

HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN

(REVISED JUNE 2002)

APPENDIX

	Action Required	Action to be Taken	*	Target for Completion	Lead Officer	Output	Resources	Comment/Progress
1	Provide a more focussed Service							
	(a) Review corporate objectives and document strategy	Review relevant existing minutes Review Corporate Plan's impacts on homelessness/housing advice Document homelessness strategy.	H	April 2002 April 2002 Dependent on Homelessness Bill and guidance.	HHHCC HHHCC RSUM	} Ensure housing strategy and corporate plan are consistent. } }	Officer time. (See section 1(2) of housing strategy action plan) Officer time cannot be quantified until guidance is issued.	Historic Minutes reviewed, however, changing law and practice in homelessness work means that strategy needs to be forward looking and past policies are of little value now. Delete from plan New legislation now enacted, but awaiting commencement orders.

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2	Improve Customer Awareness of Service							
	(a) Ensure adequate publicity for homelessness and advice services	Produce advice leaflet on homelessness and distribute.	M	October 2001	RSUM	Leaflets produced and distributed.	Officer time 3 days. Production/printing costs can be met from existing budgets.	Leaflet produced and distributed to reception areas. Copies being sent to CAB and Libraries. RDC Website includes homelessness information.
3	Develop a more Customer focussed Approach							
	(a) Evaluate customer satisfaction	Design feedback questionnaire Implement Record and analyse feedback	M	June 2001 June 2001 Ongoing	RSUM RSUM RSUM	} } Customer issues identified and taken into account in future service planning. } }	} } Officer time 5 days annually. } }	Form designed as part of review. Ongoing survey of all service recipients once duty has been discharged. Length of time for decision to be taken has been identified by

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								respondents as the main issue to be addressed. See 6(g).
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	(b) Record and analyse all complaints about the service.	Implement new corporate complaints procedure following trials	M	December 2001	RSUM	All complaints recorded, issues identified and considered in future service provision.	Officer time 4 days per annum.	Complaints recording system introduced from 01.04.02
4	Provide a more "Joined Up" Service							
	(a) Establish protocols for liaison with other agencies for identifying and dealing with homelessness, improve linkages to provide a more seamless service	Identify agencies/ Organisations where a protocol would improve service Agree and document working arrangements and protocols	H	Sept. 2001 First protocol to be agreed and documented by Dec. 2001.	RSUM RSUM	Agencies where protocol required identified. Protocol produced.	} } } } Officer time 15 days. } } } }	Completed. 1 st Protocol with Social Services Mental Health Team drafted and being finalised. 2 nd protocol with Roche Unit being drafted.

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	(b) Develop more formal working arrangements with Registered Social Landlords	Discuss with RSL's whether they can assist in providing accommodation for homeless persons.	H	Hold discussions with 2 RSL's by Sept. 2001.	HC&SO	4 new units of accommodation for the homeless available. See also 2(33) in Housing Strategy Action Plan.	Officer time. May involve use of £375,000 capital allocated to provide accommodation for homeless people, also development of unused Council land.	Competition held with RSLs. Agreement reached with Springboard HA to procure 11 units for use as temporary accommodation. Bids for supported housing needs by RSLs but no funding so far made available by Housing Corporation.
	(c) Develop working arrangements with neighbouring authorities.	Investigate how far cross-border working arrangements and joint service provision can be improved.	M	October 2003 and ongoing.	RSUM	See 2(38) in housing strategy action plan.	Officer time. Provision of an independent housing advice service is likely to entail significant costs.	Some discussions have taken place during review process and in Housing Strategy Review and Forum. Project team(s) will need to be established. Development of homelessness strategy will

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								influence decisions on housing advice services. Target of October 2003 to decide way forward.
	Action Required	Action to be Taken	*	Target for Completion	Lead Officer	Output	Resources	Comment/Progress
	(d) Maximise opportunities for joint work with other RDC departments.	Introduce service level agreement for client/contractor split departments.	M	October 2001	HCSO/HRHM	Service level agreement in place.	Officer time within existing resources.	SLA in place.
		Joint agreement on revised pointing scheme and allocations policy	H	April 2002	HRHM/RSUM/HC&SO	Revised letting policy in place.	Officer time 50 days.	Target to be revised to January 2003, because of implementation of Homelessness Act. Interim changes being considered.
		Develop protocol with Housing Benefits.		March 2003.	HRHM/RSUM	Protocol agreed	Officer time 10 days.	
5	Provide a more consistent Service							
	(a) Ensure homelessness policy and practice complies with	Research good practice among other authorities.	M	January 2004	HC&SO	Best practice identified.	} } }	Dependent on development of corporate equal

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	<p>the Council's equal opportunities policies when finalised.</p>	<p>Consult with EREC. Introduce monitoring of homelessness/advice work and periodic review of results.</p>			<p>HC&SO RSUM</p>	<p>EREC support for RDC policy. Evidence that RDC's homelessness and advice work is non-discriminatory.</p>	<p>} } Officer } time 30 } days. } } }</p>	<p>opportunities policies.</p>
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	(b) Introduce procedures to help ensure consistency in decision making.	<p>Introduce meetings to discuss cases/decisions.</p> <p>Review decisions to be discussed with homelessness staff.</p> <p>Provide staff and Member training.</p>	H	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>June 2001</p> <p>June 2001 and ongoing.</p>	<p>RSUM</p> <p>HHHCC</p> <p>RSUM/ HHHCC</p>	<p>Meetings arranged.</p> <p>Homelessness and advice staff appraised of review officer/panel decisions and reasons for them.</p> <p>High level of competency.</p>	<p>Officer time within existing resources.</p> <p>Officer time within existing resources.</p> <p>Officer time within existing resources. External trainer cost £800 pa. Staff training costs in 2001/2 are £1,400. Estimate for 2002/3 is £2,000.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Implemented. Ongoing</p> <p>Appeals & Licensing Committee training carried out.</p>

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6	Improve Quality of Service							
	(a) Ensure homelessness/advice service supports corporate aims and community plan, including: i. Equality issues ii. Social inclusion iii. Community safety iv. Quality objectives.	Review policies to ensure compatibility with corporate aims. See footnote**	H	Stage 1 – April 2002 Stage 2 – April 2003	RSUM	Policies reviewed and compatible with corporate aims.	Officer time 5 days to identify issues.	See also 1(a) and 5(a). Crime & Disorder reduction strategy 2002–2005 and homelessness and housing advice services are mutually supportive. Remaining areas are being further developed in parallel with work on Corporate Strategy.
	(b) Improve quality of interim/temporary accommodation.	Develop and implement improvements to Hatfield House Hostel.	H	May 2002.	HRHM	See 2(37) of Housing Strategy Action Plan.	See 2(37) of Housing Strategy Action Plan.	Funding allocated. Design completed. Planning/Building Regulation consents being

* Action divided into 2 phases:

Initial appraisal by April 2002 – 5 days officer time
Writing/revision of policies – by April 2003 – 20 days officer time, Lead Officer RSUM.

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								sought. Estimated completion December 2002.
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	(c) Develop strategy/options to minimise use of bed & breakfast accommodation.	<p>Discuss with RSL's whether they can assist in providing accommodation for homeless persons.</p> <p>Review allocations policy to ensure homeless people receive appropriate priority for permanent accommodation.</p> <p>Increased use of Hatfield House Hostel for interim accommodation and of 125 High Road (pending decision on its future)</p>	<p>H</p> <p>M</p> <p>H</p>	<p>Hold discussions with 2 RSL's by Sept. 2001.</p> <p>April 2002.</p> <p>November 2003</p>	<p>HC&SO</p> <p>HRHM</p> <p>RSUM</p>	<p>See 4(b) above.</p> <p>See 4(d) above</p> <p>Decreased use of B&B for interim accommodation.</p>	<p>See 4(b) above.</p> <p>See 4(d) above.</p> <p>Officer time within existing resources. Capital allocation of £375,000 available for provision of accommodation for the homeless to reduce use of B&B.</p>	<p>See 4(b) above.</p> <p>See 4(d) above.</p> <p>Target revised to November 2003. See 4(b) above.</p>

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	(d) Improve monitoring of persons in interim and temporary accommodation.	<p>Introduce systems to ensure review of cases before expiry of 2-year duty.</p> <p>Investigate ways of better monitoring of usage of interim accommodation.</p>	<p>M</p> <p>L</p>	<p>October 2001.</p> <p>April 2005</p>	<p>RSUM</p> <p>RSUM</p>	<p>All cases reviewed prior to end of 2-year duty.</p> <p>Reduced non-occupation of interim and temporary accommodation.</p>	<p>Officer time met from existing resources.</p> <p>Officer time 5 days per annum.</p>	<p>System implemented. Homelessness Act 2002 will remove the need for review and the two year limit on the accommodation duty</p> <p>Signing in system introduced for bed and breakfast</p>
	(e) Improve interview facilities.	<p>Arrange, where appropriate, for home interviews.</p> <p>Improve interview facilities at Rochford and Rayleigh offices.</p>	<p>M</p> <p>H</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 2005</p>	<p>RSUM</p> <p>HAMS</p>	<p>Home interviews carried out when appropriate.</p> <p>Private and welcoming interview facilities available.</p>	<p>Officer time from existing resources.</p> <p>See comment.</p>	<p>Implemented where appropriate. Ongoing</p> <p>Being considered as part of overall changes to accommodation.</p>

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	(f) Improve facilities for the protection of property.	Investigate options for storage and select most appropriate option.	H	October 2003.	RSUM	Secure, weather-proof accessible storage facilities available.	Current budget £7,000. Costs likely to increase. Officer time 10 days.	May require Committee report, dependent on costs. Costs for alternative options being investigated. Difficulties with interview facilities in both reception areas which are being addressed corporately. Target needs to be revised for Rochford reception to October 2002.

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	(g) Reduce time taken to decide applications.	Report to Committee		July 2001.			Additional staffing approved at full year cost of £46,000.	Completed. Remove from Action Plan.
		Appoint and train staff if approved by Committee.		November 2001.	RSUM	Staff in post. Training undertaken.	2001/2 training budget of £1,400 available for homelessness staff.	Completed. Remove from Action Plan.
				March 2003.	RSUM	70% of applications determined within 33 days	Estimate for 2002/3 is £2,000.	New target
	(h) Reconsider officer arrangements for investigating homelessness reviews.	Issues presented to Members for consideration.	H	December 2001.	HHHCC	Review process re-considered as part of homelessness best value review.	Officer time.	DELETE FROM ACTION PLAN.

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7	Improve Delivery of Service							
	(a) Develop realistic, challenging local Performance Indicators (PI's).	Obtain information from other authorities, evaluate and determine PI's to be used. Put in place appropriate collection and reporting processes.	L	November 2002 March 2003	RSUM RSUM	Local PI's identified.	Officer time 5 days. Officer time 5 days per annum.	Former BVPI 67 has been adopted as a local target
	(b) Provide better comparative information on performance.	Identify local authority group for comparison. Agree performance indicators Establish information sharing and reporting processes.	L	November 2003 November 2003 March 2004	RSUM RSUM RSUM	} } } } Benchmarking arrangements with other authorities agreed }	} } } } Officer time 20 days }	

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8	More Cost-effective Services							
	(a) Develop procurement strategy for temporary/interim accommodation that ensures cost effectiveness.	<p>Discuss with R&HM Divn to agree future allocation of temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Discuss with appropriate RSL's.</p> <p>Consider tendering for B&B accommodation and tender if considered appropriate.</p>	<p>H</p> <p>H</p> <p>H</p>	<p>July 2002</p> <p>See 4(b) above.</p> <p>March 2002.</p>	<p>RSUM</p> <p>See 4(b) above.</p> <p>RSUM</p>	<p>Release of 2 further properties.</p> <p>See 4(b) above.</p> <p>Determine appropriateness of tendering and tender if appropriate.</p>	<p>Officer time (see 2(32) of Housing Strategy Action Plan.</p> <p>See 4(b) above.</p> <p>Officer time 15 days.</p>	<p>Revised to high priority to link with 2(34) of Housing Strategy Action Plan. Target linked with further report to Committee on use of older persons' designated stock.</p> <p>See 4(b) above.</p> <p>Impracticable in current market conditions where hotel accommodation is at a premium</p>
	(b) Develop procurement strategy for removals which ensures cost	Invite tenders for provision of removal service.	L	June 2004.	RSUM	Tenders received.	Officer time 10 days.	

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effectiveness.						
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	Action Required	Action to be Taken	*	Target for Completion	Lead Officer	Output	Resources	Comment/Progress
	(c) Implement suitable information management software.	Research available systems and implement most suitable option.	L	2005/06.	RSUM	Homelessness information software implemented.	Officer time. IT strategy estimated cost of £5K.	
9	Increase Availability of Accommodation							
	(a) Improve range of temporary/interim accommodation available.	<p>Investigate assistance from RSL's</p> <p>Investigate availability of private sector accommodation.</p> <p>Review rent and deposit guarantee scheme</p> <p>Work with Rochford PCG and other organisations to investigate the use of part of Albert Jones Court as homeless persons' accommodation.</p>	<p>H</p> <p>M</p> <p>M</p> <p>H</p>	<p>See 4(b) above.</p> <p>Hold discussions with 2 letting agents by March 2002.</p> <p>See 2(27) of HS Action Plan</p> <p>To be determined.</p>	<p>HC&SO</p> <p>HC&SO</p> <p>See 2(27) of HS Action Plan</p> <p>HHHCC</p>	<p>As 4(b)</p> <p>Agreement to provide private sector accommodation to homeless.</p> <p>See 2(27) of HS Action Plan..</p> <p>See 4(b)</p>	<p>See 4(b) above.</p> <p>Officer time 5 days.</p> <p>See 2(27) of HS Action Plan. Officer time within existing resources. May involve use of £375K capital allocated to reduce use of B&B.</p>	<p>See 4(b) Discussion with private agents is ongoing, but there are few properties available for rent by homeless applicants.</p> <p>See 2(27) of HS Action Plan.</p> <p>Investigation of potential community based uses for Albert Jones Court is continuing.</p> <p>DELETE FROM ACTION PLAN</p>

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		Consider use of capital programme/receipts to procure additional accommodation.	H	April 2001	HHHCC	Minimum 4 units procured from funds set aside to reduce B&B use.	See 4(b). Officer time from existing resources.	See 4(b)
	(b) Improve research into availability of good quality temporary and permanent accommodation.	<p>Hold private landlords' forum meetings.</p> <p>Regular meetings with development partner RSL's.</p>	M	See 2(23) of HS Action Plan	See 2(23) of HS Action Plan.	See 2(23) of HS Action Plan	See 2(23) of HS Action Plan.	See 2(23) of HS Action Plan.
			M	Ongoing.	HC&SO.	Agreement on bids to be made for funding.	Officer time 4 days per annum.	<p>Meetings held with 3 RSL's during June and September 2001. Future target – meetings held with 3 developing RSL's minimum twice a year.</p> <p>Next round of meetings will take place August and September 2002.</p>

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	Action Required	Action to be Taken	*	Target for Completion	Lead Officer	Output	Resources	Comment/Progress
	(c) Encourage new markets, particularly private rented sector.	Hold discussions with letting agents about buy-to-rent in Rochford. Review rent and deposit guarantee scheme. Encourage availability of accommodation for lodgers Development and implementation of empty homes strategy	H L H	 April 2004 October 2002	} } } HC&SO } } }	See 9(a) and 9(b) above. See 2(11) of Housing Strategy Action Plan. See 2(26) of Housing Strategy Action Plan.	 See 2(11) of HS Action Plan. See 2(26) of HS Action Plan.	 See 9(a) above. See 2(11) of Housing Strategy Action Plan See 2(26) of Housing Strategy Action Plan.
	(d) Improve knowledge and understanding of private rented sector.	Discuss local housing market with estate agents/letting agents, through private landlord forum.	M	See 9(b) above.	See 9(b) above.	See 9(b) above.	See 9(b) above.	See 9(b) above.
	(e) Allocations policy to give appropriate preference to applicants who have been homeless.	Review pointing system and allocation policy.	H	See 4(d) above.	See 4(d) above.	See 4(d) above.	See 4(d) above.	See 4(d) above.

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10	Forward Planning (a) Improve understanding of demographic changes in the planning of the service provision.	Review data collection methods and improve analysis of trends.	M	December 2004	HC&SO	Census information analysed and implications identified for future strategy development.	Officer time 20 days	Target set at December 2004, by which time 2001 census information should be available.
		Liaison with other Essex authorities.	M	Ongoing.	HHHCC/ RSUM		Officer time within existing resources.	Liaison with EHOG and Essex Homeless Officers Group. Officer discussions taking place about housing needs in the Thames Gateway – South Essex Sub Region.
	(b) Adequately prepare for legislative changes.	Monitor Government announcements and consider implications. Liaison with other Essex Authorities. Committee reports as necessary.	H	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing.	} } } RSUM } } HHHCC	} } Implications for } RDC } } Members decide on action to be taken	} } } Officer time from } existing } resources } }	See 10(a)

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					where necessary		
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	Action Required	Action to be Taken	*	Target for Completion	Lead Officer	Output	Resources	Comment/Progress
	(c) Investigate whether there is a "rough sleepers" problem.	Clarify definition of rough sleeper. Establish best practice methodology Survey, liaising with other agencies	L L L	May 2004 May 2004 July 2004	RSUM RSUM RSUM	Definition established. Survey protocol identified. Number of rough sleepers in District identified.	Officer time from existing resources. Officer time 5 days. Officer time 3 days. Some costs will be incurred in carrying out the survey.	Targets to be revised to May/July 2004.