REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

PORTFOLIO AREA: ENVIRONMENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT

Date of Meeting: 9 June 2003

Public

Key Decision: Yes **Recorded in Forward Plan: Yes**

Inside Policy Framework

Title: **HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY**
Report of: **HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SERVICES**
Report reference: **EPS 33/03**

Summary:
This report presents Members with an update in regard to the production of Carlisle City Council's Homelessness Strategy.

Recommendations:
That the report be noted.

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Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

1.1 Under the Homelessness Act 2002 each Local Housing Authority has a statutory obligation to carry out a review of homelessness in their area and have in place a Homelessness Strategy by 31st July 2003.

1.2 The aims of the Homelessness Strategy as set out in the legislation are:

- To prevent homelessness
- To secure that sufficient accommodation is and will be available to meet the needs of people in the district who are or may become homeless.
- To secure the satisfactory provision of support services for people who may become homeless or who may have been homeless and need support to stop them becoming homeless again.

1.3 In December 2002 Carlisle City Council commissioned HACAS Chapman Hendy to help in the homeless review process and the development of the Homelessness Strategy. This has been carried out through a working group with representatives of different organisations on board including health, social services, probation, RSL's and the voluntary sector.

2. CONSULTATION

2.1 Consultation to Date.

The review of homelessness within the Carlisle City district was finished in March 2003 and sent out for consultation to a large number of organisations in April 2003. The review was published and consulted upon as part of the wider County document with feedback informing the Homelessness Strategy. Carlisle City Council also commissioned Shelter to undertake user consultation with a number of hostel residents with the feedback informing the Homelessness Strategy.

2.2 Consultation proposed.

The final draft of the Homelessness Strategy was sent out for consultation on 20/05/03 with a final return date of 06/06/03. Feedback received during this period will inform the final document. This will be submitted to the Executive on 7th July 2003 for approval.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the report be noted.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Homelessness Strategy is subject to consultation prior to being submitted for final approval to the Executive.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- Staffing/Resources – None
- Financial – None
- Legal – Compliance with the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002
- Corporate – None
- Risk Management – Assessment carried out in January 2003
- Equality Issues – None
- Environmental – None
- Crime and Disorder –None

ADDENDUM TO A3

CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

CONSULTATION DRAFT
MAY 2003

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Carlisle's population (102,000) makes up some 20% of that for Cumbria as a whole. The City itself is home to 46,100 households with a mean household size of 2.22. A 7% increase in households numbers is expected 2000 - 2010. The housing market for the urban part of Carlisle is distinct from that for the rural hinterland which includes the towns of Brampton and Longtown and larger villages such as Dalston and Warwick Bridge.(see Demographic data and overview of the Local Housing Market Appendix 1).

1.1.2 Carlisle City Council, as the housing authority for the area, is required by the Homelessness Act 2002 to provide a review of homelessness and to formulate and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on this review. As required the Council has produced the strategy in consultation with other statutory agencies such as social services (including Childrens' services and Criminal Justice Services/Probation) and health authorities, and with service providers and users.

1.1.3 In producing this Strategy it has had regard to the wider policy framework and has taken cognisance of other relevant legislation and guidance.

1.1.4 As the first stage in the development of its Strategy the Council produced a Homelessness Review document for consultation, which was circulated to all relevant agencies and individuals. This consultation was carried out in conjunction with the Cumbria Homelessness Forum's Countywide consultation exercise.

1.2 Framework for Developing the Strategy

1.2.1 In line with guidance from the ODPM on Homelessness Strategies a framework was put in place within which Carlisle's Homelessness Strategy was developed and will be implemented. This framework involved bringing together a working group of partner organisations to oversee the Homelessness Review and production of the Homelessness Strategy using the model set out in Chapter 2 of the ODPM manual 'A Good Practice handbook'. The Working Group (Remit and membership list at Appendix 2) had a short lifespan, with the bulk of the work being undertaken by an independent consultant from HACAS Chapman Hendy and officers of Carlisle City Council. The Homelessness Review was consulted upon as part of the Countywide approach to Homelessness and agreement was made with other districts in the drawing up of a number of the actions within the 'Action plan' in Chapter 7 of this document. Consultation has been an important part of the development of the Homelessness Strategy through both the Homelessness review and the Strategy and has involved partner agencies, providers, service users and other relevant individuals.

1.3 Purpose of the Strategy

1.3.1 The purpose of this strategy is to provide a mechanism for Carlisle City Council to document and monitor what it, and the partner agencies, will do to further prevent and alleviate homelessness. The vision and approach that will shape the strategy is of:

- **Partnership** - This embraces statutory bodies, RSL's, voluntary agencies, other public / private sector agencies and service users. The Council is committed to working positively with our partners throughout the district and the County;
- **Strategic working** – Ensuring that the strategy and our ways of working connect across the range of overlapping strategies including Supporting

People, Overall Housing Strategies, Client specific Housing Strategies and support related strategies produced by either ourselves or our partners.

- **Integration** - Ensuring Homelessness Services work jointly and integrated with other key services such as health, social work etc;
- **Innovation** - Developing and test new ways of working/services etc;
- **User orientation** – Planning and delivering services which embrace the views and needs of service users wherever possible;
- **Co-ordination** - Through the work of the Cumbria Homelessness Forum the implementation of the strategy and linked service change will be managed and co-ordinated;
- **Evaluation** – The Countywide Homelessness Forum will monitor, review and evaluate policy and service provision and through this assess progress with the prevention and alleviation of homelessness and its effects;
- **Pragmatism** – It is important to balance the strategic and operational demands within homelessness services and ensure, essentially through joint working, integration of services, innovation and the co-ordination/ implementation of the strategy, that we continually take a pragmatic approach to planning and service delivery that enables continuous progress to be made.

1.3.2 The relevant statutory agencies, Social Services, including Childrens' Services, Criminal Justice Services/Probation, and health authorities, are required to work with Carlisle City Council to achieve the following objectives:

- Jointly develop a homelessness strategy, within the context of strategic partnership planning
- Improve multi-agency working to implement the legislative requirements for homelessness services
- Work jointly with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and relevant voluntary agencies to maximise their contribution to the prevention and alleviation of homelessness
- prevent households becoming homeless wherever possible, including prevention of repeat homelessness through the provision of effective advice and support
- provide effective 'advice and assistance' service, especially to applicants to whom a new duty is owed
- provide sufficient accommodation and support of an appropriate type for people who are, or who may, become homeless, including new 'priority need' groups
- work jointly to fulfil the new duty of co-operation when dealing with families with children who are intentionally homeless or ineligible for assistance
- ensure that an effective homelessness casework service operates

- demonstrate and maximise Best Value, reduce and eliminate duplication, and identify Best Practice within homeless services
- ensure equality of access and service provision for all users
- consult service users on the strategy and on all homelessness policy and service developments.

1.4 Development and Implementation of the Strategy

1.4.1 Following the consultation exercise on the Homelessness Review document during April 2003 (List of consultees at Appendix 3 and summary of responses at Appendix 4). The Council then produced its Draft Homelessness Strategy, taking into account contributions made by other statutory agencies, service providers and service users during this consultation. A further consultation exercise on the Draft Homelessness Strategy will be carried out before submission to the ODPM in July 2003.

1.4.2 An Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy has been produced, by the Carlisle Housing Strategy Group (Homelessness Strategy Sub Group), in the context of the County-wide Homelessness Strategy.

1.4.3 Carlisle City Council will be responsible for the implementation of the Carlisle Strategy, through its Housing Strategy Group. The Countywide Homelessness Forum will monitor progress of the Carlisle Strategy within the Countywide context.

2. NATIONAL CONTEXT

2.1 National Policy Framework

2.1.1 This strategy is set in the context of a national policy framework as well as within the local context of the County. The national legislative and policy framework is briefly summarised below.

2.1.2 At a national level, preventing and tackling homelessness is part of a broader government agenda of tackling social exclusion. More specifically, the government is promoting a change in the approach to homelessness – away from reacting to homelessness as it occurs to preventing homelessness wherever possible. **More than a Roof**, published in March 2002, sets out the government's approach, building on policies set out in the Green Paper Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All, Supporting People, policy into practice, and the Rough Sleepers Unit Strategy Coming in from the Cold. Its main themes are:

- strengthening help to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- developing more strategic approaches to tackling homelessness
- encouraging new responses to tackling homelessness
- reducing the use of bed and breakfast hotels for homeless families with children
- sustaining the two-thirds reduction in rough sleeping
- ensuring the opportunity of a decent home for all.

2.2 Homelessness Legislation and Policy Initiatives

2.2.1 The current legislative framework for homelessness is set out in the 1996 Housing Act and the Homelessness Act 2002. The homelessness provisions of the Homelessness Act 2002 came into force in July 2002 and include:

- the requirement for local authorities to carry out review of homelessness and prepare homelessness strategies based on the reviews and revise the strategy at least once every 5 years
- the requirement for local authorities to provide a greater level of advice and assistance for applicants not owed housing duty
- the repeal of the two-year duty to be replaced by an indefinite duty to applicants owed the full housing duty
- a power to secure accommodation for non-priority applicants
- a new duty of cooperation between housing and social services
- changes in the detail of reviews and appeals procedures.

2.2.2 New secondary legislation was also introduced during 2002. The Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation (England) Order 2002 came into force as of 31 July 2002 and extends the priority need groups to include 16 and 17 year olds, care leavers aged 18-21, people vulnerable due to violence or threats of violence and

people vulnerable to having an institutionalised background (former prisoners and armed services personnel).

2.2.3 A revised Code of Guidance on Homelessness was issued for consultation in July 2002. It builds on existing guidance, but includes significant changes in:

- Chapter 1 which deals with the new duty to have a homelessness strategy based on a review of homelessness in the district
- Chapter 8 which deals with the priority need groups, including those introduced by the Homelessness Act 2002 (Commencement No. 1) (England) Order 2002
- Chapter 9 which includes guidance on the strengthened duties of advice and assistance owed to certain applicants
- Chapter 10 which deals with the new duty of co-operation when dealing with families with children who are intentionally homeless or ineligible for assistance
- Chapter 14 which deals with powers to accommodate
- Annex 7 which deals with joint working.

2.2.4 The Code of Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation, in force as of 31st January 2003, addresses the issue of how to offer applicants a choice of accommodation while still giving reasonable preference to those in most urgent housing need.

2.2.5 Alongside these significant legislative changes, there are a number of national initiatives on homelessness that local authorities are expected to implement. These include:

- ensuring that, by 2004, no families with children are living in bed and breakfast except in an emergency. In December 2002, the government announced that new secondary legislation will be brought forward as the means of ensuring that this initiative is implemented
- ensuring the health care of young babies and children in temporary accommodation by notifying Primary Care Trusts of placements of families with babies/young children in temporary accommodation. Housing authorities need to agree procedures with the Primary Care Trusts and implement robust systems to make sure such notifications are made in consistent and reliable ways.

2.2.6 The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and other government departments have produced a range of guidance to support the implementation of the Homelessness Act 2002 and associated initiatives, as well as more generally to assist with the prevention of homelessness. These include the following.

- Homelessness Strategies: a good practice handbook was produced following research which looked at how local authorities can adopt a strategic approach to tackling and preventing homelessness. It sets out guidance on:
  - developing a homelessness strategy – creating the strategy, successful joint working and mapping needs and resources

- homelessness services – preventing homelessness, specialist services for particular groups, (including homeless families, young people, older people, asylum seekers and refugees, rough sleepers, people leaving prison and other institutions), and homelessness services provided by other agencies

- accommodation provision – temporary accommodation, permanent social housing, supported housing and private sector housing

- The Preventing Tomorrow's Rough Sleepers: A Good Practice Guide handbook was produced by the Rough Sleepers Unit as a practical way of assisting local authorities and other key agencies to prevent homelessness. The handbook includes advice on:

  - identifying people at risk of homelessness – risk assessment, preventing tenancy breakdown, effective tenancy sustainment

  - clear pathways for people entering and leaving institutions – hospitals, care, prisons, the armed forces

  - preventing rough sleeping – quick turnaround of services when coming across rough sleepers, focusing homelessness services on prevention

  - effective homelessness prevention strategies – strategies for young people and opportunities presented by future policy developments

- Drugs services for homeless people: good practice handbook aims to help Drug Action Teams and partner agencies plan and develop more effective services for homeless drug users. It includes specific guidance on planning a joint drug and homelessness strategy and partnership working to meet the accommodation needs of homeless drug users.

- Care Leaving Strategies: A Good Practice Handbook covers the key issues to be considered by local authorities when developing integrated strategies to meet the housing and support needs of young people leaving care, including providing an appropriate range of accommodation.

2.3 National Resources for Homelessness

2.3.1 The Homelessness Directorate of the ODPM has also allocated resources to help local authorities develop new schemes to tackle homelessness. £125 million was spent during 2002/03 on projects such as mediation services for family and couples in relationship difficulties, additional support for women fleeing domestic violence, rent deposit guarantee schemes to help homeless people find housing in the private sector, court and landlord advice services to reduce evictions, and debt and welfare counselling to help people sustain their tenancies.

2.4 Other Legislation and Policy Initiatives

2.4.1 The Supporting People Programme is an initiative which is designed to:

- make public services more responsive to consumers

- improve co-ordination among organisations and functions involved in planning and delivering services

- increase service effectiveness and efficiency
- focus provision on local need.

The Transitional Housing Benefit Scheme (THBS) was introduced in April 2000 to identify Housing Support services funded through Housing Benefit and aim to quantify their costs. The THBS also provides an opportunity for the development and introduction of new housing support services for vulnerable people.

From April 2003, THBS has been replaced by funding through the Supporting People Grant.

2.4.2 The Children Act 1989 gives Local authorities in England have certain duties to assist homeless children, including:

- a duty on social services authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need and so far as is consistent with that duty to promote the upbringing of such children by their families
- a duty to provide accommodation for any child in need in their area who appears to them to require accommodation
- a duty to provide accommodation for any child within their area who has reached the age of sixteen, and whose welfare the authority considers is likely to be seriously prejudiced if they do not provide accommodation.

Housing authorities are under a duty to assist social services authorities to provide accommodation in these circumstances provided that compliance with the request is compatible with their own statutory or other duties and obligations and does not unduly prejudice the discharge of any of their functions.

2.4.3 The Children Leaving Care Act 2000 makes provision for children and young people who are being, or have been, looked after by a local authority. It sets out duties in relation to:

- 16 and 17 year olds who have been looked after by a local authority for a prescribed period which ended after they became 16 (eligible child)
- 16 and 17 year olds who are not currently being looked after, but were eligible children before ceasing to be looked after (relevant child)
- young people up to the age of 21, (or older if the pathway plan goes beyond 21), who have been relevant children, were being looked after when they became 18, and who were eligible children before ceasing to be looked after (former relevant child).

2.4.4 The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 removes homelessness help and entitlement from all people subject to immigration control (people who require leave to enter or remain in the UK) unless specified in an order made by the Secretary of State.

2.4.5 The Data Protection Act 1998 came into force on the 1st March 2000. It repealed the Data Protection Act 1984 and the Access to Personal Files Act 1987. Along with the Housing Act 1996, it gives homeless applicants certain statutory rights to see and check information which the local authority holds about their housing application.

3. LOCAL CONTEXT

3.1 The Scale of the Task

3.1.1 The current homelessness legislative, the Homelessness Act 2002, significantly extends the duties and powers of local authorities with regard to homeless persons. This extends to the requirement to produce a homelessness strategy which includes:

- all homeless people, including those who would not be considered to be in priority need for accommodation
- all people at risk of becoming homeless, whether within 28 days or a longer period
- people who might have become homeless intentionally
- homeless people in the area who might not have a local connection.

3.1.2 The scale of the task of reviewing homelessness services and developing a strategy to ensure that adequate services are provided which help to prevent homelessness, help to find accommodation for homeless and potentially homeless people, and provide support for them, including support to prevent them from becoming homeless again, is significant.

3.1.3 The scale of homelessness itself in Carlisle is at this stage very difficult to determine. The existing data in terms of homelessness presentations recorded by the Council and returns to the ODPM, for reasons detailed in Section 4. below, does not give an accurate picture of homelessness needs in the District.

3.1.4 The services and specialist accommodation provided to meet homelessness needs is relatively easy to document as is shown in Section 5 below. However, the inter relationship between services needs to be more transparent, so that it is possible to determine whether these are complimentary, or whether there is duplication or gaps in services. In addition, there is no common system for recording throughput in terms of the number of clients who take up services

3.2 Links With Other Strategies and Plans

3.2.1 The homelessness strategy will be consistent with, and integral to, Carlisle's broader Housing Strategy. It will also be consistent with other local authority strategies and, in particular, with the Supporting People strategy.

3.2.2 The homelessness strategy needs to link, and be co-ordinated, with a range of other strategies and projects provided by the Council and other organisations. A brief summary is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of Links

Strategy	Links/issues
Community Strategy	The Carlisle and Eden Local Strategic Partnership will produce a community strategy which will tackle major local issues including housing and social exclusion.

Strategy	Links/issues
Supporting People Strategy	The Supporting People Strategy will be produced by the Cumbria Supporting People Team and will ensure the provision of housing related support for vulnerable people including those who are homeless.
Community Care Plan	It is a requirement that community care plans make reference to the housing needs of care groups included in the plan, including the housing support needs of those who are vulnerable to homelessness.
Children and Young People's Strategic Plans	A local Plan will be produced which will assess needs and services, including those of 16 and 17 year olds and families, including those who are vulnerable to homelessness.
Connexions	The Carlisle Connexions project aims to guide and support young people through their teenage years, and has a key role in identifying those at risk of homelessness.
Quality Protects programme	Led by social services to work with children in need, including those leaving care. Housing and social services should have joint protocols for helping care leavers.
NHS Joint Investment Plans(JIPs) and Health Improvement Programmes(HImPs)	JIPs provide a potential mechanism for joint NHS/local authorities funding for support services for e.g. people with mental health, drugs or alcohol problems i.e. groups vulnerable to homelessness
Crime and Disorder strategy	This strategy covers offenders, anti social behaviour. On the one hand it protects people from the risk of homelessness by ensuring they are safe and secure in their homes. On the other hand the strategy may involve restricting access to housing for certain people and an increased use of evictions.

3.3 Local and Countywide Issues

3.3.1 Homelessness problems, generally, do not fit neatly into local authority boundaries. It is acknowledged that the success of Carlisle's homelessness strategy will require cross-boundary co-operation with neighbouring authorities.

3.3.2 Carlisle City Council is a member of the Cumbria Homelessness Forum and participated in the Countywide review of homelessness 2003. Carlisle provides a significant range of homelessness services which are used by homeless people from other districts in the County, especially those from Eden District. It is also worth noting that the Carlisle Womens Refuge is the only facility of this kind in the County.

3.3.3 The range of local and countywide issues revealed in the Cumbria Homelessness Review April 2003 can be found at Appendix 5.

3.4 Local Resources for Homelessness

3.4.1 There is no readily identifiable way of assessing the resources available to Carlisle City Council and Cumbria Social Services, or other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other agencies for providing homelessness services. This is a fundamental task which the strategy partners will undertake at the earliest opportunity.

4. EXTENT, NATURE AND CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS

4.1 Number of Homeless Presentations

4.1.1 The total number of homelessness presentation to the Council is not known due to a variety of factors. Many homeless households never in fact present as homeless to the Council and a number never get as far as making a formal homelessness application or receiving a determination. These include hostel residents who directly access accommodation, households who are provided with Council accommodation in low demand areas at point of presentation, etc. It is likely therefore that 'official' figures on homelessness in Carlisle in fact underestimate the incidence of homelessness in the area.

4.1.2 The number of households which present themselves as homeless to Carlisle City Council, and for which determinations are made, are recorded on the Council's system for making P1E Returns to the ODPM.

Table 2 below shows the number of Households who presented as homeless for which decisions where taken between 1 April 1999– 31 Dec 2002.

Table 2: Homeless presentations 1/4/99 – 31/12/02

	Year to mar 2000	Year To mar 2001	Year To Mar 2002	Year to Dec 2002
Eligible, Unintentionally and in Priority Need	22(25% of all determinations)	21(*21% of all determinations)	39(40% of all determinations)	52 (42%)
Intentionally homeless	8	1	5	16
Not priority need	13	21	19	44
Not homeless	44	57	34	18
Ineligible	0	0	0	0
Total Applicants	87	100	97	125

SOURCE: CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL P1E RETURNS 1999-2002

**This figure differs from the total in table 3*

4.2 Categories of Priority Need

Table 3 below shows categories of Households found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need between 1 April 1999 – 31December 2002.

Table 3: Breakdown of Applications

	Year to mar 2000	Year To mar 2001	Year Tomar 2002	Year to Dec 2002
Dependent children	20	18	29	31
Pregnant - No dependents	1	1	0	5
16/17 year old	0	0	0	2
18/20 – formerly 'in Care'				2
Emergency	0	0	0	0
Vulnerable due to old age	0	2	0	1

	Year to mar 2000	Year To mar 2001	Year Tomar 2002	Year to Dec 2002
Vulnerable Physical Disability	1	0	1	0
Vulnerable MH/learning difficulty	0	0	7	6
Other special reason	0	0	0	1
Vulnerable having been in care				0
Served in HM Forces				0
Been in custody or remand				1
Fleeing violence or threat of violence	0	6	1	3
Of which domestic violence	0	6	1	1
Total	22	*27	39	52

SOURCE: CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL P1E RETURNS 1999-2002

4.3 Age and Gender of Homeless Applicants

4.3.1 It is useful to look at the age and gender of homeless persons to establish if particular groups, such as young people or single males, are particularly vulnerable to homelessness.

4.3.2 Information on age and gender is limited for Carlisle, however an analysis of information provided for the P1E returns can be done. It is possible to gather information on homelessness among agencies which provide services particularly for these groups. These include hostels providers, Connexions, Centrepoint study, etc.

4.4 Potentially Homeless People

4.4.1 Carlisle Housing Association (CHA), now the landlord of all former Carlisle council tenancies since the housing stock transfer in December 2002, holds the largest housing register of housing applicants for the district. An analysis of the register shows the number of applicants who do not have security of tenure, such as hostel resident, No Fixed Abode, in prison/hospital/ armed forces, tied tenancy, private shorthold tenancy, caravan, etc. and are therefore potentially homeless. The total number of applicants who do not have security of tenure is 1311, out of a total number of applicants of 1986. This represents 66% of all applicants on the housing register.

4.4.2 The Carlisle HA register shows the number of applicants who do not have security of tenure, by household type. Table 4 below shows the household type breakdown for this group.

Table 4: Breakdown of the CHA Register

Household Type	Total on Register	No security of tenure	No Security as Percentage of total applicants in Household Group
Aged couples/families	199	14	7%
Aged singles	181	28	15%
Couple/dependents	76	40	53%
Couple only	147	109	74%
Family	43	20	47%
Lone parent/dependents	283	154	54%

Household Type	Total on Register	No security of tenure	No Security as Percentage of total applicants in Household Group
Pregnant/couple	16	16	100%
Pregnant/single	27	24	89%
Single	1004	901	90%
Special Needs	10	5	50%
TOTAL	1986	1311	

Source: Carlisle HA Housing Register March 2003
**defined as hostel resident, No Fixed Abode, in prison/hospital/ armed forces, tied tenancy, private shorthold tenancy, caravan, etc.*

4.4.3 The largest household type, comprising 901 applicants, with no security of tenure is non- elderly single people, they are also the largest group, numbering 1004, among all housing applicants on the register. Lone parents are the next largest household type, numbering 283, on the register, and of these 54% have no security of tenure. Pregnant singles and couples while small in number with only 27 and 16 applicants respectively, almost all (100% and 89%) have no security of tenure and are therefore, possibly, potentially homeless.

4.4.4 It is useful also to look at the age of the applicants in these groups, and an analysis of the data available on this will be done in the course of the development of this Strategy.

4.5 Groups With Particular Needs

4.5.1 Evidence shows that people with particular needs, for example those who experience mental illness and alcohol or drugs addiction, are particularly vulnerable to homelessness.

4.5.2 To establish the incidence of homelessness among these groups it is necessary to gather information from agencies and projects which provide services to them and if possible to gather information from the service users and their carers. As part of the development of this Strategy an analysis of the data gathered by the Council and other providers of hostel places in Carlisle will be carried out to determine the current needs which are being met.

4.5.3 Croftlands Trust provide care and housing support to people with severe and enduring mental health problems in North Cumbria. The Trust currently meets the needs of around 400 service users within 18 projects across North Cumbria of which 8 are Carlisle projects which meet a range of needs including 3 hostels.

4.6 Ethnicity

4.6.1 Table 5 below shows the percentage of white and non-white individuals in Carlisle, compared with Cumbria and with England and Wales. Carlisle has the highest non-white population in the County, but this is still significantly below that of England and Wales as a whole.

Table 5: Breakdown of population by ethnicity

	Ethnic Group	
	White	Non-white
England and Wales	90.9%	9.1%
Cumbria	99.3%	0.7%
Allerdale	99.4%	0.6%
Barrow	99.2%	0.8%

	Ethnic Group	
	White	Non-white
Carlisle	99.1%	0.9%
Copeland	99.3%	0.7%
Eden	99.6%	0.4%
South Lakeland	99.2%	0.8%

(Source: Census 2001)

Ethnicity of homeless households who receive a determination from the Council is available from the P1E returns. This again may underestimate the number of BME households who experience homelessness, for a variety of reasons some cultural and some due to inequality of access to homelessness services.

4.7 Where do Homeless Applicants Come From?

4.7.1 There is no data available from the P1E returns on the area of origin within Carlisle of Homeless households. This makes it difficult to determine the geographical spread of homelessness within the District and the urban/rural dimensions of the issue.

4.7.2 Carlisle HA now holds the largest Housing Register in the Council's area. An analysis of this information will provide data on housing applicants who are, or who may become, homeless and their current area of residence. These include households who are of no fixed abode, sharing a home with another household, living in a caravan, living in tied accommodation, currently have a Notice To Quit, are in Local Authority Care, in the Forces, in hospital or in Prison. This may identify particular areas in the District where people are particularly vulnerable to homelessness.

4.7.3 The P1E returns provide data on Referrals between authorities and households accepted by Carlisle with no local connection from April 1999 to December 2002. These are shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Breakdown of Homelessness Referrals

PERIOD	OUTCOME	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS
April 1999- March 2000	referred to another LA	1
April 2000-March 2001	referred to other LAs	2
April 2001 – March 2002	accepted from other LAs	6
April 2002 – December 2002	accepted from another LA	1

SOURCE: CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL P1E RETURNS 1999-2002

Since April 1999 Carlisle City Council has accepted only 1 household with no local connection (Dec 2002).

4.8 Where do Homeless Applicants Go?

4.8.1 In order to determine where homeless applicants, for whom there has been a determination, are accommodated, both temporarily and permanently, it is necessary to do an analysis of the P1E returns information. This will include information on type of temporary accommodation and how long applicants have to wait for permanent housing, and permanent accommodation provided.

4.8.2 For homeless applicants who did not receive a determination, it is not possible to assess the numbers who were housed by the Council and where, since there was no means of recording this on the Council's (now Carlisle HA's) housing allocation system.

In developing its housing allocations system Carlisle Housing Association needs to consider how it can incorporate a means of identifying allocations made to homeless households.

4.9 Reasons for Homelessness

4.9.1 Table 7 below shows the main reason for loss of last settled home for Households found to be eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need between 1 April 1999 – 31 December 2002 in Quarters

Table 7: Breakdown of Reasons for Homelessness Claims 1/4/99 – 31/12/02

	Year to mar 2000	Year To mar 2001	Year To mar 2002	Year to Dec 2002
Leaving Parents	0	0	2	7
Leaving relatives / friends	2	5	6	2
RB – non violent	6	0	5	6
Violent RB with partner	9	3	11	9
Violent RB with assoc person				1
Racially motivated violence				0
Other forms of violence				1
Racially motivated harassment				1
Other forms of harassment				2
Mortgage arrears	1	8	5	2
LA rent arrears	0	0	0	3
RSL rent arrears	0	0	0	0
PRS rent arrears	0	0	0	0
Loss of rented/tied accom due to AST ending	6	3	8	5
Other reasons for end of tenancy	0	0	0	2
Required to leave NASS accom				0
Leaving institution	0	0	0	6
Other	0	2	2	5
Total	22	21	39	52

SOURCE: CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL P1E RETURNS 1999-2002

4.9.2 Repossession hearings can lead to homelessness for both owner occupiers and tenants. In most cases, the first stage is for the occupier to be subjected to a Suspended Possession Order (SPO) which allows them time to put right the problem that caused their lender or landlord to apply for possession of their home. However, in the case of tenants, the courts do not have discretion to give an SPO in certain cases –for example in the case of assured tenancies when eight or more weeks rent is owed or if an assured Shorthold tenancy has come to the end of its term. Table 8 below shows Possession Orders by Social landlords in Carlisle and in the five other Cumbrian Districts from January 2002 – December 2002

Table 8: Possession Orders by Social landlords from Jan 2002 – Dec2002

			Reasons for SPOs			
Court	Actions entered	Total SPOs	Arrears	Anti Social Behaviour	Arrears + Anti Social Behaviour	Other
Barrow	150	20	43	0	0	0
Carlisle	354	204	34	1	0	0
Kendal	69	28	24	1	0	0
Penrith	34	22	7	0	0	0
Whitehaven	350	133	5	3	0	0
TOTAL	**957**	**407**	**113**	**5**	**0**	**0**

		Grounds for non-suspended orders			
Court	Total non SPOs	Arrears	Anti Social Behaviour	Arrears and Anti Social Behaviour	Other
Barrow	12	35	0	6	1
Carlisle	96	15	0	0	0
Kendal	11	8	0	2	0
Penrith	6	9	0	1	2
Whitehaven	33	0	0	21	0
TOTAL	**158**	**67**	**0.**	**30**	**3**

Source: Cumbria Homelessness Review Draft April 2003

4.10 What do Homeless People Say About the Services Provided and Needed?

4.10.1 Through the Cumbria Countywide Homelessness Forum, Shelter carried out consultation with service users which Carlisle City Council jointly funded as part of the Homelessness Review. The feedback from this exercise is provided in Appendix 4.

4.11 Rough Sleeping

4.11.1 The last rough sleeping count was done in September 1999, this was done Countywide, and no one was found to be rough sleeping in Carlisle. However the limitations of this exercise are well documented, and other evidence of rough sleeping in Carlisle exists. For example during 2002 Shelter Cumbria dealt with 2 people in Carlisle who were rough sleepers, and the number of clients phoning Shelterline in 2002 from Carlisle was 11.

4.12 Presentations to Advice Agencies

4.12.1 Shelter Carlisle and Eden statistics for 2002 including calls to Shelterline.

Table 9: Shelter Statistics

LA District	Total number of clients	Priority Need		Primary Housing Problem		Age	
Carlisle	94	Priority need automatic	22	Homelessness	62	16/17	8
		Priority need vulnerable	34	Arrears	2	18 – 25	26
				Possession action	9		

LA District	Total number of clients	Priority Need		Primary Housing Problem		Age	
				Seeking Accommodation	7		
				Other	14		
		Priority Need – automatic	16	Homeless	42	16/17 incl 15 yr old	6
Eden	78	Priority need – vulnerable	26	Arrears	1	18 – 25	16
				Possession action	4		
				Other	31		

Source: Cumbria Homelessness Review April 2003

4.12.2 CASS (Cumbria Action for Social Support)

Table 10: CASS Carlisle and Eden Statistics for 2001

Client Information	North Cumbria (Carlisle and Eden)
Total Clients	197
Clients With No Fixed Abode	72
Clients With Unsuitable Accommodation	26
Clients CASS Were Unable to Help	4

Source: Cumbria Homelessness Review April 2003

4.12.3 Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Statistics for clients who are homeless or threatened with homelessness are provided in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Breakdown of CAB housing clients

	April 2001-March 2002		April 2002 – September 2002	
CABx Office	Homeless	Threatened with homelessness	Homeless	Threatened with homelessness
Carlisle	24	53	8	12
Eden	28	66	11	26
TOTAL	52	119	19	38

Source: Cumbria Homelessness Review April 2003
NB: data for Carlisle (July02-Sept02) not available

4.12.4 DiGS

DiGs operates a rent deposit guarantee scheme across a number of the districts within the county and is funded by the local authorities where it operates. In Carlisle the scheme has not yet been developed with this organisation. There are pooled funds held by a partnership of agencies for the operation of a rent deposit / bond scheme which requires developing. Figures for the takeup of the scheme operated by DiGS within other parts of the county show demand for the service.

Table 12:Applications and deposits operated by DiGs to Customers in Cumbria.

	March 2000 to Dec 2000	2001	2002	Jan and Feb 2003	Total
Barrow Applications	0	1	27	15	43

	March 2000 to Dec 2000	2001	2002	Jan and Feb 2003	Total
Barrow Acceptances	0	0	22	5	27
Eden Applications	23	57	21	0	101
Eden Acceptances	23	57	17	0	97
South Lakeland Applications	58	80	54	12	204
South Lakeland Acceptances	56	77	47	12	192
West Cumbria Applications	63	83	106	15	267
West Cumbria Acceptances	55	74	85	14	228

Source: Cumbria Homelessness Review April 2003

5. MEETING THE NEEDS: THE PRESENT

5.1 Services Currently Provided by the Council

5.1.1. Assessment and Casework Services

Carlisle CC, as the housing authority for the area, has the statutory responsibility for assessing homeless persons to determine whether they are eligible for housing and support within the terms of current homelessness legislation.

The Council has transferred its housing stock and landlord functions to Carlisle HA, but has retained its Homelessness Assessment and Casework services and its hostels and temporary accommodation. The staffing of Homelessness Services is provided by 1x manager and 1x homelessness officer, and the facility at which they are provided is at the Council's HQ, where all homeless applicants within the District, wishing to access these services, are required to present themselves.

Before the Council housing stock transfer Careline was the means of out of hours contact for homeless persons with the Homelessness Service. The Careline service has now transferred to Carlisle HA, who pass homelessness enquiries on to the Homeless Persons Officer. This new means of delivering the out of hours service now needs to be formalised, and procedures put in place for its implementation. This will involve an assessment of resource requirements.

Information and advice provided to homeless people is currently being improved. All people presenting as homeless are now formally recorded and are seen by a Homeless Persons Officer who provides advice and assistance. The Council is currently reviewing its procedures related to this and the type of advice with which applicants are provided. The implementation of improved Advice and Assistance services will have resource implications which will require to be assessed.

5.1.2 Temporary Accommodation and Support

The Council's provision of temporary accommodation and support is detailed in Table 13 below.

Table 13

PROJECT	CLIENT GROUP	ACCOMMODATION/SERVICE	NUMBER OF PLACES
London Road	Families	Hostel Old property – H&S issues Mix of singles/family rooms Fully staffed 24 hour cover	10
John Street	Single men: offenders, drug/alcohol problems, mental health	Direct Access hostel Fully staffed 24 hour cover Assessment(2 places retained for) Residency <9 months	21
Homeshare	Single men	7 Satellite properties ξ owned by CCC ξ leased by CCC from CHA	17
	(Mental health)	Long stay Developing floating support In 1 satellite property	7
Total			55

Source:Carlisle CC Hostels Service

The Council does not use Bed and Breakfast accommodation as temporary accommodation

There is no accommodation of disabled standard provided, though this is required by the Disability Discrimination Act.

5.1.3 Move on Accommodation and Resettlement Support

The Council is no longer a direct provider of permanent housing and works with other RSLs to make sure that appropriate move on accommodation and resettlement support are provided. Formal procedures/protocols need to be put in place to ensure this.

5.2 Services Currently Provided by the Voluntary Sector

5.2.1 Advice Services

Many voluntary agencies in Carlisle provide advice to Homeless persons and also provide a range of homelessness prevention services. This includes the Court Duty Scheme covering mainly repossessions, a Legal Services Commission (LSC) initiative, and advice services on harassment, eviction, repairs and adaptations, etc.

a) Shelter

Shelter (Cumbria) operate across the County, and plays a key role on the Countywide Homelessness Forum. It has the LSC Quality Mark at a Specialist Level and participates in the LSC Court Duty Scheme in Carlisle.

It does not have a Carlisle based advice service, though Carlisle residents can use Shelterline, its telephone advice service. The highest number of Shelterline calls in Cumbria are from Carlisle. It refers clients to the Carlisle Law Centre and the CAB. Shelter, in partnership with the CAB, provide training to local CABs and to other agencies, including RSLs and advice centres, through its National Homelessness Advice Service. It is discussing, through the CLS Forum, the provision of rural services via the internet, telephone, etc. Shelter is also involved, with Carlisle CC, the Probation Service, the Prison Service and NACRO, in providing resettlement advice services in Haverigg Prison in South West Cumbria. It is reviewing the adequacy of advice services.

Shelter also runs a Housing Rights Promotion Project, which is an awareness raising campaign project, to ensure people are aware of their housing rights, legal remedies available to them and where to go for help. Shelter aims to liaise with all agencies offering housing advice to ensure that quality advice is offered and that agencies are aware of specialist advice providers in Cumbria.

b) CAB

Carlisle CAB provides a housing advice service which contributes to the prevention of homelessness, by advising e.g. on housing debts, on security of tenure, people threatened with homelessness, etc. The service also advises people who are actually homeless. The CAB participates in the Court Duty Scheme covering mainly, but not exclusively, repossessions.

c) Carlisle Law Centre participates in the Court Duty Scheme. It also provides a mobile service in Brampton and Longtown. A number of solicitors offer advice to homeless people. These include Scott Duff and Co, who have offices in Penrith and Carlisle, hold the LSC Quality Mark for relationship breakdown and housing and are part of the county court duty scheme in Carlisle. In 2001, they gave homeless advice to four clients and in 2002 to ten. Pauline Butler at Carlisle has a family franchise and general help for other categories.

d) Cumbria Action for Social Support (CASS) provides a Referral and Advice Scheme at Carlisle Probation Office.

e) DiGs operates a rent deposit guarantee scheme across parts of the County. It does not exclude any client group from approaching them for help and their core service is the guarantee scheme but they do offer general help and refer to specialist agencies where appropriate.

f) KEY Advice Centre is an Information Centre for young people between the ages of 16-25, who experience difficulties with housing, finance, jobs, independent living.

g) Independent Living Workshops provides workshops in schools with year 10 students and at the Police Attendance Centre (young people have been directed by the courts to attend). The aim is to prepare young people to leave home in a planned way and to have an understanding of issues, which enable them to sustain their tenancies. In the last year they have dealt with 131 clients who were homeless and 98 who were potentially homeless.

h) Partnership Independence Programme aims to provide good quality accommodation for young people aged between 16-25 who are not yet ready to live independently. Community Projects hopes to lease a house form Carlisle City Council to house young people and provide support. Due to the recent stock transfer to Carlisle Housing Association – this has been put on hold.

i) Care and Repair Project, operated by Hanover HA, helps to prevent homelessness by providing assistance with housing repairs/adaptations, through the Care and Repair project, to elderly and disabled people who otherwise might not be able to continue to occupy their home. In order to fulfil this function the project takes referrals from Housing/Social Services/Health. They have formal procedures in operation with the statutory bodies and other agencies including the Primary Care Trust and Acute health services and Social Services, and a number of voluntary agencies.

5.2.2 Accommodation and Support Services

Cumbria Action for Social Support (CASS) provides a range of accommodation and support services in Carlisle for groups who are vulnerable to homelessness, such as offenders, young people and vulnerable tenants. Details of these are provided in Table 14 below.

Table 14: CASS Support services

Agency	Project	Number of Places
CASS	Temporary Accommodation (quick access)	13
	Supported Tenancies	3
	SMART Project (substance misuse in partnership with Croftlands Trust)	14
	Floating Support (partly for offenders and 'at risk')	14

Source:CASS Accommodation and support needs of offenders Report Sept 2002

They offer a variety of services including managed accommodation schemes, which focus on offenders and those at risk of offending. They also offer floating support on a more generic basis.

CASS have a partnership with Rathbone Ltd to provide support for people with education and training needs. They also have a contract with the Cumbria Probation Service to provide housing advice to probation clients but do not have the LSC Quality mark. This service is provided via advice sessions in probation offices. Table 15 below provides data on this.

CASS refer onto specialist agencies where appropriate.

Table 15: CASS Statistics for 2001

Client Information	West Cumbria (Allerdale and Copeland)	North Cumbria (Carlisle and Eden)	Total
Total Clients	176	197	373
Clients With No Fixed Abode	61	72	133
Clients With Unsuitable Accommodation	65	26	91
Clients CASS Were Unable to Help	13	4	17

Croftlands Trust provides a range of community based care and housing support to people with severe and enduring mental health problems in North Cumbria. Table 16 below shows the details of the services which it provides in Carlisle.

Table 16: Croftlands Trust Services

PROJECT	TYPE OF SERVICE	NUMBER OF PLACES
Durranhill Road	Hostel 24 hour staff cover out of hours support service	9 rehabilitation 1 respite ....hostel places
Botchery Avenue	Supported Housing staff cover 9am-9pm	29 bedsits/l bed flats 1
Carranmore	Hostel 24 hour staff cover	?
Stratheden	Hostel 24 hour staff cover 24 hour satellite cover	9 hostel places 4 supported housing
Spencer Street	Day Centre	n/a
Co-operate	Supported employment scheme	n/a
SMART	Drug and alcohol housing support	n/a

Mental Health Matters (MHM) provides a floating support scheme for people with learning disabilities in Carlisle.

Glenmore Trust provides a floating support scheme for people with learning disabilities in Carlisle.

Turning Point deals with young people aged 16-25 years, including those with mental health issues, offenders who misuse drugs and those with learning disabilities. They provide 18 places around the County including Carlisle, and they offer resettlement services for people leaving residential care. They offer specialist provision for people with substance misuse problems and multiple needs. They also operate a prison referral project working with people with substance issues being released from prisons back to Cumbria.

Nightstop is one of the Carlisle Community Projects and provides emergency overnight accommodation for young people using a network of volunteers.

5.2.3 Move on Accommodation and Resettlement Support

Arrangements for move on accommodation and resettlement support by other agencies is an area where a number of ad hoc arrangements are in place but where procedures / protocols need to be formally put in place.

5.3 Services Currently Provided by Health/Social Services/Probation

5.3.1. Eden Valley PCT have commissioned a variety of services for groups who are particularly vulnerable to homelessness such as those with addictions to alcohol and/or drugs, and those with mental health problems. North Cumbria Mental Health and Learning Disability Trust and Cumbria Social Services joint Community Mental Health Team provide services, including homelessness advice/referral/joint assessment for hostel residents and supported accommodation tenants.

5.3.2 In addition to this Addiction Services provides services from Portland House for those with specialist needs.

5.3.3 A protocol for agencies dealing with clients with mental health problems is required which identifies 'lead' people for each of the organisations involved, and joint training. Access to healthcare for homeless groups needs to be addressed by the Primary Care Trust (PCT). It needs someone from the PCT to champion the issue of 'homelessness and access to health'.

5.3.4 Social Services/Housing have developed a draft joint assessment protocol for 16-17 yr olds. Final agreement on how to put this into operation has not yet been reached. A protocol involving agencies dealing with Young People at Risk has been drafted/agreed but has not been put into operation. This requires the identification of 'lead' people for each of the organisations involved, and joint training.

5.3.5 Probation Services are involved in providing advice and accommodation and support with others including CASS and Impact HA. There is a requirement for a Dangerous Offenders Protocol covering rehousing and development of links with prison partnership officers.

5.3.6 Probation Services provide a Bail Hostel providing called the Bowling green in Carlisle. While the purpose of this hostel is not primarily the provision of homelessness accommodation, it does help in the prevention of homelessness by providing appropriate temporary accommodation for offenders.

5.3.7 Connexions Cumbria is a youth support service for all young people aged 13-19 offering information, advice and guidance and personal support to young people throughout Cumbria.

Personal advisers are linked to every secondary school and at Connexions centres to help young people to make decisions about their future and discuss important issues with them. They also refer onto specialist agencies such as Police, Resolve Mediation Services and mediate between young people and their families.

5.3.8 The role of Health/Social Services/Probation Services/Youth Services in contributing to securing and sustaining move on arrangements and resettlement support for homeless groups is crucial to the successful outcomes which all Partners strive for.

5.4 Registered Social Landlords

5.4.1 Impact

Impact is the largest provider of supported accommodation in Carlisle, for people who are homeless or are particularly vulnerable to homelessness, providing a total of 156 places. The relevant client groups which it serves are detailed in Table 17 below.

Table 17: Impacts services

Client Group	Support Provider	Number Of Places
single homeless	Impact	42
people fleeing domestic violence,	Impact	7
Young people (care leavers?)	Impact/CASS	26
Offenders	CASS	9
substance misuse	Impact	22
mental health	Impact/?	50
TOTAL		156

Source: Impact Supported Housing Strategy 2001

Forty five floating support places are also provided by Impact, twenty of which are for young people.

Table 18 below provides details of Impacts Homelessness projects.

Table 18: Impacts Homelessness Projects

Project	Client Group	Support	Number Of Places
Bridge Lane	single men 18 years+,	24hour cover	16
Aglionby St	Older men	9-5pm support	5
Cliff Street	'wet house'	day cover support	3
Lindisfarne St	16 years+	24hour cover	10
Close Street	16-25 years, mixed	24hour cover Move on houses Floating	8 2
Mainstream Housing	Young people	Floating Support	20
CASS Supported flats	Young people	??	10

Project	Client Group	Support	Number Of Places
Womens Refuge	Domestic Violence	24hour cover plus 14 move on floating support places	7
Supported Housing	Single women	1 X 3 Bed – day cover 4 m/stream floating support	7
TOTAL			5488

Source: Impact Supported Housing Strategy 2001

All of Impact's single homelessness projects are based in Carlisle. The Bridge Lane project provides 16 units of accommodation for single men 18 years+, although older, more challenging clients tend to predominate. A number of residents in this project have high support needs as a result of mental illness, substance misuse, a combination of both or other factors. Sometimes occupancy is more than two years because there is no other suitable accommodation available.

The accommodation consists of single occupancy bedrooms and shared facilities. The project aims to enable its residents to live independently, or if this is not appropriate it facilitates move on to other more suitable accommodation. The target average stay in the project is < 18 months. A housing needs assessment of all men in Bridge Lane is carried out.

For women fleeing domestic violence Impact manages a Women's Refuge which provides 7 places and is the only Refuge in the County

Impact provides for young people:

- 20 units of Floating Support for young people.
- 10 supported flats (managed by CASS).
- A training and employment resource centre at Centre 47.
- It also accommodates young people at the single homeless projects at Close St Bridge Lane and Lindisfarne St.

In Carlisle Impact also provides accommodation and support for other groups who are vulnerable to homelessness. These are detailed in Table 19 below.

Table 19: Impact Accommodation and Support in Carlisle

Provider	Client Group	Number Of Places
Impact/CASS	Offenders	9
Impact/?	mental health	50
Impact	substance misuse	22

Source: Impact Supported Housing Strategy 2001

5.4.2 Carlisle HA

Carlisle CC transferred its housing stock to Carlisle HA in December 2002. With over 7,000 properties it is the biggest provider of social rented housing in the area.

The Association will provide permanent housing to homeless applicants whom the Council have assessed as being in priority need. There is also a proposal to provide three temporary furnished tenancies for households during the assessment period. The Association has an agreement with the Council to provide 25 units per year for hostel residents in Carlisle.

The Association has initiated a one year pilot scheme which will provide three Accommodation Support Officers and this service will be available to all new tenants. It is a homelessness prevention measure which will focus on tenancy sustainment.

Carlisle Careline operated by Carlisle HA provides the only out of hours contact for housing related enquiries, including homelessness. The Council is developing procedures for establishing its out of hours homelessness service.

5.5 Supporting People

5.5.1 The Supporting People Shadow Strategy for Cumbria September 2002 gives details of support provided through Transitional Housing Benefit (THB), now Supporting People Grant, to marginalised groups. These include homeless persons and particular groups who are vulnerable to homelessness. The Housing Support services provided to them in Carlisle are detailed in Table 20 below.

Table 20: Support Services in Carlisle

Group	Type Of Service	Number Of Units
Homeless Families	Supported accommodation	16
Single Homeless	Supported accommodation	67
People with Alcohol/Drug problems	Supported accommodation	12
Offenders and People 'at risk' of offending	Supported accommodation	13
Young People at risk/Young People leaving care	Supported accommodation	38
Women at risk of domestic violence	Supported accommodation/Outreach	7 ?
Teenage Pregnancy and Parents	Floating Support	6

Source: Supporting People Shadow Strategy for Cumbria September 2002

There are varying levels of floating support available to those in need. All services funded by the Supporting People Grant are subject to service review and potential reduction in funding which will affect their ability to provide services to vulnerable groups including those who are homeless.

5.5.2 As they develop there will be many overlaps and common features in the Carlisle Homelessness Strategy and Cumbria's Supporting People Strategy. It is therefore important that these strategies are well integrated

5.6 Key Issues and Gaps in Services

5.6.1 In the light of the objectives identified in Section 1.3.2, there are many key issues which have been identified in the development of Carlisle's homelessness strategy which need to be addressed. These include the need for:

- Improved joint working at both strategic and operational levels
- Carrying out a robust assessment of the current levels and likely future levels of homelessness in the District
- Development of an assessment of the resources available to Carlisle City Council and Cumbria Social Services, or other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other agencies for providing homelessness services
- The development of a common database for recording homelessness accommodation and services
- The development of a single shared assessment for particular groups
- Carlisle CC to revise the working arrangements within an SLA with Carlisle Housing Association, and formalise arrangements with other RSLs, to assist the Council to discharge its statutory homelessness duties
- Development of improved partnership working between the Council and other statutory and voluntary agencies, providers and service users
- Review of the Council's homelessness procedures and staff structure and budget provision
- Review of how the out of hours service is provided for homeless people
- Review of the information and support service offered by the Council and others to homeless and potentially homeless applicants
- Development of Homelessness service standards and local performance indicators for the service
- Review of the prevention work on homelessness including mediation with private sector landlords
- Review of the evidence of changing demands for temporary accommodation, including the type and nature of the accommodation currently offered
- Ensuring that all Health and Safety requirements are up to standard for temporary accommodation premises
- Review of the short and medium term management/ownership arrangements of the Council's temporary accommodation
- Review of resettlement services and move on accommodation
- Identifying gaps in appropriate temporary accommodation, and support for particular groups e.g. young people, care leavers, offenders, etc and develop a procurement strategy for this

- providing for identified need for appropriate temporary accommodation for disabled homeless people
- Assessment of the need for services to non-priority and intentionally homeless persons
- review of arrangements for access to homelessness services for those living in rural areas
- review of access issues for members of BME communities.

6. MEETING THE NEEDS: THE FUTURE

ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	ACTION	AGENCY/ LEAD OFFICER	PROJECTED TIMESCALE	COMMENTS
1. Jointly develop a homelessness strategy within the context of strategic partnership planning	ξ Local strategic partnership ξ County wide homelessness Forum ξ Carlisle Housing Strategy ξ Develop improved partnership working with other agencies, providers and service users	ξ *Attend Carlisle and Eden LSP.* ξ *Attend Forums to sustain established links.* ξ *Attend meetings to sustain contact and establish links with others. Evaluate feedback as part of the ongoing review to improve services.* ξ *Investigate joint training on a County level for front line staff.*	Housing and Health Partnerships Manager (HHPM)	**On going**	ξ Representation of Housing on Executive Panel. ξ Feeding into County mechanisms for developing common practices, Homeless Review and signing up to agreed Actions for this Strategy. ξ Agreed at County level.

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	ACTION	AGENCY/ LEAD OFFICER	PROJECTED TIMESCALE	COMMENTS
2. Improve multi-agency working to implement the legislative requirements for homelessness services	ξ Carry out a robust assessment of the current levels and likely future levels of homelessness in the Districts	ξ *Look at all RSL registers for data on housing need by age.* ξ *Look at hostel client needs regarding services for mental health, drug/alcohol abuse.* ξ *Look at and analyse applicants rehoused by area and length of waiting time.* ξ *Assess many RSL allocations given to homeless household.*	HHPM	**2004/05**	ξ Data collection and analysis to be developed within the service.
	ξ Develop a common system for recording throughput in terms of the number of clients who take up services.	ξ *Develop database for homeless applications .*		**March 2003**	ξ Databases are essential for the accurate managing of the service.

	ξ Develop a common database for recording homelessness accommodation and services	ξ *Develop database for the management of temporary accommodation, support and re-settlement services to include:* - *applicant details* - *financial information* - *lettings information* - *performance indicators*		**August 2003**	
	ξ Develop a single shared assessment for particular groups		ξ Investigate	**2004/05**	Many organisations involved.

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	ACTION	AGENCY/ LEAD OFFICER	PROJECTED TIMESCALE	COMMENTS
3. Work jointly with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and relevant voluntary agencies, to implement the legislative requirements for homelessness services to maximise their contribution to the prevention and alleviation of homelessness	ξ Commissioning of appropriate services ξ Provision and development of services with all relevant providers ξ Revise the working arrangements within an SLA with Carlisle Housing Association to assist the Council to discharge its statutory homelessness duties;	ξ *Establish links with RSLs to ensure clear links between housing management staff and homeless services staff to avoid evictions/ homelessness* ξ *Discussions with all RSL partners for homeless clients* ξ *Look at potential with partners of mediation services where none exist* ξ *Discuss with partners systems for dealing with those with rent arrears who may become homeless in the future.* ξ *Talk to CHA regarding the current working arrangements*	HHPM	**Currently Ongoing** **July 2004/05**	ξ Action agreed at County level ξ Action agreed at County level ξ October 2003

	ξ Formalise arrangements with other RSLs and voluntary organisations to assist the Council to discharge its statutory homelessness duties	ξ *Contact other Housing Associations to negotiate priority nomination rights for homeless applicants*			
4. Prevent households becoming homeless wherever possible, including prevention of repeat homelessness through the provision of effective advice and support	ξ Review the information and advice service offered to potentially homeless applicants	ξ *Investigate, Introduction of 'One Stop Shop' where specialist advice from various agencies is available including possible SLA agreements* ξ *Investigate the possibility of a 'Property Display Board' advertising accommodation vacancies.* ξ *Develop Web Site Information Service.* ξ *Implementation of fast-track HB verification and process.* ξ *Talk to Connexions with regard to potential special advisor for young people and homelessness to be joint funded post.*	HHPM	**June 2004/05** **2004/05** **November 2003** **2004/05**	ξ To be looked at within the corporate overview of advice agencies ξ To be looked at within the corporate overview of advice agencies ξ Agreed at County level and discussions to be held with Housing Benefits Officers. ξ Potential for specialist worker to develop services for young people including 16/17 yr old protocol

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	ξ Review the prevention work on homelessness including mediation with private sector landlords	ξ *Develop closer working relationship with private sector landlords to help to avoid evictions.*			
	ξ Review re-settlement services and move on accommodation	ξ *Three additional one-bedded flat management on behalf of CHA since April 2003 – provided as furnished accommodation with support provision.*		**April 2003**	

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	ACTION	AGENCY/ LEAD OFFICER	PROJECTED TIMESCALE	COMMENTS
5. Provide effective 'advice and assistance' service, especially to applicants to whom a new duty is owed (Chapter 9 – Revised Code of Guidance)	ξ Review the information and advice service offered to homeless applicants	ξ *Update of advice leaflets, support agency lists.* ξ *Provision, where possible, of temporary accommodation for non-priority cases.* ξ *Investigate holding a rural housing advice surgery.* ξ *Investigate local access points for information.* ξ *Investigate housing advice sessions at prisons, children's homes.* ξ *Investigate provision of more help and advice to landlords* - *legal advice on tenancies* - *prevention of homelessness* - *need for temporary accommodation.*	HHPM	**On going** **March 2004** **June 2004** **2004/05** **March 2004**	ξ Agreed at County level ξ Agreed at a County level. The authority, through its Hostel service helps a large number of non-priority cases both locally and from outside the area. ξ All agreed at County level as areas for service development. ξ Good practice will be shared across the County accordingly.

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	ACTION	AGENCY/ LEAD OFFICER	PROJECTED TIMESCALE	COMMENTS
6. Provide sufficient accommodation and support of an appropriate type for people who are, or who may become homeless, including new 'priority need' groups (Chapter 8 – Revised Code of Guidance)	ξ Review evidence of changing demands for temporary accommodation Including the type and nature of the accommodation currently offered	ξ *Re-organise existing accommodation to meet the needs of client groups.* ξ *Review of Hostels Service in light of staffing arrangements, funding of repairs etc.*	HHPM	**November 2003**	ξ Hostels review being carried out in the light of the new Supporting People funding regime and on going operational needs.
	ξ Ensure that all Health and Safety issues are dealt with for temporary accommodation premises	ξ *Need to address issue of dangerous people who maybe homeless including drawing up a protocol.*		**2004/05**	
		ξ *Need to address recording systems for all set procedures.*		**July 2003**	ξ Databases to include all systems and information.
	ξ Review ability to deal with increased demands on the temporary accommodation	ξ *Investigate increasing private sector provision.*		**2004**	ξ Agreed at County level
	ξ Review the short and medium term management /ownership arrangements of the temporary accommodation.	ξ *Investigate with RSL partners provision of accommodation for those escaping Domestic Violence.*			
		ξ *Explore, with Impact, the possibility of additional Hostel accommodation*		**November 2003**	ξ Agreed at County level
		ξ *Establish the Hostels Service.*			

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	ACTION	AGENCY/ LEAD OFFICER	PROJECTED TIMESCALE	COMMENTS
7. Work jointly to fulfil the new duty of co-operation when dealing with families with children who are intentionally homeless or ineligible for assistance (Chapter 10 – Revised Code of Guidance)	ξ Develop joint working arrangements with Social Services/Health/ Probation/Connexions	ξ *Implement with Social Services, the joint assessment protocol for young people, including 16/17 yr olds.* ξ *Develop/Implement with social services/Health protocols for clients with other specialist needs* - *learning disabilities* - *mental health issues.* ξ *Through the health agencies seek access routes to health care for homeless people including links to health visitors.* ξ *Investigate hospital discharge scheme so health staff can identify those at risk of homelessness , referral protocol and appropriate advice prior to discharge.* ξ *Common objectives and protocols for*	HHPM	**2004 – 2005** **2004/05** **2004** **2004** **2004**	ξ Current discussions held with Connexions regarding a specialist, joint funded worker to develop services for young people. ξ Agreed at County level ξ Agreed at County level ξ Agreed at County level

		hospital discharges. ξ *Develop closer links (both operationally and strategically) with all agencies* - *identify key contacts* - *joint protocols* - *case conferences* ξ *Do more pro-active work with schools (education on housing issues)*		**On going** **2005**	ξ Agreed at County level

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	ACTION	AGENCY/ LEAD OFFICER	PROJECTED TIMESCALE	COMMENTS
8. Ensure that an effective homelessness casework service operates	ξ Review how to manage the changing workload in light of the stock transfer and clarify how the Homeless Service will be provided post transfer ξ Review how the out of hours service is provided for homeless people ξ Review procedures and staff structure	ξ *Meet and discuss with staff to establish how services can be improved.* ξ *Establish systems for recording cases* ξ *Establish procedures, new application form etc.* ξ *Develop Service Standards* ξ *Review as part of Hostels review* ξ *Temporary homelessness post to be established as permanent – subject to Hostels Review.*	HHPM	**October 2003** **July 2003** **August 2003** **November 03** **November 03** **November 03**	ξ Database already in place. ξ Currently being developed
9. Demonstrate and maximise 'Best Value', reduce and eliminate duplication, and identify Best Practice within homeless services	ξ Development of local performance indicators for the service ξ Development of service standards for homelessness	ξ *Revise and establish homeless procedures for staff.* ξ *Introduction of a Client Database system for recording and monitoring*	HHPM	**On going**	ξ Currently being developed

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	ACTION	AGENCY/ LEAD OFFICER	PROJECTED TIMESCALE	COMMENTS
10. Ensure equality of access and service provision for all users	ξ Ethnic Minority Policy needed. ξ Performance monitoring	ξ *Develop policy and monitor BME data.* ξ *Establish systems to be developed locally as well as on a County level.*	HHPM	**2004**	ξ Agreed at County level
11. Consult service users on the strategy and on all homelessness policy and service developments	ξ Create a service providers/users forum ξ Shelter County wide proposal	ξ *Consultation systems to be developed locally as well as on a County level*	HHPM	**On going**	ξ User feedback in Strategy from Homelessness Review.
12. Provision of a Comprehensive Homelessness Service	ξ Development of the service post LSVT	ξ *Develop a Rough Sleepers Policy* ξ *Develop Rent Deposit/Bond Scheme with partners.* ξ *Develop a register of private sector landlords who will house homeless people.* ξ *Review our current referral system for clients to other agencies.* ξ *Develop links with new prison link officers.* ξ *Raise awareness of homelessness to other agencies and the public*	HHPM	**2004**	ξ Agreed at County level

APPENDIX I

Carlisle Demographic Data and Local Housing Market

Population

1991	2001	% change
101,300	100,379	Decline of 0.6%

(Source: Census 2001)

Key Economic and Social Factors

- Carlisle is the county town for Cumbria and the largest single urban area in the county.
- Good transport links, both road and rail, to Scotland and rest of England.
- Mixed economic base.

Planning Policy for Housing

The local planning authority assumes that most new building will be for owner occupation, and there is a gap in the local market for high value homes. In summary the growth in household and housing stock numbers are projected to be in almost precise balance in the city for at least the next 10 years.

Housing Market Overview

Carlisle's population (102 000) makes up some 20% of that for Cumbria as a whole. The **City** itself is home to 46 100 households with a mean household size of 2.22. A 7% increase in households numbers is expected 2000 - 2010.

The housing market for the urban part of Carlisle is distinct to that for the rural hinterland which includes the towns of **Brampton** and **Longtown** and larger villages such as **Dalston** and **Warwick Bridge.**

Carlisle's house prices:

- are lower than those for Cumbria as the North West as a whole, but closer to the latter
- lie below those for the rural/Lake District parts of the County but above those for the more industrial coast
- have risen more slowly than the North West average – but this is less significant than the absence of the very cheap housing found in many North West towns to the south
- vary considerably between post code areas
- are, almost by definition, affordable by those on average incomes.

Average house prices range from around £40,000 for terraced houses and flats to over £115,000 for detached houses. There are however considerable variations within these average price ranges with some terraced houses or ex-local authority properties being sole values below £25,000 whereas similar property types in different locations can be valued at £45,000.

House prices in the rural part of Carlisle are higher than those within the urban area.

There is a **social housing stock** of about 9000 homes. About 2000 homes are in low demand and a further 500 difficult to let. There is an over-supply of 2 and 3 bedroomed ex-council houses. To address this, the Council embarked on a demolition programme on the Raffles estate in 1999. To date over 400 properties have been demolished and the programme is still ongoing. The effect of the right to buy in rural areas means that in some villages there is no social housing available.

Open market renting forms a reasonably stable majority of Carlisle's **private rented sector**. This sector is not yet in major direct competition with the social rented market, but its significance is increasing.

Affordability of Housing For Sale (2002-2003)

Town	Average Terraced House Price	Average Semi Detached House Price	Annual Average Wage (Carlisle)	Terraced House Price to Wages Ratio
Brampton	£70,750	£63,250	£19,469	3.63 to 1
Carlisle	£50,250	£68,250	£19,469	2.58 to 1
Dalston	£67,500	£96,135	£19,469	3.44 to 1
Longtown	£38,500	£51,750	£19,469	1.98 to 1

(Source: Land Registry; upmystreet.com)

APPENDIX 2

Remit and membership list of the Homelessness Strategy Working Group

Remit

Agreed at the first meeting dated 19/2/03 the remit of the Homelessness Strategy Working group was to produce the Carlisle City Council" Homelessness Review and Strategy.

Membership

Marilyn Rooney – HACAS Chapman Hendy Consultants
Kerry Courts – Carlisle City Council
Alistair Mackay – Carlisle housing Association
Linda Jervis – Carlisle City council
Neil Waller – Cumbria Action for Support Services
Anne Rogers – Eden district council
Ann Hoban – Cumbria Social Services (Mental Health Services / Social Services)
Mike Quille – Probation
Jackie Dodd – Supporting People Team
Alan Marshall – Carlisle City Council
Simon Taylor – Carlisle City Council
Sue Little – Impact Housing Association
Vanessa Dixon – Shelter

APPENDIX 3

List of Consultees for the Homelessness Review – April 2003

Anchor Housing Trust
Pauline Butler Solicitors
CAB – Carlisle, Eden, Millom and District, Whitehaven, Workington
CADAS
CALM – Campaign Against Living Miserably
Carlisle Community Law Centre
Carlisle Counselling Service
Carlisle Mencap
Carlisle Police
Cumbria Care
Cumbria Cerebral Palsy
Carr Gomm
CASS
Catholic Caring Services
Community Projects (includes Nightstop)
Connexions in Kendal, Penrith, Workington
Cumbria Youth Alliance
DiGs rent Guarantee Scheme
Eden Youth Work Partnership
Furness Homeless Support
The Glenmore Trust
HomeStart
Impact Housing Association - Projects: Floating Support, Lindisfarne Street Hostel, Close Street Hostel, Bridge Lane Hostel, Pategill House, The Old Fire Station Hostel, Crag View Hostel, Ulverston Granary, Womens Refuge
John Street Hostel Carlisle
Kirkby Stephen Community Centre
Local Health Groups
London Road Hostel
Manna House
MIND in Furness, Penrith
Morecambe Bay PCT
NCH Cumbria
North Cumbria Addictive Behaviour Service
North Cumbria PCT
NRCS Ltd
OutReach Cumbria
Cumbria Police
Cumbria Probation Service
Relate
Resolve Mediation Services
Cumbria Rural Housing Trust
Safe in Barrow
Scott Duff and Co Solicitors
Shelter Cumbria

Silverdale St Hostel
Cumbria Social Services
South Cumbria CART
Springfield Hostel
Stonham Housing Association - Projects: Cumbria Community Services Floating Support, Sandstones Hostel, Paradise Street, Riverview Hostel
St Andrews Church Penrith
Supporting People Team
SureStart
Teenage Pregnancy coordinator
TownView Fields Hostel
Turning Point
Victim Support
West House Floating Support
Whitehaven Community Trust
Wigton Youth Station
Cumbria Youth Offending Team

APPENDIX 4

Feedback provided from the Homelessness review Consultation – April 2003

Carlisle

C: Is a young women living in temporary accommodation who experienced a lot of confusion over filling out different forms – she was pleased to receive the help from her key worker but she felt that it wasn't clear what forms she was filling out and why.

C: Had been offered accommodation by the Council but has been told that while they were preparing it that if someone with greater housing need approached them, he would not be given it and would have to wait for something else. He felt that the level of uncertainty meant that he was unable to plan for the future.

C: Is a woman with a family who was evicted from a Housing Association due to rent arrears. The rent arrears were partly due to her spending time in hospital because she had suffered from serious physical health problems. She had a high level of rent arrears and the housing association demanded they be paid off in full. She felt that her eviction could have been avoided if the housing association had a policy to help people pay their arrears off in manageable instalments. She had received independent advice which she felt was really useful. When she was evicted the LHA arranged for her to be accommodated at the LA hostel. The LHA told her that her daughter should apply to the Council for housing and they explained their duties and the options in terms of temporary accommodation. Their offer of accommodation was imminent and she was pleased with the service and advice offered.

C: Is staying at hostel, and feels that the hostel is very restrictive. He made reference to the opening and closing times, saying that it was hard to live there and be in work and that it was difficult to socialise with friends and maintain his support network.

C: Was in a violent relationship and was referred to a domestic violence project. They then referred her to a hostel in South Lakeland but while staying there her partner had found her. She then moved to a safe house in Eden but then went back to her partner. She again decided to leave and was moved to another safe house in Eden and then had asked to be moved to Carlisle. She is currently in safe accommodation and accessing support for her and her family.

C: Is a single homeless man staying at a hostel. He was not informed that he had a key worker until two weeks into his stay there. He felt that people staying at the hostel were left to sort everything out for themselves.

C: Is a young man, aged 17, staying at a hostel. He had slept rough on two separate occasions due to family problems. He had not been told about priority need or the Council's duty to help and had therefore not applied to the Council as homeless. He is currently waiting for a space in a young persons hostel. He felt that his current accommodation was not suitable for young people because most of the other residents were older and many had drug and alcohol problems. As yet he has not been offered any support and doesn't know how long he can stay at the hostel.

P: "The LHA are quite good at housing ex-offenders"

C: Believes that the women's refuge was a good base from which to start sorting things out. It was better than she expected and the staff had provided her with support.

P: "It is positive that people are able to access support when accommodated by certain RSLs which provide Floating Support."

C: Went to the LHA and thought that he was making a homeless application but was then told by the officer that he wasn't.

C: Was homeless as a result of domestic violence and was living in temporary accommodation with her four children. She had not applied as homeless. Instead she had applied for housing with a Housing Association but had been told that she couldn't have a family house because she didn't have a husband. She is currently waiting for move-on accommodation from the refuge, which will enable her children to have friends to stay.

C: " There should be more accommodation available in rural areas"

C: Returned to Carlisle after a relationship breakdown. He attended an appointment with the homelessness officer on the same day he went in. The LHA explained the homelessness process but he did not fill out a homeless application form. He was asked about his personal history (care background, prison or armed forces). He was told to apply for housing and was given a realistic timescale for re-housing; he was also advised about different benefits. Overall he said he was satisfied with the process.

APPENDIX 5

Local and Countywide issues identified through the Homelessness Review

Local Issues

Key Issues:

There appears to be a number of key issues that should be considered and included in the Homelessness Strategy and they are summarised below.

The homeless procedures adhered to by the LHA seem to be clear and comprehensive. However it appears that some homeless people are discouraged from filling in an application form which in turn means that the problem of homelessness will be underestimated by the LHA. Homeless people staying in hostel accommodation were not automatically referred to the LHA to apply as homeless (even if they clearly had priority need).

Residents in the hostels were assisted with filling out forms – either for housing benefit or for social housing, and were grateful for the help they received. However most were not sure what the forms were for and therefore this led to confusion and anxiety in relation to their own circumstances.

Practitioners raised the issue of an inadequate out of hours service within the Borough.

Most of the people we spoke to in the women's refuge and family hostel were pleased with their temporary accommodation and felt it was better than they had expected. Although many residents in the family hostel expressed a need for additional staff. Residents at John Street felt that the hostel was restrictive and could be more welcoming. There did not seem to be a consistent approach to support within John Street – some people were made aware of the support offered on the same day they arrived there, others had been staying there for a number of weeks and as yet had not been informed that they had a key worker.

The provision for people in Carlisle who are homeless as a result of domestic violence seemed to be adequate. There appear to be good communication channels between different organisations, and work across the County is effective. However Carlisle has the only refuge in the county.

The lack of specialist knowledge around immigration is becoming more of an issue and needs to be addressed.

The furniture grant offered by the Council was widely acknowledged as a very useful resource and we would recommend the scheme be extended to other parts of Cumbria.

County Wide Issues

General Comments:

- Housing is fundamental to a person's hierarchy of needs - once they have accommodation they can then start to sort out other things such as education, training and get help with any problems such as drugs or alcohol abuse.

- Intervention or advocacy on behalf of a homeless person always benefits the clients. It seems to be the case that when people get help from an agency they get treated differently and more favourably than when they attempt to go through the process alone.

- Communal areas in hostels provide an opportunity to share experiences and encourage a collective and supportive atmosphere which helps homeless people improve their social interaction skills and sharing experiences often helps people to feel empowered.

- There should be a fast track system for homeless people with mental health difficulties as their health can deteriorate if they are not supported or if they are very isolated.

- When trying to make links to other strategies the supporting people shadow strategy would be good starting point

- It is apparent that there are a lot of statistics around which on their own do not reflect the true extent and nature of homelessness. Multi-agency monitoring would be a useful tool to collect data to reflect the issue in Cumbria. There may be a role for the Cumbria Homelessness Forum to deliver this.

- There needs to be fully joined up working amongst agencies, both voluntary and statutory. There should be effective referrals between agencies keeping the clients needs as the priority.

- Different agencies have different targets, priorities, confidentiality policies which adversely affect the client. We need to address this issue of working together.

- Social Services are looking to pull together a prevention strategy by September 2003, which needs to look at intervention and prevention.

- We need to develop a framework for exchange of information and strategies.

- We can learn from good practice across the country and become more proactive.

- There is a need for protocols for cross-border issues regarding threats of violence. Good practice of this is the protocol the Women's Aid Federation use when dealing with domestic violence in Cumbria – there is currently nothing in place for those people fleeing other forms of violence and harassment including racial and homophobic.
- All lone teen parents aged 16-18 have to go into semi-independent accommodation (stated in National Teenage Pregnancy Strategy). This seems to contradict the Homelessness Act guidance which states that the allocation of appropriate housing and support should be based on an individuals circumstances. If lone teenage parents don't need support, they should not be forced to have it.

- Cumbria Adolescent Resource Team (CART) have statutory responsibility for certain client groups, they have financial resources but they do not have access to accommodation.

Key Issues:

In every Local Authority area the issue of the lack of accommodation was raised. It was identified that many different types of accommodation should be available and that the LHAs should work together to improve the provision of:

- Emergency and direct access accommodation
- Supported accommodation
- Move on accommodation
- Affordable social housing

These should be provided for a variety of client groups including general and multiple needs and dispersed around the County in different locations.

LHA duties as part of the homelessness and allocations processes were also important issues that were raised as key themes in each local authority area. It was felt that the homelessness services were not fully advertised and that they should be. Providing information in schools, colleges, libraries and other key institutions could help inform people of their rights and the services available.

There needs to be a thorough review of the homelessness process in each Borough so that when someone presents as homeless they receive a full assessment of their individual circumstances and needs, the process they go through is clear to them and that they are informed of their right to appeal or review decisions and the opportunity to gain access to independent, impartial and confidential specialist housing advice.

There also needs to be some consideration of the out of hours provision in each local area and the effectiveness of any current practices that are in existence. These issues could be addressed on a County wide level creating a single homeless application form and creating a homelessness system which is consistent across Cumbria.

It was also acknowledged that significant numbers of people do not currently apply as homeless to LHAs and therefore the statistical information available on homelessness (for instance P1Es) does not reflect the extent and nature of homelessness in Cumbria.

DiGs was another resource that was raised across the County , it is not available in Carlisle. The take-up rate varies across the other LAs and in some cases funds had been exhausted. This scheme is beneficial to many homeless people and local authorities should support the scheme and try to extend its use wherever possible sharing examples of where, how and why it works successfully in some areas but not others.

There only appears to be one joint protocol currently in existence within the County and it is regarding the housing of dangerous ex-offenders. This is not widely available to consult. Many practitioners recognised the need for better joint working and emphasised the need for housing and social services joint protocols for young people and intentionally homeless families with children.

Through carrying out the consultation exercise it has identified that there is a need to investigate (as part of the homelessness strategy) the methods of identifying people at risk of becoming homeless in order to help assist in preventing homelessness. Each local authority should address the following issues in relation to preventing homelessness:

- Anti-Social Behaviour policies and practices
- Delays in Housing Benefit
- Rent arrears and evictions policies and practices
- The availability and accessibility of tenancy sustainment and support services
- Affordability of housing and the planning processes in each Local Authority area

Some effective cross-boundary multi-agency joint working has been identified around the issue of domestic violence but it is felt that this should be extended to cover the new priority need category of all forms of violence and threats of violence. Therefore there should be some discussion and investigation of the possibility of a cross-boundary protocol on fleeing violence.

The furniture grant scheme operated by Carlisle CC was cited as a positive scheme which assisted people to sustain their tenancies and therefore should be extended to cover the rest of the County.

Training is a major issue within Cumbria. The lack of specialist housing advisors within the County and the low levels of referrals to those agencies who are specialist housing advisors means that it is vital to provide and promote training opportunities and develop more joint working.
The key themes identified as a priority for training are general homelessness law and equality training. This training could be funded by all the LHAs who could provide a rolling programme of multi-agency training days on these issues.

There are insufficient rural services for potentially homeless and homeless people. The services offered in different rural parts of the County seem rather sporadic and it would be useful to clarify the provisions that already exist and look to expand the services in partnership with key local agencies. Mobile advice provision needs to be extended.

A number of agencies raised the issue of the media. It was felt that sometimes the local media can portray a very negative picture of homeless people and where there is scope to do the work, both local agencies and the LHAs could do pro-active work to challenge the misconceptions and prejudices of the press and public about why people become homeless and the need for particular provisions and services.

The profile of homelessness needs to be raised at a political level.

During the consultation a number of ex-offenders and practitioners dealing with this client group raised issues. It appears that a very small percentage of prisoners receive housing advice whilst serving sentences – both to maintain existing accommodation (prevention of future homelessness) and where homeless on release. It was felt that if money was invested in providing housing advice and resettlement support before leaving prison this would reduce the likelihood of ex-offenders re-offending.

A number of practitioners identified the problem of funding. They highlighted the fact that when one LHA cuts funding for a particular project or organisation which has an impact on other funding possibilities. It was felt that LHAs should contribute financially to local schemes that help to assist the prevention of homelessness or that help homeless or potentially homeless people. In circumstances where funding from LHAs was not possible, agencies still felt that LHA support and backing for their projects was important because it would support funding applications to other bodies.

Mediation schemes were highlighted when consulting practitioners and it was felt that they are gradually being better understood. Many agencies felt that mediation should be encouraged across the County and that (where appropriate) mediation processes should be written into the policies of different organisations such as the LHA and housing associations. Resolve are piloting a mediation service for young people and their parents in Barrow.

The series of practitioner consultation events, service user consultation and the front line staff consultation event have all helped to provide a more detailed, critical and comprehensive picture of homelessness in Cumbria. Therefore we would recommend that ongoing consultation with both practitioners and users continue as an integral part of the homelessness strategy in order to help monitor progress and implementation.

Links have been made with some key health professionals who seem keen to be involved – Cumbria Homeless Forum may be the arena for such involvement.