

Uttlesford District Council

Homelessness Review and Strategy

Action Plan 2008 – 2013

DRAFT

Draft Consultation June 2008

Introduction

Uttlesford Council's Homelessness Strategy 2003 set out the vision for a new, strategic approach to tackling homelessness. The emphasis of the strategy was moving towards the prevention of homelessness and working together with partner agencies to take a holistic approach, recognising that accommodation itself is not the sole reason for people experiencing housing difficulties.

The main aim of the Council's first Strategy was to move the homelessness service away from being a reactive service. The emphasis being to provide a proactive service that develops initiatives to prevent homelessness by ensuring that good advice, co-ordinated working and that accessible appropriate housing is available to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

This culture and resource shift from providing a reactive service to people in crisis to providing a pro-active service to prevent crisis has been fully supported at a Corporate level. In December 2003 the post of Senior Housing Officer (Homelessness) was created to provide a specialist approach to developing partnership working and housing options for our clients.

The concept of this review document is to review the changes taking place in the service and provide a living, working document that will direct the future of Uttlesford's housing advice and homelessness service, following the aims laid out in the Homelessness Act 2002 and with the following key objectives

- To provide a full and comprehensive housing advice service
- To ensure there is sufficient accommodation available for people who are or who may become homeless
- To minimise the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families with children
- To ensure there is a satisfactory provision of support services available for homeless people, working in partnership with other agencies such as Social Services, Probation and Women's Aid

Local Profile

Scene Setting the Local Authority

Uttlesford is a sparsely populated rural locality in Northwest Essex with a population of approximately 70,000.

There are good road and rail links into London, Cambridge and Harlow from settlements in the Stansted-Cambridge and Stansted-Braintree corridors, although public transport in the more rural locations is poor. Stansted Airport lies within its boundaries.

There are approximately 30,107 dwellings in the district, made up of the following tenures:

Tenure	Nos.
Social Rented-Local Authority owned	2,887
Social Rented-Registered Social Landlord	1,067
Stock owned by other Public Bodies	687
Private Sector (rented and owner occupied)	25,466
Total	30,107

Source: Housing Investment Programme 01/04/07

Review of the 2003 Strategy

Homelessness in Uttlesford the Facts and Figures

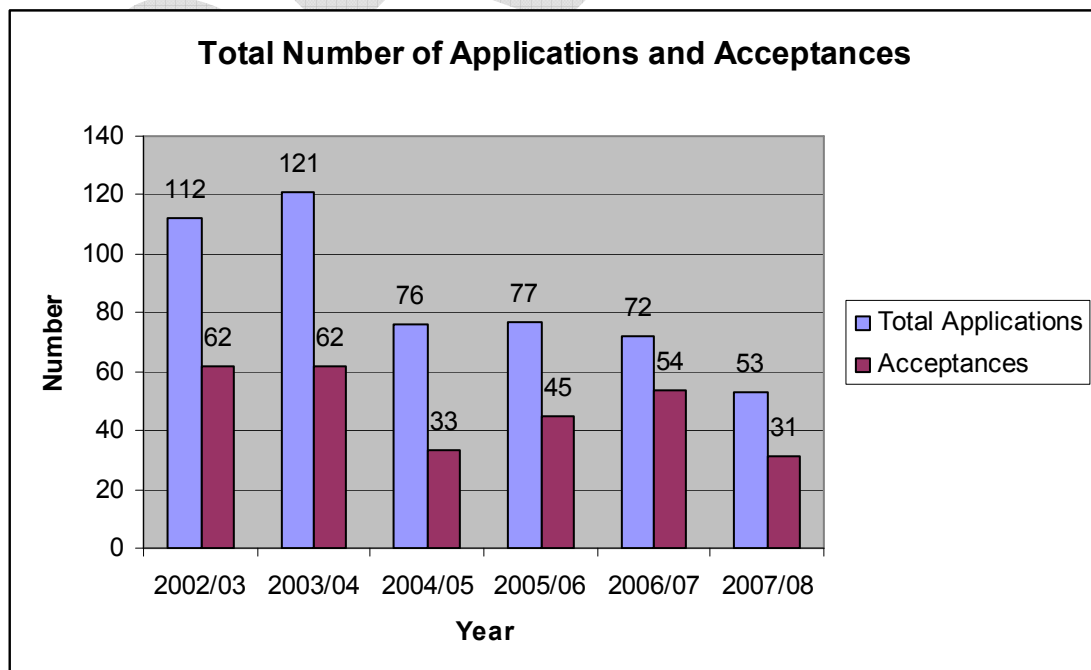
Ascertaining the true picture of the numbers of homeless people in Uttlesford is difficult as record keeping between agencies is not standardised. Until the proposed homelessness partnership is embedded with those involved and they are keeping records of homeless people that they come into contact with, the best picture is going to come from the Local Authority statistical information that is collated for government and local performance monitoring.

The information in this section relates to people who are unintentionally homeless, in priority need and are eligible for assistance (not subject to immigration control). Homelessness is defined as either being roofless or in accommodation which it is unreasonable to expect the person to remain.

It is clear that, these figures may not reflect the true levels of homelessness in some groups. Young people may be 'sofa surfing' and not approach the Council for assistance. Other clients may be classified in the statistics as one category but also fall into another category such as having mental health problems as well as having a dependant child but would only be recorded in the dependant child priority need category.

The Council is starting to gather more detailed information on those making approaches for housing advice and for those whose homelessness is prevented. Plans for further improvement in this monitoring will be in the Action Plan of this Strategy.

Total Number of Homeless Applications and Applications Accepted



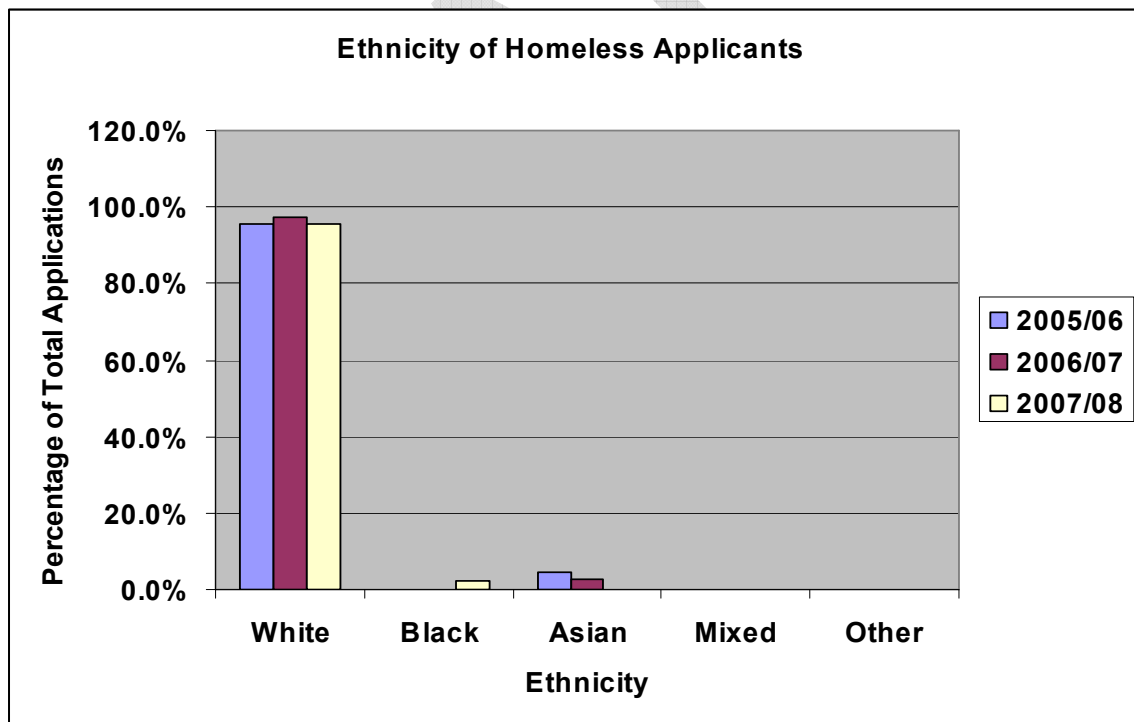
Source: P1E data

The data shows a significant drop in the levels of applications following the 2003 Homelessness Strategy. The introduction of a dedicated Homelessness Officer and a change in emphasis to homelessness prevention has reduced the number of approaches.

The number of acceptances has also seen a similar proportionate decline apart from 2006/07 which would have shown acceptances of 31 if Uttlesford, via Stansted Airport, had not in the summer of that year, been the recipient of evacuees from the war in Lebanon. The effects of Stansted Airport will be discussed again further within this strategy.

Without the Lebanon effect the figures are seen to be stabilizing. This appears to be partly due to the fact that customers who now make homeless applications are approaching us at a stage where their housing difficulties are so complex or advanced that their accommodation has already been lost and therefore homelessness prevention is not possible. There is also a hard core of applications that come from emerging households – young people or young parents wishing to or obliged to leave home and live independently.

Ethnicity of Homeless Applicants



Source:P1E data

Uttlesford Population Figures

Ethnicity	Population	%
White : British	65,564	95.09
White : Irish	534	0.77
White : Other white	1,587	2.3
Mixed : White and Black Caribbean	119	0.17
Mixed : White and Black African	51	0.07
Mixed: White and Asian	169	0.25
Mixed: Other Mixed	119	0.17
Asian or Asian British: Indian	164	0.24
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	22	0.03
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	153	0.22
Asian or Asian British: Other Asian	37	0.05
Black or Black British: Caribbean	48	0.07
Black or Black British: African	54	0.08
Black or Black British: Other Black	9	0.01
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Chinese	124	0.18
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group: Other Ethnic Group	192	0.28
Total	68,946	

Source: ONS Census 2001

As can be seen from the above data the ethnicity of the homeless applications proportionally matches the background population of the District.

Outcome of Applications 2005 – 08

	Outcomes of applications					
	Eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need	Eligible, homeless and in priority need but intentionally so	Eligible, homeless but not in priority need	Eligible but not homeless	Not eligible	total
2005/06	45	6	6	11	0	68
2006/07	54	3	1	10	3	71
2007/08	31	8	2	5	0	46

Source P1E Data

A rehousing duty is accepted where a household's circumstances have been found, after investigations have been undertaken, to fit the following statutory criteria:

- To be eligible for help from public funds
- To be homeless

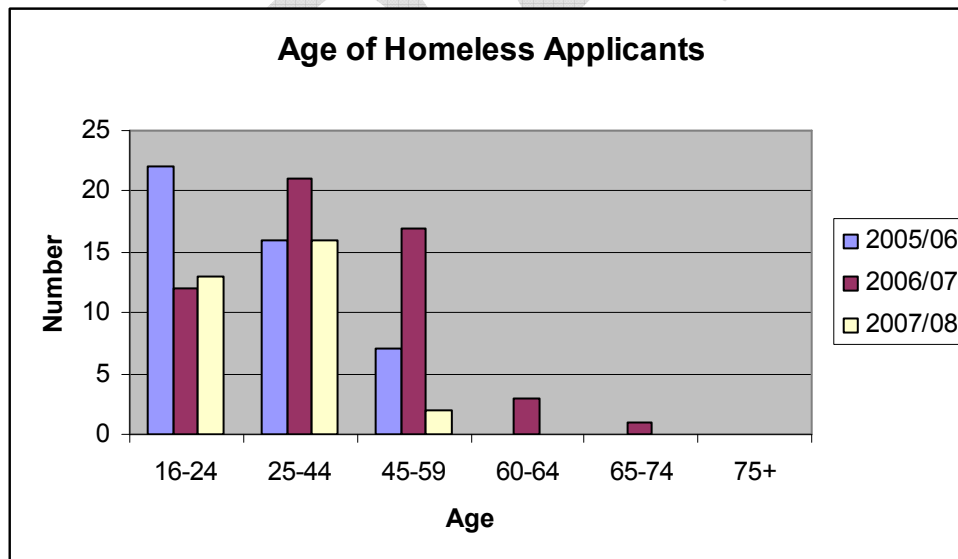
- To have a priority need
- Not be intentionally homeless
- To have a local connection to the district

There has also been a general reduction in the numbers of households found not homeless. The number of households found intentionally homeless has remained relatively constant apart for 06/07 and reflects the facts that when people have done or failed to do something which means they lose their accommodation, it is more difficult to intervene and negotiate on their behalf. Poor conduct of prior tenancies also makes alternative housing options, particularly the private sector, more difficult to access for these households.

The number of applications which resulted in a decision of 'not in priority need' has declined significantly over the last two years. This is due in part to:

- more options being available through the service to solve housing difficulties, meaning people do not see making a homelessness application, even when they have been advised there is little likelihood of it not succeeding, as their only chance of housing, and;
- clear and realistic advice from a Housing Advisor before an application is made, setting out the application process and the levels of investigation undertaken, as well as assisting the customer to resolve their housing difficulties.

Age Profile of Homeless Applicants



Source P1E Data

Whilst detailed analysis has not been undertaken, casework would suggest that there are three main reasons for the high proportion of households in the younger age brackets.

These are:

- As already emerging households wishing to or being obliged to leave the former family home.

- The relatively low incomes in this group against the market costs of housing within Uttlesford.
- The increase in demand for social housing not being able to be met by the supply

Reasons for Homelessness within Uttlesford 2005 - 2008

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Parents not willing/able to accommodate	12	5	11
Other relatives/friends no longer/willing to accommodate	4	11	4
Non violent breakdown of relationship with partner	7	0	2
Violent breakdown of relationship involving partner	3	6	0
Violent breakdown of relationship involving associated person	0	0	0
Racially motivated violence	0	0	0
Other forms of violence	0	0	2
Racially motivated harassment	0	0	0
Other forms of harassment	0	0	0
Mortgage arrears (repossession or other loss of home)	0	2	1
Rent arrears; Local Authority or other public sector dwellings	2	0	0
Rent arrears; Registered Social Landlords or other Housing Association dwellings	0	0	0
Rent arrears; private sector dwellings	0	0	1
Termination of assured shorthold tenancy	11	6	6
Loss of rented or tied accommodation other than termination of Assured Shorthold Tenancy	0	0	2
Required to leave national asylum support service accommodation	0	0	1
In institution or care	2	0	0
Other including emergency, ex HM forces, sleeping rough, in hostel	4	24	1

Source: P1E data

For applicants to whom a rehousing duty has been accepted, the main reasons for homelessness as can be seen from the above table are:

- Eviction by parent or relative/friend
- Relationship breakdown
- Termination of Assured Shorthold Tenancies or other loss of private rented accommodation

The exception to this is in 2006/07 where the 24 in the other emergency category were the Lebanese evacuees.

The largest area in Uttlesford which is remaining constant has been parental/other family/friend eviction. It is predominantly people under 25 who experience this situation, and increasing numbers of single young people, young single parents and pregnant young women are being excluded from their former home.

Reasons for Priority Need for Homeless Acceptances 2005 - 2008

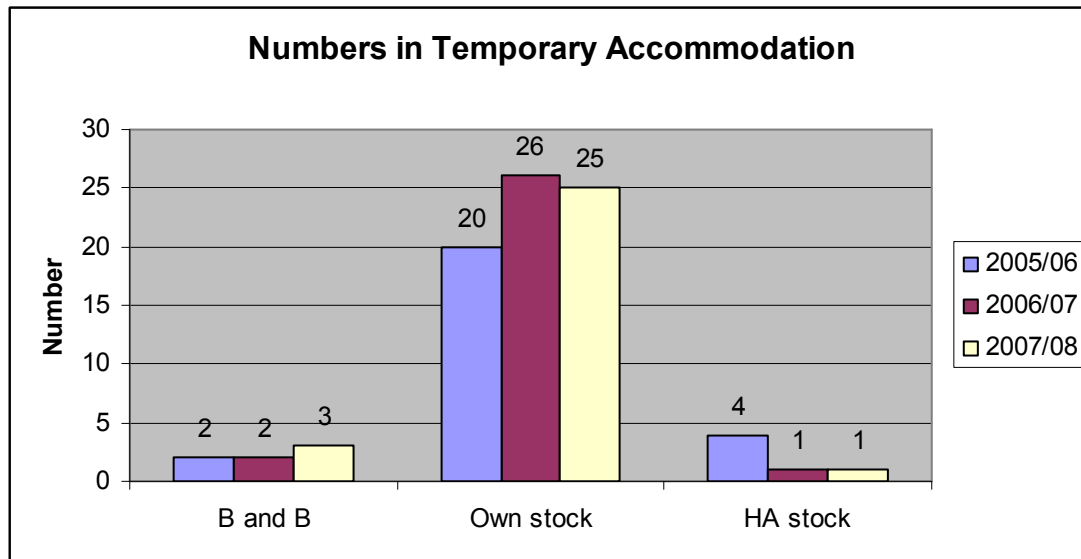
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
applicants homeless because of emergency	1	24	0
applicants whose household includes dependent children	18	20	17
applicant is or has, or household includes a pregnant woman and there are no other dependent children	7	4	6
applicant aged 16/17 years old	6	2	3
applicant formally in "care", and aged 18 - 20 yrs old	0	0	0
old age	0	1	0
physical disability	4	1	3
mental illness or disability	7	1	2
drug dependency	0	0	0
alcohol dependency	2	0	0
former asylum seeker	0	0	0
vulnerable for other reasons	0	0	0
having been in "care"	0	0	0
having served in HM forces	0	0	0
having been in custody/on remand	0	0	0
having fled their home due to violence/threat of violence			
domestic violence	0	1	0

Source: P1E Data

This table illustrates who becomes homeless within Uttlesford. Again in 2006/07 we can see the distorting effects on the figures of the war in Lebanon. Otherwise the main and stable category is those with dependant children followed by those being pregnant.

The numbers of 16 and 17 years accepted as homeless has fallen in the past two years but this still remains an area of concern, as others have been found to be intentionally homeless or not homeless and whilst decisions are being made, 16 and 17 year olds are still being placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. There is currently no specific supported housing within Uttlesford for this age group.

Number of Homeless Households in Temporary Accommodation



Source: P1E Data as at 31 March for each year given

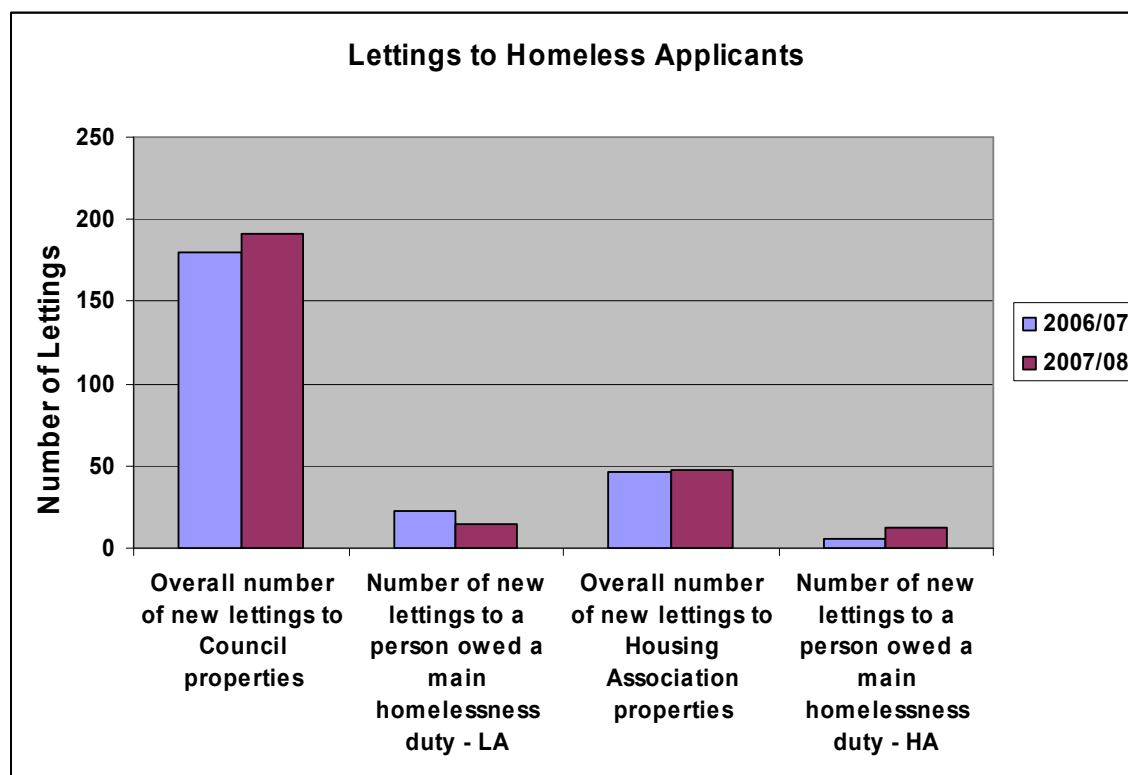
As can be seen the numbers in temporary accommodation (TA) have overall remained roughly the same for the past three years. Although the figures given are as at the 31 March figures throughout the year will fluctuate depending on the number of customers making homeless applications. The figure dropped during 2007/08 to a low in Council stock of 20 households.

The Council has implemented a temporary accommodation plan in order to help it meet the government's target of reducing the numbers in temporary accommodation by half by 2010. The Uttlesford target is 20 half the number in temporary accommodation as at 31 December 2004.

Bed and Breakfast use is minimised as far as possible and during 2007/08 there has never been more than 5 households in this type of accommodation at any one time.

Temporary accommodation is never ideal. However by using Council stock as temporary accommodation customers can be accommodated in self contained properties in the district. This is preferable to bed and breakfast accommodation which can be out of the district and some way from established support networks, employment, schools and services.

Number of Lettings Made to Homeless Applicants



Source: CORE Data

For the majority of clients the homelessness duty is brought to an end when they receive an offer of permanent accommodation through the Council's Housing Register (a Part 6 offer) into either Council accommodation or accommodation with a social landlord.

Up until November 2007 allocations were made via a points system with offers or nominations going to the highest pointed applicant on the housing register. Since November Uttlesford has been part of a consortium using a choice based lettings scheme called HomeOption. A points system is still used for awarding priority to applications and offers are still made to the highest pointed applicants. However applicants now have to express interest in advertised properties in order to be considered for them.

In the case of those applicants in temporary accommodation they have a window of eight weeks to be able to express interest in properties of their own choosing. After this time if they have not been successful, expressions of interest will be made on their behalf on suitable properties, which if successful will constitute a final offer of accommodation ending the Council's housing duty. As the choice based lettings scheme is relatively new it is too early at this stage to access if it will impact on the times that clients spend in temporary accommodation.

Rough Sleeping in Uttlesford

Year of Count	Number of Rough Sleepers
2003/04	1
2006/07	1

Source: Estimated Data

Rough sleeping within Uttlesford as can be seen from the figures is not an issue. The last rough count carried out in September 2006 found only one rough sleeper who is a gentleman who has chosen this lifestyle for many years now. The housing department attends the local Joint Action Group (JAG) meetings led by the local police and if there is any concern about someone sleeping rough then it would be raised at these meetings and investigated by the appropriate agency.

Gypsies and Travellers

The following information is the formal numbers of travellers counted in Uttlesford over the past 3 years.

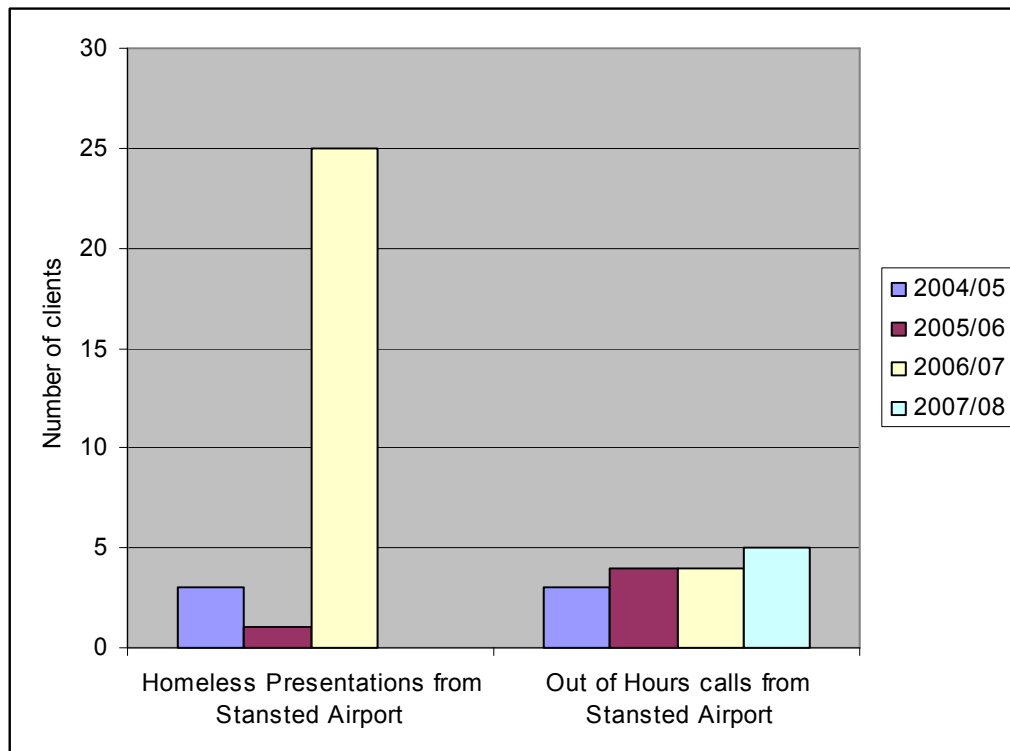
	Authorised sites (with planning permission)		Unauthorised sites without planning permission				Total all caravans
	Socially Rented	Private	No of caravans on sites on gypsies own land		No of caravans on sites on land not owned by gypsies		
			Tolerated	Not tolerated	Tolerated	Not tolerated	
July 2007	18	33	0	0	2	0	53
Jan 2007	18	33	0	0	2	0	53
July 2006	15	34	0	0	2	2	53
Jan 2006	18	34	0	0	1	0	53
July 2005	24	35	0	0	1	7	67

Source: <http://communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/138841>

Further publications are due from the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) and Essex County Council in the near future where a possible increase in official authorised sites may be required. The Essex Housing Officers Group is in the process of commissioning further research into this. Uttlesford District Council recognises the key importance of understanding the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and will engage fully into further delivery.

Stansted Airport

Homeless Applications from People Arriving at Stansted Airport/Out of Hours Generated fro Stansted Airport



Source: Council Data

The effects of having an International Airport in the District can be unpredictable as can be seen from the above Data. Some years the work generated by the Airport is relatively small but as can be seen in 2006/07 it generated 25 homelessness applications. Capacity for dealing with large numbers of arrivals at the Airport has had to be built into the Council's emergency procedures.

The Out of Hours Service takes out of hours calls from the Airport. These can often just require giving advice but if there is a possibility of a client being in priority need then a Bed and Breakfast booking would be made and the client interviewed on the next working day. If necessary a Taxi would also be arranged.

Stansted Airport is one of the designated airports used during evacuations from abroad or for a terrorist related incident. It is estimated that on average, evacuations from abroad to Stansted Airport occur once every four years.

Summary of Homelessness data

- Since 2003 the Council has witnessed a significant drop in the number of homelessness applications being made and a stabilising in the number of acceptances. This is the result of the greater emphasis on the prevention of homelessness.
- There has been a decrease in the numbers of those found eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need due to earlier intervention in cases who are threatened with future homelessness
- The most common ongoing causes of priority need are having dependant children or being pregnant; having a mental illness or disability; being 16 or 17; having a physical disability.
- The most common ongoing causes of homelessness in Uttlesford are parental/other family or friend no longer willing to accommodate; the ending of assured shorthold tenancies in the private sector; relationship breakdowns non-violent or violent.
- Numbers of households in temporary accommodation has stabilised having fallen from the 2004/05 level.
- Rough sleeping continues to not be a homelessness issue within Uttlesford.
- The effects of Stansted Airport remain unpredictable.

Progress since the 2003 Strategy

Housing Advice Service

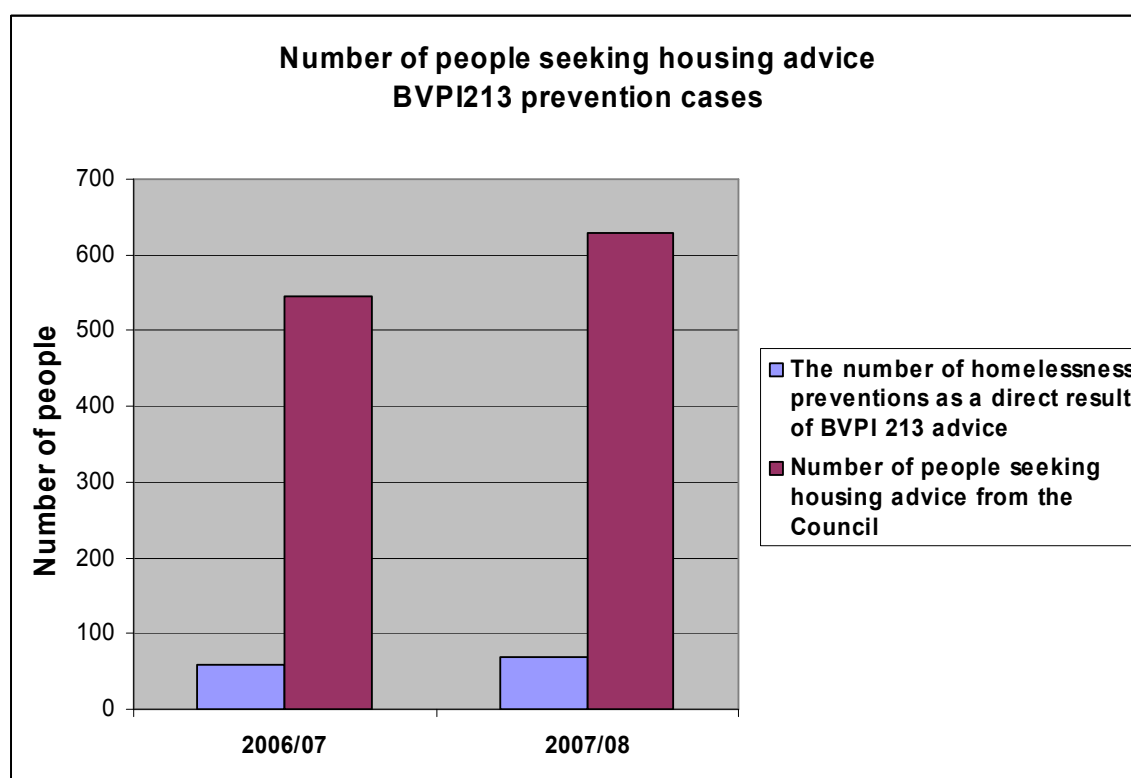
Following the writing of the Council's first homelessness strategy the Council appointed, in December 2003, its first dedicated homelessness officer to be responsible for all aspects of homelessness from strategy to day to day decision making and prevention work. Housing advice under the supervision of the Homelessness Officer is provided by a duty housing officer who is, on a rota basis, one of four generic housing officers. Advice is one small part of their work. The Duty Officer is able to give housing advice or signpost clients to others for specialist advice and when necessary take homeless applications. Advice is given to clients with or without priority homeless status and in any current tenure. This service is easily accessed with no appointments required. Advice is also available either by phone, email or on the Council website.

The local Citizens Advice Bureaus (CAB) are part funded by the Council and clients can be referred on to CAB for specific advice particularly regarding detailed welfare, benefits or money advice, debt counseling and some legal advice. Also to advocate on clients behalf.

Homelessness prevention advice is firstly provided by a duty housing officer and then details are passed to the Homelessness Officer if appropriate for further advice and homelessness prevention work. A Housing Advice Pack is provided to clients which contains general information and signposts on how to access accommodation.

Housing advice records are kept on all clients detailing homeless prevention work so that it can be monitored and recorded for BVPI 213 on homelessness prevention. Letters are sent to potentially homeless clients outlining their rights and housing options. Where appropriate contact is made with landlords or agents to negotiate on clients behalf to try to prevent homelessness. All applicants who are threatened with homelessness receive a home visit from a housing officer and emergency visits can be made where necessary to prevent homelessness. There is a homelessness contingency fund which the Homelessness Officer is authorised to use to prevent homelessness. There are good links between the housing staff giving advice and preventing homelessness and the Councils housing benefit staff, being a small authority with both sections in the same building means that clients, once seen by a housing officer, can then be seen where appropriate by a housing benefit expert as well, so that issues regarding housing benefit can be resolved quickly and in one visit.

Number of Homeless Prevention Cases



Source: BVPI 213

Accommodation

Temporary accommodation is always provided for those accepted as homeless or who are believed to be in priority need whilst their application is investigated. This accommodation may be Bed and Breakfast or a Council hard to let property. Anything other than B and B will be self-contained, with a fridge and a cooker provided. If a property has oil central heating then it will have oil in the tank. All the properties used are maintained to a good standard in line with all other council property. They are let on temporary non-secure tenancies.

To reduce the need to use bed and breakfast there is now a policy agreed by Members of keeping up to four hard to let properties available at any one time. Potentially homeless applicants are identified at an early stage so that they can be matched to a vacancy prior to becoming homeless if homelessness cannot be prevented.

The Council have also been able to utilise three properties that are scheduled for future demolition because of the proposed Stansted Airport expansion. These properties have been carpeted and have basic appliances fitted so that they can be ready for immediate occupation.

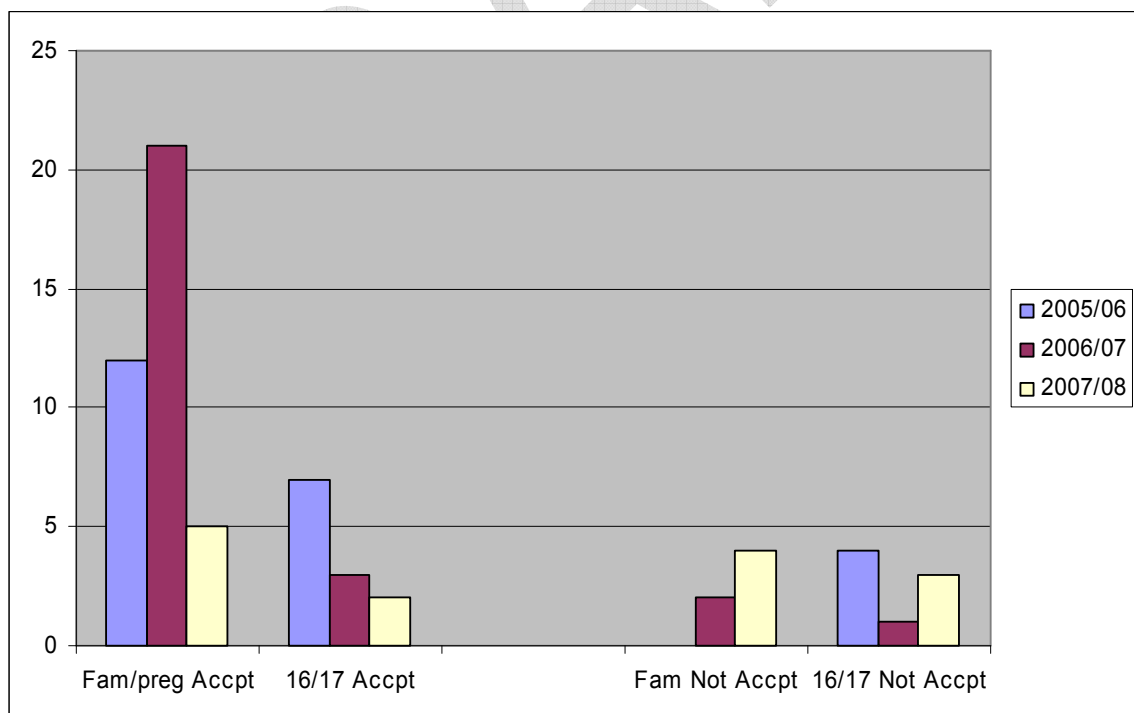
Bed and Breakfast

Where Bed and Breakfast has to be used it is ensured that clients have access to ensuite facilities. B and B is still used for families in emergencies but it has been possible to comply with the Statutory Order. In the past year only one case has gone over six weeks and this was where a review of their homelessness application was being carried out.

With the policy in place to use Council properties as temporary accommodation we have been able to reduce the use of bed and breakfast for families, with the costs for bed and breakfast before housing benefit income being £38,911 in 2007/08 compared to £102,731 in 2003/04 when the previous strategy was written.

However as can be seen in the following charts although in 2007/8 there were only 5 families, who were subsequently accepted as homeless placed in Bed and Breakfast, the average length of stay is fairly constant. The numbers were high in 2006/07 due to 9 Lebanese families placed in B and Breakfast for an initial four days on arrival at Stansted Airport having been evacuated from the war in Lebanon.

Number of Accepted and Not Accepted Households Placed in Bed and Breakfast

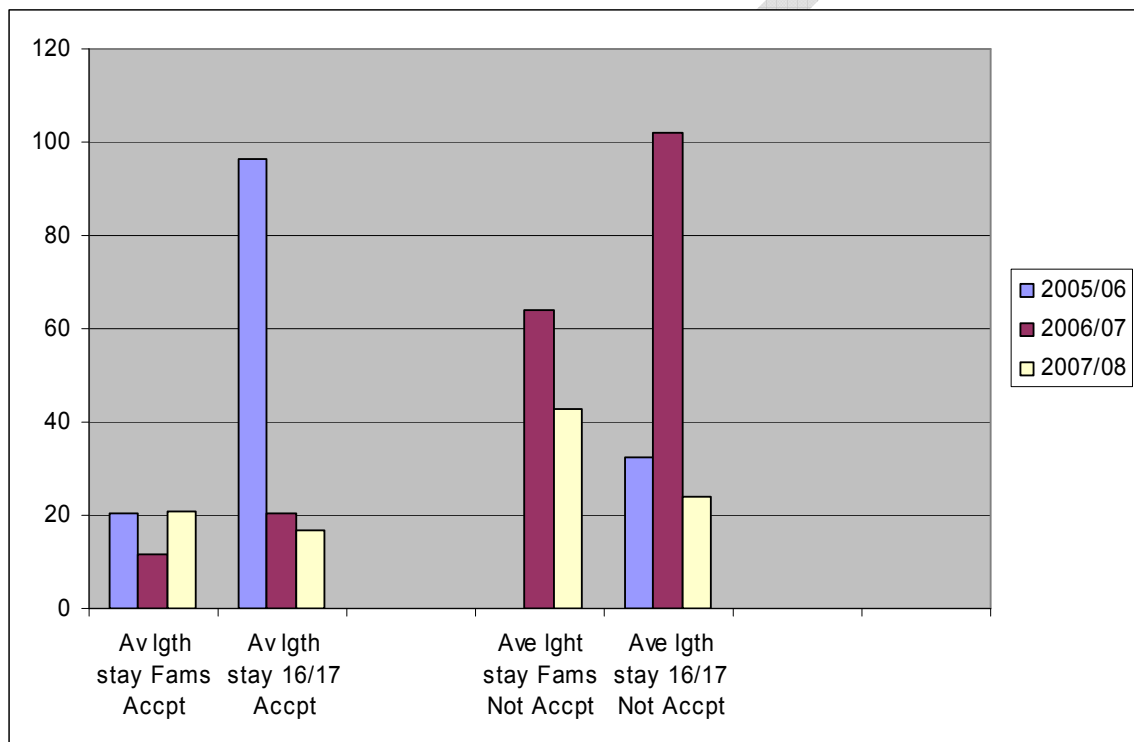


Source: Council Data

The Council also still uses Bed and Breakfast for 16 and 17 year olds and as can be seen in the past they have spent long periods in bed and breakfast before other arrangements can be made, although more recently it has been possible to reduce this time.

All services users placed in B and B or any other temporary accommodation are referred to a floating support service.

Average Length of Stay in Bed and Breakfast of Accepted and Not Accepted Families and 16/17 Year Olds



Source: Council Data

Choice Based Lettings

In November 2007 Uttlesford District Council launched a Choice Based Lettings Scheme called -



HomeOption has been formed by a consortium of neighbouring local authorities, Uttlesford, Brentwood, Epping Forest, Broxbourne, Chelmsford and East Herts Councils. A successful bid was made by the consortium to the Government to gain funding to implement a choice based lettings scheme and Locata was chosen to develop and run the scheme.

Applicants on the Council's Housing Register now have a chance to express an interest in a property suitable for their needs when it is advertised either in a fortnightly HomeOption "free sheet" or on the [HomeOption website www.homeoption.org](http://www.homeoption.org). Properties are offered to the highest pointed eligible applicant who has waited the longest out of those who have expressed an interest.

The Council prior to going live with HomeOption also reviewed its allocation policy. The policy continues to be a points based system for assessing the priority of applicants.

Homeless applicants are able to express interest in properties for a period of eight weeks after their homeless application has been accepted, after this date expressions of interest can be made on their behalf for any suitable properties. They receive only one offer of suitable accommodation.

Support Services

Closer working links have been established with support agencies particularly through the Homelessness Officer being a member of the Uttlesford Community Support Group and the Drug and Alcohol Strategy Group (now combined). All agencies were invited to attend a forum prior to work commencing on the writing of this review and strategy document.

West Essex Community Drug and Alcohol Team

West Essex CDAT is a service for people who are experiencing chronic drug/alcohol problems and who are registered with a GP who purchases services from North Essex Partnership Foundation Trust.

They essentially cover 3 district council areas: Harlow Epping Forest and Uttlesford.

They offer a wide range of services including:

- Advice & information
- Full Needs Led Assessment
- Community and Outpatient Detoxification
- Assessment for Residential Rehab
- Needle Exchange
- Substitute Prescribing in conjunction with GPs
- Drug Rehabilitation Requirement (DRR) Programmes
- 1:1 Support
- Relapse Prevention and Motivational Work
- Personal Development Service
- Group Support
- Support Worker Services (including Carer's Assessment)
- Complimentary Therapies
- Joint working and liaison with other agencies

Currently in Uttlesford CDAT have satellite clinics in Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden.

In Uttlesford the catchment area includes those with GP surgeries in Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Thaxted, Hatfield Broad Oak, Hatfield Heath, Elsenham and Stansted.

West Essex CDAT does also accept third party or self-referrals.

Alcohol and Drugs Advisory Service (ADAS)

ADAS is a registered charity providing specialist treatment services in West Essex for all family members affected by substance misuse, including those families affected by alcohol related domestic violence.

It provides assessment, brief interventions, advice and information, counselling, stress and anxiety management training, creative art groups and relapse prevention services for adults affected by substance misuse. In addition, ADAS offers a designated play therapy service for children and young people affected by parental substance misuse.

All of these services are available at either the ADAS main offices in Harlow or can be accessed via the Family Support Centre in Uttlesford. In addition, assessments and weekly counselling are available at a number of GP surgeries in Uttlesford.

The main office in Harlow manages all appointments, including those services operating in Uttlesford

Essex Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service (EYPDAS)

EYPDAS delivers advice, information and support to young people, families and professionals through outreach, counselling and training. The service is for those aged 19 or under.

It offers:

- Advice
- Information
- Support
- Assessment & counselling
- Outreach, street work and a satellite structured interventions programme

EYPDAS has an outreach worker who carries out street work in and across the district delivering substance education and workshops and promotes services via meetings and displays. The outreach worker also works closely with other services providing video projects and summer programmes to raise awareness of the dangers of drug misuse.

Members of EYPDAS also carry out assessments and one to one counselling sessions throughout Uttlesford at venues agreed with young people. This service is entirely confidential and voluntary and it is the young people themselves who decides whether or not to attend these sessions.

West Essex Primary Care Trust (PCT)

West Essex PCT holds the NHS budget for the 270,000 people who live in Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford. The area it covers stretches from Buckhurst Hill in the south of Essex to Steeplebumpsted in the north. It is responsible for improving primary care and the health of the local population.

The PCT has an annual budget of approximately £330 million and are responsible for providing:

- primary care services - GPs, dentistry, ophthalmology, pharmacy
- therapy services – speech and language, physiotherapy, hydrotherapy, pediatric, occupational
- four community hospitals which have:
 - a day hospital for our older residents
 - inpatient wards – for older people
 - a community clinic
 - nursing services – district, school and community matrons
 - community services such as dental, podiatry
 - minor surgery.

Across west Essex there are: 17 clinics and health centre, 187 GPs, 101 dentists, 96 opticians

Other services provided by the PCT include: Physiotherapists, Occupational therapists, Speech and language therapists, Podiatry, Chiroprody, Community dental services, Health visitors, District nurses, School nurses, Children's services and child protection, Health promotion, Older people's services, Inpatient and outpatient services, Young people's information centres Lead purchaser for mental health services across north Essex

Children and Families Services

The Children and Families service at Essex County Council works closely with partner agencies to prevent homelessness for families with dependant children.

Families are referred to the Service by the local authority if the family is at risk of being evicted form a local authority property and there are dependant children. Referrals are also made for 16 and 17 year olds who present as homeless so that their needs can be assessed with regards to Sections 17 and 20 of the Children Act 1989.

Where a family with dependant children is found to be intentionally homeless then they are referred to the Children and Families Service for them to offer assistance and help with rehousing.

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Uttlesford Citizens Advice Bureau provides advice and information on a wide range of issues including: housing and homelessness, welfare and disability benefits, personal debt, consumer problems, employment and relationship matters. The service is free to users, confidential, impartial and independent. There are offices in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow as well as an outreach service at Thaxted. Out of hours information can also be obtained from the following website: www.adviceguide.org.uk.

In 2007/08 Uttlesford CAB dealt with over 11,000 enquiries of which 649 were solely involved a housing issue. This is the fourth largest number of enquiries on a specific issue behind Benefit, Debt and Employment enquiries. Of the housing enquiries the largest number involved private sector rented housing issues.

Community Mental Health Teams (CMHT)

Community Mental Health Teams include community psychiatric nurses, occupational therapists and assistants, psychologists, approved social workers, support workers, psychiatrists and staff grade doctors.

The teams work with patients in their own homes, clinics and the Community Mental Health Resource Centres. The teams carry out comprehensive health and social care assessments and prepare, implement and evaluate care plans in accordance with the Care Programme Approach.

All initial assessments are carried out by a qualified worker e.g. community mental health nurse, social worker, occupational therapist or other professional as appropriate. If on-going care is required, a care co-ordinator is assigned.

A written report is always sent to the referrer detailing the findings of the assessment and any re-referral, advice, support or treatment recommendations.

Mental Health assessments are carried out by a psychiatrist, another doctor (usually the person's own GP) and an approved social worker. Together they make a judgement about the best way to provide treatment for people who are seriously ill and behaving or making judgements in a way that they would not do if they were well.

There are two teams working in Uttlesford they are:

North Uttlesford CMHT

This covers the North Uttlesford area and is based at the Skylark Centre in Saffron Walden. It is open between 9am to 5pm Monday-Friday. It serves

people with severe and enduring mental health problems, between the ages of 16 to 70.

South Uttlesford CMHT

This covers the South Uttlesford area and is based at Twyford Court in Great Dunmow. It is open between 9am-5pm Monday to Friday. It serves people with severe and enduring mental health problems, between the ages of 16 to 70.

Connexions

Connexions are able to support Young People aged 16-19 with homeless applications, general advice, guidance and support which in the past has included helping with completion of housing benefit forms, housing register applications, arranging benefits/liasing with jobcentres. Workers will also sit down and explore with the young person their housing options within Uttlesford and in some cases where possible support applications to Harlow Foyer (if young person meets their criteria) they have the ability to provide this service on a 1:1 basis and go out into the community.

Connexions workers will support the Young person with creating a plan of action as to what they can do/their options are and support them through this process.

Uttlesford Connexions have specific Drop-In days: Access Point opening times when young people can drop in for careers and general advice Saffron Walden Fairycroft Tues 2:30-5:00pm and at Dunmow Youth Centre Wed 2:30-5:00pm. The Connexions office is manned Mon-Fri between hours of 9:00am - 5:00pm young people just need to ring the bell for service.

Although clearly not a crisis centre for young homeless Connexions can and will provide as much support as possible in helping a young person resolve their situation and look at the options available to them.

Floating Support

Essex Supporting People is investing a total of £23 million over 5 years into the Essex Floating Support Service, which will significantly help to prevent homelessness, build safer and stronger communities, promote independence and social inclusion.

The re-configuration of floating support services in Essex has resulted in an expansion of floating support in Uttlesford enabling;

- More service users to be helped with preventing homelessness.
- Significantly increased support hours allowing for more flexibility

- Service provision based on support need and not dependant on where a person lives or the accommodation they live in.
- Easier promotion of and accessibility to floating support services

The innovative service will help prevent homelessness for vulnerable people by providing structured advice and individually tailored short-term housing-related support to those people most in need.

The Floating Support Service in Uttlesford is provided by InTouch and consists of;

a **gateway service** - which offers a single point of access, screens and prioritises applications, and manages the waiting list.

a **holistic service** - that provides flexible, short term focused support to vulnerable people to develop skills to achieve independence.

an **immediate response service** - that provides an urgent response to people in immediate need of housing related support to deal with a crisis such as being at risk of losing their home.

The service is open to people who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless, or unlikely/unable to manage in their accommodation and have support needs.

Essex Leaving & After Care Services (L&AC)

The Essex Leaving & After Care Service provides support to young people under the Children Act 1989 and especially the Children Leaving Care act 2000. Young people who are “Looked After” by Essex County Council are transferred to one of four geographically based teams, at around fifteen and a half. Young people with a connection to the Uttlesford area are in general dealt with by the West team based in Harlow. Each young person is allocated a named worker, and receives a full assessment of their needs and a “Pathway Plan” which identifies goals and outlines the support they require in a variety of areas including their accommodation needs. Good planning and preparation is seen as essential in seeking to prevent future homelessness.

Although Essex has a relatively large care population (1,200 children & young people), and L&AC support approaching 700 young people aged up to 21 or in some circumstances 24, only a very small number are placed in (8 as of February 2008) or have connection to the district. There are few specific resources for care leavers in Uttlesford (there is a residential unit for children & young people & a small number of foster carers), however Uttlesford young people access the whole range of services created to meet their transitional needs. These services include a large “Supported Lodgings” scheme a service level agreement with Family Mosaic Housing to provide 40 supported flats in 5 separate units, in addition to foster & residential care.

Probation

Following re structuring several years ago, probation centralised its offices. It closed outlying small ones in favour of larger offices in major locations. Offenders in the Uttlesford area under Probation supervision therefore report to the Harlow Probation Office. Here they have access to Employment/ Training and Education, work skills taster courses, advice & guidance on housing related issues, counseling for drug & alcohol misuse. There are close links between probation and housing with housing officers invited to attend Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) meetings and probation contacting housing in advance of an offender likely to require housing within the Uttlesford area so that a joint plan can be formulated.

Youth Offending Team (YOT)

West Essex (Harlow) Youth Offending Team covers Uttlesford district, as well as Epping, Waltham Abbey and Harlow obviously.

The Team is a multi-agency collaboration, including professionals from partner agencies of Health, Education, Probation, Social Care and Essex Police. There are also generic YOT workers employed directly by Essex County Council. Essex Youth Offending Service reports regularly to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales with figures relating directly to work undertaken with our clients.

The team supervise all children and young people resident in the district who receive a Final Warning from Essex Police, or who are charged to court for more serious matters. The supervision comprises of, at the very least, an assessment of circumstances of the offence, the young person and their family, and looks at ways of reducing the likelihood of any recurrence.

Obviously some young people have very minimal input from YOT, and others remain with the team for some considerable period, depending on the proliferation of offending. This assessment and intervention is intended to engage partner statutory agencies and voluntary sector colleagues where deemed appropriate to address the causes of offending, and to make reparation (payback) to the Community where applicable.

YOT also provides a Youth Offending Service (YOS) Early Intervention Programme worker to Uttlesford District who works out of the two Teams Around Schools, Children and Communities Teams (TASCC) in the locality. This post is funded by the Youth Justice Board and managed by Essex YOS and is entirely devoted to those young people (8 -13 years old) who have yet to be arrested but who are in need of intervention in an aim to prevent their behaviour escalating to the point of arrest or court appearance. All referrals for this programme come directly from the TASCC team and after a Common Assessment Framework assessment has been carried out.

They also have a parenting coordinator who works directly with parents and carers of clients known to Essex YOS. A programme of work is undertaken with parents either in group setting or individually. The referral to the coordinator comes from the supervising YOT worker, with the consent of parents.

St Matthew Housing (SMH)

St Matthew Housing was founded in 1973 in response to the needs of homeless people in Norwich. They now work throughout six counties in East Anglia and the East Midlands and house 600 people.

St Matthew offer three types of accommodation - houses, group homes and move-on flats. In Saffron Walden they have Bromfield House which is divided into a house and group home and can accommodate 17 clients requiring supported housing. New referrals to Bromfield House usually begin by living in the "house" side.

St Matthew houses are always small with between six and ten residents to encourage a supportive and family-like atmosphere. Each house has a house manager who is responsible for the day to day running of the house, for buying food and preparing an evening meal. The meal is a focal point of the day and all those living in the house sit together to eat and discuss the day's activities.

The group home is the next step towards independent living. Similar to a house in size but here the residents are responsible for their own food - it is common to see six or eight separate fridges in a group home kitchen.

St Matthew can also offer resettlement support to SMH residents wishing to move on to independent accommodation and outreach support to external clients who are in danger of losing their tenancies.

Housing Benefit Team

The Council's Housing Benefit Department processed in 2008/09 1855 new claims and 1285 change of circumstances forms.

The prompt assessment and payment of housing benefit/local housing allowance can prevent homelessness and reduce the number of approaches to the homelessness team. The efficiency of the Housing Benefit service can also play a part in encouraging private landlords to work with the Council's rent deposit guarantee scheme.

The officers dealing with homelessness clients and those in temporary accommodation work closely with the housing benefit team to ensure that rent arrears do not become an issue for moving someone on to permanent housing.

Housing Benefit also manage the Discretionary Housing payments fund which again can be used to prevent homelessness.

Since April 2008 all new claims for Housing Benefit from tenants in the private sector are subject to the new Local Housing Allowance (LHA). This gives tenants more choice, enabling them to find out how much benefit they will get before they rent a property. They can then decide how much of their benefit they want to spend on renting a property and in most cases the allowance will be paid direct to the claimant.

LHA is based on the number of rooms you are allowed.

One bedroom for

- Every adult couple;
- Any other adult aged 16 or over
- Any two children of the same sex up to 15 years;
- Any two children regardless of sex under age 10;
- Any other child.

The number of kitchens and bathrooms is ignored for the purpose of the calculation.

The Rent Officer sets the levels of LHA every month for properties of up to six rooms (comprising of bedrooms and living rooms only) in each rental area. LHA is not based upon how much rent is actually charged: if your rent is lower than the weekly LHA, you can keep the difference

Properties in Uttlesford come under three Local Housing Allowance areas, Cambridge, Harlow and Stevenage

LHA rates as at April 2008

Cambridge

Number of bedrooms	Category	Weekly amount
shared room rate	A	£75.00
1 bedroom	B	£126.92
2 bedrooms	C	£149.43
3 bedrooms	D	£173.08
4 bedrooms	E	£253.85
5 bedrooms	F	£346.15

Harlow

Number of bedrooms	Category	Weekly amount
shared room rate	A	£75.00
1 bedroom	B	£129.23
2 bedrooms	C	£167.31
3 bedrooms	D	£196.15
4 bedrooms	E	£340.39
5 bedrooms	F	£398.08

Stevenage

Number of bedrooms	Category	Weekly amount
shared room rate	A	£64.96
1 bedroom	B	£115.38
2 bedrooms	C	£150
3 bedrooms	D	£173.08
4 bedrooms	E	£230.77
5 bedrooms	F	£346.15

Essex Youth Service

The Youth Service offers advice, support and signposting for young people at two youth centers within the District.

Stansted Youth Centre is open every day 9-5 as a Children's Centre and Wednesday and Thursday evenings 7-9.30pm as a youth centre. Fridays 11-2pm is the young parents group where housing issues amongst other things are dealt with. Dunmow Youth Centre is open Tuesdays and Thursdays 7.30-10pm, Fri 7-9.30pm and Wednesday and Thursday afternoon's 3.30-5.30pm.

Women's Aid

Harlow and Broxbourne Women Aid have refuges in Broxbourne and Harlow and offer outreach/floating support services. These services are available for women living with Domestic Violence in Uttlesford, they offer support by home visits, by phone or by access to their drop in centers. The nearest drop in to Uttlesford is Harlow. They will also take referrals for Uttlesford women for their refuges. These spaces are let to women on a first come first served basis not by area of origin. Information is also available from their web site www.womensroom.org. The Women's Aid service are currently looking to expand their services locally and are very keen to be involved in working with Uttlesford to fill gaps in the service to women suffering from domestic violence.

Homelessness Services Implemented by Uttlesford District Council since the Previous Strategy

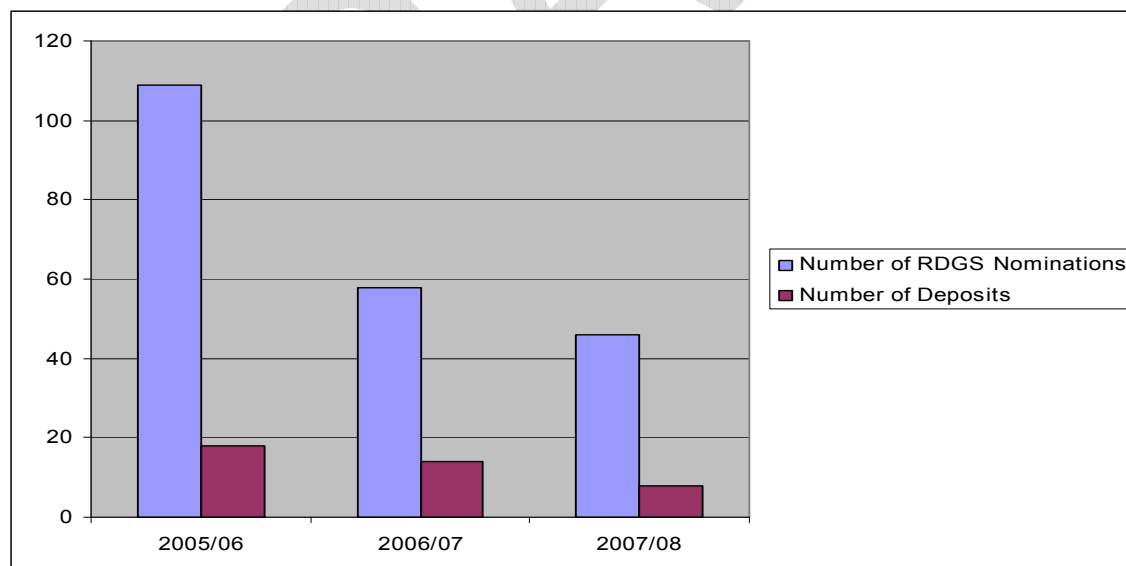
Rent Deposit Scheme

In 2004 the Council in partnership with King Street Housing Society set up a Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme. The Scheme is managed for the Council by King Street Housing Society which is based in Cambridge and runs similar schemes for neighbouring local authorities. The scheme aims to help potentially homeless people to access homes in the private rented sector that they would not otherwise be able to consider because they do not have the money needed to pay the necessary deposit. The Scheme does not pay cash deposits but King Street arranges with the landlord a deposit guarantee.

Applicants for the scheme are first interviewed by the Council and then if eligible are referred on to King Street Housing Society who will give them advice on how to find a property and then negotiate with the prospective landlord about the deposit and any rent in advance. King Street will also do credit checks on applicants and arrange for them to set up an account to pay the deposit back at an agreed monthly rate.

Funds for this scheme are restricted therefore the Council is able to help only a limited number of applicants each year.

Number of Rent Deposit Guarantees



Source: Council data

As can be seen from the above table the Scheme has been less successful in the past two years helping people into the private rented sector, this has been due to the buoyant nature of the private rented sector within Uttlesford. Landlords and agents are resistant to taking clients without cash deposits and who may be claiming housing benefit. For this reason we are looking to find other ways the council can work with the private sector.

Mediation

In 2007 a pilot mediation scheme was established with Herts and Essex Family Mediation Service. Clients have been referred if they are threatened with homelessness by a family member, this is usually young people being given notice to quit by parents. Once the referral has been made a joint home visit has been arranged with a housing officer and a trained mediator. At the meeting the housing officer would discuss housing options and the mediator would do an initial interview with the involved parties and explain how mediation could be taken further with full mediation sessions being arranged at a neutral venue.

This pilot scheme has just ended and has been evaluated for its effectiveness. There has been a poor uptake of mediation beyond the initial home visit stage. It has been difficult to co-ordinate joint visits and it is felt that mixing the housing and mediation messages is not effective with one distracting from the other. It is not planned to continue with the mediation service in its current format.

Sanctuary Scheme

In November 2007 at the Uttlesford Domestic Violence Awareness Day the homelessness service launched its Sanctuary Scheme. This has been set up in partnership with the police, the fire service and an approved locksmith. The Scheme has various levels of increased security that it can offer to clients ranging from new door locks to full sanctuary room. The Scheme is funded by the Council but is open to all tenure of clients identified by the Council or other agencies.

The Uttlesford 'Sanctuary Project'

The Sanctuary Project is a victim-centered initiative, which provides additional security measures for victims of domestic violence. The scheme aims to make it possible for victims to stay in their homes and feel safe.

The project is seen as a positive response to domestic violence, which has forged a close working partnership with other organisations. The scheme is completed at no cost to the victim.

What is a 'Sanctuary'?

Every Sanctuary project is aimed to accommodate the needs and circumstances of the individuals involved. The security measures fall into three categories:

'Sanctuary' – this is where a door to a room, generally the main bedroom, is replaced with a solid core door and reversed to open outwards. The door is fitted with a multipoint lock, along with three large steel hinges, hinge bolts and a 180° door viewer. This provides a safe room or a 'Sanctuary' in which survivors can call for and await the arrival of the police.

'Sanctuary Plus' – this would normally have all of the above elements plus additional security features, for example, window grilles and extra 'sanctuary' doors to the front and rear of the property, including London and Birmingham bars.

'Sanctuary Minimum' – this does not include a safe room, but could include a number of other security options, for example, changing window locks and door locks.

Guide to the Referral Process

Stage 1	Referral Agency provides Crime Reduction Officer with as much background information as possible.
Stage 2	The Crime Reduction Officer will contact the victim to make an appointment to view the premises with an officer from Essex Fire and Rescue Service. Timescale: 1 to 2 days, normally the same day if a contact number is given and the victim is available.
Stage 3	The Crime Reduction Officer and Fire Officer will attend the premises and complete a security survey. Timescale: 1 to 7 days, an appointment has to be arranged which is convenient for the victim.
Stage 4	The Crime Reduction Officer sends their recommendations to the Local Authority and the approved contractor. Timescale: normally the same day.
Stage 5	The Local Authority will establish who the property belongs to and either give authority (for their own properties) or seek authority from the landlord, whether it is a Housing Association or private, for the works to be carried out. Timescale: 1 to 2 days, this can take longer if the property is managed by a Housing Association or is owned by a private landlord.
Stage 6	The Local Authority will instruct the contractor when authority has been granted. Timescale: 1 to 2 days, normally the same day.
Stage 7	The contractor will arrange to install the 'Sanctuary' recommendations. Timescale: 1 to 7 days, depending on the availability of the client.

Case Study

Ms A was living with her baby in a Council Flat. Her partner B had left the property following incidents of domestic abuse and she had obtained a non molestation order against B. B however kept returning to the flat trying to get in and Ms A was thinking of leaving the flat because she no longer felt safe. Her Social Worker told her about the Council's Sanctuary Scheme and she agreed that she would like to try this instead of having to move. A referral was made and the recommended security measures were put in place. Ms A then felt secure enough in her accommodation that she felt able to stay.

Floating Support Service

Since April 2007 we are now able to refer all homeless clients to the InTouch floating support service as detailed previously. This is particularly beneficial where we are placing young vulnerable people into temporary accommodation where they are without means of support and have quite often never had to manage on their own before.

The support can move with clients from their temporary accommodation into permanent housing thus increasing the chances of tenancy sustainment in the longer term.

Case study

K was 48 and had long term issues with alcohol, he had been homeless for sometime, dividing his time between sleeping rough and sleeping on his parents couch. When his health deteriorated he approached the Council and was accepted as homeless. Initially he was placed in Bed and Breakfast and then into permanent accommodation, a one Bedroom flat, the first proper home of his own. At the time he presented as homeless he was referred to Intouch for floating support. They started supporting him when he was in Bad and Breakfast and this support continued when he moved to his flat. They helped him sort out benefits which he had not previously claimed and with their continuing support K is maintaining his tenancy and enjoying having a home of his own.

Stansted Airport

As has previously been said Stansted Airport is one of the designated airports used during evacuations from abroad or for a terrorist related incident. It is estimated that on average, evacuations from abroad to Stansted Airport occur once every four years, which would mean that statistically an evacuation could occur again in 2010.

The following is part of the Council's emergency response plans for the eventuality of the arrival at Stansted Airport of a large number of people requiring housing assistance.

Dealing with Passengers arriving at Stansted Airport who require assistance with Housing
1.1 From time to time passengers may arrive on flights at Stansted Airport, who for a variety of reasons request leave to enter the United Kingdom and due to circumstances in their country of origin then require permanent or temporary accommodation in this country.
1.2 Under current United Kingdom Housing legislation, Uttlesford District Council has a legal responsibility to provide housing advice and assistance for persons who arrive at Stansted Airport and on arrival are unable to return to the country they have come from and have no where to live in the United Kingdom.
1.3 Notification times of such arrivals will depend upon the circumstances, but often the numbers arriving; their immediate housing needs; and the numbers requiring such assistance from the local authority may not be known until they actually arrive through immigration controls at the airport. This makes it difficult to plan in advance for this eventuality.
2.1 On receipt of notification of the arrival/imminent arrival of a flight at Stansted Airport the Emergency Planning Officer, in conjunction with Housing staff will attempt to ascertain the approximate needs of these people.
2.2 An early decision should be made on what accommodation will be needed for these

people and where this will be sourced from i.e. local hotels or rest centre type accommodation in a local school or leisure centre. Based on this decision contact should be made with local providers to source the accommodation prior to the arrival of the persons requiring it.

2.3 Consideration should be given to special needs in terms of disabilities, medical conditions, dietary requirements, etc. and appropriate arrangements made.

2.4 Once it has been ascertained how many people will have to be dealt with, contact should be made with staff who have indicated a willingness to assist with rest/reception centre operations to put them on stand-by or if the response is more immediate, direct them to the appropriate location(s).

2.5 Contact should be made at an early stage with Essex County Council Emergency Plans & Business Continuity Team so that they are aware of the incident and to discuss any requirement for support and/or joint working such as transport, CSTE workers, etc. If it is outside of office hours, this contact should be made through the Emergency Plans Duty Officer.

2.6 Once it is know where accommodation will be located and what form this will take, contact should be made with appropriate support agencies and organisations such as WRVC, British Red Cross, etc. to provide the necessary welfare support structure

Case study

Mrs L who was 60 and her adult daughter were evacuated by the British Government from Lebanon in the summer of 2006 because of the war going on at the time. Mrs L was a British Citizen who had never lived in the UK whilst her daughter had a Lebanese passport and was initially only granted entry into the Country for six months. Uttlesford District Council put its emergency plan into operation at Stansted Airport to receive the evacuees. After four days in a hotel the family were moved to University accommodation in Colchester for five weeks until temporary accommodation within the District was available. The Council was able to identify a hard to let bungalow in a village location, the property was decorated and carpets and curtains fitted, also basic furniture and household goods were provided.

Mrs L has since been allocated the bungalow as permanent accommodation and her and her daughter have found employment. This year Mrs L was elected to be a tenant representative on the Council's Tenants Forum.

Consultation in Drafting the Review, Strategy and Action Plan

A number of consultation events were held to review homelessness services since the last Homelessness Strategy and to consult on priorities for the new strategy.

Homelessness Stakeholders Forum

A forum was held for interested parties, partner agencies and local elected Members. At the end of the event attendees were asked to list their two main priorities for the strategy or what they perceived as the most important gaps that need filling. The following are the points made:

- Acknowledge successes/opportunities
- Partnership working – supporting people – housing corporation - St Matthews, Connexions
- Multi agency working together
- Joint assessment panel for supported housing – raise awareness of already available services – St Matthew, Connexions
- One stop shop for all agencies
- Access to properly managed resources/short term accommodation
- Accommodation for young people – St Matthew
- A variety of supported accommodation need – long term
- Core homeless facility within Uttlesford
- Young person specific supported housing
- Young person crash pad/assessment stop gap
- Convert three bedroom house into three separate units for three young people
- Investigate supported lodgings type scheme
- Investigate other Housing Options
- Identifying need/planning for future
- Plan now to achieve maximum planning gain on new sites to help resolve problem
- Review planning policy
- Making best use of council land (large gardens)
- Making best use of accommodation that we have already
- Updating and building more sheltered housing - this would have a knock on effect, freeing up larger accommodation
- Proactive preventative information/support
- Continuity of advice and support by housing officers
- Regular multi-agency reviews on homeless in the district
- Parent training meaning more early intervention for young homeless
- Involving education to help prevent homeless with teenagers

These priorities have now been used to inform the action planning of Uttlesford's new Homelessness Strategy.

Landlords Forum

A successful landlord's forum was held in February 2008 to provide landlords with the following information.

1. Housing Allowance
2. Private Sector Leasing and Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme
3. PLACE project
4. HMO licensing
5. Energy Efficiency grants

The event was well attended and highlighted areas of concern in the private sector. Officers from the Council were able to answer questions and provide landlords with information which could assist them in gaining grants, letting their property to those on the Council's housing register and bringing their property back into use if empty. Landlords suggested that it would be useful to have a yearly landlord's event and this was agreed.

Service Users Forums

Three sessions were held where service users were invited to attend to give their perspective on homelessness services within Uttlesford, a cross section of views is given here.

- Service users were mainly agreed that the Service was friendly and that staff were approachable and gave them the information they required.
- They expressed concerns over the added stress of not knowing where they may be accommodated and for how long it would be and the fact that it was often away from their current support networks.
- They were offered housing options but many felt that they these were limited because of their own financial circumstances, some expressed the concern that if they had taken on a private rental then they would have not been able to afford to work.
- The standard of temporary accommodation was generally good although when placed in a hard to let council property their was concern because of the temporary nature of the accommodation what to do about basic living conditions such as flooring and not having tools to look after the garden.
- There was general agreement about the difficulty in accessing benefits and crisis loans because of the lack of a job centre within the district and the number of forms that need filling in can be daunting.

- The floating support service offered was generally welcomed.
- The new Choice Based Lettings Scheme had made people realise the lack of properties currently available for permanent housing.

Quotes

“The Housing Officer was supportive”

“Lack of information available from the Council”

“Saffron Walden CAB were fantastic so was the Housing Officer”

“Affordable rent is a godsend as I could not afford private rent.”

Ongoing Consultation

The Action Plan contains an action to establish a new Homelessness Partnership that will meet on a quarterly basis. It will be a multi agency forum with key partners which will review the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy.

Housing Advice customers and homeless applicants will continue to be asked to complete questionnaires, the answers of which will be used to shape services in the future. We will also hold an Annual Service Users review event.

An annual Landlords Forum will be held to continue to forge links within the private sector.

Outcomes of the review consultation – Perceived gaps within service provision within Uttlesford.

Temporary Accommodation

The ending of bed and breakfast usage is seen as a major priority to be addressed by the new strategy, especially for 16/17 year olds and families with young children even though it is currently used only in emergencies. The lack of alternative short term accommodation where people can be supported is seen as a major gap that needs to be filled.

Information and Education

A perceived gap is the need for more information at an earlier stage so that those in danger of losing their accommodation know where they can seek timely advice and assistance which might be able to prevent their homelessness.

Also the need to get more and better information to young people via youth workers, schools etc. To provide advice in a format that is relevant for young people.

Affordable Housing

There has been a wide gap between levels of new affordable housing and housing need in the District. This will be rectified during 2008-2011 when an estimated 350 new affordable rented and shared ownership units will be completed across the District.

Aims of The Strategy

The Review informs this Strategy which sets out the overall strategic aims for Uttlesford, in the area of homelessness, which are influenced by the changes to National policy and government agenda since 2002 the key points of which are as follows:

- Homelessness Act 2002
- March 2002 the then ODPM produced Sustainable Communities: settled homes; Changing Lives – set out the aim of halving the total number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010
- July 2006 - DCLG produced new Homelessness Code of Guidance – emphasising partnership working, particularly in terms of Housing Authorities and Social Service Departments
- June 2006 – DCLG produced Homelessness Prevention – a Guide to Good Practice – giving detailed guidance on the housing options approach and prevention of homelessness
- November 2006 – Ruth Kelly announced a package of measures to tackle youth homelessness including the ending of the use of bed and breakfast for 16/17 year olds by 2010
- May 2008 - Joint Working between Housing and Children Services

National policy priorities

Bed & Breakfast accommodation must only be used in an emergency for families with children or a pregnant woman, and stays restricted to a maximum 6 weeks.

This same restriction will be extended to homeless young people by 2010

The number of households who are prevented from becoming homeless should increase year on year

The number of homeless households housed in temporary accommodation must reduce by 50% by 2010

Uttlesford's Strategic Priorities

To prevent homelessness by providing good quality advice, early intervention strategies and increase housing options

To reduce the use of temporary accommodation including Bed and Breakfast accommodation for all client groups

To increase services to tackle youth homelessness and to supply appropriate accommodation

To provide effective advice and assistance through partnership working to meet the needs of vulnerable groups and single homeless

To develop services and partnership working through a homelessness partnership

To deliver continuous improvement to services

To prevent homelessness by providing good quality advice, early intervention strategies and an increase housing options

Homelessness and Housing Options Team

Housing advice is currently offered by housing staff as a small part of their overall job. A recent Audit Commission Inspection has highlighted that although the Authority provides a fair service and is good at signposting customers to other agencies it lacks capacity to expand its housing options and homelessness prevention work with the current arrangements. The lack of one stop shop facility especially within a rural area can make accessing the required advice difficult for customers and can be costly for them in terms of time and transport.

At present staff are limited in their approach to housing options/advice because of their wide roles within the housing service, a new specialist team is therefore being created to expand the current advice services available, increase housing options and expand homelessness prevention.

The new team will consist of three officers. The Homelessness and Housing Options Manager who will be leading on the strategic role of the service within the Council as well as the day to day running of the homelessness service and two Homelessness Prevention and Options Officers who with continuing support from the current generic housing officers will specialise in housing advice and homelessness prevention work.

This will enable the Council to offer a more specialist advice service and expand the current work being done on homelessness prevention, so that we can meet the national priority of increasing the number of households who are prevented from becoming homeless year on year .

The new team will work closely with CAB particularly to ensure clients can receive timely debt advice.

The extra capacity in the service will also allow for increase monitoring of homelessness trends and to update and expand the information available to clients.

Develop mediation service

Mediation services in relation to preventing homelessness will in future be offered by Relate who already run services within Uttlesford from the CAB office.

The new housing options/homeless prevention team will work with Relate to provide a mediation service for people who have housing related relationship

problems. Relate has trained mediators who can assist clients with the difficulties they are having within their family relationships. This could be where the client is experiencing relationship problems within their family, or with their partner.

Mediation is not the same as counselling. The Relate mediator helps people with their family relationship difficulties, by helping them to deal positively with the difficulties they are faced with. Relationship difficulties within a family, or between partners, can lead to the loss of someone's home and therefore as part of the Council's strategy to prevent homelessness officers will be able refer potentially homeless clients to a Relate mediator. Once the referral has been made an interview with a mediator will normally take place within 7 days. Referrals will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. Interviews will be arranged with the Relate mediator to take place at the Council Offices either in Saffron Walden or Great Dunmow. After the appointment takes place, the Relate mediator will provide a written assessment to the Homelessness Prevention Officer.

Settled Homes Initiative – Private Leasing Scheme

Currently the Council works with King Street Housing Society to run the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme. As has been stated previously this has had limited success however there is a need to be able to use the private sector further if we are to be able to present potentially homeless clients with real housing options other than social housing.

The Settled Homes initiative, which King Street currently runs in several neighbouring authorities. It helps clients access good quality privately rented homes, that are managed by a registered social landlord, as an alternative housing option and in order to prevent homelessness.

King Street Housing Society will lease homes from private landlords in Uttlesford and become the managing agents. The properties will be leased for a minimum period of two years meaning that the homes would be 'settled accommodation' unlike conventional private renting, where tenants can only be sure of a property being available to them for six months.

The Council will refer clients to this scheme as properties become available. It will be open for priority need households who are threatened with homelessness. They would pay a market rent to King Street for the property and if necessary apply for housing benefit to help pay the rent.

The Council will pay King Street an annual fee for running the scheme and then a weekly fee per property that would partly be covered within the rent. The funding for this scheme can be met out of the homelessness prevention grant that the government has awarded the Council for the next three years.

It is proposed that initially King Street will acquire a portfolio of 5 properties within Uttlesford, being either 2 or 3 bedroom houses.

Choice Based Lettings

The new choice based lettings system HomeOption will be publicised to ensure maximum uptake by all client groups. The feedback information on the fortnightly free sheets will allow customers to make informed choices regarding their housing options as they will be able to see where and how frequently properties become available and what level of points were required to be allocated a particular property type.

This information can also be discussed at housing option interviews so that clients are fully aware of their realistic options and can consider the alternatives to social housing.

Landlord's forum

As previously stated, the Council held a successful landlords forum in February 2008. A further event will be held in 2009 to highlight to landlords up to date information, available grants and future schemes they may be interested in (e.g. Settled Homes Initiative)

<p>To reduce the use of temporary accommodation including Bed and Breakfast accommodation for all client groups</p>
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Provision of New Temporary Accommodation Facility

The Council has already gained planning permission for a purpose built facility in the village of Stansted which is an area well served by local services and with good transport links.

The Council will be providing the land and will work in partnership with Flagship Housing who will access funding and build the accommodation. Chelmer Housing Partnership will then have ownership of the building whilst the Council will be responsible for the day to day management.

The accommodation will consist of a maximum of four bed-sit units but because of the layout of the first floor of the building it will be possible to open two of the units up to provide one larger unit of accommodation. Each unit will have their own self contained kitchen and bathroom facilities. There will be shared laundry facilities provided and on site storage will be available.

The units will be let on licences and the accommodation will be used as an alternative to bed and breakfast. There will be office space in the building which will be used by the floating support service who will also offer support to the residents. The accommodation will be for short stay use only whilst homelessness applications are assessed. Clients will then be moved to further

temporary accommodation or to a permanent housing solution if one is available.

Clients will be charged a weekly rent for the accommodation for which they will be able to claim housing benefit.

The facility has been designed to be suitable for use by families or single people and with the provision of support services will help Uttlesford meet both the Government objectives and our local priorities on the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation

Prevention of homelessness

The increased housing options and prevention services to be implemented as previously detailed in this Strategy will be monitored to ensure they have the desired outcome of reducing the need to place clients in temporary accommodation and help Uttlesford to meet its temporary accommodation target by 2010

To increase services to tackle youth homelessness and to supply appropriate accommodation

Young parent's scheme

This scheme is in partnership with Brentwood and Epping Forest Councils and will provide 12 units of supported accommodation for young parents living in Uttlesford, Brentwood or Epping Forest. The scheme will be provided on a new development in Ongar and will provide the three Councils with nominations to the project.

	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7
Number of teenage parents presenting as homeless	5	3	3

Source: council data

These figures only count those teenage parents who have actually made a homeless application they do not include those that have been housed prior to homelessness but who would have been better suited to supported housing had it been available.

Develop Bromfield House facility

The Council will continue to work with St Matthew to develop Bromfield House as a first class facility offering supported housing to 16 – 25 year olds. It will be staffed 24 hours and residents will be have support plans which they will

work on with staff and which will be regularly reviewed to ensure that goals are being achieved.

Staff will meet with Council staff on a monthly basis to update on residents progress and the Council will facilitate move on accommodation when clients are ready to move out of a supported environment.

Remedial work will also be carried out to the outside and inside of the property, including decoration, new furniture and the installation of CCTV.

Supported Accommodation – Support-Works (Harlow)

The Council will work with a supported housing provider, Support-Works, to provide supported accommodation for young homeless clients. This will be an alternative to placing young homeless people to whom the Council is likely to have a housing duty in Bed and Breakfast for long periods as can happen currently. The accommodation will be in Harlow and will consist of converted properties which will provide shared housing for 3 – 4 clients. Clients will have a support worker who will ensure that support is provided to the level the client requires to meet their housing support needs and any related needs.

Support-Works already works with Harlow Council

The Client will claim housing benefit to meet part of the housing costs the other costs will be met by the Council at an agreed rate.

Nightstop

Work has already been carried out on investigating the possibilities of setting up a Nightstop project within Uttlesford. The lead for this is being taken by the local Churches Together Group and the Council has facilitated meetings between representatives from the Nightstop organisation, Bernardos and Church Group leaders. They have also had discussions with another Church led Nightstop project in Essex. Work will continue on this project over the coming year.

Education

The Council will work with partners in the Youth Service and Connexions to provide information for young people on the realities of homelessness and housing. The Council will look to work with others to produce an information booklet aimed at young people and to explore the possibilities of working in schools and youth centres.

To provide effective advice and assistance through partnership working to meet the needs of vulnerable groups and single homeless

Learning Disabilities and Mental Health Schemes

Uttlesford currently has a learning disability and mental health scheme that are both no longer fit for purpose. The schemes are managed by Housing Associations who are actively seeking new buildings/land to relocate the projects. Officers from the Council will continue to work with these Housing Associations to identify sites that could be used for the relocation of these schemes.

Drug and Alcohol Schemes

The Homelessness Manager works with the Uttlesford Community Support Group and the Drug and Alcohol Strategy Group. Close working will be developed to assess the needs of those with drug and alcohol problems. Clients who are homeless with drug and alcohol problems are currently housed at Bromfield House along with clients with other varying needs. Research needs to be carried out by the Housing options team to assess if a specific scheme is required in Uttlesford. This will be completed during the timescale of this strategy.

Gypsies and Travellers

The Essex Housing Officers Group is in the process of commissioning further research into the needs of gypsies and travellers. Uttlesford recognises the key importance of understanding the needs of this client group and will engage fully into further delivery.

BME Groups

The Housing Options/Homelessness Team will work with the Councils Migrant Community Development Officer to liaise with hard to reach groups to ensure that they know how to access services and that services are meeting their needs.

To develop partnership working through a homelessness partnership

Homelessness Partnership

Following the successful homelessness stakeholder forum the Council will set up a homelessness partnership that will meet quarterly. This will be the forum for partnership working and to discuss and implement the Action Plan of the Homelessness Strategy.

Partnership working underpins the delivery of a comprehensive and holistic housing options and homelessness service. Households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness can present with a wide range of often complex issues which in addition to their lack of housing can make it difficult for them to access and maintain support networks.

Invariably the delivery of sustainable housing solutions requires the addressing of non housing problems, this requires a multi agency approach. As advice and support services can be delivered by an often complex and fragmented range of organisations, without partnership working and a co-ordinated approach, it is easy for people to slip through the net.

Those invited to join the Homelessness Partnership will include:

- Social Services
- Connexions
- CAB
- Youth Services
- Probation
- Youth Offending
- Drug and Alcohol Services
- Womens Aid
- Community Mental Health
- PCT
- Intouch
- King Street Housing Society
- Relate
- Leaving and After Care
- Elected Members
- Service Users

To deliver continuous improvement to services

Annual service users review of service

The Council will invite service users to an annual event where they will be encouraged to give feedback and comments on the service they have received. This information will then be collated and used to improve the future delivery of services. It is hoped that a service user or service users can be encouraged from this event to join the homelessness partnership.

Feedback Questionnaires

Feedback questionnaires will continue to be used to monitor the performance of the service and to inform the future direction of the service.

There will be separate questionnaires for those who have used the housing options service and the homelessness service.

The format and delivery of the questionnaires will be monitored and adapted to ensure they are capturing the full picture.

Annual review of Action Plan

The Homelessness Strategy Action Plan will be subject to an annual review by the Homelessness Partnership. It will monitor progress and slippage and agree new targets and revisions to the Action Plan

Resources for Future Plans

HOMELESSNESS (HM) SERVICE BUDGET REPORT

CODE	DESCRIPTION	2008/09 BUDGET
ACCH504	ACCOMMODATION - B&B ACCOMMODATION	45,000
ACCH508	RRIVATE SL - PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING	15,000
TRAH504	TRANSLATION - HOMELESSNESS	390
X59H504	RENT INCOME - HOMELESSNESS	-35,100
TMPH504	EMERG SUPPS - TEMP ACCOMMODATION	3,000
	ACCOMMODATION EXPENSES (NET)	28,290
SANH504	SANTUARY - SANCTUARY SCHEME	3,000
MEDH50X	CONTRACT - MEDIATION SERV	4,000
ACCH50R	RENT DEPOSIT - RENT DEPOSIT SCHEME	26,200
HPRH504	HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION FUND	14,000
	HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION EXPENSES	47,200
CLOH504	CLOTHING ETC - HOMELESSNESS	20
MOBH504	MOBILE PHONE - HOMELESSNESS	100
PSTH504	POSTAGES - HOMELESSNESS	100
PUBH504	PUBLICATIONS - HOMELESSNESS	90
SEMH504	MEETINGS ETC - HOMELESSNESS	800
TRGH504	TRAINING - HOMELESSNESS	700
	DIRECT ADMIN COSTS	1,810
	DIRECT EXPENDITURE TOTAL	77,300
	STAFFING AND MANAGEMENT RECHARGES	76,240
X04H504	DCLG GRANT - HOMELESSNESS	-60,000
	INCOME - DCLG GRANT	-60,000
	DIRECT INCOME TOTAL	-60,000
	HOMELESSNESS TOTAL	93,540

Performance Monitoring

Indicator No.	Definition of indicator	Reporting Frequency	Proposed target 2008/09	Proposed target 2009/2010	Proposed Target 2010/2011
C (NI 156)	Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation	Q (performance judged on Q4)	26	23	20
S	Percentage of local authority tenants in arrears who have had Notices Seeking Possession served.	Q	14.00%	13.50%	13.00%
S	Number of people (a) presenting as homeless (b) accepted as homeless	Q	(a) 50 (b) 35	(a) 49 (b) 32	(a) 48 (b) 30
S	The average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation for (a) accepted priority need families (b) accepted priority need others (c) rejected (all groups)	Q	(a) 2 weeks (b) 3 weeks (c) 6 weeks	(a) 1.8 weeks (b) 2.8 weeks (c) 6 weeks	(a) 1.5 weeks (b) 2.5 weeks (c) 6 weeks
NI 154	Net additional homes provided	A	500	550	600

Indicator No.	Definition of indicator	Reporting Frequency	Proposed target 2008/09	Proposed target 2009/2010	Proposed Target 2010/2011
NI 159	Supply of ready to develop housing sites	A	TBA	TBA	TBA
NI 170	Previously developed land that has been vacant or derelict for more than 5 years	A	0	0	0
C (NI 155)	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	A	100	120	130

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Strategic Priority 1 – Prevention of Homelessness

Key Objective: To prevent homelessness by providing good quality advice, early intervention strategies and increase housing options.

How (should include actions and milestones)	Who	Target Date	Resources	Expected Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To set up and develop a new housing options/homelessness prevention team 	Judith Snares	September 2008	Staff time Increased grant from CLG	Housing Options and Homelessness team set up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase monitoring of trends in homelessness and adjust resources accordingly 	Judith Snares	Ongoing	Staff time	Resources used in most effective way and any shortfall in funding identified early
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop greater partnership working with Uttlesford CAB, particularly in relation to debt advice and mortgage repossession cases 	Judith Snares	April 2009	Staff time Existing funding	Increase in prevention of homelessness from clients in the private sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve links with Housing Benefits to ensure high take up of HB and appropriate 	Judith Snares Sue Mustill	Ongoing	Staff time Existing funding	Prevention of homelessness through use of Housing Benefit

use of DHP (discretionary housing payments)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased publicity and accessibility of Choice Based Lettings Scheme 	Liz Petrie Judith Snares	Ongoing	Staff time Existing funding	Increased awareness of Choice Based Lettings Scheme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore increasing provision of the homelessness prevention fund 	Judith Snares	Dec 2008	Homelessness grant funding	Increase in homelessness prevention activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and expand the Housing Advice Pack and the information available on the Councils website 	Judith Snares	April 2009	Staff time Existing resources	Increased customer awareness of housing options available
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Homeless Prevention Mediation Services with Relate 	Judith Snares	Sep 2009	Staff time Existing resources	Improved mediation service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with King Street HS to increase use of Rent Deposit Scheme 	Judith Snares	Ongoing	Staff time Homelessness grant funding	Increased use of private sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop 'settled homes project with King Street Housing Society to increase housing options in the private sector 	Judith Snares	April 2009	Staff time Increased homelessness grant funding	Increased use of private sector

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the PLACE project team to bring empty homes back into use in Uttlesford. 	Suzanna Clarke	Ongoing	Staff time Homelessness grant funding	Increased availability of property within the private sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve partnership working with private landlords and lettings agents and develop the landlord forum into a regular event 	Judith Snares Suzanna Clarke	Feb 2009	Staff time Existing resources	Increased awareness and uptake of grants and services by private sector landlords
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop plans for best use of Council land and current stock to increase supply of affordable housing 	Suzanna Clarke	Ongoing	Staff time Existing resources Housing Corporation funding	Increased supply of affordable housing within Uttlesford
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with developers and housing associations to increase provision of affordable housing within the district 	Suzanna Clarke	Ongoing	Staff time Existing resources Housing Corporation funding	Increased supply of affordable housing within Uttlesford

Priority 2 – Reduction in use in temporary accommodation

Key Objective: To reduce the use of temporary accommodation including Bed and Breakfast for all client groups

How (Should include actions and milestones)	Who	Target date	Resources	Expected Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to provide temporary accommodation facility in Stansted 	Suzanna Clarke Judith Snares	April 2009	Staff time Housing Corporation funding	Reduction in use of bed and breakfast accommodation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify hard to let stock to use as temporary accommodation 	Judith Snares Liz Petrie	Ongoing	Staff time	Reduction in use of bed and breakfast accommodation through best use of Council stock
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where appropriate convert current temporary accommodation to permanent housing 	Judith Snares	Ongoing	Staff time	Homelessness clients provided with settled homes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the effects of the new allocation policy and Choice Based Lettings Scheme on the numbers of lettings to homeless cases and the time clients spend in temporary accommodation 	Judith Snares Liz Petrie	April 2009	Staff time	Understanding of the effects of CBL on homeless clients achieving settled housing

Strategic Priority 3 – Youth Homelessness

Key Objective: To increase services to prevent youth homelessness and to supply appropriate accommodation

How (Should include actions and milestones)	Who	Target Date	Resources	Expected Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to provide a young parents scheme in Ongar 	Suzanna Clarke	Sept 2009	Staff time Housing Corporation Supporting People	Provision of dedicated scheme for this client group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with St Matthew to provide supported housing for young people at Bromfield House. Explore further the Foyer option 	Judith Snares Suzanna Clarke	Ongoing	Staff time	Bromfield House meets the needs of young people requiring supported housing within Uttlesford
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Support-Works to provide emergency supported housing for young people 	Judith Snares	Sept 2008	Staff time Homelessness grant funding	Reduced use of Bed and Breakfast for young people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to explore with the local Churches Together the possibilities of a NightStop in Uttlesford 	Judith Snares	April 2009	Staff time	Provision of emergency housing for the single homeless

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explore possibilities of working with Connexions and Youth Service to provide education on homelessness to young people in schools etc 	Judith Snares	April 2009	Homelessness grant funding Staff time	Increased awareness amongst young people of services available to them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate working with partner agencies or neighboring authorities on developing a housing options toolkit specifically for young people 	Judith Snares	Sept 2009	Homelessness grant funding Staff time	Increased awareness amongst young people of services available to them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Intouch Floating Support to provide housing support to young people 	Judith Snares	Ongoing	Staff time	Greater support for young people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve assessment/referral services and processes between housing and social services for 16/17 year olds 	Judith Snares	Ongoing	Staff time	Seamless service for all homeless 16 and 17 year olds

Priority 4 – Meeting the needs of vulnerable groups

Key Objective: To provide effective advice and assistance through partnership working to meet the needs of vulnerable groups and single homeless

How (Should include actions and milestones)	Who	Target date	Resources	Expected Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners on the reprovision of Learning Disabilities scheme The Squirrels 	Suzanna Clarke	Ongoing	Staff time Housing Corporation Supporting People	Continued provision of Learning Disabilities scheme in Uttlesford
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners on the reprovision of the mental health scheme in Saffron Walden 	Suzanna Clarke	Ongoing	Staff time Housing Corporation Supporting People	Continued provision of mental health scheme in Uttlesford
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all people have equal access to services and housing options 	Suzanna Clarke Judith Snares	Ongoing	Staff time	Equal access to services for all client groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to assess housing needs and housing provision for long term drug/alcohol users 	Suzanna Clarke Judith Snares	Sept 2009	Staff time	Needs identified for this client group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor use and success of Sanctuary Scheme in cases of domestic violence 	Judith Snares	Ongoing	Staff time	Homelessness prevented in appropriate cases of domestic violence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the Choice Based Lettings Scheme to ensure there is equal access to the scheme across all groups 	Judith Snares Liz Petrie	Ongoing	Staff time	Evidence that CBL is fully inclusive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Intouch floating support to provide housing support to clients in need of housing support 	Judith Snares	Ongoing	Staff time	Greater housing support for vulnerable people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting People – continue to work with Core strategy group and Essex County Council Commissioning Body 	Suzanna Clarke District Councillor Lead	Ongoing	Staff time Councillor time	That supported housing needs in Uttlesford are met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Essex Housing Officers Group to commission further research into the housing needs of gypsies and travelers in Essex 	Suzanna Clarke	Sept 2009	Staff time	Knowledge of the housing needs for gypsies and travelers in Uttlesford

Priority 5 – Homelessness Partnership

Key Objective: To develop services and partnerships working through a homelessness partnership

How (Should include actions and milestones)	Who	Target Date	Resources	Expected Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop homelessness partnership and hold quarterly meetings 	Judith Snares Suzanna Clarke	Dec 2008	Staff time Existing resources	Increased partnership working
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore possibilities of including Job Centre Plus as part of partnership to link employment and housing and homelessness issues 	Judith Snares	Apr 2009	Staff time Existing resources	Increased job centre services within Uttlesford
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor effectiveness of partnership working through the homelessness partnership 	Judith Snares	Sept 2009	Staff time Existing resources	Better understanding of effectiveness of partnership working in preventing homelessness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore possibilities of a joint training programme for partnership members 	Judith Snares Suzanna Clarke	Sept 2009	Staff time Existing resources	Training needs identified

Priority 6 – Enhanced Homelessness Service

Key Objective: To deliver enhanced homelessness services through the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan and monitor performance to identify areas of the service requiring improvement

How (Should include actions and milestones)	Who	Target Date	Resources	Expected Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold annual services users review of service event to influence future service development 	Judith Snares	March 2009	Staff time Existing resources	Increased involvement of service users
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop feedback questionnaires 	Judith Snares	Ongoing	Staff time Existing resources	To be able to learn from feedback how best to develop the service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmark performance of the housing options and homelessness service against other Authorities 	Judith Snares	April 2010	Staff time Existing resources	To be able to judge if service is providing value for money
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homelessness Partnership to monitor delivery of Strategy Action Plan 	Judith Snares	Sept 2009	Staff time Existing resources	Action Plan reviewed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish updated Homelessness Strategy Action annually 	Judith Snares	Dec 2009 and then annually	Staff time Existing resources	New Action Plan published

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