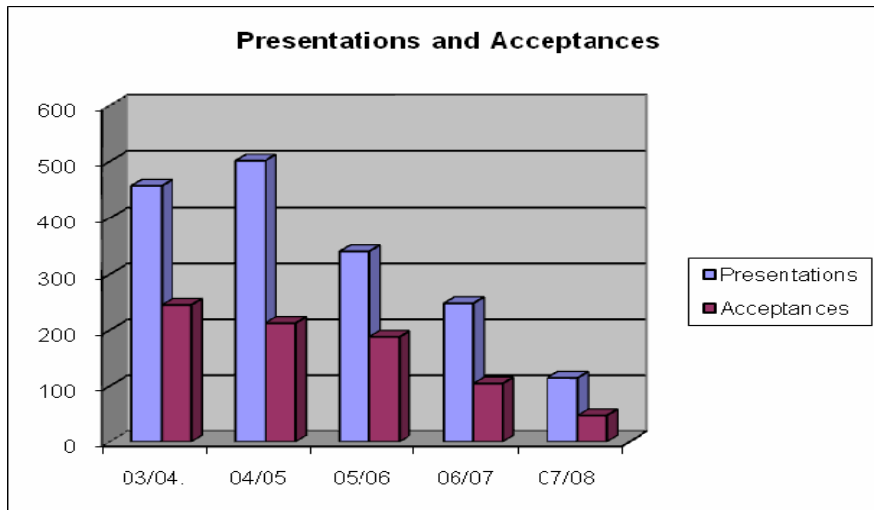
- 3.1 The latest population estimates for 2005 show the population of North West Leicestershire to be 88,800. The population of North West Leicestershire has grown considerably since 1981, from a population of 79,200 to a population of 88,800 in 2005, that's a percentage increase of 12%; almost double that of the national rate. By 2029 the population of North West Leicestershire is expected to reach 106,800, an increase of 18,500 (21%) since the 2004 mid-year population estimates. This compares to a 7% increase in population for East Midlands and 13% increase for England overall in the same period.
- 3.2 These growth rates equate to an average increase of 840 people annually and this presents a significant challenge to sustainability in the area including the additional housing required as well as the increased demand for services.
- 3.3 The age profile of the population is also set to alter dramatically. By 2029 the population aged over 60 years old will have increased significantly, those aged between 65-69 will have increased by 70% and people aged 85 and over will have increased by 138%, from 1,600 people to 3,800 people. Population growth amongst the younger age groups is forecast to increase at a more stable rate (for the most part) with the biggest change being in the 5-9 year old age group where the increase is forecast at 15%.
- 3.4 From the 2001 Census, the ethnic population of North West Leicestershire is predominantly white British with 97.36% of the population being white British.
- 3.5 There was an estimated 37,000 homes in North West Leicestershire in 2004, and this figure is rising to meet demand. It is estimated that the number of homes will increase by 3,000 between 2006 and 2011 representing an increase of 8%, and by 2026 it is expected that there will be 49,000 homes in the district, an increase of around 30% from the 2006 figure.
- 3.6 Owner occupation is the predominant tenure with 76% of all homes being owner occupied. The total local authority owned dwelling stock in North West Leicestershire has declined steadily since the mid 1990's as a result of policy to give existing tenants the right to buy their properties. As at 2005 the dwelling stock was 4,544. The housing provided by housing associations has slowly increased over the years and they jointly owned 1330 homes as at 2006.
- 3.7 The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) suggests that the percentage of households who cannot afford market housing in the district is as high as 51%. The inputs used to calculate this percentage figure were a 3.5 income mortgage multiplier and an average lower quartile house price of £122,000 for the district.
- 3.8 The private rented sector has grown rapidly in recent years, as a result of more flexible mortgage lending such as buy to let mortgages. However many people currently consider it only acceptable for a short period or at a particular life stage, for example when leaving the parental home or after a relationship breakdown.

People prefer a more permanent type of tenure. The SHMA shows that 40% of households in the district cannot afford private sector housing rents so even though we have seen an increase in private sector homes available these homes are not affordable to a large percentage of the population in housing need.

- 3.9 The SHMA has calculated that levels of affordable housing supply required could be as high as 80% of total house building in the district. This level of affordable house building is never going to be achieved but it does give an indication of the high levels of need.
- 3.10 At present, mortgage repossessions are rising; the Council of Mortgage Lenders said in January 2007 that mortgage repossessions increased by 65% in 2006 (to 17,000 across the country), with a further 4,000 abandoned or handed back to the lender and predicted a further rise this year, possibly as high as 45,000. The increasing effect of the credit crunch is likely to see these levels of repossessions rising. If the patterns of the mid 1990's repeat themselves we will begin to see an increase in homeless applications as a result of the increase in repossessions.
- 3.11 A county wide assessment of the needs of gypsies and travellers in 2007 showed that the greatest demand was in North West Leicestershire. The Council is looking at options to allocate land for five or six sites to prevent the current high level of illegal encampments continuing in the future.

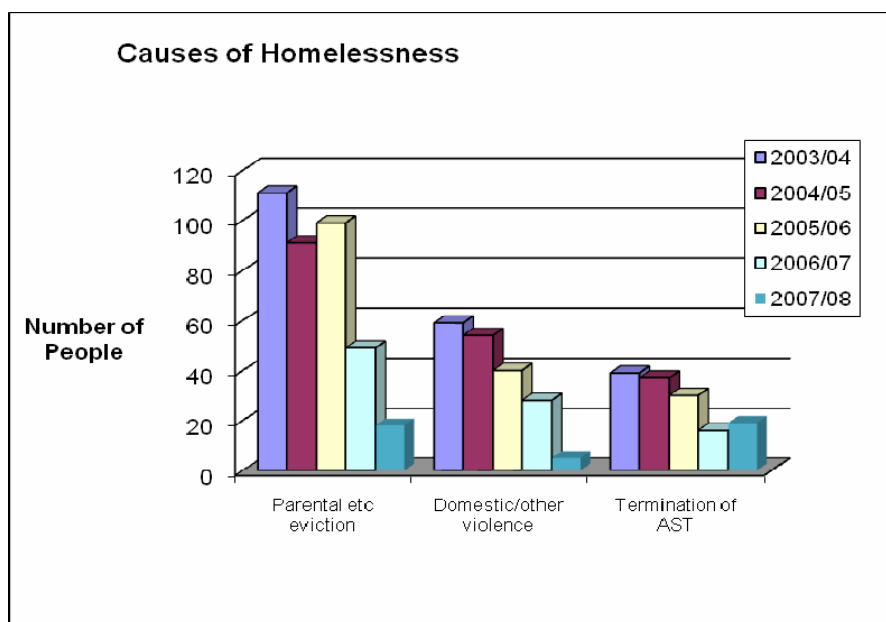
### ***Homelessness***

- 3.12 We are proud of our performance against the national indicators and our local targets. There continues to be a low incidence of rough sleeping in the district with only three people identified in 2006/07 reducing to zero in 2007/08. Our prevention activity is good with an increasing number of cases where advice has prevented homelessness (79 in 2007/08) and no cases of repeat homelessness within two years of a previous acceptance (Best Value Performance Indicator 214). We have nearly halved the average time taken to make a decision to accept a duty to house a homeless household since 2006/07 with the outturn performance in 2007/08 being 24.82 days.
- 3.13 Trends in homelessness have changed dramatically in the last five years. During this period the picture of homelessness in terms of both the number of households presenting to the Council as homeless and the number where the Council accepts a duty to house have reduced by over 75% as shown in the following chart:

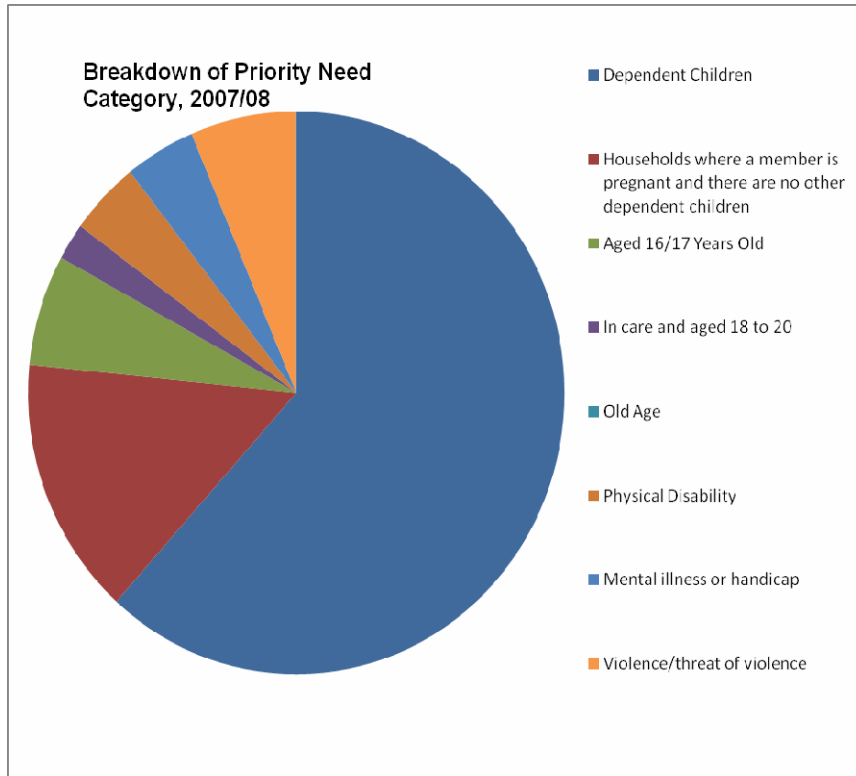


This follows the trend in reduction of acceptances seen nationally and across the East Midlands region although the level of reduction is far greater in North West Leicestershire. Analysis of the data for each quarter over the same period shows no particular seasonal trend.

- 3.14 The top three causes of homelessness are eviction by parents and friends, domestic or other forms of violence and termination of assured shorthold tenancies. The following chart shows how these factors have changed over the last five years. There has been a steady decline in homelessness as a result of eviction by parents or other family/friends and domestic violence. The latter is surprising considering the rise in incidence of domestic violence reported to the police and County Council but may result from more women choosing to stay put with support. However homelessness arising from termination of an assured shorthold tenancy increased after a dip in 2006/07 which may be as a result of the forecast changes in the property market driving private landlords out of the sector.



3.15 Households with children or including a pregnant woman continue to be the major reasons for acceptance of priority need at around 75% of the total. This is shown in the following chart along with the incidence of the other priority need categories accepted last year. There has been a notable reduction in 16/17 year olds accepted as homeless from 16 in 2004/05 to three last year, largely as a result of prevention and advice. The number of women accepted as a result of domestic violence has also significantly reduced since 2003 with only three cases in 2007/08.



**Temporary accommodation**

3.16 We house a low number of homeless households in temporary accommodation with only ten households accommodated at the end of March 2008 and this has reduced further during the first quarter of this year. The government target to halve the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010 has therefore already been achieved.

3.17 Two supported housing projects offer temporary accommodation to homeless households in North West Leicestershire. Both schemes are owned and managed by East Midlands Housing Association and provide short stay, low level supported housing, one to women fleeing domestic violence (six units) and the other to vulnerable young people (eight units). Some concerns have been raised by the association about service users ability to move on when they no longer need to support provided. This is despite the fact that service users are awarded priority for rehousing when they are ready to move on. This is due to the lack of one bedroom permanent housing available and the issue needs further consideration as the new choice based lettings service is developed. There is no supported accommodation for those with medium/high level needs.

- 3.18 All other homeless households are placed in commercial Bed and Breakfast establishments outside of North West Leicestershire until a permanent home can be found. Four establishments are used in Loughborough, Leicester and Ashby-de-la-Zouch. These are visited on a regular basis by the Council's homelessness team and are of a good standard, although one can only be used for single people due to the size of the rooms.
- 3.19 In 2007/08 the average length of stay in Bed and Breakfast for homeless households was 5.21 weeks and this cost the authority £96,566. This was because of an unexpected demand for temporary accommodation arising in February/March 2008. At the beginning of June 2008 only three households were in Bed and Breakfast therefore the trend has not continued. However these were all single young people. This reliance on Bed and Breakfast as temporary accommodation is a matter for concern and reducing its use must become one of our future priorities, particularly in view of the government target to cease its use for 16/17 year olds by 2010.

## 4 How we developed our strategy

- 4.1 The 2003 strategy has been the subject of regular review throughout the last five years. Hence assessment of progress made since 2003 has been largely achieved through a desk top exercise collating the information available from the following documents:
- Citizens Advice Bureau review
  - NWLDC Homelessness Service Review, November 2006
  - Interim service review paper, 2008
  - Staff assessment of progress and improvements needed, December 2007
  - Draft self assessment against Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry for homelessness services, January 2008.
- 4.2 However feedback from stakeholders at the partnership event in May 2008 and that received through completed questionnaires and comments on the draft strategy have supplemented the review of progress.
- 4.3 Analysis of the quarterly performance returns to government (P1E) and internal performance reports has provided an up to date picture of the needs and attributes of homeless households and the performance of the Council and its partners in addressing these needs.
- 4.4 The priorities for the strategy have been developed through an extensive process of discussion at the Housing Futures Forum meetings, feedback from partners at a multi-agency partnership event, further information received from partner agencies during May 2008 and comments on the draft strategy received during June/July 2008.
- 4.5 The partnership event was held on 20 May 2008 and was attended by representatives from 20 agencies involved in homelessness prevention or service provision in North West Leicestershire. Information was provided to delegates about the trends in homelessness since 2003 and the issues facing homeless households currently. Feedback was obtained about the quality and success of current services, gaps in provision and any issues likely to have an impact on homelessness in North West Leicestershire in the future. Delegates were also engaged in determining the priorities for the strategy. This was achieved through a 'marketplace' approach where delegates were able to input comments and ideas and discuss these with others attending the event to identify synergies and possible joint solutions to the issues raised. A prioritisation exercise was then used to ensure that the issues that would give the biggest impact rated highly in the emerging strategy. The notes of the event are included in an appendix to the strategy (A3).
- 4.6 Agencies unable to attend the event were invited to send their thoughts on the questions above using a questionnaire attached to the invitation to the event and telephone interviews were held. The feedback received through these means were collated and used to develop the draft priorities for the strategy.

- 4.7 Service users of the supported housing projects were engaged through discussion about current services and the future priorities. People exiting the homelessness service provided by the Council were consulted on their experience of the service and how this might be improved in future.
- 4.8 The draft strategy was published for widespread consultation through the Council's website. All partner agencies were sent a copy of the draft strategy with a short questionnaire seeking their views and this included neighboring local authorities and the Government Office for the East Midlands. Comments received from partners and service users have been included in appendix A3.

## 5 Our future priorities

- 5.1 Our desk top review of homelessness trends and performance highlighted the need to focus homelessness prevention activity on enabling young people to continue living with their parents or to find alternative accommodation and to prevent the loss of assured shorthold tenancies. The review also highlighted the need for alternative forms of temporary accommodation to be developed in order to meet the government target to cease the use of Bed and Breakfast for families and 16/17 year olds.
- 5.2 The partnership event on 20 May 2008 identified some key issues to be addressed by the strategy. The issues given the highest priority by delegates were the need for:
- A follow-on service to support people leaving supported temporary accommodation, perhaps using an outreach model
  - More refuge provision for women fleeing domestic violence
  - More provision for young people, particularly those demonstrating complex and chaotic behaviour issues
  - Services that enable people to move on from supported accommodation
  - Support for young people moving away from the family home
  - Improved customer care/ service standards to ensure staff think about how to achieve the best outcome for the service user
  - Resettlement support for those leaving institutions, etc.
- 5.3 These and other issues raised at the partnership event broadly mirror those raised by Council staff at a team planning event held in December 2007 and comments received from service users through exit interviews during the development of this strategy.
- 5.4 These issues can be readily translated into three main priorities for the emerging strategy, these being:
- Priority 1: prevention through better provision of support, including floating /outreach support, for vulnerable households*** – this would include support for young people leaving the family home, women experiencing domestic violence, people moving out of institutional accommodation and those moving on from supported accommodation.

**Priority 2: better temporary accommodation provision** – this includes the provision of additional supported temporary accommodation for young people with complex needs and women fleeing domestic violence as well as enabling more accommodation through the private rented sector.

**Priority 3: improved customer service standards and joined up working** – this would involve greater engagement with other key agencies including social services and Connexions to ensure that we provide a joined up service that has a focus on better outcomes for service users and that monitors achievement of these.

- 5.5 At the sub-regional level work has already started through the Local Area Agreement to prevent youth homelessness and as this supports priorities 1 and 2 we will link in with this. We can also link into work commenced by the Housing Corporation to encourage housing associations to prevent homelessness through their approach to allocations and eviction.

## **6 Priority 1: prevention through provision of support, including floating/outreach support for vulnerable households**

### ***The issues***

- 6.1 We have succeeded in preventing the majority of potential homelessness situations through provision of housing advice. However homelessness continues to occur as a result of parental eviction and tenancy failure in the private sector. The floating support availability in North West Leicestershire is limited. Some social landlords provide generic floating support to their tenants, thus preventing homelessness arising through evictions that might be avoided, and outreach support is available for women experiencing domestic violence provided by Loughborough Women's Aid. Other services are available across the county including the SHARP project, (Shelter Housing Aid and Research Project) which works with ex-offenders and customers with issues around substance misuse, although these are provided on a first come, first served basis.
- 6.2 This review has identified a need for more floating support/outreach support for young people leaving the family home, women experiencing domestic violence, people moving out of institutional accommodation and those moving on from supported accommodation.

### ***Our successes***

- 6.3 Since 2003 we have:
- Developed a successful homelessness prevention and housing options service within the Council
  - Introduced a new rent arrears pre-action protocol requiring specific action to be taken by housing associations before cases are referred to court for possession
  - Established a tenancy sustainment team within the Council landlord service which focuses on vulnerable tenants at risk of homelessness. The team carries out a vulnerability assessment with new tenants and refers those who have not lived independently before or lost a previous tenancy through rent arrears for money advice. Since 2007 no tenants have been evicted
  - Adopted a protocol with social services, the youth offending team, Connexions and East Midlands Housing Association for working with homeless 16/17 year olds
  - Prevented women experiencing domestic violence from having to move or present as homeless through provision of additional security measures

- Set up a private landlords forum to promote partnership working to improve conditions and security in the sector
- Established a forum of partners engaged with homelessness prevention in North West Leicestershire to develop services and strategies
- Set up a rent deposit scheme to assist anyone threatened with homelessness through provision of a guarantee to the landlord to the level of the local housing allowance and a loan to the tenant of four weeks rent in advance.

### ***Our future plans***

6.4 Our plans for preventing homelessness through provision of support for vulnerable households are outlined fully in the action plan at Appendix 1. These include:

- Increasing the number of households facing, or at risk of, homelessness who are offered support to resolve their housing needs without making a homelessness application to the Council
- Increasing the number of households receiving support to maintain independence each year through raising awareness of services, improving joint working and developing new services where gaps exist
- Developing protocols between the district and county council and other relevant agencies for statutory vulnerable groups.

## **7 Priority 2: better temporary accommodation provision**

### ***The issues***

- 7.1 We have a low number of households in temporary accommodation at any one time compared to many authorities. However except for 14 units of supported accommodation the only option currently available is Bed and Breakfast. This is not a suitable form of temporary accommodation for families or vulnerable young people and we need to address this.
- 7.2 This is set against the fact that there are over 1,300 empty homes in the district of which nearly 500 have been empty for over six months and the fact that the Council owns some homes that are difficult to let. These may present a solution to the need for better temporary accommodation as well as improving income to the Council through council tax and reduction in void rent loss.

### ***Our successes***

- 7.3 Since 2003 we have:
- Reduced the number of households in temporary accommodation
  - Delivered 162 units of new affordable housing
  - Provided rent deposits to homeless households – 34 in 2007/08
  - Increased the number of units in our supported housing scheme for young people by two.

### ***Our future plans***

- 7.4 Our plans for provision of better temporary accommodation are outlined fully in the action plan at Appendix 1. These include:
- Ensuring that no families or 16/17 year olds are placed in B&B by 2010 through development of better alternative temporary accommodation such as supported lodgings and new supported housing
  - Ensuring the need for additional supported housing is identified and met by 2010
  - Exploring how to make best use of the private rented sector for both temporary and permanent accommodation.

## **8 Priority 3: improved customer service standards and joined up working**

### ***The issues***

- 8.1 Stakeholder feedback received through the development of this strategy suggests that whilst the scope of the housing advice and homelessness prevention service provided by the Council has improved over the past few years, there remains a need to improve customer care and to focus on the best outcome for service users. The Council needs to consider how it will enable communication and involvement of customers generally in the light of the new bill on empowerment and the attention that Comprehensive Area Assessment will pay to this, but particular attention will need to be paid to ensuring vulnerable people are engaged.
- 8.2 The government's homelessness and Supporting People agendas also require a greater focus on outcomes and these will be keenly monitored through local area agreements in future. Hence a strong multi agency approach to identifying needs and developing solutions to homelessness, both on a general and individual basis, will be crucial to the success of this strategy.

### ***Our successes***

- 8.3 Since 2003 we have:
- Developed clear procedures for staff to ensure a consistent approach to customer needs
  - Provided a range of information leaflets about the service
  - Developed service standards for customers of the Council
  - Set up a successful multi agency panel to consider the needs of 16/17 year olds.

### ***Our future plans***

- 8.4 Our plans for improving customer service standards and joined up working are outlined fully in the action plan at Appendix 1. These include:
- Increasing customer satisfaction with the Housing Futures service through development of service standards and monitoring satisfaction
  - Improving inter-agency working through development of a data sharing protocol and common assessment process
  - Involving customers in all aspects of service delivery and providing information.

## **9 Meeting housing needs – current and future housing supply**

- 9.1 Although it is not the purpose of this strategy to provide detail on the Council's plans to enable additional affordable housing, the supply of housing has a direct impact on homelessness. The need for affordable housing identified by the SHMA is high with 51% of households unable to afford to buy or rent in the private market as outlined in section 3. Since 2003 162 additional affordable homes were developed and the projected delivery over the next three years will provide a further 265 homes, although this will depend on developers continuing to build out schemes with planning approval which is uncertain in the current economic climate. Even if these homes are delivered, the expected rise in mortgage repossessions and the current restrictions on loans will see more people unable to meet their own housing needs and a possible rise in homelessness in the near future.
- 9.2 Housing associations may be able to identify land for affordable housing development, or indeed purchase land or dwellings from private developers wishing to reduce their risk. The Housing Corporation has already indicated that funding is available to enable associations to purchase new homes off the shelf and with an increased programme available over the next three years there is scope to increase delivery. In addition the Council is considering the future use of some hard to let housing, primarily sheltered accommodation, that may be available for redevelopment or change of use.
- 9.3 Landlords will also be affected by the credit crunch and there may be a downturn in the supply of private rented accommodation as a result. However those that do remain in the market may be willing to provide accommodation to those in housing need and the scope for this needs to be explored further. The Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy and the associated Empty Homes Strategy will encourage landlords to bring empty homes back into use and those receiving a grant will be required to let to Council nominees for five years.
- 9.4 Finally homeless households need to be able to access the affordable housing that is available. Around 11% of Council lettings are already made to homeless households and, in view of the short time households spend in temporary accommodation it would seem that they are getting reasonable priority for permanent rehousing. We need to work together to ensure suitable lettings are made to homeless households and this also needs to be addressed through the development of our choice based lettings service next year.

## **10 Consultation – what stakeholders said**

- 10.1 As all stakeholder agencies were involved in the development of the strategy and their comments taken into account through early drafts it is not surprising that no comments were received in the final consultation stage. The issues arising from the partnership event together with responses from individual agencies are provided at Appendix 3 and it is clear that these are all addressed within the action plan at Appendix 1.
- 10.2 Service users were also supportive of the priorities proposed in the draft strategy. They were asked about the quality of the service they had received and the suitability of their temporary accommodation where applicable. Some very positive comments were received, particularly about the accommodation and service provided at the supported housing schemes. Whilst many were positive about the service they received from the council, the need for better written information was an issue and some felt that they were not listened to. Several comments were made about the need for better, more local temporary accommodation. These issues are all addressed in the action plan.

## 11 Resources available

11.1 Aside from the staffing budget for the homelessness service in the Council and other service providers and the capital assets described in paragraph 3.17, resources are available for homelessness prevention, support to homeless households and temporary accommodation. The Council currently provides a budget of £80,000 for temporary accommodation and pays grants totaling £74,500 to partner agencies involved with homelessness prevention. Additionally Supporting People fund the support provided in the two East Midlands Housing Association schemes. There are other smaller budgets available including:

- £3,000 'spend to save' funding to prevent homelessness where no other resource is available
- £7,500 for deposit guarantees
- £5,000 to support the local furniture scheme
- £5,000 from the Local Area Agreement for work with 16/17 year olds.

11.2 The future use of these resources will be considered in developing the action plan to implement this strategy. The enhanced affordable housing programme available from the Housing Corporation over the next three years and the commitment to focus allocation of resources to relieve homelessness pressures in the region will provide further opportunities for us in developing our plans to address homelessness locally. Finally the economies of scale that might be achieved by working with neighbouring local authorities on cross boundary projects create additional capacity for us.

## **12 Developing our action plan and how this will be monitored**

- 12.1 The Strategy will be implemented and monitored through a detailed action plan outlining what steps the partners will take to address the priorities identified. The action plan will be developed at the Housing Futures Forum in July 2008 and will be included as the main appendix to the document.
- 12.2 The Housing Futures Forum will monitor progress with delivering the action plan on a quarterly basis and will be responsible for reporting progress to Members and other stakeholders.

## Appendix one: Action plan

| Objective   | Action  | Who                                   | When               | Milestones/progress                                   |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| <b><i>Priority 1 – prevention through better provision of support, including floating/outreach support, for vulnerable households</i></b>                                     |   |                                       |                    |   |
| Increase the number of households facing, or at risk of, homelessness offered support to resolve their housing needs without making a homelessness application to the Council | 1. Map existing support services  | Forum/ SP                             | Jan 09             | Document showing existing services and gaps produced. |
|   | 2. Identify gaps (specifically mediation)   | Forum                                 | Mar 09             |   |
|   | 3. Sustain and develop existing services and look to deliver new services to fill identified gaps | Forum/ DV<br>Forum/other stakeholders | Ongoing            | Service data monitored                                |
| The number of households receiving support to maintain independence is increased year on year until 2013  | 1. Raise awareness of existing support services available   | Forum                                 | April 09           | Increased referrals and increased demand for services |
|   | 2. Improve joint working approach between all stakeholders  | Forum/ all stakeholders               | Ongoing            | Customer feedback from satisfaction survey            |
|   | 3. Monitor, review and develop new services to address future demand                              | All stakeholders                      | Ongoing            | Feedback from services<br>Annual review               |
| Prevention and move on protocols in place between the district/borough council and county council and other relevant agencies for statutory vulnerable groups by 2013         | 1. Identify statutory vulnerable groups   | Forum                                 | Dec 08             | List of groups  |
|   | 2. Identify relevant lead person to develop protocols   | Forum                                 | Feb 09             | Lead identified                                       |
|   | 3. Consult and implement  | Service users and stakeholders        | Apr 09 and ongoing | Protocols adopted                                     |

| Objective   | Action   | Who                     | When   | Milestones/progress   |
|---|--|-------------------------|--------|---|
| <b>Priority 2 – better temporary accommodation provision</b>  |  |                         |        |   |
| No families or 16/17 year olds are placed in B&B by 2010  | 1. Investigate alternatives to B&B such as supported lodgings and implement  | Forum                   | Mar 09 | Options considered by Forum<br>Preferred options implemented                                |
|   | 2. Provide additional supported housing to meet needs through new build or conversion  | LA and HA's             | 2010   | Opportunities identified<br>Plans developed<br>Funding obtained<br>New accommodation in use |
| The need for additional supported housing is identified and met by 2010   | 1. Identify need in district for additional accommodation for vulnerable people e.g. women experiencing domestic violence and young people with chaotic lifestyles | DV<br>Forum/LA/<br>HA's | Feb 09 | Needs identified  |
|   | 2. Explore opportunities for providing additional units required to meet identified need   | LA/ HA's                | Feb 09 | Opportunities discussed at Forum  |
|   | 3. Develop a sanctuary scheme  | DV<br>Forum/LA/<br>HA's | Mar 10 | Funding identified<br>Scheme operational  |
| Explore the range of available options for increasing the supply of temporary and permanent accommodation through the private rented sector | 1. Explore good practice and opportunities available through private sector leasing  | LA                      | Dec 08 | Report to Forum   |
|   | 2. Identify level of need  | LA                      | Dec 08 | Needs data available  |
|   | 3. Identify private lettings available in district and contact landlords   | LA                      | Dec 08 | Supply information available  |
|   | Develop private sector lease scheme if appropriate option and implement  | LA/HA's                 | Mar 09 | Scheme in place   |

| Objective   | Action   | Who                 | When     | Milestones/progress  |
|---|--|---------------------|----------|--|
| <b>Priority 3 – improved customer service standards and joined up working</b>   |  |                     |          |  |
| Increase customer satisfaction with the Housing Futures service                 | 1. Develop new service standards for homelessness customers                              | LA/<br>customers    | Dec 09   | Draft by Dec 08<br>Consult by July 09<br>Implement Dec 09                  |
|   | 2. Carry out customer satisfaction survey  | LA/<br>stakeholders | Annually | Survey set up by Mar 09<br>Baseline survey Aug 09<br>Annual surveys in Aug |
|   | 3. Develop online feedback system for customers  | LA                  | Aug 09   | System in place  |
|   | 4. Develop a framework to deal with the outcome of the survey                            | LA/<br>stakeholders | Aug 09   | Framework in place   |
| Develop information and referral systems to facilitate inter-agency working     | 1. Set up a working group of all stakeholders to develop information and referral system | LA/<br>stakeholders | Mar 10   | First meeting Oct 09<br>Report back Mar 10                                 |
|   | 2. Develop data sharing protocol   | Project<br>group    | Sep 11   | Draft by Dec 10<br>Agencies signed up                                      |
|   | 3. Develop common assessment tool  | Project<br>group    | Sep 11   | Draft by Oct 10<br>Agencies signed up                                      |
|   | 4. Implement system  | LA/<br>stakeholders | Dec 11   | System implemented   |
| Customers involved in all aspects of service delivery and information available | 1. Explore models of customer involvement  | LA                  | Dec 08   | Research complete  |
|   | 2. Hold workshop with stakeholders to develop model                                      | LA/<br>stakeholders | Jul 09   | Workshop held  |
|   | 3. Implement   | LA                  | Dec 09   | System in place  |

## Appendix two: The national picture

- 1.1 Ever since the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977, local authorities have been expected to prevent, as well as to respond to, homelessness. Since the Homelessness Act 2002, however, central government has increasingly encouraged local authorities to become more pro-active in tackling homelessness. A wide range of preventative approaches have been promoted in the Ministerial Homelessness Code of Guidance as well as in good practice publications.
- 1.2 The aims of homelessness legislation and national policy in the UK are:
- To strengthen help to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
  - To develop more strategic approaches to tackling homelessness
  - To encourage new responses to tackling homelessness
  - To reduce the use of bed and breakfast (B&B) hotels for homeless families with children and for 16/17 year olds
  - To reduce the use of temporary accommodation
  - To sustain the two-thirds reduction in rough sleeping
  - To ensure the opportunity of a decent home for all.
- 1.3 The legislation requires local housing authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their area and to formulate and publish a strategy based on the results of this review. All authorities were required to carry out an initial review by July 2003 with a new strategy published every five years thereafter. Homelessness strategies must include plans for:
- The prevention of homelessness
  - Ensuring that there is sufficient accommodation and support available for people who have become, or who may become, homeless
  - Ensuring that there is satisfactory advice, information and assistance for people who are, or who may become, homeless or who need support to prevent homelessness.
- 1.4 The 2002 legislation and guidance emphasise the need for greater corporate commitment from authorities to tackling homelessness than in the past, and the need to make links to other strategic documents and groups, including the work of Local Strategic Partnerships where they exist. The Act places a specific duty on social services to assist the authority with formulating a strategy.
- 1.5 The Code of Guidance published in 2006 reiterated the requirement to review homelessness and develop new homelessness strategies every five years. For North West Leicestershire this means a new strategy is required by July 2008. It

also required a greater focus on prevention, better involvement of other agencies, especially social services and greater service user involvement.

- 1.6 The national picture of homelessness has changed since 2003. In 2003 the focus was on sustaining the significant reduction in rough sleeping which had been achieved over the past two to three years, and on meeting challenging targets to cease the use of B&B for families with children. Since that time, new targets have been introduced to halve the number of people in temporary accommodation, and to end the use of B&B for 16- and 17-year-olds. Government funding for prevention initiatives has continued, with authorities reporting annually on how they are spending the funding allocated to them and what is being achieved.
- 1.7 At the same time more attention is being paid to some of the underlying problems in the housing market that can lead to homelessness. The structure of housing markets is different from area to area, with some areas experiencing low demand and low house prices; in other areas house prices have continued, until very recently, to rise ahead of wage inflation, making home ownership an increasingly unaffordable option. The underlying housing market does have an impact on levels of homelessness, as can be seen by the very low levels of homelessness experienced by some authorities with surplus social rented stock. However, it is also clear that for many homeless households there are underlying reasons for homelessness, which need to be tackled alongside the provision of a new home.
- 1.8 In preparing this homelessness review we have looked at the very wide range of related national policy agendas, which are touched on briefly below:
  - **Welfare benefit reform** – the biggest unknown at the moment is the likely impact of the new Local Housing Allowance, a ‘flat rate’ housing benefit designed to simplify benefits administration and give more certainty to landlord and tenant. However there is also a continuing drive to get more people into work and the idea of tenancies being conditional on seeking work is currently being considered by the government. Whilst it seems unlikely that they will introduce a direct link between the two, it is symptomatic of current government thinking to look at the intertwining of housing and economic policy
  - **Hills review** – this review, billed as a fundamental review of social housing, was completed last summer. The government’s initial response was lukewarm but more recently there are signs that it will take forward recommendations to tackle worklessness in the social housing sector. The recent proposal to require greater priority for work mobility in choice-based lettings (CBL) schemes is one example of how the Hills agenda will continue to be reflected in government policy
  - **Cave review** – although Cave is mainly linked to regulatory reform, and the establishing of the new OFTENANT service, the key message from the review is about retaining a strong customer focus. There is likely to be continuing emphasis on service user involvement in reviewing, assessing and delivering services

- ***Changes in the financial market*** – there are significant recent changes in the financial markets which will continue to have an impact. Interest rates have remained comparatively low, but failures in the sub-prime market have led to tightening up of criteria for accessing loans, making it more difficult for those on low incomes to get into home ownership. A significant number of fixed rate mortgages are coming to the end of the fixed rate period, and there has been speculation about the impact on those taking on higher variable rate mortgages. As yet this factor has not led to an increase in levels of repossession. There has been a slight increase in the numbers of homes being repossessed in the last two years but this appears to be due to second mortgages and secured loans. There is also some increase in take-up of equity release schemes, which has led to concern being expressed that greater numbers of older people will become homeless in the future. There is also increasing concern about the affordability of some of the low cost home ownership (LCHO) schemes, with new pilots announced in the latest budgets to try to reduce the initial cost of buying a shared ownership home. Recent estimates suggest a rise in repossessions to 45,000 during 2008/09 suggesting this is a major area for future strategic plans.
- ***Changes in the voluntary and community sector*** – many services which support homelessness people are provided through the voluntary and community sectors, so any changes to these sectors can have an impact on homelessness. Many local authorities are now seeking more robust arrangements, with voluntary sector agencies working in their areas. This may include tighter monitoring, outcome-based performance targets, and grant funding which is dependent upon outcomes being achieved. We are also seeing the development of national standards for more areas of voluntary sector activity, which quickly become accepted norms and may then be seen as mandatory
- ***National Supporting People strategy*** – the continuing uncertainty over long-term funding levels for Supporting People, and the year-on-year reductions in funding seen to date, is leading to a loss of providers in the sector, particularly smaller providers. The next challenge will be greater use of individual and direct budgets, giving individual service users much more choice over how they purchase services and who from, but bringing continuing uncertainty for the provider. This may be a disincentive to develop new models for service delivery, and is certainly an issue for consideration when changing current SP contracts. Individualised budgets will initially be focused on particular client groups, such as those with a learning disability, or older people. Over time, however, they are likely to be extended to all groups. Another challenge will be the removal of the ring fence that currently prevents Supporting People funding being used for other purposes. With extreme pressure on some local authority budgets, Supporting People funding could be diverted to pay for services currently being funded through social services
- ***Comprehensive Spending Review 2007*** – this brought significant additional funding for new affordable housing, there is now extreme pressure to deliver. Although the financial settlement for local government was tight, Communities and Local Government (CLG) has secured additional funding

for homelessness grant, and both authorities have seen increases in their grant funding for 2008/09. Homelessness services may see themselves picking up additional cases in response to the pressure on other services such as prisons and hospitals

- ***Emerging communities/migrant workforce*** – nationally this is a major issue, with the economy increasingly reliant on a migrant workforce, yet no housing provision being made for that work force
- ***Training, education and employment*** – since the 2002 legislation there has been increasing emphasis on the need to find a homeless person not just a home, but the means to sustain that home long term, through employment. This means taking account of the economy of the area when carrying out the homelessness review, and also ensuring that links are made between homeless services and those offering training, education and employment
- ***Allocations and Choice Based Lettings (CBL)*** – since 2003 the number and scope of CBL schemes nationally has increased in line with the government target for all authorities to adopt a scheme by 2010. This offers a real opportunity to look creatively at how the possibility of accessing social housing can reduce the need to make a homelessness application, as well as helping to create sustainable communities by enabling people to have much greater choice about where they live
- ***Housing Associations (HA) taking a more active role in tackling homelessness*** – the Housing Corporation now expect HAs to have their own strategies in place to prevent and tackle homelessness and for larger HAs to nominate a homelessness champion. HAs are also asked to monitor the number of homeless households they rehouse, so that the Corporation can be sure that they are carrying a fair share of these households and not left open to accusations of ‘cherry picking’. Of course, this does require local authorities to be effective in nominating homeless households and in monitoring what allocations are made by HAs
- ***Housing and Returning Prisoners Protocol (HARP)*** – nationally the government is far more aware of the likelihood for people to become homeless on leaving prison, and of the strong links between repeat offending and homelessness. The HARP protocol was put into place to create a framework within which local authorities and prisons could work together to secure settled accommodation for offenders. The protocol should encourage identification at an early stage of those who may need intervention to retain the home, and those who have a pre-existing debt, on which they can then make regular payments from prison so that this is not a barrier to securing accommodation when they leave. Disappointingly the HARP protocol is working less effectively than anticipated. The ROAD project, set up to look at issues with the operation of HARP, has concluded that this is in part due to a lack of clarity over responsibilities within the protocol
- ***Private sector housing and housing renewal*** – there has been renewed emphasis on local authority involvement in the private sector with the extension of the Decent Homes target to cover vulnerable households in the

private sector. This has prompted many local authorities to carry out stock condition surveys of the private sector and to develop strategies to prioritise work which will help them to meet the target. At the same time, the homelessness prevention agenda has placed increasing emphasis on the private rented sector as an alternative to a social housing tenancy. Bringing these two agendas together offers the chance to work with private landlords to ensure that properties offered to those at risk of homelessness are of a decent standard, albeit with no separate identified funding for this work

- **Home ownership** – home ownership continues to be the tenure to which the majority of households aspire, and increasing home ownership remains a central part of government policy. New forms of Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) have been introduced over the last three years, marketing of LCHO has been streamlined through the introduction of zone agents, and more recently pilots introduced to try to make LCHO more affordable to those on lower incomes. Many homelessness strategies do not highlight the role that can be played by LCHO schemes; whilst it may be a small minority who can afford these, it is another option to be considered
- **Responding to the needs of an ageing population** – with a longer life expectancy and a strong wish for people to remain independent in their own homes as long as possible, there is renewed emphasis on the development of homes which will be suitable for all life stages, including older age when people may be less mobile. The development of new lifetime homes is an issue for the housing strategy; for the homelessness strategy there is a need to ensure that those who become less mobile have access to appropriate advice, assistance and where necessary, funding, to ensure that they can remain in their own home. The Council has a role to play in this through its Disabled Facilities Grants policy, through its social care work, and through work with other partners providing services to older home owners
- **'Respect' agenda and linked policies** – the Respect agenda encourages landlords to tackle anti-social behaviour at an earlier stage and to play a key role in ensuring safety and a peaceful existence in the communities they serve. For homelessness, there are two challenges: tackling anti-social behaviour in ways which do not lead to eviction, and creating support for those who may be at risk of losing their home.

## Appendix three: Feedback from partners

Notes of Homelessness Partnership Event 20 May 2008

| Preventing Homelessness   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>What do we do well?</i>  | <i>What could we do better/more of?</i>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rent deposit scheme</li><li>• Mediation</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More work in schools in Y10/11 <b>(1)</b></li><li>• Early intervention work with YISP targeting 14-17 years olds/young offenders</li><li>• Benefit take up campaign for all, not just over 60's <b>(1)</b></li><li>• DHP should be controlled by HA</li><li>• Promotion of DHP</li><li>• More talking between Council departments, e.g., benefits/CT overpayments <b>(2)</b></li><li>• Knowledge of services by debt clients</li><li>• Greater use of sanctuary scheme</li><li>• Sanctuary scheme being piloted in Charnwood</li><li>• Build on DV measures/involvement in MARAC</li><li>• Other responses to DV, e.g., sanctuary scheme/floating support</li><li>• NWL Housing become members of DV Forum</li></ul> |

| <b>Preventing Homelessness</b>   |   |
|--|---|
| <i><b>What new things do we need to do (gaps)?</b></i>   | <i><b>What new issues do we face in future?</b></i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to ask the question – what will be the outcome if we don't house this applicant? <b>(8)</b></li> <li>• Resettlement Support <b>(8)</b></li> <li>• Links with multi agency group that works with Bridges under the Common Assessment Framework (u18's)</li> <li>• Consultation/informing services how to use the DV policy in tenancy agreements</li> <li>• Nottingham Night Stop – short stay whilst assessments done</li> </ul> |   |

| <b>Housing advice and options</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| <i><b>What do we do well?</b></i>  | <i><b>What could we do better/more of?</b></i>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placing u25's in work experience to gain NVQs</li> <li>• Homelessness prevention</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of early release of YP if secure address</li> <li>• Adopt 'Innocent until proven guilty' approach <b>(2)</b></li> <li>• Respect for customers – possible to challenge without being rude/bullying <b>(9)</b></li> <li>• Non judgemental attitude</li> <li>• Be more accessible, e.g., premises less threatening</li> <li>• Think 'there but by the grace of God I'</li> </ul> |

| <b>Housing advice and options</b>  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate use of ASTs</li> </ul>  |
| <b><i>What new things do we need to do (gaps)?</i></b>   | <b><i>What new issues do we face in future?</i></b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary accommodation</li> <li>• High level support hostel <b>(1)</b></li> <li>• Drop in/flexible support for ex-residents needing advice</li> <li>• Single assessment process for homelessness and support similar to that for older people <b>(2)</b></li> <li>• Offenders into other areas on reciprocal basis <b>(2)</b></li> <li>• Housing advice in different languages, e.g., Polish</li> <li>• Increase options for people, e.g., more affordable housing/mediation, etc</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit crunch impact</li> <li>• Increase in repossessions affecting both number of approaches and availability of accommodation <b>(2)</b></li> <li>• Increased need for multi skilling and wider knowledge base on cases and solutions – joint training sessions <b>(1)</b></li> </ul> |

| <b>Accommodation</b>   |   |
|--|---|
| <b><i>What do we do well?</i></b>  | <b><i>What could we do better/more of?</i></b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work well with other agencies, e.g., Homeless Forum, DV Forum, 16/17 Forum</li> <li>• Fund raising</li> <li>• Durban/Veronica building good reputation for moving/equipping YP</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage bed blocking more rigorously <b>(1)</b></li> <li>• Pay for more peripatetic workers in the community – prevention beats care</li> <li>• Asset management strategy for sheltered housing – change use to supported housing for other groups/TA<b>(1)</b></li> <li>• Stop HA's using ground 8 for eviction</li> </ul> |

| <b>Accommodation</b>  |   |
|---|---|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach/follow on and drop in service <b>(7)</b></li> </ul>   |
| <b><i>What new things do we need to do (gaps)?</i></b>  | <b><i>What new issues do we face in future?</i></b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More temporary accommodation in NWL/ensure support accessible <b>(1)</b></li> <li>• More appropriate provision for 16/17 year olds – with support available 24/7</li> <li>• Young offenders being placed in B&amp;B – leading to intentionality decisions <b>(2)</b></li> <li>• More supported lodgings</li> <li>• Return empty properties to use – wasted resource</li> <li>• Refer DV cases to other providers, e.g., Loughborough WA</li> <li>• Affordable housing – not always the type needed <b>(2)</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single persons accommodation in short supply <b>(6)</b></li> <li>• Lack of move on accommodation – avoid projects silting up <b>(2)</b></li> <li>• More refuge accommodation/ s/c move on provision <b>(9)</b></li> <li>• Robust enforcement of Housing Act – deal with empty homes <b>(3)</b></li> <li>• Mortgage arrears – buy property and rent back <b>(2)</b></li> <li>• Increased repossessions</li> <li>• Voluntary leasing schemes and landlord/tenant accreditation schemes <b>(3)</b></li> </ul> |

| <b>Support services</b>  |   |
|--|---|
| <b><i>What do we do well?</i></b>  | <b><i>What could we do better/more of?</i></b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support workers often go beyond call of duty to assist customers</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speed of assessment</li> <li>• Referrals – knowing what is available</li> <li>• Refer to DV outreach service – consider hosting outreach service <b>(1)</b></li> <li>• Develop tenancy sustainment links with support agencies <b>(1)</b></li> <li>• Blanket policies – often covert/based on spurious reasons, e.g., insurance</li> <li>• Need to be able to access funding for SP services more quickly</li> </ul>   |
| <b><i>What new things do we need to do (gaps)?</i></b>   | <b><i>What new issues do we face in future?</i></b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to make sure good evidence base to support requests/ plan future provision</li> <li>• Transitional benefit for people having support who get a job – can't afford supported housing if you work <b>(2)</b></li> <li>• Supported housing for women fleeing DV who have no recourse to public funds</li> <li>• Tenancy sustainment/floating support to prevent homelessness <b>(1)</b></li> <li>• Family support to prevent eviction of young family members <b>(1)</b></li> <li>• Not enough support for YP living independently for first time <b>(7)</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding <b>(5)</b></li> <li>• Specialist trained staff to deal with a range of complex issues with young offenders/16/17 year olds</li> <li>• Single access points/common assessment framework to facilitate co-ordinated approach across agencies</li> <li>• 'Undeserving' users are marginalised further causing community safety problems and risk to victims<b>(1)</b></li> <li>• Collecting needs data etc to influence SP/LAA priorities and commissioning</li> <li>• Need to sustain funding for DV outreach services <b>(1)</b></li> </ul> |

### Support services

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YP losing tenancies because of lack of support with life skills to cope with responsibility of being independent <b>(1)</b></li> <li>• Alcohol dependency/misuse slips through the net – DAAT only take if alcohol plus other substance</li> <li>• Need for support for people alcohol dependent</li> <li>• Resettlement support <b>(2)</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need service where woman experiencing DV can call to arrange meeting to discuss options</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

### *Other issues raised by partners through questionnaires/telephone interviews*

| Name   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Accommodation and Supported Housing Team, Leicestershire and Rutland Probation Trust | Low priority for rehousing given to offenders residing at hostels outside NWL  |
| Loughborough Women's Aid   | <p>Surprised to see the reduction in women accepted as a result of domestic violence, particularly when all of the statistics received from the Police and County Council clearly show that the number of incidents of DV in NWL is increasing year on year</p> <p>Research commissioned by Leicestershire County Council looking at refuge provision in the County. This included the cost effectiveness of refuge provision compared to outreach services and also mapped out current refuge provision and need within the County. The conclusion was that there are current gaps in the South of the County, not the North</p> <p>Need to link with the NWL DV Forum on deciding upon and delivery of any DV related priorities/actions</p> |

| Name                                     | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Nottingham Community Housing Association | <p data-bbox="564 302 1944 367">It would be good to have better information on the services available from smaller support providers and private letting opportunities and improvements to the bond scheme would help</p> <p data-bbox="564 402 1955 505">Also more information about what charities are available and criteria for funding, i.e., looking for help with furniture, money for transport to attend meeting etc in rural areas. Befriending for inclusion work in the community</p> <p data-bbox="564 540 1604 573">Training to enable homeless households to access the job market is important</p> <p data-bbox="564 609 1203 641">Adequacy of resources will be an issue in future</p> <p data-bbox="564 677 1944 742">Joint working with shared information would support the services and give the homeless a better service which offered good choices</p> |

## NOTES

## **OUR VISION**

North West Leicestershire will be a place where people and businesses feel they belong and are proud to call home

North West Leicestershire District Council,  
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