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Report

Subject : Interim Homelessness Strategy 2008-2009
Report to : The Cabinet
Date : Wednesday 03 September 2008
Author : Andrew Reynolds
Cabinet Member for Housing: Councillor Ian Tomes

1. Purpose

Cabinet is asked to note and endorse the council's interim Homelessness Strategy covering the period from July 2008 to March 2009.

2. Background

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires the council to produce a review of its Homelessness Strategy within the national deadline of July 2008. Received guidance from Communities and Local Government (CLG) has advised that in consideration that Salisbury District Council is one of four district authorities within Wiltshire moving towards Unitary status the requirement for a revised Homelessness Strategy is deferred until April 2009 and that an action plan will be accepted as an interim measure. A comprehensive review of all the strategies will be undertaken as the unitary transition progresses, resulting in a new strategy for Wiltshire.

3. Review of current strategy

The opportunity was taken to review the targets and actions set out in the Homelessness Strategy and to provide an analysis of the outcomes.

Tests made against the previous strategy provide a positive outcome and confirms that the council has largely met the set objectives. The council's continued proactive approach to tackling homelessness remains one of the political priorities to which resources continue to be targeted. The council also recognises that homelessness is not just a housing issue and puts great effort into developing strong and effective partnerships with a wide range of key agencies and stakeholders to resolve the very real problems homelessness causes; disruption to families, health both mental and physical and the disruption to communities.

Key successes

- The following are just some of the key successes from the last five years:
- Commissioning and publishing the Bannan Report;
- Allocating £800,000 of capital funding to support new projects;
- Providing strategic and political leadership to homelessness service provision, including the SHOOTS project group;



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- Providing a comprehensive housing options and prevention service;
- On target to meet the Government's temporary accommodation reduction target;
- Strong partnership with the voluntary organisations and other statutory bodies to deliver more joined up services to homeless people;
- Securing additional revenue funding, for the current year this amounts to £70,000;
- Securing £10,000 to operate a Court Desk to support people facing the loss of their home.

The priority outcomes set in 2003 remain relevant today. Our continuing approach focuses on meeting the challenges homelessness presents to the individual, and our planned objectives will continue to develop as we achieve and review our five key strategic aims:

1. Proving and monitoring homelessness need
2. Inspiring solutions for early intervention, prevention of homelessness
3. Delivering more affordable homes
4. Delivering high quality and a choice of services that meet individual needs
5. Facilitating and enabling partnership working to deliver holistic services

These five aims have been endorsed through consultation with the key partners and stakeholders. There has not been sufficient time to undertake consultation with users, however, this will form part of the new Wiltshire Homelessness Strategy.

This attached Interim Strategy presents the outcomes of the last five years, it outlines the achievements from the previous strategy (Appendix 1), and the objectives for the intermediate period to April 2009 which complements the 03/08 strategy (Appendix 2) it sets out the timetable for the development of the future single strategy for Wiltshire, when the District and County Councils will cease to exist and we become a single council: Wiltshire Council.

4. Conclusion:

The council has made significant strides to lead and support the improvement of services to homeless people. It is necessary to continue with a programme of improvements especially in the current economic climate where more people will encounter difficulties with keeping their home.

5. Recommendation:

Cabinet is asked to note and endorse the Interim Homelessness Strategy.

6. Implications:

Financial:	None in respect of this report.
Legal:	Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities every five years to publish a Homelessness Strategy. CLG has confirmed that the council does not need to produce a new strategy but has requested an update on current and proposed actions to March 2009.
Human Rights:	None in respect of this report
Personnel:	None in respect of this report
IT:	None in respect of this report
Community Safety:	None in respect of this report
Environmental:	None in this report
Council's Core Values	Promoting excellent service, supporting the disadvantaged, being fair and equitable, communicating with the public, wanting to be an open, learning council and a willing partner.
Wards affected:	All
Consultation undertaken	Yes but limited to stakeholders. Public consultation will be undertaken as part of the new Wiltshire Homelessness Strategy.

A PLACE TO CALL
HOME

Interim Homelessness Strategy 2008 - 2009



Awarded in:
Housing Services
Waste and Recycling Services



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More information can also be found on the council's website

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Interim Homelessness Review

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires Salisbury to produce a review of its Homelessness Strategy within the national deadline of July 2008. Received guidance from Communities and Local Government (CLG) has advised that in consideration that Salisbury District Council is one of four district authorities within Wiltshire moving towards Unitary status the requirement for a revised Homelessness Strategy is deferred until April 2009 and that an action plan will be accepted as an interim measure. A comprehensive review of all the strategies will be undertaken as the unitary transition progresses, resulting in a new strategy for Wiltshire.

CLG requires a proactive planned preventative approach to homelessness, with a requirement to help whether a household is in priority need, which contrasts with the previous reactive approach.

Salisbury tested itself with the previous strategy and has largely met the set objectives. Salisbury's continued proactive approach to tackling homelessness remains one of the political priorities to which resources continue to be targeted. Salisbury recognise that homelessness is not just a housing issue and puts great effort into effectively working in partnership with a wide range of key agencies and stakeholders to resolve the very real problems homelessness causes; disruption to families, health both mental and physical and the disruption to communities.

The priority outcomes set in 2003 remain relevant today. Our continuing approach focuses on meeting the challenges homelessness presents to the individual, and our planned objectives will continue to develop as we achieve and review our five key strategic aims:

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This report presents the outcomes of the last five years, it outlines the achievements from the previous strategy (appendix 1), and the objectives for the intermediate period to April 2009 which complements the 03/08 strategy (appendix 2) it sets out the

timetable for the development of the future single strategy for Wiltshire, when the District and County Councils will cease to exist and we become a single council: Wiltshire Council.

A summary of the outcomes of the planned objectives from the 2003-08 strategy is attached as appendix 1 and offers an overview of each individual objective.

A key local partnership Single Homeless Options Opportunities Training (SHOOTS) has been instrumental in developing a strong multi-agency approach towards single homeless. SHOOTS comprises members drawn from all the supported housing providers, health, housing and other support agencies from the third sector.

The achievements within the 5 key aims is outlined in more detail below:

Proving and monitoring homelessness need

- Key research commissioned from Bannan has helped underpin and model our current and planned development of local homelessness services.
- The development of the SHOOTS partnership pathway to help delivery of effective services for single homeless people as a result of the Bannan report and direct consultation with local stakeholders.
- The current development of a specific strategy for Rough Sleepers that incorporates the Government's 'Getting Connected' agenda.

Inspiring solutions for early intervention, prevention of homelessness

- We have tested different working practices to identify the best way to deliver the prevention agenda set by CLG, resulting in an increase of individuals of who have avoided homelessness.
- The encouraging impacts of the initiatives developed to support people in sustaining and procuring accommodation, through the dedicated Deposit Bond Team and Rent In Advance team who assist individuals to obtain independent private rented accommodation.
- The positive outcomes of the informal Direct Access arrangements and future development through the Damascus House project.
- The SHOOTS partnership has been effective in delivering services for single homeless people through positive joint working and information sharing.

Delivering more affordable homes

- We continue to work closely with our Housing Management team to make the best use of all our housing stock .
- We have 338 units of accommodation via the affordable home program, which includes the Do It Yourself Shared Ownership scheme.

Delivering high quality and a choice of services that meet individual needs

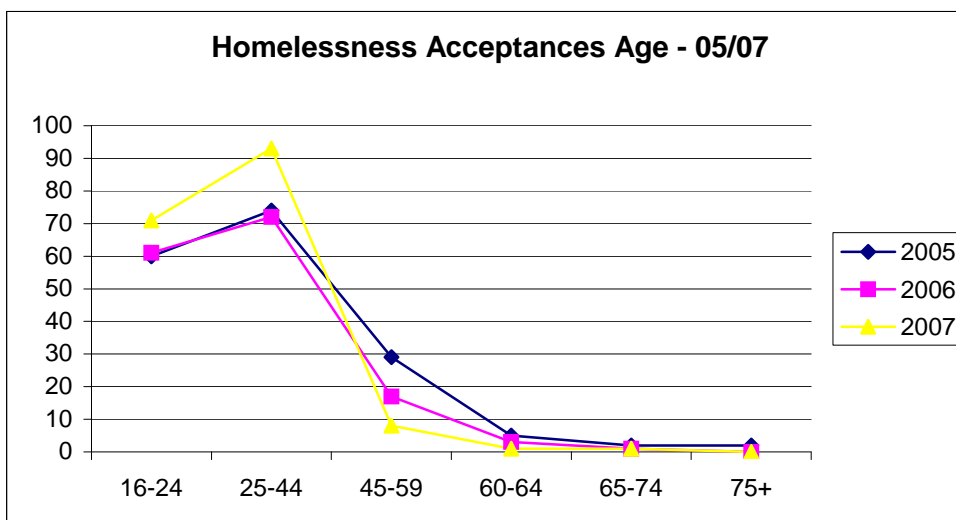
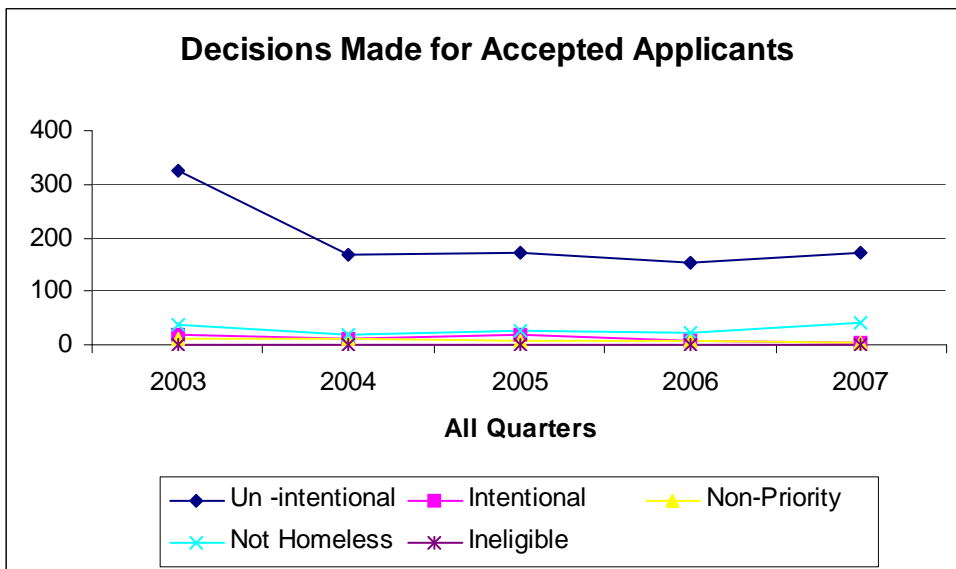
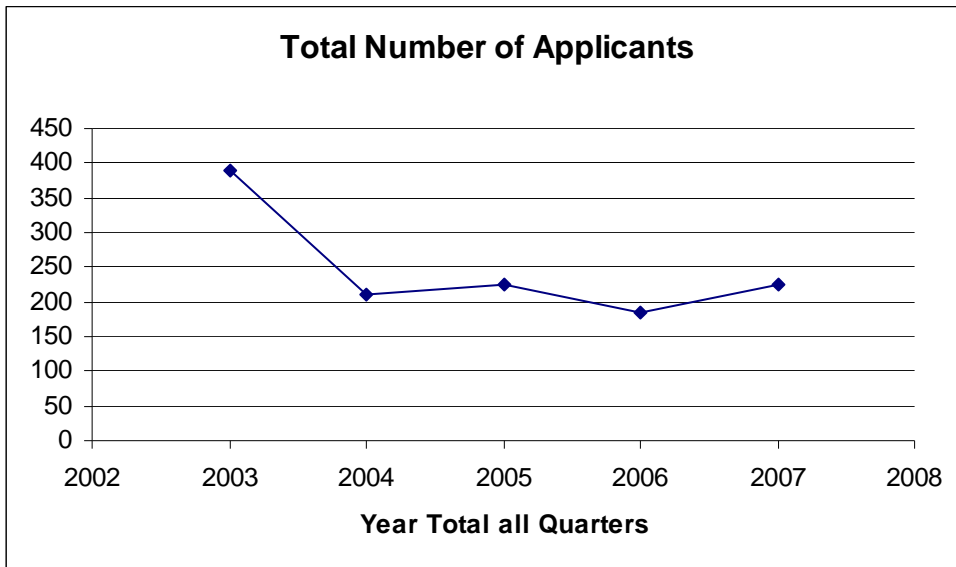
- We are actively supporting the remodelling of a first tier supported accommodation provider to deliver services fit for the 21st Century and the Government's 'Places for Change' agenda.
- We have led the development of a service specifically for 16 and 17 years olds through the Local Public Service Agreements, which resulted in Centre of Excellence for Youth Homelessness recognition.
- We are on target to meet and sustain the Government's Temporary Accommodation Target for 2010.
- We are meeting the targets set to limit the use of Bed & Breakfast through active development of alternative solutions.
- We are developing a strategy for Rough Sleepers and the implementation of the Government's 'Getting Connected' agenda.
- We are leading on the development of the SHOOTS partnership to delivering effective services for single homeless people.

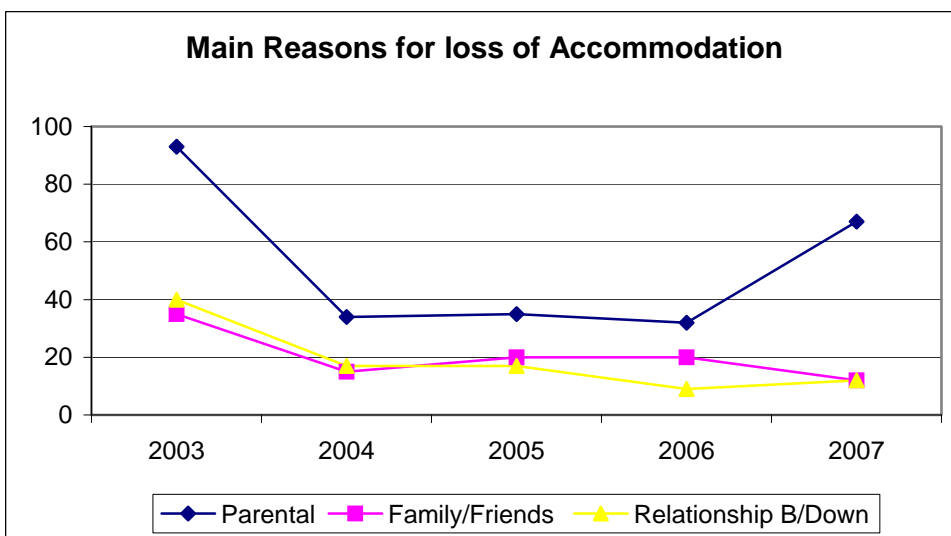
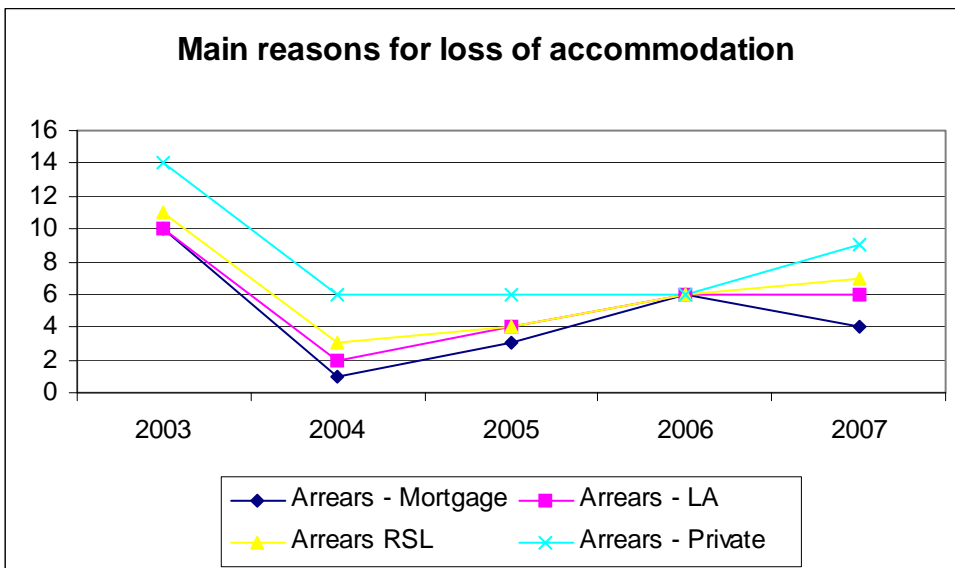
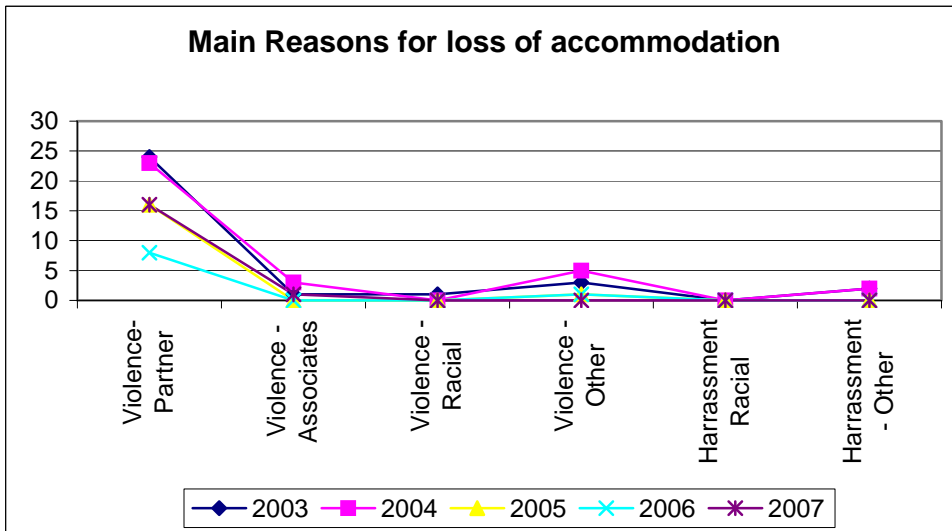
Facilitating and enabling partnership working to deliver holistic services

- We have facilitated the development of the SHOOTS partnership in delivering effective services for single homeless people.
- We have an agreement where 75% of all single person accommodation is allocated to homelessness and move-on from supported housing.
- We have developed Direct Access arrangements for a number of beds with our first tier supported accommodation provider.
- We have embraced and encouraged healthy dialogue between stakeholders and ourselves to deliver more effective services.

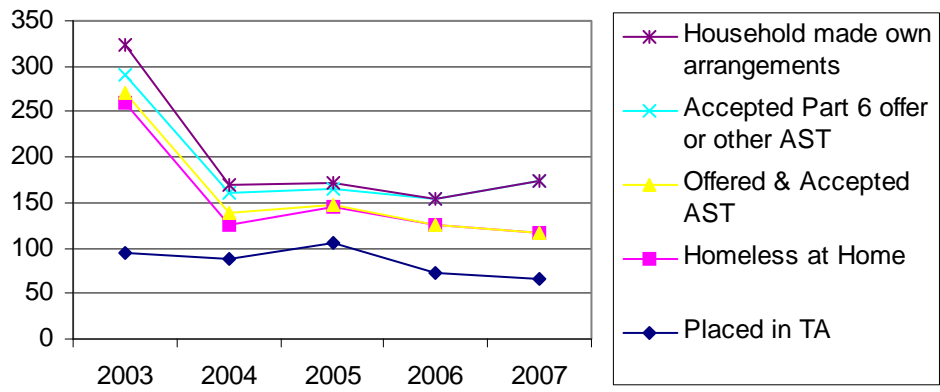
Measuring Homelessness

These summary graphs offer an indication of the levels of homelessness in Salisbury which have decreased over the period of the last strategy evidencing the positive impact of a prevention agenda. The low intentionality decisions further supports the effective homelessness advice provided by our team.





Immediate Outcome for eligible, unintentional & priority need



Outcomes Summary of Planned Objectives from 2003-08 Strategy

Key:

Blue – updated actions for the 2003-08 Homelessness Strategy

Red – outstanding issues – or not achieved

1 Providing and monitoring homelessness needs		
Additional to the specific actions highlighted. A specific report to identify Single Homelessness Needs was commissioned in 2005 and delivered in 2006, and, a Rough Sleeper strategy is currently being developed that will capture details of all known homelessness cases.	Develop an effective database of housing advice enquiries to monitor the effectiveness of housing advice in preventing homelessness.	Multi-agency agreement (03-08 Plan) LIBRA Client piloted 2005 – 07, fully implemented in September 2007. Off the shelf standard report based on P1E data, structure of database requires mandatory information for P1E. Currently the system is unable to provide reports assessing effectiveness of Housing Advice, though it may be possible if resources are allocated to allow interrogation of the free text stored in the system. Moving to a new CBL system which will have a Homelessness Module included
	Introduce a standardised data collection form for use by voluntary agencies to record enquiries.	Draft form (03-08 Plan) Count Them In – initiated by the Voluntary Sector conducted 2 Homelessness Count episodes using standardised, anonymised collection form in Oct – Nov 2005 & Mar – Jul 06. This has led to the development of the SHOOTS referral form - to be fully implemented Spring 2008.
	Use the Council's Medical Panel to monitor and evaluate issues around homelessness and ill health.	Amend Terms of Reference (03-08 Plan) Medical Panel now includes health care professionals to assist officers in assessment of housing needs and homelessness. A Community Matron has been invited to join the panel
	Discuss with the CAB and Shelter a means of evaluating the effectiveness of housing advice services in the district.	Meeting (03-08 Plan) Bi-annual formal meeting held with CAB Advisors. Actively involved in the implementation of the SHOOTS Project Board and Panel. Re-initiated the Multi-Agency Housing Group for South Wiltshire which encourages open discussion amongst stakeholders.

2 Inspiring solutions for early intervention, prevention and providing options		
Inspired Housing Options Service	Reviewing and re-launch the Rent in Advance and Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme	Draft procedures (03-08 Plan) Draft information pack (03-08 Plan) The scheme has been remodelled during the period in line with statutory and local requirements. A specific officer who has responsibility for marketing the service currently delivers the scheme. (Rent in Advance and Deposit Bond Scheme)
	Developing and launching 'Inspired Housing Options Service'	Draft work practices (03-08 Plan) Options Service launched July 2007, ongoing evaluation through Team Meetings. Organisational Flow Chart demonstrates links. Effectiveness can be checked against BVPI 213. Links will be established with the new IT system
Housing Advice	Complete the review of housing advice services.	Draft work practices (03-08 Plan) Two Management Reviews undertaken on both occasions resources where realigned to identified capacity gaps. The service is reviewed on an ongoing basis through self-comparison with other Local Authorities and attendance at seminars.
	Introduce more robust homelessness assessment and prevention framework.	Achieved through the two items above
	Develop and launch a rural outreach advice service.	Assessed as not cost effective
	Develop and launch a web site with housing advice information	Identify locations and delivery plan Web design(03-08 Plan) Web site developed and updated by a specific officer.
	Develop and publish a series of advice leaflets.	Draft leaflets (03-08 Plan) Achieved – December 2007 Meeting (03-08 Plan)
	Explore with the CAB the opportunity to develop more accessible services, and in particular those related to debt counselling	Draft Service Level Agreement Report to Cabinet (03-08 Plan) Bi-annual meetings. CAB have appointed a specific Debt Advisor to their service which is part funded through their core contract with SDC
Young Homeless People	Launching the partnership with Salisbury Mediation Services	Engaged, protocol updated 2007
	Reviewing the Shared Housing Project	Demand and supply under constant review. Rural

	and consider the future development in rural areas.	provision identified as not being cost effective.
	Develop a Children Act protocol with Wiltshire County Council	Meeting with WCC (03-08 Plan) Achieved
	Consider the opportunities of extending the services delivered by the Foyer into the local community and links to the Shared Housing Project.	Meeting with relevant stakeholders (03-08 Plan) Picked up in Bannan Report – now SHOOTs
	Identify how the Connexions service can be integrated into the housing advice role and the work of the South Wiltshire Foyer.	Meeting (03-08 Plan) Links through working relationships. Youth Support Worker appointed in Jan 08 which further integrates links
Young Mothers	Open the Young Mothers supported home	Launch (03-08 Plan) Completed (2004) service enhanced and tendered in 2007 – Alabare support this project
	Employ a Project Support Worker	Advert (03-08 Plan) met through Alabare
	Create a home and centre where other agencies can provide support services.	Not Achieved
Ex-Offenders	Consider the Winchester Prison – custody to work project request for a nomination agreement for re-housing ex-offenders.	Draft agreement (03-08 Plan) Agreement in place for Offenders. Links remain open.
Street Sleepers	Conduct an official rough sleepers count.	Establish working group (03-08 Plan) Count & Strategy under development – Spring 2008. In 2005 & 2007 other mechanisms were utilised with partners to offer indicative findings
	Re-launch the Soup Kitchen project.	Morning Star & The Drop In
	Develop a Crisis Assessment Centre for Homeless People.	A specification and project identified at the Quaker site in Wilton Road was assessed as unaffordable. Delay until winter 2006 when Damascus House – Direct Access 28 day assessment was established and the SHOOTs project developed in 2007
Domestic Violence	Provide regular housing advice surgeries at the Refuge	Established
	Evaluate the concept of a 'Sanctuary' project to enable women to return home.	Utilised once in Salisbury. Merits are recognised and funds available. The Harrow Model is being used alongside the police Bobby Van scheme and LifeLine through Care Connect.

3 Delivering more affordable homes		
	Deliver on the Actions detailed in the Scrutiny Review of Creating more Affordable Homes in South Wiltshire.	Interim Report to Cabinet (03-08 Plan) We delivered 323 new affordable homes in December 07. Most of the schemes have at least 25% shared ownership, which is a position we intend to maintain. We have also delivered two Do It Yourself Shared Ownership Schemes enabling a further 15 households to purchase their own home from the open market.
	Develop a plan for low cost home-ownership initiatives, including shared ownership	
4 Delivering high quality and a choice of services that meet the needs of individuals		
	Achieve Charter Mark accreditation for Housing Services.	Received twice – 2004 & 2007
	Achieve the Crystal mark for the Housing Application Form.	Not applied for. A new Housing Application form will be developed under LGR for implementation in April 2009
	Explore how service users and stakeholders can be involved in the review and development of services.	Service users are systematically involved in development of services i.e. Bannan, SHOOTs
Health & Social Care	Identify models to help improve access to primary care for homeless people.	Not Achieved
	Develop a model with the South Wiltshire Primary Care Trust to direct people from hospital to local services.	On-going. Development has occurred re Domestic Violence. Conduit will be developed for SHOOTs
	Ensure that the Young Mothers Project is linked to the local Health Visitor and Mid-Wifery services.	Was at inception and continues to do so under Alabare
	Undertake health promotion campaigns in our Shared Housing Projects.	Identify what PCT priorities are and obtain leaflets for reception. Promote through SWMAHP
	Hold events in conjunction with the SWPCT to provide networking opportunities and to develop shared knowledge.	Develop links with SWMAHP
Support for Training & Employment	Develop procedures for the Shared Housing Projects to have access to the Foyer.	Via SHOOTs project
	Explore how we can raise greater awareness of the consequences of	Outreach to schools & colleges ongoing project since 2004.

	homelessness amongst school children.	
Intervention Pilot at Winchester Prison	Develop and implement an intervention pilot at Winchester Prison.	Links established with Accommodation Team at Winchester Prison, staff changes at HMP Winchester has reduced the effective links
Choice Based Lettings	Finalise our review on the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) pilots.	Reviewed in 2005. CBL is a priority for the new authority.
	CBL Report to Cabinet for Members' decision.	November 2007
Salisbury Housing Support Team & Floating Support Services	Review the current range of floating support services.	Evaluated strategically; Bath University & Bannan
	As a minimum to improve co-ordination with providers to bring about efficiency savings.	In relation to Floating Support the intention was to reduce blockages in services. SHOOTs resolves some of these issues.
Soup Kitchen	Identify the reasons why the Soup Kitchen ceased operation and work towards re-provision	Alabare Drop-In and Morning Star provide food on weekdays. The former is an accommodation based service, the latter is outreach
Supporting People	Develop a clear process for identifying supported housing needs that can inform the Supporting People Strategy.	Bannan Report, SHOOTs, and is ongoing
	Review our own services to ensure they are assessed as high quality.	Management Review Structure, Audit Commission Reports etc review various different service areas
Private Rented Sector	Identify the causes of presentations.	P1E data
	Review the rent in advance and rent deposit guarantee scheme.	Reviewed, most recently in 2007, transference to a Deposit Bond Scheme
	Evaluate whether it is appropriate to provide tenancy support to people in the private sector.	Evaluated – generic floating support established
	Develop a grant policy to encourage owners to bring back into use empty properties for letting to homeless households.	Not achieved
Temporary Accommodation & Standards	Review our standards to ensure they meet current legal requirements.	This is an ongoing task and has resulted in properties being returned to landlords. Inspections are planned to ensure existing stock meets the Decent Homes Standard

	Conduct customer satisfaction survey.	Measured by complaints. Further analysis will be undertaken when resources allow.
	Update literature package and brand image 'Inspired Leasing'.	Not Achieved It is considered that the targets set to reduce temporary accommodation would not lend this initiative to value for money
	Consider extending the Housing Benefit verification work undertaken by Strategic Housing Services to private sector landlords.	Undertaken for private sector for clients accessing the RIA and DBG schemes.
	Evaluate the implications of introducing a Landlords Accreditation scheme	Not achieved This was discussed with the Landlords forum, who requested that the council conduct research on schemes run by other councils, the forum has not met for a significant time and the research remains an outstanding item
5 Facilitating and enabling partnerships to work closer together to deliver more holistic services		
	Develop a clear partnership map that can show the local interfaces.	SHOOTS
	With the local interfaces arrange networking sessions to enable staff to come together and share problems and solutions.	SHOOTS
	Publish partnership directory to help the voluntary agencies to access services.	SHOOTS
	Develop a sub-regional housing strategy with neighbouring authorities.	Unitary Status will provide one strategy for Wiltshire

Summary of Planned New Actions

Carry out a full review of Wiltshire's homeless strategy	Carry out a cross-county review and produce a new five year homeless strategy	June 2009
Establish a Court Desk	Establish a service free to all people on possession hearing days at the local county court to reduce the incidence of homelessness, and to prove and monitor the causes of repossession and eviction	August 2008
Fully implement the SHOOTs database	Establish support and housing needs of all single homeless people in south Wiltshire. To enable delivery of positive outcomes for single homeless to support delivery of prevention agenda. Further develop the existing model towards fully integrating all single homeless people within SHOOTs. Enabling move-on options to independent and other supported housing options to be accurately delivered and offered	October 2008
Review the needs and services for Rough Sleepers	Identify services appropriate to meet the needs of rough sleepers, identify reconnections processes to help meet unmet need	November 2008
Embed links with third sector & statutory agencies to share good practice	Jointly develop joint training, inductions for new staff and staff shadowing to promote good working relationships and to share good practice	March 2009
Assess the impact of LHA on different market areas	Identify the impact of Local Housing Allowances on private lettings in the area. Improve the knowledge of available housing options for clients in the private sector	March 2009
Consult with private landlords regarding the options available to them via Salisbury District Council	Consult to identify the deposit scheme needs of private landlords in the area. To increase availability of provision and improve relationships with private landlords / private sector	December 2008
Single Portal to Supported Housing Services	Implementation through SHOOTs of a single portal to all supported housing services for single homeless. Portal is able to assess needs, risk and other vulnerabilities and appropriately place for initial key working	October 2008
Assertive Outreach for Rough Sleepers and Intermittent Sleepers	Establish a Street Support Team that will link with health, housing and the voluntary sector to encourage positive engagement within communities and a reduction in Rough Sleepers and Intermittent Sleepers	December 2008
Support the delivery of more new affordable homes through the LAA ambition	Support the planning application for Damascus House and secure the funding required to resource the new development.	March 2009
	Support additional provision of move-on accommodation.	March 2009
	Support the delivery of an intermediate rent scheme.	March 2009
Produce an information guide to the residents	Detailed information guide for single temporary accommodation	March 2009

who stay in Temporary accommodation	residents	
Develop & Implement a Temporary Accommodation standard	Improve the standard of the accommodation environment specifically: cleanliness, provision of basic furniture and bedding to ensure is fit for purpose.	March 2009
Monitor Local Area Agreement national indicator 141 – Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living	Assess effectiveness of local services in the delivery of supporting vulnerable people to achieve independent living. Identify and assess tools that may assist in the development of life skills i.e. Practical Housing Units, Its Your Move etc	March 2009
Review housing advice services	Develop increased robustness to support the preventative work in the private sector	March 2009
Conduct a review of all joint protocols in place with partner agencies.	Review all joint partnership protocols. Identify effective processes and support with joint / multi-agency training. To improve working relationships with partner agencies and aid prevention agenda	March 2009
Increased effectiveness in the utilisation of Supported Housing Services	Introduction of a single portal with the responsibility to fully assess single homeless people and identify appropriate placement within supported housing provision. Develop and underpin greater understanding of local provision	March 2009