

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Clements
LEAD OFFICER: Fergus Mc Morrow
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Summary and Recommendation:

This report updates members on the progress made against the Homelessness Strategy Delivery Plan 2008- 2013

The Panel are asked to note the progress made.

1. INTRODUCTION

In July 2008 the Strategic Housing Panel recommended the approval of the Homelessness Strategy 2008 – 2013, which was approved along with a delivery plan at the August 2008 Executive meeting. This report updates Members on the progress made against the plan

2. PROGRESS TO DATE

In total there are 43 different tasks in the plan of which 33 were to be delivered by October 2009.

Due to the fact that there was an assumption that new staff would have been recruited earlier than they actually were many end dates have slipped.

Some 21 tasks have been completed or are ongoing pieces of work, with a further 13 underway.

3. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)

No cost implications directly relating from this action plan, but the tasks contained in it are covered by existing budgets.

4. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN AND RECOMMENDATION

This report is in accordance with the Council's action plan following the Audit Commission's inspection report of April 2008.

It is recommended that the Strategic Housing Panel note progress made.

CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed. This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	Will help to reduce crime & disorder
Impact on Sustainability	Will promote sustainable neighbourhoods
Impact on Rural Proofing	The scheme would be extended to rural communities
Health and safety Implications	None
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	Advertising of the scheme will be accessible to disadvantaged and minority groups
Children and Young Person's Implications	None
Human Rights Act Implications	None
Monitoring Officer comments	None
s.151 Officer comments	None

Is this a key decision? No

List of appendices – Appendix 1: Homeless Strategy Delivery Plan 2008 - 13

Copeland Borough Council Homelessness Strategy Delivery Plan 2008-2013

Objective 1 Preventing Homelessness

Task	Priority	Start date	End date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
Develop an Organisational structure with increased resources so that advice and preventative work is strengthened	High	01/07/08	30/11/08	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum	More than half of resources deployed to prevention Completed
Provide staff with a complete and up to date training plan which should include best practice	High	01/09/08	31/11/08	Housing Services Manager	Housing Needs Team	All staff to have individual plan. Increased staff satisfaction levels Improved prevention performance with overall increase in prevention of 100% by 31/3/10 Completed
Develop a comprehensive Homeless Prevention and options toolkit Key elements of the toolkit are expanded below in shaded boxes	High	01/09/08	31/03/09	Housing Services Manager	Andy Gale Consultant Homelessness Forum	Improved prevention performance. Cases reported in P1E increase in line with target Completed

Task	Priority	Start date	End date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An effective Mediation service, particularly in relation to young people asked to leave by relatives 	High	01/09/08	31/03/09	Housing Needs Strategy Manager	Homelessness Forum Housing Services Manager	<p>Reduction in homelessness resulting from parent, friend and other relative eviction. This could also reduce homelessness as a result of relationship breakdown where appropriate</p> <p>Completed</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Sanctuary scheme across all tenures 	Med	31/03/09	30/09/09	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum	<p>An annual reduction in homelessness resulting from violence</p> <p>Work under way as part of Cumbria Domestic Violence Group, but no actual scheme yet in place. I have asked the local RSL's if we can buy into any handy person scheme that they may do, but if they can't help us then we will advertise out for a local person until the SP project starts early in 2010.</p> <p>Also other work being done on generally raising awareness such as training for HOA's and other front line staff.</p>

Task	Priority	Start date	End date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase use of rent deposit or bond schemes 	High	01/09/08	31/03/09	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum Supporting People – Louise Jeffrey	<p>Provide scheme that is attractive to both customers and landlords so that tenancies are maintained. 100% of cases considered for scheme before 31/03/09</p> <p>Achieved through more funding of the DIGS scheme and via more effective monitoring and publicity via jointly produced leaflets from DIGS and CBC.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early warning systems and joint protocols from all key stakeholders and landlords so that intervention can take place 	Med	31/10/08	31/10/09	Housing Services Manager	RSL's	<p>100% key stakeholders and 50% landlords giving early warning by 31/03/10</p> <p>This has been agreed through the RSL Liaison Group and will be formally signed off at its next meeting in September</p>

Task	Priority	Start date	End date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discretionary Housing Payments to be used to prevent homelessness 	High	01/09/08	31/03/09	Housing Services Manager	Housing Benefit Homelessness Forum	<p>100% expenditure of DHP, Full access for homelessness prevention staff via agreed arrangements</p> <p>Achieved. A joint panel of Housing and HB staff along with welfare benefits advisers meet with the aim of preventing homelessness.</p> <p>A six month review of the scheme will take place in August.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fast-track HB payments for people moving into and already in private rented accommodation 	High	01/09/08	31/03/09	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum Housing Benefit	<p>Assist in reduction of ASTs coming to an end and build up confidence of private sector. 100% of homeless households accessing Private sector and all those with a notice for arrears having HB fast tracked.</p> <p>A Service Level Agreement between Housing Services and Housing Benefit was signed off in June 09</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a designated 'Homelessness Prevention Fund' 	High	01/09/08	31/03/09	Whitehaven Community Development Trust	Homelessness Forum	<p>Agreed criteria and allocated budget in place by 31/03/09. Full use by 31/03/10.</p> <p>Signed off by the SHP in Dec 08</p>

Task	Priority	Start date	End date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Homeless Prevention and Housing options advice backed up with leaflets 	High	01/09/08	31/03/09	Housing Services Manager	Distribute via Homelessness Forum (use radio advertising?)	<p>Have full suite of leaflets available at reception and in other agencies by 31/03/09</p> <p>Completed with suite of leaflets available from Jan 09.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information on how to access Social Housing in Copeland and how Housing is let 	High	01/09/08	31/03/09	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum	<p>Better understanding. In place by 31/03/10</p> <p>This task has been given to the RSL Liaison Group who will report back in the September 09 meeting</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a directory of Housing Advice Services in Copeland. 	High	01/06/08	30/09/08	Housing Services Manager	Jenkins Duval consultants Homelessness Forum	<p>Up to date information about local services is available. Hold Launch event and publicity by 31/07/08</p> <p>Completed August 08</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce home visiting in all cases of eviction by family and friends 	High	01/09/08	31/03/09	Housing Services Manager		<p>To Reduce the number of homelessness acceptances due to family and friends eviction by 50% by 31/03/10</p> <p>Home visits will be carried out where necessary.</p>

Task	Priority	Start date	End date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
Work with landlords to prevent assured shorthold tenancies coming to an end	High	01/08/08	31/03/09	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum	<p>To Reduce the number of homelessness acceptances due to the loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancy by 50% by 31/03/10</p> <p>An action plan is in place to bring staff and landlords together in September 09 for a formal report to go to the next Private Landlord's Forum to follow that.</p>
Establish access routes in order to provide floating support across tenures.	Med	31/03/09	31/03/10	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum Young Persons Panel	<p>100% routes in place. All staff aware of routes</p> <p>Informally being done, but need to be formally written as procedures.</p>
Establish referral routes for specific debt advice	High	30/09/08	31/03/09	Citizens Advice Bureau	Homelessness Forum	<p>All customers with substantial debt to be referred for help</p> <p>Being done through links with our money advice partner the CAB via formal referrals. We have also adopted a formal SLA with the CAB on complex debt cases to help prevent private tenancy evictions and mortgage repossessions.</p>

Task	Priority	Start date	End date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
Establish a “tackling youth homelessness “ package focussing on joint working, early intervention and education	Med	31/03/09	31/03/10	Whitehaven Community Development Trust	Homelessness Forum	<p>A Young Persons Housing Strategy/package in place by 31/03/10.</p> <p>Elimination of B&B for 16 / 17 year olds</p> <p>We have started some of this work and are working up an action plan to be completed in August to include multi agency working to include Home Group and Connexions</p>

Objective 2 Improve Performance monitoring

Task	Priority	Start Date	End Date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
Develop a suite of local performance and financial management information for benchmarking purposes	Med	31/03/09	31/10/09	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum	<p>Resources can be directed proactively. Spend to save policy can be implemented. Suite in place by 31/10/09</p> <p>Performance information has been done with ongoing revisions taking place as we refine it on a monthly basis. Corporate Team agreed on 27/7/09 to accept a value for money proposal from consultants and internally we are looking to complete a benchmarking process by beginning October 09.</p>
Implement a system of providing staff with internal and comparison performance data	Med	31/03/09	31/10/09	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum	<p>100% staff are aware of how performance compares to England and the North West Region</p> <p>As part of the above benchmarking and linking in to us having joined Housemark we will now be able to provide staff and our Strategic Housing Panel with meaningful data. AD to work with KS to agree a methodology and process by October 09.</p>

Task	Priority	Start Date	End Date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
Develop specific SMART targets for Officers. particularly in relation to prevention work	High	31/03/08	31/03/09	Housing Services Manager	N / A	Increased prevention activities. Prevention against main causes measureable per officer All have performance plans that are regularly reviewed in 1-2-1's.
Ensure systems are in place to monitor the effectiveness of outreach work	Med	31/03/09	31/03/10	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum	Establish value for money. Systems in place by 31/03/09, evaluation by 31/03/10 These will be in place by the due date.
Develop mechanisms to measure the cost of homelessness and resources needed	Med	31/03/09	31/03/10	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum	Establish value for money. Systems in place by 31/03/09, evaluation by 31/03/10 Agreement has been reached to use outside consultants to help us develop VFM mechanisms.
Develop specific service level agreements with all key agencies including Shelter, CAB , DIGS Carlisle Law Centre & others as appropriate	Med	31/03/09	31/03/10	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum	Establish value for money. Systems in place by 31/03/09, evaluation 31/03/10 Already in place with CAB, DIGS, Carlisle Law Centre and a new specific one on preventing reposessions has just been signed off with CAB. We need to talk to Shelter about an agreement with them We are negotiating internally

Task	Priority	Start Date	End Date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
						with Legal Services and Environmental Services to devise SLA's with them.
Set Performance targets for key Partners and undertake monitoring through the Council and the Homelessness Forum	Med	31/03/09	31/10/10	Homelessness Forum		<p>Targets in place by 31/09/09 evaluation by 31/03/10</p> <p>Little progress yet. We are now receiving performance information from the RSL's and this information will be presented to the SHP for it to analyse.</p> <p>We will then look to see what targets we can set at the September meeting of the RSL Liaison Group.</p>
Implement a formal spend to save policy	Med	31/03/09	31/10/09	Housing Services Manager	N/A	<p>Be able to identify where spend leads to savings</p> <p>Policy written and will go to the August SHP meeting for its approval. Copies will be sent to partners for their information and comments.</p>

Objective 3 Increase access to housing

Task	Priority	Start Date	End date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
Research and develop mechanisms for increasing access to the private rented sector linking in to the development of the Private Sector Housing Strategy	High	31/03/08	31/03/09	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum DIGS	Plan in place by 31/07/09 An action plan has been devised to tackle this with work to commence in August. This will link in to the Private Sector Strategy being written by DC.
Set up a landlords forum or similar to help get landlords involved and increase access to private rented accommodation	High	31/03/08	31/03/09	Housing Services Manager	DIGS Homelessness Forum	Clear terms of Reference, written monitoring of progress leading to better understanding of issues This had its first meeting in Feb 09. As well as this, we have separately devised an action plan to see how we can increase access to the private sector with actions from August 09.

Task	Priority	Start Date	End date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
Review the rent deposit scheme to increase their success in preventing homelessness	High	31/03/08	31/03/09	Housing Services Manager	DIGS Homelessness Forum	<p>25% increase in take up of scheme before 31/03/10</p> <p>Is being done and is an ongoing process through monitoring performance information. We also have recommendations in place following a critical friend inspection as to how we can expand the use of this both through our homeless prevention budget and through an increased contribution to DIGS to help with this agenda.</p> <p>Regular meetings take place with DIGS to assess our relationship with them with the last being on 22 July.</p>
Provide practical support to clients wanting to access private rented sector.	High	31/03/08	31/03/09	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum	<p>All clients to be given support in accessing so that homelessness prevented</p> <p>See various actions above tying in to the new landlord's forum and action planning in place following actions from this document.</p>

Task	Priority	Start Date	End date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
Research whether a Qualifying Offers scheme would be appropriate, to enable the Council to discharge Part 7 duty into the private rented sector	Med	31/03/10	31/10/10	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum	<p>Production of report with recommendations.</p> <p>Implementation of any findings.</p> <p>No progress yet, but will be linked in to the work on expanding access in to the private sector. (a “qualifying offer” is a statutory term referring to discharging a homelessness duty by obtaining a private sector tenancy instead of a housing association tenancy)</p>
Ensure that the needs of the homeless and those threatened with homelessness are identified within the allocations policy so they have access to settled homes	High	31/03/08	31/03/09	Housing Services Manager	Copeland Homes Supporting People Sub regional CBL group	<p>Appropriate provision for homeless households, so they can participate in CBL.</p> <p>Appropriate priority for those in TA, so adequate move on arrangements are in place</p> <p>Done and the policy is going to Executive for formal sign off in August 09.</p>

Task	Priority	Start Date	End date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
Negotiate and agree formal nomination arrangements with RSLs so that homelessness duty can be discharged effectively	High	30/05/08	31/03/09	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum	100% of RSLs signed up to formal agreements to help discharge duty. Provides better monitoring and increases access to accommodation. Agreement signed off in June 09.
Determine how the needs of the homeless can feed into the Housing Association Forum	Med	31/03/09	31/10/09	Housing Association Forum	Homelessness forum	Help Registered Social Landlords better understand the contribution they can make towards resolving homelessness. As part of a wider consultation/participation strategy to be carried out, this will be done and fed through to the Homelessness Strategy Forum, other partners and our customers.
Develop and introduce plans to increase the chances of formerly homeless households achieving successful move-on from supported housing to fully independent tenancies	Med	31/03/09	31/10/09	Homelessness Forum	Supporting People (MOPP protocol)	Tenancies in settled homes maintained minimising disruption and extra "pull on services. All homeless households to have support plans in place. Working in partnership with the Supporting People team we are looking at a much more effective move on strategy. This is ongoing and the SHP will be updated when we can.

Objective 4 Tackle the wider causes of homelessness

Task	Priority	Start Date	End date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
Improve relationships with Supporting people services and primary Care Trust so that resources and funding are targeted and meet the needs of people that are homeless and vulnerable.	Med	31/03/09	31/10/10	Homeless ness Forum	Adult Social Care Children Services Police	<p>Vulnerable people receive the support they need. Less disruption in the lives of vulnerable people and reductions on "pull" on services</p> <p>We now have a much improved relationship with SP and are active in working on the channelling of resources. For example a current project on the targeting of a £100k grant for young people is seeing close working. The relationship with the PCT is indirectly improving through involvement with elements of the PCT in several multi agency groups in the County.</p> <p>Also LP is to meet with an Assistant Director, NHS Cumbria, on 28/9/09.</p>
Hold and support training and capacity events for all involved in tackling homelessness in the district	Med	31/03/09	31/10/09	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum	<p>Helps pull together common objectives, increase motivation, awareness and team working.</p> <p>Plan of events/training will be in place by 31/10/09 with an action plan to evidence this.</p>

Task	Priority	Start Date	End date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
Develop mechanisms so that the homelessness agenda feeds into internal and externally based relevant forums, groups and strategies	Med	31/03/09	31/10/09	Homelessness Forum		<p>Decisions taken take into consideration relationship to homelessness</p> <p>There has been some progress in that the SHP actively promotes issues in CBC and through the Cumbria SP team and via links with other local partners.</p> <p>Internally we need to ensure that the Corporate Team help us in this agenda and homelessness/housing options issues feature in the Departmental Strategic Plan.</p>
Re-launch the Council's Homelessness Forum to ensure that services are planned in conjunction with other stakeholders and service users.	High	31/06/08	31/10/09	Housing Services Manager	All agencies	<p>Clear terms of Reference, formal written monitoring of progress and bringing together joint vision</p> <p>Completed. Homelessness Forums held in November 2008 & May 2009.</p>
Explore how partner agencies can help provide life skills training to help sustain tenancies	Low	31/03/10	31/03/11	Homelessness Forum		<p>Partners become engaged in adopting the Governments Places for Change Programme and minimise service interventions</p> <p>Some work being done with floating support agencies and the Whitehaven Community Trust among others to</p>

Task	Priority	Start Date	End date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
						<p>examine this. To add to this we need to co-ordinate what these services offer to fully understand how we can effectively use these resources.</p> <p>We also want to explore some partnership working with Home Group and Impact Housing on this, they do a lot of work in community development.</p>
Improve access to health services, education training and employment opportunities	Med	31/03/09	31/03/10	Homeless ness Forum		<p>In line with the Governments Places of Change programme. Provides greater ability to tackle the wider issues associated with homelessness and increase sustainable solutions</p> <p>Will obtain more health service participation in the homelessness forum</p>
Develop a consultation and feedback mechanism so that stakeholders and service users are involved and feel listened to	Med	31/03/09	31/10/09	Homeless ness Forum	Link to work of SP & service user forums	<p>Clear established method in place. Customers feel listened to and services/resources can be targeted. Improved satisfaction levels</p> <p>In place by 31/10/09</p> <p>Surveys to service users were</p>

Task	Priority	Start Date	End date	Lead officer	Partners and others involved	Anticipated Outcomes
						started from May 09 and are now being revamped to offer an incentive to return a form due to its initial failure. As stated before other forms of consultation and feedback will be put in place this year.
Improve the perception of the homelessness and advice service with service users	High	31/03/09	31/10/09	Housing Services Manager	Homelessness Forum	<p>Establish a baseline of customer satisfaction</p> <p>Year on year improvements in customer satisfaction</p> <p>This is being done through improved service performance and better information on services. The use of surveys will help to measure and track this more effectively and we are considering using focus groups to look at particular service areas which will also help.</p>