

Appendix 1 - Homelessness Strategy Action Plan: 2014 - 2019

Section 1 - Recommendations from the Homelessness Review by Jenkins Duval (February 2013)

Aims	What will we do?	Who will deliver this?	Resources needed	Target/ Outcome	Progress
1. Continue to develop the Council's Housing Options Service	1.1 Service improvements arising from the Lean Systems Review	Housing Service Manager & Housing Options Team	WDC staff within an improved service structure	a) Improved service structure to be in place by April 2014; b) Carry out 6 monthly reviews thereafter	
	1.2 Introduction of a feedback form for customers of the Housing Options service	Housing Options Team & agencies assisting clients	WDC staff time – within existing resources	a) Feedback form to be introduced by July 2014 & blank copies provided to agencies for use; b) Findings reviewed every 6 months and input to service improvements	
	1.3 Increase percentage of online applications to the Housing Register	Housing Options Team & agencies in assisting clients	Actions to encourage online applications to Housing Register	2012/13 baseline = 35%; target is to increase percentage year on year – report annually	
	1.4 Provide officers with more opportunity to prevent & address homelessness	Housing Options Team	WDC staff time – within existing resources	Restructure the department for more efficient use of staff time / free up officer time for casework - by September 2014	

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2. Deliver sufficient, appropriate temporary accommodation	2.1 Cease use of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation other than in exceptional circumstances or emergencies	Housing Options Team	WDC staff time - to make use of other TA options	Nil use of B&B for families – monitor and report quarterly	
	2.2 Upgrade Saunderton Lodge to improve the accommodation	Housing Service Manager	Capital Finance (amount to be assessed)	a) Report to Cabinet by April 2014; b) Subject to approval, carry out improvements – timescale to be agreed	
	2.3 Use or sell (to procure alternative temporary accommodation) the 8 WDC owned miscellaneous properties – timescales for actions being subject to approval.	Housing Service Manager	To be assessed	Actions to be progressed in accordance with Cabinet decision in November 2013 – timescale to be agreed	

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3. Improve access to and increase use of the Private Rented Sector	3.1 Closer working with private sector landlords – to increase access to private rented sector housing	Private Renter Sector Officer	WDC staff time, local Forums	a) Hold regular Landlord Forum meetings; b) Achieve an increased use of the private rented sector – monitor and report quarterly	
	3.2 Discharge homelessness duty to the Private Rented Sector	Housing Options Team	WDC staff time - extra post in team	a) Commence discharge of homelessness duty to Private Rented Sector by January 2014 b) Increase use year on year – monitor and report quarterly	
	3.3 Investigate potential of co-locating the WRDGS and the Council's 'in house' scheme	Housing Service Manager	WDC staff time; office space	a) Prepare an options report by Spring 2014; b) Future actions depend on findings	
4. Tackle Rough Sleeping	4.1 a) Continue to gather information on people sleeping rough in the district	Housing Options Team and partner agencies	WDC housing staff + volunteers from local agencies - and Police support on the night	a) Continue regular meetings of WDC and agencies regarding rough sleepers; b) Carry out an annual Street Count or Estimate in accordance with in accordance with the DCLG guidance and verified by the Homeless Link agency to assess the number of people sleeping rough in the district	

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	b) Monitor numbers of 'sofa-surfers' and prison leavers	Housing Options Team and CAB		c) Work with the CAB to monitor the number of people and provide the information	
	<p>4.2 a) Monitor the current Outreach and NSNO for the sub-region service (including the B&B funding, emergency beds, reconnection funding and personalisation funding) - assisting rough sleepers to access accommodation and support to ensure the performance is in accordance with the tendered specifications;</p> <p>b) Review outcomes when the current contracts end and assess if</p>	WDC Housing Service and BOSH Group Members	WDC housing staff time; and if the service is to be funded in future, finance will be required	<p>a) Reduced incidences of rough sleeping in the Wycombe District – having NSNO in place throughout 2013/14;</p> <p>b) If successful, aim to secure resources to enable commissioning of the services for a further period – to be agreed;</p>	

Aims	What will we do?	Who will deliver this?	Resources needed	Target/ Outcome	Progress
	<p>successful</p> <p>c) Consider options for 2015 and beyond</p>			<p>c) Monitor and report 6 monthly thereafter</p>	
	<p>4.3 Continue to make the case for complex needs clients to access the countywide hostel services.</p>	<p>WDC and Bucks housing leads</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>Increase uptake of complex needs clients from the streets of Wycombe District - monitor and report quarterly</p>	
	<p>4.5 a) Monitor the current worklessness initiatives for individuals who have previously slept rough</p> <p>b)) Review outcomes when the current contracts end and assess if successful</p> <p>c) Consider options for 2015 and beyond</p>	<p>WDC and Bucks housing leads</p>	<p>WDC staff time and some financial resource</p>	<p>a) Clients being able to take part in training, gain skills / knowledge to be able to take up voluntary or paid employment</p> <p>b) If successful, aim to secure resources to enable commissioning of the service for a further period – to be agreed;</p> <p>c) If continued, monitor and report at 6 monthly intervals</p>	

Aims	What will we do?	Who will deliver this?	Resources needed	Target/ Outcome	Progress
5. Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy Review	5.1 Operate an amended Bucks Home Choice Allocations Policy to reflect the local needs	Housing Options Manager / Bucks Home Choice group	WDC staff time	Subject to Member approval in December 2013, have the amended policy in operation by April 2014	
	5.2 Carry out an annual review of Bucks Home Choice to ensure it is meeting the needs	Housing Service Manager and Housing Options Manager	WDC staff time	Review annually and report findings	
6. Address the Impacts of Welfare Reforms	6.1 Gain an understanding of the housing impacts of the various Welfare Reform changes & attend the Bucks Network Welfare Reform Task & Finish Group	Housing Service Manager and Housing Options Manager	WDC staff time, financial may also be needed	a) Carry out detailed analysis of people affected by the various elements of Welfare Reform & identify the implications; b) Work with Registered Providers, agencies and private sector landlords to address the issues	
	6.2 Under-Occupation Deduction– a) Raise awareness of DHP assistance and opportunity for move / exchange	WDC Housing Options Manager	WDC staff time	a) Prepare suitable publicity material and distribute – also update the Council’s website – by January 2014	

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	<p>b) Investigate the need and scope for an incentive scheme to assist households needing to downsize;</p> <p>c) Work with HB team to ensure a consistent message is sent from the Council encouraging the seeking of early assistance</p>	<p>Housing Service Manager and Registered Providers</p> <p>Housing Options Team and HB Team</p>	<p>Financial resources</p> <p>Staff time</p>	<p>b) Report on findings to WDC Cabinet by April 2014 - Future actions depend on findings;</p> <p>c) Regular engagement of officers from the two teams and reporting of actions</p>	
	<p>6.3 Universal Credit – raise awareness and be able to inform & advise households - aiming to avoid debts and rent arrears</p>	<p>Housing Options Team, agencies including CAB</p>	<p>WDC staff time</p>	<p>a) Raise awareness of UC & basic bank accounts b) Staff training as to exemptions etc. c) Make IT facilities available at WDC d) Monitor the impacts of UC, respond with actions if possible and keep under review</p> <p><i>Timescales to be agreed - based on Govt. timetable</i></p>	

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	6.4 Benefit Cap – Provide targeted advice and assistance to those affected by the benefit cap before this causes homelessness	Housing Options Team and HB Team	WDC staff time	a) Contact to be made with the affected households to offer support & access to resources b) Provide additional training for front line staff c) Regular liaison between the HB and Housing Options teams regarding the affected households and regular meetings with Jobcentre Plus	
	6.5 Local Housing Allowance - Investigate the local effect of the 30th percentile	Housing Service Manager	WDC staff time	Consider options for local market research - details and timescales to be agreed	
	6.6 Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) – maximise opportunities for hostel move-on accommodation	Housing Options Team	WDC staff time	Seek opportunities with RPs and the PRS - in partnership with stakeholders –Detailed actions and timescales to be agreed	

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7. Reviewing Joint Working and Protocols	7.1 Continue to prioritise homelessness services		Staff time and financial	Continue to work with agencies/ organisations to provide effective services and referrals for clients by targeted resources appropriately - for training, networking, funding streams etc.	
	7.2 Monitor the impacts of the recently agreed protocol for 16/17 year olds across the county	Housing Service Manager	Staff time	Quarterly monitoring and reporting	
8. Social Lettings Agency	8.1 Investigate the scope to create a local social lettings agency	Housing Service Manager	Financial	Recommendation to Cabinet by September 2015	
9. Deliver affordable settled accommodation	9.1 Work with Registered Providers to develop additional affordable / social housing	Registered Providers – in partnership with WDC Housing Service	Financial	a) Deliver affordable / social housing in line with annual targets; b) Work with Bucks CC to assist in the provision of appropriate supported housing accommodation; Quarterly monitoring and reporting	

Section 2 - Actions for the DCLG Gold Standard for Homelessness Service

DCLG 'Gold Standard' Challenge	What will we do?	Who will deliver this?	Resources needed	Target/ Outcome	Progress
2.1	Adopt a Corporate commitment to prevent homelessness	WDC– Housing Service.	Commitment from WDC staff and elected Members	Approval of a new Strategy by the Council and regular reporting to the Cabinet Member on homelessness	
2.2	Partnership work with voluntary sector and agencies to address support, education, employment and training needs	BOSH Group and partners	Initial funding from Central Government, delivered via BOSH Group	No rough sleepers in the Wycombe District without having been subject to a plan by January 2014	
2.3	Housing Options prevention service, with written advice to all clients	WDC Housing Service	Within existing	Inclusion of letter within standard procedures to clarify the advice delivered to clients	
2.4	No second night out model in place	All agencies	Initial funding from Central Government, delivered via BOSH Group	No person to spend 2 nd night out as homeless by Winter 2013/14 and onwards	
2.5	Housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group, to include appropriate accommodation and support	WDC Housing Service and all agencies	To be assessed and agreed with partner organisations	To continued regular meetings with agencies regarding rough sleepers and pursue agreed actions	

2.6	Develop suitable private rented offer for all client groups, including advice and support for both clients and landlords	WDC Housing Service;, WRDGS	DHP, homelessness prevention fund	A scheme of private rented accommodation to be available to all	
2.7	Active engagement in preventing mortgage repossessions, including via the mortgage rescue scheme	Partner agencies and WDC Housing Service	WDC staff time and resources of the national mortgage rescue scheme (MRS) (including those of the Registered Providers)	a) Monitor the impacts if the national MRS ends in March 2014 and explore possible alternatives; b) Maintain a low level / reducing number of mortgage repossessions	
2.8	Have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually	All agencies	WDC staff time	Strategy in place by Dec 2013 and reviewed annually Report to 6 monthly meetings of the WHF Core Group	
2.9	No placement of 16/17 year old into B&B	WDC Housing Service/ BCC	Emergency bed/protocol with SSD	No 16/17 year old in B&B	
2.10	No placement of families into B&B unless in emergency and then for less than 6 weeks	WDC Housing Service	Better use of TA and prevention of homeless	No placement of families in B&B from Sept 2013	

Section 3 - Actions for Specific Client Groups

Client Group	What will we do?	Who will deliver this?	Resource needed	Target/ Outcome	Progress
3.1 People being excluded by parents / family / friends	a) Develop a robust approach to parental/ family/ friend exclusions b) Raise awareness in partner agencies /services to enable early identification of potential housing crises	WDC Housing Service	WDC Staff Time	Produce clear process map leaflet to aid understanding of processes and options available	
3.2 People facing termination of Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs)	Understand of which landlords/ agencies are seeking termination of AST's to try to prevent the need to do so.	WDC Housing Service	WDC Staff Time	Mapping of landlords/ properties and agencies where termination of AST is cause for approach	
3.3 Women Escaping Violence	Develop a new protocol for closer working with Women's Aid	WDC Housing Service	WDC Staff Time	a) To have an agreed protocol in place by Summer 2014; b) Shadowing of roles by each service; c) Housing Options surgeries at the women's aid refuge to ensure all options are made available- not just homelessness; d) Increased use of sanctuary scheme as a possible option	

Client Group	What will we do?	Who will deliver this?	Resource needed	Target/ Outcome	Progress
3.4 People Leaving Hospital who are also known rough sleepers	Develop a new protocol for people being discharged from hospital who are also known rough sleepers and may have health issues.	WDC, Bucks housing leads and the Community Mental Health Service	Staff time	To have an agreed protocol in place by Summer 2014 which aims to prevent hospital leaver rough sleepers from going back to the streets	
3.5 People Leaving Prison who are also known rough sleepers	Develop a new protocol for prison leavers who are also known rough sleepers, including exploring any scope for use of Probation funding.	WDC, Bucks housing leads and the Probation Service	Staff time	To have an agreed protocol in place by Summer 2014 which aims to prevent prison leaver rough sleepers from going back to the streets	
3.6 Community Groups	Understanding of why people from some community groups appear more likely to face homelessness than others	WDC housing Service	WDC Staff Time	a) Target community leaders to raise awareness of housing options and services available; b) Mapping areas to understand if customers from certain wards are more likely to seek assistance	
3.7 Pregnant Single Women	Consider possibilities to provide more specialist accommodation for pregnant single applicants	WDC Housing Service, BCC Supporting People Team	WDC and BCC staff time – and potentially financial resources	Discuss needs with Supporting People providers using evidence gathered as to need for increased services	

Client Group	What will we do?	Who will deliver this?	Resource needed	Target/ Outcome	Progress
3.8 Families Considered to be Intentionally homeless	Develop a new protocol for closer working with Social Services	WDC housing leads and BCC Social Services	WDC and BCC staff time	To have an agreed protocol in place by Summer 2014;	
3.9 Drug and Alcohol Misusers	Develop links with the agencies	WDC Housing Service and agency teams	WDC and agency staff time	To be agreed with the agencies	