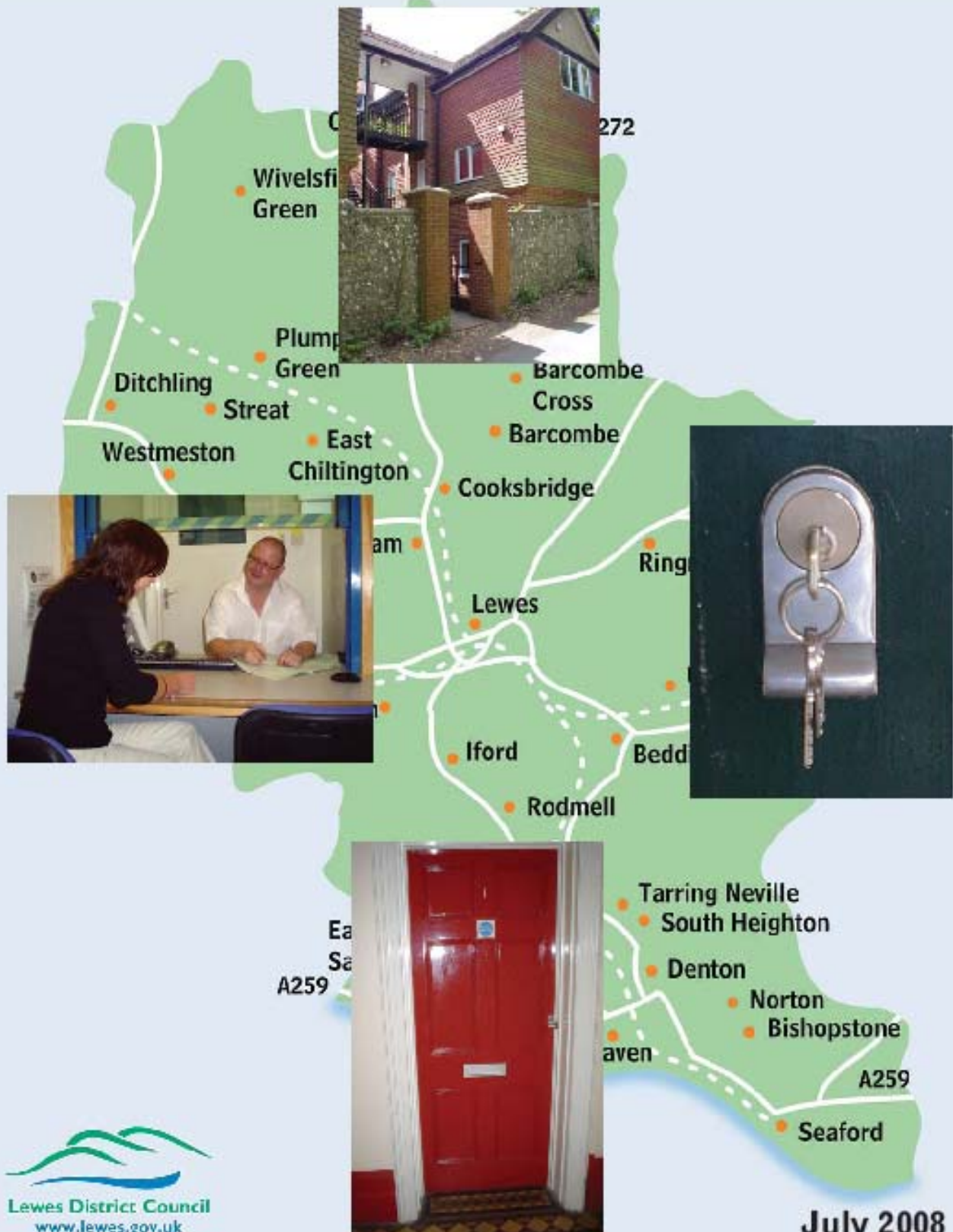


Homelessness Strategy 2008 - 2013



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Foreword: Councillor Steve Saunders



As Lead Cabinet Councillor for Housing I am pleased to present the Council's Homelessness Strategy for the next 5 year period. Helping prevent homelessness and assisting members of our community to find affordable housing is a priority for the Council.

Provision of more affordable housing, particularly quality rented accommodation will help the 80% of people on our housing register who cannot afford to access the open housing market. You know the majority of these people. We meet them as we go about our daily lives. They could be the people who serve us in shops or they could be our neighbours or our own children who have stayed at home well beyond the age when the older members of our society left to set up their first home. The rental sector in this area offers limited choice for those on low incomes and many rental properties are beyond their reach. Many of these people are hard working members of the community who want a decent home like anyone else. These form the majority of people on our housing register.

There are also vulnerable individuals and families within our community and they need the special protection and support that legislation affords them. They are the minority of people on the housing register.

We have reviewed our homelessness activities undertaken over the last five years, with the invaluable assistance of people who have used our services, registered social landlords, private landlords and third sector agencies such as the Lewes and Seaford Citizens Advice Bureau, to name but a few.

The review has shown that we have made some significant advances but it also shows that we, like many Councils in the region, have some way to go to help provide more affordable housing for rent in the region. We also need to prepare a plan to reduce the use of temporary accommodation for the vulnerable people we help. This will be a significant challenge as the slowdown in the economy at the time of writing has a knock-on effect on house building. The need for housing advice and homelessness prevention services are likely to continue unabated whilst the numbers of new affordable homes struggle to match demand.

I would like to thank the Housing Strategy team and the Homelessness Steering Group for their hard work in the preparation of this strategy

**Steve Saunders
Lead Councillor for Housing at Lewes District Council**

1 Executive Summary

1 Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to publish a new Homelessness Strategy at least every five years. This strategy covers the period 2008-2013 and replaces the previous strategy.

This summary covers the main points in the strategy.

2 Homelessness in Lewes – Key Findings from the Homelessness Review 2007/2008

A Homelessness Review was undertaken in 2007/2008 and covered the period 2003/04 to 2007/08. The Review sought to identify current and future levels of homelessness, activities undertaken to prevent homelessness, the accommodation, support and resources available to assist homeless households and from this identify gaps in services.

A summary of the key findings emerging from the review will be presented here. The full review can be found at www.lewes.gov.uk

2.1 Levels of Homelessness

There has been a 57% reduction in the number of homeless acceptances since 2003/04. This is despite significant increases in the number of households in housing need.

2.2 Causes of Homelessness

The predominant reasons for homelessness amongst those accepted as homeless were family and friends no longer willing to accommodate (29%), loss of privately rented accommodation (31%) and the violent breakdown of relationships (12%).

Rent arrears are a smaller but growing reason behind evictions and loss of accommodation.

2.3 Provision of Accommodation – Permanent Housing

The number of Registered Social Landlord vacancies taken by Council nominations has increased dramatically since 2004. However, it is still below the 75% required in the majority of nomination agreements.

New provision of affordable housing has failed to keep pace with increases in the number of households on the housing register.

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Provision of Temporary Accommodation

The number of households in temporary accommodation in 2008 is significantly above the figure required to meet the Government target to halve the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010, but the target remains achievable.

There have been no families or 16/17 year olds placed in bed and breakfast accommodation with shared facilities since 2006.

2.4 Prevention of Homelessness

The number of households prevented from becoming homeless through the provision of advice increased by 33% between 2005/06 and 2007/08.

Use of the Rent Deposit Scheme has helped 104 households access the private rented sector in the last 3 years and prevented homelessness for these 104 households.

Acceptances onto and take up of the Homelink Rent in Advance Scheme have been low.

2.5 Provision of Support

The take up of both the mediation and the sanctuary scheme have been low despite increases in family and relationship breakdowns, which they are aimed at.

There are few services available for ex-offenders.

3 The Six Strategic Objectives of the Strategy

The results of the review, and in particular the gaps identified in services, in conjunction with the Government's objectives and targets relating to homelessness were used to develop 6 strategic objectives and actions within each, to be addressed over the period of the strategy.

3.1 Objective 1: Preventing homelessness

Preventing homelessness remains the key focus of this strategy. Work will concentrate upon 2 areas:

Reviewing the effectiveness of existing services

- Evaluating the take up, effectiveness and outcomes of the mediation service provided by Relate.
- Preventing homelessness through debt advice; providing 6 additional hours per week of debt advice, researching and developing an early intervention system at first stage rent arrears, and providing enhanced debt advice training for housing advice officers.

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- Examining the reason for the low levels of take up of the Homelink scheme to ensure use of funds and the number of households assisted is maximised.

Building better relationships with the private and social housing sectors

- Setting up a Landlord Forum.
- Undertaking a project to investigate how to improve access to the private rented sector for homeless households and those on the Lewes District Council Housing Register.
- Using our rent deposit guarantee scheme to assist 45 households to access the private rented sector per annum.
- Increasing the use of Discretionary Housing Payments to prevent homelessness amongst households claiming benefits.
- Setting up a Registered Social Landlords Management Forum to share best practice in reducing homelessness and maximising use of existing stock.

3.2 Objective 2: Improving support to vulnerable people

We need to take a proactive approach to working with partners to meet the needs of vulnerable groups who are facing homelessness. The focus of this work will be victims of domestic violence, substance misuse, ex-offenders and assisting in the transition to the new Supporting People model of commissioning housing related support services. Initiatives in this area will include:

Women experiencing domestic violence

- Working with partners to deliver 6 additional refuge spaces.
- Developing the Sanctuary scheme to ensure this is a feasible alternative option for those experiencing domestic violence.
- Adopting the multi agency risk assessment conference approach to domestic violence.

Substance misusers

- Signing up to the countywide floating support service for people with substance misuse problems.

Young People

- Signing up to the countywide youth homelessness strategy.

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Executive Summary

Ex – Offenders

- Working in partnership with Brighton and Hove City Council, Hastings Borough Council and HMP Lewes to deliver the Preventing Offenders Accommodation Loss project.
- Working with partners to develop an accommodation based service for ex-offenders.

General

- Working with partners to assist the transition to the new Supporting People model of commissioning housing related support services.

3.3 Objective 3: Ensuring accessible and effective homelessness and housing advice services

The homelessness and housing advice services are pivotal in preventing homelessness in the district. Particular emphasis is required to ensure services and information are accessible and of a high quality. Actions in this area will include:

- Producing clear and comprehensive information on services and housing options through an updated website and the development of information leaflets.
- Undertaking a quality review of homelessness and housing advice services.
- Increasing the number of successful outcomes for prevention advice.
- Introducing Choice Based Lettings to enable households on the Lewes District Council Housing Register to assess their housing options more realistically.

3.4 Objective 4: Improving the use and affordability of temporary accommodation

Central Government set a target to halve the use of temporary accommodation by 2010. This will form the focus of work in this area, along with Government objectives regarding the use of bed and breakfast for households with children or a pregnant member and 16/17 year olds. Activities will include:

- Developing a plan to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation to 34 by 2010.
- Preventing fuel poverty in temporary accommodation by undertaking a value for money review of Saxonbury temporary accommodation.

3.5 Objective 5: Increasing the provision of affordable housing

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Executive Summary

A key underlying cause of homelessness is the lack of affordable housing in the area. Actions will concentrate upon:

- Setting up a Registered Social Landlord Development Forum to develop new affordable housing policies.
- Undertaking a housing need survey and financial viability study to obtain a robust evidence base for the development of affordable housing policies.
- Examining under occupancy and how to encourage under occupying households to release their properties.
- Councillor lead review of what can be done to increase the provision of new affordable housing.

3.6 Objective 6: Improving monitoring procedures

The Homelessness Review identified a number of gaps in information and accessibility of information. In order to ensure continual review of services improvements need to be made in both internal and external monitoring procedures. Emphasis will be placed upon:

- Reviewing internal data collection procedures to ensure useful, accurate and up to date data is available on all aspects of the housing advice and homelessness service in line with the Council's Data Quality Policy. This will ensure regular review and identification of areas for improvement.
- Developing procedures for regular data collection and benchmarking of external organisations activities in relation to preventing homelessness through the RSL Management Forum.
- Improve monitoring of nomination agreements made with registered social landlords.

4 Resources

The Strategy will be resourced from a number of different funding streams including:

- Communities and Local Government Homelessness Grant
- Supporting People funding
- The Councils own resources such as Discretionary Housing Payments.

2 Strategic Links

5 The National Framework

Central Government's homelessness strategy, (Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives, 2005) sets out plans for further reducing homelessness and halving the numbers in temporary accommodation by 2010. It intends to do this by:

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

5.1 The national policy priorities are:

- Bed and breakfast accommodation with shared facilities not to be used for families with children or pregnant women except in emergencies and then only for a maximum of 6 weeks.
- Bed and breakfast accommodation with shared facilities not to be used for homeless 16 and 17 year olds except in emergencies and then only for a maximum of 6 weeks by 2010.
- The number of households prevented from becoming homeless should increase year on year.
- A 50% reduction in the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation by 2010 (for Lewes this means halving the 2004 figure of 68 to 34).

6 Links to Regional Strategies

There are a number of regional, sub regional and local strategies and priorities which drive and link into the Homelessness Strategy.

South East Regional Housing Strategy 2008-2011 – outlines the strategic housing priorities for the region and sets out a framework for targeting available resources at the priorities for investment. Implications for the homelessness strategy include the provision of greater numbers of affordable homes. In particular social rented and family sized accommodation and quantifying the need and nature of accommodation based and floating support services for vulnerable people.

2 Strategic Links

7 Links to Sub-regional and local strategies

7.1 East Sussex Supporting People Strategy 2005 – 2010

This strategy was updated in July 2007 for the period 2007/08 – 2009/10. This strategy has 8 strategic objectives of which the following are of particular relevance to the Homelessness Strategy:

- To pursue a stronger focus on preventative services (this includes homelessness and repeat homelessness, rough sleeping and the use of bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation).
- To enable resettlement and move on to mainstream housing.
- To commission housing-related support services on the basis of need regardless of their housing situation or tenure.

7.2 Pride of Place - East Sussex Integrated Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 - 2026

Pride of Place has been developed by the six Local Strategic Partnerships in East Sussex (Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes, Rother, Wealden and East Sussex) in conjunction with their Local Authorities. Pride of Place outlines a shared vision to create places where everyone can prosper, be safe and healthy, and live in a high quality environment. The strategy sets out nine strategic objectives. One of these is to provide affordable, good quality and environmentally friendly homes for all. Within this, key tasks of relevance to the Homelessness Strategy are to:

- Increase and diversify the supply of affordable homes, housing and tenures in all areas, both urban and rural.
- Minimise homelessness, especially hidden and youth homelessness.
- Tackle youth homelessness and provide better housing and housing related support for young people.
- Extend the number and range of people receiving housing-related support.

7.3 East Sussex Local Area Agreement (LAA)

A Local Area Agreement is a three year agreement negotiated between Central Government and the local area through East Sussex County Council. The LAA includes 35 indicators from the new National Indicator Set of 198 indicators. The new LAA for East Sussex is due to be completed in June 2008.

2 Strategic Links

7.4 Lewes District Council Plan 2008/2009

Lewes District Council's ambition is to be recognised as a centre of excellence in environmental management and to make sustainable improvements in the quality of life of local communities. Under this it has 3 key aims:

1. To protect and enhance the quality of the environment.
2. To support the housing, health and social needs of everyone in the district.
3. To support and promote a diverse and prosperous local economy.

Homelessness falls within the second key aim and places it as one of the Council's key priorities. In addition the Council has identified 3 priorities for service improvement in the medium term. This includes working in partnership with Housing Associations to deliver affordable housing, which will have a clear impact on homelessness within the district.

7.5 Lewes District Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 - 2026

The Lewes District Local Strategic Partnership set out its vision for the District in the Sustainable Community Strategy. The strategy is underpinned by 6 priority themes:

- A valued environment.
- Decent, affordable housing for all.
- Safer, stronger communities.
- Access to good local facilities.
- Healthier communities.
- A vibrant and sustainable local economy.

The theme of decent affordable housing for all is most directly relevant to the Homelessness Strategy.

2 Strategic Links

7.6 Lewes District Council Housing Strategy 2006-2009

The strategy has 8 strategic housing priorities:

1. To maximise provision of safe, energy efficient and affordable housing.
2. To improve the condition of the housing stock.
3. To reduce homelessness.
4. To support the needs of vulnerable people.
5. To encourage and maintain the development of sustainable communities.
6. To foster tenant empowerment and partnerships with all stakeholders.
7. To ensure good and continually improving environmental performance in the Council's housing and related activities.
8. To promote equality and to provide good quality housing services that meet the chosen needs of the community.

The Homelessness Strategy links into objectives 3 and 4 of the Housing Strategy. A Housing Strategy will be developed for adoption in 2009.

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Our Achievements and Future Plans

8 Our achievements over the last five years

The review of homelessness in Lewes in conjunction with Central Government's vision and objectives for tackling homelessness has identified 6 key strategic objectives to be addressed in the next 5 years.

- Objective 1: Preventing homelessness
- Objective 2: Improving Support for vulnerable people
- Objective 3: Ensuring accessible and effective homelessness and housing advice services
- Objective 4: Improving the use and affordability of temporary accommodation
- Objective 5: Increasing the provision of affordable housing
- Objective 6: Improving monitoring procedures

This section provides a commentary under each of the strategic objective headings. The commentary commences with a review of what we have achieved and then moves on to provide some statistics about the service. We explain what activities and projects are in place to deliver our services and we have made a realistic assessment of what more can be done to address unmet needs. Section 4 then summarises what we propose to do over the next 5 years.

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Our Achievements and Future Plans

8.1 Objective 1 – Preventing homelessness

Achievements since the last strategy:

- There has been a steady decline in the number of homeless acceptances since 2003.
- A housing advice service has been introduced. This has prevented homelessness for 173 households over the last 3 years.
- The Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme was reviewed and subsequently use of the scheme has risen dramatically with 117 households assisted since its introduction. We were successful in securing a further £20,000 from the Homelessness Directorate of Communities and Local Government for work with private sector landlords.
- A mediation service has been introduced.

The prevention of homelessness involves activities undertaken to ensure households can remain in their accommodation or a planned move to alternative accommodation. Take up of the housing prevention agenda has reduced homelessness in the district, however further work is needed. This can be grouped into two main themes.

1. Reviewing the effectiveness of existing services.
2. Building better relationships with the private and social housing sectors.

Reviewing the effectiveness of existing services

A number of services have been introduced with the aim of preventing homelessness. However, take up of these services has not always been high, despite the Homelessness Review still indicating a need for such services. In addition, some services need to be expanded due to high demand.

Mediation

Family/friends no longer being willing to accommodate households and the breakdown of relationships were two of the main causes of homelessness over the last 5 years. In 2007/2008 they made up 29% and 17% respectively of the causes of homelessness amongst accepted homeless households. Therefore mediation is deemed a valuable service to help prevent such causes of homelessness. Mediation can help families solve the underlying causes of the breakdown of the relationship and can enable households to remain

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Our Achievements and Future Plans

in their accommodation until more permanent solutions can be found. This enables planned moves rather than homelessness.

In 2006/2007 a mediation service was set up. This was provided by Relate and funded by Lewes District Council. Counselling was offered from lifestyle training, one to one counselling and family counselling. Offices were set up for use as interview rooms in both the North and South of the district. However, whilst £5,000 was set aside, only 1 client accessed this service at a cost of £160. We will review this service and look at mediation services provided elsewhere to ensure this valuable service is utilised to maximise its potential in preventing homelessness.

Debt advice

The Homelessness Review demonstrated that 9% of accepted homeless households in 2007/2008 were homeless due to rent or mortgage arrears. In addition the main cause of homelessness of those found intentionally homeless was the result of non-payment of rent. Further evidence of the lack of ability to cope with finances and subsequent rent arrears was identified through the causes of evictions over the review period.

The provision of housing advice, including debt advice provided by the Citizens Advice Bureau, is highlighted in the table below. This includes additional funding provided for 2008/2009 to enable an extra 6 hours per week of debt advice, as well as an extra £80,000 provided for debt and welfare benefits advice to the CAB for the years 2008/09 to 2010/2011. Outcomes will need to be measured to monitor the uptake and effectiveness of this advice. This will be aided through the development of a joint protocol between the Citizens Advice Bureau and Lewes District Council. This protocol will ensure the regular reporting of statistics on prevention through advice.

Feedback from organisations involved in the Homelessness Review and Homelessness Steering Group highlighted that households tend not to seek debt advice until they reach crisis point. One Housing Association reported employing specialist income recovery officers, although again cases are only referred to these officers at crisis point. This emphasises the need to develop early intervention systems when people first fall into rent arrears and to raise awareness of debt and where help can be sought. We will research and develop a system to notify support agencies at first stage arrear notification to tenants. We will enhance the debt advice training given to Lewes District Council Housing Advice officers and raise awareness of debt issues through an article in District Link, an LDC publication that is distributed to every household in the district.

Rent Deposit Guarantee Schemes

The Council reviewed its Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme in 2004 and the updated scheme has proved popular with 117 households helped to access the private rented sector in the last 5 years. Furthermore, over the last 3 years 104 households have been prevented from becoming homeless through the scheme, this accounted for 60% of preventions over the period. We aim to help a further 45 households per annum access the private rented sector through the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme. The target is set below the number of households assisted in 2007/08 due to the introduction of Local Housing Allowance. This

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Our Achievements and Future Plans

new system requires that Housing Benefit be paid direct to tenants, who then use the money to pay their rent to their landlord. This new system of Housing Benefit payment may prove a disincentive for Landlords to accept households on housing benefit.

[Homelink](#), an independent charity, set up a complementary Rent in Advance scheme to assist those who were not statutory homeless. However despite 79 households being referred to this scheme only 23 (29%) were accepted and of these only 6 took up the scheme in 2007/2008. We will review acceptances onto and take up of this scheme to identify the cause behind such low levels of acceptances and take up. We will take action to ensure this scheme reaches its potential in enabling households to access the private rented sector.

Citizen Advice Bureau Services in the Lewes District			
	DAY	HOURS	
LEWES 3 North Court Tel 01273 473082	Monday Tuesday Thursday	9.30am - 3.45pm	Call in or phone for advice
	Wednesday & Friday	9.30am - 12.45pm	
SEAFORD 37 Church Street Tel 01323 896209	Monday Tuesday Thursday	9.30am - 3.45pm	Call in or phone for advice
	Wednesday & Friday	9.30am - 12.45pm	
NEWHAVEN The Summerhayes Centre (Marshalls Lane) Tel 01273 612360	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday	9.30am - 4.15pm 9.30am - 4.00pm	By appointment only Please ring to make an appointment
	Thursday	9.30am - 12.30pm	
PEACEHAVEN The Neville room The Meridian Centre Tel 01273 585493	Monday	9.30am - 4.15pm	By appointment only Please ring to make an appointment
TELSCOMBE CLIFFS Telscombe Civic Centre 360 South Coast Road Tel 01273 585493	Tuesday	9.30am - 2.30pm	By appointment only Please ring to make an appointment

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Our Achievements and Future Plans

Building better relationships with the private and social housing sectors

Working with private sector landlords

Due to the lack of affordable housing, the private rented sector is often the only housing option available to households. However, accessing this sector can be problematic for households on low incomes or claiming benefits.

In January 2008 we set up a Private Sector Housing Working Group. This group is comprised of officers from Housing Strategy, Housing Needs, Environmental Health and Housing Benefits. The aim of the group is to develop a co-ordinated approach to working with the private sector. Landlord Forums are part of the remit of this group.

In April 2008 Lewes District Council set up a Landlord Forum to build improved relations with the private sector, drive up standards and share information of mutual interest. The first Forum was well attended and received positive feedback from landlords. Forums will be held 6 monthly with landlords invited to suggest presentation topics that would be of benefit.

Investigating how we can make best use of the private rented sector and assist households to access this sector is one of the primary aims under the preventing homelessness objectives. We will undertake a project to examine ways to encourage private landlords to accept homeless households and households on low incomes.

Working with the social housing sector

Registered Social Landlords are a key partner in preventing homelessness and maximising the use of affordable housing stock. We will set up a Registered Social Landlords Management Forum to share best practice in these areas and benchmark performance. All RSLs with stock in the Lewes District will be invited to join the Forum.

Discretionary Housing Payments

The Council can use Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to prevent homelessness in the private sector. Central Government provides a variable annual grant to all local authorities to cover DHPs. These are used on a case-by-case basis to help households in receipt of Housing Benefit when they require further assistance with their housing costs. In 2007/08 the Council spend on DHPs exceeded the maximum Government grant available. It is our intention to maximise the use of DHPs in preventing homelessness by continuing to take up the full Government grant for DHPs. In 2007/08 the surplus generated from the Private Sector Leasing scheme was set aside to fund a two-year pilot scheme whereby the Council provide additional funding to use through DHPs.

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Our Achievements and Future Plans

8.2 Objective 2: Improving Support to vulnerable people

Achievements since the last strategy

- In 2006 the Council leased an additional property to support a further 3 young people leaving care.
- Developed a joint assessment protocol with Social Services to undertake joint housing and care needs interviews with all 16/17 year olds.

Lewes District Council works closely with Supporting People and other support agencies to prevent homelessness amongst vulnerable client groups. The Homelessness Review found that domestic violence was an increasing cause of homelessness. In addition, the Review found that there are currently no support services available for ex-offenders or people with substance misuse problems. Consequently these groups will form the focus of the improving support objective.

Women experiencing domestic violence

Violent breakdown of a relationship was attributed as the main cause of homelessness for 14% of all accepted homeless households in 2007/2008.

The Lewes Refuge can accommodate up to 6 households experiencing domestic violence. Nevertheless, this service has been full to capacity since opening in 2003. Lewes District Council is working in partnership with Refuge and the Home Group to develop 6 additional bed spaces for this client group.

In 2007/2008 the Council set aside a budget of £10,000 to set up a Sanctuary Scheme. This scheme increases the housing options for households experiencing domestic violence by enabling them to remain safely in their home, and thus preventing the break-up of important support and social networks. However, the scheme has yet to be fully developed and publicised and none of the funding was spent in 2007/08. We will research best practice in Sanctuary schemes and use this information to re-launch the scheme in 2008.

Lewes District Council will adopt the new Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) approach to supporting victims of domestic violence. All relevant officers will be trained in the new framework by summer 2008.

Ex Offenders

3% of acceptances in 2007/08 were in priority need due to having been in custody.

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Currently there are few support services available for ex-offenders facing homelessness in the district. The instability of a lack of secure housing has often been cited as a main cause of re-offending amongst this group.

Lewes District Council along with Hastings Borough Council is a delivery partner in a bid from Brighton and Hove City Council and HMP Lewes to prevent offender accommodation loss for short sentenced prisoners. The service will provide 2 dedicated Housing Options Officers, one in Brighton and one in Hastings, and a part time Housing Benefit Officer. The project seeks to sustain tenancies, successfully claim Housing Benefit under the 13 or 52 week rule, close tenancies in a managed way when they cannot be sustained and ensure ex-offenders are in stable accommodation on their release.

Lewes District Council will also work with partners across the County to develop an accommodation based service for ex-offenders.

Substance misusers

There have been no homelessness acceptances due to substance or alcohol misuse since 2005/06. However, many housing applicants have substance or alcohol misuse problems but these can be secondary in relation to mental health issues. A countywide floating support service for people with substance misuse problems has been commissioned by Supporting People and will begin operation in September 2008.

Young People

Only 1 homelessness acceptance in 2007/08 was due to a person being 16/17 years old. However, 9 homelessness acceptances were aged between 16 and 24 years old. The majority of these were homeless as a result of domestic violence and mental health problems. East Sussex County Council Children's Services in conjunction with the five districts (Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes, Rother and Wealden) and Supporting People are developing a countywide Youth Homelessness Strategy. We will review our activities in relation to youth homelessness in light of the Strategy.

General

A key aim of the Supporting People Strategy 2005-2010 is to commission housing-related support services on the basis of need regardless of their housing situation or tenure. A new model of commissioning housing related support services has been developed. Phase One of this model will be implemented by June 2009. The new model will ensure the maximum number of people can be supported to remain in their home. We will work closely with Supporting People and other partners across the County to ensure the smooth transition to the new model.

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Our Achievements and Future Plans

8.3 Objective 3: Ensuring accessible and effective homelessness and housing advice services

Achievements since the last strategy:

- 173 households prevented from homelessness through housing advice in the last 3 years.
- Expanded drop in surgeries

The provision of timely housing advice is paramount in preventing homelessness. There are 2 key features in providing a high quality housing advice and homelessness service:

1. Access to advice and homelessness services.
2. Quality of advice provided.

[Accessible housing advice and homelessness services](#)

The Homelessness Review highlighted that 23% of respondents who had experienced homelessness were unaware of the Council's housing advice and homelessness service.

The Housing Advice service offers 4 drop in surgeries on four days of the week. The surgeries are held between 10.00 am and 12.30am at Peacehaven, Lewes, Seaford and Newhaven. In addition, there is a telephone advice line that operates between 2.30 pm and 4.30 pm on Monday to Thursday and between 2.30 pm and 4.00 pm on Fridays. As well as the telephone help line the service offers home visits when clients cannot access the surgeries and an email address where clients can send their housing queries. The service offers advice and assistance on issues such as homelessness, difficulties in meeting rent payments, negotiating and liaising with landlords and letting agents and housing benefit advice and enquiries.

Whilst there are a number of ways in which households can access the housing advice service many people prefer to access information via the Internet or written leaflets. The Housing web pages on the Lewes District Council website can be improved with better navigation and clearer information. The Council has 4 leaflets on:

- Homelessness: Our Duty.
- Homelessness: Getting Help.
- Homelessness: Getting my Application Reviewed.
- Domestic Violence.

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Our Achievements and Future Plans

Some of these have not been updated since 2002. We will update the information on the website to ensure it is easy to access, clear to understand and comprehensive. We will also review the leaflets available to ensure they are clear, comprehensive and up-to-date.

Effective housing advice and homelessness services

The Homelessness Review Questionnaire identified that 60% of people who had experienced homelessness had a very positive experience of the housing advice and homelessness service. However, this represents only a very small sample of those using the service. In order to ensure we are providing an effective service we need to undertake a quality review of the housing advice and homelessness service. The effectiveness of the service will also be measured through an increase in successful prevention activities. Currently identified preventions are only recorded for a small number of those seeking advice because many clients having received advice do not re-establish contact with the service.

Housing Advice 2005/06 – 2007/08			
Housing Advice	05-06	06-07	07-08
Total number of all new enquiries in year	780	759	779
<i>Of which:</i>			
Eligible cases	145	189	180
Homelessness was prevented (see breakdown below)	45	68	60
Completed & cancelled as advice once only	379	249	66
Remain on system – no further action	256	321	533*
Totals	780	759	779
<i>* for 2007-08 in the process of being updated.</i>			
Total Decisions given for the year	96	120	125

Currently households from our housing register are allocated to affordable housing by being nominated in accordance with our allocations policy. This system does not allow people to assess their opportunity of being re-housed and thus to consider their housing options realistically. By 2008 the Council intends to join the Regional Sussex HomeMove Choice Based Letting Scheme. This scheme requires households to proactively bid for available housing in the district. Results of the bidding process along with information on who was allocated to properties will enable households to consider their housing options appropriately.

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Our Achievements and Future Plans

8.4 Objective 4: Improving the use and affordability of temporary accommodation

Achievements since the last strategy:

- There have been no families or 16/17 year olds placed in bed and breakfast accommodation with shared facilities since 2006.

Central Government has set a number of closely related targets on the use of bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation for homeless households.

In April 2004 the Government announced that bed and breakfast accommodation with shared facilities should not be used for families with dependent children or a pregnant member, except in emergencies and only then for a maximum of 6 weeks. In November 2006 this target was extended with a further commitment for 16/17 year olds to be reached by 2010. In January 2005 the Government introduced a target to halve the number of households living in temporary accommodation from a baseline set at 31 December 2004 by 2010.

With regard to the temporary accommodation target for Lewes District Council the baseline figure as at December 2004 was set at 68. This means that by 2010 a maximum of 34 households can be in temporary accommodation (including bed and breakfast).

The number of households living in temporary accommodation at 1 April each year rose in 2005/2006 and 2007 and then dropped in 2008 to just below 2004 figures. At 1 April 2008 there were 73 households living in temporary accommodation. This is significantly above the target figure of 34 households by March 2010. We will develop a plan to demonstrate how this target will be achieved over the next two years.

[Use of bed and breakfast with shared facilities for families and young people](#)

There have been no families or 16/17 year olds placed in bed and breakfast accommodation with shared facilities since 2006.

[Affordability of temporary accommodation](#)

The Council has 32 units of temporary accommodation in its own stock. 12 units of this stock are in an old building in Lewes. It has been recognised that service charges within this building have been rising dramatically. At 1 April 2008 the service charges including electricity increased by 33%. This has made the accommodation unaffordable for many families placed there who are on full benefits. Consequently Lewes District Council internal audit department are undertaking a Value for Money review of the building with the aim of identifying ways to achieve possible savings, improve services and explore options for alternative ways of providing the services for homeless households. This review is expected to be completed by October 2008.

3

Our Achievements and Future Plans

8.5 Objective 5: Increasing the provision of affordable housing

Achievements since the last strategy

- We have worked with registered social landlords and developers to develop 119 affordable homes over the last 5 years. 68 of these are affordable rented accommodation.
- We have gifted or sold at discounted price several parcels of Council owned land so that registered social landlords can build new affordable homes for rent.

A lack of affordable housing is one of the key underlying factors in causing homelessness.

The Lewes Housing Market Assessment (2008) highlighted the affordability ratio between earnings and house prices at 8.7. The 2005 Lewes District Housing Needs Survey highlighted that 84% and 63% of concealed and existing households respectively were unable to afford to buy a property. In addition, 75% of concealed households could not afford to rent in the private sector.

As a result Lewes District Council set a target to complete 300 new affordable homes in the five-year period between 2005/06 and 2009/10, equating to 60 new units per annum. However progress towards this target has been slow with only 83 units developed in the first three years. Whilst completions have increased in the last two years only 43% of completions since the target was set have been affordable rented units.

The Council has set up an Affordable Housing Delivery Group comprising officers from Housing Strategy, Legal, Planning Policy and Development Control. This enables a strategic approach to improve the delivery of affordable housing in the district. This group has developed a protocol to ensure there is close collaboration at an operational level for residential developments where there is an affordable housing requirement. In addition, the Cabinet set up a Housing Working Party of 7 Councillors to review best practice and identify what more can be done at Lewes.

[Developing a robust evidence base](#)

The Council has recognised the need to develop strong policies to increase the provision of affordable housing and, in particular, affordable rented housing. In order to develop new policies a strong evidence base is required. The Council will commission a new Housing Needs Survey to investigate the need for affordable housing within the district. In addition, it will commission a financial viability study to ensure the maximum contribution viable is required through developer contributions.

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Our Achievements and Future Plans

Developing affordable housing policies

The current affordable housing policy as set out in the Local Plan requires a contribution of 25% affordable units on sites of 15 or more units. The Council intends to develop its Local Development Framework by 2010. This will include a review of the affordable housing requirements in light of the results of the new evidence base.

The Council will set up a Registered Social Landlords Development Forum with its main development partners operating in the district to aid the development of new policies.

Gifting and selling land for affordable housing

The Council has gifted or sold at discounted price several parcels of land to registered social landlords so that more affordable housing can be provided. The sites include Council stock that can be developed at a greater density, underused Council garage sites and a landlocked brownfield site. In total these sites will eventually provide 32 rented properties and 4 shared ownership properties

Making best use of the existing stock

Due to the shortages in affordable housing it is crucial that the best use is made of existing stock. The Council has been operating a Cash Incentive Scheme for a number of years. The scheme was last reviewed in 2005. The scheme aims to encourage under occupying households to move to smaller homes thus freeing up family homes to those on the Housing Register. The criteria for the scheme are as follows:

- Households must have at least 2 bedrooms to give up
- Households receive £1,000 for the first bedroom and £500 for subsequent bedrooms given up
- Households can only move to sheltered or one bedroom accommodation.

Number of households moving through the Cash Incentive Scheme			
	Funding received	Number of households	Number of bedrooms freed
2003/04	£4,391	5	8
2004/05	£6,270	5	10
2005/06	£13,670	8	12
2006/07	£21,741	12	21
2007/08	£8,585	6	8
TOTAL	£54,657	36	59

Since 2003/04 36 households have moved to smaller homes, freeing up 59 bedrooms at a cost of £926 per bedroom. However there are still a number of households under occupying Council stock. The Council is undertaking a review of the Cash Incentive Scheme. This will involve a questionnaire to identify the number of under occupying households and how they could be encouraged to move to smaller properties.

3

Our Achievements and Future Plans

8.6 Objective 6: Improving Monitoring Procedures

The Homelessness Review highlighted the need to capture more data and to improve its accessibility so that information can be produced. Regular monitoring of homelessness activities is paramount in enabling outcomes, successes and areas for improvement to be identified.

[Reviewing internal data collection procedures](#)

The Council will review its existing data collection procedures to ensure the information produced is accurate, useful and accessible.

[Developing procedures for monitoring and benchmarking external homelessness activities](#)

The Council will utilise the newly forming Registered Social Landlords Management Forum to benchmark data such as voids, evictions and arrears, on a quarterly and annual basis. This will provide an early warning system for areas of improvement and provide a focus for the sharing of best practice.

A joint protocol is being set up between Lewes District Council and the Citizens Advice Bureau to ensure the regular reporting of statistics on prevention of homelessness through advice.

[Monitoring nomination agreements](#)

The lack of affordable housing means it is vital that the Council ensures it receives the nomination rights as set out in Nomination Agreements with Registered Social landlords. These will be monitored on an annual basis through the Registered Social Landlords Management Forum.

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Our Updated Strategy

9 This section outlines the 6 key strategic objectives and summarises what actions we propose to take over the life of the strategy. A more detailed action plan is provided in section 6 which identifies resource requirements, relevant partners, timescales and the lead body responsible for delivering each action.

9.1 Objective 1: Preventing homelessness

Preventing homelessness remains the key focus of this strategy. Work in this area will concentrate upon 2 areas:

1: Reviewing the effectiveness of existing services

- Evaluating the take up, effectiveness and outcomes of the mediation service provided by Relate.
- Preventing homelessness through debt advice; providing 6 additional hours per week of debt advice, researching and developing an early intervention system at first stage rent arrears, and providing enhanced debt advice training for housing advice officers.
- Examining the reason for the low levels of take up of the Homelink scheme to ensure use of funds and the number of households assisted is maximised.

2: Building better relationships with the private and social housing sectors

- Setting up a Landlord Forum.
- Undertaking a project to investigate how to improve access to the private rented sector for homeless households and those on the Lewes District Council Housing Register.
- Using our rent deposit guarantee scheme to assist 45 households to access the private rented sector per annum.
- Increasing the use of Discretionary Housing Payments to prevent homelessness amongst households claiming benefits.
- Setting up a Registered Social Landlord Management Forum to share best practice in reducing homelessness and maximising use of existing stock.

9.2 Objective 2: Improving support to vulnerable people

We need to take a proactive approach to working with partners to meet the needs of vulnerable groups who are facing homelessness. The focus of this work will be victims of domestic violence, substance misuse, ex-offenders and assisting in the transition to the new Supporting People model of commissioning housing related support services. Initiatives in this area will include:

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Our Updated Strategy

Women experiencing domestic violence

- Working with partners to deliver 6 additional refuge spaces.
- Developing the Sanctuary scheme to ensure this is a feasible alternative option for those experiencing domestic violence.
- Adopting the multi agency risk assessment conference approach to domestic violence.

Substance misusers

- Signing up to the countywide floating support service for people with substance misuse problems.

Young People

- Signing up to the countywide youth homelessness strategy.

Ex – Offenders

- Working in partnership with Brighton and Hove City Council, Hastings Borough Council and HMP Lewes to deliver the Preventing Offenders Accommodation Loss project.
- Working with partners to develop an accommodation based service for ex-offenders.

General

- Working with partners to assist the transition to the new Supporting People model of commissioning housing related support services.

9.3 Objective 3: Ensuring accessible and effective homelessness and housing advice services

The homelessness and housing advice services are pivotal in preventing homelessness in the district. Particular emphasis is required to ensure services and information are accessible and of a high quality. Actions in this area will include:

- Producing clear and comprehensive information on services and housing options through an updated website and the development of information leaflets.
- Undertaking a quality review of homelessness and housing advice services.
- Increasing the number of successful outcomes for prevention advice.

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Our Updated Strategy

- Introducing Choice Based Lettings to enable households on the Lewes District Council Housing Register to assess their housing options more realistically.

9.4 Objective 4: Improving the use and affordability of temporary accommodation

Central Government set a target to halve the use of temporary accommodation by 2010. This will form the focus of work in this area, along with Government objectives regarding the use of bed and breakfast for households with children or a pregnant member and 16-17 year olds. Activities will include:

- Developing a plan to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation to 34 by 2010.
- Preventing fuel poverty in temporary accommodation by undertaking a value for money review of Saxonbury temporary accommodation.

9.5 Objective 5: Increasing the provision of affordable housing

A key underlying cause of homelessness is the lack of affordable housing in the areas. Actions will concentrate upon:

- Setting up a Registered Social Landlord Development Forum to develop new affordable housing policies.
- Undertaking housing needs survey and financial viability study to obtain a robust evidence base for the development of affordable housing policies.
- Examining under occupancy and how to encourage under occupying households to release their properties.

9.6 Objective 6: Improving monitoring procedures

The Homelessness Review identified a number of gaps in information and accessibility of information. In order to ensure continual review of services, improvements need to be made in both internal and external monitoring procedures. Emphasis will be placed upon:

- Reviewing internal data collection procedures to ensure useful, accurate and up to date data is available on all aspects of the housing advice and homelessness service. This will ensure regular review and identification of areas for improvement.
- Developing procedures for regular data collection and benchmarking of external organisations activities in relation to preventing homelessness through the RSL Management Forum.
- Improve monitoring of nomination agreements made with registered social landlords.

5

Delivering the Strategy

Monitoring the Strategy

Partnership working is fundamental to the successful delivery of the strategic objectives set out in this strategy. This multi-agency approach is recognised in the Homelessness Steering Group. The Steering Group will be made up of representatives from external agencies including Social Services, Probation, Supporting People, Refuge and Southdown Housing Association. The Council will be represented by the Housing Strategy Manager, the Housing Operations Manager, the Principal Housing Needs Officer and the Policy and Development Officer.

The Homelessness Steering Group will have responsibility for overseeing the progress made in achieving the strategic objectives set out in the strategy. The Steering Group will monitor progress on a quarterly and annual basis and provide an updated annual action plan for the strategy.

Resources

The Strategy will be resourced directly and indirectly from a number of different funding streams including:

- Communities and Local Government Homelessness grant
- Supporting People funding
- Lewes District Council
- Registered Social Landlords
- Delivery Partners

Direct Resourcing of the Strategy by Lewes District Council in 2008/09

Programme	Funding Source	2008/09	Outcomes
Discretionary Housing Payment	Government Grant	£28,764	Prevention of homelessness through increased use of DHP
Discretionary Housing Payment	Lewes District Council	£21,236	Top up to the above
Homelessness Service	Lewes District Council	£256,610	Housing Aid and Advice and prevention of homelessness.
Debt and Welfare Advice	Lewes District Council	£26,666	Prevention of homelessness and increase in net disposable incomes
Sanctuary	Lewes District Council	£5,000	Safety improvements for vulnerable persons
Refuge	Lewes District Council	£20,000	Safe Housing for families fleeing Domestic Violence
Affordable Homes Provision	Lewes District Council	£25,000	More affordable homes
Choice Based Lettings	Lewes District Council	£35,000	Realistic assessment of housing options

5 Delivering the Strategy

	Target	Milestones & measures of success	Timescales	Links to other strategies/priorities	Officer responsible	Other agencies involved	Resources
OBJECTIVE ONE - PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS							
Reviewing the effectiveness of existing services							
1	Evaluate current mediation services for families and young people provided by relate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Utilise pro forma for referral and refusal •Review take up, effectiveness and outcomes of service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2008 • Jan 2009 	Sustainable Communities: Settled Lives, Pride of Place, LDC Housing Strategy	Principal Housing Needs Officer	Relate	Within existing resources
2	Examine the reasons for the low take up of Homelink referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Review referral criteria/acceptances and refusals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2008 	Sustainable Communities: Settled Lives, Pride of Place, LDC Housing Strategy	Principal Housing Needs Officer	Homelink	Within existing resources
3	Prevention of homelessness through debt advice and welfare benefit advice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Provide 6 additional hours per week per annum •Develop a system to notify Support Agencies at first stage arrear notification to tenants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Oct 2008 •Mar 2009 	Sustainable Communities: Settled Lives	Principal Housing Needs Officer	Citizens Advice Bureau/ Support Agencies/ Housing Services	£6,000 + £26,666 (Homelessness Grant 2008/09) Within existing resources

5 Delivering the Strategy

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of the issue of debt through an article in District Link 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oct 2008 				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide enhanced debt advice training to housing advice officers for homeless applicants in temporary accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mar 2009 				
Building better relationship with the private and social housing sectors							
4	Improve access to the private rented sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up landlord forum • Project to investigate options for accessing private sector (including landlord accreditation) • Assist 10 households per annum to access the private rented sector through the Homelink rent deposit scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2008 • Scope Jan 2009 • April 2009 	Sustainable Communities: Settled Lives, LDC Housing Strategy	Housing Strategy Manager/ Policy and Development Officer/ Principal Housing Needs Officer	Homelink/ Other Local Authorities	Within existing resources.

5 Delivering the Strategy

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist 45 households per annum to access the private rented sector through the Lewes District Council rent deposit scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2009 				
5	Prevent homelessness through increased use of Discretionary Housing Payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure 100% take up of Government grant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2009 	Sustainable Communities: Settled Lives	Principal Housing Needs Officer/Housing Benefit Manager		Annual Government DHP Grant/ PSL surplus
6	Reduce homelessness and maximise use of stock through Registered Social Landlord Management Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up management forum • Quarterly and annual benchmarking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2008 • Oct 2008/ Jan 2009/ April 2009/ July 2009 	Sustainable Communities: Settled Lives, LDC Housing Strategy	Housing Strategy Manager/ Principal Housing Needs Officer	Registered Social Landlords/ Housing Services/ Housing Benefits	Within existing resources

5 Delivering the Strategy

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Share best practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oct 2008/ Jan 2009/ April 2009/ July 2009 				
OBJECTIVE TWO - IMPROVING SUPPORT TO VULNERABLE PEOPLE							
People Experiencing Violence							
7	Prevent homelessness through violence - both domestic and non domestic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •6 additional refuge places •Set up Sanctuary scheme •Appoint working group for Sanctuary scheme set up •Adopt Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) •Train officers on MARAC framework 	<p>TBC</p> <p>Summer 2009</p> <p>Summer 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2008 • June 2008 	Sustainable Communities: Settled Lives, NI 32 (Repeat incidences of domestic violence), Supporting People, LDC Sustainable Community Strategy, LDC Housing Strategy	Housing Strategy Manager/ Policy and Development Officer/ Principal Housing Needs Officer	Housing Corporation/ Rainer/ Environmental Health	£20,000 from General Fund, Housing Corporation grant. £5,000 Private Sector Renewal Programme

5 Delivering the Strategy

People with Substance Misuse Problems							
8	Prevention of homelessness through adequate support for people with substance misuse	•Sign up to Countywide floating support service	• Sept 2008	Sustainable Communities: Settled Lives, Supporting People, South East Housing Strategy, LDC Housing Strategy	Housing Strategy Manager	Registered Social landlords/ East Sussex Local Authorities/ Supporting People/ Probation	Within existing resources
Young People							
9	Prevention of youth homelessness	•Sign up to County Youth Homelessness Strategy	Autumn 2008	Sustainable Communities: Settled Lives, Pride of Place, LDC Housing Strategy	Principal Housing Needs Officer	East Sussex County Council, East Sussex Local Authorities, Supporting People	Within existing resources
Ex Offenders							
10	Preventing Offenders Accommodation Loss	TBC	TBC	Sustainable Communities: Settled Lives, Supporting People, LDC Housing Strategy	Housing Strategy Manager/ Principal Housing Needs Officer	Brighton and Hove City Council, Hastings Borough Council, HMP Lewes	Within existing resources

5 Delivering the Strategy

Generic Support							
11	Enabling wider access to housing related support regardless of tenure	<p>Consultation</p> <p>Sign off of Commissioning plan and service specification Procurement</p> <p>New services implemented</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •June - Aug 2008 •Sept 2008 •Sept 2008 - June2009 •June 2009 	Sustainable Communities: Settled Lives, Supporting People, South East Housing Strategy, Pride of Place, LDC Housing Strategy	Housing Strategy Manager	Supporting People Strategic Forum and Core Strategy Group	Within existing resources
OBJECTIVE THREE - ENSURING ACCESSIBLE AND EFFECTIVE HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING ADVICE SERVICES							
12	Produce comprehensive information on housing options and homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Produce leaflets and fact sheets •Update website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Nov 2008 •Oct2008 	Lewes District Plan, LDC Housing Strategy	Policy and Development Officer	Housing Needs Team	Funding for printing costs
13	Undertake a quality review of homelessness and housing advice services	<p>Investigate options</p> <p>Undertake review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •April 2009 •July 2009 	Lewes District Council Plan, LDC Housing Strategy	Housing Strategy Manager/ Principal Housing Needs Officer		Homelessness Grant

5 Delivering the Strategy

14	Introduce Choice Based Lettings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Consultation with housing register applicants and transfer applicants •Review Allocation Policy •Cabinet Approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •April 2008 •August 2008 •Oct 2008 	Lewes District Council Plan, LDC Housing Strategy	Housing Strategy Manager/ Principal Housing Needs Officer	Registered Social Landlords/ Housing Services/ Sussex Local Authorities / Locata	£35,000 Housing Revenue Account/General Fund
OBJECTIVE FOUR - IMPROVING THE USE AND AFFORDABILITY OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION							
15	Reduce the temporary accommodation units for homeless households by 50% to a target of 34	•Develop a plan to reduce temporary accommodation units	•Oct 2008	Sustainable Communities: Settled Lives, NI 156	Principal Housing Needs Officer	Housing Services	Within existing resources
16	Maintain the prevention of households with children or pregnant women being placed in B & B except in an emergency and then for no longer than six weeks		Ongoing	Government target	Principal Housing Needs Officer		Within existing resources
17	Prevent 16/17 years olds from being placed in B & B except in an emergency and then for no longer than six weeks		•Mar 2010	Government target	Principal Housing Needs Officer		Within existing resources

5 Delivering the Strategy

18	Prevent fuel poverty in Temporary accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value for money review of Saxonbury Temporary Accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jan 2009 	Sustainable Communities: Settled Lives, Lewes District Council Plan, LDC Sustainable Community Strategy, LDC Housing Strategy	Principal Housing Needs Officer	Lewes District Council Internal Audit	Within existing resources
OBJECTIVE FIVE - INCREASING THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING							
19	Increase affordable housing in the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60 new build per annum (April 2008 - March 2009) Set up Registered Social Landlord Development Forum Appoint consultants to undertake housing needs survey and financial viability study Draft housing needs survey and financial viability study completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End March 2009 July 2008 Dec 2008 April 2009 	South East Housing Strategy, Local Development Framework, LDC Council Plan, Pride of Place, LDC Sustainable Community Strategy	Housing Strategy Manager/ Policy and Development Officer	Planning Policy/ Registered Social Landlords/ Private Developers	Housing Corporation allocations/ commuted sums/S106 contributions/ LDC funding for evidence base

5 Delivering the Strategy

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Housing need survey final report •Housing Working Party 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •June 2009 •Dec 2008 				
20	Examine under occupancy and how to encourage under occupying households to release their properties	TBC	TBC	Sustainable Communities: Settled Lives, South East Regional Housing Strategy, LDC Housing Strategy	Housing Projects Officer		Within existing resources
OBJECTIVE SIX - IMPROVING MONITORING PROCEDURES							
21	Monitor quarterly and update annually the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Appoint steering group •Quarterly review of action plan •Update action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •July 2008 •Oct 2008/ Jan 2009/ April 2009/ July 2009 • July 2009 		Housing Strategy Manager	Multi-Agency Group	Within existing resources

5 Delivering the Strategy

22	Review internal data collection procedures to ensure useful, accurate up to date information is available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Log all data collected for homelessness and housing advice, including source of information and format produced •Develop monitoring framework and procedure notes for homelessness and housing advice functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Dec 2008 •April 2009 		Policy and Development Officer/Housing Administrator		Within existing resources
23	Develop procedures for monitoring and benchmarking external homelessness activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Set up management forum •Quarterly and annual benchmarking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •June 2008 •Oct 2008/ Jan 2009/ April 2009/ July 2009 		Housing Strategy Manager/ Policy and Development Officer/ Principal Housing Needs Officer/ Housing Administrator	Registered Social landlords/ Housing Benefits/ Citizens Advice Bureau/ national Homelessness Advice Service - Communities and Local Government/ Housing Strategy and Needs Team	Within existing resources

5 Delivering the Strategy

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Set up joint protocol with Citizens Advice Bureau 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept 2008 				
24	Monitor nomination agreements with Registered Social Landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Annual monitoring through RSL Management Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oct 2008 		Housing Administrator	Registered Social Landlords	Within existing resources