London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

Street Population Strategy/Action Plan

2009/12

A Consultation Document

Contents

1. Introduction…… page 1

1.1 What the strategy must achieve……. page 4

2. Key Drivers……. page 4

3. Strategic Framework…… page 7

4. Strategic Priorities……page 9

4.1 Intelligence……...page 9
4.2 Support……page 10
4.3 Enforcement……page 11
4.4 Migrants……page 13
4.5 Prevention……page 14

5. Responsibility for delivery and performance monitoring…….page 15

6. Partnership structure…… page 16

7. Challenges to delivery…….. page 17

1. Introduction

This strategy and accompanying action plan sets out the boroughs vision and commitment to reducing rough sleeping and other associated street activity such as street drinking and begging etc within the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF).

Rough sleeping and other forms of street activity have a detrimental effect on the health and quality of life of individuals who engage in this lifestyle and impacts on the community as a whole, especially in terms of crime, fear of crime and anti social behaviour (ASB) sometimes associated with this group.

Rough sleepers are some of the most socially excluded citizens in our community; stigmatised by society, serially excluded by services and as a consequence of this and the lifestyle they engage in, develop exceptionally complex conditions such as mental and physical illnesses such as; personality disorders; psychosis such as schizophrenia; chaotic and sometimes violent behaviour; dual diagnoses' as a result of dependency on alcohol and substance misuse. The consequence of this behaviour, particularly in those who are entrenched in this lifestyle can result in the death on the streets. In fact homeless and rough sleepers are five times more likely to die than the equivalent age group of the general population.[1] This is not acceptable to the borough. Therefore this strategy seeks to address these issues to reduce the numbers engaged in street activity, and providing the appropriate configuration of services to address the accommodation and health needs of individuals on the street by;

"Tackling the root causes of rough sleeping and associated street activity through a coordinated response"

The responsibility for tackling rough sleeping and its effects on both the individual and the community lies with a number of statutory and third sector agencies such as Local Authority departments i.e. Housing, other accommodation providers, Adult Social Services, Community Safety and other key partners such as Primary Care Trust, Mental Health Trust, Drug and Alcohol commissioners and providers and Police etc. This strategy recognises that to be effective in dealing with this problem all agencies need to act and work together to provide flexible, innovative and quality services in a coordinated way. Without this approach the revolving door of homelessness and entries into the criminal justice system will continue and the future life chances and health of a minority within our community will continue to diminish. Therefore at the heart of this strategy there contains a vision to build a strong multi agency partnership to reduce returns to the street and deliver sustainable reductions in rough sleeping, crime and anti social behaviour. To deliver this vision 5 strategic themes have been identified;

[1] Rees, S Mental Ill Health in the Adult Single Homeless Population: A Review of the literature Crisis 2009

- **Intelligence**
- **Support**
- **Enforcement**
- **Migrant's**
- **Prevention**

These themes are explored in detail in the section Strategic Priorities.

1.1 What the strategy must achieve

The current partnership does not fully harness the diversity and expertise of agencies/providers with a responsibility for providing services to the Street Population. As it is a complex area of work that cuts across many different service areas i.e. adult social care, physical care, mental health, housing, employment, training, education, crime, ASB, regeneration, drug and alcohol treatment etc the partnership needs to be developed to ensure a coordinated response is achieved.

Therefore this strategy must achieve the following;

- stronger links with partners
- focused coordinated approach that incorporates joint priorities across departments i.e. National Indicators, PCT/Council Joint Strategic Needs Assessment etc
- identify responsible agencies and named leads accountable for delivery within all key agencies
- promoting/highlighting impact of rough sleeping and street activity on individuals engaging in this lifestyle and the local community by raising the profile of the subject

To this end a Champion has been identified and the Director of Residents Services, Lyn Carpenter has agreed to take on this leadership role. Champions for each strategic theme will also be sought within the police and other services.

2. Key Drivers

There are a number of key drivers that have informed the need for this strategy;

i) New central government strategy to end rough sleeping by 2012

In autumn 2008 Communities and Local Government (CLG) launched its new strategy for eradicating rough sleeping called 'No One Left Out'. The first strategy 'Coming in from the cold' (1999) focussed on lifting rough sleepers off the streets to achieve the target of a two thirds reduction in rough sleeping and then maintaining this figure to as close to zero as possible thereafter. The two thirds reduction was achieved in 2002. Although this reduction was achieved across the UK, London did not with a reduction of 50% being achieved. The following strategy 'More than a roof' (2003) recognised the importance of tackling relationship, economic and health issues to prevent homelessness.

The new strategy focuses on finding solutions for people who are either at risk of sleeping rough, actually sleeping rough or accommodated but in need of support to reintegrate into the community by providing the right support in the right place at the right time.

ii) Review of rough sleeper services

In February 2008 a comprehensive review of rough sleeper services was initiated and led by Safer Communities in partnership with Supporting People, Housing and other partners due to a number of local and sub-regional drivers such as;

- the expiration of the Street Outreach Service contract in March 09
- the coming on line of the 'Old Theatre' – a 24 hour high needs supported accommodation unit for the boroughs most entrenched rough sleepers; those with the most complex needs and those who have been serially excluded from services
- changes to the funding allocation and partnership arrangements for the procurement and delivery of the Street Outreach Service (previously done jointly with RBKC)

The review is in its final stages and is currently focusing on the current and future development of day service provision and opportunities.

iii) Supporting People strategic review

Due to cuts in the Supporting People budget allocated by the CLG from 2010, a strategic review began in 2008 to make savings of £1.25m across all of its services including single homeless and rough sleeper services. This will undoubtedly mean a reduction in the number of units provided to this client group. Current projections estimate a loss of up to 40 units.

iv) Community concerns of impact of street activity on neighbourhoods

There is growing evidence that increases in street activity, particularly street drinking and street activity amongst A10 nationals has occurred across the borough. This is reflected and supported by evidence in the boroughs first crime and disorder strategic assessment undertaken in 2008 and the subsequent borough partnership plan which identified street population as an emerging priority. In addition several Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) Ward panels, particularly Shepherds Bush Green, have identified street related ASB as a priority by local residents for their SNT's to address.

v) Tackling exclusion

The councils Community Strategy 2007-14 sets out the vision for the borough. Its mission statement is 'creating a borough of opportunity for all'. Its approach is to combine opportunity with social responsibility and social justice and deliver opportunity to all local people. The strategy has identified 7 strategic priorities. This strategy aims to work towards and contribute towards the delivery of 4 of the seven priorities;

- tackling crime and anti social behaviour – improving the quality of life of residents by reducing the environment for crime and the fear of crime
- setting the framework for a healthy borough' – reducing the use of more acute services and helping vulnerable residents to live more independent lives through the provision of high quality, responsive health and social care services
- deliver a cleaner, greener borough – to markedly improve the local environment, delivering cleaner streets and improving parks so everyone can enjoy green open spaces
- deliver high quality, value for money public services

Tackling social exclusion in all its forms is at the heart of this strategy/action plan.

vi) Housing strategy

The borough's Housing strategy 2007-14 'A Housing Ladder of Opportunity For All' is committed to providing high quality advice and assistance to those looking for housing in the private, social rented and low cost homeownership sectors and providing high quality flexible supported housing and housing support services that are targeted and outcome focused. Both of these strategic objectives, although specifically in relation to the former in terms of quality advice, have been highlighted as priorities for this strategy and action plan to prevent people from homelessness and rough sleeping.

vii) Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) produced in 2008 identified the vision for improving the health of the local population. Part of this vision is proactively tackling health inequalities and as a result of the assessment the core needs for the borough were grouped as follows;

- entrenched health inequalities
- differential access to quality provision
- inadequate prevention and early intervention services

The assessment also identified specific areas of need such as the health of the offender population. In addition the assessment also identified the correlation between crime rates, and the prevalence of cardio-vascular disease and other health issues and how these are interrelated.

The assessment collected feedback through consultations with providers and the local community which found that there are poor links between health and social care, housing and education. Mental health was also identified as an area of concern in terms of the inequalities in access to mental health services, particularly by residents.

The JSNA identified 5 goals with a number of initiatives supporting each goal. Of particular relevance to this strategy are;

- to give priority for health interventions to those people at greater risk of poorer health.
- offender health services, including forensic

The Offender Health strategy and Lord Bradley review are expected to recommend investment in court diversion, police diversion and liaison and community support to address the health needs of offenders living in the community.

3. Strategic Framework

The Street Population Strategy/Action Plan ties into a number of key partnership strategies and plans:

LBHF Housing Strategy 2007-2014	Overarching policy document that sets out the strategic aims and objectives for housing related services across the entire spectrum of housing activity
LBHF Homelessness Strategy	Ensures there is an integrated response to homelessness in the borough and agencies work together to provide services to promote the

	well-being of individuals in the community
LBHF Supporting People Strategy	Currently being refreshed in light of cuts to the SP budget
LBHF Crime Reduction Partnership Plan 2008-2011	Statutory plan that sets out the boroughs priorities as identified through the strategic assessment and refreshed annually in the form of the Partnership Plan
LBHF Community Strategy 2007-2014	Sets out the long term vision for the borough to improve the area
LBHF Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy and Action Plan 2008-2011	Statutory strategy that addresses alcohol-related crime and disorder, health harms and the impact of alcohol on children and families
LBHF Drug Strategy 2008-2011	Sets out the priorities of the national strategy as well as key local priorities identified by consultation, key partners and local data collection and analysis
WLMHT Clinical Mental Health Strategy 2008-13	Has 5 strategic themes; to effectively treat and care for people with MH problems; to provide accessible services; to support independent living; to promote health and well being in partnership; to be a truly listening, responsive and aspirational organsiation
Local Area Agreement	There are a number of National Indicators that this strategy will contribute towards including; NI 17 Perception of ASB NI 39 Alcohol related admissions NI 41 Drunk and rowdy being a problem NI 120 a,b Mortality rate in males and females NI 121 Circulatory disease mortality NI 124 People with a long term condition supported to be independent NI 130 Self – Directed support NI 134 Emergency bed days NI 136 People supported to live independently NI 141 SP – achieving independent living NI 142 SP – maintaining independent living
Domestic Violence Action Plan	Aims to achieve a reduction in the

2008/12	need for crisis intervention through earlier identification and prevention. Relationship breakdown is the single biggest factor contributing towards homelessness. Drug and alcohol dependency as a means of coping with the abuse is also highly prevalent amongst victims; substance misuse are the second and fourth biggest factors that lead to homelessness.

4. Strategic Priorities

This section sets out the strategic themes of the strategy and will inform the development of the supporting action plan. The 5 themes; intelligence; support; enforcement; migrants and prevention were agreed through consultation with partners of the Street Population Steering Group. The local priorities also reflect the national strategy 'No One Left Out'.

4.1 Intelligence

"To build a complete picture of the needs, trends, patterns, locations etc of the borough's street population through data collection and analysis"

Aims:

i) To continue use of CHAIN data to assist in mapping local and pan-London trends among the street population

To enable a full understanding of the local and regional factors that contribute to rough sleeping, as well as the needs of this group and the wider street population, comprehensive intelligence and information is needed in order to prevent this activity and provide the right services and support. Current systems such as CHAIN (Combined Homelessness and Accommodation Information Network) will continue to be utilised.

ii) To assess the level of need among the street population through the use of Street Needs Audits and data from other providers

However other methods also need to be developed such as a Service User Forum to capture the experiences of current street users of the factors that contributed towards their precarious situation, and gain a greater understanding of their needs to highlight current gaps in service provision and inform the development of existing and new services.

Data and information collected by key partner agencies such as Police, PCT, PATHS, voluntary sector providers etc will need to be shared in order to harness the full range of data available in order to inform and deliver the objectives of this strategy. This data will also be useful in the

planning and development of the wider offender health services that will be developed as highlighted as a key health priority in the JSNA.

4.2 Support

"Providing the right services at the right time to meet the needs of a changing street population"

Aims:

i) Improving access to health and social care services for people with complex and multiple needs (housing related support, mental health, dual diagnosis, substance misuse)

Central to the new national rough sleeping strategy that aims to eradicate rough sleeping by 2012, and also a priority within this strategy is providing the right services at the right time to stop returns to the street through equality of access to health and social care services. Therefore specific protocols and service level agreements will need to be agreed and developed with key service providers to ensure pathways into care and support are open, accessible and maintained to ensure on-going treatment and support is available to those who need it. The recent addition of 2 Substance Misuse Outreach Workers and the forthcoming recruitment of a Mental Health Outreach Worker to the Street Outreach Response Team (SORT) are key in ensuring timely and comprehensive assessments are completed to ensure the mental health and substance misuse needs of the street population are met through referral into treatment services and ongoing support provided.

The introduction of Personalised Budgets to enable greater individual choice and empowerment of individuals requiring care and support will be a key challenge of this strategy, but one that will hopefully ensure greater access to the right services to match the needs of individual rough sleepers. Supporting People will be the lead agency for this.

ii) Assisting rough sleepers in the transition from street to home through the provision of a Street based Outreach Service

A key service in the borough for tackling rough sleeping and associated street activity is the SORT. This service engages with individual rough sleepers on the streets and is responsible for developing a Personal Resettlement Plan (PRP) to open up the pathways into accommodation, care and support for clients. This service begins the process of resettlement and is therefore vital in the transition from the street to a more settled way of life. Ensuring access to statutory and third sector services is paramount to ensuring it can fulfil its optimum potential and effectiveness as the primary interface between clients and referral into support services.

iii) Enabling rough sleepers into meaningful activity (employment, training, education) through the provision of outcome focussed Day Opportunities

There is a need for more structured day opportunities in the borough; whether in the form of meaningful activity or more long term goal orientated opportunities such as education, training, employment (ETE) etc. As part of the day service review a model of provision will be developed through consultation with service users and providers to ensure there is a wide range of opportunities that meet the needs and aspirations of the street population. The provision of such services will contribute towards reducing the risk of relapse into harmful behaviours and increase the motivation and self worth of street users so they can continue to improve their chances of leading a more productive, stable, healthy and settled future.

Current day service provision is delivered by Broadway's Market Lane Day Centre. However due to regeneration plans for the site the centre is situated on, a new location will need to be sourced by April 2010. A review is already underway to determine what type and level of future provision is required. The Rough Sleeper Project Board is responsible for overseeing this review, reporting to the Supporting People Commissioning Body and Assistant Director for Housing Strategy and Regeneration.

iv) Providing and maintaining access to quality accommodation (temporary, supported, move-on to suitable accommodation) appropriate to individual need and increasing positive move-on's

Access to accommodation that can meet the housing needs of rough sleepers needs to be maintained, and housing related support services such as floating support and Tenancy Sustainment Teams. These are vital if the revolving door of homelessness and returns to the street are to be reduced. A particular challenge for this strategy will be to maintain a sustainable level of supported accommodation in light of changes to the SP budget. Providing quality high, medium and low support accommodation to ensure there is sufficient through put in the system resulting in positive move-on is essential in achieving the aims of this strategy.

4.3 Enforcement

"Using the enforcement model through the full range of powers available to;

Aims:

i) communicate the unacceptability of engaging in a street based lifestyle

The borough has adopted an enforcement/social care approach to addressing all forms of street activity. It is unacceptable for anyone to be

engaging in a street based lifestyle and it is vital that this message is conveyed by all agencies that come into contact with members of the street population. This also needs to be supported through the appropriate use of enforcement measures such as civil action etc.

ii) require rough sleepers/members of street population to engage with services

For this approach to work a delicate balancing between these agendas needs to be achieved in order to fully utilise their effectiveness in reducing rough sleeping, street drinking and begging etc. For enforcement interventions to achieve their optimum effectiveness, access to support services need to be in place. Requiring or compelling individual rough sleepers to engage with services raises questions of whether this is achievable within the confines of;

- the current criminal/human rights legislative framework
- the resources of agencies to provide the appropriate response for the individual

Although there is legislation such as the Vagrancy Act 1824 that has certain conditions under which an individual can be criminally prosecuted for sleeping rough or begging, it is an archaic piece of legislation and is currently not considered as an appropriate tool for tackling this issue by the CLG. If it is to be used as a means to require rough sleepers into engagement in services, accommodation will need to be secured during the process, which could result in a loss of income to the potential provider, as well as a criminal record for the individual concerned which could jeopardise their future life chances in terms of employability etc and leading a more productive way of life. Tackling social exclusion is at the heart of this strategy/action plan, so therefore it is paramount that support services are used within this approach. Therefore achieving and coordinating this balance will be a key challenge for this strategy and the partners responsible for its delivery.

Bearing these factors and potential consequences in mind it would be more appropriate and fairer to use civil action such as Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and in extreme cases Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO) to achieve the desired outcome. It will require a number of agencies such as CLG, police, magistrates, support services, Supporting People etc to agree to this approach to test its effectiveness. Therefore a model will need to be developed through a coordinated multi agency response that balances these agendas, and tests courts, police and providers ability to respond appropriately within the legislative framework and within the resources available to bring the most entrenched rough sleepers off the streets and engaging with services.

iii) tackle anti social/criminal behaviour (begging, street drinking, street drug markets) amongst the street population

Current methods used to reduce this activity in the borough such as the borough wide Controlled Drinking Area (CDA) and coordinated partnership working have proved successful in reducing street drinking etc. However in some cases there were unintended consequences resulting in incarceration of a number of street users a result of individuals breaking the conditions of their ASBO's. Although there have been successes in reducing this type of ASB, we will need to build on this to continue to achieve sustainable reductions. We will continue to work in partnership to reduce the visibility of these acts of ASB whilst also ensuring that there is sufficient opportunity for street users, particularly street drinkers to have access to treatment services.

4.4 Migrants

"To reduce rough sleeping and associated street activity amongst migrant communities"

Aims:

i) To provide a voluntary reconnection service for A10's into social inclusion programmes

LBHF has seen an increase in the numbers of A10's engaging in street activity. The borough has long been a destination for migrants to settle due to the historical ties the borough has with peoples from Eastern Europe and in particular Poland that goes back generations, well before the accession of these states to the EU in 2004 and 2007. Although the borough has benefited from this new migration especially in terms of the local economy, there are a minority that have fallen into destitution as a result of pre-existing conditions such as alcoholism or poorly planned pre-migration plans, and the inability to secure stable employment. As a result of this and the legislation restricting access to public funds that would normally offer routes out of destitution such as access to hostels etc. some have fallen into a street based lifestyle with an increased risk of becoming entrenched.

LBHF was the first Local Authority in the country to commission the services of a Polish charity called Barka Foundation who in partnership with the council developed a policy of voluntary reconnection to the country of origin where they have they have the greatest social capital, and into services that they could not access in the UK.

This service is a key intervention for this group and will need to be maintained to ensure there is a safety net to assist those who find themselves in this precarious position.

ii) Prevention of rough sleeping through earlier intervention by providing advice and support (self-help)

Although the work of Barka has been hugely successful in providing a service to this group within the street population, more services are needed to prevent A10 nationals from falling into a street based lifestyle. To achieve this a model of intervention will be developed that will aim to provide earlier intervention through treaty rights advice, support and self-help, contribution based benefit checks, employment advice etc.

iii) Exploring opportunities for working on a cross borough level where clear benefits to LBHF can be achieved

It is widely acknowledged that providing services such as Barka's reconnection programme can act as a magnet for people in other boroughs who do not have such a service. Also due to funding restrictions there is a limited amount of resources available to fund services for those who have no recourse to public funds. Therefore joint working opportunities with other boroughs will need to be explored where this a clear benefit to this borough.

iv) To inform central government in relation to policy development in tackling rough sleeping and wider street activity amongst migrants

It is clear that innovative solutions need to be found in light of the restrictions placed upon Local Authorities to effectively address these issues. The partnership will continue to devise new effective methods in tackling rough sleeping amongst A10's to inform central government policy and responses to this growing issue.

The CSU have been working with a European Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) called European Citizen Advice Service (ECAS) on the issue of the mobility of migrants following the enlargement of the EU in 2004 and 2007. Activities of this partnership have included holding a series of events across Europe to build an understanding of the different responses from EU members to this issue with particular reference to those migrants in a precarious position. It also tested the idea of a 'one stop mobility shop' approach to this problem. The CSU will continue to work with ECAS and other European partners in order to build knowledge and understanding of migrants situation and consider policy responses aimed at addressing this increasing problem, and sharing these learnings with central government and homelessness organisations.

4.5 Prevention

"Preventing tomorrow's rough sleepers through early identification and intervention"

Aims:

i) Ensuring provision of high quality housing advice services that are accessible to vulnerable adults at risk of rough sleeping

The current Housing Strategy 'A Housing Ladder of Opportunity for All' is committed to providing high quality housing advice that links in with other services such as children's services, supported housing, adult social care etc. It is also committed to providing services that are accessible for vulnerable adults in the borough.

PATHS (Placement and Assessment Team for Homeless Singles) provides a single assessment process for single homeless which takes a holistic look at needs etc to identify the right kind of options that meets individual needs. Housing is the lead department on delivering this service.

ii) Reducing the risk of evictions and exclusions from accommodation providers through multi agency intervention

In order to reduce the revolving door of homelessness and returns to the street there needs to be a concerted multi agency response to reduce the risk of evictions and exclusions through earlier intervention. Once an individual has lost their accommodation there is an increased risk of them being unable to access alternative accommodation as they are likely to be assessed as intentionally homeless and the council has no duty to assist in these cases. This often means the increased risk of become entrenched on the streets.

A protocol will be developed with Supporting People, Community Services Procurement and other key providers to minimise the numbers of evictions and exclusions.

iii) Reconnecting those individuals to the area where they have the greatest social capital through the pan-London reconnections protocol

Another means of prevention of rough sleeping is the pan-London reconnections protocol which all boroughs have signed up to, to ensure that those seeking accommodation and assistance in the borough but have a greater connection with another borough are reconnected to that area. However in practice the protocol does not always work. The London Delivery Board that is overseeing the delivery of the national rough sleeping strategy for London is looking into this issue to ensure boroughs deliver on their commitment and responsibility to assist in these cases.

5. Responsibility for delivery and monitoring of the strategy/action plan

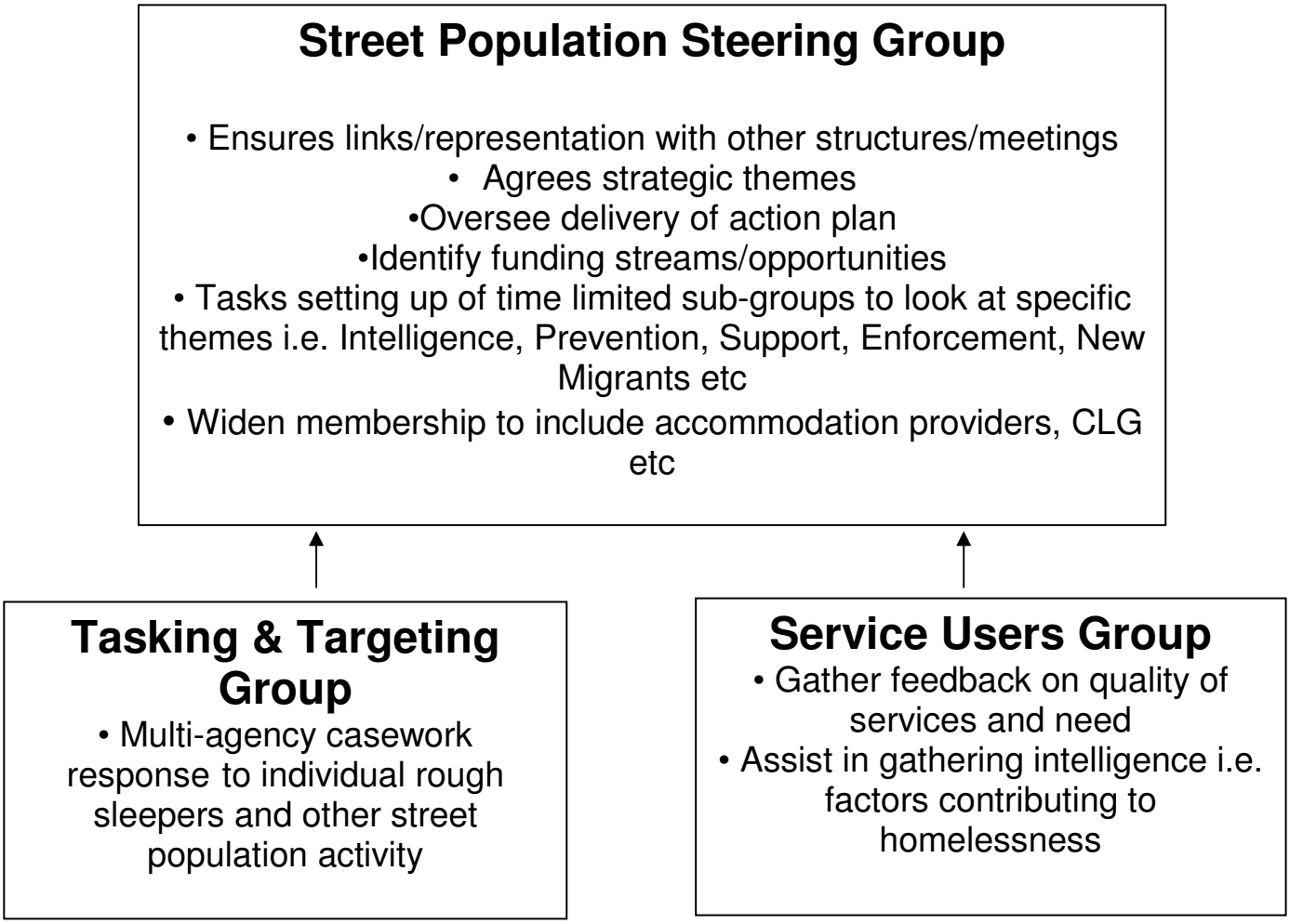
The Community Safety Unit (CSU) within the Safer Communities Division in Residents Services has the lead for the Street Population Strategic shared agenda. The CSU is also responsible for reducing crime and ASB including rough sleeping, street drinking and begging.

Within the CSU the Street Population Coordinator and Principal Community Safety Officer are the two dedicated officers responsible for the delivery of the agenda. Ultimately responsibility lies with the Assistant Director of Safer Communities.

However as previously stated, this agenda needs a strong multi agency partnership to ensure effective and timely delivery of this strategy and action plan. The Street Population Steering Group comprising of strategic leads' from across the partnership chaired by the Head of the CSU will be the body that oversees the delivery and performance monitoring of the action plan.

6. Partnership Structure

The Street Population Steering Group and Tasking and Targeting Group are already in operation. The Service Users Group is a proposed new group that will feed into the steering group to inform service development etc.



7. Challenges to the delivery of the strategy/action plan

There are number of external factors that could pose a risk to the delivery of this strategy. The current economic crisis will certainly have an effect on the numbers of individuals at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping, adding further pressure to already stretched budgets. The forthcoming changes to the SP budget will result in losing its ring-fenced status and will be included within the Area Based Grant (ABG), placing it under competition from other bids to this grant. In addition the reduction in this budget instigated by the CLG will also add further pressure to the ability to deliver supported housing and related services to single homeless and rough sleeper services.

The current funding for the key services for rough sleepers etc comes from the Homeless Directorate Grant allocated from the CLG which is held by the Assistant Director of Housing Strategy and Performance. This currently funds the SORT, Day Centre and a contribution towards the Street Population Coordinator post, and a portion of the costs towards the Barka reconnections project. This funding is allocated by the CLG on a 3 yearly basis and the current round is from 2008-11. It is unclear whether this funding will continue beyond this date, and with the possibility of a new central government administration being elected in 2010 priorities could change.