

East Surrey Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer

Delivery Plan

A Partnership of Elmbridge, Epsom and Ewell, Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead and Tandridge Borough and District Councils

INTRODUCTION

We are committed through our Homelessness Strategies to the continued enhancement and improvement of our housing options services and are pleased that our bid for resources to the Department of Communities and Local Government towards achieving this goal has been successful.

This plan provides background information to our partnership and sets out how we intend to use these resources with our partners to specifically deliver enhanced services focused on providing employment and training advice.

OUR VISION

Across our area we will employ three full time staff seconded from VT Group plc (the Surrey County Council Connexions provider), who are skilled in employment and training advice, they will work with people at risk of homelessness and or in housing need to help them improve their economic status and employment and housing opportunities. The skills of these workers will be steadily transferred to our existing teams to ensure that, over the course of the project, every housing options interview includes advice on employment and training.

This project will:

- deliver housing, employment and training advice through enhanced housing options services;
- improve our current success in homelessness prevention;
- measure performance and outcomes;

- use the Chartered Institute of Housing's 'Tackling Worklessness Toolkit' to develop the service;
- use feedback from service users and partner agencies to continue to shape and improve the service;
- promote the service to partner registered Social Landlords and statutory and voluntary agencies;
- monitor the current downturn in the housing and job market and in response review and revise the project if required;
- identify gaps in our wider service delivery and agree how we will address these; our action plan is attached at appendix 1(to follow);
- promote best practice to other authorities once the service has been developed; and
- develop an exit strategy and ensure that the skills and experience gained during the project is smoothly transferred to the work of our housing options staff.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Our track record on partnership working

We have a strong track record of working in partnership in East Surrey and across the County that provides us with the experience and commitment to deliver this project. Examples of our joint work are given below.

- East Surrey Housing Strategy
- East Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- East Surrey Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment
- East Surrey successful bid to the Department of Communities and Local Government for private sector housing renewal funding

- East Surrey Home Choice and North West Surrey Search – choice based lettings schemes
- Surrey Supporting People Strategy
- Surrey domestic violence mobility scheme
- Surrey housing protocols for offenders and young people
- Surrey rural affordable housing group and rural enabler funded by some of the authorities
- Surrey Local Area Agreement target to develop new affordable homes

Our Track Record on Homelessness and Housing Options

Reigate and Banstead were selected as regional champions on homelessness and each of the East Surrey authorities has achieved significant success in preventing homelessness, delivering housing options services, improving services to customers and achieving the government's targets. In particular we have all achieved the following:

- produced and implemented comprehensive Homelessness Reviews and Strategies;
- achieved the government's targets on:
 - ✓ only using bed and breakfast accommodation in cases of emergency
 - ✓ halving the numbers of households in temporary accommodation; and
 - ✓ avoiding the use of bed and breakfast accommodation to temporarily house 16 and 17 year olds.
- increased the number of homelessness cases prevented;
- improved access to different housing options, including comprehensive use of the private rented sector; and

- maintained a low level of rough sleeping.

STRATEGIC LINKS

In delivering this project we will have regard to the legislation on homelessness, housing allocations and choice and the accompanying codes of guidance, best practice guides and toolkits.

We will also have regard to the following national, regional, county and local policies and initiatives.

National

- The ***Housing Reform Green Paper*** that may link housing services to economic dependence and social mobility including the introduction of different forms of tenure and the ***Welfare Reform Bill*** that is expected to focus on helping to get people back into work. Both of these will build on the work of the Hills review ***Ends and Means; The future roles of social housing in England*** that was published in 2007. Hills examined the problem of high levels of unemployment among social housing tenants and the need to retain tenants with mixed incomes.
- **No-one left out: Ending Rough Sleeping by 2012.** Whilst all five authorities have low estimates of rough sleeping that do not trigger the requirement for a count, we are committed to provide services to this group, as this helps to alleviate the impact on neighbours such as Brighton, Guildford and London, where high levels of service are provided for rough sleepers. The local services we have available are:
 - ✓ free housing options advice;
 - ✓ rent deposit schemes for priority and non-priority homeless households;
 - ✓ a range of supported housing;
 - ✓ generic tenancy and specialist tenancy support schemes including schemes for offenders and drug users across Surrey;
 - ✓ Surrey housing protocols for offenders and young people

- ✓ the Leatherhead (Mole Valley District Council) Night Hostel that has no local connection criteria and has received Places for Change money so the building can be refurbished and provide a 24 hour service that focused on support, access to training and work;
 - ✓ support provided to the day centre for the homeless and lonely in Leatherhead called the Pitstop; and
 - ✓ a reconnection protocol is under negotiation with Guildford Borough Council to provide access to the night hostels in that area and there are links with the night hostel facility in Woking.
- **Tackling Overcrowding in England: Self-Assessment for Local Authorities.** The five authorities do not have significantly high levels of overcrowding, however, the housing needs surveys for each area indicate a problem with under occupation across all tenures. That said, we all have a small number of overcrowded households with high levels of housing need that need to be assisted. We therefore have local initiatives in place to tackle both overcrowding and under occupation and these are:
 - ✓ high priority awarded for overcrowding and under occupation in all the authority allocation schemes;
 - ✓ incentive schemes offered by Registered Social Landlords and local authority landlords to tenants under occupying their homes and some provide assistance with the practicalities of moving home;
 - ✓ reviews under way of older persons housing that should lead to the remodelling of schemes to attract under occupiers and the development of a Surrey wide extra care initiative;
 - ✓ some large scale voluntary transfer Registered Social Landlords have funding to extend existing homes or provide loft extensions where families are overcrowded and this best practice will be shared; and
 - ✓ a pilot Housing Options for Older People scheme for East Surrey funded by Supporting People for two years that will provide a high level of assistance to help older people across all tenures to either adapt their current home or move to a smaller home.

- **The economic down turn, debt and mortgage repossession.** During the course of the project we will monitor the economic downturn and review and revise the scheme if appropriate. We are all committed to ensure our housing options services can respond to the current conditions and have the following in place:
 - ✓ Citizens' Advice Bureaux and local money advice services;
 - ✓ county court advice desks;
 - ✓ either integrated housing options and housing benefit services or close working arrangements that provide quick responses for customers;
 - ✓ housing and council tax benefit calculators on our websites;
 - ✓ given a commitment to implement the government's mortgage rescue schemes and are putting the procedures and protocols in place; and
 - ✓ our housing options staff are trained on the different types of help that is available to people who have a threat of repossession because of mortgage arrears and will record the results of their work as required by government for monitoring purposes.

Finally, we are all in the process of updating our websites to provide information on debt, mortgage repossession, the criteria for the different schemes and links to recognised on-line debt services. We will also use leaflets and our council magazines to promote this information.

Regional

- **The Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11** that prioritises support for vulnerable people.

County

- **The Surrey Supporting People Strategy 2008-11** sets out the vision for supporting vulnerable people across Surrey that requires housing support. The main aim of the Strategy is to ensure that the more vulnerable members of the community have opportunities to make positive choices and to positively contribute to the communities in which they live.
- **The Surrey Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement.** We are committed to jointly achieving targets for the following National Indicators:
 - ✓ National Indicator 154 – net additional homes provided.
 - ✓ National Indicator 155 – number of affordable homes delivered.
 - ✓ National Indicator 141 - percentage of vulnerable people achieving independent living (Surrey Supporting People is the lead authority for the collection and monitoring of this indicator).

Local

- All the authorities have in place a:
 - ✓ Community strategy
 - ✓ Local Plan and evolving Local Development Frameworks
 - ✓ Housing strategy
 - ✓ Homelessness review and strategy

EAST SURREY ENHANCED HOUSING OPTIONS TRAILBLAZER DELIVERY PLAN

Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Resourcing	Outcomes /Measure of success
1. Draft Partnership budget and headline spending projections for the two year period	March 2009	Partnership	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear Budget Plan • Outcomes delivered within agreed budget plan
2. Agree key performance targets for Partnership	March 2009	Partnership	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key PI's agreed with CLG as part of Action Plan • Clear framework for establishing success of the partnership. Early identification of any problems allowing for amendments to action plan as necessary.
3. Enhanced Housing Options Project Management required. This role will be taken on by the coordinator.	March 2009	Partnership	Enhanced Housing Options budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinator appointed and project management taken on

<p>4. Agree job roles of Employment Training across the Partnership</p> <p>Advisers, number and spread of posts</p> <p>Partnership to consider draft job description, liaise with Job Centre Plus and VT Group plc for input.</p> <p>Partnership to agree amount of trailblazer budget to be spent on Employment Training Advisers and then negotiate/agree budget with VT Group plc</p>	<p>April 2009</p>	<p>Partnership</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job roles/ Job descriptions drafted and FTE's, work base arrangements etc finalised ready for recruitment to begin • Posts advertised
<p>5. Agree employment/commissioning arrangements for Employment Training Adviser posts through third party (VT Group plc)</p> <p>Need to consider whether Partnership/commissioning Agreement is needed between the Partners and VT Group plc.</p> <p>Need some documentation setting out costs to be paid to VT Group plc, where responsibility for Health and safety, line management lies etc</p>	<p>April – June 2009</p>	<p>Partnership</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other employment arrangements in place ready for recruitment

6. Recruitment of Employment Training Adviser posts Partnership to agree advertising arrangements, interview panel, selection process etc	June 2009	Partnership & VT Group plc	Enhanced Housing Options budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Officers successfully recruited.
7. Induction and training of new Employment Training Adviser posts Partnership to agree induction programme with VT Group plc and work plans, targets etc Targets to cover inward client referrals, clients seen, back to work plans completed, numbers finding work etc	July/August 2009	Partnership & VT Group plc	Enhanced Housing Options budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective induction of ETA and clear work plan/targets to work toward
8. Better off in work calculations performed by Employment Training Advisers who will train Housing Options Officers to perform this function. Benefits with staff encouraged to promote benefits of employment.	August 2009	Employment Training Advisers. Housing Options personnel after training	Enhanced Housing Options budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients engage with service resulting in potential self esteem and financial benefits to clients. • Reflected in Employment Training Advisers case load and Performance Indicator 5 attached.

9. Commencement of 1:1 Employment Training Adviser service for Housing clients	August 2009	Employment Training Advisers	Enhanced Housing Options budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Training Advice Service Commences. • Referrals made, casework commences, monitoring of service against agreed outcomes
10. Improve access to advice and information available to clients across the partnership. Review and enhance leaflets and web based information on the service Support to use free internet access to search for job vacancies.	August 2009	Employment Training Advisers and Local Authority Housing Options Officers	Enhanced Housing Options budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to information to clients. • Increased engagement with the service available on options, employment and training advice • Improved information/ content displayed on the Local Authority websites with links.
11. Agree client training/workshop programme across the partnership to publicise the project at easily accessible locations	August 2009	Partnership	Enhanced Housing Options budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops take place • engagement with the service • harder to reach groups targeted

<p>12. Commencement of skills / Training sessions for clients</p>	September 2009	Employment Training Adviser's	Enhanced Housing Options budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training takes place, skill obtained leading to increased chances of employment, clients employed. • Level of success will be numbers taking up training opportunities and securing employment – targets set out in Performance indicator table.
<p>13. Set up wider stakeholder group to monitor Employment Training Advisor service</p> <p>Develop forums for discussion with key partners.</p> <p>Decide on membership with other stakeholders.</p> <p>Develop a framework for consultation through members.</p>	September 2009	Partnership	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference agreed • Partners kept informed of progress • Relevant protocols in place with partner agencies

14. Develop systems to capture information and monitor outcomes.	May 2009 to commence recording.	Partnership	Enhanced Housing Options budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out 3 and 6 monthly impact assessments with referred clients • Develop a system to record performance against targets • Use feedback to further improve and develop the service delivered
15. To monitor the current downturn in the job market each quarter and to review the action points and targets amending as necessary	Ongoing from commencement of project	Employment Training Advisers Partnership	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plan will be relevant to changing context. • Actions will be amended to ensure objectives of the project are met
17. Investigate any potential sources of funding during and beyond the life of the project	March 2010	Enhanced Housing Options Co-ordinating post	Enhanced Housing Option budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach Registered Social Landlords working in the area • Secure funding from other external sources

<p>18. Work with Registered Social Landlords to ensure employment and training is discussed as part of the sign up to any new tenancies.</p> <p>To train Registered Social Landlord officers to perform this role to apply across wider management functions</p>	October 2009	Employment Training Advisers	Partnership Registered Social Landlord resources to be agreed locally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining benefits of training and work should result in less dependency on benefits for new tenants. • Increased number of tenants move from benefits to work and take up employment activity.
<p>19. Employment Training Adviser posts to train other members of Housing Options Teams so by the end of year 2 period, employment, training and advice become part of Housing Options process</p>	May 2010	Employment Training Advisers	Partnership. Additional training may be provided by Local Authorities as agreed at local level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training process will be undertaken skills and knowledge transferred. • Housing Options Officers will be competent and able to provide advice on training, employment.
<p>20. Consider and agree a further, separate Partnership Action Plan for delivering wider EHO improvements using the CLG EHO toolkit</p>	December 2009	Partnership	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued action to prevent homelessness and provide customer focussed service

<p>21. <u>Communication Plan</u></p> <p>Communication Plan agreed for Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer bid</p>	March 2009	Partnership	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan agreed and monitored
<p>22. Partnership and launch meetings and events take place. Method – Formal events</p> <p>Progress monitored throughout project with partnership meetings being held twice a year</p>	<p>August 2009 for launch meetings and events</p> <p>Partnership meetings twice a year and ongoing for project duration</p>	Partnership	Enhanced Housing Options budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch will increase awareness and referrals Partnership meetings and monitoring will check progress and achievement of objectives and targets
<p>23. Collection of any media coverage and creation of a portfolio on launch and throughout the project. Method - Review of local press and radio</p>	From July 2009 and ongoing on a monthly basis for project duration	Employment Training Adviser Coordinator	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information collected Review effectiveness of coverage and review as necessary

24. Project Board meetings set up and take place. Method - Formal meetings	From July 2009 and ongoing every 4 months	Partnership	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project managed and progress monitored to achieve objectives and targets.
25. Customer feedback questionnaire agreed and sent out for completion Method – Questionnaire Analysis considered by partnership board	From July 2010 on a annual basis for project duration	Employment Training Adviser Partnership board	Enhanced Housing Options budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questionnaires completed and returned Analysis will show clients views of the service to be considered to improve the service and relevance to the targeted client group
26. Partner feedback questionnaire on their knowledge of the project Method – Questionnaire Analysis considered by partnership board	From July 2010 on a annual basis for project duration	Partnership board	Enhanced Housing Options budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questionnaires completed and returned Analysis completed and this will inform the project on whether additional publicity is required and effectiveness of consultation.

Performance Indicators:

	Performance Indicators Totals across the partnership	Baseline	Target Year One 6 months	Target Year Two	Target Year Three 6 months
1.	Number of referrals of housing options clients to new Employment Training Adviser service Total for Partnership :	0	Total : 50	125	75
2.	Number of referred clients interviewed by Employment Training Advisers Total for Partnership :	0	Total : 45	Total : 110	60
3.	Caseload of Employment Training Adviser (ETA) service Definition where ETA have more than appointment with a client.	0	30 (15 per ETA)	30 (15 per ETA)	30 (15 per ETA)
4.	Number of Individual work focused client action plans created and given to clients Total for Partnership:	0	Total : 25	60	35
5.	Number of “Better Off at Work” calculations carried out by ETA’s Total for Partnership :	0	Total : 40	100	60

6.	Number of training and employment workshops held – target to hold 4 workshops per year	0	2	4	2
7.	Number of clients seen by ETA's going into employment Total for Partnership: Links to NI 152 Working age people on out of work benefits	0	20	35	25
8.	Number of clients seen by ETA's going into training Total for Partnership : Note Links to N1 163 Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher and N1 164 Working age population qualified to at least level 3 or higher	0	10	15	12
9.	Number of clients into voluntary employment Total for partnership :	0	10	20	15
10.	Number of referrals of clients onto specialist services (eg NEET Service or lone parent services) Total for partnership:	0	10	15	13

RESOURCES

The Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer funding allocation is £240 000 for the two year period.
A combined additional total of £50 000 has been committed to the project across the two year duration by the five authorities.

Throughout the first year of operation officers will liaise with stakeholders within the agreed communications plan and will seek to agree changes in SLA'S or support of agencies to obtain additional funding / resources to support the work of the Enhanced Housing Options approach.

The partnership will seek to maximise any opportunities for additional funding from external sources where possible.

The funding will be used to employ 3 full time Employment and Training Advice Officers via VT Group plc.

The cost of employing the posts via VT Group plc will include the supply of ongoing support and training, IT, travel expenses, contract management and a telephone support and advice line as well as the delivery of training workshops to clients.

Funding will also be used to invest in "Better off at work" calculator software, publicity of the service, incentives and training.

MONITORING

The project will be implemented and monitored by a Partnership Board.

- **Membership of the Partnership Board**

Elmbridge Borough council

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Mole Valley District Council

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council

Tandridge District Council

VT Group plc

Job CentrePlus

- **Terms of Reference of the Partnership Board**

Provide leadership for the project

Consult and update the partnership

Make key decisions

Agree the project plan

Implement the project plan

Approve and monitor budgets and expenditure

Provide quarterly reports to the funder (DCLG) on project progress and the financial position

Establish a stakeholder group with local partners to raise awareness of the project and receive feedback

Ensure that the project objectives and outcomes are achieved

Agree timetable of meetings

The Partnership Board will establish a stakeholder group of local partners to raise awareness of the schemes consult and receive feedback.

- **Membership of the Stakeholder Group**

All members of the Partnership Board

Registered Social Landlords

Citizen Advice Bureaux

Money advice agencies

Leatherhead Night Hostel

Pitstop

Surrey Supporting People

Careers service

Surrey Community Action (voluntary services)

RISKS

- The economic climate leads to further unemployment and minimal opportunities for employment placements
- Project funding is withdrawn within the first or second year.
- Staffing of the service; unexpected prolonged periods of absence, for example, long term sickness.
- Apathy; potential clients not wishing to engage with the Employment and Training Advisers.

Response to Risk

- We would keep the project under review and monitor the economic climate to ensure we keep up to date with current trends
- If funding is withdrawn we would look for alternative sources via our partner organisations
- Periods of absence at the beginning of the project could be covered by the coordinator, as the project progresses we would expect the housing options officers to have accumulated the relevant skills to be able to provide cover.
- We would contact other Trailblazer authorities to explore good practice on engaging clients