

Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy

2012 - 2017

**“To ensure that everyone has access
to a place that they can call home,
where they can close their door and
feel safe”**

Bromsgrove District Council

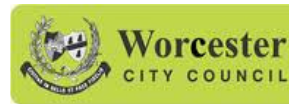
Malvern Hills District Council

Redditch Borough Council

Worcester City Council

Wychavon District Council

Wyre Forest District Council



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1. Foreword

I am very pleased to introduce Worcestershire's second Homelessness Strategy and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the organisations and individuals from across the county who have contributed towards its development.

The local authorities in Worcestershire have a long history of working together in partnership and in collaboration with key agencies to drive change and innovation across the county.

Since Worcestershire produced its first countywide Homelessness Strategy 'Working Together to Change Lives', significant progress has been to improve services and deliver a range of housing initiatives. Some of our shared achievements include:

- increase of prevention work across the county to assist people to either stay in their own homes or find other suitable accommodation;
- development of various accommodation and floating support schemes including the Bromsgrove Foyer for young people, the start of work on the Kidderminster Foyer in June 2012 and South Worcestershire Nightstop providing safe emergency accommodation for homeless young people in the homes of approved 'hosts';
- introduction of Worcestershire LinkUP, a virtual gateway that enables single homeless people to quickly and

effectively access supported accommodation, and housing support services across Worcestershire;

- increased assistance for those who are trying to access the private rental market through bond schemes; and
- implementation of Choice Based-Lettings schemes across the county to ensure that the allocation of housing is transparent.

This new strategy retains the vision from the previous Homelessness Strategy thereby providing a continued focus for Worcestershire over the next five years in the pursuit of preventing homelessness:

"to ensure that everyone has access to a place they can call home, where they can close their door and feel safe"

The four strategic goals set out in the body of the document provide a framework for directing activity around meeting the overall vision.

Engaging with a wide spectrum of stakeholders, service users and residents has added much to the development of this strategy; providing an insight into the diverse experiences of those who have experienced homelessness alongside the views of practitioners.

The Strategy is set against the backdrop of unprecedented change in public spending, welfare benefits and social housing. The implications of these changes are not yet fully understood but there is broad consensus that they will increase pressure on homelessness

services at a time when resources are facing cuts.

We recognise that we face a challenging five years ahead. However, we are determined that the wide ranging actions set out in this Strategy, together with the support of our partners, will enable us to provide a co-ordinated approach to delivering services, to effectively tackle and reduce the risk of homelessness in Worcestershire.

Kate Bailey

Chair, Worcestershire Strategic Housing Officers Group

2. Executive Summary

This new Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy 2012 – 2017 has been developed in consultation with service users and key stakeholders to steer the homelessness services and support within the county over the next five years.

It sets out how we and our partners will work together to prevent homelessness, tackle the root causes of homelessness and provide holistic outcomes for people who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness. The prevention of homelessness is the overriding focus of all the six Worcestershire Local Authorities.

The strategy has been developed by a project team of senior housing officers and produced in accordance with government guidance from the Code of Guidance (2007) and Homelessness Strategies: A good practice handbook 2002 and other relevant good practice documents published by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

This second countywide strategy builds on the considerable progress made over the last five years through our previous Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy 'Working together to change lives' and the existing strong working relationships with partners, to contribute positively to change people's lives. It is based on the findings of the Worcestershire Homelessness Review (2012) and through the Worcestershire Homelessness Pathways Research (2012) has been developed placing the customer at the centre.

Considerable consultation with customers and key partners has been undertaken and the feedback received has helped to shape the goals and actions and hone the final content of this document. Consultation took the form of a Home Truths Event (a stakeholder consultation event which included face to face feedback), homeless journey mapping (through the Worcestershire Homelessness Pathways Research), customer and stakeholder surveys and a final public consultation opportunity on the draft strategy document.

The vision of the strategy is:

"to ensure that everyone has access to a place that they can call home, where they can close their door and feel safe"

In order to achieve our vision, four goals have been developed and for each a number of strategic objectives identified:

Goal 1 'Provide a pathway to a housing solution for everyone that accesses our services'

Within Goal one the strategic objectives are as follows:

- Ensure housing options services provide Value for Money in order to attract and retain investment to maintain and improve services levels;
- Increase the number of households prevented from becoming homeless by making housing options services as accessible and effective as possible;

- Ensure that there is a pathway for everyone which is developed and supported by partners;
- Maximise the supply and use of new and existing accommodation; and
- Develop a range of holistic initiatives to understand and tackle the causes of homelessness.

Goal 2 'Create strong partnerships to tackle homelessness'

Within Goal two the strategic objectives are as follows:

- Highlight the gaps in current service provision and their link to homelessness and encourage partners to tackle them through improved joint working and more effective commissioning of services;
- Promote cross agency working through relevant protocols and liaison meetings with the aim of strengthening relationships between organisations and within communities; and
- Increase joint working with private sector landlords to create new housing opportunities and tackle homelessness caused by the end of Assured Shorthold Tenancies.

Goal 3 'Take effective action to prevent anyone new to the streets having to sleep out for more than one night'

Within Goal three the strategic objectives are as follows:

- Develop a No Second Night Out (NSNO) standard for Worcestershire;
- Understand why people enter and remain in a street lifestyle and tackle the barriers preventing them from accessing and sustaining accommodation;
- Make the best use of existing resources to ensure a flow through supported accommodation; and
- Tackle entrenched rough sleeping.

Gaol 4 'Reduce financial deprivation within our communities to minimise homelessness'

Within Goal four the strategic objectives are as follows:

- Proactively identify those at risk of homelessness as a result of welfare reforms or financial deprivation and encourage them to seek advice before reaching crisis point;
- Deliver sufficient levels of housing and debt advice to meet the anticipated rise in demand;
- Review the use of Discretionary Housing Payment and Discretionary Social Fund to make sure that they can be used flexibly to prevent homelessness; and
- Work with partners and the voluntary sector to provide more opportunities for members of the community to gain

employment or undertake positive activities.

These goals will assist us to improve the delivery of services and to rise to the challenges of increased demand for homelessness services in a time of economic constraint by also working more efficiently and cost effectively.

We know that work needs to be done to achieve consistency in preventing homelessness across all client groups, to create efficiencies in service delivery and to empower customers to take an active role in finding their own housing pathway. We need to strengthen existing partnership relationships and build new ones in order to tackle the root causes of homelessness and meet the diverse needs of those that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Credible housing options need to be delivered for single people, to enable us to offer all single homeless people suitable accommodation and implement a NSNO standard. The current economic situation and welfare reforms are likely to have a major impact on customers' ability to access and sustain accommodation and we must work proactively to identify those at greatest risk of homelessness.

A range of actions to achieve the goals and objectives are detailed in the strategy action plan associated with the full strategy document.

The strategy links to the Worcestershire Housing Strategy 2011 – 2016 as well as being linked to many other National, Regional and Worcestershire strategies and strategic plans.

It is clear the financial landscape as well as government policy and legislation changes including the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the Localism Act 2011 will have a significant impact on the nature and shape of services and housing options that will be needed to prevent and alleviate homelessness.

In recognition of this, the strategy action plan only contains direction for years one and two of the strategy (although there are proposals for further actions for consideration in 2015 for the remainder of the strategy). There will be a review of the action plan each year and a full review of the action plan in 2015.

The strategy provide a flexible structure for everyone involved in homelessness in Worcestershire to work together to make further improvements to the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in the county.

The Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership (WSHP) will be responsible for overseeing the strategic implementation of the strategy. The County Homelessness Implementation Group (CHIG) will be responsible for implementation of the action plan and regularly reporting on progress to the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Officers Group (WSHOG).

3. Development of the Strategy

This strategy was developed by a project team of local authority strategic housing officers from each of the six local authorities in Worcestershire and senior housing officers from those Registered Providers who are contracted on behalf of local authorities to carry out the housing advice function.

The six local authorities within the county are:

- Bromsgrove District Council
- Malvern Hills District Council
- Redditch Borough Council
- Wychavon District Council
- Worcester City Council
- Wyre Forest District Council

The project team co-ordinated the work required to produce this strategy. In particular the group has shaped the response through developing goals, objectives and actions to respond to issues that were identified from evidence gathering and consultation.

The strategy has been produced in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 (amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), the Code of Guidance (2007) and supplementary guidance (2009), Homelessness Strategies: A good practice handbook (2002), and more recently a DCLG specialist advisors circular entitled "36 things to think about - developing a homelessness strategy in a changing world."

An Equalities Impact Assessment is also underway to determine whether we need to take specific action to address homelessness to those people who share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

Homelessness Review

A comprehensive review of information was carried out by the project team during 2011 to analyse the nature and extent of homelessness across the County. It included local authority data, partner agency data, and research into the areas of need and resources available.

This Worcestershire Homelessness Review (2012) is available as a separate document and can be downloaded. A summary of the main conclusions of the review is included in this document.

Home Truths Event

To ensure stakeholders were central to developing the strategy, a consultation event was held on 12th July 2011. The event was well attended by key partners and commissioners. In addition, people who have lived through the experience of homelessness shared their stories and ideas to improve the delivery of services. Workshops were held to get direct feedback, which has been fed into the strategy and action plan.

Homeless Journey Mapping

The views and opinions of those with direct experience of homelessness and homelessness services are invaluable in understanding the current situation and quality of services available in Worcestershire.

The project team were pleased to secure additional funding from each of the six council housing departments to carry out in depth research into the journeys of homeless households.

In October 2011, the project team commissioned RRR Consultancy, a social research company, to undertake research on the 'journey' of homeless people, to determine the linkages between homelessness and a range of other needs and to deliver the research report on behalf of the project team.

This Worcestershire Homelessness Pathways Research (2012) provided the opportunity to place the customer at the centre of the strategy development. A copy of the report can be found within the homelessness review document.

Customer and Stakeholder Surveys

In addition to the face to face feedback received via the Home Truths Event and the homeless journey mapping, a survey was sent out to both customers and stakeholders.

Key messages and analysis of feedback from the Home Truths Event, homeless journey mapping and the surveys are contained within the homelessness review document.

Public Consultation

The local authorities across Worcestershire consulted on the proposed Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy, setting out the strategic goals for the delivery of homeless services and support. The draft strategy was subject to public consultation from mid-April to early July 2012.

This final strategy document incorporates the amendments made reflecting the respondents' feedback.

4. Strategic Framework

The National Framework

There are a number of changes as a result of the Coalition Government's Comprehensive Spending Review 2010 and revised national government legislation and policy which impact upon the homelessness arena including through: a new national housing strategy, *Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England*; the Localism Act 2011; Welfare Reform Act 2012; Energy Act 2011; Health and Social Care Act 2012; and reforms for social housing regulation.

Comprehensive Spending Review 2010

The Comprehensive Spending Review 2010 set out spending budgets for each government department up to 2014/15. The Spending Review 2010 had a number of implications on government departmental budgets and expenditure on welfare and tax credits.

Some key changes relevant to homelessness are:

- A national 7.1% decrease in annual council funding, leading to a cumulative 28.4% cut by 2014/15;
- End to ring-fencing of all Local Authority grants (few exceptions) including Supporting People funding no longer being ring-fenced;
- Supporting People funding cuts, locally this equates to 20%;

- Homelessness Prevention Grant funding remains stable at approximately £400 million between 2011 to 2015;
- A new, smaller Places of Change scheme with £37.5 million additional investment from April 2012;
- Increasing the age threshold for the Shared Room Rate in Housing Benefit from 25 to 35 years old;
- Potential increase in social housing rents to 80% of market rents for new tenancies, alongside substantial 74% cut in affordable housing budget; and
- £19 million fund 2012/13 to enable local authorities to help homeowners at risk of repossession.

In September 2012, the Housing Minister announced the government's intention to continue to fund local authority Preventing Homeless Grant until 2015. However, from April 2013, this grant funding will be rolled into the Business Rate Retention Scheme (BRRS) and there is concern that the grant will no longer be a separate, identifiable funding stream. It will be vital for local authorities to be proactive about ensuring that the grant funding is being identified for the purposes of supporting the prevention of homelessness locally.

In light of the unprecedented cuts to public spending, announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review, local authorities are experiencing considerable pressure on their finances.

Some local authorities within the Worcestershire area need to make difficult decisions regarding where spending should be cut and that has resulted in a growing need to engage with local people by giving them a say in decisions that affect them and the services they use.

Localism and the Big Society

The Coalition Programme for Government ('The Coalition: Our programme for government') 2010 set out the Coalition Government's commitment to the devolution of power from central government to those at a more local level. Integral to their approach is their wish to reduce social expenditure and develop local services that better reflect the needs of local people.

To do that the Government believe that local people need to be more actively involved in the communities where they live and work and that this will best enable them to address the perceived culture of welfare dependency in the United Kingdom and strengthen civil society by improving community relations.

The proposals for how change can be driven are detailed in the Localism Act 2011 and Welfare Reform Act 2012.

The Localism Act 2011 includes the introduction of directly elected Mayors and Police Commissioners, greater devolved financial powers to local government, reforms to homelessness legislation, social housing regulations, council housing finance and to the social housing system.

In particular the Localism Act will soon allow local authorities to discharge their

homelessness duty by providing good quality private rented sector homes via an Assured Shorthold Tenancy of a minimum twelvemonth term; it brings changes to social housing tenure by introducing Affordable Rent, a new fixed-term 'Flexible' tenancy and the requirement for local authorities to develop a Tenancy Strategy. In addition it gives local authorities greater scope to set local priorities for allocating social housing in their areas.

The Localism Act paved the way for a national home swap scheme, *HomeSwap Direct*, aiming to give social housing tenants access to a much wider selection of properties and boosting their prospects of moving. *HomeSwap Direct* brings together four existing internet-based providers of mutual exchange services (HomeSwapper, House Exchange, Abritas and LHS (Locata)) to offer tenants more choice over where they live. Registered Providers are now required to subscribe to an internet-based mutual exchange service.

Reform of social housing regulation will provide social tenants with tools to hold their landlords to account. There is an expectation that landlords will support tenant scrutiny panels – or similar bodies – in order to give tenants the opportunity to carefully examine the services being offered.

There is a new focus on local and tenant led dispute resolution as part of the wider changes to social housing regulation. Currently, there are two separate ombudsmen (the Local Government Ombudsman and the independent Housing Ombudsman) handling social tenants' complaints. Provisions introduced through the Localism Act, which

will when commenced from 1st April 2013 the Housing Ombudsman's remit will expand to include complaints from tenants of local housing authorities. This will mean that complaints by all social tenants and leaseholders against their landlord will be handled by a single watchdog (the Housing Ombudsman Service).

New regulation arrangements are in place for Registered Providers of Social Housing. From 1st April 2012, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) took over responsibility for the regulations of social housing providers in England and as the Regulator are responsible for setting out the regulatory framework within which they must operate.

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 includes the introduction of Universal Credit to replace a range of existing means-tested benefits and tax credits for people of working age; the introduction of Personal Independence Payments (PIPs) to replace Disability Living Allowance; restrictions on housing benefit entitlement for social housing tenants in under-occupied accommodation and overall benefit caps on the amount that households can claim.

The Government's 'Big Society Agenda' is being co-ordinated through the Cabinet Office which works across all Government departments to deliver policies which aim to engage more citizens in developing their communities and offers support to community groups wishing to assume greater control in public service delivery.

The involvement of the third sector has been further encouraged by the creation of the Big Society Bank which offers charities, social

enterprises and neighbourhood groups additional funding.

Health and Social Care

The health and social care system in England is undergoing significant reform.

The Health and Social Care Bill, the largest piece of health legislation since the creation of the NHS, was introduced following the publication the white paper, *Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS* in July 2010. This paper set out the Government's long-term vision for the future of the NHS. The Health and Social Care Act received Royal Assent in March 2012.

The Act represents a major restructuring, not just of healthcare services, but also of local authorities' responsibilities in relation to health improvement and the co-ordination of health and social care. It devolves power and responsibility for the commissioning of NHS services, creates new duties for local authorities to protect and improve public health and sets up new accountability and scrutiny arrangements.

Responsibility for public health will transfer from the NHS to local government in April 2013 and this is accompanied by new powers for local authorities both to commission and to provide public health services.

Public health and health improvement will therefore be one of the major functions of local government. This provides an opportunity to integrate public health with mainstream local government plans and services for example housing and address the wider social determinants of health in a more

holistic way through the full range of local government functions and partnerships.

Impact for Worcestershire

The key policy and resource changes announced by the Government which will have a direct impact upon homelessness in Worcestershire and the delivery of the strategy are:

Resources

- Government funding to local authorities will go down by 28%.
- Councils no longer have to monitor Local Area Agreement targets.
- Homelessness Grant was confirmed to local authorities for 2011-12 and 2012-13 with the majority of Worcestershire local authorities receiving a substantial increase. However it is no longer ring-fenced.
- Nationally £6 billion has been allocated to funding the Supporting People programme over four years (but this is not ring-fenced and the allocation is made to Worcestershire County Council).
- Provision for Disabled Facilities Grants will rise with inflation but local authorities will be given more discretion for their allocation.
- The Regional Growth Fund will be extended to three years and increased to £1.4 billion.

- The HCA will provide capital investment to support building up to 150,000 new affordable homes over four years.
- Introduction of the New Homes Bonus will mean communities directly benefit from new housing as the equivalent of the Council Tax from each new home will be paid to the local authority for each of the following six years.
- Investment via the Decent Homes programme will continue with £2.1 billion of capital funding ear-marked from the 2010 spending review to be spent over four years.
- The Government has already committed to funding the Mortgage Rescue Scheme to help assist vulnerable home-owners at risk of repossession until 2013 and recently a further £19 million has been committed which council's will be able to use to support homelessness prevention.
- Redditch Borough Council is preparing to take on £118 million of debt (previously held by the Treasury) to fund the purchase of their housing stock.

Localism

- Citizens and volunteers will be supported to play a bigger role in shaping and providing services within communities.

- Local Enterprise Partnerships have been set up to help drive growth and develop the local economy in partnership with local business and communities.
- The creation of a 'Big Society Bank' will provide charities, neighbourhood groups and social enterprises with sustainable funding and allow them to play a greater role in delivering public services and tackling deep-rooted social problems.
- Reform of the planning system will put local authorities and local people in charge of decisions on new house-building in their local areas, aimed at increasing housing supply.

Homelessness

- A new methodology for carrying out a count of people sleeping rough and providing robust estimates was introduced in October 2010 to assist in providing a more accurate picture of the number of people in need.
- The Government has given local authorities more scope to discharge their statutory homeless duty through placing households into private sector accommodation.

Social Housing

- The Government wants to make social housing more responsive, flexible and fair so that a greater number of people are able to access social housing in a

way that reflects their needs and changing circumstances.

- Under the Localism Act 2011 there is a requirement for local authorities to develop Tenancy Strategies providing Registered Providers with guidance on the types and lengths of tenancies they should grant.
- Social housing will be reformed to provide a more tailored response to the needs of local areas.
- Registered Providers will introduce a new form of affordable housing called 'Affordable Rent' for social housing tenants.
- Government reform of the National Register of Social Housing will reduce reporting requirements on Registered Providers.

Welfare Reform and Housing Benefit

- £2 billion will be allocated over the next four years to fund the implementation of a Universal Credit aimed at simplifying the benefit system.
- Household benefit payments for families will be capped at around £500 per week from 2013.
- The age threshold for the Shared Room Rate in Housing Benefit has increased from 25 to 35 year olds.
- A one-year time limit will be introduced for contributory

Employment and Support Allowance for those in the Work Related Activity Group.

- The Warm Front Programme is being scaled down over the next two years with a budget of £110 million in 2011-12 and £100m in 2012-13.
- Households living in under-occupied social housing and of working age will receive at least a 14% reduction in their Housing Benefit entitlement.

Fuel Poverty

- From 2013 the Green Deal will replace Warm Front and a new obligation will be imposed on energy providers – this will help households improve their energy efficiency with no up-front costs. Phasing out Warm Front is estimated to save £345 million by 2013-14.
- The Government has also announced an independent review of the fuel poverty target and definition before the end of the year.

Public Health

- A Worcestershire Health and Well-being Board is being established by Worcestershire County Council and the three local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) across Worcestershire (Redditch and Bromsgrove CCG, Wyre Forest CCG and the South Worcestershire CCG) under the Health and Social Care 2012 and will operate in 'shadow' form in 2012/13 until

formally assuming its new statutory responsibility in April 2013.

- A joint Worcestershire Health and Well-being Strategy is being developed to shape the agenda and commissioning of health services across the County from now until 2015.

The cuts to public sector finances and legislative reforms are far reaching and will have a significant impact on both the housing market overall and homelessness within Worcestershire.

In particular benefit reforms such as the reduced Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate for single applicants aged between 25 and 35 years old, proposals to include Housing Benefit in the new Universal Credit, the introduction of an overall benefit cap and cuts in Housing Benefits for under-occupied households in social housing are likely to put many households under increased financial pressure.

These proposals have been met with criticism from many who believe that reforms on this scale, and so quickly, will likely mean an increase in homelessness.

Reduced public sector investment is also likely to result in reduced delivery of new affordable housing in Worcestershire and reduced public revenue spending may impact upon the number of public sector staff available to support those at risk of homelessness. It remains to be seen whether the increased resources within the voluntary sector that are generated through the 'Big Society Agenda' will meet the increased demand for services

by those at risk of homelessness. The strategy has been developed at a time of unprecedented change and uncertainty within the housing market. The action plan attached will require regular review as the true impacts of these reforms unfold.

The national and local strategic framework can be illustrated further by the table on the next page.

Links to National and Regional Policy Framework

Housing Act 1996.
 Homelessness Act 2002.
 Housing Act 2004.
 Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.
 Localism Act 2011.
 Welfare Reform Act 2012.
 Health and Social Care Act 2012
 Energy Act 2011
 West Midlands Regional Homelessness Strategy Refresh 2008 - 2013.
 DCLG Best Value Statutory Guidance (2011)
 The Government’s Alcohol Strategy (2012)
 HM Government Drug Strategy 2010 Reducing demand, restricting supply, building recovery: supporting people to live a drug-free life.
 Breaking the cycle: Reducing re-offending green paper (2010).
 The Coalition: Our Programme for Government (2010)
 Council Housing: A Real Future (2010).
 Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England (2011)
 Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night Out nationwide (2011)
 Making Every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness (2012)
 National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
 Planning Policy Statement 3: Planning for Housing

Links to other Worcestershire Strategies

Worcestershire Housing Strategy 2011 - 2016.
 Worcestershire Sustainable Community Strategy 2011 - 2021.
 Worcestershire Local Investment Plan 2011.
 Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy 2010 - 2013 and Strategic Reviews:

- Domestic Abuse 2007;
- Older People 2009;
- Young People 2009;
- Learning Disability 2011;
- Mental health 2011;
- Single Homeless Strategic Review 2011; and
- Physical and sensory impairment 2012.

Worcestershire Children and Young Person’s Plan 2011 - 2014.
 Countywide Telecare Strategy 2007 - 2011.
 Ageing well in Worcestershire 2012-2017: A strategy for meeting the health, care and support needs of people aged 50 years plus. Joint Commissioning Strategy for Adult Mental Health in Worcestershire 2008 - 2013
 Learning Disability Strategy 2008 - 2010.
 Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse Strategy 2011 - 2014.
 Worcestershire Financial Inclusion Strategy 2011 - 2014
 Substance Misuse Strategy 2008 - 2011.
 Worcestershire County Council Corporate Plan 2011 - 2016.
 Community Safety Partnership Plans 2008 - 2011.
 Worcestershire Health and Well-being Board: Joint Health and Well-being Strategy 2013-2016.

5.

5. Homelessness review conclusions and new strategic goals

During 2011 the project team responsible for the development of the strategy carried out a homelessness review into the nature and extent of homelessness in Worcestershire. This is a statutory requirement within the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Code of Guidance published by DCLG.

The information coming out of the Worcestershire Homelessness Review led the project team to develop four new goals to achieve the vision of the strategy.

The following sections outline each of the goals and contain the homelessness review conclusions that led to the development of these goals and strategic objectives.

Firstly, it is important to highlight the **key positive findings of the review:**

- Worcestershire has a good track record in preventing homelessness;
- The Redditch Trailblazer has led to a huge decrease in statutory homelessness in Redditch;
- The number of households in temporary accommodation has decreased dramatically since 2007, and customers experience a relatively short length of time in temporary accommodation today;

- There is good customer satisfaction with housing advice services across the county;
- Partners say there is good access to housing options services in Worcestershire; and
- The Homelessness Pathways Research participants were generally positive about the support they received from agencies across the county.

It is important to bear in mind when considering these positive findings that homelessness is on the increase locally and nationally. Therefore, it is essential that we improve on our work in these areas to rise to the challenge of increased demand for our services.

The four goals of the strategy are to:

- 1. Provide a pathway to a housing solution for everyone that accesses our services;**
- 2. Create strong partnerships to tackle homelessness;**
- 3. Take effective action to prevent anyone new to the streets, having to sleep out for more than one night; and**

4. Reduce financial deprivation within our communities to minimise homelessness.

For each goal a number of strategic objectives have been identified which will contribute towards the overall aim **'to ensure that everyone has access to a place they can call home, where they can close their door and feel safe'**.

Actions to achieve the goals and strategic objectives are outlined within the strategy action plan contained in appendix 1.

It became apparent throughout the development of this strategy that there are many changes on the horizon including changes to government policy and legislation, as well as the shifting financial landscape and the continuing threat of recession.

In light of this, the strategy aims to be a very flexible document, and although the vision and overarching goals will remain the same, it is likely that the strategic objectives and action plan will need to change over the life-time of the strategy.

The strategy action plan only contains direction for years one and two of the strategy. Further actions for consideration in 2014 are proposed within this document in Appendix 2. In 2014 the action plan will be reviewed and will take into account the relevance of these and other actions for the remaining three year period of the strategy.

Goal 1 - Provide a pathway to a housing solution for everyone that accesses our services

The first goal we have set to achieve our strategic vision centres around building on our successes in preventing homelessness and creating efficiencies. We want to achieve consistency in preventing homelessness across **all** client groups and empower our customers to take an active part in finding their own housing pathway. This is particularly important given the high demand for our services evidenced from the recent increase in homeless decisions and acceptances both locally and nationally.

In order to do this we need to ensure that:

- there are a range of credible, and “barrier free” housing pathways for people to access;
- there is wide knowledge of these services amongst agencies and services, especially front line housing teams;
- the homelessness prevention culture is embraced by front line staff, regardless of whether someone is priority or non-priority homeless; and
- on-line housing advice and assistance is of high quality and widely promoted.

By empowering customers needing only low level advice and assistance to prevent their homelessness, we will ensure that we free up

time to make sure that vulnerable people receive the higher level of advice and support that they need.

We know that there are a range of vulnerable customer groups who are identified as requiring homeless services and related support in Worcestershire including people with mental health issues and substance misuse and that we need to ensure that our services are accessible to all including those from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups and Gypsy and Traveller communities.

This strategy is closely linked with the Worcestershire Housing Strategy (2011-2016) which highlights the increased needs of many vulnerable people and identifies specific actions to address the needs of BME households and Gypsies and Travellers. It is also underpinned by a specific goal to embrace the diversity that exists within Worcestershire and ensure that we plan to meet the diverse needs of our communities.

The main conclusions from the homelessness review that led to the forming of this goal are:

1. Although there are some similarities in the way in which housing advice teams across the county operate, there are also some real differences. This makes it difficult to compare the efficiency of services.
2. We need to increase our knowledge of how each of the councils work, and what data each local authority collects

in order to inform working practices, policy and homelessness grant spend. Redditch works in a very different way to the rest of the county and has dramatically reduced their homeless decisions and acceptances over recent years. There are potential lessons to be learnt from this way of working.

3. We do not know enough about the homeless prevention pathways for all the different client groups that we work with across the county. Due to reduced budgets we need to prioritise resources which will mean that there will be changes to how services are delivered and potentially some service reductions or closures. Therefore, we need to remodel existing provision.
4. The Localism Act offers the opportunity for a fundamental change to allocations policies which need to be considered across the county.
5. Customer and stakeholder feedback is not collected and analysed on a regular basis consistently across the County.
6. The Homelessness Pathways Research identified that information that would assist customers in preventing their own homelessness is not presented in a consistent way and easily accessible.
7. The Homeless Pathways Research also identified a need for officers to be

- more empathetic and to communicate more effectively.
8. A large proportion of customers are still approaching housing advice services as 'homeless on the day'. This suggests that customers still do not know how we can prevent their homelessness and why we need as much time as possible. We need to consider a communication strategy to combat this.
 9. Increasing numbers of customers are experiencing barriers to accessing accommodation due to poor tenancy histories, not just financial barriers such as lack of a rent deposit.
 10. Local authority housing advice teams are reporting that they are dealing with a growing number of vulnerable customers. This could be a result of cuts to other support services (both statutory and non statutory). Worcestershire Supporting People has not cut capacity of services but some charities have lost grants and cuts to other funding they receive. We need to consider ways of demonstrating the impact of this to partner agencies and working together to tackle the needs of those to whom we have joint responsibility.
 11. The Homelessness Pathways Research identified that many of our customers have mental and physical health problems but do not meet the threshold of social care services.
 12. Analysis of the Home Choice Plus housing register and Redditch Home Choice shows that demand for social housing is high in all districts but most acute in Worcester City, Wychavon and Wyre Forest. Therefore, there is a need to improve customers understanding of the demands on social housing and also the Choice Based Lettings system as a whole in order to get a realistic picture. We need to provide statistics on the numbers of properties becoming available for re-let on an annual basis, and broken down by district so people's expectations are reasonable.
 13. There has been a downward trend in lettings to statutory homeless households. This could be attributed to prevention methods but does warrant further investigation.
 14. Analysis of Registered Provider data shows that a high proportion of tenants vacating social housing tenancies do so to go into the private rented sector. The Homeless Pathways Research suggests that social housing makes customers feel more secure about their future than private rented housing. This demonstrates the need for further investigation into this area through a survey of tenants.
 15. There are more social housing evictions in Wyre Forest and Worcester City. We need to expand on existing proactive evictions policies and procedures on a county wide basis across supported and general needs accommodation.
 16. Addressing the root causes of homelessness continues to be a challenge in times of reduced budgets and staffing levels. The benefits of more proactive work need to be widely promoted.
 17. The Homeless Pathways Research highlighted the need for there to be more of a focus on the individual (life events and support needs) to make an accurate assessment of their needs, provide a holistic approach to their situation, and to understand how we can effectively prevent their homelessness.
 18. Access to training, education or employment is essential for customers once their primary housing need is addressed. We need to improve links with Job Centre Plus and other employment providers. Few of the clients interviewed as part of the Homeless Pathways Research were employed and those that were received relatively low incomes. Aspirational outcomes are the key to tenancy sustainment and preventing the cycle of future homelessness.

We will address these findings through the following strategic objectives:

- **Ensure housing options services provide Value for Money in order to attract and retain investment to maintain and improve service levels;**
- **Increase the number of households prevented from becoming homeless by making housing options services as accessible and effective as possible;**
- **Ensure there is a pathway to suitable housing for everyone which is developed and supported by partners;**
- **Maximise the supply and use of new and existing accommodation; and**
- **Develop a range of holistic initiatives to understand and tackle the causes of homelessness.**

Goal 2 - Create strong partnerships to tackle homelessness

If we are to truly tackle the root causes of homelessness, it is vital to create strong and effective partnerships, especially at a time of reduced financial resources.

This second goal aims to strengthen existing partnerships, forge new ones and maximise cooperation in order to meet the diverse needs of homeless people.

The strategy will provide clarity about what action is needed from communities and partner agencies to effectively tackle homelessness in Worcestershire.

The main conclusions from the review that led to the forming of this goal are:

1. Many of our customers experience mental health problems and indeed this is often an underlying cause of their homelessness. The Homelessness Pathways Research identified that many of the social, economic or health problems faced by participants stemmed from events experienced in early life. In addition debt and money issues were a source of emotional problems and family conflict.
2. It is not clear if front line staff in housing advice teams are fully aware of how to recognise the signs of mental ill health and what services to signpost people to for help.

3. There appears to be increasing demand for housing from customers with autistic spectrum disorder, personality disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
4. Substance misuse is becoming an increasing problem within Worcestershire which has a significant impact on the wider community; there is a lack of suitable accommodation and support at a district level and a lack of joined up working between organisations to tackle the issues.
5. There are some examples of good joint working across the county for some client groups such as the 16/17 year old protocol, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences. However, further protocols and liaison meetings are needed particularly relating to multiple needs, mental health, substance misuse, housing benefit and with Registered Providers.
6. Many vulnerable adults are presenting with complex needs and dual diagnosis. There is no consistent way of meeting their needs across the county as there is with the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for children and young people. We need to consider implementing an Adult CAF style framework in line with the Every Adult Matters framework being piloted.
7. From discussions with participants through the Homeless Pathways Research, it became evident that a range of factors led or contributed to homelessness including: domestic abuse, family conflict and breakdown, mental health and substance misuse.
8. Supporting People Strategic Reviews including single homelessness, young people, mental health, learning disabilities, physical disabilities and, domestic abuse will have a major impact on how we work together to prevent homelessness.
9. More than one third of the Homelessness Pathways Research participants were victims of domestic abuse.
10. A major cause of homelessness continues to be the loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancies. If we are to deliver our vision for Worcestershire, enhancing security and quality of accommodation in the private rented sector will be key.
11. Customers are more receptive to accessing private rented accommodation than originally thought but often a lack of life skills, poor mental health and benefits problems results in it being lost. The Homeless Pathways Research highlighted that many of the participants had changed their accommodation frequently before being housed and all emphasised the

importance of having security in their new home. Relationships with the local areas and proximity to support networks played a significant role in determining feelings of security.

12. There are many barriers to accessing private rented accommodation for example high costs, poor credit and tenancy histories, fear of bad landlords and property disrepair.
13. Figures suggest that landlord repossession is on the increase. There has also been an increase in landlords selling their buy to let properties due to the downturn in the economy.
14. Private rented accommodation is not accessible in some parts of the county (where it has become unaffordable) partly due to low LHA rates.
15. Single people who are affected by the under 35 year olds LHA rate particularly struggle to fund self-contained private rented accommodation or find suitable shared accommodation.
16. DCLG recommend that 40% of officer time should be spent sourcing accommodation and fewer resources should be directed at casework.
17. Social lettings agencies and rent deposit bond schemes have proved to be very successful in locating and maintaining private rented sector

tenancies but this has become more difficult since the turbulent economic climate.

18. We need to enhance our strategic work through joint strategic reviews and commissioning to maximise efficiencies. Multi-agency project teams will be key to delivering our vision in light of the challenges of Localism and Welfare Reforms.

We will address these findings through the following strategic objectives:

- **Highlight the gaps in current service provision and their link to homelessness and encourage partners to tackle them through improved joint working and more effective commissioning of services;**
- **Promote cross agency working through relevant protocols and liaison meetings with the aim of strengthening relationships between organisations and within communities; and**
- **Increase joint working with Private Sector Landlords to create new housing opportunities and tackle homelessness caused by the end of Assured Shorthold Tenancies.**

Goal 3 - Take effective action to prevent anyone new to the streets needing to sleep out for more than one night.

The third strategic goal aims to take effective action and adopt a NSNO approach in Worcestershire, to ensure that no one new to the streets has to sleep out on the streets for more than one night and that we stop the flow of people onto the streets.

Homelessness amongst single people appears to be on the increase nationally and in some areas of the county. The impact of Housing Benefit and welfare reform is also likely to hit this client group the hardest. We need to work on delivering credible housing options for single people regardless of whether they are deemed to have a statutory homeless priority need or not.

If we are able to offer all single homeless people suitable accommodation when they need it, we should see a reduction in the number of people with deteriorating health caused as a consequence of sleeping rough.

From this we are likely to see an overall reduction in the number of individuals that have a 'statutory priority need' due to poor health and also see a reduction in the cost to the NHS in relation to treatment.

The main conclusions from the review that led to the forming of this goal are:

1. There has been an increase in rough sleeping with approximately 40 cases across the County. The largest

proportions of these are situated in Worcester City and Wychavon. We need to collect more in depth data especially on the district/area/country of origin.

2. Rough sleeping is on the increase across the county, despite provision for this client group having increased throughout the life of the previous homeless strategy. One reason for this increase is the increasing number of Eastern Europeans sleeping rough, especially in Wychavon. In addition to the information coming out of the Worcestershire Supporting People Strategic Review of Single Homeless, we need to consider carrying out a Prevention Opportunities Mapping and Planning Toolkit (PrOMPT) (developed by Homeless Link) to identify if there are gaps in provision or if the provision is sufficient but needs remodelling.
3. We need to increase the strategic response to this across the county and implement a NSNO Standard. We need all partners to understand and sign up to a NSNO protocol.
4. The Move On Plan Protocol (MOPP) is still outstanding from the previous homelessness strategy. Bed blocking in hostel and supported accommodation continues to be an issue and needs to be addressed. The MOPP aims to help local authorities, housing providers and support providers to address the local barriers

to move on from supported accommodation. For those that are ready to move on to semi-independent or independent living, we should be enabling a successful transition to appropriate accommodation, including private rented accommodation, in a sustainable and fulfilling way.

5. Information sharing and access to accommodation and support for single homeless people has been improved through the implementation of Worcestershire Link Up, a virtual gateway that enables single homeless people to quickly and effectively access supported accommodation, and housing support services across Worcestershire. However, this does need to be built upon as there was a general feeling throughout the research carried out that agencies are still working in isolation.
6. Partners feel that there is too much of a concentration of services for single homeless people in Worcester City. We need to ensure there is adequate provision across the county and robust reconnection policies are implemented. We also need to consider decentralisation of services from Worcester City to smaller scale satellite services across the county.
7. The NSNO standard does not address the needs of entrenched rough sleepers across the county. The county should research good practice to

address this client group, this could include considering the use of personalisation budgets.

8. National research indicates an increase in rough sleepers with mental health complaints. The county will be required to work closely with other partner agencies such as the Mental Health Trust and the Clinical Commissioning Groups to address why more individuals with mental health problems are becoming homeless and improve access to mental health services.
9. The Supporting People Strategic Review of Single Homeless found that single homeless females have specific needs and can find unisex services intimidating; this can disadvantage them from using a unisex service. This was not something that was highlighted during the homelessness review carried out by the project team but does warrant further investigation.

We will address these findings through the following strategic objectives:

- **Develop a No Second Night Out standard for Worcestershire;**
- **Understand why people enter and remain in a street lifestyle and tackle the barriers preventing them from accessing and sustaining accommodation;**

- **Make the best use of existing resources to ensure a flow through supported accommodation; and**
- **Tackle entrenched rough sleeping.**

Goal 4 - Reduce financial deprivation within our communities to minimise homelessness

The final strategic goal of this strategy, goal four, aims to reduce the financial deprivation within our communities to minimise homelessness.

In 2008 the United Kingdom banking system faced near collapse, forcing the government to take action and use public money to bail them out, which led to increased levels of national debt.

Prior to the crisis, house prices in the United Kingdom had risen to 'unsustainable' levels, caused by lenders granting loans to impaired mortgage applications, which increased demand for housing as investment and inflated house prices.

As people realised the risks associated with the assets, further investment stopped, and the lack of money flowing into the market resulted in falling prices and the banks withdrawing 'credit' due to fear of default.

In an attempt to strengthen their financial position, banks retained cash, which further restricted the 'credit' available.

As a result, an increasing number of people can now not afford to buy their own home due to lack of available credit and the requirement for large deposits to minimise risks to lenders.

This has led to rising demand for affordable housing and increased numbers of people on housing register.

The Coalition Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (2010) announced reductions to public spending including the capital available for development of social housing.

Rising demand for affordable housing, coupled with reduced public sector investment presents a significant challenge for Worcestershire if we are to meet our vision.

The Welfare Reform Act (2012) has recently received Royal Assent and aims to make the benefits and tax credit systems fairer and simpler by:

- providing incentives to get more people into work by ensuring work always pays;
- protecting vulnerable people in our communities; and
- offering fairness to both those claiming benefits and the taxpayer.

Whilst the implications of these reforms are not yet fully understood, it is anticipated that the cuts to welfare benefits are likely to be hard hitting, particularly for those already on low incomes, and could result in more demand for housing advice due to higher levels of homelessness.

The main conclusions from the review that led to the forming of this goal are:

1. Affordability of suitable housing is a major concern for our customers for a variety of reasons such as debt, benefit changes, lack of available credit and the increased costs of utilities. All thirty participants interviewed for the Homelessness Pathways Research identified themselves as experiencing financial difficulties.
2. Analysis of the economic status of the households in social housing across the county demonstrates that a higher proportion of social housing tenants in Malvern, Redditch and Wychavon are working full time, whilst in Bromsgrove and Worcester, a higher proportion of tenants are unemployed or job seeking. In Wyre Forest larger numbers are not seeking work. The Homelessness Pathways Research identified that families that include working members were equally likely to face financial difficulties as those without.
3. Wyre Forest has the highest proportion of social housing tenants at the lowest income level of £40-£59 per week.
4. Single people living in social housing tenancies in Redditch, Wychavon and Wyre Forest have seen a drop in their income over time (this ties in with the areas which have been most hit by redundancies). Lone parents across the county have the second lowest

average income (only greater than single people).

5. We need to do more to target those who have not traditionally used our services but who are affected by the economic downturn and cuts to services. In doing so we hope to reduce the number of applicants that only approach on the day that they become homeless. In particular households at risk of mortgage repossession should be targeted.
6. Benefit reforms will have a major impact on customer ability to access and sustain accommodation. In particular under 35 year olds, and those of working age that are under-occupied and living in social housing, are likely to be severely effected. The planning introduction of Universal Credit has also brought controversy. Simplification of the current benefits system is welcomed by many, but concerns have also been raised regarding the loss of direct Housing Benefit payments to Registered Providers; households known to have complex needs such as alcohol or drugs dependencies could fail to pay their landlords resulting in increased homelessness.
7. Local authorities will need to review their Housing Allocations Policies to ensure that new social housing tenants are not entering under-occupied properties that will later become

unaffordable (due to Housing Benefit changes). Consideration should be given to whether extra assistance towards removal costs could be offered to under-occupied households facing Housing Benefit reductions that need to move to smaller accommodation before they actually become at risk of homelessness.

8. Joint working between housing advice and housing benefit departments will be imperative to make sure that everyone gets the right advice when they need it. Protocols should be developed to ensure that Discretionary Housing Payments are used proactively to bridge gaps in affordability while cheaper housing arrangements can be found. Consideration should also be given to all districts allowing the use of Discretionary Housing Payments to fund Rent Deposits or Rent in Advance for homeless applicants seeking accommodation.
9. Publicity to target those at risk of homelessness due to the welfare reforms and ensure that they ask for assistance early will be needed. Support and advice should also be offered to Private Sector Landlords and tenants via open days.
10. Debt appears to be on the increase across the county according to figures from the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). Customers are increasingly

worried about benefit reform, increased costs of living and utilities. Access to good quality debt and benefits advice will become increasingly important as the implications of welfare reforms unfold. The Homelessness Pathways Research identified that debt and money issues were a source of emotional problems and family conflict which may lead to increased homelessness due to Domestic Violence or Parental Exclusion.

11. Rising unemployment (especially in young people), large numbers of redundancies, low pay for those employed, and benefit reforms are likely to increase the levels of homelessness based on financial pressures.
12. The Government's Spending Review recently confirmed a further £200m funding for the Mortgage Rescue Scheme. It aims to enable local authorities to provide on-going support to households facing repossession during the economic down turn. Unfortunately in some areas of the county (such as Wychavon) property prices are very high meaning that most fall outside the threshold of the scheme.

We will address these findings through the following strategic objectives:

- **Proactively identify those at risk of homelessness as a result of welfare reform or financial deprivation and encourage them to seek advice before reaching crisis point;**
- **Deliver sufficient levels of housing and debt advice to meet the anticipated rise in demand;**
- **Review the use of Discretionary Housing Payment and Discretionary Social Fund to make sure that they can be used flexibly to prevent homelessness; and**
- **Work with partners and the voluntary sector to provide more opportunities for members of the community to gain employment or undertake positive activities.**

6. Governance of the Strategy

The Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership (WSHP) will be responsible for overseeing the strategic implementation of the strategy. This partnership includes the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Officers Group (WSHOG) which comprises of the Strategic Housing Managers from each of the six councils in Worcestershire) and has wider membership from senior officers within Health, Supporting People, Probation, Registered Providers, Social Care and other key partners.

The County Homelessness Implementation Group (CHIG) will be responsible for implementing operational actions detailed within the strategy action plan. This group consists of a core team of local authority strategic housing officers from the six councils in Worcestershire and officers from Registered Providers who are contracted on behalf of local authorities to carry out the housing advice function. This group will be expanded to include wider membership from

other agencies with a responsibility for tackling homelessness.

It is also likely that specific task and finish groups will be set up to carry out specialised or intensive tasks.

It is important to monitor progress against our goals to ensure delivery of the actions and that the action plan continues to be relevant.

Performance measures to monitor the success of the strategy are:

- The number of cases where positive action is successful in preventing homelessness;
- The number of cases access the private rented sector;
- Length of stay in temporary accommodation;

- Reduce the number of households that leave bed and breakfast accommodation within six weeks; and
- The number of rough sleepers.

Progress reports on the implementation of the strategy action plan by CHIG will be presented to the WSHOG on a regular basis by the County Homelessness Strategy Co-ordinator (CHSC). WSHOG will report on progress to the WSHP and the Worcestershire Chief Executives Panel.

At a local level, the local authorities will report to their individual council housing forums.

Regular communication on the implementation of the strategy will be via the CHIG reports, each individual council's homeless forums and websites.

7. Appendices

Table 1: Summary of the Acronyms used in the strategy action plan

Key	
B&B	Bed and Breakfast
CHIG	County Homeless Implementation Group
CHSC	County Homeless Strategy Co-ordinator
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government
DAAT	Drug and Alcohol Action Team
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payments
DWP	Department of Work and Pensions
WFIP	Worcestershire Family Intervention Project
HB	Housing Benefit
HCA	Homes and Communities Agency
HCP	Home Choice Plus
HQN	Housing Quality Network
LA	Local Authority
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnerships
LHA	Local Housing Allowance
NAC	Night Assessment Centre
NSNO	No Second Night Out
RP	Registered Provider of Social Housing
SAR	Shared Accommodation Rate
SASH	Services Addressing Single Homelessness
SP	Supporting People
TA	Temporary Accommodation
UC	Universal Credit
WFIP	Worcestershire Family Intervention Project
WHABAC	Worcester Housing And Benefit Advice Centre
WSHOG	Worcestershire Strategic Housing Officers Group
WHSP	Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership

Appendix 1: Strategy Action Plan (Years 1 and 2)

Goal 1 – Provide a pathway to a housing solution for everyone that accesses our services

Strategic links– Worcestershire Housing Strategy, Worcestershire Strategic Market Assessment, Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy, Strategic Housing Service Plans, Homelessness Code of Guidance, Choice Based Letting schemes and Hosing Allocations Policies, Local Authority Tenancy Strategies, Worcestershire Local Investment Plan

Ref.	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/local links
1.	Ensure housing options services provide Value For Money in order to attract and retain investment to maintain and improve service levels.	<p>Implement the HQN toolkit to benchmark cost effectiveness of services and obtain better understanding of cost, customer satisfaction and performance or</p> <p>Undertake a systems thinking review of the Housing Advice Service using the Vanguard Method and use the findings to deliver an improved service to customers.</p>	Existing staff resources	<p>Worcester City</p> <p>Redditch BC</p>	Year 2	Homelessness Grant funding
2	Increase the number of households prevented from becoming homeless by making housing options services as accessible and effective as possible.	Implement the CLG DIY diagnostic tool to ensure we are getting the basics right and identify gaps in services.	Existing staff resources	All LAs	Years 1	DCLG good practice
		Align practices across the County taking account of CLG best practice in service design.	Existing staff resources	All LAs	Years 2	DCLG good practice
		Ensure that all homeless services are accessible to all equality and diversity groups (this may mean offering alternative ways of delivering services especially temporary accommodation and online services to meet the needs of particular groups including BME and Gypsy and Travellers).	Existing staff resources	All Las	Years 2	
		Consider implementation of the Enhanced Housing Options Model on a countywide basis to free up resources to allow more time to be spent with vulnerable clients that need additional help.	Existing staff resources and cost of software packages	All LAs	Years 2	DCLG good practice
		Enhance the range of advice and information on housing options using a variety of media and	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Years 1	DCLG good practice

Goal 1 – Provide a pathway to a housing solution for everyone that accesses our services

Strategic links– Worcestershire Housing Strategy, Worcestershire Strategic Market Assessment, Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy, Strategic Housing Service Plans, Homelessness Code of Guidance, Choice Based Letting schemes and Hosing Allocations Policies, Local Authority Tenancy Strategies, Worcestershire Local Investment Plan

Ref.	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/local links
		ensure it is continually reviewed and updated.				
		Improve online information on all council websites (including agreeing one set of generic information about homelessness prevention with different local elements).	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Years 1	DCLG good practice
		Develop existing customer satisfaction feedback methods.	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Year 2	DCLG good practice
		Investigate ways to assist customers to overcome the barriers to accessing accommodation for example life skills training, tenant accreditation scheme and joint working with other agencies / voluntary sector partners.	Existing staff resources and homelessness grant	CHIG	Years 1	Making the best use of existing and new resources
		Review the need for a Worcestershire mediation services.	Existing staff resources, CLG grant funding	CHIG, CHSC	Years 2	Making the best use of existing and new resources
		Provide staff training to reflect change in emphasis towards preventing homelessness regardless of priority need.	County Training Programme (co-ordinated and commissioned by WSHOG and RP funders)	CHIG, CHSC	Year 1	DCLG good practice
3	Ensure there is a pathway to suitable housing for everyone which is developed and supported by	Review the prevention pathways (housing and support) for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> families people with mental health issues (intermediate housing) 	Existing staff resources and homelessness grant funding.	SP and WSHP	Year 1	

Goal 1 – Provide a pathway to a housing solution for everyone that accesses our services

Strategic links– Worcestershire Housing Strategy, Worcestershire Strategic Market Assessment, Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy, Strategic Housing Service Plans, Homelessness Code of Guidance, Choice Based Letting schemes and Hosing Allocations Policies, Local Authority Tenancy Strategies, Worcestershire Local Investment Plan

Ref.	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/local links
	partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people with a physical disability (to include temporary accommodation) • people with a learning disability • ex-forces personnel with support needs • teenage parents • migrant workers <p>Groups not mentioned either have existing protocols to be reviewed or new ones to be developed (covered in Goal 2)</p>				
		Ensure Rent Deposit Schemes across the County compliment each other and that the Rent Deposit Schemes do not compete for landlords and/or applicants.	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Year 1	
4	Maximise the supply and use of new and existing accommodation.	Develop agreements with RPs to ensure that their response to flexible tenancies and affordable rent schemes does not increase homelessness.	Existing staff resources	WSHOG All LAs	Year 1	Localism
		Enable delivery of more shared accommodation particularly for under 35s, such as HMOs, lodging schemes or shared social housing initiatives.	Social lettings agency and homelessness grant funding	All LAs	Year 2 (and on-going to year 5)	Welfare and benefit reform
5	Develop a range of holistic initiatives to tackle the causes of homelessness	Support the 'Working Families Everywhere' pilot delivered through the WFIP supporting families with multiple and complex needs access education, training and employment by encouraging housing providers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Identify families with multiple needs with intergenerational benefit dependency; and •Link in with shared training opportunities around benefits and welfare advice. 	Existing staff resources	WFIP, Housing providers	Year 1	

Goal 1 – Provide a pathway to a housing solution for everyone that accesses our services

Strategic links– Worcestershire Housing Strategy, Worcestershire Strategic Market Assessment, Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy, Strategic Housing Service Plans, Homelessness Code of Guidance, Choice Based Letting schemes and Housing Allocations Policies, Local Authority Tenancy Strategies, Worcestershire Local Investment Plan

Ref.	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/local links
		Consider developing an education project to prevent homelessness among young people within each district.	Existing Staff Resources and Homelessness Grant funding	CHIG	Year 1	

Goal 2 – Create strong partnerships to tackle homelessness

Strategic links: Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy, Joint Commissioning Strategy for Adult Mental Health in Worcestershire 2008 – 2013, Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse Strategy, Strategic Housing Service Plans, Housing Benefit Service Plans, Worcestershire Children and Young Person’s Plan 2011 – 2014, Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Strategy,

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/local links
1	Highlight the gaps in current service provision and their link to homelessness and encourage partners to tackle them through improved joint working and more effective commissioning of services	Develop a communication strategy to demonstrate how better relations with different directorates and partner agencies will result in tackling the holistic needs of joint client groups.	Existing staff resources	WSHP and WSHOG	Year 1	
		Develop closer working arrangements with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGS), Health Living Actions Groups and Worcestershire Health and Well-being Board to influence commissioning of appropriate services to meet the needs of homeless or potentially homeless households.	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Year 1	Health and well-being agenda Health and Well-

Goal 2 – Create strong partnerships to tackle homelessness

Strategic links: Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy, Joint Commissioning Strategy for Adult Mental Health in Worcestershire 2008 – 2013, Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse Strategy, Strategic Housing Service Plans, Housing Benefit Service Plans, Worcestershire Children and Young Person’s Plan 2011 – 2014, Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Strategy,

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/local links
						being Board
		<p>Mental health</p> <p>Investigate and tackle the barriers in the referral system for customers needing to access mental health services.</p> <p>Develop links to Increased Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) across the County.</p> <p>Investigate opportunities for Mental Health First Aid training for front line officers.</p>	<p>Existing staff resources</p> <p>Existing staff resources</p> <p>Existing staff resources, County Training Programme</p>	<p>CHIG</p> <p>CHIG</p> <p>WHSOG</p>	<p>Year 1</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>Year 2</p>	<p>Health and well-being agenda/</p>
		<p>Physical health</p> <p>Undertake the Homeless Link Health and Homelessness Audit.</p> <p>Work with PCT to role out Health Chat programme across County.</p>	<p>Existing staff resources</p> <p>Existing staff and training resources</p>	<p>CHSC, SP</p> <p>CHIG and PCT</p>	<p>Year 1</p> <p>Year 1</p>	<p>Health and well-being agenda</p> <p>Health and Well-</p>

Goal 2 – Create strong partnerships to tackle homelessness

Strategic links: Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy, Joint Commissioning Strategy for Adult Mental Health in Worcestershire 2008 – 2013, Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse Strategy, Strategic Housing Service Plans, Housing Benefit Service Plans, Worcestershire Children and Young Person’s Plan 2011 – 2014, Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Strategy,

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/local links
						being Board
		<p>Young people Undertake a snapshot survey to establish true number of young people accessing services, overlaps and collect their views.</p>	Existing staff resources	SP	Year 1	
		<p>Substance Misuse and Alcohol Continue to identify the gaps in accommodation and support provision across the county.</p>	Existing staff and key partners	CHIG, SP, DAAT and LinkUP	Year 2	
		Conduct a mapping exercise across the County to identify the numbers and needs of those accessing drug and alcohol treatment, but not accessing housing advice.	Existing staff and key partners	SP, DAAT, CHIG and LinkUP	Year 1	
		Collection of data relating to housing need and or drug or alcohol use, to identify areas of highest need, profiled by district. Analysis of this data will allow for planning and commissioning of future services.	Existing staff and key partners	CHIG, SP, DAAT and LinkUP	Year 1	
		Co-ordination of accommodation, treatment and mental health services to ensure successful sustainment of tenancies.	Existing Staff and resources	CHIG, DAAT, PCT and SP	Years 1&2	
		Prison leavers	Existing staff and key	WSHOG CHIG	Year 1	WSHOG/ Probation

Goal 2 – Create strong partnerships to tackle homelessness

Strategic links: Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy, Joint Commissioning Strategy for Adult Mental Health in Worcestershire 2008 – 2013, Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse Strategy, Strategic Housing Service Plans, Housing Benefit Service Plans, Worcestershire Children and Young Person’s Plan 2011 – 2014, Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Strategy,

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/local links
		Roll out Redditch offender information packs across the county.	partners			action plan
2	Promote cross agency working through relevant protocols and liaison meetings with the aim of strengthening relationships between organisations and within communities.	Develop protocols <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health and housing • Substance misuse and housing • Housing Benefit and Strategic Housing Departments 	Existing staff resources	WSHP and CHSC	Years 2 (& 3)	-
3	Increase joint working with Private Sector Landlords to create new housing opportunities and tackle homelessness caused by the end of Assured Shorthold Tenancies	Investigate the feasibility of developing more private tenancy leasing schemes to improve access private landlords and encourage them to work with local authorities.	Existing staff resources	All LAs	Years 1-3	-
		Develop an accreditation scheme (already in operation in some districts) for lettings agents and private landlords.	Existing staff resources	All LAs	Years 1-3	-
		Maximise the potential of Home Choice Plus by offering private landlords an opportunity to advertise properties.	Existing staff resources	HCP Partnership	Year 1	-

Goal 3 – Take effective action to prevent anyone new to the streets, having to sleep out for more than one night

Strategic links – Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night Out nationwide, Making Every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness Worcestershire Community Safety Action Plan, Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/local links
1	Develop a No Second Night Out standard for Worcestershire	Development and implementation of No Second Night Out policy and reconnection policy for Worcestershire.	Existing staff resources, DCLG funding	SASH Partnership Board	Year 1	NSNO
		Development of NSNO assessment hub/s to specifically implement a No Second Night Out standard for Worcestershire.	HCA funding, LA Homelessness Grant, DCLG funding, SP funding, DAAT funding	SASH Partnership Board	Year 1	NSNO
		Improve the visibility of the outreach team and public rough sleeping support systems.	Existing staff resources	St Paul's Hostel, Link Up, CHIG	Year 1	NSNO
		Completion of DCLG rough sleeper count/estimate.	Existing staff resources	All LAs	Year 1 (and on-going on an annual basis)	
		Create a county wide single homelessness forum.	Existing staff resources,	SASH Partnership Board	Year 1	NSNO
2	Understand why people enter and remain in a street lifestyle and tackle the barriers preventing them from accessing and sustaining accommodation.	Map the provision of free food and provisions across the county to see how services can link more effectively.	Existing staff resources	CHSC, CHIG	Year 1	
		Consider a "Killing with kindness" marketing strategy in line with Thames Reach to reduce begging and enablement of a street lifestyle.	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Year 2	
		Ensure access to a wide range of services	Existing staff	CHIG	Year 1 - 2	

Goal 3 – Take effective action to prevent anyone new to the streets, having to sleep out for more than one night

Strategic links – Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night Out nationwide, Making Every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness Worcestershire Community Safety Action Plan, Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/local links
		relating to mental health arising from low self-esteem and confidence building including access to Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) and consider how these services might be made available on an outreach basis.	resources			
3	Make the best use of existing resources to ensure a flow through supported accommodation	Carry out PROMPT analysis (Homeless Link) to identify where there may be gaps in services	Existing staff resources	SASH Partnership Board	Year 1	NSNO
		Work with partners to implement the Move On Protocol Plan (MOPP).	Existing staff resources	SP, CHSC	Year 1	
4	Tackle entrenched rough sleeping	Consider the introduction of a personalised approach for rough sleepers (to include tackling rough sleepers with no recourse to public funds).	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Year 1	
		Ensure continuation of outreach support for rough sleepers depending on the timescales for funding.	Existing staff resources	SASH Partnership Board	Year 1	

Goal 4 – Reduce Financial Deprivation within our communities to minimise homelessness

Strategic links – Worcestershire Housing Strategy, Worcestershire Financial Inclusion Strategy, Housing Benefit Department Service Plans and Strategic Housing Service Plans.

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/local links
1	Proactively identify those at risk of homelessness as a result of welfare reform or financial deprivation and encourage them to seek advice before reaching crisis point	Develop a Multi-Agency Welfare Reform Action Plan	Existing staff resources	WHSP	Year 1	Welfare and benefit reform
		Make links with local employers who are making major redundancies, and strengthen links with LEPs, to ensure that community members get the housing and financial advice they need at the right time.	Existing staff resources	All LAs Chamber of Commerce, LEP and Job Centre Plus	Year 2	Welfare and benefit reform
		Provide targeted housing and debt advice for first time claimants of Housing and Council Tax Benefit or those in arrears with their Council Tax (aimed at encouraging them to take early action and reduce homelessness).	Existing staff resources	All LAs	Year 1	Welfare and benefit reform
		Undertake an education campaign on welfare reforms for Communities, LA officers and Councillors so that they are able to plan for reductions in entitlement and prevent homelessness.	Existing staff and publication resources	CHIG	Year 1	Welfare and benefit reform
		Undertake more pro-active work linking people into money advice earlier, offer advice sessions outside normal office hours where appropriate and make information available on-line consistent.	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Year 12	Welfare and benefit reform
2	Deliver sufficient levels of housing and debt advice	Investigate new funding opportunities such as the Big Society Bank to fund additional	Existing staff	All LAs	Year 1	Welfare and

Goal 4 – Reduce Financial Deprivation within our communities to minimise homelessness

Strategic links – Worcestershire Housing Strategy, Worcestershire Financial Inclusion Strategy, Housing Benefit Department Service Plans and Strategic Housing Service Plans.

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/local links
	to meet the anticipated rise in demand	resources in the Voluntary sector required to support vulnerable households in financial deprivation directly by the community.				benefit reform
		Signpost to alternatives that will fill the gap left by the Credit Union and where there is no provision consider service development.	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Year 2	Welfare and benefit reform
		Increase the level of provision and quality of debt advice within the County by undertaking audits and talking to customers that try to access the services.	Existing staff resources, LA homelessness grant	CHIG	Year 2	Welfare and benefit reform
		Consider providing more opportunities for community members to gain training to enhance their budgeting skills.	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Year 2	Welfare and benefit reform
		Develop a partnership arrangement with a suitable lender to ensure easier opening of a bank accounts.	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Year 1	Welfare and benefit reform
3	Review the use of Discretionary Housing Payment and Discretionary Social Fund to make sure that they can be used flexibly to prevent homelessness	Raise awareness amongst members of the importance of the delivery of the Social Fund for supporting homeless people in Worcestershire.	Existing staff resources	WHSP, CHIG	Year 1	Welfare and benefit reform
		Consider developing a common process for administering the Social Fund in all Local Authority Areas within Worcestershire to ensure that it continues to be used to prevent				Welfare and benefit reform

Goal 4 – Reduce Financial Deprivation within our communities to minimise homelessness

Strategic links – Worcestershire Housing Strategy, Worcestershire Financial Inclusion Strategy, Housing Benefit Department Service Plans and Strategic Housing Service Plans.

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/local links
		homelessness / financial deprivation				
		<p>Improve joint working with Housing Benefit Departments:</p> <p>Implement good practice identified by CLG in responding to benefit reform.</p> <p>Promote on-line resources to calculate the LHA for those accessing the Private Rented Sector.</p> <p>Work with Housing Benefits about issuing a notice of entitlement to LHA.</p> <p>Ensure that all front-line staff have welfare benefits awareness training.</p> <p>Develop an effective referral process with housing benefit to ensure that all DHP claimants have gone through housing options service.</p>	<p>Existing staff resources</p> <p>County Training Programme</p>	<p>Redditch Borough Council and CHSC</p>	<p>Year 1</p>	<p>Welfare and benefit reform</p>
4	Work with partners and the voluntary sector to provide more opportunities for members of the community to gain employment or undertake positive activities	<p>Build a better relationship with employment services.</p> <p>Tackle barriers for community members wishing to undertake work or go back into education (such only full time courses being offered in some subject/skills areas and subsequent ineligibility for Housing Benefit)</p>	<p>Existing staff resources to link in with key partners</p>	<p>CHIG</p>	<p>Year 2</p>	

Goal 4 – Reduce Financial Deprivation within our communities to minimise homelessness

Strategic links – Worcestershire Housing Strategy, Worcestershire Financial Inclusion Strategy, Housing Benefit Department Service Plans and Strategic Housing Service Plans.

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/local links
		Develop more opportunities for community members to gain job experience by encouraging employers and agencies to create more voluntary positions				
		Promote 'care to learn' childcare support and other childcare provision to support parents back into education training or employment.	Existing staff resources to link in with key partners	CHIG	Years 2&3	

Appendix 2: Future considerations for the action plan from years 3-5

As detailed throughout this strategy, the action plan needs to be achievable and flexible enough to respond to changes in the economic and political climate. Therefore this appendix sets out actions that are planned for the future, but which will be reviewed on an annual basis to decide if and when they should feature in the action plan.

Goal 1

Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/Local Links
Investigate the feasibility of expanding the out of hours homeless emergency service to link with emergency support.	Current provider contracts	WHSP	Year 3	
As a result of the prevention pathways review, develop or remodel existing provision of accommodation and support services for homeless or potentially homeless clients with additional needs. This could include the provision of dispersed units of accommodation.		WHSP	Years 3-5	
To continue to provide and expand re-settlement packages appropriate to peoples needs (including for example furniture and white goods).	Existing staff resources, SP funding	CHIG SP	Years 3 & 4	Welfare Reform
Investigate the feasibility of extending the countywide tenant matching service based on Both Ways model.	Existing staff resources	CHIG SP	Years 3 & 4	
Work with the Home Improvement Agency to: make better use of existing adapted accommodation through use of current database of clients and adapted properties; and to ensure those who may otherwise become or are currently homeless are offered appropriate accommodation to meet their needs.	Existing staff and stock, HIA	All Local Authorities HIA	Years 3 & 4	
Consider ways to expand the Worcestershire Family Intervention Project service cross tenure.	Existing staff resources	SP, WFIP	Years 3 & 4	

Goal 2

Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/Local Links
Investigate the feasibility to increase the provision of outreach workers for clients with autistic spectrum, personality disorders, ADHD and Asperger's.	Investigate potential funding streams	SPCB WSHP CHIG	Years 3&4	Health and well-being agenda

Domestic abuse - Work with the Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse and Community Safety to review Sanctuary Scheme and Homesafe				
Consider the implementation of a Countywide Clean Break module.	Existing Staff, Homelessness Grant and other funding streams	CHSC, SP and DAAT	Years 3-5	
Introduce multi agency assessments for vulnerable adults similar to Common Assessment Framework	Existing staff resources, Worcestershire Link Up	Link Up Vulnerable Adults Team	Years 3-5	

Goal 3

Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/Local Links
Investigate the potential for social enterprise projects led by service users.	Existing staff resource, HIA	SP Voluntary Sector	Years 3&4	-
Develop Supporting People positive activities for street homeless and substance misusers.	Existing staff resources, SP funding	NAC Project Group	Years 3&4	-

Goal 4

Action	Resources	Lead Partner	Timescale	Link to Government Changes/Local Links
Look at different models of accommodation and support relating to affordability and disincentives to work through subsidised rents or use of DHP.	Existing staff resources	CHIG	Years 2&3	-

Appendix 3: Resources Available

Please refer to section 7 of the Worcestershire Homelessness Review for information on the resources available.



Appendix 4: On-going commitments



There are a number of commitments identified during the development of the strategy that will be assumed as everyday work. These will not be specifically included in the action plan as they are not SMART; however, they are listed below to ensure continued commitment:

- Monitor and respond to allocations policy changes and the challenges this may present for customers and in terms of preventing homelessness, in the light of draft revised Code of Guidance on Allocations and changes arising from the Localism Act.
- Monitor and respond to threats to LA Homelessness Grant (exit strategies).
- Identify and bid for relevant funding opportunities in conjunction with statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Support the work of the Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse.
- Support Worcestershire Link Up in the development of a web based directory of housing and health related services for Worcestershire.
- Work with existing advocacy services to raise awareness of their services across the county, and increase signposting.
- Improve relationship with council/RP housing management teams to try and prevent homelessness through evictions.
- Continue to support the development and sustainability of the Family Intervention Project by encouraging housing providers to identify families with complex needs who may be facing eviction due to ASB or rent arrears, and assist in addressing issues.
- Work with Supporting People to identify the need for Countywide Homelessness Mental Health Workers.
- Promote integrated working between housing and substance misuse services, ensuring the continuing engagement of housing professionals accessing drug and alcohol training.
- Manage supporting people budget reductions by supporting strategic service reviews including single homeless, mental health, learning disability, physical disabilities, domestic abuse and chaotic lifestyles.
- Support the implementation of the Supporting People Strategy.
- Ensure the continuation of Worcestershire Link Up to ensure a single point of access to accommodation and support for single homeless people.
- Consider the impact of the personalisation agenda when developing or reviewing strategic housing procedures, policies, service improvement plans and strategies.

Appendix 5: Achievements from the previous homelessness strategy



Action Plan - Year One (2007-08)



Goal	Priority	Lead & Partners	Opportunities & Risks	Resources	Milestones & Target Timescales	Expected Outcomes	Achieved/Comments	
Establish a County wide Multi Agency Homelessness Strategy Steering Group	To develop joint working processes and strategic partnerships to improve the delivery of services	Lead: CHOG Partners: CHOG Plus Nacro/ Probation Community Mental Health Teams, Women's Aid Voluntary Agency reps	Opportunities: To monitor and evaluate the successful implementation of the action plan and improve service delivery to the customer Risks: To fail to achieve comprehensive multi agency representation	Officer Time	Target: Paper written and circulated for discussion May 2007. Agreement to new structure July 2007. Quarterly meetings est. Bi-annual progress report on the action plan to be prepared	To provide a formalised approach between agencies on homelessness. To deliver a seamless service to homeless or potentially homeless customers.		Group was set up to monitor last strategy and worked to develop the new strategy.
Develop joint training and job shadowing initiatives across the county	To share good practice and knowledge of the delivery of housing advice, homeless prevention and other related services	Lead: HOG Partner agencies County Training Group	Opportunities Improved relations and understanding of roles Risks Having time available to organise and release staff	Officer time	Target: July 2008 scope project with ES and HOG. August contact relevant organisations. September 2008 begin training and shadowing initiatives	Improved working relationships between statutory and voluntary organisations. Improved knowledge of services on offer to people who are threatened with homelessness for all providers involved.		Carried out through County Training Group. Also initiatives take place such as mystery shopping.



Investigate provision of another direct access hostel, Nightstop and Foyer in the county to address differences in current provision	Support the development of appropriate types of temporary, permanent and move on accommodation for a variety of client groups	<p>Lead: WFDC/ Wychavon</p> <p>Partners: Supporting People, Nightstop, Bromsgrove Youth Homeless Forum, Centrepoin t, Foyer Federation , Connexion s</p>	<p>Opportunities: Improve supply of accommodation with training and support</p> <p>Risks: Targeted group remaining in unsuitable TA Risk of tenancy failure</p>	SP Budget Housing Corporation	Supported accommodation bids to HC – June 2007. Ongoing research into needs. Target: March 2008 Completion of SP homelessness review – Target: March 2008	Expansion of Nightstop in South Worcestershire Provision of at least 1 new Foyer in County		Nightstop set up in south of county, and foyer in Bromsgrove.
Develop and implement joint protocols and regular liaison meetings with key agencies	To develop joint working processes and strategic partnerships to improve the delivery of services	<p>Lead: CHOG/HOG</p> <p>Partners: PCT, Probation, Nacro, CMHTs, Women’s Aid, refuges, Supporting People</p>	<p>Opportunities: Better working relationship with partners. Improved service for customers</p> <p>Risks: Clients not being correctly signposted to services. Increased Homelessness due to prevention mechanisms not being accessed at an early enough stage. Regular training and ensuring use of</p>	Officer Time	Target: Hospital Discharge Protocol - April 2007. Housing and Probation Protocol – July 2007	Improved access to services and customer satisfaction. Improved performance in prevention of homelessness.		<p>Carry this item over Different groups have been set up to develop and monitor various protocols and working practices, and liaise with different agencies. As a result a number of documents have been produced and a range of meetings take place, but others are still needed (more specific</p>



			protocols					details further on).
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Action Plan – Year Two (2008-09)




Goal	Priority	Lead & Partners	Opportunities & Risks	Resources	Milestones & Target Timescales	Expected Outcomes	Achieved/Comments
Introduce a county wide, cross agency web based data collection package for single homeless people	To develop a countywide methodology and system of data collection for homelessness information	Lead: WCC Partners: Centrepont WHABAC	Opportunities; Improve data collection for the county to inform strategies, work plans and bids inc removing double counting Risks; IT package, current data	Officer time	Target: August 2007 website to go live. September 2007 training to all users. March 2008 end of first 6 month report.	To support bids for funding from other organisations based on empirical evidence. Improved understanding of issues enabling for co-ordinated service delivery across agencies.	 Achieved as part of Worcestershire LinkUp project – also will be expanded to collect more info regarding all single homeless
Develop a county wide data capture system for standardised housing and homelessness information	To develop a countywide methodology and system of data collection for homelessness information	Lead: County Homeless Strategy Group Partners: County Council Research & Intelligence Unit	Opportunities; Improve data collection for the county to inform, update & monitor success of the strategy and actions Risks; Difficulties in developing services	Officer time	Target: Establish sub-group to examine current data collection methods and agree type and system by December 2007. Ongoing quarterly reporting to strategy group.	Regular meetings to update statistical data. Measure the success of the County Homeless Strategy by seeing decreasing numbers of approaches and acceptances. Development of data recording	 Achieved through Worcestershire LinkUp project, and data is also available through Home Choice Plus


			flexible enough to cope with changing demands			system to inform policy decisions.		
Develop the existing customer satisfaction survey to capture information from all homeless clients	To develop a countywide methodology and system of data collection for homelessness information	Lead: County Homeless Strategy Group	Opportunities; Improved data on service users perceptions that will lead to real engagement and improvement in service delivery Risks; Difficulties in developing services flexible enough to cope with changing demands	Officer time Prize money to encourage participation - £100 per authority	Target: December 2007 once P1Es for 2006/07 completed. September to meet to discuss format. October to distribute and collate responses. November to produce report. December to feedback responses to strategy group / committee.	Data captured on homeless households not accepted for statutory re-housing. Production of standardised customer information to assist with service delivery options.		Although surveys have been carried out, most recently as part of the consultation for the Strategy, they need to be undertaken on a regular basis Needs to be carried over
Review the homeless application process	To develop joint working processes and strategic partnerships to improve	Lead: Bromsgrove Partners: All district LAs	Opportunities: Improvements in accessibility and	Officer Time	Target: To review the current homeless application process across	Improved application or applications tailored to client groups as appropriate and		Needs to be undertaken to develop good practice and to include Equality Impact

	the delivery of services		consistency. Risks: None		the county by September 2007. To identify appropriate changes and produce report by December 2007. To implement changes by March 2008.	compliant with equalities requirements. Ensure efficiency and practicality of system.		Assessment Needs to be carried forward
Develop resettlement packages appropriate to people's needs	To empower customers to make a positive change to their lives	Lead: Supporting People Partners: County Homeless Strategy Group HOG	Opportunities Increasing the sustainability of tenancies and longer term homelessness prevention Risks Lack of resources to develop new services	Supporting People budget	Completion of supporting people homeless review Target: 2008-09	Reduction in the number of failed tenancies.		Although a number of initiatives have been developed, to cover budgeting, life skills and accessing Social Fund more work needs to be done in this area Needs to be carried over
Work with support providers and to key strategies to equip people with the skills to sustain a tenancy.	To empower customers to make a positive change to their lives	Lead: Worcester City Council Partners: HOG	Opportunities Increasing the sustainability of tenancies and longer term homelessness prevention Risks Lack of	Officer time Cost of delivering training courses	Target: undertake research in county with group of homeless households by July 2008. Identify training providers and costs by	Improved experiences of households in temporary accommodation Reduction in the number of repeat or cross-generational homelessness Equipping people with the skills to		As above Needs to be carried over

			resources to provide courses		October 2008. Evaluation and feedback by February 2009 with view to establishing rolling programme and securing funding.	make a house a home, avoid debt, be effective parents and have a healthy and happy life		
Encourage the best use of existing stock by - increasing the % of RSL lettings to homeless households and other vulnerable groups (ASB) - tackling under occupation and empty homes - reducing the number of evictions/ abandonments	Support the development of appropriate types of temporary, permanent and move on accommodation for a variety of client groups	Lead: Wychavon Partners: Other LAs, partner RSLs, Private Sector Fora, North Worcs Care and Repair Agency	Opportunities: Increase supply and provision of Affordable Housing Risks: Vulnerable groups will remain in unsuitable accommodation	Officer time	Work with prevention officers group to look at best practice examples. Target: September 2008 Under-occupation schemes set up across the county. Target: March 2009	Ensure that a minimum of 30% general needs lettings going to homeless households across County. Empty homes back into use – targets according to each local authority. Reduce the number of homeless approaches due to eviction to less than 5 per annum across the county.		Information on lettings collected from CORE data Empty homes data collected as part of county Housing Strategy Difficult to achieve as dependant on factors outside realm/scope of this strategy
Ensure all temporary accommodation provided is good quality, self contained and where support can be accessed if required.	Support the development of appropriate types of temporary, permanent and move on accommodation	Lead: Malvern/ Bromsgrove Partners: Other LAs, Supporting People/ support providers,	Opportunities: Standardise quality of temporary accommodation across County Risks:	Officer time	Mapping exercise completed by July 2008. Further research to follow after above	Reduction in the number of failed tenancies. People able to maintain employment and education whilst occupying temporary		


	on for a variety of client groups	RSLs	Unsuitable accommodation without support remaining		completed	accommodation. No detrimental effects on health and well being through occupying temporary accommodation.		
Improve mechanisms to record the longer term outcomes of homelessness prevention	To develop a countywide methodology and system of data collection for homelessness information	Lead: Prevention officers group Partners: Support providers Voluntary & community agencies	Opportunities; Improve data collection for the County to inform and update the strategy Risks; Difficulties in developing services flexible enough to cope with changing demands	Officer time	Target: Attend prevention officers group to launch project by July 2008. Identify remit of project and analyse information by Dec 2008. Produce report for consideration by strategy group by March 2009.	Monitor the long term effectiveness of homelessness prevention across the county to inform use of resources and policy decisions		Through Abrisas and P1E information
Encourage the best use of existing stock by - remodelling/re-designation of stock - loft conversions	Support the development of appropriate types of temporary, permanent and move on accommodation for a variety of client groups	Lead: Wychavon Partners: Other LAs, partner RSLs, Private Sector Fora, North Worcs Care and Repair Agency	Opportunities: Increase supply and provision of Affordable Housing Risks: Vulnerable groups will remain in unsuitable accommodation	Officer time	Work with RSLs to consider remodelling options. Target: March 2009 Work with private sector officers group to look at best practice examples.	Less popular stock remodelled for alternative client groups / supported accommodation. Families able to remain in own home and extend living space to reduce overcrowding through loft	 	Although some districts have done this others haven't. Needs to be carried over




			on		Target: September 2008	conversion grants.		
Research and improve links with private sector landlords to prevent homelessness and overcome issues of access	To better understand the needs of key client groups for the delivery of appropriate housing services and to prevent homelessness	Lead Worcester CC Partners Other DC's HB teams Private Sector Landlord Forums County Council	Opportunities Increasing the availability and quality of private rented stock Risks Increasing number of vulnerable homeless	Officer time	Target: Autumn 2008	Reducing the number of homeless acceptances due to the end of AST's and preventing homelessness through improving access to the PRS		Has been achieved but needs to be updated to include initiatives such as Social Lettings Agency Needs to be carried over
Investigate the feasibility of a countywide youth homelessness service for young people	To better understand the needs of key client groups for the delivery of appropriate housing services and to prevent homelessness	Lead Worcester CC & Wyre Forest DC Partners Bromsgrove Youth Homeless Forum Centrepont, YMCA Nightstop Other DCs, Connexions	Opportunities Increasing range of affordable housing Risks Failure to identify a provider or resources	Officer time	Target: Spring 2008	Reduction in youth homelessness across the district A better, more co-ordinated and holistic service for young people		Feasibility work was undertaken as part of Supporting People Young People Strategic Review – led to development of The Bubble in the south, & St Basils/foyer in the North of Worcestershire
Consider the need to develop support services to tackle social exclusion for those who fall through the net of statutory	To better understand the needs of key client groups for the delivery of appropriate	Lead Worcester CC Partners Other DC SP Social Services	Opportunities Tackling rough sleeping and chaotic clients with complex	Officer time initially Financial resources from Supporting People, Community	Outcomes from SP Homeless Review Target: December 2008	Reduction in social exclusion and homelessness for chaotic client groups. Reduction in costs for PCT,		Range of initiatives have been developed e.g. Worcestershire LinkUp, WHIT, Night Assessment Centre, Supporting People single





agencies	housing services and to prevent homelessness		needs and thereby reduce costs incurred by agencies including the PCT and Police. Risks Increasing numbers of homelessness , particularly rough sleepers	Safety and Voluntary Agencies		Police and other agencies.		homeless review. NB Needs to be carried over (for continuation of NAC and work around "No Second Night Out")
Develop and implement joint protocols and regular liaison meetings with key agencies	To develop joint working processes and strategic partnerships to improve the delivery of services	Lead: CHOG/HOG Partners: PCT, Probation, Nacro, CMHTs, Women's Aid, refuges, Supporting People	Opportunities: Better working relationship with partners. Improved service for customers Risks: Clients not being correctly signposted to services. Increased Homelessness due to prevention mechanisms not being accessed at	Officer Time	Target: Mental Health and Housing Protocol – 2008 / 09 Domestic Violence Protocol – 2008 / 09 Adult Services protocol – 2008 /09	Improved access to services and customer satisfaction. Improved performance in prevention of homelessness.		Although some protocols have been produced (probation, domestic abuse, 16/17 year olds, hospital discharge) others are still needed (countywide rough sleepers/NAC, mental health, severe weather, ex-servicemen) Needs to be carried over

			an early enough stage. Regular training and ensuring use of protocols					
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Action Plan – Year Three (2009-10)

Goal	Priority	Lead & Partners	Opportunities & Risks	Resources	Milestones & Target Timescales	Expected Outcomes	Achieved/Comments
To develop a housing advice toolkit (to include homelessness prevention and good practice directory)	To share good practice and knowledge of the delivery of housing advice and homeless prevention services	<p>Lead: Malvern Hills District Council / Elgar Housing</p> <p>Partners: County Homeless Strategy Officers Group</p>	<p>Opportunities Comprehensive & consistent range of services available across the county</p> <p>Risks Officer time to develop</p>	Officer time Printing costs	<p>Target: To meet with MHDC and review progress on their housing advice toolkit by July 2009</p> <p>To consider research into prevention methods undertaken in previous year. To develop draft by January 2010. To circulate to each council by February 2010. Toolkit agreed by March 2010.</p>	<p>Comprehensive and consistent county wide housing advice delivered to service users through a variety of organisations across the county</p> <p>Increase in officer knowledge of cross boundary services</p>	 <p>Needs to be carried forward – potentially develop along lines of Homeless Link orange pages</p>




Develop comprehensive homelessness awareness raising in schools	To share good practice and knowledge of the delivery of housing advice and homeless prevention services	Lead: Homeless Officers Group Partners Centrepont, Schools, Connexions	Opportunities Early prevention Risks Officer time / resources may not be available Schools not interested in delivering training	Officer time Training materials	Develop appropriate training package by June 2009. Contact schools for new academic year by September 2009. Deliver sessions throughout December – March 2010.	A reduction in the number of under 25 approaching as homeless and increasing the number of preventions to this age group		Needs to be carried forward – also liaise with Education Department at County Hall to ensure put on to curriculum for PHSE
Use knowledge to develop specialised projects such as good practice in DHP and HB administration, mediation services across all client groups etc.	To share good practice and knowledge of the delivery of housing advice and homeless prevention services	Lead: Wychavon County Homeless Strategy Officers Group	Opportunities Early intervention and prevention Risks Barriers from other departments and organisations	Officer time Resources for new schemes e.g. £60k for relate mediation project	To develop in conjunction with prevention toolkit. Target: 2009 - 10	Developing a range of services to support the prevention toolkit. Delivery of high quality and consistent services across the county.		Although some projects were set up for example for mediation, these weren't maintained (but now being re-established). Other issues increased priority due to impending welfare reform Needs to be carried forward
Undertake regular county benchmarking exercises	To develop a countywide methodology and system of data collection for homelessness information	Lead: County Homeless Strategy Officers Group	Opportunities Ensure cost effectiveness of services Risks Service becomes to cost driven	Officer time	Develop new set of measures that are activity based. December 2009 Collect data and analyse by March 2010	Possible cost savings and efficiencies identified		Although this has been undertaken as part of the homeless review, needs to be carried out regularly e.g. by using HQN package and reviewing Action Plan annually Carry over

Work with Supporting People to review the support provision specifically to homeless households	To develop joint working processes and strategic partnerships to improve the delivery of services	Lead: Worcestershire Supporting People Partners: DCs RSLs Other Statutory and Voluntary Sector organisations	Opportunities: Timely strategic review Risks: To transform services may be long term	Staff time Realignmen t of funding Worcesters hire Supporting People funding	Participation in the strategic review Joint ownership of the strategic targets Target: March 2010	No pre-determined outcomes Strategic targets will be based on partnership and customer feedback to the review team		Carried out on on-going basis, and will continue into new strategy Needs to be carried over
Develop a comprehensive range of supported housing options	To empower customers to make a positive change to their lives	Lead: SP & CHOG		Supporting People	3 SP schemes to secure HC capital funding in the 2008-10 bidding round	To meet the objectives of the Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy		Projects set up such as foyer in Bromsgrove and accommodation in Worcester. Needs to be carried over as ideas include wet hostel
Increase the supply of supported move-on accommodation for victims of domestic violence	Support the development of appropriate types of temporary, permanent and move on accommodation for a variety of client groups	Lead: Redditch/ Bromsgrove DC. Partners: Other LAs, County DV Forum, Supporting People, Women's Aid	Opportunities: More suitable and appropriate accommodation Risks: To remain in unsuitable temporary accommodation	SP Strategic Review	Target: July 2009	Need to await outcome of SP reviews – increase in types of accommodation available to occupy including refuge spaces, self-contained safe houses and sanctuary schemes.		Safe houses and sanctuary scheme have been set up
Implement Choice Based Lettings model based on	To develop joint working processes and strategic	Lead: Wychavon D C Partners:	Opportunities: DCLG funding To build on	Staff time DCLG funding and direct	Gaining support of politicians and stakeholders	Successful implementation of the CBL scheme across		Home Choice Plus has been implemented across the county

Wychavon's model throughout the county	partnerships to improve the delivery of services	DCs RSLs	success of existing scheme Risks: Managing the changeover to CBL scheme on an individual district basis	funding from DCs and RSL partners	Bid submission Partnership approach to developing model and implementation Target: March 2010	the county Increased choice for local people People having sufficient understanding of housing issues and a range of options to be able to exercise choice effectively		
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Action Plan – Year Four (2010-11)

Goal	Priority	Lead & Partners	Opportunities & Risks	Resources	Milestones & Target Timescales	Expected Outcomes	Achieved/Comments
Increase the supply of move-on accommodation for substance misusers	Support the development of appropriate types of temporary, permanent and move on accommodation for a variety of client groups	Lead: Worcester Partners: Other LAs, CDT, Supporting People, SMAT	Opportunities: More suitable and appropriate accommodation Risks: To remain in unsuitable temporary accommodation	SP Strategic Review	Feasibility work completed Target: March 2011	Need to await outcome of SP reviews. Reduce the use of inappropriate accommodation, including where people are occupying supported or emergency accommodation they no longer require.	 On-going - projects established through WHABAC and bids have gone in to HCA Needs to be carried over

To support the development and delivery of related strategies to ensure strategic relevance	To develop joint working processes and strategic partnerships to improve the delivery of services	Lead: HOG	Opportunities: Improved service for clients Risks: Conflict with district Council priorities could lead to failure to deliver objectives	Officer time	As per individual strategy	Ensure strategic fit with Supporting People 5 year plan, Children and Young persons plan, Domestic Violence strategy, Worcestershire Youth Homeless Partnership strategy, Teenage pregnancy strategy, County parenting strategy. Ensure strategic ownership of the strategy		County Homeless Strategy Steering Group and other partnership working mean have contributed to new strategies and action plans
Develop appropriate housing services for migrant workers and gypsies based on outcome of the SHMA research	To better understand the needs of key client groups for the delivery of appropriate housing services and to prevent homelessness	Lead Wychavon DC Partners Other DC Planning sections County Council	Opportunities To utilise resources effectively across the county Risks Additional service demands but limited resources	£3,000 per district and County	Target: December 2007 for research to be completed. Sites identified as part of Joint Core Strategy July 2008 – October 2010. Submitted to secretary of sites in January 2009. District Councils to	South HMA Partnership to work together to consider and develop additional sites and services relating to housing and health based on identified need.	 	MIRA project set up for migrant workers/no recourse to public funds. Need for sites for permanent pitches. Needs to be carried over

					develop policies for dealing with migrant workers and gypsies and travellers by March 2011.			
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Appendix 6: Glossary of Terms

Affordable Housing	Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the open market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. From April 2012 affordable housing is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (prior to this the definitions in Planning Policy Statement 3 apply).
Big Society	The Big Society was the flagship policy idea of the 2010 UK Conservative Party general election manifesto. It now forms part of the legislative programme of the Conservative – Liberal Democrat Coalition Agreement. The aim is "to create a climate that empowers local people and communities, building a big society that will 'take power away from politicians and give it to people'.
Black Minority Ethnic (BME)	Black Minority Ethnic, term used to describe minority groups recognised as falling under the Race Relations Act 1976.
Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB)	A Citizens Advice Bureau provides free advice and information to local people, in person or by telephone. They advise on problems like benefits, dent and consumer rights and housing issues.
Choice Based Lettings	Choice-Based lettings (CBL) schemes are designed to introduce an element of choice for people who apply for council and housing association homes. Choice-based lettings allow people applying for a home (including existing tenants who want a transfer) to bid for properties which become available.
Clean Break Model	A Toolkit developed by Homeless Link to assist commissioners, service providers and strategic leads for drug and housing services create more integrated housing and care pathways for drug users engaging in treatment services.
Common Assessment Framework	The Common Assessment Framework is a shared assessment tool for use across the entire Children's Workforce and all local areas in England. It aims to identify additional needs of children and young people and promote early intervention.
Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Community	The Government department that sets policy on supporting local government; communities and neighbourhoods; regeneration; housing; planning, building and the environment; and fire. A specific group of people who all hold something in common. Community has tended to be associated with two key aspects: firstly people who share locality or geographical place; secondly people who are communities of interest.
Community organisation or community group	a community organisation or group differs from a voluntary organisation in that the control lies in the hands of the beneficiaries as individual users, members or residents
Community sector	The web of personal relationships, groups, networks, traditions and patterns of behaviour that exist amongst those who share physical neighbourhoods, socio-economic conditions or common understandings and interests.
Comprehensive Spending Review	The Spending Review is a Treasury-led process to allocate resources across all government departments, according to the Government's priorities.
Continuous Recording	CORE (COntinuous Recording of Letting and Sales in Social Housing in England) is a national information source funded by the DCLG and local government that records information on the characteristics of both Registered Providers and and local authority new social housing tenants and the homes they rent and buy. Policy makers

and practitioners regard the system as an essential tool for monitoring housing costs, assessing affordability and developing policy.

Corporate Strategy

A document which sets out the overall corporate vision and priorities of the Council.

Decent Home

A home that meets the Decent Homes Standard. This means housing; that meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing; is in a reasonable state of repair; has reasonably modern facilities and services; and provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

Disabled Facilities Grants

The Disabled Facilities Grant is a local council grant and is a mandatory entitlement that helps disabled people to live as comfortably and independently as possible in their own homes through the provision of essential adaptations.

Discretionary Housing

For people receiving Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit who require further financial assistance with their rent or Council Tax.

Payments

Enhanced Housing Options

The Enhanced Housing Options approach takes as its core values the principles of choice, empowerment and excellent customer service. An enhanced housing options approach has the potential to be widely applied, with enhanced housing options services making a difference in a number of areas including employment and training.

Enhanced Housing Options

Trailblazer ('Trailblazer')

The Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer ('Trailblazer') programme was run by DCLG with support from the Department of Work and Pension. It aimed to develop innovative approaches to delivering housing options/advice services by offering housing advice to people with low and medium housing need as well as those with acute need, and also by linking housing advice to wider advice about a range of issues such as training and employment, financial management, and access to benefits. Information and help and a good practice toolkit with practical examples on how to deliver an effective housing options service will be produced as part of a comprehensive evaluation of the programme in 2011.

Equality Impact Assessments

A tool for identifying the potential impact of Council policies, services and functions on its residents and staff.

Family Intervention Project

Family Intervention Projects have developed out of the Government's anti-social behaviour strategy which has focused on tackling anti-social behaviour such as neighbour nuisance. They have drawn on the pioneering work of the Dundee Families Project established by NCH in 1995.

Floating Support

A service that provides housing related support to vulnerable adults (over 16 years of age) to enable them to maintain their independence in their home. Floating support services will generally be short term (less than two years) and will have the flexibility to support a person wherever they live – as distinct from accommodation based services, where support is tied to particular accommodation.

Foyer

Provides accommodation for young homeless people. A foyer is a place where young people can give and receive support to enable residents to achieve their goals, gain access to training, education and employment, and to gain independent living skills.

Fuel poverty

Households are considered by the Government to be in fuel poverty if it needs to spend more than 10 per cent of their household income on fuel to keep their home in an adequate level of warmth (usually defined as 21 degrees Celsius for the main living area, and 18 degrees Celsius for other occupied rooms) and to meet its other energy needs (i.e. lighting and appliances, water heating and cooking).

Green Deal

The Green Deal is a government finance initiative to improve energy efficiency in UK households and includes a mechanism which allows consumers to pay back through their energy bills. As part of the 2011 Energy Act, the

	Green Deal aims to reduce carbon emissions through large scale energy efficient improvements to residential buildings and infrastructure across Britain.
Home Choice Plus	Home Choice Plus is a common allocations scheme which operates across a number of Local Authority areas in Worcestershire. This scheme has been developed by the Local Authorities and Registered Providers, working together in partnership.
Home Improvement Agency	Home improvement agencies assist vulnerable homeowners and private sector tenants who are older, disabled or on a low income to repair, improve, maintain or adapt their homes. They are local, not-for-profit organisations.
Homeless Link	Homeless Link is the membership body for organisations and individuals working with homeless people around England.
Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)	The national housing and regeneration delivery agency for England, enabling local authorities and communities to meet the ambition they have for their areas.
Housing Needs Assessment	A survey that provides detail of an areas housing market, including housing demand, need and future influences such as the economy and transport.
Housing Quality Network	An independent social housing consultancy in the UK providing briefings and regional seminars on issues of concern to social housing.
Local area agreement	A three-year agreement between central government and a local area working through its Local Strategic Partnership. The agreement sets out priority issues for local action and what partners will deliver.
Local Authority	A term used to define a body providing and managing local public services (such as Housing) in a defined area, for example District Councils, County Councils and Metropolitan Boroughs.
Local Enterprise Partnership	Local enterprise partnerships are locally-owned partnerships between local authorities and businesses across natural economic areas and play a central role in determining local economic priorities. They provide the vision, knowledge and strategic leadership needed to drive sustainable private sector growth and job creation in their area.
Local Housing Allowance	The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) arrangements are a way of working out Housing Benefit (HB) for people who rent from a private landlord. Local authorities use LHA rates based on the size of household and the area in which a person lives to work out the amount of rent which can be met with HB. HB paid under the LHA arrangements is normally paid to the tenant, who will then pay the landlord.
Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM)	MEAM is a coalition of four national charities – Clinks, Drug Scope, Homeless Link and Mind – formed to influence policy and services for adults with multiple needs and exclusions.
Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)	MAPPA is the name given to arrangements in England and Wales for the "responsible authorities" tasked with the management of registered sex offenders, violent and other types of sexual offenders, and offenders who pose a serious risk of harm to the public. Other agencies are under a duty to co-operate with the Responsible Authority.
Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)	A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is part of a coordinated community response to domestic abuse.
Mediation	A method of resolving disputes between two parties using a third, external party, known as a mediator.
Move On Plans Protocol	MOPP is designed to help local authorities and service providers address local factors preventing effective

(MOPP)	move-on. The protocol is based around local partnership; a move-on audit; the development of a move-on action plan; and regular analysis of progress and results.
New Homes Bonus Scheme	The New Homes Bonus is a Government scheme which is aimed at encouraging local authorities to grant planning permissions for the building of new houses, in return for additional revenue.
No Second Night Out (NSNO)	(NSNO was launched on 1st April 2011 as a pilot project aimed at ensuring those who find themselves sleeping rough in central London for the first time need not spend a second night on the streets. NSNO helps to identify where rough sleepers are coming from and improve prevention and recovery services in these areas. The Government aims to roll out the principles of NSNO nationally.
P1E	Key information about local authorities' discharge of their duties under homeless legislation is collected on quarterly P1E s.
Personal Independence Payments	The personal independence payment (PIP) replaces working age disability living allowance (DLA) from April 2013. PIP will have many similarities with DLA. In particular it will have two components: a daily living component (which has similarities to the current care component) and a mobility component.
Places of Change	DCLG's Places of Change agenda is providing capital investment to help make hostels into places of change for their service users.
Public Services	Services that are wholly or partly funded through taxation. They include national, regional and local government and statutory agencies.
Registered Providers (RP)	The old definition of registered social landlord ("RSL") has been replaced with the concept of registered providers of social housing. All providers of social housing will now be listed on a register and will become a "Registered Provider" (RP). A distinction between this system and the old system of RSLs is that a provider of social housing can now be either a non-profit organisation or a profit-making organisation. Each body will be designated as one or the other upon being entered on to the register. RSLs automatically became non-profit registered providers under the new system.
Sanctuary Scheme	The Sanctuary Scheme is an innovative approach to homelessness prevention. It provides professionally installed security measures to allow those experiencing domestic violence to remain in their own accommodation where it is safe for them to do so, where it is their choice and where the perpetrator no longer lives within the accommodation.
Shared Room Rate	The Shared Room Rate currently applies to single people aged under 35 on Housing Benefit in the private rented sector. These claimants are restricted to the rate for a single room in a shared house, rather than the rate for a self-contained one bedroom property.
Supporting People Programme	Supporting People is a Government programme to provide housing-related support services, such as homeless hostels and sheltered housing, to help vulnerable people live independently. The programme offers vulnerable people the opportunity to improve their quality of life by providing a stable environment which enables greater independence. It will deliver cost effective, reliable, high quality and strategically planned housing-related services, and complement existing care services. The planning and development of services will be needs led. Supporting People is a working partnership of local government, service users and support agencies.
Tenancy Strategy	The Localism Act places a new duty on every local housing authority to publish a tenancy strategy setting out the considerations for individual social housing landlords regarding their own policies on the granting and reissuing of tenancies.

Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a new single payment for people who are looking for work or on a low income. It is to be launched in 2013 and will entirely replace the system of means-tested benefits and tax credits for working-age adults, including Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit and Housing Benefit.

Voluntary sector

Groups whose activities are carried out other than for profit but which are not public or local authorities. These organisations would normally be formally constituted and employ paid professional and administrative staff. They may or may not use volunteer help.

Warm Front Programme

The Warm Front scheme provides heating and insulation improvements to households on certain income-related benefits living in properties that are poorly insulated and/or do not have a working central heating system.

Worcestershire Link Up

Worcestershire Link Up is a single homeless access service covering the whole of the county. It is a virtual gateway enabling quick and effective access into supported accommodation and support services funded by Supporting People.

Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership

A partnership including the Strategic Housing Managers from each of the Worcestershire local authorities, representation from the Chief Executives across Worcestershire, Social Care, Connexions, Supporting People, Probation, Public Health and is responsible for the strategic direction of housing *and* the wider aspects of housing such as health, social care, safer communities across the Worcestershire.