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Foreword

This Homeless Strategy sets out what needs to be done to tackle the problem of homelessness in Gedling over the next five years. The 2008 – 2013 strategy builds on the achievements of the 2003 strategy, continuing the theme of addressing the far-reaching effects of homelessness on people, by delivering a holistic service, which meets individual need.

Whilst Gedling Borough Council has made significant progress, for example the 60% reduction in temporary tenancies, we still face a continuing problem of homelessness, and as issues surrounding the credit crunch and its effect on housing affordability come to the fore in the Borough the need for affordable housing and support for vulnerable people continues to be a challenging issue.

The sustainability of accommodation has been a key area for the Homelessness and Housing Advice team, with their focus being on prevention. We have had considerable success in this area and have been able to prevent the loss of accommodation across all tenures. However we also need to look to the future and plan how we will best manage the existing resources available in the borough, and consider how additional resources may become available through working with partners.

The greater role in prevention is best achieved by joint working with partner agencies, and I would like to acknowledge the support we receive from specialist agencies such as Adult Social Care and Health and Children and Young People's Services, Supporting People, Sure Start, Framework, The Primary Care Trust and the local advice centres.

The strategy also demonstrates how the Borough's approach to homelessness fits with national, regional and local priorities, whilst delivering the Borough's corporate aims and objectives.

This document will be monitored by the Joint Inter Agency Forum, who will assess the Borough's performance in relation to the action plan at Appendix 1 of the document. We are proud to be part of this multi disciplinary partnership and see it as an integral part of improving the service we provide.

Councillor Carol Pepper, Housing Portfolio Holder

Executive Summary

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires Local Authorities to publish a Homelessness Strategy at least every 5 years. This strategy defines the Council's strategic approach to homelessness for 2008 – 2013, and supersedes the previous strategy. It has been formed following a full review of homelessness in the Borough, which was carried out from January to March 2008. This involved the collation of homeless information and activities carried out by partners in the Borough.

Since the 2003 – 2008 strategy was produced the focus on homelessness has moved to prevention, and follows the Department for Communities and Local Government recommendation that homelessness can be prevented at 3 key stages:

- **Firstly – early intervention, for those who may be at risk of homelessness**
- **Secondly – pre-crisis intervention, when homelessness is imminent**
- **Thirdly – preventing recurring homelessness, for those who have been resettled.**

This approach has been harnessed at Gedling Borough Council resulting in the prevention of homelessness across tenures.

The Strategy offers a summary of the 'Review of Homelessness in Gedling Borough' carried out between January and March 2008. This review looked at both the current picture of homelessness in the Borough, the availability of affordable accommodation and the support available to assist with the prevention of homelessness and the sustainment of tenancies for vulnerable people.

The review also made predictions about future trends, based on evidence and factors that might affect homelessness in the Borough.

The Strategy discusses other research undertaken to identify current needs and map future needs, including the Nottinghamshire Homeless Watch and the Council's own Snap Shot Survey of Key Informants, which is carried out annually.

In response to the significant increase in the number of 16 and 17 year olds and single homeless people with support needs, presenting as homeless in the Borough, the Council has, in partnership, been able to successfully develop Quick Access and associated move-on accommodation for single people. This was completed and opened in March 2008.

The Borough has also identified the need to look at the quality and quantity of temporary accommodation that is available to homeless families in the Borough, along side the need to develop new supported accommodation for teenage parents in response to the changes brought about by both an increase in need locally and as a result of the Nottingham Gateway.

Consideration is then given to the national regional and local priorities, and the Borough's focus on delivering its corporate priorities which are :-

- A high quality local environment
- A safer community

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- Good health for everyone
- A good start in life for children and young people

The main section of the Strategy discusses the Council's approach to the prevention of homelessness, and includes a summary of the homelessness review, the toolkit, and highlights key changes which have been put in place to assist with this Borough's preventative approach to homelessness, for example:

- The First Lets Scheme
- The Deposit Guarantee Scheme
- The Sanctuary Scheme
- A dedicated Homeless Prevention Officer

This aspect of the service is further strengthened by the priorities for action which is attached at Appendix 1. The actions are in line with the Council's aspirations for the service and is a response to the Homelessness Health Check and details a series of challenging smart targets contained in the Health Check, which the Borough will work through, and feed back to the Joint Inter-Agency Forum (JIAF) (membership at Appendix 2) to underpin its monitoring role.

The action plan should enhance the Borough's ability to prevent homelessness and tackle the wider causes of homelessness within both the Borough and the County. It will also underpin the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities.

The Strategy then considers future provision acknowledging the need for continued partnership working to deliver the specific range of services required to prevent homelessness.

1 Introduction

1.1 This is Gedling Borough Councils' second Homelessness Strategy and its purpose is to further develop the achievements of the 2003 Strategy. The 2008 – 2013 strategy has been developed having regard to the Department for Communities and Local Governments' publication – Preventing Homelessness: A Strategy Health Check, which proved to be a robust analytical assessment of the current service, and the feedback received for the 2003 strategy. Reference is also made to the requirements of the Audit Commission – Key Lines of Enquiry - Homelessness and Housing Need. These appraisals of the service have generated an action plan, which is included at Appendix 1, and will impact on Gedling Borough Council's approach to tackling homelessness, in the short, medium and long term.

1.2 A key area for development has been the focus on the preventative aspect of homelessness and advice work, with the continuing progression of the holistic service, and the need to involve service users to a larger extent.

1.3 The need for a more encompassing service to support people facing homelessness has driven Gedling Borough Council to work with Nottinghamshire Supporting People to enhance the provision of support services to address issues such as tenancy sustainment, and support new initiatives like the South Nottinghamshire Sanctuary Scheme. The Homelessness and Housing Advice Team is more focused with officers specialising in homeless prevention and dealing with homelessness applications to further enhance the Borough's ability to prevent homelessness.

1.4 To address the need to engage with our service users the Council has implemented a customer satisfaction survey which every resident of the hostel is asked to complete. To date, this has proven very useful in getting the residents perspective on the hostel and has generated changes to how the hostel is managed and to the facilities on offer. A full consultation exercise with service users is being carried out by the Council to inform this Strategy. The results will be analysed and published in the final Strategy.

1.5 The 2003 Strategy was produced in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council Social Services Department and Nottingham Health Action Zone. As such it was part of a wider project to develop work around homelessness for the Local Authorities within the Nottingham Health Authority area. The Local Authorities were Ashfield District Council (Hucknall), Broxtowe Borough Council, Gedling Borough Council, Nottingham City Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council.

1.6 The 2008 – 2013 strategy has been written with the focus on Gedling Borough Council, but the delivery of many of the action plans identified is dependent on the continued support of the Joint Inter Agency Forum (JIAF) which provides the ideal tool to engage with many organisations in both a consultative and participative capacity.

1.7 Targets have been developed in the action plan and six monthly updates on progress will be fed back to the JIAF, to facilitate the overarching monitoring role.

2 . Aims and Objectives of the Strategy

2 Aims and Objectives of the Strategy

2.1 The aims and objectives of the 2008-13 Homeless Strategy are to:

- Review current provision, identifying areas of concern and make recommendations for progress, with particular reference to the profile of the community.
- Prevent homelessness and provide support for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness or need support to maintain a tenancy
- Promote partnership working, with the Strategy being owned by statutory and non statutory agencies that work with homeless people.
- Be holistic in its approach, recognising the need for both accommodation and support to address the isolation, discrimination and exclusion that homeless people can face.
- Place homelessness in the mainstream of funding and access to resources.
- Feedback on key initiatives – e.g. the homelessness prevention tool kit.
- Enable service users to have more involvement and influence over how services are delivered.
- Safeguarding children and young people.
- Plan ahead by evaluating trends and analysing needs and gaps in provision

2.2 In summary the 2008 – 2013 strategy has been produced to ensure that the Borough continues to develop its Homelessness and Housing Advice service to meet the changing and challenging needs of the Borough.

2.3 The Strategy was developed using the following processes:

- A review of the 2003 Homeless Strategy
- A full review of homelessness in the Borough in accordance with prescribed CLG guidance.

2.4 The strategy also reflects the requirements of the following guidance:

- Preventing Homelessness: A Strategy Health Check
- Homelessness Prevention – A guide to good practice,
- Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities
- The Audit Commission's – Key Lines Of Enquiry - Homelessness and Housing Need
- Feedback received from Housing Quality Network on the 2003 strategy
- The Sustainable Communities – Changing Lives publication

3 Strategic Overview

3.1 This section considers the national, regional and local strategic links to this Strategy.

National Priorities

3.2 Since the introduction of the Homelessness Act 2002 the Government has continued with its objective of reducing homelessness through the increasing use of early involvement and preventative measures. Targets were also set to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation.

3.3 The Council was successful in a bid to the Homelessness Directorate for additional funding to reduce their own temporary tenancies and this is an area in which Gedling Borough Council excelled.

3.4 In October 2005 the Council had 238 homeless families in temporary tenancies and by 31st March 2007 it had reduced to 41, equating to a reduction of nearly 60%. At 1st April 2008 the figure had decreased again to 30.

3.5 The Department of Communities & Local Governments (DCLG) published the Sustainable Communities: Settled Homes: Changing Lives document which highlights the following 5 key areas:-

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

Places of Change Programme (PCP)

3.6 The Government wants hostels and other facilities for homeless people to provide the best opportunities for their clients that will help people to move forward into work and a settled home.

3.7 By tackling homelessness through the Hostels Capital Improvement Programme they want to demonstrate that hostels and day centres can be centres of excellence and choice which positively change lives, and that they can be places of change.

3.8 The key outcome of the programme is for homeless people to move on positively from a homeless service, for example to a job or training or a settled home.

3 . Strategic Overview

3.9 Section 12 looks at the the Council's current provision, success to date and future plans to improve the supply and quality of the temporary accommodation in the Borough to ensure that it meets the needs and aspirations of homeless people .

Regional Priorities

3.10 The objective for housing in The Regional Housing Strategy 2004-10 is “*To ensure that the existing and future housing stock is appropriate to meet the housing needs of all parts of the community*”.

3.11 Homelessness forms part of the ‘Policies to Deliver Inclusion’ with Policy 9 -Tackling the causes of homelessness.

3.12 The Strategy emphasises the need for statutory and voluntary agencies to work together to develop homeless strategies and services, which would tackle the causes of homelessness.

3.13 Emphasis is also placed on the findings of a 2004 report by NACRO (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders) which suggests the key issues identified by Drug and Alcohol Action Teams (DAAT’s), Local Authorities (LA’s) and other service providers include:

- Floating support to help people sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness
- Offer floating support for life skills, (i.e. dealing with providers of benefits, provision of drug training)
- Dedication of supported housing units to provide a stable base
- Improving partnership working and information sharing
- Ensuring the needs of service users are given due weight in developing new services

3.14 Local authorities should work with DAAT’s and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP’s) to identify the level of housing need and current provision for current and recovering drug users and ex-offenders.

3.15 Policy 13 of the Strategy - Ensuring that all sub regions understand the diverse needs and aspirations of diverse sections of their communities: a) To promote sustainable and balanced communities by providing a framework for the delivery of housing to address the needs of the diverse communities in their areas the following groups were identified:

- Teenage parents
- Students
- Gypsy and Travellers

3.16 To identify and address the need for housing with support for vulnerable groups there is a need to link in with Supporting People to ensure that the sections of the community who are disadvantaged and vulnerable, or who have little or no choice in housing provision are offered appropriate services and support to enable them to continue to live independently in their communities.

3.17 To identify and address the future housing needs of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities within the sub-regions. Sub-regions should establish joint working arrangements to identify the housing needs and priorities of BME communities in their areas.

3.18 The Regional Housing Strategy is currently under review, and the Council has been involved in the consultation process.

The East Midlands Regional Homeless Strategy

3.19 The Regional Housing Board commissioned the first Regional Homelessness Strategy for the East Midlands in September 2006 to:

- Inform future updates of the Regional Housing Strategy
- Inform Regional Spatial and Local Development Frameworks
- Shape investment in regional homelessness and related services
- Add value to inform local strategies

3.20 The Strategy raises the importance of the duty of housing associations to co-operate with local housing authorities in meeting statutory homeless duties, and the need to bring together a wider range of agencies to address common aims that overlap with homelessness including:

- Prison re-settlement and reduction of re-offending by securing settled accommodation
- Tackling access to jobs, education and training for young people and others who are also at risk of homelessness
- Addressing the homelessness that is often associated with drug or alcohol dependence
- Improving access to primary and secondary health care, addressing hospital discharge blockages and inappropriate use of accident and emergency services by homeless people

3.21 In particular there is a need to develop pathways out of homelessness by providing an integrated set of support services that lead from the streets and insecure housing into long term settled accommodation.

3.22 The Strategy also hi-lights the fact that pathways to address the above will often need to cross local authority boundaries and involve several sets of funders and commissioners. The council has had considerable success in this area which will be discussed in Sections 7 and 10.

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3.23 A sub regional group made up of Nottingham City and South Notts Districts has been set up to take forward actions, which to date include:

- Shared best practice and developing a joint approach to working with young people, in particular the age group 16-17
- Developing the use of the private sector based on the existing success of the First Lets scheme
- Prison resettlement and Hospital Discharge Protocols
- Developing new intelligence to assist with directing changes in policy and practice

3.24 All actions have been set a target for results to be achieved by April 2010.

Nottinghamshire Local Area Agreement

3.25 The current Local Area Agreement began in April 2006 and will run until the end of March 2009. It is based on the four themes of:

- Healthier Communities and Older People
- Economic Development and Enterprise
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Children and Young People

3.26 The new LAA has just been agreed with the National Indicators selected against the following themes:

- Health and well-being for all
- Children achieving their full potential
- A strong sense of place
- A safe place to live
- Thriving economy
- Sustainability

3.27 Whilst there is no single indicator for tackling homelessness within the Nottinghamshire LAA, the National Indicator set includes the following which have a a direct link to homelessness:

- NI 154 - Net additional homes provided
- NI 155 - Number of affordable homes delivered
- NI 156 - Number of households in temporary accommodation

3.28 At least a further three have indirect links:

- NI 160 - LA tenants satisfaction with landlord services
- NI 180 - Changes in Housing/Council Tax benefit entitlements within the year
- NI 181 - Time taken to process Housing/Council Tax benefits new claims and change events

3.29 All will be measured and where appropriate targeted as part of Gedling Borough Council's performance management framework.

3.30 The Notts LAA also has a local indicator relating to domestic abuse. However, the many causes and effects of homelessness are also addressed in a large number of the National Indicator set.

How is Gedling meeting these agendas?

3.31 Gedling is working to meet the national and regional agendas by working to prevent homelessness, increasing the supply of affordable housing, commissioning research into the housing market and the accommodation needs of diverse groups like Gypsy and Travellers. Gedling is also working in several partnerships to deliver improved or additional services including commissioning additional support with Supporting People.

Gedling Priorities

3.32 Gedling Partnership set a long-term vision for the future of Gedling Borough, taking into account the key concerns that affect the Borough now and which are likely to affect it in the future. This Vision for Gedling Borough is a community in which everyone plays their part in bringing about greater security, greater prosperity, improved health and a better environment for all.

- “ A Borough where people want to live and do business.”

3.33 This Homelessness Strategy complements the following priority themes identified in the Gedling Community Strategy:

- Health Inequalities
- Safer Communities
- Building Social Capital and Pride in the Local Area

Gedling Housing Strategy

3.34 Priority Action G of the Gedling Housing Strategy Draft Update 2004 highlighted the success of the Borough in the improvements to its homelessness service following the successful implementation of the following:

- Domestic violence outreach worker;
- Floating support scheme for vulnerable households including young teenage parents;

3 . Strategic Overview

- Bond scheme through HLG to enable people access to private sector renting and to widen housing choice;
- Mediation service for young people at risk of leaving their family home.

3.35 There have been significant improvements since the 2004 Draft Housing Strategy especially in partnership with other local authorities.

3.36 Good practice advises joint working across neighbouring boroughs and this is an area in which Gedling Borough Council has embraced. The achievements to date include:

- The 2003 Homelessness Strategy –a jointly commissioned publication between Gedling Borough Council, Broxtowe Borough Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council.
- The First Lets Scheme
- The Homeless Managers Meetings
- The Joint Inter Agency Forum
- The South Nottinghamshire Quick Access and Move on accommodation.
- The South Nottinghamshire Sanctuary Scheme.

Corporate Plan

3.37 The Borough has just revised its corporate priorities and outcomes will be based on the following four themes:

- A high quality local environment
- A safer community
- Good health for everyone
- A good start in life for children and young people

3.38 The homeless strategy sits predominantly under the fourth principle as it has a significant impact on children and young people, with the high number of homeless applications being made by families, either with one or two parents. The effect of the homeless strategy on this group is significant and by preventing homelessness, wherever possible, the Council is better able to safeguard the interests of children and young people. This is because there is a reduction in the wider ranging impacts of homelessness, like breaks in education, and preventing the upheaval involved with moving into temporary accommodation and then settled accommodation if applications are accepted.

3.39 The Borough acknowledges the detrimental impact the loss of the family home can have on children and young people, and to this end strives to engage early with potential homeless people to improve the prospects of resolving their problems, linked to the corporate objective of safeguarding children and young people.

3.40 This strategy also links with the second corporate priority and promotes the reduction in crime and disorder in the Borough. The provision of supported housing is one of the key elements in seeking sustainable reductions in acquisitive crime and reducing prolific offending through effective interventions and working towards the rehabilitation for offenders. Such provision links not only to the local crime and disorder strategy but also to strategies of key partners within local crime & disorder reduction partnership working.

3.41 The prevention of homelessness also impacts on health, and later on in the strategy clear links are evidenced between homelessness and poor health. This demonstrates linkage with the third theme.

3.42 If the prevention approach is unsuccessful, the Council has set itself challenging targets relating to the National Indicators above and has set local indicators which relate to both the length of time taken to determine applications and also the length of stay in hostel and bed and breakfast accommodation.

Member Involvement

3.43 Gedling Borough Council's members have just concluded a scrutiny exercise covering the following areas:-

- To review homelessness in the Borough
- To improve the quality of life for homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless by reviewing the advice and support currently offered
- To explore the multi-agency approach in relation to vulnerable groups i.e. single parents
- To influence housing policy at Gedling Borough Council.

3.44 The scrutiny committee subsequently made recommendations which have informed this Strategy.

3.45 The role of the Boroughs' Councillors will be further enhanced with the introduction of the White Paper "Community Call for Action" (Autumn 2007). This paper looks to strengthen Councillors ability to solve problems for their residents. This emphasis is continued with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill – this document deals with local government matters, and finally the Police and Justice Act 2000, which deals with crime and disorder matters.

3.46 The likely impact of this for Gedling Borough Council is to increase the powers of its' Councillors to engage with external agencies at a higher level to deliver results to the local community.

Joint Working Partnerships

3.47 A major part of the monitoring and assessment of the Homeless Strategy 2008 – 2013 will be undertaken by the Borough with the JIAF having an over arching role. The membership of this group is contained in Appendix 2.

3 . Strategic Overview

Joint Inter-Agency Forum (JIAF)

3.48 The JIAF was established in 1997 and the following objectives were highlighted:-

- Sharing information
- Identifying gaps in provision
- Improving communication
- Influence policy decisions
- Identifying ways of meeting the needs of homeless or potentially homeless households in the Gedling Area.

3.49 In 2007 the group formed with Rushcliffe Borough Council and became the JIAF. This change was brought about as a further development of the ongoing partnership working.

3.50 This led to a change in the agencies formulating partnership's working around the issue of homelessness.

3.51 The JIAF has proven to be the ideal forum to discuss the holistic needs of homeless people, due to its comprehensive membership. This has resulted in improvements to the service in terms of the delivery of comprehensive multi disciplinary packages including accommodation, benefits advice, practical assistance i.e. the provision of furniture, support packages from specialist agencies i.e. mental health, drug and alcohol abuse etc.

3.52 It is proposed that the feedback from the user survey, currently being carried out to inform this strategy, will be passed to the JIAF.

3.53 Projects and research that currently work or have been undertaken in partnership to assist the Council with its Strategic role in preventing homelessness, or enabling further provision include:

- First Lets
- Sanctuary
- Quick Access and Move on accommodation
- Housing Market Assessment
- Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs survey

Homeless Managers Meeting

3.54 The Homeless Managers meetings were established in 2004. All the Managers in the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire areas meet every other month.

3.55 Outcomes include:

- Joint protocols on hospital discharge and prison leavers
- Reviewing working practices
- Discussing implications of changes in legislation.
- Networking and sharing best practice.

3.56 The group is also considering undertaking peer reviews to further strengthen the joint learning opportunities. Ultimately the objective of this group is to harmonise the provision of homelessness and housing advice services across Nottinghamshire and continuing to improve the services provided.

Developing Partnerships

3.57 To embrace the more holistic approach delivered to both homeless applicants and those receiving advice and assistance, the Borough acknowledges the need to expand the range of agencies it currently works with to both promote the services available to people experiencing problems with their housing and also to support people in sustaining their homes. To do this the borough needs to engage with other agencies who can offer support and advice in those areas of their lives, e.g. employment and training opportunities and health care services.

Job Centre Plus

3.58 To further develop the service provided to include 'better off in work calculations' and the ability of former homeless people to gain employment, and move away from the circle of homelessness, Gedling Borough Council will look to work more closely with the local job centres. This also links back to the corporate objectives.

Education

3.59 By engaging with secondary schools the Council aims to get across the message about provision in the locality, so that children know where to turn for advice and assistance, but more challengingly to bring home the message to young people about the harsh realities of becoming homeless. This continues the theme of safeguarding children and young people, by raising their awareness.

Health

3.60 To assist people to engage with health services and help them to access any support they may require. Gedling Borough Council has already engaged with Surestart who now hold sessions on a weekly basis at the hostel, but further work is required to ensure that homelessness and potentially homeless people engage with health services. This again links back to the Borough's corporate priorities and outcomes.

4 . Gedling Borough - Overview

4 Gedling Borough - Overview

4.1 Gedling Borough Councils' population is 111,700 ⁽¹⁾ with a total of 48,571 households. ⁽²⁾

4.2 Over 76% of the Borough's population live in the main towns of Arnold and Carlton (including Gedling and Netherfield), which form part of the Greater Nottingham conurbation. The remainder live in the 10 rural parishes of Newstead, Linby, Papplewick, Ravenshead, Calverton, Woodborough, Lambley, Burton Joyce and Stoke Bardolph. (The Borough's 11th parish, Colwick, covers an urban area). The entire Borough falls within the Nottingham functional economic area.

4.3 Closer analysis of the Borough's population ⁽³⁾ shows: -

- Whilst the borough's population between 1991 and 2001 showed a 1.2% increase, the most recent population prediction shows a reduction of -5.6% between 2000-2010 ⁽⁴⁾.
- Working age population, at 61%, is consistent with regional and national figures ⁽⁵⁾.
- A higher than average proportion of economically active residents compared with national and county levels ⁽⁶⁾ There is a significant net employment outflow from the Borough to neighbouring areas, particularly to the City of Nottingham, a key demonstration of the importance of the Greater Nottingham conurbation for the Borough's overall well-being.
- Low levels of unemployment - the current overall figure for the Borough is 1.7% compared to 2.1% nationally, reflecting a long-standing pattern of unemployment below regional and national levels. Ward rates vary considerably – figures for Daybrook and Killisick are 4.9% and 6.1% respectively ⁽⁷⁾
- A slightly higher than average population of pensionable age (19.6% vs. 18.6% regionally and 18.4% nationally) and a correspondingly slightly lower than average 0-15 year old population ⁽⁸⁾. The most deprived wards tend to have the highest under 16 populations, while those with a greater proportion of older people tend to be relatively more affluent.
- Overall, the Borough is relatively affluent – it ranks at 208 of the 354 ⁽⁹⁾ districts nationally on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (where 1 = most deprived) – and its relative position is improving - in 2004 it ranked 197. At ward level, the 2007 IMD indicates that none of the Borough's wards fall within the 10% most deprived nationally, and that 13.6% fall within the 20% most deprived, an improvement on the 16.7% shown in 2004.

1 ONS Mid Year Estimates 2006

2 (2001 Census)

3 2001 Census – Office of National Statistics

4 Mid Year Population Estimates 2007 Office of National Statistics

5 2001 Census, Office of National Statistics

6 81.4 per cent of those of working age are in employment (65.5 per cent were employees and 12.6 per cent were self-employed), with correspondingly lower levels of economic inactivity (18.6 per cent) Sources - NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics, April 2006 – March 2007.

7 Nottinghamshire County Council Employment Bulletin - December 2007

8 2001 Census Office of National Statistics

9 Communities and Local Government, Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007

4 . Gedling Borough - Overview

- There are pockets of more severe deprivation at sub-ward and super output area (SOA) levels, with some parts of the Borough falling within the most deprived 10% nationally against some deprivation criteria . Overall affluence has meant that it has not been easy for the Council and its partners to attract large-scale external funding to address areas of deprivation.
- The 2007 Nottingham Core Strategic Housing Market Assessment ⁽¹⁰⁾ ⁽¹¹⁾ concludes that the demand for social housing (affordable and rented) in the borough is likely to increase in the years ahead.
- 81.4 per cent of those of working age are in employment (65.5 per cent were employees and 12.6 per cent were self-employed), with correspondingly lower levels of economically inactivity (18.6 per cent) ⁽¹²⁾

4.4 Home ownership, at over 81%, is the highest in Nottinghamshire and well above the regional and national average. Less than 8% of the population now live in council-owned accommodation ⁽¹³⁾.

Age and Gender

4.5 The total population of the Borough is split by gender as follows:

- 49% male; 51% female.
- The average age of Gedling's population is 40.1 years, compared to an average age across England and Wales of 38.6.
- Nearly one fifth (19%) of Gedling's population is under sixteen. 58.8% of the population is between the ages of 16 and 60, which largely represents the Gedling population of a working age.
- 22.2% of the Borough's population are 60 and over. (Source: ONS, Census 2001).

Ethnicity

4.6 According to the 2005 population estimates, 7.3% of Gedling's population are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds, including those people defined as 'White other'. This has risen from 5.2% in 2001. The BME population is spread throughout the Borough – there are no distinct geographical BME communities.

4.7 This compares to 9.1% of the population of England and Wales who come from BME groups (Source: ONS, Census 2001).

10 Nottingham Housing Market Assessment 2006/07

11 <http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/cdplanninghmaes.pdf>

12 Sources - NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics, April 2006 – March 2007,

13 Data source - 2001 Census Office of National Statistics

4 . Gedling Borough - Overview

What is homelessness?

4.8 The Homelessness Strategy focuses on the needs of all homeless families, single people and childless couples. The working definition of 'being homeless' has not been changed from the definition in the 2003 strategy and is still defined for the purposes of this Homelessness Strategy as:-

- **Staying with friends or relatives or living in a state of dispossession (i.e. not being able to have your belongings in the same place that you are sleeping). This is commonly referred to as 'hidden homelessness'.**
- **Living with the insecurity of not knowing where you will sleep tomorrow or for the next 28 days.**
- **Residing in temporary accommodation such as a hostel or local authority accommodation provided under the Housing Act 1996 Part VII or other specialist homelessness provision.**
- **Rough sleeping or living in something which is not normally considered to be housing (such as vehicles, sheds, barns etc.) either long term or occasionally.**

4.9 This definition continues the theme of addressing:

- all homeless people within the borough, including those who would not be seen as being in priority need under the legislation
- all people at risk of becoming homeless
- people who might have become homeless intentionally and
- homeless people in an area who might not have any local connection.

4.10 The ability to acknowledge the variety of situations which can lead to homelessness links with the need for the Council to be able to conduct extensive statistical analysis of the type of approaches made to the Borough for assistance. The review carried out to inform this Strategy was vital and has provided:

- comparisons of the approaches made to the community profile;
- allowed the Council to identify any possible areas for concern, now and in the future,
- and is used as a predictive tool to identify possible trends and fluctuations in the causes of homelessness within the Borough.

4.11 The findings inform the action plan to ensure an ongoing ability to deliver a quality service.

5 Review of Homelessness in Gedling

5.1 The Gedling Borough Homelessness Review was carried out between January and March 2008 by the Council's Housing Strategy team in accordance with guidelines issued by CLG. All relevant agencies responsible for and working in homelessness in the Borough were involved with the review, including:

- Officers of Gedling Borough Council including the: Homeless and Housing Advice Team, Rents and Resources, Strategy and Performance, Housing Benefits, Private Sector Housing
- All Registered Social Landlords
- Nottinghamshire Supporting People
- Shelter
- Gedling Council for Voluntary Services
- HLG
- Nottinghamshire Probation Service
- Nottingham Prison
- Nottinghamshire Social Services

5.2 A full version of the review is available at the Council's website at: www.gedling.gov.uk or on request by calling: The Housing Strategy Team on 0115 9013672 or write in to: The Housing Strategy Team, Gedling Borough Council, Civic Centre, Arnot Hill Park, Arnold, Nottingham NG5 6LU.

5.3 The review looked at both the current situation and made predictions for the future based on a number of variables including:

- the ongoing success of the 'toolkit',
- future developments including new affordable housing completions,
- impact of the introduction of 'Local Housing Allowances'
- increasing numbers of migrant workers
- predictions about the instability of the housing market.

Table 1 - Presentations and Acceptances

YEAR	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
No. of Presentations	191	168	174	82	101	133
No. of Acceptances	153	132	135	49	45	70

Data Source: Council own records

5.4 Table 1 clearly illustrates that the number of presentations to the Council have reduced.

5 . Review of Homelessness in Gedling

5.5 From 2004 Gedling Borough Council placed a greater focus on prevention rather than just tackling homelessness when it became a problem. Resources are in place to target prevention by engaging with households as soon as a problem has been identified.

5.6 Specially assigned staff focus on this method with every new applicant having an initial interview to review their housing circumstances. The aim of the interview is to explore the possibility of maintaining the applicants existing accommodation and examining the full range of possible routes to access alternative accommodation.

5.7 The Borough receives approximately 500 approaches for assistance each year. Of these around 25% result in a homeless application being made.

5.8 From the figures above it is clear to see the Council's policy decision to focus resources on prevention has been successful to date and has significantly reduced the number of homeless applications taken during the two out of the last three years.

5.9 Table 2 demonstrates the consistently high number of acceptances where parents and family are no longer willing to accommodate and loss of rented accommodation. The third highest reason is violence and harassment.

Why are people becoming homeless in Gedling and who are they?

5.10 The following tables demonstrate who is homeless in Gedling and why.

**Table 2 - Main reasons for homelessness and age and status of accepted applicants
(Data source: Council own records)**

Main Reason	2006/07	2007/8
Parents/family no longer able to accommodate	19	24
Loss of rented accommodation	14	20
Violence/harassment	11	17
Non violent relationship breakdown	0	3
Mortgage arrears	1	1
Asylum	0	1
Leaving LA Care	0	1
Leaving Hospital	0	2
Emergency	0	1
Total	45	70

5 . Review of Homelessness in Gedling

Ethnicity of Accepted Applicants	2006/7	2007/8
White British	39	62
White Irish	0	1
Black or Black British	0	4
Asian or Asian British Indian	1	1
Asian or Asian British Pakistan	1	
Mixed White/Black Caribbean	0	1
Black or Black British Caribbean	4	
Other Groups	0	1
Total	45	70

2006/7 Age Range	Single Male	Single Female	Lone Parent Male	Lone Parent Female	Couple with Children	Total
Under 20	1	0	0	2	0	3
20-25	0	1	1	18	2	22
26-30	0	0	0	7	3	10
30-40	1	1	1	2	1	6
40+	0	0	0	2	2	4

Data Sources: Council own records and P1E returns

The Housing Market

5.11 The Review provides as full a picture of the housing market in Gedling as possible, taking into account the cost of accommodation in the Borough and surrounding areas as well as average incomes.

5 . Review of Homelessness in Gedling

5.12 The following house price data was collected as part of the review process.

Table 3 - House Price Data (for the County)

Authority	Detached (£)	Flat (£)	Semi (£)	Terraced (£)
Rushcliffe	309,159	134,888	197,278	164,768
Newark & Sherwood	270,236	121,938	143,378	122,002
Broxtowe	235,711	107,996	141,490	119,473
Gedling	228,610	107,135	139,329	114,247
Bassetlaw	221,441	105,471	129,749	110,007
City of Nottingham	215,183	105,018	122,240	102,451
Ashfield	186,967	96,858	117,218	91,362
Mansfield	179,302	87,651	116,174	90,759

Source: BBC House Price Index

Table 4 - Average Cost of Renting in the Nottingham 'Core' Housing Market Area

Local Authority	1 bed weekly	1 bed monthly	2 bed weekly	2 bed monthly
Gedling	£109	£472	£132	£572
Nottingham City	£80	£347	£109	£472
Broxtowe	£66	£286	£103	£446
Rushcliffe	£114	£494	£126	£546
Erewash	£80	£347	£103	£446
Ashfield	£84	£364	£96	£416

Source: HOMETRACK

5 . Review of Homelessness in Gedling

Table 5 - Income Required to access the Rental Market in the Nottingham 'Core' Housing Market area

Local Authority	Weekly 2 bed rents	Monthly rents	Income required assuming 25% of income is paid in rent
Gedling	£132	£572	£27,456
Nottingham City	£109	£472	£22,672
Broxtowe	£103	£446	£21,424
Rushcliffe	£126	£546	£26,208
Erewash	£103	£446	£21,424
Ashfield	£96	£416	£19,968

Source: HOMETRACK

5.13 Tables 3-5 demonstrate the cost to access the owner occupied and private rented market in the Borough. They show that rent levels in the borough are comparatively higher than in the other boroughs with the exception of Rushcliffe. The rent for a 1 bed home being £472 a month and the average weekly gross earning £399.20. This means that over 27% of the average household income needs to be spent on rent, before any other household costs are taken into account. An affordable rent is considered to cost less than 25% of a household income.

5.14 In 2007 the mean income in Gedling Borough was £33,986, slightly higher than that for the United Kingdom. Table 6 shows the average weekly wage in the Borough compared to Nottingham City and England.

Table 6 - Average Weekly Pay

Area	Average weekly pay-gross
Gedling	£399.20
Nottingham City	£397.10
England	£454.40

Source: NOMIS

5 . Review of Homelessness in Gedling

5.15 Whilst only one application because of mortgage arrears was accepted in 2007/8, mortgage repossessions are expected to hit a 12-year high during the year, with 45,000 owners seeing their homes taken away across the Country, the Council of Mortgage Lenders have warned.

5.16 The review of homelessness in the Borough shows that the top three causes of homelessness are:

- Parents, family and friends no longer willing to accommodate
- Violence/Harassment (including domestic violence) and
- Loss of rented accommodation

5.17 Both the data held by the Council on homelessness acceptances and the results of Nottinghamshire Homeless Watch show that Black and Minority Ethnic communities are slightly over represented in homelessness statistics. This may require further investigation to ensure that cultural differences and needs are being met throughout the Borough.

5.18 Whilst the Borough is relatively affluent, the high cost of housing has, to some extent, created a two-tier system in terms of accessibility and choice in housing with the relatively well off having choice and the less well off and vulnerable groups having fewer choices and the need for assistance to access that choice.

5.19 The Council has already developed tools to assist with the prevention of homelessness and to provide more choice, however it is clear that there is still work to be done to develop a fuller range of tools.

5.20 This evidence in this review and the homeless health check will also allow the Council to select priorities for action. These priorities will need to overlap with corporate and LAA targets.

Possible future trends

5.21 The review concluded that the following factors may affect the number of residents in the Borough who may require assistance due to homelessness in the next few years:

- Statutory homeless levels should fall due to the prevention tools in place
- Raised awareness of domestic abuse services may lead to an increase in presentations following the work of Domestic Violence Services Co-ordinator to raise awareness of the issue of domestic violence and the availability of the Sanctuary Scheme.
- Possible increase in number of enquiries due to mortgage difficulties and re-possession due to increasing house prices, the credit crunch and fluctuations in interest rates and associated borrowing costs
- Increasing numbers of eligible migrant workers experiencing housing difficulties
- Impact of the Local Housing Allowance on Private Sector Tenancies
- Affordable Housing completions – large sites emerging like Top Wighay Farm and Gedling Colliery
- Continued impact of the Deposit Guarantee Scheme and First Lets

6 . The Prevention of Homelessness

6 The Prevention of Homelessness

6.1 Gedling Borough Council agrees, and is fully committed to ensuring that prevention work forms the mainstay of our approach to reducing homelessness. To this end our approach echoes the advice of CLG.

Firstly – early intervention, for those who may be at risk of homelessness

Secondly – pre-crisis intervention, when homelessness is imminent

Thirdly – preventing recurring homelessness, for those who have been resettled.

6.2 The Borough Council has the overall responsibility for achieving these aims

6.3 In meeting the challenge set by the Government's prevention agenda, Gedling Borough Council has significantly changed its approach, to reflect the need to engage with potentially homeless people at an early stage. Various options to further improve this are identified in the action plan and include issues such as further developing the relationship with the courts to receive notification of evictions of Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) and private sector tenants and repossession orders against owner occupiers, so that effective engagement with people who are at risk of losing their homes may take place earlier.

6.4 We use a prevention toolkit, discussed in the next chapter of this Strategy , which includes a series of options which have been used successfully by the Homelessness and Housing Advice team, not only preventing homelessness, but seeking to empower individuals and offer greater choice. For example, through the use of both the First Lets initiative and the Deposit Guarantee Scheme we have been able to help people to access accommodation with private landlords in their chosen area.

6.5 The impact of the toolkit is evident with the number of presentations falling from 174 to 82, for the year 2004/05 and in 2005 /06 the number of acceptances fell from 135 to 49. These figures remained similar in 2006 / 07, although there has been an increase in 2007/8 with 133 presentations and 70 acceptances.

6.6 Gedling Borough Council is experiencing an increasing demand for housing advice. Through the use of the toolkit the Council has been able to increase the number of homeless preventions. This is not only in line with the national approach to homelessness, but invariably has a positive outcome for the applicants as they are often able to exercise greater choice, for example by being supported to access accommodation in the private rented sector, in a location of their choice.

6 . The Prevention of Homelessness

6.7 The continued use, and funding of the toolkit should enable Gedling Borough Council to continue to reduce the number of people reaching crisis point and needing to make a homeless application.

7 Summary of the Toolkit

7.1 The following information demonstrates how the Council has embraced the role of prevention and how it has been able to deliver achievable housing solutions to people experiencing problems with their accommodation in the Borough.

7.2 The 'toolkit' of options, below, are available to assist the Homelessness and Housing Advice team to provide, for the first time, a degree of choice to applicants. The Council recognises that by offering these options, it will help to create a more sustainable community as there will be an element of choice about where people live, other than the limited options previously available.

7.3 Value for Money assessments of each of the schemes have been or will be carried out to ensure the 'toolkit' is service-user driven to ensure additional context information is provided to calculate the 'cost' of the service delivered.

Summary of the toolkit

Current and Working

Deposit guarantee scheme

The scheme has been designed to help those who are unable to afford a deposit to access private rented accommodation. The scheme is beneficial for both preventing homelessness and providing the already homeless with accommodation in the private sector. The scheme works by enabling the landlords to have a guaranteed deposit and also know that any damages can be re-couped.

Liaison with Private Sector Landlords through First Lets

The current demand for council and housing association accommodation is very high and there are not enough properties to meet this increasing demand.

First Lets is a partnership project between Gedling, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe Borough Councils, which is working to create stronger links with landlords and letting agents, and to help more people enter into private rented accommodation as an alternative. The scheme also enables the Councils to improve standards in the private sector, driving up the number of vulnerable households in decent homes. To help achieve this, the three councils have worked together to create a scheme which includes a website that offers help and advice to landlords and potential tenants, as well as providing a 'property shop' service where landlords can advertise their properties free of charge, and tenants can search for a new home. It also contains valuable information about other support services set up to help people wanting to let and rent properties within three Boroughs.

Sanctuary Scheme

Gedling Borough Council has acknowledged the specific needs of victims of domestic abuse and has introduced a Sanctuary Scheme to provide greater choice to this vulnerable group.

7 . Summary of the Toolkit

Current and Working

- The ‘Sanctuary Scheme’ is one of the housing options that can be considered by residents experiencing domestic abuse.
- The ‘Sanctuary Scheme’ aims to make it possible for people who experience domestic violence and hate crime to remain in their homes and feel safe. The scheme is not limited to local authority or housing association tenants but covers all tenures. The core element of the scheme is to create a free of charge “Sanctuary Room” or “Safe Room” within the home where victims can call for and wait for the Police to arrive. In certain cases other additional security is also provided. The level of security provided under the Sanctuary Scheme can be categorised as “Sanctuary Minus”, “Sanctuary” or “Sanctuary Plus” dependant on the severity of each case.
- Each case will be assessed individually with the different agencies within the South Nottinghamshire Domestic Violence Steering Group all working together and information sharing for the common good of helping the client to feel safer.
- The Domestic Violence Outreach Worker can be utilised by everyone in the Borough and is not tenure specific. The outreach worker is there to support people who are experiencing or who have experienced domestic violence and are living in the Gedling area. The type of support offered includes emotional support, accompanying clients to appointments and criminal and civil proceedings, helping with benefit claims and housing issues, personal safety planning, any other issues that are relevant to their support. The support is accessed via self-referral, or other agencies can make referrals on behalf of their clients. Both the Coordinator and the Outreach Worker are there to ensure survivors receive the information they need to improve their lives.
- It is acknowledged that as the partnership continues to promote the new services available, there will be an increase in demand.

Floating support

Services are available to assist anyone in need to sustain their tenancy. Referrals can be made for anyone in the Borough in any tenure who may be in danger of losing their home.

Home Care and Repair Scheme

The home care and repair scheme is a scheme which is funded by the Council but implemented by the Home Improvement Agency. The scheme is specifically designed for the elderly and frail and provides pre-approved workmen to undertake repairs for frail or elderly owner-occupiers to assist them to maintain their homes. The purpose of this scheme is to enable people to remain in their homes.

Liaison with RSL's

The Council is a member of Nottinghamshire Social Housing Forum, which meets regularly to share progress on joint working initiatives, Strategies and Homeless Action Plans which housing associations are required to have in place as part of the Housing Corporation's homeless agenda.

Current and Working

- A Service Level Agreement is in place between the Council's housing benefits team and all housing associations in the Borough, which should have a beneficial impact on tenants who may have faced eviction before the agreement was in place.
- Housing Associations are required to follow the national protocol with regard to Ground 8 possession orders, and this may also start to have an impact locally.
- Closer working between the Council's homeless team and housing associations through dual attendance at the Notts Social Housing Forum, may assist with the prevention of homelessness, with discussion and preventative actions being put in place well before any eviction stage is reached.

The use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and measures such as Demoted tenancies

Disabled facilities grants

This scheme is designed for private sector accommodation only. The applicant would be referred by their Occupational Therapist for a disabled facilities grant so their property could be adapted, reducing the number of people with disabilities having to leave their home because of their disability.

Adaptations to Council owned properties

Adaptations are also carried out to homes owned by the Council, enabling the tenant to sustain their tenancy.

Working with Housing Benefits

Homelessness and Housing Benefits teams at the Council work closely together to ensure the verification framework works to assist the Council with its homelessness agenda.

Officers are trained in:

- The verification process
- Applications for late submission and backdating of claims
- Overpayments and their collection
- A basic guide to benefits and maximisation

Benefits Officers also attend the JIAF and homeless managers meeting as and when appropriate.

Homeless Officers also work with the Housing Benefits team around the decisions made on Discretionary Housing Payments.

Council run Affordable Ownership Scheme and East Midlands Home buy scheme

The Council, in partnership with developers, offers its own affordable ownership scheme. Homes are offered to eligible persons at a discount off the open market value of up to 30%. This discount is attached to the property for the future (affordable in perpetuity), with the owner unable to sell on to anyone unless the Council confirms that the prospective purchaser qualifies for the discount.

7 . Summary of the Toolkit

Current and Working
<p>EM HomeBuy Scheme</p> <p>EM HomeBuy schemes are intended to assist those who would not normally be able to get on to the property ladder. New Build Home Buy - enables eligible people to usually buy either, 25%, 50% or 75% of a property by way of a mortgage or cash purchase and pay a subsidised rent on the remainder.</p> <p>First Time Buyer Initiative (FTBI)- enables aspiring first time buyers, who cannot otherwise afford to buy a new home, to purchase a new property with an affordable mortgage and with Government assistance (min £25,001) on a designated FTBI development. The Government then has an entitlement to a share of the future sale proceeds which will be equal to the initial percentage contribution required to assist the buyer. This enables a FTBI buyer to take out an affordable mortgage (minimum 50% of the total purchase price) on which they make repayments.</p> <p>For the first three years of FTBI home ownership there is nothing to pay on the amount which the Government contributed. After three years buyers will pay a fee to Government (through a HomeBuy Agent) of 1% per annum on the amount Government funded. This fee will increase each year by a fixed percentage reaching a maximum of 3% after five years in the property.</p>
Mutual Exchanges
Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs) Housing Act 2004
Specialist Officers to deal with illegal evictions - Officers trained now in illegal eviction process.
Specialist officers to deal with dis-repair - linking in with Officers from the Council's Private Sector Housing Team, arranging inspections and offering advice and service notices to landlords to advise of action that could be taken for non-repair.
Joint Protocol with Social Services for 16-17 year olds - For care leavers and 16-17 years olds

Priorities for Action - Further Options for the toolkit to be considered	Timescale
Work with other departments of the Council to provide money management and welfare benefits advice	Years 1-2 of the Strategy
PACE training to train Officers to gather evidence to prosecute landlords who carry out illegal evictions	Years 1-2 of the Strategy

Priorities for Action - Further Options for the toolkit to be considered	Timescale
New allocations policy	Years 1-2 of the Strategy
Engaging with the courts to receive notification of evictions	Years 1-2 of the Strategy
Mediation services (develop the service)	Years 1-3 of the Strategy
Review the provision of Supporting People funded floating support within the Borough	Years 1-3 of the Strategy
Expanding the protocol for 16-17 year olds	Year 1-2 of the Strategy
Engaging with Education services to pro-actively prevent homelessness earlier and raise awareness of the issues faced by young people experiencing homelessness	Years 1-3 of the Strategy

7.4 In response to the challenges of the health check we are looking to further develop the service by providing

Links to Court

7.5 By further developing the relationship with the Nottingham Courts, the Council is looking to obtain information about potential homeless applicants within both the private rented, housing association sectors, and owner occupiers, to fully engage with potential homeless people at an earlier stage.

Housing Advice

7.6 The Council needs to consider how best to enhance its preventative role and whether the appointment of a specialist officer providing money management and welfare benefits advice would prevent homelessness and provide a comprehensive service to both council tenants, private sector tenants, RSL tenants and owner occupiers who are experiencing financial problems.

7 . Summary of the Toolkit

Floating Support

7.7 The Council currently benefits from Supporting People funded floating support services in the Borough and needs to consider if the services currently available are adequate, or if there is a need to commission more floating support to ensure greater contact with both tenants and the residents of the Borough, to ensure that people continue to be assisted to sustain their tenancies, or owner occupied properties.

Home Visits

7.8 Whilst home visits are already provided at the applicant's request and in the case of parental evictions, we consider that this is a vital part of the investigation process and we aim to increase the number of home visits undertaken by officers. We acknowledge the resource implications required but in terms of value for money, continued investment in this area is crucial.

7.9 Consideration is currently being given to identifying resources to provide a specialist family liaison officer as parental evictions represent the main route to homelessness locally and have been on the increase.

7.10 The Council recognises the significant benefits of being able to address this need. If officers are successful in negotiating the return to the family home, then the particular intensive support needs of young people can often be facilitated by re-engaging them with their parents, and possibly providing an element of floating support. This needs to be within a safe environment, and is viewed as continuing the Borough's commitment of safeguarding children and young people.

Mediation

7.11 The benefits of providing a mediation service have been acknowledged by the Borough and there are excellent examples of schemes provided by neighbouring authorities. Funding has been secured and work will now be carried out to develop the mediation service to be delivered to people presenting as homeless.

Promotion of the service

7.12 It is vital to the success of the 2008 – 2013 Strategy that the residents of the Borough are fully aware of the range of services available.

- Increased membership of the JIAF – the other members of JIAF also promote the service to potential clients and to assist we have produced leaflets describing the service which are circulated.
- Engaging with secondary schools
- Gedling Council website
- Advertising the service in the Gedling Borough Council magazine "Contacts."
- Information leaflets are widely available at both the Borough's civic centre, and the Carlton office but also in the sheltered schemes, local doctor's surgeries and libraries.

8 . Tackling the Wider Causes of Homelessness

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8 Tackling the Wider Causes of Homelessness

8.1 The DTLR publication, “More than a Roof” 2002, clearly defined the need for support services to underpin the sustainability of tenancies, and prevent people becoming homeless.

8.2 Gedling Borough Council acknowledges the immense value of working with specialist support agencies, and to this end is working with Nottinghamshire Supporting People, Framework and Hostel Liaison Group, Step Forward and Action Housing, to access specialist floating support packages, covering :

- Teenage pregnancy
- Drug and alcohol issues
- Financial management
- Life skills
- Physical health problems
- Mental health problems
- Prison leavers
- General support to young vulnerable people – e.g. care leavers

8.3 These support providers deliver a holistic bespoke package to meet either individual or multiple needs, and to date have been used to support 166 tenancies.

8.4 Gedling Borough Council has recently expanded the range of services aimed at reducing homelessness through the appointment of:

- Domestic Violence Co-ordinator
- Domestic Violence Worker

8.5 Consideration is being given to enhancing the 'toolkit' by working with other Departments of the Council to provide money management and welfare benefits advice.

Education, employment and school outreach

8.6 Employment and training schemes have an important role to play in the prevention of homelessness, the resettlement of homeless people and impact on an individuals' ability to break the cycle of homelessness. These factors can help to integrate homeless people back into society and assist them in developing their confidence, giving them aims to develop their employment skills and hopefully increase their sense of security and independence.

8 . Tackling the Wider Causes of Homelessness

8.7 With reference to young people, employment and training have a particular importance as this contributes towards providing young people with direction, aims and if they are homeless a change in their life style.

8.8 Within the Borough residents are able to receive advice and assistance with employment from the job centres and for people aged 13 – 24 there is access to the government initiative – ‘Connexions’ which provides young people with a personal advisor who will assist them with all aspects of their lives, but primarily help them to access training and employment. Young people also have access to youth workers across the Borough, and can access information and services through the local libraries.

8.9 Funding has been agreed to allow Officers to engage with education services to pro-actively prevent homelessness earlier and raise awareness of the issues faced by young people experiencing homelessness. The implementation of this work is a key action in the Action Plan at Appendix 1.

Single and Multiple need

8.10 The Snap Shot survey undertaken for the period the 18th September to 1st October 2006 identified the range of needs experienced by the people who made a homelessness enquiry during the period. Table VII illustrates the situation within the Borough and compares this to the Nottinghamshire area as a whole. It is important to note that people could present as having both individual and multiple needs.

Table 7 - Support Needs

Support Needs	Number	Percentage of presentations – Gedling	Percentage – Nottinghamshire
Drug Abuse	8	13	29
Domestic Violence	8	13	10
Mental Health	7	11	17
Ex-Offender	5	8	22
Alcohol Abuse	4	7	18
Learning Difficulties	4	7	8
Physically Disabled	3	5	4
Other	3	5	9
Not Stated	3	5	1
Total	45	N/A	N/A

Source: Nottinghamshire Homeless Watch 2006

8 . Tackling the Wider Causes of Homelessness

8.11 As can be seen from Table 7, the support needs of those in or connected to Gedling Borough Council vary considerably from the figures for the whole of Nottinghamshire. This may be because the majority of people with issues surrounding drug and alcohol abuse access the services and accommodation more readily available in other parts of Nottinghamshire, mainly in the City and to the North in Mansfield. In most cases the proportions of presentations with particular needs are lower than for the county as a whole.

8.12 One exception to this is domestic violence with 13% of presentations highlighting this as a support need compared with 10% for Nottinghamshire.

8.13 The support needs identified by the Snap Shot survey are further developed under their respective headings.

Teenage Parents

8.14 The Council has identified a need to develop supported accommodation for teenage parents in the Borough, and this is discussed further in Chapter 10.

Substance Misuse

8.15 Substance misuse covers alcohol, drug and poly-drug use. Whilst poly-drug use was not included on the Snap Shot survey these results evidence the high needs of homeless applicants within the borough. Currently floating support is used to assist some applicants and others are referred onto specialist supported accommodation. Recent re-configuring of specialist floating support services in the Borough by supporting People should assist with this client group. A key action identified in this Strategy is to carry out a review of the availability of housing related floating support in the Borough for all vulnerable groups.

Domestic Violence

8.16 Domestic Abuse is one of the top three groups identified as being the main causes of homelessness within the Gedling Borough Area. Service providers believe that domestic abuse is significantly under reported which leads to difficulties in gaining a true picture of the extent of this crime.

8.17 Research shows that domestic abuse is usually carried out by a man against a woman but can occur against a man by a woman and between persons in same sex relationships. It can also manifest itself through the actions of immediate and extended family members including children and elders.

8.18 Relationship and marital break down are identified as risk factors associated with homelessness or events that can lead to homelessness. People who are experiencing Domestic Abuse can apply to the Homelessness and Housing Advice section for assistance.

8.19 The following options are available for consideration:-

- Feeling safe at home for those who do not wish to leave the property
- Access to alternative property through transfers/management recommendations

8 . Tackling the Wider Causes of Homelessness

- Refuge accommodation
- Referrals to other areas of the Country
- Provision of support or outreach services

8.20 Gedling Borough Council, in partnership, with Rushcliffe and Broxtowe Borough Councils has significantly increased the resources targeted at helping the victims of domestic violence through the appointment of :-

- Domestic Services Service Co-ordinator
- Domestic Violence Outreach Worker
- Sanctuary Scheme.

Equalities and Homelessness

8.21 The Council is committed to ensuring equal access to services for all groups regardless of their race, disability, gender, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

8.22 Steps will be taken to ensure measures are in place to assist anyone requiring additional support to either prevent their homelessness or make an application and access suitable accommodation if they are unintentionally homeless, have a local connection and in a priority need group.

8.23 The Council will also ensure that its evidence base is kept up to date by commissioning research, either in partnership with other authorities in the conurbation or the County, or on its own where evidence suggests a local issue is having an effect on particular groups with regard to homelessness.

8.24 The following research studies have been commissioned and have assisted with the formulation of this strategy.

Black and Minority Ethnic Study

8.25 A research project was commissioned by the Borough in partnership with other Council's including Nottingham City, Rushcliffe Borough, Broxtowe Borough and Ashfield District to investigate the housing and support needs of the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community. The research was developed in partnership with the BME Community.

8.26 As part of the research, homelessness was studied with a survey of 55 temporary accommodation users across the study area being interviewed. Reasons for becoming homeless included: dispute with parents, domestic violence and other forms of harassment.

8.27 Barriers to accessing accommodation included a general lack of accommodation being available, especially because of the young age of the respondents. Other barriers including the high rents being charged for privately rented accommodation and the attitudes of landlords. Concerns over the condition of properties becoming available were also expressed.

8.28 Further barriers include a general lack of knowledge among homeless people about what assistance is available and although these barriers are faced by all homeless people, the experience of BME homeless people is made worse by the fear of discrimination.

8 . Tackling the Wider Causes of Homelessness

Gypsy and Travellers

8.29 The Housing Act 2004 placed a duty on each local authority to complete an Accommodation Needs Assessment for Gypsies and Travellers. The research was further required in order for the commissioning authorities to make a properly planned provision of sufficient and decent accommodation for this community, informing the need for new sites in both regional and local development documents.

8.30 A partnership was formed by all Nottinghamshire authorities to carry out a County wide research project (except Bassetlaw who had already commissioned their own research a year previously.)

8.31 Although not verified, the study revealed that there is already private provision in the Borough with up to 13 pitches being provided.

8.32 CLG guidance recommends that the calculation of pitch requirements is based on five core variables:

- Current supply
- Current Demand
- Concealed Households
- Transfers from Housing
- Family Formation

8.33 Based on the above methodology the research concludes that 4 new permanent pitches are required in the Borough to meet the current backlog and the needs of newly forming households over the next five years.

8.34 The Council is currently exploring options for providing for this identified need and funding has been awarded by Communities and Local Government to work in partnership with Nottingham City Council to identify land to provide a joint site.

Snap Shot Survey of Rough Sleepers 2006

8.35 A previous action highlighted in the 2003 Inter-Agency Homeless Review and Strategy was a commitment to undertake an annual snap shot by key informants. This would both support the work undertaken in partnership (Homeless Watch) and inform the Housing Statistical Appendix annual return. It assists the Borough to monitor the levels homelessness and the reasons for homelessness. To further inform the development of the pro-active approach the borough is adopting to tackle homelessness and meeting the needs of the homeless in the Borough.

8.36 From the core of people surveyed in 2006 it was discovered that within the Borough there is a small number of rough sleepers but that it is difficult to establish exactly how many there are as evidence shows that they migrate to different areas.

8.37 The survey found that in the past 12 months 22 rough sleepers had been noticed although some will have been counted twice where other rough sleepers will have remained unnoticed. It is a common theme for many rough sleepers to try and hide from observers

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8.38 The survey was sent to local Police Officers, visiting Gedling Borough Council Housing Staff, and places of worship. They were sent out to this group of people as they work within the streets of the Borough every day.

8.39 From the survey, respondents were asked whether they thought that Gedling Borough had a rough sleeper's problem of which only 1 respondent answered yes and 18 answered no.

Nottinghamshire Homeless Watch

8.40 The Borough (in partnership with local authorities in Nottinghamshire including Nottingham City) identified a need to carry out a survey of homelessness in Nottinghamshire. This was required to further the knowledge and understanding of homelessness in the County and the housing and support needs of those people who present as homeless.

8.41 The Homeless Watch Survey 2006 took place from 18th September to 1st October 2006 and was conducted by HLG. 181 agencies took part, completing a survey form for each individual who presented to them as homeless in this period. A steering group of local authority officers undertook the development of the survey, which was based on a form used successfully in the County in the last three years.

8.42 The report on the findings from the survey also makes a number of recommendations for action for further investigation as a result of an analysis of the survey findings. It looks at the recommendations from the 2005 survey report and attempts to identify where progress has been made and where further work is still required. The steering group continue to meet periodically to report on progress.

- The survey revealed that a total of 57 homeless enquiries from people with a connection to Gedling were made in the survey period with 76% being single, 12% single parents and 5% couples with children. Of these 89% were White British, with the largest BME group at 5% being Caribbean.
- A total of 45 out of the 57 presentations had support needs, with 13 being recovering drug users and 13 fleeing from domestic abuse. Others included mental health and ex offenders.
- Of the 57 presentations 5 had been sleeping rough the previous night, 2 of which had been sleeping rough for over a year.

Health and Homelessness

8.43 Homelessness people are statistically at a greater risk of mental and physical health problems than the general population. Particular problems that affect homeless people include:-

- Severe mental illness
- Substance misuse
- High levels of stress and anxiety
- Infections such as TB and Hepatitis
- Poor diet
- Prolonged exposure to cold and damp

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- Neurological problems
- Trauma injuries
- Foot problems
- Mental / physical problems in homeless mothers
- Increased health, developmental and psychological problems in homeless children

8.44 These findings were identified in the 2003 Inter Agency Homelessness Review and Strategy, and are considered to still be reflected in the presentations made to the Borough.

8.45 In summary the conclusion that has been drawn is that homelessness can exacerbate existing health problems and cause new conditions.

8.46 The difficulties encountered by homelessness people when trying to engage with main stream services such as GPs, dentists etc. further increase the risks faced by homelessness people, and can also mean that they miss out on routine screening and inoculations that persons of a fixed abode would benefit from.

8.47 In recognition of these difficulties the Borough's homeless persons hostel is attended by:-

- Health Visitors
- Sure Start – focusing on supporting young families

8.48 Hostel residents also receive an information pack encouraging them to register with local GPs and dentists and also advising of the local NHS Walk In centre and hospitals. This supports the boroughs corporate priorities and outcomes.

Tenancy Sustainment

8.49 Where approaches are made to the Council because of homelessness, an analysis of any support needs of the client is undertaken, firstly to assess vulnerability, and secondly to ensure any services are tailored to the individual.

8.50 This may involve referral to a specialist support provider, particularly if successful move on to independent living is to be achieved.

Table 8 - Supporting People Funded Support in the Borough

Primary client group	Amount in units
Frail elderly	120
Older people with support needs	1,315
People with mental health problems	53
People with learning disabilities	40
Single homeless with support needs	37
Teenage parents	18

8 . Tackling the Wider Causes of Homelessness

Women at risk of domestic violence	10
Offenders or people at risk of offending	4
People with a physical or sensory disability	3

Data Source: Supporting people

8.51 It can be seen from Table 8, that the majority of support places appear in sheltered accommodation for older people. Gedling Borough Council is working with Supporting People and providers to deliver support to households who are vulnerably housed, threatened with homelessness or in temporary accommodation who may need assistance in maintaining a tenancy.

Table 9 - Support available through Supporting People in the borough

Primary client group	Current take up
Learning disabilities	21
Physical or sensory disabilities	3
Mental health problems	38
Single homeless with support needs	27
Teenage parents	18
Women at risk of domestic violence	10
Offenders or people at risk of offending	4

Source: Supporting People

8.52 Tenancy Sustainment services are vital in enabling people to move on from homelessness. The support provided offer a range of services which include:-

- Helping people to understand and meet their tenancy obligations
- Assisting people to make and maintain benefit claims
- Assistance with the management of household bills and the management of debt
- Assistance during the setting up of the tenancy
- Helping to resolve crisis
- Liaison with other services
- Helping people to develop links in the local community
- Assisting people to develop life skills

8 . Tackling the Wider Causes of Homelessness

8.53 Surestart and Health Visitors also support residents in the Borough's temporary accommodation at Balmoral House. Surestart also offer support to parents with children under 4 in the Netherfield, Killisick and Oxclose areas of the Borough.

Repeat Homelessness

8.54 Repeat homelessness is measured as the number of acceptances made by the Borough of applicants who had previously been accepted within the last two years. Gedling has had a nil return in this field because the prevention of homelessness policy adopted by the Borough has meant that no repeat presentations have taken place.

8.55 This was formerly BVPI 214, which has now been cancelled (the proportion of households accepted as homeless by the same authority within the past two years). BVPI 213, which declared the percentage of preventions maintained for over 6 months, has been retained as a local indicator.

Care Leavers

8.56 Gedling Borough Council has a good working relationship in relation to care leavers and there is a robust protocol in place. Services for Nottinghamshire people in need of care or support are the responsibility of the Adult Social Care and Health Department and Children and Young People's Services. However the Borough acknowledges the need to act swiftly to assist social care services in accommodating current and former care leavers and addresses this through the priority need status awarded to former applicants who where in care, looked after, accommodated or fostered.

Young People

8.57 Gedling Borough Council has experienced a significant increase in the number of 16 and 17 years olds approaching the authority for assistance. This is proving to be a very challenging and time consuming area of work for the Borough.

8.58 Many of the 16 and 17 year olds who have approached the authority are as a result of parents and family no longer being able to accommodate them. This is often a difficult situation as there can be grounds to find the applicants intentionally homeless, if their behaviour has resulted in their family and friends no longer being willing to accommodate them.

8.59 Gedling Borough Council has been successful in reconnecting young people with their family often as a temporary measure whilst we work to find them suitable accommodation, with floating support if required. If assurances can be given to help the parents/family in addition to the young person, then parents/family or friends are often prepared to take the young person back as a temporary measure. Gedling Borough Council is mindful of the varying support needs of young people, and seeks to continue the relationship with their family friends, where suitable, as this is considered to be a stabilising and positive influence on the young person.

8.60 The introduction of mediation may also prove a useful tool in preventing homelessness amongst this group. The Council's approach underpins the government's objective of reducing the use of B&B accommodation to house 16 and 17 year olds.

8 . Tackling the Wider Causes of Homelessness

Ex- Offenders

8.61 The needs of offenders, ex-offenders and prison leavers must be considered within the homelessness strategy. Whilst not every individual in this group will be found to be in priority need there is a requirement to address the needs of this group.

8.62 National research suggests that although many prisoners had been adequately housed before their imprisonment, and that the majority wished to return to their original homes, on release less than half were able to achieve this due to the following factors

- Benefit cessation after 13 weeks (sentenced) or 52 weeks if on remand
- Loss of private rented accommodation.
- Repossession of owner occupied property (loss of employment on imprisonment)
- Loss of place in squat
- Eviction for rent arrears
- Loss of tied accommodation (Loss of employment)
- Breakdown of relationship
- The nature of their offence means that they would be ill-advised to return to the original area
- Anti-social behaviour and / or offending behaviour means that some people are considered to be too high risk for placement in housing projects.

8.63 With regards to the impact on the wider community, the research also identified that 66% of ex-prisoners who had no accommodation re-offended within 12 months of release, where as only 25% of those with good accommodation did so.

8.64 Offenders, ex-offenders and prison leavers can also face the following problems

- Access to independent, mainstream accommodation is increasingly difficult
- Arranging accommodation other than hostels is difficult
- Very few ex-prisoners agree to live in a hostel; they are concerned at re-offending through contact with other ex-prisoners
- Women ex-prisoners with children can find themselves in a 'Catch 22' situation, where they need adequate accommodation before they can regain their children from care after release, yet are not considered to have dependent children unless they have 'custody' . They are not therefore considered to be in priority need for rehousing.
- Discrimination from employers, housing providers, neighbours and landlords
- Challenging behaviour
- Institutionalisation
- Issues of affordability of accommodation
- Loss of belongings.

8.65 Whilst the number of applications from this sector of the community is low in the Borough, there is still some demand, and they are often a group with complex needs.

8.66 Working with offenders, ex-offenders and prison leavers can also be challenging for officers, particularly those cases which involve the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). MAPPA is a protocol based initiative for agencies to work together

8 . Tackling the Wider Causes of Homelessness

in order to minimise the risks some people may present to the public. Housing issues are often part of these considerations. Gedling Borough Council has designated officers who work with MAPPA when such cases are identified within the community.

8.67 The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) conducts housing needs assessments on entry to custody, and this information could be used to forecast future need.

Prison Leavers Protocol

8.68 The prison leaver's protocol is designed to address the housing needs of people prior to, during and following the serving of a custodial sentence, and supports:

- Statutory Housing Authorities' duties towards the prevention of homelessness
- Prison and Probation commitment to effective resettlement.
- Contributions towards Community Safety objectives.
- To maximise the contribution of RSL's and the Voluntary Sector in housing and supporting offenders

8.69 The protocol will enable prisoners who are having difficulty in identifying possible housing to have access to specialist housing advice and services.

9 . An Eye to the Future

9 An Eye to the Future

9.1 Key to the success of the 2008 – 2013 Homeless Strategy is the Borough’s ability to both identify trends and fluctuations and adapt its services and resources accordingly.

9.2 Finance is key to facilitating the delivery of services and resources. The Homelessness and Housing Advice team at Gedling is funded through the General Fund, as the overall responsibility for homelessness lies with the Council. The Borough has, however, also benefited from additional funding from the Homeless Directorate, which has been renewed for a further 3 years.

9.3 In addition to valuable pieces of research, such as the Homeless Watch and the Snap Shot Survey, the following work is being progressed.

Value for Money

9.4 Early intervention including advice and assistance is the key to homelessness prevention. To prevent homelessness, officers need to visit applicants, parents/friends and landlords to:

- enable people to remain in their current accommodation;
- provide options to enable a planned and timely move to sustain independent living.

9.5 This reduces the demand for temporary accommodation and the need to take unnecessary homeless applications. Above all it saves money and significantly improves performance.

9.6 All seven ‘Tackling Homelessness’ Beacon Councils focussed on homelessness prevention as a priority. Failure to maximise preventative opportunities results in increasing numbers of homelessness acceptances and more households in temporary accommodation for longer periods. The Beacons recognised the need for a new approach to tackling homelessness and this has since become the cornerstone of Government initiatives.

9.7 Most Beacon Councils adopted a ‘Spend to Save’ policy, the main strands of which are likely to include:

- Additional staffing to ensure there is the capacity for early intervention and to work on solutions to prevent homelessness
- Flexible use of the homelessness budget to facilitate access to alternative housing, or to maintain the current tenancy e.g. rent in advance, tenancy renewal fee
- Provision of a “toolkit” empowering staff to use to prevent homelessness arising.
- Re-investment of finances from temporary accommodation to prevention activities.

9.8 Experience shows that utilisation of a Spend to Save (STS) budget will result in savings for the council at an average ratio of £ 2.5K for every £1k invested.

9.9 Typical costs of employing two Homeless Prevention Officers are £56,000 per annum. They become cost effective once 15 single homeless cases have been prevented or redirected to alternative housing. Savings on families are likely to be more significant as expenditure is typically higher where larger units of accommodation are required.

9.10 In addition each prevention secured has the beneficial impact of not adding to the formal homelessness figures thus greatly assisting performance in achieving targets. Moreover it reduces the impact of homelessness on the individuals affected.

9.11 The spend to save investment can be used in a variety of ways but perhaps it is most versatile as the “toolkit” for staff.

9.12 Prevention officers help potentially homeless households keep or find accommodation thus preventing formal homeless applications. They also help households who have become homeless to find private rented sector accommodation. This is achieved through a variety of means including:

- Undertaking home visits to find out the underlying cause of the potential homelessness before accepting a homeless duty. (This has often not happened at many Councils because of limited staff resources.) Home visits enable a better view to be gained of the potential homeless situation and are more likely to detect fraud and deception.
- Early and in-depth contact with the potential homeless household, enabling an early identification of the problem and improved prospects of resolution, thereby preventing homelessness e.g. referral to debt counselling, liaising with Housing Benefits section.
- Where it is clear at an early stage that the current accommodation cannot be retained, the officers focus on seeking alternative (non B&B) accommodation in order to prevent homelessness arising.
- Greater contact is achieved with landlords to ascertain the reasons for homelessness and early identification and negotiation of solutions to the problem e.g. legal/administrative fees necessary to renew a tenancy, or Housing Benefit issues.
- Officers provide advice, practical and emotional support to encourage households to retain their tenancies. This is relevant to both the private rented and social housing sector and single people and families.
- Improved co-ordination with the Housing Benefits team has seen the Council’s Housing Benefit staff notifying the homelessness team of cancelled, suspended or restricted claims. This enables an early intervention by a Homeless Prevention Officer which is crucial in preventing homelessness

9.13 Spend to Save is a slight misnomer as it should be noted that it is actually a “loan to save” scheme as a significant portion of the fund is used to “facilitate” private sector tenancies by providing the deposit and first month’s rent, which will be refundable in due course subject to compliance with tenancy conditions. Use of this facility can enable people to remain in their current accommodation or secure alternative private sector accommodation.

9.14 The operation of a Spend To Save scheme must be flexible in order to empower staff however it is important to establish:

- clear criteria for use of funds
- management reports
- VFM assessments for each application
- Regular performance updates for managers and members.

9.15 Once this has been agreed the next step is to publicise and market the availability of the scheme.

9 . An Eye to the Future

9.16 This is an area which the Borough will be utilising to expand the services it provides by undertaking value for money exercises which could enable the Homelessness and Housing Advice Team to demonstrate the benefits of commissioning new services, for example including a homelessness prevention fund in the toolkit. This is an ideal option to illustrate the business case of the value for money, or spend to save principle, in terms of its impact on the Borough's increasing use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

9.17 A value for money exercise, will be undertaken once Elizabeth House is up and running, to identify savings in the wider community for example, hospital and police, but also attempting to identify the positive effects of suitable specialist housing in terms of enabling people to engage with employment and education opportunities.

Supporting People

9.18 In Nottinghamshire, the Supporting People programme brings together the County Council, seven District Councils, the Primary Care Trust and the county's Probation Service to form the Supporting People Partnership.

9.19 The Partnership is responsible for ensuring that the county's housing-related support services provide quality,value for money services that complement other related services and meet local need. It does so by seeking the views of interested parties including service providers, service users and other groups who have an interest in protecting the county's vulnerable people.

9.20 Nottinghamshire receives a Supporting People Grant that funds support services provided in hostels, women's refuges, supported living schemes, sheltered accommodation and floating support services to around 20,000 people who need support to help them to live independently, including the following people:

- People who are homeless
- People fleeing domestic violence
- People with mental health needs
- People with learning disabilities
- Older people
- Ex-offenders
- Recovering drug or alcohol users.

9.21 Through the Borough's representation at the Commissioning body and the Core Strategy Development Group, there are ongoing discussions into the future provision of Supporting People funded services within the Borough. As referred to earlier, the emergent need for 16 and 17 year olds has been acknowledged, and some of the new units at Elizabeth House will be available to this group.

9.22 As the Respect for Nottingham agenda, implemented through the Gateway, greatly restricts the Boroughs ability to access specialist accommodation, the Council will be looking to Supporting People and other providers to help in the development of further specialist accommodation and support within the Borough. High on the agenda, and already mentioned in this Strategy, is the need for accommodation for teenage parents, and the Council is already working on this key action.

Enabling the Provision of more Affordable Housing

9.23 The Council aims to assist with the homelessness prevention agenda by increasing the supply of affordable housing in the Borough, primarily through planning gain.

9.24 Recently guidance in the form of Planning Policy Statement 3 defines affordable housing as including social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. It should also include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, hence ensuring affordability in perpetuity..

9.25 Currently 20% affordable housing is required on all new housing developments of 15 homes or more. Some success has been achieved over the past two years with the addition of 44 new affordable homes in the Borough in 2005/6 and 41 in 2006/7. This includes social rented, shared ownership and homebuy homes. The estimated number of completions in 2007/8 is likely to be nearer 100.

9.26 Several section 106 agreements recently agreed or under development means that even more homes that are affordable will be completed during this year and for the next few years.

Housing Market Assessment

9.27 Research was commissioned by the Borough and carried out in partnership to commission a Housing Market Assessment (HMA).

9.28 An HMA is intended to provide a platform for wider activity within authorities and cross partnership working. It should act as a robust analytical foundation for a wide range of future strategies and investments and further inform the Housing Needs work already undertaken in the area with the results acting as an evidence base to inform both the Regional Plan and the Local Development Framework. The HMA should assist with decision making and the implementation of sustainable policies and actions, leading to a better balance between supply and demand in the housing market.

9.29 The Nottingham 'Core' Housing Market Assessment was carried out by B.Line Housing Information and Three Dragons in 2006/7 with the final report being published in May 07. The study itself looked at demographics, current housing stock, the active housing market, employment trends, the future market and housing need.

9.30 The Study concluded that 46% of new homes in the Borough need to be developed as affordable to meet the backlog and future need within 7.5 years.

9.31 The Draft East Midlands Regional Plan also recommended a total affordable target of 30% for the Nottingham Core housing market area.

9 . An Eye to the Future

9.32 In the light of these figures, the council is giving consideration to increasing the percentage of affordable housing on new housing sites, and is commissioning further research to support this.

Future Trends

9.33 The review process identified several issues that may affect homelessness in the Borough, such as the Local Housing Allowance and the influx of migrant workers and the possible increase in the number of enquiries due to mortgage difficulties and re-possession due to increasing house prices, fluctuations in interest rates and associated borrowing costs.

Local Housing Allowance

9.34 A factor that could have a potential impact on the number of homeless presentations in the Borough is the introduction of the Local Housing Allowance. Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is a means of working out claims for housing benefit for tenants in private sector accommodation, which is being introduced nationally on the 7th April 2008.

9.35 LHA will apply only to private sector tenants and only to new tenancies or new benefit claims (after a break in claim of more than 1 week) for existing tenants. It will not be used to calculate housing benefit for local authority or RSL tenants or in supported housing provided by charities or hostels.

9.36 LHA is a flat rate allowance based on the make-up of the household and the broad area in which a rented property is located, rather than the actual property rented or the rent paid i.e. based on the number of occupants and the number of bedrooms required by the household.

9.37 There will be rates for each accommodation category (number of bedrooms) and people under 25 will be entitled to a maximum LHA based on a shared room rate – i.e. a single bedroom and shared facilities.

9.38 Where the LHA is lower than the rent being paid, the tenant may keep the difference, up to a limit of £15. If LHA is lower than the actual rent, the tenant will need to make up the difference if the rent cannot be re-negotiated with the landlord.

9.39 LHA is generally paid to the tenant and not to the landlord. LHA can be paid to landlords where tenants are deemed to be vulnerable. This would include vulnerable people in receipt of SP funded services. There is no option for tenants or landlords to choose to have LHA paid to the landlord. The decision is made by benefit staff, based on evidence received to confirm that the tenant is likely to have difficulty. Confirmation that SP services are being delivered would be considered as suitable evidence.

9.40 LHA can also be paid to landlords where the claimant has accrued 8 weeks arrears or is considered to be unlikely to pay their landlord based on previous rent arrears or debts.

9.41 Fears have been expressed that fewer private landlords will make properties available to service users leaving supported accommodation and to homeless clients seeking private rented accommodation, with no guarantee of rental income.

9.42 Vulnerability is assessed on an individual basis and landlords will not be able to influence the decision in order to secure payments to the landlord.

9.43 The impact of LHA on supported housing and vulnerable tenants in independent accommodation will need to be reviewed over time, as well as the number of homelessness claims that are made as a direct result of the policy.

Migrant Workers

9.44 With regard to migration into the Borough the influx of A8 workers into the United Kingdom does appear to have some impact on people either living or working in Gedling. Latest figures show an increasing number of Polish people may be resident in the Borough with 150 National Insurance Registrations for 2006/7. However, this is only the 5th highest in Nottinghamshire County for that period.

9.45 The impact on Gedling workforce has the potential to be significant, with 3060 A8 workers appearing on the Worker Registration Scheme since May 2004, as having their employer's address in Gedling. This puts Gedling highest in the Nottinghamshire County and 6th highest in the East Midlands. Approximately 2990 of these registrations in Gedling are from Polish workers, which equates to 98% of the total proportion of the Borough's A8 workers. This is the highest proportion of Polish workers within a local authority nationally. It suggests that there is an increasing migration of Polish workers into Gedling for employment, but they are resident in neighbouring local authorities.

9.46 Some further exploration may be required of these trends, particularly as some national research has considered that the significant numbers of workers in Gedling registered under the scheme could relate to indirect employment through employment agencies. In other words, their registration maybe with an employment agency but their actual employment base may well be in a separate location either inside or outside the Borough.

9.47 There has only been one approach for assistance due to homelessness by a member of the migrant community in the past year. There are currently 30 houses in multiple occupation in the Borough, some of which house migrant workers. It is assumed that other migrant workers form part of the private rented sector, however this is an area that would benefit from further research.

Estimating future Numbers

9.48 Other factors that will affect the number of number of approaches for assistance due to homelessness include the success of the 'toolkit' and future affordable housing completions and whilst it is very difficult to predict exact numbers, the homeless review did attempt to do this.

9.49 It is predicted that, so long as the 'toolkit' remains effective and the Council continues to take a pro-active approach to preventing homelessness wherever possible, there will be a slight year on year decrease in the number of acceptances.

10 Temporary Accommodation

10.1 As noted in the introduction, the Government has required local authorities to halve the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010. In response to this, targets were set and this is an area in which Gedling Borough Council has excelled. Gedling Borough Council was successful in its bid to the Homelessness Directorate for additional funding to address temporary tenancies and used this to great effect with a reduction of nearly 60% from 238 temporary tenancies in October 2006 to 41 by 31st March 2007. The number held at the 1st April 2008 was 30.

10.2 To ensure that the council maintains its position, significant changes have been made to the allocations process. Accepted homeless applicants can now select either the north or south of the Borough and will be awarded an introductory / assured tenancy of that property. Temporary tenancies in unsuitable accommodation are only used when an applicant is housed in an emergency, or whilst investigations are underway, (i.e. accommodation that may be one bedroom less than defined in the allocations policy) and they will maintain priority on the waiting list until a suitable property can be offered on either an introductory / assured tenancy basis.

10.3 The Council monitors its performance in this area through local and national performance indicators, setting itself challenging targets to ensure homeless families are not unduly placed unsatisfactorily in temporary conditions for longer than necessary.

10.4 The following is a summary of the current position and future plans for housing homeless people in temporary accommodation:

Current Provision

- Gedling Borough Council has a homeless persons hostel which has 10 rooms all of which have access to shared kitchens and bathrooms.
- The Homelessness and Housing Advice team also have use of 7 two bed roomed first floor flats which are predominantly used for larger families with furniture to store, as applicants are able to take their belongings and furniture with them.
- Finally the authority uses bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation. The B&B's currently used are situated outside of the Borough, although they are nearby. The lack of accommodation within the Borough is due to the lack of proprietors who are willing to work with the authority.
- The Quick Access accommodation at Elizabeth House and the move-on accommodation at Sherbrook Road are available to single homeless people in the Borough

Future Plans

Families - Balmoral Hostel

10.5 The Council has a family hostel at Balmoral Road, Colwick. It has ten rooms available to homeless families who have access to shared kitchens and bathrooms. It is a detached Victorian House, the design of which makes it not viable to convert to self-contained accommodation.

10 . Temporary Accommodation

10.6 The Council is aware that this accommodation does not support the national agenda to improve hostel accommodation which encouraging homelessness services to become '**places of change**'. Furthermore it does not support the Council's priorities.

10.7 A key priority for action in this Strategy will be the procurement of a replacement facility.

10.8 The Council would also like to work more closely with housing associations in the Borough to increase the supply of temporary accommodation for homeless people in the Borough. This is in line with the Housing Corporations Homelessness Strategy, which encourages closer working with Councils to meet the national agenda aimed at reducing the use of bed and breakfast accommodation and reducing rough sleeping.

Actions Identified	Outcome	Time scales
Explore options for, and, if appropriate, progress the replacement of, Balmoral Hostel with 'fit for purpose' self-contained accommodation in line with national 'places of change' agenda	The provision of high quality accommodation that is fit for purpose, and which contribute to the Council's priorities	Years 1-3 of the Strategy (Already commenced - Estimated timescale from start to end 3 years)
Seek to identify suitable Bed and Breakfast accommodation in the Borough.	Provide emergency accommodation that is in the Borough.	Yrs 1-2 of the Strategy
Work with Housing Associations in the Borough to increase the availability of temporary accommodation	Reduction in the use of bed and breakfast accommodation	Yrs 1-2 of the Strategy

Accommodation for Teenage Parents

10.9 The need to provide accommodation for teenage parents was hi-lighted in the 2003 Homeless Strategy, and also links to the Nottinghamshire Supporting People Strategy 2005-10 which states: '*The lack of suitable social housing for young/teenage parents ...has increased the need for supported accommodation for this service user group at a time when government policy recommends the accommodation of teenage parents in supported housing if they cannot live with their family or partner*'.

10.10 A significant number of teenage parents approach the Council for assistance due to homelessness. Whilst every effort is made to work with the families to prevent homelessness, this is not always possible. The introduction of mediation services to work with this group may also have a significant impact on the numbers who are able to be re-united with parents and the identification for a suitable mediation service for the Borough is included in the action plan at Appendix 1.

10 . Temporary Accommodation

10.11 The advent of the City of Nottingham's 'Homeless Prevention Gateway' , which has prevented homeless people from outside the City from using supported housing within the City, has been a factor in identifying a need for this service.

10.12 The Council is exploring options for the provision of specialist accommodation with support for young parents, to enable them to gain the skills necessary to maintain a tenancy of their own.

Priority for Action	Resource Implications	Tasks	Outcomes
Develop supported accommodation for homeless teenage parents in partnership with Supporting People and Registered Social Landlord	Land has been identified in principle and revenue funding needs to be identified. (Housing Corporation funding and RSL partner already identified)	Work with asset manager to identify land and Supporting People to identify revenue funding	Supported accommodation suitable for homeless teenage parents in the Borough

10.13 Further outcomes linking to wider strategies in younger people's services include:

- The sustainment of tenancies
- A reduction in homeless applications
- A reduction in rent arrears
- The reduction in anti-social behaviour
- A reduction in repeat homelessness and frequent use of specialist services

Single Homeless - Elizabeth House and Sherbrook Road

10.14 Quick Access accommodation at Elizabeth House has been developed in partnership with the Boroughs of Rushcliffe and Broxtowe, Framework Housing Association , Supporting People and the Housing Corporation. This high quality supported accommodation comprises of 21 self contained one bedroom flats for single people, with additional facilities including a kitchen, education and art rooms, an I.T training suite and a resource centre. The facility opened in March 2008, along side the move-on accommodation which is at Sherbrook Road.

10.15 Elizabeth House is situated within the Borough and an equal share of referrals is available to homeless single people with a connection to Gedling, along side referrals from the Boroughs of Rushcliffe and Broxtowe. Homeless single people from the Borough will be re-housed in to settled accommodation either direct from Elizabeth House, or following a period in the supported move on accommodation. Each client's move on will be assessed according to their individual needs and progress in the accommodation and their longer term settled accommodation could be either in the private or social sector.

Scrutiny review

10.16 __ __Gedling Borough Council members recently completed a scrutiny exercise covering the following areas:

10 . Temporary Accommodation

- To review homelessness in Gedling Borough
- To improve the quality of life for homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless by reviewing the advice and support currently offered
- To explore the multi-agency approach in relation to vulnerable groups i.e. single parents
- To influence housing policy at Gedling Borough Council

10.17 The scrutiny committee subsequently made recommendations which have informed this Strategy.

11 Conclusion

11.1 This homelessness strategy sets out the Council's approach to homelessness and has identified priorities for action over the next 5 years. It has been based on working in partnership, a review of successes to date and the outcome of the Homeless Health Check undertaken by the authority in 2007.

11.2 The focus of the strategy is on the increasing role of prevention, with actions identified to build on the successes of the toolkit to date, looking to add further options to the toolkit to increase the Council's ability to offer additional choice and allow applicants to move on from their homeless situations.

11.3 The Strategy recognises the importance of hi-lighting emerging issues that could affect the Council's ability to deliver the service, paying particular attention to issues like the Local Housing Allowance and

11.4 The strategy has been developed in consultation with key providers in the locality via the JIAF. The Borough will take the lead in monitoring the delivery of the action plan, feeding back to the JIAF via the regular meetings.

11.5 Gedling Borough Council views partnership working as the means to addressing the multiple and complex needs of service users, and seeks to develop both existing and new partnerships, as defined in the action plan, in the immediate future.

11.6 In summary Gedling Borough Council is committed to preventing homelessness wherever possible, and seeks, through the use of the toolkit to offer choice to those at risk of losing their homes.

11.7 Preventative work remains the priority, but it has to be acknowledged that this requires considerable resources in terms of both staff time and local resources and to address this the action plan identifies where there is a need for further funding and resources.

1. Action Plan

1 Action Plan

Priorities for Action

1.1 The following priorities for action have been identified in this Strategy. They have been identified as part of the review process incorporating the Homelessness Health Check. The action plan will be reviewed every six months.

Priorities for Action	Resource Implications	Lead and Links	Tasks	Outcomes	Timescale
Explore options for, and, if appropriate, progress the replacement of, Balmoral Hostel with 'fit for purpose' self-contained accommodation	Initially staff time with ongoing costs including the cost of land, build costs (potential for partnership with RSL and funding by the Housing Corporation)	Strategic Housing Manager, Homeless Manager, RSL partner, Supporting People, Housing Corporation	Begin by reviewing standard of current provision and Best Value Review of Services Feedback from Scrutiny	The provision of high quality accommodation that is fit for purpose, and which contribute to the Council's priorities	Years 1-3 of the Strategy (Already commenced - Estimated timescale from start to end 3 years)
Value For Money assessment of the 'toolkit' and other services for homeless people in the Borough	Officer time	Homeless and Strategy Officers	Develop a methodology to calculate the wider cost of homelessness services, taking account of service-user views	A calculation of the wider costs, overheads and support offered to homeless clients	Ongoing
Develop supported accommodation for teenage parents in partnership with	Land has been identified in principle and revenue funding	Strategic Housing Manager, Planning	Work with Supporting People to identify revenue funding	The provision of supported accommodation suitable	Years 1-3 of the Strategy

Priorities for Action	Resource Implications	Lead and Links	Tasks	Outcomes	Timescale
Supporting People and Registered Social Landlord	needs to be identified. (Housing Corporation funding and RSL partner already identified)	Officers, Supporting People, Lead RSL		for teenage parents in the Borough	
Work with Housing Associations in the Borough to increase the availability of temporary accommodation	Officer time	Housing Strategy and Homeless Manager	Take to Notts Social Housing Forum	Increase the supply of temporary accommodation and the reduction in the use of bed and breakfast accommodation by the Borough Council	Years 1-2 of the Strategy
Work with other Departments of the Council to provide money management and welfare benefits advice.	Resources identified to recruit benefits take up Officer.		Explore availability of money advice services in the County	Increase in the take up of benefits including housing benefit, preventing homelessness. Income maximisation	Ongoing
Develop relationship with the Courts to receive early notification of evictions across all tenures	Staff time		Begin dialog with Court Officers to explore feasibility	Prevent homelessness	Years 1-2 of the Strategy

1. Action Plan

Priorities for Action	Resource Implications	Lead and Links	Tasks	Outcomes	Timescale
PACE training to train Officers to gather evidence to prosecute landlords who carry out illegal evictions	Staff time				Years 1-2 of the Strategy
Work with partners to implement Choice Based Lettings	Staff time, grant received from CLG, contribution from each Borough		Appoint project manager, develop and implement CBL	CBL in operation	Ongoing
Implement mediation services	Funding secured - provider to be identified		Appoint provider and monitor services	Mediation services included in toolkit of options	Year 1 of the Strategy
Review the provision of Supporting People funded floating support within the Borough	Officer time	Homeless and Strategic Housing Managers and Supporting People	Carry out monitoring exercise to ensure officers are able to access support for clients when need identified	Ensure appropriate support in place to assist with prevention of homelessness and tenancy sustainment	Years 1-3 of the Strategy
Expanding the protocol for 16-17 year olds	Officer time	Homeless Manager and Social Services	Continue partnership working to agree the protocol	More settled accommodation for 16/17 year olds	Year 1 of the Strategy
Engaging with Education services to pro-actively prevent homelessness earlier and raise awareness of the issues faced by young	Officer time	Homeless Officers and local secondary schools	Begin dialog with Education to commence activity	Education on the reality of homelessness for young people, with early education on housing options	Years 1-3 of the Strategy

Priorities for Action	Resource Implications	Lead and Links	Tasks	Outcomes	Timescale
people experiencing homelessness					
Comprehensive review of the number of applicants from diverse groups, ensuring their needs are being met by housing and homelessness services in the Borough	Officer time	Strategic Housing	Ensure information is gathered at point of service that will enable a full analysis to be carried out	A service that checks it meets the needs of the community	Ongoing
Seek to identify suitable Bed and Breakfast accommodation in the Borough	Officer time	Homeless Team	Research the availability of B&B accommodation in the Borough	Provide emergency accommodation that is in the Borough.	Yrs 1-2 of the Strategy

Priorities for action

Monitoring and Review

1.2 The Strategy will also be monitored and reviewed in the following way:

Indicator	Description	Frequency	Actual 2007/8	Target 2008/9	Target 2009/10
L1045	Number of homeless prevented through improved access to private rented sector (First Lets)	Annual	23	24	25

1. Action Plan

Indicator	Description	Frequency	Actual 2007/8	Target 2008/9	Target 2009/10
LI043	Number of private sector dwellings improved through First Lets.	Annual	13	14	15
LI044	Number of empty properties brought back into use (First Lets).	Annual	2	2	2
NI155	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	Annual	To be agreed		
NI156	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	Quarterly			
LI 057 (Local 006)	Average time to process homelessness applications	Quarterly	21 days	21days	19 days
LI 046 (BV 213)	Number of Households who consider themselves as homeless, who approached the local housing authority's housing advice service(s), and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation	Quarterly	1.8%	1.9%	2%

2 Joint Inter Agency Forum (JIAF) Membership and Glossary of Terms

Joint Inter Agency Forum (JIAF) Membership

2.1

- Framework
- Step Forward
- Gedling Borough Council
- Framework HA
- Framework - Community Houses
- Safeguarding Children County PCT
- N.C.C. Children & Young Peoples Aftercare Team
- Rushcliffe Community Mental Health Team
- Connexions
- Rushcliffe PCT
- Rushcliffe Youth Services
- N.C.C. Communities Dept
- Notts County TPCT
- Friary Drop-In
- West Bridgford Health Centre
- HLG
- Rushcliffe Borough Council
- N.C.C. Social Services After Care Team
- CLG
- Step-forward
- Cotgrave Town Council
- HLG - Mental Health
- Broxtowe Borough Council
- Spirita Limited
- Nottinghamshire Probation Service
- Bassetlaw District Council
- HLG - Young People
- Framework - Children & Young People
- Supporting People Partnership
- Nottingham Social Services
- N.C.C. Social Services After Care Team
- HLG
- Notts Rural Community Council
- Nottingham City PCT

Glossary of terms

- ABC - Anti Social Behaviour Contract
- ABO - Anti-Social Behaviour Order

2 . Joint Inter Agency Forum (JIAF) Membership and Glossary of Terms

- BME - Black and Minority Ethnic
- CAB - Citizens Advice Bureaux
- CCTV - Closed Circuit Television
- CDRP - Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
- CVS - Council for Voluntary Services
- DAAT - Drug and Alcohol Action Team
- CLG - Communities and Local Government
- DFG - Disabled Facilities Grant
- DTLR - Department for Transport on Local Regions
- DV - Domestic Violence
- EDMO- Empty Dwelling Management Order
- EHO - Environmental Health Officer
- GBC - Gedling Borough Council
- HB - Housing Benefit
- HLG - Hostel Liaison Group
- HMA - Housing Market Assessment
- HRA - Housing revenue Account
- JIAF - Joint Inter-agency Forum
- LA - Local Authority
- MAPPA - Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement
- MASH - Mobile Advice Service for Young Homeless People
- NACRO - National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
- NI - National Indicator
- NOMS- National Offender Management Service
- PCT - Primary Care Trust
- PI - Performance Indicator
- RSL - Registered Social Landlord
- RTB - Right To Buy
- SP - Supporting People

3 Consultation on the Strategy

Consultation

3.1 Consultation on the Strategy began October 2007 when an event involving all major stake holders was held. Attendees included all partner Housing Associations, Supporting People, support providers including Sure Start and Framework, the Housing Corporation and employees of the Council involved with homeless services.

3.2 During the review process the above agencies were also involved in the collection of information and activities carried out in the Borough and the membership of the JIAF were asked for their contribution to inform the review.

3.3 A full consultation with users is being carried out to inform the Strategy and the results will be fed into the final Strategy.

