

East Kent Homelessness Strategy

2008-2013

July 2008
(Draft version 2)

Foreword

Welcome to the first East Kent Homelessness Strategy.

The *Homelessness Act 2002* placed a statutory duty on all local authorities to publish their first homelessness strategy, based on a full review of homelessness in their area, by 31 July 2003. The Act also requires that, following a further review of homelessness, these strategies be updated within a five-year period.

The four East Kent authorities of Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet each published individual homelessness strategies in 2003. However, they have a strong track record in joint working and they have worked together, and with other agencies and service users, to tackle homelessness across East Kent.

Although a considerable amount has been achieved in the last five years, homelessness remains a significant problem in East Kent. Increasing house prices and high rents exclude many households from the private sector, and the supply of new affordable homes has so far been outstripped by sales of existing Council accommodation under the Right to Buy.

This strategy will strengthen the sub-regional approach that has underpinned many of the achievements to date. It will build on past successes and existing partnerships, without losing sight of district-specific priorities.

It has been developed in consultation with partners, stakeholders and service users, and it reflects the broader strategic priorities that have been identified within national, regional and sub-regional housing policy.

We welcome the views of service users, partners, stakeholder and members of the East Kent community on this Homelessness Strategy – please let us know what you think. You can contact any of the four East Kent authorities. The relevant staff and their contact details are listed at appendix 7.

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To add – info re translation and other formats

Executive summary

In response to consultation with partners, stakeholders and service-users, seven key strategic priorities have been identified to enable the East Kent authorities and their partners to build upon their achievements to date, and to tackle the ongoing problem of homelessness in East Kent:

□ Maximise housing options and choice for customers

The increasing emphasis in recent years on the prevention of homelessness has significantly reduced the number of homeless households in East Kent. Building on this success is a major priority for the East Kent authorities and their partners.

□ Prevent rough sleeping

Although the number of people recorded as sleeping on the streets in East Kent is low in comparison to other parts of the country, there is strong evidence to suggest that this does not reflect the true extent of the problem.

□ Promote sustainable private sector accommodation

The private rented sector has a significant role to play in meeting the housing needs of many households in East Kent. In practice however, accessing private rented accommodation is still a problem for the most vulnerable members of the community.

□ Help homeless households to secure and retain good quality accommodation

A high proportion of vulnerable households have difficulty maintaining a permanent tenancy without support. The East Kent authorities have a key role to play helping vulnerable households to access support to help them live independently.

□ Reduce the use of temporary accommodation

The East Kent authorities are committed to exceeding the Government's target for all local authorities to halve the number of households living in temporary accommodation by 2010.

□ Tackle youth homelessness

An increasing number of young people are being accepted as homeless in East Kent. Youth homelessness is also a key target for the Government, and by 2010 the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds must have ended.

□ Monitor performance and develop best practice in homelessness

By monitoring and measuring performance, and listening to service-users, partners and stakeholders, strengths and weaknesses can be identified and tackled, good practice shared, and services continuously improved.

Individual priorities are discussed in detail at section 5 of this strategy. The objectives that underpin each priority will be found in the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan at section 8.

1. Strategic context

1.1 The national agenda

The Government's current five-year plan for housing, *Sustainable Communities: Homes For All*¹ (January 2005) set the ambitious target to halve the number of households living in temporary accommodation by 2010. Its subsequent publication, *Sustainable Communities: Settled Homes; Changing Lives*² (March 2005) identifies how this will be achieved, and how through the modernisation of services provided by local authorities, more opportunities must be provided for people at risk of homelessness:

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

Young people become homeless for a wide range of reasons, and in November 2006, the Government announced a package of measures to tackle youth homelessness by:

- Ending the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds
- Improving access to mediation services
- Establishing supported lodgings schemes, which provide accommodation, advice and mediation for young people who can no longer stay in the family home.

The Housing Corporation's homelessness strategy "*Tackling Homelessness*"³ (November 2006) recognises the critical role that Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) have in helping local authorities tackle and prevent homelessness. The strategy sets out how the Housing Corporation expects them to build on the important role that they already have through:

- Better partnership working with local housing authorities and other agencies
- Sustainable and mixed communities that provide choice and mobility
- Allocation and management policies that seek to sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness
- Better use of existing housing stock e.g. reducing under occupation, tackling overcrowding.

The need to provide high quality housing for people who are unable to access market housing is also emphasised within *Planning Policy Statement 3*⁴ (November 2006) which sets out the national planning policy framework for delivering the Government's housing objectives.

¹ www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?=-1150239

² www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1163057

³ www.housingcorp.gov.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.9131

⁴ www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1504591

The Government's Housing Green Paper *Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable* (July 2007) calls for three million new homes by 2020, and pledges to build 180,000 new affordable homes in the next three years, rising to an annual rate of 70,000 from 2010.

More affordable housing is needed not only to meet newly arising housing need, but also to address the poor conditions that many households currently live in. An estimated 87,000 households nationally still live in temporary accommodation, which includes some 4,000 households in bed and breakfast. Approximately 526,000 households live in overcrowded conditions, of which 216,000 are in the affordable housing sector⁵.

1.2 The homelessness legislation

The *Homelessness Act 2002* places a duty on local authorities to:

- Provide free advice and information about homelessness and preventing homelessness to everyone in their district
- Assist eligible individuals and families who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and in priority need.

The *Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities* (July 2006) provides guidance for local authorities and social services departments on how to apply the legislation. It also provides guidance on developing homelessness strategies, emphasising the need to understand the causes of homelessness across all groups, to develop effective preventative measures and to work at county/sub-regional level where possible.

Further information on the legislation and guidance can be obtained from the Communities and Local Government (CLG) web site – www.communities.gov.uk

1.3 Regional priorities

The prevention of homelessness is a key priority in *The South East Regional Housing Strategy*⁶ (March 2008). Specifically:

- Increasing the supply of new affordable housing
- Housing-related support to enable vulnerable households to maintain tenancies
- Better use of existing accommodation in both public and private sectors.

⁵ Housing Green Paper (July 2007)

⁶ www.go-se.gov.uk

The *South East Homelessness Forum* has been established to ensure that a consistent approach is taken across the South East region to tackling homelessness. Supported by the Regional Housing Board, East Kent is represented on the forum by Thanet District Council.

Also significant to the regional perspective is the *South East Plan*⁷. Due for publication in 2008, it will provide a statutory regional framework for development to 2026. The substantial need for more affordable housing in the region is recognised within an overall target to ensure that 35% of all new homes will be affordable.

1.4 Sub-regional overview

□ *East Kent housing strategies*

The *Local Government Act 2003* places a statutory duty on all local authorities to produce forward-looking housing strategies. Local authorities have a wide and varied strategic housing responsibility, and the need to prevent and tackle homelessness is a key priority in each of the East Kent housing strategies. Full copies of the housing strategies can be found on each authority's website.⁸

□ *Kent Agreement 2 (the second Kent Local Area Agreement)*

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a partnership between Kent County Council and the county's twelve district, borough and city Councils. It identifies the priorities for the county and its aim is to drive the delivery of these priorities, making best use of public services and allowing for local solutions that reflect local circumstances.

The first LAA was established in 2005, the second one (KA2) became effective in 2008. It has a significant part to play in the reduction of homelessness, through a wide range of priorities and targets that address improved health care and wellbeing, education, safer communities and the provision of new housing.

□ *Partnership working*

The East Kent authorities have a long and successful history of joint working and the partnership is recognised as a model of good practice by both the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) and CLG.

East Kent partnership groups

East Kent Homelessness Forum

Established in 2001 to develop links with statutory agencies and the Third Sector, and to develop joint working to tackle homelessness. The forum has recently undergone a review and a copy of its revised Terms of Reference will be found at appendix 1. Individual sub-groups, such as the Homelessness Strategy Review group, are established to take forward specific pieces of work, and report back to the main Forum.

East Kent Registered Social Landlord (RSL) Forum

⁷ www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan

⁸ www.dover.gov.uk/housing/housingstrategy.asp www.canterbury.gov.uk/buildpage.php?id=629
www.thanet.gov.uk/housing/strategies_key_documents.aspx www.shepway.gov.uk/content/view/200272/1718/

Through the Forum, the East Kent authorities work closely with the RSLs that have property in East Kent. In October 2006 a Preferred Partner Protocol was launched with the aim of achieving a level of consistency and good practice across the sub-region in relation to the development of new affordable housing. Commended by the Housing Corporation, the protocol identifies a number of preferred development partners who were selected not only on the basis of their ability to develop new affordable housing, but also to positively contribute to the reduction and prevention of homelessness.

Joint Policy and Planning Board (Housing)

A strategic partnership between health, housing, probation and social care. Its main responsibilities are to promote inter-agency working, and to ensure that district housing strategies inform, and are influenced by, the work of partner organisations and other inter-agency plans. The close links between housing and health are well recognised, and a key objective for the Board is to improve the health care arrangements for homeless people. This is being taken forward in the Board's 2008 action plan and the East Kent authorities are fully committed to achieving these objectives.

Kent Housing Group

A Kent-wide group with membership drawn from the local authority and RSL sectors, as well as the Supporting People Team, Kent Adult Social Service and GOSE.

Kent Homeless Officers Group

A sub-group of the Kent Housing Group, this group meet to share good practice and develop new initiatives to tackle homelessness. It is currently developing a schools education programme to raise the awareness of homelessness amongst children in schools.

Kent Policy Officers Group

Also a sub-group of the Kent Housing Group, this group focuses on sharing and developing good practice to support the local authorities strategic and enabling functions.

2. An East Kent perspective

2.1 The East Kent market

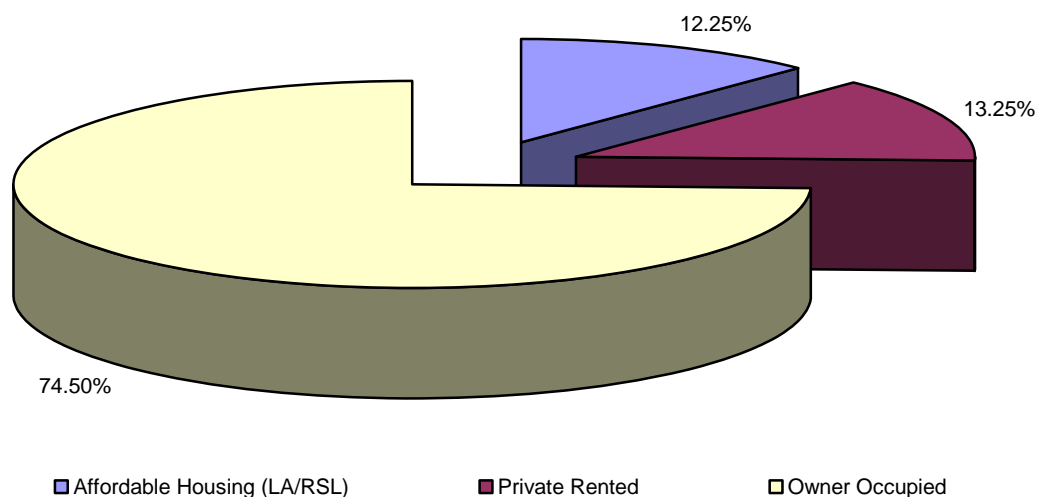
The four East Kent authorities border the districts of Swale and Ashford. They cover an area of 420 square miles and have a combined population of 463,000.

Although there are considerable variations within East Kent, generally speaking, it is characterised by:

- Relatively low land values compared with the rest of the South East (less so for areas such as Canterbury and Sandwich)
- Common coastal characteristics – poor quality housing, low levels of investment, high levels of private rented accommodation, economic and social decline
- An ageing population, with higher than average numbers of older people
- A higher than average number of vulnerable people
- A low skill, low wage economy that is perceived as less dynamic than other parts of Kent.

75% of East Kent's 196,000 homes are owner-occupied. 12% are rented from the local authorities or a Registered Social Landlord (RSL). The remaining 13% are rented in the private sector (see Table 1).

Table 1 – East Kent housing stock by sector



2.2 Affordable housing

Within East Kent, it is the local authorities that are the major social landlords with a combined total of 16,709⁹ affordable homes. RSLs provide a further 10,000 affordable homes.

⁹ As at March 2007

However, the Right to Buy¹⁰ has seen stock levels across East Kent decline significantly (see Table 2), and a disproportionate number of two and three-bedroom homes have been sold over the last 28 years (the East Kent authorities owned approximately 30,000 homes in 1980).

Table 2 - Right to Buy sales for five years to March 2007

Year	Canterbury	Dover	Shepway	Thanet	Total
2002-03	94	122	84	77	377
2003-04	72	144	79	71	366
2004-05	41	65	26	46	178
2005-06	18	27	18	24	87
2006-07	23	24	18	23	88
Total	248	382	225	241	1096

This situation has been compounded by the comparatively low number of new affordable homes provided by RSLs in East Kent over the last five years (See Table 3).

Table 3 - RSL completions for five years to March 2007

Year	Canterbury	Dover	Shepway	Thanet	Total
2002-03	31	18	21	20	90
2003-04	53	29	84	12	178
2004-05	53	65	58	12	188
2005-06	42	26	40	53	161
2006-07	56	64	16	31	167
Total	235	202	219	128	784

To place this further into perspective, data from individual housing needs assessments undertaken individually by the East Kent authorities between 2002 and 2004 indicated a collective need for 4701 affordable homes annually over a five-year period to meet existing and projected housing need. Offset against an annual average of 1796 re-lets of existing affordable housing, this leaves an annual shortfall of 2905 affordable homes across East Kent (See Table 4)

Table 4 – Annual shortfall of affordable housing

	Canterbury	Dover	Shepway	Thanet	Total
Annual need	1219	814	1234	1434	4701
Less annual average re-lets	443	492	329	532	1796
Annual shortfall	776	322	905	902	2905

It is not surprising therefore that the private rented sector is seen to have a significant role to play in preventing homelessness, through the provision of both temporary and permanent accommodation.

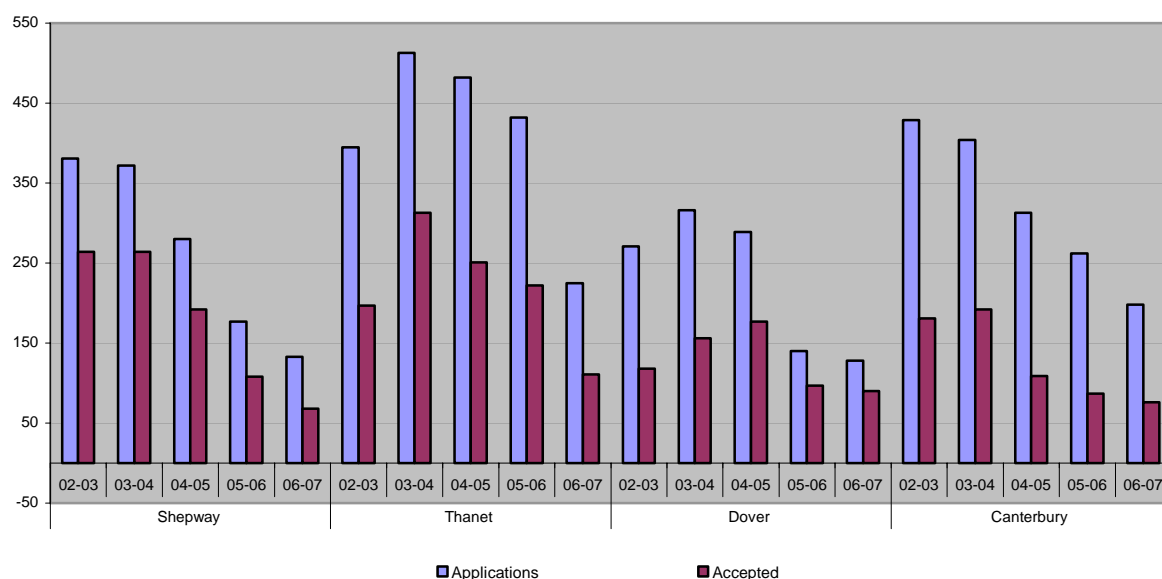
¹⁰ An initiative introduced in 1980 by the Conservative Government which allowed eligible local authority tenants to purchase their homes at a discount, following a minimum period of residence

2.3 Homelessness in East Kent

There has been a significant drop in the number of homelessness applications made in East Kent in the past five years (see Table 5).

Applications peaked between 2002 and 2004. This is due partly to the initial impact of the *Homelessness Act 2002*, which extended the category of applicant that had priority need. However, with an increasing emphasis on the prevention of homelessness through the *Housing Options* model of service delivery (see section 3.2), and particular initiatives such as the *Rent Deposit Scheme* for example (see section 3.5, the number of applications received (and those accepted) has decreased steadily over the past five years.

Table 5 - East Kent homelessness statistics 2002 – 2007



The number of households accepted as homeless across East Kent peaked in 2003-2004 at 925. In the following three years this figure reduced by just over 62% to 345. It will be noted from Table 6 that the two most common causes of homelessness were eviction by a family member or friend which is rising proportionally (32% in 2002-2003 compared with 40% in 2006-2007), and also loss of rented or tied accommodation, although this has decreased proportionally by some 13%. Loss of accommodation due to mortgage default and incidents of violence and harassment have also risen proportionally, as has the number of homeless people leaving institutions.

Table 6 – Reasons for homelessness – East Kent

Category / Year	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07
Relatives/friends unable to accommodate	244	326	255	181	137
Relationship breakdown	48	52	42	37	12
Violence / harassment	82	152	128	100	57
Mortgage default	10	9	4	8	17
Rent arrears	45	43	26	21	10
Loss of rented or tied	258	235	209	124	73

Category / Year	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07
accommodation					
Asylum seekers	0	2	0	1	3
Care / institution leaver	21	42	31	14	24
Other	52	64	34	28	12
Total	760	925	729	514	345

Table 7 illustrates the priority needs category for each household that was accepted as homeless.¹¹ The majority of acceptances were for households with dependent children, but of significant concern, is the proportional increase in the number of 16/17 year-olds accepted as homeless, which more than doubled during the five-years (7% in 2003 to 16% in 2007). To a lesser extent but also a concern, is the proportional increase from 3% to 8% in the number of acceptances due to risk of violence.

The proportion of older people has reduced by some 50%; however acceptances due to physical disability, mental illness/disability and drug/alcohol dependency have remained proportionally consistent.

Table 7 - Priority needs categories – East Kent

Category / Year	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07
Emergency	16	13	5	14	2
Dependent children	461	508	380	248	143
Pregnancy	41	68	57	45	39
16/17 year-old	51	77	56	57	56
Care leaver aged 18-20	3	8	9	3	10
Old age	46	37	36	16	12
Physical disability	32	71	49	27	15
Mental illness / disability	57	74	50	34	27
Other (drug / alcohol dependency)	24	10	19	12	13
Vulnerable - care leaver	1	2	2	0	0
Vulnerable - HM forces	0	1	0	1	0
Vulnerable - custody / remand	6	12	4	1	2
Vulnerable - violence	22	44	62	57	26
Total	760	925	729	514	345

2.4 The key drivers

Several issues will have a significant impact on the East Kent housing market in the immediate future - and potentially therefore, levels of homelessness:

- The channel tunnel domestic rail link – will access Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone and Ramsgate and will have an inevitable impact on property prices, as the districts become more attractive to investors and London becomes more accessible

¹¹ It should be noted that although many homeless households fall into more than one of the priority needs categories, only one is actually used for each household when their homelessness application is assessed

- Rising interest rates – if interest rates continue to rise there is a risk that an increasing number of households will be unable to meet their mortgage commitments. Potentially, this will result in more repossessions and increased homelessness
- The *South East Plan* (see section 1.3) – proposes future levels of housing provision which have significant implications for East Kent
- The strength of the local economy – there are clear links between the health of the local economy, the number of people in employment and the demand for housing across different tenures. A downturn in the local economy will see demand for owner occupation overturned by demand for affordable housing
- The impact of growth within Ashford and the Thames Gateway
- Changing demographics – the age distribution of the population arising from births and deaths; changing patterns of household formation due to marriage, divorce and childbirth; and the number and composition of new households arising from migration to and from the sub-region.

2.5 Accommodation-based services for homeless households in East Kent

East Kent has a limited amount of short-term accommodation for homeless people, which is unevenly distributed across the sub-region. As a result, demand is continuously in excess of supply. This is frequently compounded by a shortage of suitable permanent accommodation for service users to move on to, and consequently many will occupy short-term accommodation for far longer than necessary. This has the added disadvantage of blocking access to these limited resources for other homeless households. Table 8 summarises the short-term accommodation currently available.

Table 8 – Accommodation-based services for homeless households (by bed space) – East Kent

Service	Canterbury	Dover	Shepway	Thanet	Total
Night shelter	28	-	-	-	28
Homeless hostel	16	27	9	20	72
Single homeless (high support)	-	12	11	-	23
Women's refuge	12	6	7	12	37
Young people	22	12	-	23	57
Move-on accommodation	18	-	-	-	18
Supported housing for homeless people	38	-	-	-	38
Supported housing – substance/alcohol misuse	13	-	11	-	24
Total	147	57	38	55	297

3. Achievements and progress 2003-2008

3.1 Identifying the priorities

Although separate, the 2003 homelessness strategies were developed by the East Kent authorities in partnership, and they included an overarching statement demonstrating their long-term commitment to joint working. Shared priorities included:

- Preventing homelessness through the establishment of a “Housing Options” service
- Reducing the use of bed and breakfast accommodation
- Making better use of the private sector rented sector
- Tackling rough sleeping.

3.2 “Housing Options” model of service delivery

If housing difficulties can be resolved at an early enough stage, the need to make a homelessness application may not arise. The *Housing Options* model of service delivery was introduced originally by the London Borough of Harrow. Cited by Government as an example of proven best practice,¹² it is now well established in East Kent, and has been significant in reducing the number of homelessness applications made, and the numbers accepted, which reduced by over 62% in the three years to 2007 (see section 2.3).

Each authority also records the number of households who avoided homelessness as a result of successful housing advice (see appendix 4), and table 9 illustrates the steady increase in the number of households that have benefited from the increasing emphasis on prevention.

Table 9 – Homelessness preventions 2005-2007

Year	Canterbury	Dover	Shepway	Thanet	Total
2005-2006	182	152	176	7	517
2006-2007	210	152	205	175	742
Total	392	304	381	182	1259

3.3 Reductions in the use of bed and breakfast and other temporary accommodation

All of the East Kent authorities met the Government target to ensure that by 2003, families with children did not occupy bed and breakfast accommodation for any more than six weeks.

The use of temporary accommodation generally has reduced significantly within East Kent as well. Table 10 illustrates the numbers of households in temporary accommodation at year-end for the five years to 2006-2007. At December 2007 Canterbury City Council had further reduced its total to 148, thereby ensuring that it exceeded the Government’s 2010 target some two years sooner than required.

Table 10 – Households in temporary accommodation at year-end

¹² *Reducing B & B use and tackling homelessness – What’s working?* (ODPM August 2003)

Year	Canterbury	Dover	Shepway	Thanet
2002-2003	381	107	113	35
2003-2004	334	121	110	73
2004 - 2005	286	114	158	77
2005-2006	246	118	144	111
2006-2007	228	83	107	70

3.4 Outreach and resettlement

The Porchlight¹³ Outreach and Resettlement Team were established in 1998 to support the increasing number of people sleeping on the streets of Canterbury. Funded originally by Government grant, the service expanded into Dover, Shepway and Thanet with funding from the *Big Lottery Fund*, and from individual authorities' homelessness grants¹⁴. Over time, it has evolved to meet a wider range of needs, and take an increasingly preventative approach, providing tenancy sustainment as well as specialist services including prison outreach (working with offenders prior to and after release), and a young persons mental health outreach service.

Drop-in services have been running in Canterbury, Dover and Shepway since April 2005 and are perceived as a very effective way of delivering the outreach service. Table 11 shows the number of clients that have accessed the service since it first began.

Table 11 – Clients accessing outreach drop-in services 2005 - January 2008

Year	Canterbury	Dover	Shepway	Thanet
2005-2006	100	160	76	76
2006-2007	197	172	37	109
2007 – 2008 (April 2007-January 2008)	195	220	71	N/A

Porchlight has also provided a separate community outreach and support service to the residents of two tower blocks in Ramsgate. The service was accessed by 143 local people during 2006-2007 and has led to the establishment of a Residents' Association and a number of individual community groups.

From January 2008, the service expanded countywide with funding from Supporting People. Key aims include:

- The prevention of homelessness through advocacy and advice
- Reconnecting people to their place of origin through the *Kent Reconnection Policy*
- Work directly with homeless people, and rough sleepers to prevent them from becoming entrenched in a street lifestyle
- Facilitate access to benefits advice, health care, training and education
- Support rough sleepers who have been re-housed, until they can access floating support services
- Work with local communities to develop housing and support solutions for socially excluded groups.

¹³ Porchlight were formerly known as the East Kent Cyrenians

¹⁴ The service was not funded to provide street outreach in Shepway or Thanet during 2007-2008

3.5 Rent deposit schemes

One of the main impediments to accessing accommodation in the private rented sector for people on low incomes is the need to pay a deposit. The rent deposit scheme enables homeless people to access the private sector by providing a repayable rent deposit and where appropriate, one months rent in advance. The schemes vary between the East Kent authorities, but each one has made a major contribution to the prevention of homelessness in the sub-region.

In April 2007 the Government introduced the *Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme*. Any landlord who took a deposit from this date was required to protect it using a government authorised tenancy deposit scheme, for which a charge was made.

As an alternative to taking a deposit, both Dover and Shepway have offered a deposit bond to landlords that participate in the rent deposit scheme. No monies are actually paid to the landlord at the start of the tenancy, but the Councils undertake to meet any end of tenancy costs that would normally be offset against the deposit. The scheme has been well received by participating landlords in the two districts.

In total, the schemes have helped in excess of 1308 households to access accommodation in the private rented sector within the five years from 2003:

- Canterbury – 267 households
- Dover - 347 households
- Shepway - 511 households
- Thanet - 183 households.

Porchlight has also made rent deposits available as part of their preventative work, making in excess of £6,000 available in the twelve months to March 2007.

3.6 Working in partnership with other agencies

Three countywide protocols, developed by the *Joint Policy and Planning Board for Housing* (JPPB) between 2005 and 2007, each identify the statutory duties and agreed responsibilities of partner agencies for ensuring that young people, intentionally homeless families with children, and people with mental health needs secure accommodation suitable for their needs. Monitored by the JPPB, the aim of the protocols was to establish and agree an approach to preventing homelessness and addressing tenancy sustainment by the partner agencies, irrespective of local authority area.

Complex cases involving homeless and potentially homeless households are increasingly addressed through multi-agency case conferences. This has been beneficial to all parties, ensuring a greater understanding and cooperation between agencies, improved joint working and communication across districts and a more sustainable outcome for the household.

Case study – Dover District Council

A family approached the Housing Options Team seeking housing advice and assistance. Their landlord, who wished to gain possession of the property, had served them with court proceedings.

Social Services were already involved in the case, as there had been evidence of domestic violence, witnessed by the children.

The Social Worker contacted the Housing Options Team to explain the family's situation and the Housing Needs Manager was invited to attend a case conference and also to become a member of the core group, which monitored the family's progress on an ongoing basis. Copies of the initial child protection conference minutes and the child protection plan document were provided to the Housing Needs Manager, who was also involved in the decision to place the children on the child protection register.

The family eventually became homeless, and submitted a homelessness application.

Although they were eventually assessed as intentionally homeless, they were re-housed into secure accommodation through the Council's housing register. This positive outcome was possible because of the on-going involvement of the Housing Options Team with the family, and the close liaison with Social Services. The family's housing application was kept up to date, and Social Services were involved at every stage.

3.7 Choice based lettings

The Government's housing policy places considerable emphasis on the themes of choice and responsibility. One element of this agenda is changing the mechanism through which households access affordable housing. Traditional methods of allocating affordable housing are being seen as increasingly bureaucratic, and less preferable than alternative approaches that allow applicants to play a greater role in the process of selecting their home.

Choice based lettings will be implemented in Kent by the *Kent Choice Based Lettings Partnership* a Thanet-lead consortium of 12 local authorities and 14 RSLs. In 2005 the partnership (which was at the time a much smaller group of East and Mid-Kent authorities), obtained a Government grant of £100,000 to offset against the cost of developing the service. Combined with the economies in expanding the partnership countywide, the Partnership is confident that it will be able to deliver a service that is not only cost-effective, but also able to help tackle homelessness through better use of existing housing, opportunities for greater mobility between districts, and greater choice for applicants.

Choice based lettings will be implemented in East Kent during 2008-2009, well in advance of the Government's 2010 target.

3.8 Regional Homelessness Champions 2005 – Canterbury City Council

Canterbury City Council was awarded *Regional Homelessness Champion* status by the Government in 2005, in recognition of reductions in homelessness and rough sleeping, and the targeting of vulnerable groups through amendments to the housing register. The purpose of the award was to encourage successful authorities to support others and share good practice to prevent homelessness. The Council provided information and training to other local authorities and service providers directly, and through attendance at conferences.

3.9 Sanctuary schemes

The *Sanctuary scheme* is an initiative that helps people who have experienced domestic violence to remain safely in their homes. The scheme is currently available in Canterbury and Thanet, and will be implemented in Dover and Shepway during 2008-2009. It is available to people who live in Council and RSL homes, and also

those who live in the private sector. During 2007-2008, 16 households were helped to remain in their homes.

Case Study – Thanet District Council

A client who contacted the Housing Options Team advised that her former partner was harassing her.

She lived in Thanet with her daughter, and wanted to remain in the district so that her daughter, who was at secondary school, would not need to change schools at such an important time in her education. The client was a nurse and worked unusual hours, often having to leave her daughter at home alone during the evenings.

The harassment continued, and the Police became involved when the client returned from work early one morning and found that her former partner had gained access to her home.

The Sanctuary scheme provided a replacement back door, a new lock for the front door, and installed safety glass to both. This has enabled the client and her daughter to remain safely at home, with the opportunity of continued support from the scheme, should it become necessary.

3.10 Single agency assessment

The East Kent authorities each participate in the *East Kent Single Agency Assessment process*, which enables statutory partner agencies to refer applicants who require housing due to a health/support need that cannot be met by their current accommodation. Developed in 2003 by the *Joint Policy and Planning Board*, the process has been extremely effective in establishing a multi-agency approach to meeting the housing needs of vulnerable people, and also in starting to map the need for accommodation-based services across the sub-region.

Case study – Thanet District Council

A single agency assessment was completed by an Occupational Therapist in October 2007 on behalf of a family who were living in a two-bedroom property situated on three floors.

Although mobile, the applicant was unsteady on her feet and she suffered chronic tiredness when exerted. She lived with her two sons who both had learning disabilities, and required 24-hour care and supervision.

The Housing Options Team placed the family into the highest priority band, and by the end of October they had been re-housed into a three-bedroom house, which was suitable for future adaptation if required.

During 2007-2008, 271 single agency assessment referrals were made by 16 partner agencies across East Kent. Of these, 29% were re-housed during 2007-2008.

Table 12 – SAA Referrals 2007-2008

Priority	Canterbury	Dover	Shepway	Thanet	Total
High ¹⁵	14	18	35	82	149
Medium ¹⁶	8	14	28	46	96
Low ¹⁷	4	0	5	17	26

¹⁵ High priority – the client has a critical need to move. For example, delayed discharge from an inpatient setting

¹⁶ Medium priority – the client has a substantial need to move. For example, an inability to access bathing or cooking facilities, or overcrowding

Priority	Canterbury	Dover	Shepway	Thanet	Total
Total	26	32	68	145	271

3.11 Private sector leasing schemes

Private sector leasing has provided the East Kent authorities with a further alternative to placing homeless families in bed and breakfast accommodation by providing temporary accommodation that is more suited to their needs. Individual schemes vary between authorities and have been attractive to landlords who are able to lease their properties for a fixed period of five years, in return for a full management service and a guaranteed rental income.

Table 13 – PSL stock - January 2008

Canterbury	Dover	Shepway	Thanet	Total
11	42	100	45	198

3.12 Mediation

Mediation services are provided across East Kent by the Thanet Mediation Service, the Shepway Mediation Service (in Dover and Shepway) and in Canterbury, by KCHT Breakthrough. The value of mediation and support in preventing homelessness is well recognised, particularly for young people. Improved communication between family members, increased attendance at school and increased confidence and self-esteem are positive additional outcomes that frequently result from mediation and support.

Case study – Shepway District Council

A young single mother with a three-year-old child contacted the Council's Housing Options team requesting assistance with finding alternative accommodation.

They were living in a privately rented flat with the child's grandmother, but the relationship between the mother and grandmother was deteriorating. The flat was small, space was limited and there had been a number of alcohol-related incidents.

The mediation team worked closely with both parties, and they were eventually able to reconcile many of their differences. They were supported in agreeing future boundaries that would help to relieve the potential stress of living in a small flat.

As a result, the young mother and her child were able to remain at home, and did not pursue their application for alternative accommodation through the Housing Options team.

¹⁷ *Low priority* – the client has a moderate need to move. For example, the need for a planned move to a more independent environment at some point in the future.

4. Reviewing the service

4.1 Lessons learned

Although a considerable amount has been achieved in the last five years, homelessness remains a significant problem for the East Kent authorities and their partners.

In 2004 the *Office of the Deputy Prime Minister* (now CLG) commissioned the *Housing Quality Network* (HQN) to undertake an evaluation of the 2003 homelessness strategies of all 354 local authorities¹⁸. This exercise proved invaluable, providing each local authority with a detailed overview of the strengths and weaknesses of their individual strategies, and the opportunity to address these issues during the 2008 review. The key points arising from the review of the East Kent homelessness strategies were:

- The review process needs to be more comprehensive and to focus on all groups rather than particular ones
- There was a lack of emphasis on tackling issues in the private sector
- A limited emphasis on the prevention of homelessness, and the monitoring thereof
- The need for the *East Kent Homelessness Forum* to widen its strategic links and engage with health, social care and education sectors
- The need to evidence how the sub-regional approach is addressing district-specific issues.

4.2 Cross authority peer reviews

Using the CLG self-assessment guide *Preventing Homelessness: A Strategy Health Check* (September 2006), each authority undertook a self-assessment of their service during 2007, which was then tested with frontline staff by staff from the partner authorities. The process was consistently applied across each authority, enabling each one to share good practice. The following service gaps were also identified:

- RSL commitment to homelessness prevention – improve partnership working by inviting stock-holding RSLs to join the East Kent Homelessness Forum (see also objective 1.7 in the Action Plan at section 8)
- Strengthen money/debt advice and credit unions to help tackle financial exclusion to prevent homelessness (see objectives 1.13 -1.16 in the Action Plan at section 8)
- Options Toolkit (including procedures, advice leaflets, comprehensive agency contact details, up to date information on range of services available, referral forms, etc) to be developed for use by frontline Housing Options staff.
- Absence of street outreach service (Thanet only. Addressed by Countywide Outreach and Resettlement service from 2008)
- Quality checking of temporary accommodation (see objective 5.7 in the Action Plan at section 8)
- Customer satisfaction/exit surveys to inform service development (see section 7 in the Action Plan at section 8).

4.3 Listening to service users

¹⁸ *Local Authorities' Homelessness Strategies: Evaluation and Good Practice* (HQN, ODPM 2004)

Service user feedback is invaluable. Three satisfaction surveys sought the views and opinions of service users on a range of services across East Kent during 2007:

- *Homelessness service satisfaction survey* – issued to households who had been homeless but whose cases were closed during February 2007. 24 responses were received. The survey tested overall satisfaction with the service including advice and information provided, and waiting time to see an officer. Overall satisfaction levels were moderate at 63%, although 83% found staff helpful. The survey will be repeated during 2008 and a focus group convened to explore in further detail experiences of using these services.
- *Temporary accommodation survey* – issued to all households in temporary accommodation with 320 responses received. Generally there were few problems with the size and condition of accommodation or the proximity to schools and employment; however 19% of respondents reported accommodation-related health problems and 17% reported harassment problems. The need to improve the quality of temporary accommodation across East Kent is a key priority within this strategy and objectives have been developed to address the issues that have been identified. This survey will also be repeated during 2008.
- *Single homelessness survey* – this survey was first undertaken by Canterbury City Council in 2004 but was rolled out across Kent during February/March 2007. Completed by all statutory and voluntary agencies that provide advice and assistance to single homeless people in Kent, it tracked the causes of homelessness, and the movements and needs of single homeless people. Countywide, 731 responses were received, 356 of which were within East Kent. 34 (10%) of the East Kent respondents were aged under 18. This survey will be repeated during 2008.

A more detailed summary of the findings of each survey will be found at appendix 2.

- *Individual case studies* – undertaken during 2007 on behalf of the East Kent authorities by the Scrine Foundation. 23 service users spoke frankly about their experience of being homeless and accessing local statutory and voluntary services. The case studies highlighted several key issues:

- Illegal evictions and poor quality housing management provided by private sector landlords was identified as a major cause of homelessness amongst single people in East Kent
- The validity of the annual street count was questioned and the need for this data to be supplemented with more comprehensive service user feedback on a more regular basis
- The need to review the provision of direct access accommodation across the sub-region. Is it in the most appropriate location? Are the access criteria correct?
- The need to review the provision of accommodation for people with substance misuse and addiction issues across East Kent. The study suggests that the current level of provision is inadequate
- Evidence suggests that homeless people still experience difficulties accessing health services, specifically services for addressing substance misuse
- The need to review the provision of accommodation for people who experience domestic violence
- The need to review policies that prevent people from accessing services due to a history of anti-social behaviour.
- Evidence suggests an increasing number of people from the A8 countries are looking to access voluntary sector services across East Kent - many agencies are struggling to address this need because of language

difficulties or because clients are often ineligible for benefits.

4.4 Young people

Young people are particularly vulnerable to homelessness and its consequences. The increase in the number of young people accepted as homeless in East Kent has already been noted (see section 2.3) and this is a particular issue in the Dover district. In 2006-2007¹⁹ 6,061 young people were accepted as homeless nationally, which represented 8.5% of all acceptances. In the same period in Dover, 21 young people were accepted as homeless, which accounted for 23% of all acceptances. In September 2007, nine 16 and 17 year olds were living in bed and breakfast in the Dover district, making it one of the top 30 users of bed and breakfast nationally, and the fourth highest user in the South East region. Evidence suggests however that the problem is significant for East Kent as a whole, and that services to prevent and tackle youth homelessness are less than adequate:

- *Evaluation of services and initiatives for young homeless people in Kent and Nord-Pas-de-Calais*²⁰ - examined and evaluated youth homelessness services in East Kent and Nord-Pas-de-Calais by considering the experiences and perspectives of service users, service providers and service commissioners. The study found that:

- A poor family relationship is key factor in influencing a young person's decision to engage with service providers. Emotional difficulties, low self-worth and rejection by family make engagement less likely
- There was a lack of psychological support available to young homeless people
- All young people wanted a job and a flat of their own. They were optimistic for their futures and aspired to conventional family lives
- Drug and alcohol use increased when young people were placed in homeless hostels
- Assessment of young homeless people by support services was risk-based rather than needs-led, and the delivery of support was based on risk management
- There were few training opportunities for young homeless people outside of Education, Employment or Training (EET) schemes
- Access and availability of primary health care was mixed for young homeless people and was dependent on the area and individual surgery decisions

- Research undertaken on behalf of *Shepway Young Persons Homeless Forum* during spring 2007 in partnership with Maidstone and Ashford Borough Councils. 68 young people responded, and key issues that emerged for the Shepway area were:

- An increasing proportion of people presenting as homeless and being accepted for permanent re-housing by Shepway District Council are under 25 – 16 cases were recorded in 2005-06, and 23 in 2006-2007
- The main causes of homelessness are family relationship breakdown and eviction from the family home
- There is a higher than average incidence of repeat homelessness amongst 18-20 year olds
- Most respondents knew what agencies they could contact for support, and the majority were content with the level of support they were receiving

¹⁹ CLG December 2007

²⁰ Canterbury Christ Church University and the Catholic University of Lille March 2006

- Most respondents said that their main priority was to secure permanent housing
- The majority of Shepway-based service providers supported a need for the provision of an accommodation-based support scheme that could provide young people with the life-skills necessary to enable them to live independently, and avoid repeat homelessness.

- *Housing advice in the school setting* – a pilot project undertaken by Shelter in Dover and Folkestone during 2007 with the aim of providing information for young people about accessing housing. Initially the service was little used by students, however evidence from classroom sessions held by Shelter, and feedback from the 530 students who completed Shelter’s questionnaire revealed that:

- Students in years seven and 11 were most likely to access the service. Least likely were the year 10 students (ages 14-15), although they were the group most likely to have experienced housing-related problems
- 30 students said they had a housing-related problem, but only five had sought advice from Shelter. For those that did, the cause of the problem was relationship breakdown. A perceived lack of privacy was the reason given for not accessing the school-based service, with the Internet being the preferred source of information and advice
- The students were relatively uninterested in housing issues unless they had experienced homelessness or knew someone who had. Those who attended Shelter’s classroom sessions were more likely to have experienced homelessness, and these sessions were generally perceived by teaching staff to be much more interactive than regular classes
- Generally the students had unrealistic expectations of their ability to find housing when they are older. They knew little about their housing-related rights or responsibilities or of the sort of difficulties they may face in accessing housing in the future
- The students were uninterested in being “taught” about housing, but responded well to a session where a young homeless woman spoke about her experience
- There is an acute need to address housing issues within the classroom, and this is most likely to be effective when it is delivered by young people who have already experienced problems with housing. Shelter concluded from this experience that this should be targeted at young people from the age of 11 or younger where possible.

- *KCHT Breakthrough*, working in partnership with Canterbury City Council provides support and mediation to families. In the 18 months to September 2007, 132 referrals were received from young people aged 10-19 with the “risk of homelessness” the primary cause for referral. Additional primary causes were behaviour, family breakdown, communication difficulties, educational difficulties and low self-esteem, all of which are factors that can contribute to homelessness. The service estimates a success rate of between 90-95% in preventing homelessness, but this is dependent upon support being provided at the earliest opportunity. The service also demonstrated:

- The city has an acute shortage of suitable accommodation for young people
- Mediation does not work for everyone. For some young people, the best option is a supported move into alternative accommodation
- In most cases, the parents need just as much advice and information about avoiding homelessness as the young people
- Some young people and their families genuinely believe that there is an abundance of alternative accommodation available for homeless people,

and that it is relatively easy to obtain a council-owned home. Once aware of the reality, the inclination to resolve differences is considerably stronger.

4.5 Listening to partners and stakeholders

Partners and stakeholders have also informed the review process. A sub-regional stakeholder event was convened during May 2007, which provided an opportunity for stakeholders to debate issues around making better use of private sector housing, reducing the use of temporary accommodation, tackling rough sleeping and improving services and support for young people. Key issues identified by stakeholders during workshop discussions were:

Making better use of private sector housing

- Be proactive in taking action against private landlords for harassment and illegal eviction
- Work with private landlords to promote the private rented sector as a tenure of choice for those accessing housing options services
- Provide information on housing options for those who are ineligible to present as homeless or apply for social housing
- Undertake routine consultation with service users, including exit interviews.

Reducing the use of temporary accommodation & improving the quality of existing:

- Develop alternatives to bed and breakfast
- Visit all households in temporary accommodation to encourage take-up of housing options
- Undertake routine inspections of temporary accommodation
- Work closely with landlords to improve quality of accommodation
- Avoid accommodation that is isolated from local service/schools/support networks
- Ensure floating support is available from point of access.

Maximising housing options and choice:

- Ensure that all partners implement the Kent Reconnection Policy, enabling to service-users live in an area of choice, with family and support networks
- Choice-based lettings rollout to involve all partner agencies to avoid exclusion of vulnerable households
- Review the effectiveness of homelessness prevention and housing options services identifying initiatives that have the greatest impact
- Develop and implement a system of obtaining service-user feedback – surveys, focus groups etc.

Preventing rough sleeping:

- With partners, work to reduce the negative community impact of rough sleepers
- Make public areas less attractive to rough sleepers.
- Ensure that adequate outreach and re-settlement resources are deployed across all areas
- Ensure that services match local needs.

Services and support for young people

- Investigate viability of foyer-type accommodation, linking accommodation with training and employment opportunities, life skills training
- Evaluate benefits of supported lodgings schemes and consider trialling
- Local authorities to lead a multi-agency approach – no one agency can tackle the issue alone
- Expand schools programme, targeting the younger children and also the none-attendees.

Partners and stakeholders have also contributed to this strategy as it has developed, and a full list of all contributors will be found at appendix 3.

5. Strategic priorities

In response to consultation with partners, stakeholders and service-users, seven key strategic priorities have been identified. They will enable the East Kent authorities and their partners to build upon their achievements to date, and to tackle the ongoing problem of homelessness, which remains significant across the sub-region:

- Maximise housing options and choice for customers
- Prevent rough sleeping
- Promote sustainable private sector accommodation
- Help homeless people to secure and retain good quality accommodation
- Reduce the use of temporary accommodation
- Tackle youth homelessness
- Monitor performance and develop best practice in homelessness.

5.1 Maximise housing options and choice for customers

Effective homelessness prevention is about finding ways to avoid actual homelessness occurring. This includes help to access benefits, liaison with families, landlords and other agencies, and support through mediation. Key outcomes will include:

- The ongoing provision of housing options services to meet an increasingly diverse range of needs
- The effective implementation and monitoring of choice-based lettings (CBL)
- A greater focus on the prevention of homelessness
- Improved partnership working
- Maximise the role of RSLs in tackling homelessness
- Make better use of existing housing stock
- Promoting financial inclusion.

5.2 Prevent rough sleeping

Although the annual street count indicates that the number of people sleeping on the streets in East Kent is relatively low, it is widely believed that this does not reflect the true problem. Seasonal fluctuations are also relevant, and evidence suggests that many rough sleepers move between the four authorities, staying for short periods in each. The East Kent authorities welcome the countywide Outreach and Resettlement Service that commenced in January 2008. Delivered by Porchlight, it will build upon the strong track record that Porchlight has already achieved with its Outreach and Resettlement services (see section 3.4). Key outcomes will include:

- A reduction in the numbers of people sleeping rough
- Increased level of provision for those in acute need
- Increased numbers of rough sleepers re-housed into permanent accommodation or reconnected with an area with family and/or other support networks.

5.3 Promote sustainable private sector accommodation

The private rented sector has a significant role to play in meeting the housing needs of many households in East Kent. Demand for affordable housing is considerably in excess of supply, and for an increasing number of households the private rented sector is the only alternative. However in practice, accessing private rented

accommodation is still a problem for the most vulnerable members of the community and the sector offers them little choice and little security of tenure. Key outcomes will include:

- Continued assistance for vulnerable households to access the private sector through initiatives such as the Rent Deposit Scheme.
- Stronger joint working with Private Sector Housing Teams
- Fewer homeless presentations arising from enforcement action or illegal evictions
- Stronger dialogue with private landlords, improved standards of accommodation and management.

5.4 Help homeless households to secure and retain good quality accommodation

A high proportion of privately rented homes are occupied by low-income households who are dependent upon income-related benefits. Many are vulnerable, and have difficulty maintaining a permanent tenancy without support. The East Kent authorities have a key role to play in ensuring that vulnerable households can access sufficient support to help them live independently. Key outcomes will include:

- Vulnerable people able to access support services appropriate to their needs. E.g.: referral to specialist-supported accommodation, housing options advice, mediation services, outreach and resettlement and floating support services
- Vulnerable people able to access good quality private rented accommodation
- Future accommodation needs and related support services identified and planned for
- New accommodation-based services developed in partnership with key stakeholders.

5.5 Reduce the use of temporary accommodation

The Government has set a clear target for local authorities to halve the number of households living in temporary accommodation by 2010 (see section 1). Targets are based on temporary accommodation levels at December 2004, and as such vary between authorities (see Table 14).

Table 14 – 2010 Temporary Accommodation Targets

Canterbury	Dover	Shepway	Thanet	Total
155	60	72	55	342

Temporary accommodation also needs to be of a high standard, and in a location that does not isolate vulnerable households from families, schools, employment and other support networks. Key outcomes will include:

- Achieving the Government's 2010 target
- Existing temporary accommodation regularly monitored and reviewed
- Improved move-on provision
- Standard of existing temporary accommodation improved.

5.6 Tackle youth homelessness

Youth homelessness is also a key target for the Government. It has already been noted that an increasing number of young people are being accepted as homeless across East Kent (see sections 2.3 and 4.4) and that existing services to prevent and tackle youth homelessness are less than adequate. Key outcomes will include:

- Ending the use of bed and breakfast for 16 and 17 year olds in accordance with Government target
- More accommodation-based services for young people, in particular Shepway district, where there is currently no provision for young people at all
- Greater engagement with agencies that provide services for young people
- Positive outcomes for young people who are at risk of homelessness.

5.7 Monitor performance and develop best practice in homelessness

Section 7 outlines how performance is monitored within individual authorities, and across the sub-region as a whole. Key outcomes will include:

- Stakeholder, partner and service user feedback routinely obtained through surveys and focus groups; feedback used to inform service reviews and improvements
- Strengths and weaknesses identified
- Good practice shared
- Performance benchmarked with other authorities and service providers
- Service costs benchmarked with other authorities to ensure a value for money service.

6. Resources and funding

6.1 Sources of funding

Financial resources for tackling homelessness are extremely limited. Revenue funding is used to meet the ongoing cost of services, and capital funding is used to meet the initial cost of new services and accommodation. Funding to deliver the East Kent Homelessness Strategy is drawn from a number of sources:

□ **General Fund**

Each local authority funds the majority of their revenue expenditure on homelessness and related activities through their General Fund. This includes the costs of providing a housing options and advice service, grant funding to voluntary partners that provide services to homeless people, and the cost of providing emergency accommodation to homeless households. The cost of providing managing and maintaining any Council-owned hostels is generally met from the Housing Revenue Account.

□ **CLG Homelessness grant**

Specific Government funding based on the level of need identified in each area. Payable quarterly, the grant is intended to fund the development of preventative initiatives, for example mediation services and outreach and resettlement services. The Government has recently confirmed that Homelessness Grant will be available for the three-years from 2008-2009.

□ **Supporting People funding**

Supporting People funding is allocated through the Kent Supporting People Team and provides the revenue funding for services that support homeless people across East Kent. This includes temporary accommodation such as direct access hostel provision, women's refuges and accommodation based support for people with specific needs, such as alcohol or drug dependency. Supporting People also funds the countywide Outreach and Resettlement Service that is delivered by Porchlight.

Supporting People resources are limited, and funding for new initiatives has to be bid for from the Supporting People Commissioning Body. The 2007-2008 Supporting People budget is just in excess of £29m for Kent. The distribution across East Kent is shown in Table 15 below.

Table 15 – distribution of 2007-2008 Supporting People budget across East Kent

Canterbury	Dover	Shepway	Thanet	Total
£2,865,897.22 (9.83%)	£1,418,895.30 (4.86%)	£2,068,040.13 (7.09%)	£2,415,806.32 (8.28%)	£8, 768,692.97 (30.06%)

□ **Funding for Voluntary sector organisations**

The majority of voluntary sector organisations that provide services to homelessness people across East Kent are funded by grants and donations. The uncertainty of this form of funding makes planning for future services very difficult.

□ **Discretionary housing payments (Housing Benefit)**

Discretionary Payments are housing benefit payments made to people who are experiencing housing difficulties and can help them to access and retain accommodation. The limited budgets are normally fully committed each year.

□ ***Housing Corporation funding***

The main source of capital funding for new accommodation based services for homeless households and new affordable housing. Resources are limited, and are bid for by developing RSLs in partnership with each local authority.

□ ***Other funding***

From time to time additional grant resources are made available for new accommodation based initiatives and/or to improve existing accommodation. These resources are generally bid for by each authority or with partners where practical.

A summary of the anticipated funding and expenditure for each authority to 2011 is provided at appendix 6.

6.2 Managing limited resources

Any fluctuation in the levels of funding identified at section 6.1 will inevitably impact the ability of the East Kent authorities and their partners to deliver the Homelessness Strategy. Specifically:

- Any reduction in funding will create significant pressure on local resources and may jeopardise existing services. However, in the medium to long term expenditure on preventative services will reduce the cost of providing emergency accommodation
- Future levels of Supporting People funding are uncertain – and services for homeless people will have to compete for limited resources alongside services for other groups
- Any reduction in the level of Housing Corporation funding for new affordable homes will make it more difficult for homeless families to move on from temporary to permanent accommodation
- Although the East Kent authorities will take every opportunity to bid for additional capital and revenue funding – these resources are limited and are distributed according to the Government's priorities
- New accommodation-based initiatives cannot proceed unless both capital and revenue funding have been identified.

7. Monitoring and reviewing our performance

The Homelessness Strategy Action Plan at section 8 contains detailed individual objectives for delivering the Homelessness Strategy. Progress against each objective is continuously monitored at both a district and sub-regional level. Performance is also closely monitored by Central Government, through the quarterly P1E return.

7.1 Sub-regional monitoring of performance and progress

Performance against the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan and key performance indicators is monitored by the *East Kent Homelessness Forum* (see objective 7.1 in the Action Plan), which meets on a quarterly basis. A copy of the Terms of Reference for the Forum will be found at appendix 1.

The Action Plan is reviewed on an annual basis, in consultation with members of the forum.

7.2 District-based monitoring of performance and progress

Processes within individual districts vary. However, each district monitors its own performance closely, and objectives from the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan are reflected in divisional service plans, team plans and individual performance appraisals. Progress against individual and team objectives is monitored during team meetings and monthly one to one meetings.

Performance is also monitored by the internal audit process, which undertakes audit reviews of specific services to ensure that they are being delivered appropriately. In Dover, Shepway and Thanet, this function is carried out by the *East Kent Audit Partnership*.

7.3 Key performance indicators

Until April 2008, performance was measured against the Government's Best Value Performance Indicator framework (BVPI), a set of national performance standards that related to all Council services, plus a number of local performance indicators. Targets were reviewed annually for each performance indicator and performance was monitored rigorously by individual authorities, and also by Central Government. A summary of each authority's performance against current homelessness-related performance indicators for the two years to April 2007 is provided at appendix 4.

In April 2008 the BVPI framework was replaced by a set of new National Indicators. Indicator 156 measures the number of households living in temporary accommodation and will be monitored by local authorities in addition to many of the existing BVPIs, which will be retained as local performance indicators.

7.4 Consulting with partners, stakeholders and service users

The East Kent authorities recognise the role that regular consultation with partners, stakeholders and service users plays in monitoring and reviewing service delivery. Specific objectives have been developed to ensure that feedback is obtained on a regular basis to inform this process (see section 7 in the Action Plan).

8. Homelessness strategy action plan 2008-2013

The following objectives have been developed to help the East Kent authorities and their partners meet the seven key strategic priorities that are identified at section 5 of this strategy:

1. Maximise housing options and choice for customers
2. Prevent rough sleeping
3. Promote sustainable private sector accommodation
4. Help homeless households to secure and retain good quality accommodation
5. Reduce the use of temporary accommodation
6. Tackle youth homelessness
7. Monitor performance and develop best practice in homelessness.

Each objective has been developed to:

- Maximise the use of scarce financial resources
- Reflect partner, service user and stakeholder feedback
- Promote and develop joint working with a broad range of partners
- Build upon existing achievements
- Reflect current policy and legislation, and proven good practice
- Reflect national, regional and sub-regional priorities, specifically those identified within:
 - *The Way Forward for Housing* (ODPM December 2000)
 - *Sustainable Communities: Homes for All* (ODPM January 2005)
 - *Sustainable Communities: Settled Homes; Changing Lives* (ODPM March 2005)
 - *South East Regional Housing Strategy*
 - *East Kent Housing Strategies*
 - *Tackling Homelessness* (The Housing Corporation, November 2006)
 - *Kent Supporting People Strategy* (2005)

The majority of objectives are relevant for all four East Kent authorities. Where practical, and to avoid duplication of effort, responsibility for taking each objective forward rests with one authority and/or partner organisation. However, some objectives are a priority for only one or two authorities, and they are identified clearly as such in column 4, on the left hand side of the action plan.

Progress against each will be monitored by the East Kent Homelessness Forum and also within individual local authorities (see section 7).

Outcome	Timescale	Resources Implications	Lead/Reference
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: MAXIMISE HOUSING OPTIONS AND CHOICE FOR CUSTOMERS			
1.1 Review information available to service users (leaflets, Internet) and update			
Comprehensive information available in a range of formats	December 2008	Cost of leaflet design and production if appropriate	Shepway DC, Canterbury CC & Thanet DC (Dover information review completed December 2007)
1.2 Provide comprehensive housing options service			
Greater focus on homelessness prevention, strengthened housing advice and information service	Ongoing	Resource through current budget provision	All authorities
1.3 Review the effectiveness of existing housing options services			
Identify initiatives that have the greatest impact	April 2009	Resource through current budget provision	Thanet DC on behalf of all authorities (Reference: <i>Homelessness Prevention Systems Diagnostic</i> - Audit Commission 2007)
1.4 With partner RSLs and other Kent authorities, introduce choice-based lettings			
Increase choice, with a clearer route to permanent accommodation for homeless households	April 2010	Annual running costs budgeted for from 2008-2009	All authorities with Kent CBL Project Board
1.5 With partner agencies, monitor the impact of choice-based lettings on the community's most vulnerable households			
Vulnerable households able to engage with CBL process, and exercise choice	April 2010	Resource through current budget provision	All authorities with partner agencies
1.6 Monitor implementation of Kent Reconnection Policy			

Outcome	Timescale	Resources Implications	Lead/Reference
Equal access to short-term supported accommodation; vulnerable people able to make planned return to an area of local connection; reduced pressure on move-on resources in host district	Ongoing	Resource through current budget provision	All authorities - with service providers and Supporting People Team (Reference: Kent Reconnection Policy December 2007)
1.7 Through the East Kent RSL Forum, work with RSLs to implement the Housing Corporation's Homelessness Strategy			
Improved partnership working with East Kent authorities and other agencies; better use of existing housing stock e.g. reducing under occupation, tackling overcrowding; maximise RSL role in tackling homelessness	November 2009	Resource through current budget provision	Canterbury CC on behalf of all authorities (Reference: Broadland Housing Group - RSL Questionnaire 2007)
1.8 Assess the levels of under occupation in Council-owned properties and develop incentives for move-on			
Better use of existing housing stock	December 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Dover DC on behalf of all authorities
1.9 Using the UK Coalition on Older Homelessness methodology, undertake older homeless needs audit			
Assess levels of older people's homelessness; raise awareness; improved services for older people	April 2009	Resource through current budget provision	All authorities
1.10 Evaluate the effectiveness of current accommodation-based service for homeless households, quantify shortfall within individual districts, and if appropriate, develop proposals for additional services			
Ensure services match local needs; increase accommodation based services within the sub-region	April 2009	Subject to availability of revenue and capital funding	Shepway DC on behalf of all authorities
1.11 Review and evaluate effectiveness of mediation services, reporting annually to East Kent Homelessness Forum			

Outcome	Timescale	Resources Implications	Lead/Reference
Prevention of homelessness	From August 2008	Resource through current budget provision	All authorities
1.12 With RSLs and other partners develop initiatives to tackle overcrowding			
Practical actions to reduce overcrowding identified and implemented	April 2009	Funding to be identified	Thanet DC on behalf of all authorities (Reference: <i>Tackling overcrowding in England: An Action Plan</i> , CLG December 2007)
1.13 Encourage the expansion of debt advice to include the provision of court desks for households facing repossession			
Strengthened debt advice service	April 2010	Funding to be identified	Canterbury CC on behalf of all authorities
1.14 Enable access to credit through credit unions			
Reduce use of expensive/illegal money lenders	October 2009	Resourced through existing CAB provision	Thanet DC on behalf of all authorities
1.15 Help those without a bank account to access banking services			
Reduce adverse impact of phasing out of Post Office Cash Accounts in 2010; more efficient management of finances	October 2009	Resourced through existing CAB provision	Thanet DC on behalf of all authorities
1.16 Maximise uptake of debt advice service			
Reduce incidents of homelessness with improved financial awareness and knowledge	December 2008	Resourced through existing CAB provision	Thanet DC on behalf of all authorities
1.17 Support Kent Probation Area in implementing and achieving the objectives set out in the National Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan (November 2005) in particular pathway 1, Accommodation			
Reduce risk of re-offending; enable ex-offenders to engage with relevant support services	Ongoing	Resource through current budget provision	Kent Probation Area & the East Kent Homelessness Forum
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: PREVENT ROUGH SLEEPING			
2.1 Undertake annual street count			
Quantify levels of rough sleeping within individual districts and the sub-region	Annual	Resource through current budget provision	Porchlight on behalf of all authorities

Outcome	Timescale	Resources Implications	Lead/Reference
2.2 Monitor and measure the impact of the countywide Outreach and Resettlement Service on individual districts in East Kent, and provide each authority with quarterly performance data			
Ensure service continues to match district-specific needs	Quarterly from January 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Porchlight on behalf of all authorities
2.3 With partners, work to reduce the negative community impact of rough sleepers and make public areas less attractive to rough sleepers			
Reduce rough sleeping	Develop project plan by September 2009	May require additional funding	Canterbury CC on behalf of all authorities
2.4 Identify the agencies that are directing rough sleepers to East Kent and engage with them to identify alternative solutions			
Reduce the number of rough sleepers accessing services in East Kent	December 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Canterbury CC on behalf of all authorities
2.5 Obtain feedback from service users on levels of rough sleeping across individual districts			
Quantify levels of rough sleeping, building upon data obtained from annual street count	Ongoing from January 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Porchlight on behalf of all authorities
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE PRIVATE SECTOR ACCOMMODATION			
3.1 Review the impact of the Rent Deposit Schemes/Deposit Bond Schemes, reporting findings to the East Kent Homelessness forum			
Maximise effectiveness of schemes	Annually from September 2008	Resource through current budget provision	All authorities
3.2 Develop format for, and undertake customer satisfaction survey of RDS/PSL customers and RDS landlords			
Customer needs and preferences identified	November 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Dover DC on behalf of all authorities
3.3 With local landlords and Housing Benefit teams monitor impact of Local Housing Allowance on levels of homelessness			

Outcome	Timescale	Resources Implications	Lead/Reference
Respond to any identified increase in levels of homelessness	Ongoing from April 2008	Resource through current budget provision	All authorities
3.4 In consultation with private landlords, lettings agents and other agencies research the extent of and reasons for private sector evictions			
Understand and quantify issue, inform approach at 3.6 below	April 2009	Resource through current budget provision	Dover DC on behalf of all authorities
3.5 Following completion of research at 3.4 above, identify potential preventative measures and implement in consultation with partner agencies			
Fewer evictions; reduce landlord costs; fewer homeless presentations	September 2009	Resource through current budget provision	Dover DC on behalf of all authorities
3.6 Develop a clear policy and guidance for taking action against private landlords for harassment and illegal eviction			
Fewer illegal evictions; fewer homeless presentations	September 2009	Cost of legal action to be quantified	Dover DC on behalf of all authorities
3.7 Provide training for Housing Options staff on how shared ownership schemes operate, including how to assess the suitability of applicants against financial eligibility criteria			
Information provided to working households accepted as homeless as part of options interview	September 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Shepway DC & RSLs to develop format on behalf of Dover, Shepway and Thanet DCs
3.8 Promote the private rented sector as a tenure of choice for those accessing housing options services			
Maximise choice; reduce demand for affordable housing	On-going	Resource through current budget provision	All authorities
3.9 Review induction training for newly appointed Housing Options and Private Sector Housing staff to include training on both functions			
Strengthen joint working; fewer homelessness presentations arising from enforcement action	September 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Dover DC to develop format on behalf of Dover, Shepway and Thanet DCs

Outcome	Timescale	Resources Implications	Lead/Reference
3.10 Provide training for Housing Options and Private Sector Housing staff on the rights of EU nationals who are ineligible to present as homeless or apply for social housing			
Reduce illegal evictions; facilitate access to private sector	December 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Shepway DC to develop format on behalf of all authorities
3.11 Provide clear information on housing options for EU nationals who are ineligible to present as homeless or apply for social housing			
Reduce illegal evictions; facilitate access to private sector	December 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Shepway DC on behalf of all authorities
3.12 With Private Sector Housing teams, promote take-up of Warm Front grants by private landlords			
Maximise opportunities for affordable warmth	Ongoing	Resource through current budget provision	Dover, Shepway and Thanet DCs
3.13 Establish district-based private sector landlords' forums			
Strengthen dialogue with private landlords, raise standards of accommodation and management, prevent homelessness	June 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Dover DC; Shepway DC; Thanet DC
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: HELP HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS TO SECURE AND RETAIN GOOD QUALITY ACCOMMODATION			
4.1 Implement Sanctuary scheme in Dover and Shepway			
People who experience domestic violence can choose to remain at home	April 2009	Resource through current budget provision	Dover DC; Shepway DC
4.2 Maximise the use of Discretionary Housing Payments, ensuring that local authority budgets are fully allocated each year			
Reduce/prevent homelessness	On-going	Resource through current budget provision	All authorities

Outcome	Timescale	Resources Implications	Lead/Reference
4.3 With Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, Youth Offending Partnerships and the Probation Service identify opportunities for accommodation-based services for ex-offenders			
Reduce/prevent homelessness	May 2009	Resources to be identified	Thanet DC on behalf of all authorities (Reference: <i>Reducing Re-offending Housing and Housing Support resource pack 2008</i> - National Offender Management Service, 2008)
4.4 With the Eastern and Coastal Kent Primary Care Trust (PCT), facilitate improved access to GPs and other health-related services for homeless households			
Improve the health care arrangements for homeless households	April 2009	Resource through current budget provision	Shepway DC on behalf of all authorities (Reference: <i>Framework for planning and commissioning of services related to health needs of people who are homeless or living in temporary accommodation</i> - CLG January 2007)
4.5 Establish a substance misuse and housing sub-group to develop effective information-sharing and joint working protocols between housing providers and specialist treatment services for substance misusers			
Housing and support providers better able to meet the needs of substance misusers; prevent the homelessness of substance misusers	April 2009	Resource through current budget provision	KDAAT & East Kent Homelessness Forum (Reference: <i>Drugs: Protecting families and communities – 2008-2018 strategy</i> – HM Government 2008)
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: REDUCE THE USE OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION			
5.1 By 2010, reduce the number of households living in temporary accommodation by 50% of December 2004 level			
Meet and sustain key Government target	April 2010	Resource through current budget provision	All authorities
5.2 Ensure that families with children do not remain in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks			
Meet and sustain key Government target	Ongoing	Resource through current budget provision	All authorities
5.3 Maintain regular contact with all households in temporary accommodation within one year of commencement of occupation			

Outcome	Timescale	Resources Implications	Lead/Reference
Encourage take-up of alternative housing options	From January 2009	May require adjustment to existing budgets	All authorities
5.4 Review the impact of the Private Sector Leasing (PSL) scheme			
Maximise effectiveness of scheme; develop clear proposals for it's longer-term role	July 2009	Resource through current budget provision	Thanet DC on behalf of all authorities
5.5 Monitor the impact of choice-based lettings on households in temporary accommodation			
Reduce number of households in temporary accommodation	From 2009	Resource through current budget provision	All authorities with Kent CBL Project Board
5.6 Review the use of Council-owned temporary accommodation			
Alternative use identified for half of temporary units	April 2011	Resource through current budget provision	Canterbury CC & Shepway DC
5.7 Undertake regular inspections of bed and breakfast and hostel accommodation, and a sample of PSL accommodation within all districts			
Raise standard of existing temporary accommodation, safeguard residents, demonstrate good practice	From April 2008	Resource through current budget provision	All authorities
5.8 Undertake annual move-on audit across all forms of temporary housing for homeless people, and identify actions to address shortfalls identified			
Quantify move on needs, plan access to appropriate move on accommodation	Annually from April 2009	Audit resourced through current budget provision. Funding to address shortfalls to be identified	Thanet DC on behalf of all authorities (Reference: MOPP Protocol - CLG/Homeless Link June 2007)
5.9 Review cost of temporary accommodation and report annually to East Kent Homelessness Forum			

Outcome	Timescale	Resources Implications	Lead/Reference
Ensure value for money services; inform budget review process	Annually from May 2008	Resource through current budget provision	All authorities
5.10 Develop alternative emergency accommodation arrangements			
End the use of bed and breakfast accommodation	Project plan - April 2009. Alternative arrangements in place by 2012	Resource through current budget provision. Funding for alternative provision to be identified	Canterbury CC on behalf of all authorities
5.11 Evaluate existing good practice, and develop district-specific supply and demand models to inform future service provision			
Balance effective planning of prevention activities against availability of temporary and permanent housing	April 2009	Resource development of model through current budget provision. Funding for any alternative service provision to be identified	Canterbury CC on behalf of all authorities
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6: TACKLE YOUTH HOMELESSNESS			
6.1 By 2010, end the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds			
Meet and sustain key Government target	April 2010	Funding for alternative emergency provision to be identified	All authorities
6.2 Develop a Dover district Youth Homelessness Strategy			
Achieve better outcomes for young people at risk of homelessness and who have become homeless	May 2008	Funding identified	Dover District Council
6.3 Implement Dover district Youth Homelessness Strategy in partnership with Dover district Youth Homelessness Forum			

Outcome	Timescale	Resources Implications	Lead/Reference
Engagement with agencies that provide services to young people, achieve better outcomes for young people	From May 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Dover District Council
6.4 Evaluate the success of Supported Lodgings schemes elsewhere and if appropriate, develop proposals for establishing schemes within East Kent			
Alternative option for young people who cannot stay in the family home	December 2008	Funding to be identified	Dover DC on behalf of all authorities
6.5 Develop programme for delivering housing advice to students in local schools			
Raise awareness of homelessness; provide advice and information; prevent homelessness	December 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Porchlight on behalf of all authorities
6.6 Review current service provision for vulnerable young people across East Kent, identify shortfalls and develop proposals for additional services in each district			
Reduce/prevent homelessness	Review complete by December 2008	Resource review through current budget provision. Funding for additional services to be identified	All authorities
6.7 Develop an accommodation-based support service for young people in the Shepway district			
Reduce /prevent homelessness	December 2010	Funding to be identified	Shepway DC
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 7: MONITOR PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOP BEST PRACTICE IN HOMELESSNESS			
7.1 Monitor performance against objectives in the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan and key performance indicators			
Monitor delivery of the Homelessness Strategy effectively	Quarterly	Resource through current budget provision	East Kent Homelessness Forum
7.2 Review Homelessness Strategy Action Plan			

Outcome	Timescale	Resources Implications	Lead/Reference
Effective implementation of the Homelessness Strategy	Annually from July 2009	Resource through current budget provision	Dover DC on behalf of East Kent Homelessness Forum
7.3 Evaluate impact of East Kent Homelessness Forum, review and update Terms of Reference, and membership if appropriate			
Maximise effectiveness and widen strategic links.	July 2009	Resource through current budget provision	Thanet DC on behalf of East Kent Homelessness Forum
7.4 Develop comprehensive monitoring arrangements across Housing Options services, including homelessness applications, housing register and housing options/advice services			
Detailed profile of service users; ensure equality of access to services; monitor quality and consistency of service; identify training needs; identify services that have the greatest impact	April 2009	Resource through current budget provision	Dover DC on behalf of all authorities
7.5 Monitor performance and trends against national and local performance indicators, benchmarking where appropriate against other Kent authorities			
Strengths and weaknesses identified	Agree LPs with EKHF and implement from December 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Canterbury CC on behalf of all authorities (with the <i>Kent Homelessness Officers Group</i>)
7.6 Evaluate the effectiveness of partnerships and outsourced services, reporting outcome to the East Kent Homelessness Forum			
Good practice shared; weaknesses or failures identified and tackled; inform decisions on service development	November 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Thanet DC on behalf of all authorities
7.7 Monitor the use and effectiveness of all resources including homelessness grant and general fund contributions			
Target staff and financial resources to improve outcomes and ensure value for money	From April 2008	Resource through current budget provision	All authorities

Outcome	Timescale	Resources Implications	Lead/Reference
7.8 Undertake sub-regional homelessness service satisfaction survey. Compare outcomes against 2007 survey and report, with recommended follow-up actions, to East Kent Homelessness Forum			
Customer needs and preferences identified	November 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Canterbury CC on behalf of all authorities
7.9 Undertake sub-regional temporary accommodation survey. Compare outcomes against 2007 survey and report, with recommended follow-up actions, to East Kent Homelessness Forum			
Customer needs and preferences identified	November 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Canterbury CC on behalf of all authorities
7.10 Undertake sub-regional single homelessness survey. Compare outcomes against 2007 survey and report, with recommended follow-up actions, to East Kent Homelessness Forum			
Customer needs and preferences identified	November 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Canterbury CC on behalf of all authorities
7.11 Develop satisfaction measures and monitor customer satisfaction across Housing Options services			
Customer needs and preferences identified	November 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Shepway DC on behalf of all authorities
7.12 Complete Equality Impact Assessments for all homelessness and housing options services			
Ensure equality in every aspect of service provision	From January 2008	Resource through current budget provision	All authorities (Ref: <i>The Equality Standard for Local Government – LGA/1 & IDeA October 2007</i>)
7.13 Develop a coordinated approach to service user consultation (including minority groups – e.g. the BME community and gypsies and travellers)			
Service users consulted on future and current service provision	December 2008	Resource through current budget provision	Shepway DC on behalf all authorities

East Kent Homelessness Forum

Terms of reference

- To agree, monitor and review the homeless strategy in conjunction with the Strategic Housing Managers from; Canterbury City Council, Thanet District Council, Dover District Council and Shepway District Council
- To help develop productive relationships between local authorities, the voluntary sector, RSLs and service users in order to help design and deliver service to homeless households, single homeless people and those not deemed to be in priority need
- To recommend and discuss a range of housing and support options designed to prevent homeless in East Kent
- To monitor the effectiveness of all protocols currently in place that affect homeless people in East Kent
- To feed into the Supporting People Strategy for Kent to assist with the planning of future service in East Kent
- To identify gaps in services, help formulate bids and/or tendering opportunities for new services, working collaboratively in the implementation of services where necessary
- To help achieve the PSA/KA2 targets in relation to move on, homelessness, housing related support issues, achieving independence for those who are homeless and maintaining independence for those at risk of homelessness
- To meet four times a year and appoint sub groups to look in detail at homelessness issues as necessary.

July 2007

Service user consultation – summary of feedback

Homelessness service satisfaction survey

- For cases closed during February 2007
- 24 responses – 54% female, 46% male
- 88% white British; 4% mixed white/black African; 4% Chinese
- 63% satisfied with overall service
- 75% saw a Housing Options Advisor within one week of contacting the Council (58% on the same day)
- 83% found the staff helpful
- 67% satisfied with information and advice provided
- 71% satisfied that homelessness application processed as quickly as possible.

Temporary accommodation survey

- 320 responses
- 37% currently living in hostel with shared facilities; 12% in hostel with self-contained facilities; 26% in Council house/flat; 9% in PSL property; 6% in bed and breakfast
- 43% living in current accommodation for one year or less
- 43% had at least one previous temporary home
- 19% reported accommodation-related health problems
- 17% experiencing harassment problems
- Generally – few problems identified with size and condition of accommodation or proximity to schools, employment etc
- 77% knew who to contact to discuss housing problems
- 73% found it easy to make contact.

Single homelessness survey

- East Kent – 356 responses (731 county-wide)
- 77% male; 21% female
- 86% white British; 3% white and black Caribbean
- Age range variable – 10% under 18
- Canterbury – majority aged 26-39
- Dover – majority aged 40-59
- Shepway – majority aged 18-25
- Thanet – majority aged 18-25

Where did you sleep last night?

- Hostel – 32%
- With friends and family – 23%
- On the street – 12% (NB those who answered “other” indicate that this figure was much higher. The car, the beach, Mum’s shed, the subway, a tent, and the graveyard behind the post office were all given as examples)

In which district was your last settled home?

- In all districts except Canterbury, the majority of respondents had lived previously in the district in which they were now homeless
- The pattern was slightly different in Canterbury – 65% of those responding had lived elsewhere previously. Of these, 22% came from Thanet, 9% from Dover, 2% from Shepway and 20% from other parts of the UK/abroad

Are you planning to stay in this area?

- Canterbury – 84% yes
- Dover – 58% yes
- Shepway – 41% yes
- Thanet - 58% yes

Reason for homelessness

- Dispute with family/partner – 39%
- Leaving prison – 15%
- Domestic violence – 5%
- Other reasons – 19% (E.g. Loss of tied accommodation and job; unable to afford rent; overcrowding; unemployment; eviction, dispute with landlord; death of family member)

What has prevented you finding another home? (NB most respondents ticked more than one box in this section, hence the higher percentages)

- No deposit – 62%
- No rent in advance – 56%
- Rent too high – 32%
- Lack of support – 24%
- Other – 49% (E.g. Having a dog, prison, mental health, too young, use of drugs and alcohol)

What sort of support do you need?

- Help to find a home – 58%
- Help to find a job – 25%
- Life skills – 23%
- Other – 6% (E.g. Drug and alcohol issues, mental health, physical illness)

Have you slept rough in the last year?

- Yes – 48%

Are you registered with a GP?

- Yes – 67%
- No – 27%

Partners

This strategy has been developed in consultation with the following partners:

To be completed following consultation

Best Value Performance Indicator Framework/Local Performance Indicators

	Performance 2005-06	Target 2005-06	Performance 2006-07	Target 2006-07	Performance 2007-08 (To 31.12.07)	Target 2007-08
<i>BVPI 183a: The average length of stay in bed and breakfast of households that are unintentionally homeless and in priority need (weeks)²¹</i>						
Canterbury	3.38	2	1.69	2	0.93	-
Dover	6	6	7	6	-	-
Shepway	6	6	2.9	<6	2	<6
Thanet	4	4	2	5	-	-
<i>BVPI 183b: The average length of stay in hostel accommodation of households that are unintentionally homeless and in priority need (weeks)</i>						
Canterbury	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dover	0	21	15	21	51	14
Shepway	29	16	12.4	20	12	12
Thanet	15	12	10	15	10	10
<i>BVPI 202: The number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the area of the authority</i>						
Canterbury	3	5	2	4	8	3
Dover	5	3	6	3	7	3
Shepway	1	9	1	<5	1	<5
Thanet	1	1	2	1	1	1
<i>BVPI 203: The percentage change in the average number of families placed in temporary accommodation²²</i>						
Canterbury	-14.99%	-10%	-11.67%	-10%	-	-

²¹ Discontinued as a BV Performance Indicator from April 2007

²² Discontinued as a BV Performance Indicator from April 2007

	Performance 2005-06	Target 2005-06	Performance 2006-07	Target 2006-07	Performance 2007-08 (To 31.12.07)	Target 2007-08
Dover	-10%	0%	-47%	0%	-	-
Shepway	25%	6	-22%	-8%	-	-10%
Thanet	41.14%	40%	-8.07%	-18%	-	-
BVPI 213: The number of households who considered themselves homeless, who approached the local housing authority's housing advice service, and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation (per 1000 households)						
Canterbury	2.97	3.0	3.39	3.0	3.13	3.0
Dover	4.0	0.72	3.13	2.88	2.40	2.88
Shepway	4.29	1.83	5.00	4.87	3.95	4.87
Thanet	0	N/A	1.39	1.0	2.26	3.0
BVPI 214: The proportion of households accepted as statutorily homeless who were accepted as statutorily homeless by the same authority within the last two years²³						
Canterbury	2.3%	2%	2.63%	2%	-	-
Dover	4%	5%	4%	5%	-	-
Shepway	13%	5%	1%	12%	-	1%
Thanet	3.14%	N/A	4.13%	3%	-	-
LPI: The number of households in temporary accommodation at year end						
Canterbury	246	257	228	231	148	208
Dover	118	130	83	100	83	90
Shepway	144	144	107	105	101	90
Thanet	108	108	70	75	61	110

²³ Discontinued as a BV Performance Indicator from April 2007

Glossary of terms

Affordable housing

Social rented and intermediate housing provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.

Best Value performance indicator

A set of national performance indicators set by the Government.

Choice-based lettings

A system of allocating Council and RSL housing which gives applicants a choice in where they are housed. Due for implementation by 2010.

Communities and Local Government (CLG)

Government department that sets UK policy on local government, housing, urban regeneration, planning and fire and rescue. Responsible for all race equality and community cohesion-related issues in England, and for building regulations, fire safety and some housing issues in England and Wales.

East Kent Audit Partnership

A partnership of auditors from Dover, Shepway and Thanet councils who share a range of different auditing skills.

Floating support

Support that is attached to the person and not the property and can follow a service user if they move to another address. It only lasts for as long as the service user needs it and then “floats” away to the next person in need.

General Fund

A local authority’s main revenue fund. All day-to-day spending on services is met from this account apart from those that relate to the housing stock, which are charged to the Housing Revenue Account.

GOSE

Government Office of the South East.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)

An assessment of the current and future housing and support needs of the gypsy and traveller community.

Housing Corporation

The statutory body that is responsible for supervising and monitoring RSLs.

Housing Quality Network

A consultancy that provides a range of services to the social housing sector.

Housing Revenue Account

A local authority’s revenue account for council housing.

Kent Reconnection Policy

Developed by the Joint Policy and Planning Board for Housing, this policy aims to ensure equal access to short-term supported accommodation for homeless and vulnerable people irrespective of their area of local connection; thereafter enabling them to return to their area of local connection in a planned way.

KCHT Breakthrough

Part of KCHT, a charitable company that provides care and support to vulnerable people. KCHT Breakthrough provides support to children and their families who are experiencing difficulties in their lives.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Former Government department, replaced in May 2006 by CLG.

Porchlight (formerly known as the East Kent Cyrenians)

An independent registered charity that provides outreach and resettlement services for street homeless people, supported accommodation for single homeless people and floating support for those at risk of homelessness.

Primary Care Trust (PCT)

Responsible for planning and providing health care services. One PCT covers East Kent, The *Eastern and Coastal Kent PCT*.

Private Sector Leasing (PSL) scheme

Scheme to lease homes from the private sector as an alternative to placing homeless families in bed and breakfast accommodation

Private sector stock condition survey

Undertaken by local authorities as a means of maintaining a detailed picture of house conditions in the private sector.

Registered Social Landlord

Housing organisations that are registered with the Housing Corporation. Includes housing associations, industrial and provident societies and not-for-profit companies.

Rent Deposit Scheme

Enables homeless households to access private sector accommodation by providing a repayable rent deposit, and where appropriate, one months rent in advance.

Right to Buy

The Housing Act 1980 granted most secure tenants of non-charitable RSLs and local authorities the right to buy their home at a discount, after a minimum period of residence.

Scrine Foundation

A Canterbury-based charity that works to improve the lives of vulnerable and/or marginalised members of the community.

Shelter

A national charity that provides advice on housing and homelessness

Single agency assessment

Enables statutory partner agencies to refer applicants who require housing due to a health/support need.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment

A sub-regional study of housing need, demand, and market conditions that provides a basis for local authorities to develop planning and housing policies. Replaces the local Housing Needs Assessment, which has been traditionally undertaken by local authorities to measure the need for affordable housing.

Supporting People

A programme to deliver housing related support services to vulnerable people through a single funding stream.

Third sector

The Government defines the Third sector as non-governmental organisations that are value-driven. Includes voluntary and community organisations, charities, social enterprises, co-operatives and mutuals. The definition also includes housing associations.

Summary of anticipated funding and expenditure per authority 2008-2011

	Canterbury			Dover			Shepway			Thanet		
Funding:	08/09	09/10	10/11	08/09	09/10	10/11	08/09	09/10	10/11	08/09	09/10	10/11
General Fund	169,300	173,532	177,870	169,120	174,193	179,419	73,830	82,850	91,150	258,500	267,800	278,500
Homelessness Grant	225,000	225,000	225,000	58,000	58,000	58,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	90,000	90,000	90,000
Housing Benefit - DHP	29,978	29,978*	29,978*	56,000	56,000*	56,000*	35,000	35,000	35,000	26,000	31,000	36,000
Total	424,278	428,510	432,848	283,120	288,193	293,419	188,830	197,850	206,150	374,500	388,800	404,500
Expenditure:												
Staffing costs	144,900	148,432	152,070	109,120	114,193	119,419	71,830	79,350	86,150	172,000	180,000	190,000
Bed & Breakfast	7,200	7,400	7,600	60,000	60,000*	60,000*	2,000	3,500	5,000	42,000	41,000	40,000
Rent deposit scheme	41,200	41,700	42,200	23,000 ²⁴	23,690 ²⁵	24,400 ²⁶	45,000	45,900	46,800	48,454	53,454	58,454
Temporary accommodation - other	10,000	10,000	10,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Housing Benefit - DHP	29,978	29,978*	29,978*	56,000	56,000*	56,000*	35,000	35,000	35,000	26,000	31,000	36,000
Other initiatives	191,000	191,000	191,000	35,000	34,310	33,600	35,000	34,100	33,200	-	5,000	5,000
Total	424,278	428,510	432,848	283,120	288,193	293,419	188,830	197,850	206,150	374,500	388,800	404,500

* Notional figures

²⁴ Salary for Deposit Bond Officer

²⁵ Salary for Deposit Bond Officer

²⁶ Salary for Deposit Bond Officer

Local authority contacts

Officer	Position	Email	Telephone
Canterbury City Council			
Steve Osborne	Assistant Head of Housing and Community Development	Steve.oborne@canterbury.gov.uk	01227 862102
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Dover District Council			
Janet Walton	Housing Initiatives Manager	Janet.Walton@dover.gov.uk	01304 872266
Elly Toye	Housing Needs Manager	Elly.toye@dover.gov.uk	01304 872259
Shepway District Council			
Adrian Hammond	Housing Strategy Manager	Adrian.hammond@shepway.gov.uk	01303 853747
Bev Jackson	Housing Options Manager	Beverley.Jackson@shepway.gov.uk	01303 853772
Thanet District Council			
Amber Christou	Housing Strategy and Development Manager	Amber.christou@thanet.gov.uk	01843 577220
Victoria Harley	Housing Options Manager	Victoria.harley@thanet.gov.uk	01843 577172