

Hastings and St Leonards

Homelessness Strategy 2016-18

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Foreword

Having a home is a fundamental right for all of us. Homelessness is one of the most devastating situations facing anyone, so preventing and minimising homelessness remains a housing priority for Hastings Borough Council. It is a legal and a moral duty for the council to fulfil.

Our last Homelessness Strategy covered the period 2013-2015. It set out how we would work to prevent homelessness with a range of housing and support solutions. It also gave a commitment for the Council and partners to work together to address homelessness and related issues as it is clear the Council cannot not tackle the problems in isolation. We have been successful in finding alternative options for those who have become or who have been in danger of becoming homeless and will continue to do this.

However, despite these successes there are significant challenges ahead. This Homelessness Strategy is being implemented at a time of continued changes to Government housing policy and legislation. The Welfare Reforms are still not fully implemented and the impacts of the changes remain relatively unknown. There are continual pressures on the housing market in Hastings, which are increasing as more households struggle to find housing suitable for their needs at a cost they can afford, whether buying or renting.

Our Homelessness Strategy is our plan for tackling homelessness over the next three years, at a time when levels of homelessness are increasing and resources are reducing. We will work in partnership to find solutions and help prevent homelessness for the residents of Hastings and St Leonards.

Councillor Peter Chowney, Leader of the Council

Councillor Kim Forward, Housing and Community Services Portfolio Holder

Executive Summary

The Homelessness Strategy 2016-2018 takes account of the new policy challenges emerging from the Government deficit reduction plans and welfare reform agenda. It also reflects key changes to homelessness guidance and revisions to national housing policy. The new strategy has been drawn up within the context of rising homeless presentations which is placing additional demand on the service.

The impact of homelessness on both individual households and the wider community cannot be underestimated. Homelessness is linked to a wide range of issues, including mental health, crime and fear of crime, developmental problems, substance misuse issues and poor educational attainment. The Council's Homelessness Strategy is intended to help shape multi-agency approaches to tackling homelessness and to highlight how partners intend to intervene to support people to find and retain accommodation suitable for their needs.

Hastings has and continues to experience significant problems associated with higher levels of deprivation. As a consequence it has been disproportionately affected by reductions in public expenditure and changes in welfare provision. Adding to the pressure upon the household budgets of low income households has been a marked increase in accommodation costs locally. A combination of rising rents and a reduced supply of affordable private sector accommodation are making it increasingly difficult for local people, particularly some of the most vulnerable, to secure accommodation suitable for their needs. With demand for social housing already far outweighing supply, preventing an increase in homelessness in Hastings will be challenging.

Therefore, it is imperative that the Council works with partners to seek innovative solutions to address housing need. This strategy recognises the need to look at new ways of joint working to provide holistic solutions for vulnerable members of our community who are unable to access or sustain tenancies. It outlines how the Council will work with partners to tackle key issues, including, rising levels of rough sleeping; the support needs of people with multiple complex needs; the poor health outcomes of homelessness people and the substandard property and management standards in the private rented sector. It also sets out ambitious plans to explore the provision of new housing solutions, including improving the temporary accommodation offer and exploring the viability of a Housing First approach.

We recognise the solutions to meeting local housing need and improving the health and wellbeing of local households must be delivered in partnership. Our Homelessness Strategy therefore provides a framework from which the Council, together with statutory and voluntary sector partners, can work together to meet the following strategic priorities:

- Strategic priority 1: Prevent and minimise homelessness

- Strategic priority 2: Improve access to good quality, well managed accommodation in the private rented sector
- Strategic priority 3: Work jointly to deliver quality housing and support services

Introduction

Homelessness not only affects individual households, but also impacts upon the wider community. Homelessness is commonly linked to crime and fear of crime, health and developmental problems, substance misuse issues, poor educational attainment and unemployment. Homelessness is also intrinsically linked to poverty.

The Council has, and will continue to prioritise tackling homelessness as a key strategic priority and invests substantial amounts of time and resources to do this. Significant achievements in preventing and minimising homelessness and improving access to a range of housing options available to those in housing need have benefited a wide range of local people over the last two years (see Appendix A for a list of key successes). This is indicative of the Council and its partners' commitment to tackling homelessness and associated issues to ensure positive outcomes for as many households in Hastings as possible.

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the Localism Act 2011 introduced a range of measures which resulted in unprecedented changes to social housing policy and homelessness legislation. Changes to the welfare system that came about from 2012 are largely now embedded. Although the effects of the changes on homelessness were not as significant as expected, it is still anticipated that households will continue to struggle financially as 'top up funding' that has been provided to Local Authorities to cushion the impact of cuts is being reduced and the use of sanctions to penalise job seekers who have not complied with the terms of their 'Claimant Commitment' increases. Universal Credit is yet to be fully implemented and emerging reforms following the General Election in May 2015 will create additional challenges for the poorest and most vulnerable residents in the Borough, as well as the professionals, volunteers and advocates seeking to assist them.

The Chancellor's Spending Review in November 2015 announced a £20bn reduction in departmental budgets and significant cuts are forecast for the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The Spending Review 2015 also outlined the Government's plan to protect the DCLG funding for targeted homelessness intervention, so it is hoped that the Council will, at a minimum, retain its current level of Homelessness Grant. The Homelessness Grant provides vital central government funding to ensure that the Council can continue to deliver effective homelessness prevention measures and activities; it is important to note that this grant is not ring-fenced for use in tackling homelessness exclusively.

The Government has provided some assistance to local councils and developers to work with local communities to plan and build better places to live for everyone. This includes capital investment for affordable housing, changing legislation to improve the quality of rented housing, encouraging local authorities to develop initiatives to help more people to buy a home, and providing funding to support the most vulnerable people. The Housing and Planning Bill, which, at the time of publication, is being debated in Parliament looks likely to have a significant impact on future affordable housing development and provision. Demand for social housing in Hastings still outstrips supply and the support available for vulnerable people will continue to reduce as part of the Government's plans to reduce public spending.

Homelessness and rough sleeping has steadily increased over the last 2 years which is a trend that is mirrored nationally. The use of temporary accommodation is therefore increasing, and finding suitable housing options to prevent a homelessness crisis is becoming more challenging as demand for housing in Hastings rises in an increasingly competitive market. Hastings continues to grow as a vibrant and popular community in which to live. In recent years Hastings has benefitted from the inward migration of households choosing to relocate from more expensive areas in the South East and London. However, there is a risk that the continued gentrification of Hastings will further increase demand for what is, in terms of the South East, very affordable, family-sized accommodation. This sustained level of demand is likely to continue to drive-up market prices meaning local people are less able to access affordable, good quality housing in the private sector.

As well as the evident challenges for local households accessing accommodation, the ability to sustain and keep accommodation is also an increasing issue. This is mainly due to private landlords having fewer concerns with terminating a tenancy as demand for private sector accommodation continues to outweigh supply.

The link with housing and health has been highlighted nationally and is more recognised locally. The need to ensure people successfully manage health problems is crucial to ensure they access and sustain accommodation. This in turn will reduce the reliance on primary and secondary health care services which is disproportionately high for homeless people. East Sussex County Council, the NHS, the Clinical Commissioning Group and partners are working together to jointly commission services and change how services operate to ensure housing, support and care needs can be met as part of a holistic approach to service delivery.

The emerging challenges linked to homelessness come at a time when Central and Local Government funding is reducing. It is therefore timely to develop a new Homelessness Strategy that will address the continuing need to provide good quality housing and support services to meet an ever increasing demand from households facing homelessness. A comprehensive review of homelessness in Hastings during 2013-15 has been carried out which has been used to shape this strategy. In moving forward, it is essential

that local agencies continue to work together to ensure that limited resources are targeted effectively to those in need.

Taking into account the challenges presented by changes to housing policy and legislation, this strategy sets out a strategic framework for the continued improvement to housing and support services delivered by the Council, stakeholders and local agencies over the next two years.

Our aim is to reduce and prevent homelessness in the Borough by:

- Assisting households in housing need to secure suitable accommodation at a price they can afford across all tenures
- Providing a range of housing advice and assistance to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping and adopt models of good practice for delivering holistic services to the most vulnerable households
- Further improving our understanding of the local housing market and causes and reasons for homelessness, including the potential impact of any increase in homelessness stemming from inward migration
- Adapting or developing existing housing and related support services in order to tackle emerging trends and priorities
- Ensuring housing related support is available for vulnerable households
- Exploring funding opportunities and options for joint commissioning
- Raising the standards of private rented sector accommodation, tackling rogue landlords and improving joint working relationships with landlords

This strategy has been produced in consultation with service users, stakeholders and local agencies and builds upon the successes of the previous Homelessness Strategies delivered since 2002. It is directly informed by consultation with partners and users of the Home Works floating housing support service. It links to other local strategic priorities and also incorporates Government recommendations on developing Homelessness Strategies, which places a strong emphasis on achieving their '10 Local Authority Challenges' (listed in Appendix B).

Building on the successes of the last strategy, we will:

- Help facilitate improved inter agency partnership working to ensure services meet local need
- Ensure resources are maximised and targeted effectively and efficiently to avoid duplication of service provision.
- Help re-engineer existing services, or develop new services where resources are available, to tackle homelessness
- Ensure fair and equal access to services for all
- Facilitate regional and sub-regional working where it will assist in meeting needs locally

Housing & Welfare Policy Context

The newly elected Government that came into power in 2015 is proposing additional welfare reforms that will again affect vulnerable people. In November 2015, the Chancellor announced as part of the Spending Review, further spending cuts: including £12bn of welfare cuts and a £20bn reduction in departmental budgets – to include a further 30% reduction to the 12.8bn DCLG budget. With the implementation of some of the proposals there is an even greater risk that homelessness will increase as households struggle to adapt to further changes including:

- Reductions in levels of welfare benefits with a cap from £26,000 to £20,000 annually for families that are out of work and have children
- The introduction of Universal Credit for all households where all benefits will be paid in one lump sum on a monthly basis by 2017
- Working tax credits and Universal Credit limited to 2 children born after 2017
- Households earning over £40,000 in London will have to pay market rents on a Housing Association tenancy in London (which could encourage migration to other areas like Hastings)
- Removing housing benefit entitlement for under 21s with a new 'earn to learn' obligation
- Employment and Support Allowance payments for new claimants who are deemed able to prepare for work to be "aligned" with Jobseeker's Allowance

It is anticipated that further challenges in preventing homelessness will arise as households continue to struggle to pay rents with reduced levels of benefit and struggle to access affordable accommodation in the private rented sector as demand for this type of accommodation increases.

In addition, the Housing and Planning Bill will impact on the way in which affordable homes are delivered in the future. The repercussions of this policy could be a further decline in the availability of affordable accommodation for rent and an increase in housing insecurity and, therefore, homelessness.

Hastings was confirmed as the 11th most affected Local Authority area in the United Kingdom by the welfare reforms¹ in 2013. The impact in Hastings is more than four times that of many South East council areas. There appears to be no one single reason for this (e.g. Benefit Cap or changes to under occupation rules in social housing). The cumulative impact of the benefit changes on Hastings was explained by the large number of people in receipt of welfare benefits and the unusually high number of people renting accommodation; this distribution of types of tenure in the town has not

¹ *Hitting the poorest places hardest: The local and regional impact of welfare reform.* Beatty, C. and Fothergill, S., 2013. Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University

changed significantly and Hastings will be hit hard by the further reforms outlined above.

DRAFT

What do we need to understand to successfully tackle homelessness in Hastings?

A full review of homelessness has been produced taking into account:

- Key changes to Government housing policy, legislation and welfare reforms
- An analysis of a wide range of data to better understand homelessness in Hastings
- An evaluation of the impact of the 2013-15 Homelessness Strategy
- Consultation on the way forward with a wide range of partners, including statutory bodies, voluntary groups, faith groups, support agencies and service users
- Likely future levels of funding

Key Facts about Hastings that can affect levels of homelessness

- Hastings is the 20th most deprived Local Authority in the Country
- There are very high levels of economic inactivity
- Life expectancy is below the regional and national average
- Benefit dependency levels remain high and wage levels are lower than the regional average
- There is a high proportion of adults on working age benefits
- There are higher than average numbers in receipt of incapacity benefit
- A third of all households in Hastings claim housing or council tax benefits
- Educational attainment is persistently low
- Teenage conception rates remain one of the highest in the country
- Hastings is one of only three areas in the south east designated as a dispersal area for asylum seekers
- 11th most affected area in the Country by welfare reforms
- Very high levels of deprivation and benefit dependency which are linked to patterns of inward migration of poorer households

Homelessness in Hastings

- Homelessness presentations and acceptances consistently remain higher than the South East average
- Homelessness prevention (keeping people in their home or finding alternative accommodation before homelessness) has been increasingly successful year on year
- Homelessness acceptances increased by 33% between 2013/14 and 2014/15
- The use of emergency accommodation, the length of stay and associated costs have all increased over the last two years as a result of the increase in homelessness presentations
- There have been significant increases in the number of single men being accommodated in emergency accommodation

- Joint working with statutory and voluntary agencies to prevent homelessness for a range of client groups is well regarded and has proved successful in recent years
- Incidences of rough sleeping have increased
- Homelessness presentations are expected to further increase over the next 2 years
- Main reasons for homelessness have remained consistent
- The number of 16 and 17 year olds presenting for assistance with homelessness is consistent, but remains higher than the rest of East Sussex
- Increasing numbers of households are presenting for assistance with additional support needs around mental health, substance misuse, offending behaviour and challenging behaviour
- Debt and financial inclusion is increasingly more of an issue when trying to prevent homelessness and secure suitable affordable accommodation
- Demand for support services and specialist supported accommodation is high and far outstrips supply.

Homelessness Presentations	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Total homelessness applications	242 households	263 households	325 households
Total homelessness acceptances	98 households	104 households	138 households
Homelessness preventions	1,896	2,093	2,197
Applicants accepted as homeless and under 25	20 households (20%)	23 households (22%)	26 households (19%)
Key reasons for homelessness			
1. Friend or family evictions	22	32	36
2. End of Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST)	14	20	39
3. Loss of rented or tied accommodation due to reasons other than termination of AST	12	15	10
4. Violent breakdown of relationship involving partner	7	10	12
5. Non-violent breakdown of relationship with partner	8	0	11
<i>Accounting for:</i>	64% of acceptances	74% of acceptances	78% of acceptances

Rough sleepers

Over the last five years there has been a seen a steady increase in the number of rough sleepers in Hastings. In 2010 there were a maximum of 2-3 rough sleepers found by outreach services on any one night and 10 rough sleepers confirmed as intermittently rough sleeping.

In 2015 outreach services have verified up to 14 rough sleepers on any one night and 35 individuals are confirmed as intermittently rough sleeping. As well as an increase in numbers, the rough sleeper profile has changed. An increase in females has been confirmed (in some instances they have been pregnant) and the number of under 25 year olds sleeping rough has increased. The chaotic nature of substance misuse including the use of legal highs is notably more prevalent.

Consultation with stakeholders has concluded that a different approach to dealing with single homeless with complex needs is needed. The mainstream housing options and support interventions available for homeless people in the Borough are not tailored for the chaotic lifestyles of entrenched rough sleepers. As a result, success in accessing or keeping accommodation has been limited for a core-group of entrenched rough sleepers identified locally. (Although resettling those new to rough sleeping has been much more successful).

Hastings has been fortunate to be part of regional and sub-regional partnerships that have attracted external funding and are tasked with addressing the needs of single homeless and individuals with the most complex of needs. The learning from the Fulfilling Lives Project and SHORE (Sussex Homeless Outreach Reconnection and Engagement) will help inform future commissioning plans and service design for these client groups going forward.

Health Inequalities

It is nationally recognised that suitable housing is critical to maintaining health and wellbeing. Good housing helps people stay healthy and achieve a decent quality of life. Stable housing will aid people to recover from periods of ill health and can also enable them to effectively address their health and social care needs. Safe housing will help prevent trips, falls and injuries that can result in hospital admissions and lead to longer term health problems.

Hastings has significantly worse health outcomes for residents when compared to the rest of England. There are a range of underlying reasons for poor health in Hastings, including the high level of deprivation, the percentage of children living in poverty, the high number of overcrowded households, households without central heating, poor housing conditions and the rate of long term unemployment.

Innovative solutions which are designed to tackle the prevalence of mental health issues among individuals experiencing rough sleeping and homelessness continue to be developed. Hastings Council continues to work proactively with health partners to develop effective multi-agency solutions to these complex and interrelated challenges.

In July 2014 Hastings and Rother CCG launched a £5m Action Plan to address health inequalities in the area. The plan sets out a blueprint for improving access to healthcare, developing better services for certain types of conditions and kick-starting programmes to encourage local people to live healthier lives. The Housing Options team has been commissioned to provide a group of services designed to address health inequalities among the rough sleeper and street communities to improve the health outcomes for this vulnerable group.

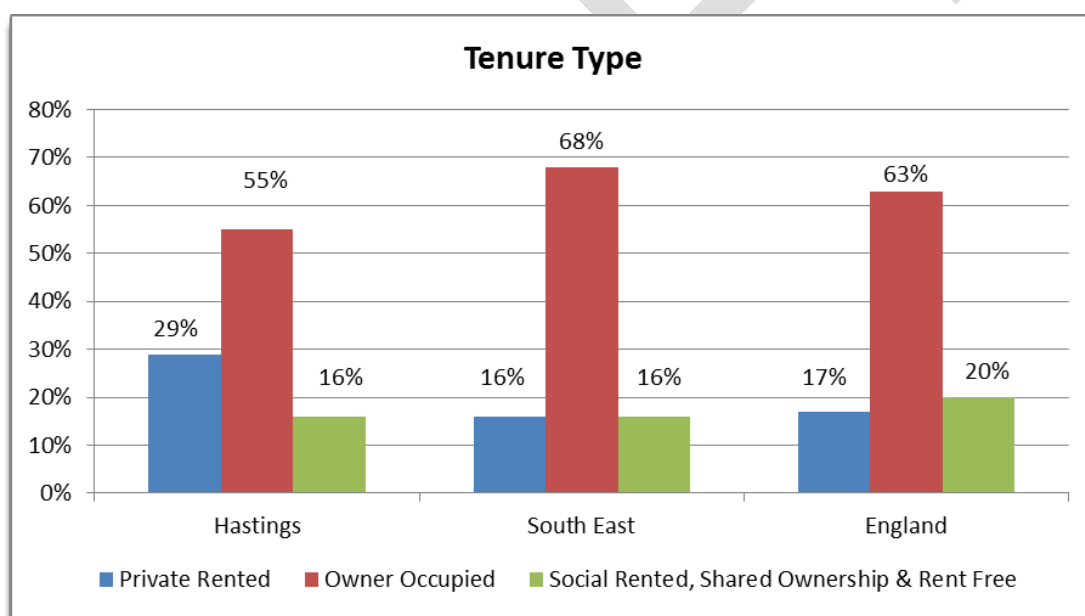
The key focus of the Action Plan is health improvement and empowering patients to take control of their own health in line with the strategic direction embodied in East Sussex Better Together (a programme to deliver integrated social care and health services).

Homeless Link's 2014 audit states '*There is evidence that if physical, mental health, substance misuse and housing agencies work together in a coordinated way to support an individual's multiple problems, better health outcomes and cost savings are achieved*'.

Hastings Borough Council and the Hastings and Rother CCG will work jointly to commission services that improve health outcomes for homeless people and reduce the reliance on primary and secondary health care services.

Housing Stock in Hastings

- Owner occupation is low compared with the rest of East Sussex and the South East average
- House prices remain below the regional average
- The social sector housing numbers are slightly lower than the regional average and supply is not sufficient to meet demand.
- The private rented sector is considerably larger than the rest of East Sussex and is 50% bigger than the national average at the time of the 2011 census
- A third of all private rented accommodation in the County is located in Hastings
- There are issues with affordability and quality of accommodation in the private sector and rogue landlords are known to operate
- New house building remains slower than needed to meet demand



Census 2011

The private rented sector

Significant effort to improve the condition and housing management of private rented sector accommodation continues, and enabling access to this accommodation for households in housing need is crucial to preventing homelessness. However, the following are key features of the private rented sector housing stock that pose a challenge when tackling homelessness:

- 30% of Hastings stock is privately rented and continuing to expand
- 50% plus of stock rented in Central St Leonards area
- Approximately 2,800 Houses in Multiple Occupation, 85% of which are concentrated in 4 wards
- A surplus of old Bed & Breakfasts/ Hotels some used by other Local Authorities as emergency accommodation for homeless households
- Significantly higher than average number of older buildings, often with poor internal layouts due to inadequate conversions in the 1960s and 70s
- High numbers of listed buildings and conservation requirements that deter investors and add to costs
- Poor management and maintenance in some accommodation with rogue landlords in operation

Understanding the role of the private rented sector in managing homelessness is crucial. This valued resource, currently available for local people to secure affordable housing, is also a risk to the Borough in terms of future increases in homelessness. Households presenting as homelessness as a result of their private sector tenancy being terminated is increasing as the stock of private accommodation grows. In addition, the housing market is changing as Hastings undergoes a process of gentrification and becomes a more attractive area to live in. A more competitive housing market can be seen as a positive sign of successful regeneration but this is also driving up rents and making it increasingly hard for local people to access private housing to prevent homelessness. Although numbers are remaining fairly low, neighbouring Local Authorities and London Authorities continue to relocate homeless households to Hastings which is further compounding the problem of accessibility for local people.

In response to this challenge, one idea was for the Council to pilot a Social Lettings Agency. Initially private rented sector accommodation will be leased and offered to local households at risk of homelessness. The aim of the service is to:

- Engage with private landlords, offer a competitive and good quality housing management service, and encourage them to work jointly to meet local housing needs
- Drive improvements to property and management standards
- Provide an option for households in crisis and reduce reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation
- Prevent homelessness

- Address the financial obstacles faced by households trying to access private accommodation in terms of tenancy start-up costs.

Inward migration

The large stock of private rented sector in Hastings can be an attractive option for households living in more expensive areas to relocate to more affordable accommodation. It could also be a cost effective option for other Local Authorities looking to place their homeless families in affordable accommodation.

An increase in demand for affordable private rented sector accommodation has the potential of driving up rents and making it more difficult for local people to access affordable accommodation. Given the increasing demand for homelessness prevention services, coupled with an increase in demand from households from outside the area, local agencies may find it increasingly difficult to prevent homelessness. In addition, the risks associated with an influx of vulnerable households from outside of the area, in terms of increased demand for local services, the negative impact of transience and a change in population on a community should not be ignored.

The Council and partners will continue to monitor the impact of inward migration on local services and the community and work with London Authorities to ask for their cooperation in joint working when considering relocating household to Hastings.

What's the plan?

Taking into account the Council's successes over the last five years, the predicted increase in pressure on all services as a result of welfare reform, and potential changes in the housing market, the following three strategic priorities have been identified as the key areas to focus on in the next two years:

Strategic Priority 1: Prevent and minimise homelessness

We will:

- Maximise partnership working opportunities to ensure the effective use of local resources and earlier intervention
- Ensure housing options services are accessible
- Find holistic housing and support interventions to meet the needs of the most vulnerable single homeless people, in particular rough sleepers and homeless people with complex needs
- Work jointly to monitor impacts of welfare reforms and encourage people to take positive action to minimise the impacts and prevent homelessness
- Commission services to meet the needs of specific client groups where there are gaps in service and resources allow
- Ensure people can access a range of housing options to meet individual housing and support needs
- Work constructively with other Local Authorities and Statutory organisations to minimise the impact of the in-migration of households in need to the Hastings area, particularly in levels of high deprivation

Strategic Priority 2: Improve access to good quality, well managed accommodation in the private rented sector

We will:

- Improve joint working and support for private landlords
- Continue to expand the social lettings agency
- Improve the condition of accommodation through enforcement
- Raise standards of management in private sector accommodation
- Implement selective licencing and continue with additional and mandatory licencing
- Address financial barriers to accessing accommodation
- Ensure people have support to sustain tenancies

Strategic Priority 3: Work jointly to deliver quality housing and support services

We will:

- Ensure all organisations and the community understand what we aim to achieve
- Work jointly to commission services, targeted in the areas of most need
- Ensure homelessness is addressed as part of the new integration of services with East Sussex County Council and the NHS
- Pilot new ways of working that reflect models of good practice nationally
- Improve understanding of different organisations' roles across the sector
- Provide accurate up to date, relevant information to service users
- Facilitate training opportunities to ensure consistent and accurate advice is provided

Action Plan

Priority 1 – Prevent and Minimise Homelessness						
No.	We will	By who?	Resources	Milestones	Outcome	Comments
1.1	Continue to provide accommodation based services and housing related floating support services through the Supporting People Programme	ESCC HBC	Existing resources	The quality of service provision reviewed by Supporting People Work with Supporting People to target limited resources effectively in light of future budget cuts as part of the Supporting People Strategic Forum	Good quality support services delivered that offer a housing solution and prevent homelessness	
1.2	Make best use of housing stock by bringing empty homes back into use to meet housing need	HBC YMCA HCA	Existing resources	70 long term empty homes brought back into use per annum 30 long term empty homes identified for CPO by December 2015 20 additional units brought back into use through the YMCA project	More homes available for people in housing need, including young people	

Priority 1 – Prevent and Minimise Homelessness						
No.	We will	By who?	Resources	Milestones	Outcome	Comments
				Promote Empty Homes Week annually – 30 th November		
1.3	Offer financial assistance for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to sustain their home or access accommodation	HBC ESCC	Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme (DESSS) funding	150 households assisted into private sector accommodation annually Provide Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) to qualifying households	Homelessness prevented with a suitable housing solution Financial barriers to accessing or sustaining accommodation overcome	DESSS funding is only confirmed until 2016/17
1.4	Continue to work with the Sussex Homeless Outreach Reconnection & Engagement group (SHORE) to develop a consistent approach to tackling rough sleeping across Sussex	HBC SHORE	DCLG funding	Review HBC's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) to ensure it is consistent and fit for purpose by April 2016 Explore the development of a county-wide SWEP	Reduce health risks associated with rough sleeping in severe weather Consistent approach to addressing	

Priority 1 – Prevent and Minimise Homelessness						
No.	We will	By who?	Resources	Milestones	Outcome	Comments
				Consider recommissioning the Sussex wide rough sleepers outreach service by 2017	rough sleeping across Sussex More support to help rough sleepers from out of the area to reconnect with where they are from Additional outreach resources locally	
1.5	Continue to work jointly to meet the housing and support needs of the street community and rough sleepers in Hastings	HBC	Existing resources HBC Community Partnership Funding	Continue to facilitate the monthly rough sleepers and street drinkers meeting Participate in a weekly multi-agency drop-in service for rough sleepers to access a range of support at one time	Multiagency information sharing and targeted plans for rough sleepers Holistic interventions that are more likely to have	

Priority 1 – Prevent and Minimise Homelessness						
No.	We will	By who?	Resources	Milestones	Outcome	Comments
				<p>Explore the viability of a weekly rough sleeper panel meeting to coordinate and support the work of the multi-agency drop-in – March 2016</p> <p>Recommission the Council's rough sleepers outreach contract in 2017 subject to available resources</p>	<p>lasting impact</p> <p>Detailed intelligence of who is rough sleeping, where and why</p> <p>More opportunities to help connect rough sleepers with local services</p>	
1.6	Develop alternative housing options for people in housing need to prevent placements in emergency accommodation or minimise length of stay if placement unavoidable	HBC	HBC HCA ESCC	<p>75 new affordable housing units delivered annually</p> <p>Work with partners to explore the feasibility of developing additional supported accommodation for young people by 2017</p> <p>Deliver 30 additional</p>	<p>More housing options for people in housing need</p> <p>Additional supported housing for vulnerable people</p>	

Priority 1 – Prevent and Minimise Homelessness						
No.	We will	By who?	Resources	Milestones	Outcome	Comments
				units of accommodation through the Coastal Space Project by 2018 Explore the viability of new models of housing		
1.7	Ensure effective partnership working with health services and Adult Social Care to ensure the housing and support needs of their clients are met	HBC Health ESCC	ESCC	Ensure housing care and support are considered jointly as part of the ESCC Better Together Programme by 2017 ASC to provide a dedicated housing contact	New housing, care and support services commissioned More efficient housing advice and support	
1.8	Work with project partners to deliver housing and support solutions for rough sleepers due to be discharged from the Conquest Hospital	Seaview St John Ambulance HBC	DoH	Service operational by June 2016 Carryout a mid-project review of service outcomes – January 2017	The admission and discharge of homeless people from hospital are recorded and monitored Improved accommodatio	

Priority 1 – Prevent and Minimise Homelessness						
No.	We will	By who?	Resources	Milestones	Outcome	Comments
					n outcomes are achieved	
1.9	Pilot new ways of working to meet the housing and support needs of the most vulnerable homeless people with multiple and complex needs	HBC	CCG	<p>Launch the CCG funded Housing Health and Support Interventions for Rough Sleepers and the Street Community in Hastings project</p> <p>Explore the viability of a Housing First model – December 2016</p> <p>Review project outcomes – June 2017</p>	Fully integrated health, housing and support services	
1.10	Provide practical solutions and support for victims of domestic abuse to remain in their homes if safe to do so	HBC	<p>DCLG Homelessness Grant</p> <p>Community Partnership Funding</p>	<p>Make homes safe through physical interventions as part of the Council's Sanctuary Scheme</p> <p>Continue to fund an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) who offers support and advice to victims of</p>	<p>Households can remain in their home and feel safe</p> <p>Victims are helped to stay safe and to take action against</p>	

Priority 1 – Prevent and Minimise Homelessness						
No.	We will	By who?	Resources	Milestones	Outcome	Comments
				<p>domestic abuse</p> <p>Facilitate the bi-annual Hastings Domestic Abuse Forum</p> <p>Support the delivery of White Ribbon Day</p>	perpetrators	
1.11	Provide housing advice and financial assistance to households needing disabled adaptations in order to remain in their home, or to help them find an alternative housing solution	HBC Amicus- Horizon	Disabled Facilities Grant, HBC and Amicus Horizon funding	<p>Support households through the Housing Solutions service by visiting 90% of referrals within two weeks</p> <p>Annually commit the DFG budget to assist as many applicants as possible with adaptations to their homes</p>	Households can make informed choices about whether to stay and adapt their home or to move	
1.12	Promote the availability of Streetlink as a way of reporting a rough sleeper	HBC partners	Existing resources	<p>Advertise on the Council's public display screens</p> <p>Do promotions on the Council's homepage –</p>	Rough sleepers identified and assisted where possible	

Priority 1 – Prevent and Minimise Homelessness						
No.	We will	By who?	Resources	Milestones	Outcome	Comments
				biannually Work with members of the Rough Sleeper meeting to promote on their websites – July 2016		
1.13	Expand temporary accommodation options	HBC/ Amicus- Horizon		Explore the viability of joint working with AmicusHorizon to provide temporary accommodation for households in housing need – July 2016	Improved temporary accommodation options	
1.14	Gain a greater understanding of why people have difficulty securing/maintaining long term housing solutions			Review P1E and service outcomes quarterly and report annually	Identify trends in number and type of homeless and prevention presentations/outcomes and adapt service accordingly	
1.15	Explore opportunities to meet the housing and support needs of homeless women	Brighton Women's Centre	DCLG SHORE	Pilot specialist services for women	Fewer women rough sleepers	

Priority 1 – Prevent and Minimise Homelessness						
No.	We will	By who?	Resources	Milestones	Outcome	Comments
		Brighton Oasis Fulfilling Lives				

Priority 2 - Improve access to good quality, well managed accommodation in the private rented sector						
No.	We will	By who?	Resources	Milestones	Outcome	Comments
2.1	Continue to expand the stock of accommodation in the Council's Social Lettings Agency to offer good quality accommodation as a housing solution to homeless households or those at risk of homelessness	HBC	DCLG HBC	Review the project outcomes of the SLA – April 2016 32 units of accommodation procured by June 2016	Local people can access private rented sector accommodation more easily and with no financial barriers	
2.2	Maximise availability of financial assistance to access the Private Rented Sector with loans for rent in advance and deposits	Credit Union	DESSS DCLG funding	Recover 40% of the value of total loans from DESSS funding annually	Money can be recycled and used for other people as funding is likely to be reduced in future	

Priority 2 - Improve access to good quality, well managed accommodation in the private rented sector						
No.	We will	By who?	Resources	Milestones	Outcome	Comments
2.3	Support vulnerable households to access and sustain tenancies in the Private Rented Sector	HBC Home Works		Home Works to provide floating housing support to 450 people living in the PRS in Hastings per year Home Works to support 90% of clients to maintain or secure accommodation annually	Increased likelihood of vulnerable households having successful tenancies in the PRS	
2.4	Improve standards in the private rented sector through proactive enforcement	HBC	Exiting resources	175 homes improved per annum	350 homes improved	
2.5	Continue to licence private rented property	HBC	Existing resources	Consider the replacement of the HMO Licensing scheme operating in the 4 town centre wards when this finishes in September 2016 Review the implementation of Selective Licensing in 7 wards – November	1,250 HMOs improved over the life of HMO Licensing Improved conditions and management in PRS properties overseen by licensing	

Priority 2 - Improve access to good quality, well managed accommodation in the private rented sector						
No.	We will	By who?	Resources	Milestones	Outcome	Comments
				2016 License 250 HMOs per annum	Improved and proper tenancy arrangements put in place for tenants with property covered by licensing	
2.6	Provide information, advice and training to tenants and landlords	HBC	Existing resources	2 landlord forums per annum Deliver training and information to tenants and landlords via the Rogue Landlord project Review website information annually	Landlords' knowledge is increased, which supports improvements in property management and conditions Tenants are empowered through greater awareness of their rights and responsibilities and, where necessary, are protected from	

Priority 2 - Improve access to good quality, well managed accommodation in the private rented sector						
No.	We will	By who?	Resources	Milestones	Outcome	Comments
					losing their homes	
2.7	Work with partners to explore options to increase the supply of affordable sharers accommodation for under 35s	HBC	Existing resources	<p>Expand the Social Letting Agency portfolio to include sharers accommodation – January 2017</p> <p>Review the number of homeless presentations from under 35 year olds – quarterly</p> <p>Promote improved partnership working between local housing providers and Planning colleagues to meet demand for sharers accommodation</p>	<p>More timely move-ons from supported accommodation</p> <p>Increased housing options for single people struggling to access studio/one bed accommodation</p>	
2.8	Tackle rogue landlords	BHT Hastings Advice, BHT HHAP & HBC	DCLG	Expand existing Rogue Landlord project to include: Rogue Landlord Taskforce & Register, partner training, Specialist Legal service	Improved standards and management in the private rented sector and greater	

Priority 2 - Improve access to good quality, well managed accommodation in the private rented sector						
No.	We will	By who?	Resources	Milestones	Outcome	Comments
				<p>and a suite of information videos for landlords</p> <p>Work with East Sussex Trading Standards in relation to Landlord and Letting Agency fee displays and contract terms</p> <p>Work with 25 tenants via mediation or enforcement where necessary – March 2016</p> <p>Inform the County Court judges of the HMO licensing changes and provide further training if required – January 2016</p>	protection for tenants	

Priority 3 – Work in partnership to deliver quality housing and support services						
No.	We will	By who?	Resources	Milestones	Outcome	Comments
3.1	Undertake reviews of local systems in partnership with stakeholders	Fulfilling Lives	Big Lottery Funding	Map longer term outcomes from pop up hub – January 2016 Explore alternative housing options for people with complex needs – October 2016	Improved access to and retention of accommodation by people with the most complex needs	
3.2	Maintain a focus on collaborative working and seek to assist local partnerships to come up with better solutions to complex problems	Fulfilling Lives	Big Lottery Funding	Participate in local partnership forums – ongoing Pilot new ways of working, share learning and provide robust cost benefit evidence for innovative practice – annually	New solutions found to tackle complex problems	
3.3	Continue to facilitate a local forum for homelessness discussions with representation from statutory and voluntary sector partners to ensure effective joint working and greater shared knowledge	HBC	Existing resources	Quarterly meetings of the Housing and Support Services group (HASS)	Shared information and learning, joined up strategic thinking and improved joint working	

Priority 3 – Work in partnership to deliver quality housing and support services

No.	We will	By who?	Resources	Milestones	Outcome	Comments
3.4	Provide training and awareness raising on domestic violence	LSCB HBC	Existing resources	<p>Deliver introductory domestic violence courses across East Sussex</p> <p>Provide free online Domestic Violence and Abuse e-learning course</p> <p>Facilitate bi-annual Hastings Domestic Abuse Forum</p> <p>Facilitate the annual Hastings White Ribbon Day</p>	<p>Professionals better able to recognise the signs of abuse, its impact, the support available and how to deal with disclosure</p> <p>The public have a greater awareness of the issue of domestic violence and are empowered to speak out</p>	
3.5	Promote access to good quality advice, such as national help lines and websites, so that customers can independently access up to date housing information	HBC	Existing resources	Update the Council's website and Housing Options' information sheets – January 2017	Customers are empowered through access to services and improved knowledge	
3.6	Update service related delivery	HBC	Existing	Revised procedures on	Housing	

Priority 3 – Work in partnership to deliver quality housing and support services						
No.	We will	By who?	Resources	Milestones	Outcome	Comments
	procedures and improve accessibility to ensure that frontline services are responsive to demands		resources	homelessness prevention and homelessness – June 2016 Pilot the delivery of a web-based appointment provision – April 2016 Restructure homelessness triage process – April 2016	Options services delivered in accordance with recognised good practice Improved accessibility for customers	
3.7	Monitor the impact of 2016/2017 welfare reforms locally and take positive action to mitigate against the impacts on households who will see benefit levels reduced	HBC ESCC	Existing resources	Report annually on the impact of welfare reforms on the Housing Options service Bi-annual meetings with HBC, HARC, BHT and Housing Associations Quarterly East Sussex Welfare Reform Group meetings	Risks associated with welfare reform identified and minimised through partnership approach	

Monitoring the strategy

The Housing Options team will produce quarterly updates on the Action Plan using a 'traffic light' system for ease of reference: Green identifying an action which has been met or is on course to be met within the timescale; Amber for actions which have not been met to deadline, but will progress; Red for actions which have not been met and are unlikely to progress. This will ensure that any issues in relation to the achievement of the Homelessness Strategy actions are addressed in a timely manner and that successes can be highlighted and celebrated.

These updates will be reported to the Housing and Support Services (HASS) Group, which is well represented by local voluntary and statutory partners who are key to the success of the Strategy.

It is recognised that there may be unforeseen challenges presented by new welfare reforms and the Action Plan will be reviewed annually in consultation with partners to take account of this and to address any emerging needs.

Resourcing the strategy

Significant resources are allocated to the provision of housing related services. Total net expenditure for 2015/16 on homelessness and housing advice, including staffing and other costs, is anticipated to be around £805,470. The net costs of temporarily accommodating homeless households in bed and breakfast establishments accounted for £122,000 of the budget in 2014/15.

In addition to the above, approximately £950,000 of revenue will be spent in 2015/16 on the provision of other housing services for Private Sector Renewal.

The Council's Revenue Services' Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) for 2015/16 is £230,368. This is more funding than in 2012/13 when it was £156,525. This increase has been made to help Local Authorities provide support to people affected by some of the key welfare reforms, but is less funding than in 2013/14 and 2014/15 when the reforms were initially introduced. DHP is a valuable resource for preventing homelessness and will be crucial in helping to meet some of the additional housing need resultant from benefit reforms as well as a variety of other needs.

Year	DHP funding
2012/13	£156,525
2013/14	£320,232
2014/15	£327,607
2015/16	£230,368

There is also a Capital Programme, which includes the Private Sector Renewal Support and Empty Homes Strategy, which are funded for £141,000 in 2015/16 and 2016/17. It also includes the disabled facilities assistance outlined below.

Disabled facilities assistance

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) provide financial assistance for the provision of disabled adaptations to enable people to remain in their homes. In 2015/16 the funding for DFGs formed part of the Better Care Fund Grant made to East Sussex County Council. From this fund the County Council has allocated £766,643 to Hastings Borough Council of which £736,643 is being used to fund DFGs.

Similar levels of expenditure are anticipated for future years, but are subject to annual review and the delivery of efficiency improvements.

Homelessness Grant

The Council has been successful in securing an annual Homelessness Grant from the Department of Communities and Local Government since 2002/03. Whilst this funding is not ring-fenced, the Council has been committed to using it for the purpose of homelessness prevention.

Funding for 2015/16 has been confirmed at £181,000 per year. This is a reduction on 2011/12 and 2012/13 when the grant was £204,000. The cutback takes into account changes in funding for the Court Desk Service, which is now expected to be delivered by the organisation awarded the Legal Services Commission contract. No funding has been confirmed for 2016/17

The allocation provides a vital supplement to the significant level of revenue funding committed by the Council annually to meet the costs of providing the Housing Options service. The bulk of the allocation provides for three additional members of staff to target homelessness prevention. The grant also

funds the Hastings Sanctuary Scheme, which installs security measures to help victims of domestic abuse, hate crimes and other types of harassment to remain in their homes and feel safe.

Community Partnership Fund

Since 2004/05, the Council has used its Community Partnership Fund to support local voluntary sector agencies to deliver services that have a direct impact on homelessness prevention. Grants for 2015-17 totalling £83,119 have been awarded to two local organisations that are providing services that directly support rough sleepers and victims of domestic abuse.

Supporting People funding

Supporting people invest in the region of £760,000 in accommodation based services in the Hastings borough: £92,000 in Hastings Refuge, £260,000 in homeless people with support needs, £280,000 in young people at risk, including young parents, and £128,000 in mental health.

They also invest £530,000 across Hastings and Rother in the STEPS service, which provides floating support to older people, and a further £3.5 million in the cross county Home Works floating support service.

The Welfare Reform Project

East Sussex County Council Welfare Reform project provides a range of support, including a Benefit Helpline, regular briefings and an online video to explain the welfare benefit changes. Through the Supporting People partnership, the service has been continued into 2015/16 with a focus on the more specialist advice offered as part of the service.

Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme

DESSS provides residents in East Sussex with emergency help in certain situations. The scheme does not provide cash or loans but may provide food, utilities or household items. Households will usually only be able to receive support from the scheme once in 12 months.

The Council, in partnership with East Sussex County Council, has also administered funding through DESSS to provide people with interest free loans to meet the costs of rent in advance and deposits since 2013/14. It is unclear what levels of funding will be available in future years but in 2015/16, £79,000 has been made available for this purpose.

Fulfilling Lives

The Big Lottery awarded £9.2million in funding across Hastings, Eastbourne and Brighton, which launched the Fulfilling Lives project, which is being led by BHT. The project, which in Hastings is being delivered by Seaview in partnership with BHT, will help to address the housing and support needs of the most vulnerable single homeless people with complex needs and also support the delivery of improved services over an 8 year period with approximately £300k being allocated to Hastings annually

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Appendix A – Key Successes from 2013-2015

- Hastings has the highest homelessness prevention rate in England
- The launch of the new Social Lettings Agency and the introduction of the Letstart Letting Leasing Scheme
- Exceeded targets for delivering alternative housing options and improved local housing stock: Coastal Space, Empty Homes Project, YMCA Private Leasing and Affordable Homes (Shared Ownership & Affordable Rent)
- Developed new levels of partnership working, e.g. the Seaview One Stop Shop, the Rough Sleepers Hub and the co-location of services with Probation
- 583 households were supported to access the private rented sector through the Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme (DESSS) funding administered by the Council and the Letstart bond scheme
- Delivered new initiatives targeted at supporting offenders and their families to prevent homelessness and encourage better life opportunities
- Provided unprecedented support for landlords and tenants, e.g. the Rogue Landlords project, Workshops and Training
- Evidenced commitment to raising awareness and speaking out about the issue of domestic abuse by becoming a White Ribbon Town

Appendix B – Strategic Direction

National Context

‘Making Every Contact Count: A Joint Approach to Preventing Homelessness’ (published in August 2012) is a report that outlines the Government’s approach to tackling and preventing homelessness. It sets out a range of reforms to *‘tackle the complex causes of homelessness focusing on prevention, early intervention and on locally designed integrated services that step in when things go wrong, to give people another chance.’*

The expectation is that organisations focus on joint working across a *‘range of disciplines to ensure services can be managed in a way that prevents all households, regardless of whether they are families, couples, or single people, from reaching a crisis point where they are faced with homelessness.’*

The report highlights the Government’s wish to make sure that every contact local agencies make with vulnerable people and families really counts. It brings together the Government’s commitments to:

- **tackle troubled childhoods and adolescence** – through interventions to turn around the lives of the most troubled families; and by promoting innovative approaches to youth homelessness
- **improve health** – including improving outcomes for homeless people with dual drugs/alcohol and mental health needs; and helping to ensure medical professionals discharging patients know who to approach for help to meet housing needs
- **reduce involvement in crime** – through support to the new Police and Crime Commissioners; improving offender access to private rented sector accommodation; and measures to help those on short sentences retain their tenancy
- **improve skills; employment; and financial advice** – through new housing demonstration projects which help claimants budget and manage rent payments; a commitment to explore a payment by results approach for those some distance from the labour market; and piloting community learning trusts
- **pioneer social funding for homelessness** – through a world first Social Impact Bond for rough sleepers and support to other local commissioners to turn social investment propositions into reality

The **ten local challenges** the report poses to Local Authorities are to:

1. adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness, which has buy in across all local authority services
2. actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs
3. offer a Housing Options prevention service, including written advice, to all clients
4. adopt a *No Second Night Out* model or an effective local alternative
5. have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support
6. develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both clients and landlords
7. actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions, including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme
8. have a Homelessness Strategy, which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs
9. not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation
10. not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks

Local Strategic Links

[The Hastings and St Leonards Anti-Poverty Strategy 2011](#) sets out key information about poverty in the Borough and its connections to poor housing. It identifies that:

- Over 5,500 children under 16 years old are growing up in poverty in Hastings
- A child born and growing up in Hastings can expect to live nearly 5 years less than someone in Lewes

It also sets out the Council's aspiration to work with its partners to dispel myths about poverty and to help people to manage poverty through:

- Providing good quality advice and information
- Helping people to maximise their income and benefit entitlement
- Tackling financial exclusion
- Supporting vulnerable people
- Working with households affected by the negative impacts of the welfare and housing benefit change

The Council's new homelessness strategy will deliver actions in support of all of these approaches to poverty. It will also recognise that the economy in Hastings has been hit hard by the recent recession and the importance of maximising regeneration opportunities.

Economic and social regeneration are key priorities for all agencies working in Hastings, as set out in the [Hastings and St Leonards Sustainable Community Strategy 2009 to 2026](#) which aims to make Hastings and St Leonards:

- A Safer Town
- An Economically Successful Town
- A Learning Town
- An Inclusive Town
- A Healthier Town
- A Town with a Decent Home for Everyone
- A Town That's Good to Live In
- A Town Where We Protect Our Environment and Respond to the Challenges of Climate Change

Effective planning also plays a key role in shaping the town and the quality of life of local people. Work carried out by the Council's Planning Policy Department affects many aspects of the community – from where people live, work and shop to where and how they can spend their leisure time. The **Hastings Local Plan** (comprising Planning Strategy and Development Management Plan) sets out spatial strategy for the Borough taking into account social, economic and environmental factors such as health and housing under following key themes:

- Sustainable Communities
- Protecting the Environment
- Housing, including affordable housing
- Local Economy
- Community Infrastructure
- Transport and Accessibility

The Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan sets out Hastings Borough Council's strategic direction and priorities until the end of 2015/16. It includes the Council's targets and some of the activities that will be undertaken in 2015/16 to achieve these priorities. The plan reflects local and national issues and was developed with local people and partners.

The **Corporate Plan** sets out Hastings Borough Council's strategic direction and priorities until the end of 2017/18. It includes the Council's targets and some of the activities that will be undertaken in 2015/16 to achieve these priorities. The plan reflects local and national issues and was developed with local people and partners.

Priorities for 2015/16 – 2017/18:

- a) Economic & physical regeneration
- b) Cultural regeneration
- c) Intervention where it's needed
- d) Creating decent homes.
- e) An attractive town
- f) A greener town
- g) Transforming the way we work

Housing & Development – Corporate Plan Performance Indicators

Indicator	Target 2015/16
4.01 Number of homelessness acceptances	145
4.02 Homelessness preventions – households who considered themselves as homeless, who approached the local housing authority's housing advice service, and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation	2,000
4.03 Number of private sector dwellings (units) brought in line with the current statutory standard	200
4.04 Number of affordable homes delivered	75
4.05 Long term (2+ years) empty properties returned to use	70
4.06 % major residential & commercial planning applications determined within 13 weeks	90%
4.07 % minor residential & commercial planning applications determined within 8 weeks	85%
4.08 % householder planning applications determined within 6 weeks	65%
4.09 Net number of new homes built	200
4.10 Number of neglected and derelict buildings improved	50

Appendix C – Glossary of Terms²

Adaptations

Adaptations are changes to a home, usually funded by either the registered provider or the Council, that make it accessible or suitable for a tenant with physical challenges or disabilities. These may be very specific to the needs of a person currently living there, but the council will always seek to re-use such facilities where possible.

Additional Preference

Taking account of local circumstances, Housing Authorities can give 'additional preference' through their allocation policies to particular descriptions of people who fall within the statutory reasonable preference categories and have housing needs.

Affordability

A measure that considers the income and expenditure of a household in relation to the accommodation they can reasonably afford in their local area that is suitable for the household needs.

Affordable Housing

Housing (usually subsidised) made available to people who are not able to afford adequate housing locally.

Affordable Rent

A new rent policy introduced in 2011 to support the funding of new affordable housing development through increased rental streams. The rent will be no more than 80% of the local market rent.

Allocation Scheme

Process by which housing applicants are put into the social housing allocation pool.

Annexe

Accommodation secured in an emergency for a homeless household to meet a statutory housing duty. The accommodation has self-contained bathroom facilities and facilities to prepare food.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Behaviour that causes harassment, alarm or distress to other people living in the area. Examples include: noise, verbal abuse, drug dealing, and violence.

Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST)

² Not all of the terms listed in the Glossary have been used within the Strategy however they are designed to provide a useful resource for further reading

Created under Section 20 of the Housing Act 1988, an Assured Shorthold Tenancy is granted for a fixed term between 6 months and 5 years. Upon expiry of a valid Notice of Seeking Possession, the Court has no discretion to allow the tenant to remain.

Assured Tenancy

An assured tenancy is a form of residential tenancy in England that grants a degree of security of tenure to the tenant. A tenant under an assured tenancy may not be evicted without a reason.

Asylum Seeker

Any person who has lodged an appeal for asylum but whose application has not yet been resolved (Home Office definition).

Banding

Banding is the method the Council use to award priority on the Housing Register to social housing applicants. There are four bands and these reflect the comparative urgency of applicants' need to move.

Bed and Breakfast (B&B)

Accommodation secured in an emergency for a homeless household to meet a statutory housing duty. The accommodation has no cooking facilities. Legislation states a family with children should not remain in B&B for longer than 6 weeks.

Bedroom Eligibility

The number of bedrooms a household is assessed as needing.

Bidding

This is the process by which applicants register their wish to be considered for a particular vacancy advertised through the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Scheme.

Choice-Based Lettings (CBL)

Schemes for people who want to apply for social housing, or for people who already live in housing association homes, but need to move. They aim to provide more information and choice than the old social housing 'waiting lists'. Vacant properties are advertised and applicants choose those they wish to bid for or otherwise express an interest.

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

'Clinical Commissioning Groups were created following the Health and Social Care Act in 2012, and replaced Primary Care Trusts on 1 April 2013. CCGs are clinically-led statutory NHS bodies responsible for the planning and commissioning of health services for their local area'. (NHS Clinical Commissioners)

Coastal Space

This is a social regeneration project being delivered in partnership between Hastings Borough Council and AmicusHorizon. The project involves AmicusHorizon purchasing homes in Central St Leonards, renovating them, creating flats, rather than bedsits where possible, and offering tenants support towards gaining employment and training.

Community Partnership Funding (CPF)

The Council's CPF enables local community and voluntary organisations to deliver services and projects on behalf of the Council to meet the needs of the most vulnerable residents.

Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR)

Sets out spending budgets for each Government department.

Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)

Legal function allowing local authorities to obtain land or property without the consent of the owner.

Decant

A facilitated permanent or temporary move of a housing association tenant to allow major works/refurbishment to be carried out, or prior to demolition and redevelopment.

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

Government department responsible for housing and planning.

Dependent Children

A dependent child is defined as an individual aged under 16. A person will also be defined as a child if they are 16 to 19 years old and they are: not married nor in a Civil Partnership nor living with a partner; and living with parents; and in full-time non-advanced education or in unwaged government training.

Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme (DESSS)

This scheme is being delivered by East Sussex County Council to help people live independently or help when they are facing a difficult situation. It replaces the Crisis Loans for living expenses and Community Care Grants, formerly run by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), which stopped on 1st April 2013.

Direct Let

A home that may be offered directly to a customer without them having to make a 'bid' or 'register an interest' in that home.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

Grant available from the Council to fund home adaptations for people finding it difficult to live in their homes because of age or disability.

Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)

DHPs may be awarded, in addition to any welfare benefits, when a Local Authority considers that a claimant requires further financial assistance towards housing costs.

Domestic Violence/Abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional (Home Office 2013).

East Sussex Better Together

This is a 150 week programme to transform health and social care services that is being led by East Sussex County Council and the three local NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (Hastings and Rother CCG, High Weald Lewes Haven CCG and Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford CCG). The programme started in August 2014 and aims to develop a fully integrated health and social care system in East Sussex by 2018.

East Sussex Chief Housing Officers Group (ESHOG)

The purpose of ESHOG is to work together to meet the housing strategy objectives of the member districts and boroughs; Hastings, Brighton & Hove, Lewes, Eastbourne, Wealden and Rother.

Eligibility

Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act includes provisions that make certain persons from abroad ineligible to housing assistance. Determining eligibility can be complex and may be dependent on a number of elements including: immigration status, habitual residence, country of origin and whether the individual is classed as a 'worker'.

Emergency Accommodation

Any accommodation (usually B&B or annexe accommodation) secured and paid for by the Local Housing Authority to meet a statutory housing duty.

Fulfilling Lives

The Big Lottery awarded 9.2million in funding over 8 years across Hastings, Eastbourne and Brighton, which launched the Fulfilling Lives project. Locally, it is being delivered by Seaview in partnership with BHT. It has been designed to meet the support needs of the most vulnerable single homeless people who suffer with at least two of the following: substance abuse, homelessness, mental ill health and reoffending.

General Needs Housing

Social housing is housing rented by a housing association at rents which are usually below those that are charged in the private rented sector. It is regarded to be 'general needs' housing when there is no additional support provided to tenants beyond a normal housing management and repairs service.

Gold Standard

This is a peer-review scheme designed to help local authorities to deliver more efficient and cost effective homelessness prevention services. It has been developed around the ten 'local challenges' set out in the Ministerial Working Group report, "Making Every Contact Count: A Joint Approach to Preventing Homelessness".

Homelessness Grant

This is funding provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government to all Local Authorities to help prevent homelessness.

Homelessness Prevention

Where a local authority takes positive action to provide housing assistance to someone who considers him or herself to be at risk of homelessness in the near future, and as a result the person is able to either remain in his or her existing accommodation or obtain alternative accommodation.

Homelessness Strategy

Under the Homelessness Act 2002 all housing authorities must have in place a homelessness strategy which is renewed at least every 5 years. The strategy must set out the local authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support are or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

Homemove

Homemove is the lettings scheme used for social housing in Hastings.

Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)

Government agency responsible for regulating registered providers of social housing and providing government funding for the provision of new affordable homes.

Homeseekers

New applicants applying to the housing register.

Homeswapper

A self-help scheme, designed to help social tenants find someone with whom to swap their home.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

Under the changes in the Housing Act 2004, the following types of building are Houses or Flats in Multiple Occupation:

1. An entire house or flat which is let to three or more tenants who form two or more households, and who share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet
2. A house which has been converted into bedsits or other non self-contained accommodation, and which is let to three or more tenants

who form two or more households, and who share kitchen, bathroom or toilet facilities

3. A converted house which contains one or more flats which are not wholly self contained (i.e. the flat does not contain within it a kitchen, bathroom or toilet) and which is occupied by three or more tenants who form three or more households
4. A building which is converted entirely into self contained flats, but the conversion did not meet the standards of the 1991 Building Regulations, and less than two thirds of the flats are owner occupied

To be an HMO, the property must be used as the tenants' only or main residence, and it should be used solely or mainly to house tenants.

Housing Association Leasing Schemes (HALS)

Where a private rented unit is leased by a Housing Association for a fixed term and rent and repair costs are guaranteed for the life of the lease.

Housing Benefit

Means tested benefit intended to help meet housing costs for rented accommodation.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

Introduced under the Housing Act 2004, it is a risk assessment tool used to assess potential risks to health and safety in a property.

Housing Need

Households that fall within the criteria set out in Bands A-C in the HBC Allocation Scheme whose current accommodation is unsuitable.

Housing for Older People Scheme (HOPS)

Housing provided by Registered Providers that is designed to give older people the independence of having their own flat with the security of having an alarm system and housing related support.

Housing Needs Survey

A sample survey used to assess and evidence the level of housing need in the borough and to measure people's aspirations and plans.

Housing Register

A list of customers requesting social housing who are eligible for assistance in accordance with the Council's Allocation Scheme.

Housing Stock

Properties currently available for housing use in the borough, including private rented sector, owner occupied and social housing.

Insanitary

Refers to the condition of accommodation that does not meet a minimum standard and can be hazardous to the occupant's health.

Intentionally Homeless

A person becomes homeless intentionally or threatened with homelessness intentionally, if: i) the person deliberately does or fails to do anything in consequence of which the person ceases to occupy accommodation (or the likely result of which is that the person will be forced to leave accommodation); ii) the accommodation is available for the person's occupation; and iii) it would have been reasonable for the person to continue to occupy the accommodation.

Intermediate tenures

Accommodation made available to rent or purchase at below open market rates.

Landlords Forum

The Hastings & Rother Landlords Forum is facilitated by Hastings Borough Council, Rother District Council and the National Landlords Association. The Forum meets bi-annually with the aim of updating local landlords and letting agents on current changes in legislation and other information that they might find useful in conducting their business. It also provides members with valuable networking opportunities.

Leasing

See Private Sector Leasing and Housing Association Leasing Schemes.

Legal Services Commission

A non-departmental public body sponsored by the Ministry of Justice to look after Legal Aid in England and Wales.

Local Authority Challenges

The ten challenges posed by the Government in the report *Making Every Contact Count: A Joint Approach to Preventing Homelessness* (2012), which they believe will enable local homelessness services to deliver a gold standard service:

1. To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services
2. To actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs
3. To offer a Housing Options prevention service to all clients including written advice
4. To adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative
5. To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that include appropriate accommodation and support
6. To develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both client and landlord
7. To actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme

8. To have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually to be responsive to emerging needs
9. To not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation
10. To not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks

Local Development Framework (LDF)

Portfolio of local development documents, supplementary planning documents, statement of community involvement, local development scheme and annual monitoring reports which provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for a local area.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)

LEPs are 'joint local authority-business bodies brought forward by local authorities themselves to promote local economic development'. They replaced Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). There are 39 LEPs in the UK. Hastings is part of the South East LEP, which has been established to drive economic growth across East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock.

Local Health & Wellbeing Board

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 establishes health and wellbeing boards as a forum where key leaders from the health and care system work together to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population and reduce health inequalities.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

The LHA arrangements are a way of working out Housing Benefit (HB) for people who rent from a private landlord.

Local Lettings Plan (LLP)

Local Lettings Plans can be agreed in exceptional circumstances for the allocation and letting of social housing within an agreed community / location or across a type of property. A Local Lettings Plan would only be agreed in consultation with the Council and partners and aims to bring benefits to the area e.g. to create more balanced sustainable communities.

Localism Act 2011

This devolves greater powers to council and neighbourhoods and gives local communities more control over housing and planning decisions. This includes the power to limit who can apply for social housing and to discharge duties to homeless people by using private rented accommodation.

Low Cost Home Ownership

An all-embracing term for the various categories of ownership offered by organisations e.g. Improvement for Sale (IFS) or Shared Ownership.

Medical Need

The medical circumstances of a household that is directly affected by current housing conditions and where a move to more suitable accommodation would improve the medical condition.

Mixed Tenure

A range of types of accommodation in terms of ownership and occupation – social rented, private rented, shared ownership and outright owner occupation.

Mortgage Rescue

Support for homeowners to stay in their property if they fall into arrears.

Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA)

Provides the statutory framework for inter-agency co-operation in assessing and managing high risk offenders in England and Wales.

Mutual Exchange

A mechanism to swap accommodation between two social housing tenants that relies on each tenant moving permanently into the other person's/tenant's property.

National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS)

This is a partnership between Shelter and Citizens Advice, funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government. It works with Citizens Advice, voluntary advice agencies and local authorities to make sure their staff can give appropriate, accurate, and timely housing advice.

National Landlords Association (NLA) Foundation Accreditation Course

The programme is designed to help both new and experienced landlords to develop their professional skills. The course focuses on the main issues facing landlords, including finding tenants, setting up, managing and ending a tenancy, keeping records and repairing obligations. It is the foundation level of knowledge required for landlords to be accredited with the NLA.

Overcrowded

Households with fewer bedrooms than their entitlement set out in Appendix D (Bedroom Eligibility) in the HBC Allocation Scheme will be considered overcrowded (not in line with statutory overcrowding).

Overview and Scrutiny Committees

These were introduced by the Local Government Act 2000 and have a number of functions, including reviewing policy and making recommendations. They are essentially the 'backbench' of the Council; they involve non-executive members which means that they exclude the Leader of the Council, the Mayor and members of Cabinet.

Peer Review

To achieve the Government's Gold Standard, Local Authorities will be required to carry out a peer review with at least 3 local authorities. This will involve assessing authorities' performance in particular areas using the Department for Communities and Local Government's Self Diagnostic Toolkit.

Performance Indicators

Targets that allow the Council to measure how it is progressing towards its goals.

Priority Need

Only homeless people who are also in priority need are entitled to accommodation. The following categories of applicant have a priority need for accommodation: i) a pregnant woman or a person with whom she resides or might reasonably be expected to reside; ii) a person with whom dependent children reside or might reasonably be expected to reside; iii) a person who is vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness or handicap or physical disability or other special reason, or with whom such a person resides or might reasonably be expected to reside (iv) a person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency such as a flood, fire or other disaster.

Private Rented Sector (PRS)

All rented properties, which are privately owned and rented to a tenant, i.e. not owned by a local authority or housing association.

Private Rented Sector Offer

The Localism Act 2011 made changes to homelessness legislation, which means that local authorities have the power to end the main homelessness duty with a private rented sector offer, without the applicant's consent. Private rented sector offers can only be ended in the private rented sector if a minimum 12 month Assured Shorthold Tenancy is offered and the accommodation offered is considered to be suitable

Private Rented Sector Strategy

This sets out how the Council, together with its partners, address issues relating to quality, management, accessibility and sustainability in the private rented sector.

Private Sector Leasing (PSL)

Where a privately rented unit is leased for a fixed term and rent and repair costs are guaranteed for the life of the lease.

Protocol

Is a joint agreement between the Council and a partner/s, which sets out shared aims, objectives and procedures to improve service delivery.

Reasonable Preference

Under the law, Housing Authorities must ensure that 'reasonable preference' for social housing is given to certain categories of people.

Reconnection

Involves supporting vulnerable rough sleepers to return to their home area.

Redress Scheme

'Letting agent redress schemes provide a free, independent service for resolving disputes between letting agents and their customers. Letting agents have to be a member of one of three letting agent redress schemes. Landlords and tenants can use the schemes. The decision made by a redress scheme is binding on all parties.' (Shelter 2015)

Registered Provider (RP)/Housing Association

Registered Providers (Housing Associations) are social landlords registered and regulated by the Homes and Communities agency and the Tenant Services Authority and provide affordable housing.

Repossession

To regain possession, for example, a landlord or mortgage company taking back a property that was being rented or was owned with a mortgage.

Right to Buy (RtB)

This scheme gives council tenants the option to buy their rented home at a discounted price. The Government has proposed an extension to the scheme to enable Housing Association tenants the chance to buy their home.

Rough Sleeping

People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or "bashes"). The definition does not include people in hostels or shelters, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protest, squatters or travelers (DCLG 2010).

Sanctions

Benefit sanctions, which means that benefits are stopped or reduced, occur when benefit recipients fail to comply with the conditions attached to receiving their benefit.

Sanctuary Scheme

The Hastings Sanctuary Scheme is delivered by Hastings Borough Council in partnership with local voluntary and statutory organisations. The Scheme installs security measures to help victims of domestic abuse, hate crimes and other types of harassment to remain in their homes and feel safe and prevent homelessness.

Selective Licensing

The Council has adopted a Selective Licensing Scheme. The Selective Licensing Scheme will come into force on 26th October 2015 and will mean that all privately rented dwellings in Braybrooke, Castle, Central St Leonards, Gensing, Old Hastings, Ore and Tressell wards will be subject to licensing.

Self-Diagnostic Toolkit

This has been designed to help Local Authorities develop a standard of service that incorporates commitment to improved access, quality, recording & monitoring of outcomes, and delivering value for money. Ideally, it is undertaken through a peer review process.

Shared Accommodation

There are different types of shared accommodation: *Flat/House share* – this is a property rented out as whole by a group of sharers under a joint tenancy; *Rooms to rent (live out landlord)* – a landlord rents their property out by the room; *Rooms to rent (live in landlord)* – a person (or family) owns and lives in a property and rents out one or more room (often known as lodgers); Sublet – If 2 people rent a 3 bed property under a standard assured shorthold tenancy then rent out the 3rd room, collecting the rent themselves.

Shared Equity

House purchaser enters into an agreement with a housing provider to purchase a property jointly.

Shared Ownership

House purchaser enters into an agreement with a housing provider to part buy and part rent a home.

Sheltered Housing

Housing that is designed to give older people the independence of having their own flat with the security of having an alarm system and housing related support. Sheltered flats are often small, self-contained units or single rooms in a complex, which often has a communal social area. There is usually a Warden or Scheme Manager. It is possible to find sheltered housing to rent or to buy for people needing housing support.

SHORE

The Sussex Homeless Outreach Reconnection and Engagement (SHORE) Initiative is being delivered in partnership by all Local Authorities in Sussex through funding provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The initiative will bolster front line provision to address and prevent single homelessness and rough sleeping, with the aim of ensuring that all single homeless people approaching any of the authorities receive consistent and tailored advice to resolve their homelessness or rough sleeping.

Shortlisting

This is the list of applicants who have shown an interest (placed a bid) in a property advertised through Homemove. This list is used to offer the property to the applicant with the highest priority according to the HBC Allocation Scheme.

Social Lettings Agency (SLA)

The SLA, Letstart Letting, is a stand-alone Council service that aims to make accommodation accessible and affordable for local households struggling to secure housing in the private sector. The first element of the Council's SLA to be developed is the leasing scheme which involves the Council leasing private sector properties and renting them to people in housing need.

Squatting

People occupying property or land without permission of the owner or person legally entitled to occupy it.

Statutory Duty to House

Households the Council has a duty to assist under the homelessness legislation.

Statutory Homelessness

Where local authorities have defined a household as homeless within the terms of the homelessness legislation.

Strategic Forum

The Strategic Forum is the Supporting People Commissioning Body, which includes representatives from the borough and district councils of East Sussex along with the those from the County Council who are decision makers in matters relating to health, housing, social care and probation.

Streetlink

This service provides a telephone line and website which allows members of the public to alert Local Authorities about rough sleepers in their area.

Succession of tenancy

When a tenant dies, the tenancy will automatically pass to any joint tenants, a partner or a close member of the tenant's family as long as they were living with the tenant at the time of the death and for at least 12 months before. Anyone who takes over the tenancy in this way is called a 'successor'.

Suitable/Suitability

With reference to the HBC Allocation Scheme, suitable accommodation is accommodation that is large enough to accommodate a household, is of good quality in terms of physical condition and housing management, and affordable and accessible both in terms of location and type of housing.

Suitability of Accommodation

Government guidance that sets out what type of accommodation is suitable and reasonable to offer a homeless household to meet a statutory housing duty.

Supported Housing

Accommodation provided with additional housing related support for individuals with specific needs.

Supporting People

Supporting People is a government programme which helps adults who need particular kinds of support connected to their housing needs. This support is aimed at helping people to achieve independence within their community. It pays for housing support services that help people aged 16 and over (single people, couples and families) to find, or stay in, their own home. This includes help to manage money, claim benefits, develop domestic or social skills and keep safe.

Sustainable Communities

The Department for Communities and Local Government says a sustainable community is a place where people want to live and work now and in the future.

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

The Council operate a SWEP in accordance with Central Government guidance and best practice. Rough sleepers can access emergency accommodation in cold weather and are offered assistance through the housing options team to secure more permanent accommodation.

Temporary Accommodation (TA)

Any accommodation secured by the Local Authority to meet a statutory housing duty. The accommodation remains temporary until the housing duty is discharged.

Transfer Tenants

For the purposes of the HBC Allocation Scheme, a Transfer Tenant is an assured tenant of one of the Council's Homemove housing association partners who are permanently resident in the borough.

Under-Occupation

A tenant is considered to be under-occupying their home when they have more bedrooms than they are eligible for, as set out in Appendix D (Bedroom Eligibility) in the HBC Allocation Scheme.

Welfare Reform Act 2012

Introduces a new benefit, to be known as universal credit, which will replace existing in and out of work benefits – this will result in one benefit payment on a monthly basis. Besides introducing Universal Credit and related measures there are other significant changes to the benefits system which:

- introduces Personal Independence Payments to replace the current Disability Living Allowance
- restricts Housing Benefit entitlement for social housing tenants whose accommodation is larger than they need
- up-rates Local Housing Allowance rates by the Consumer Price Index
- amends the forthcoming statutory child maintenance scheme
- limits the payment of contributory Employment and Support Allowance to a 12-month period
- caps the total amount of benefit that can be claimed

YMCA Project

YMCA DownsLink Group is bringing empty homes across Hastings and St Leonards back into use to increase accommodation options for 18-35 year olds.

Youth Hub

The Hastings Targeted Support Youth Hub provides advice and help for young people aged 11 to 25 years old in a range of areas, including housing, drugs and alcohol, and money and benefits.