



**Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy – action plan**

<u>Task</u>	<u>Further detail if appropriate</u>	<u>Responsible service area</u>
<p><b>Offer a range of support and advisory services to those presenting as or threatened with homelessness regardless of need at the earliest opportunity</b></p>		
<p>Establish protocols with social housing providers in relation to evictions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- for sound advice to be provided by the Council to those at risk of losing their tenancy at the earliest possibility</li> <li>- to work with the client or provider if possible to resolve issues</li> <li>- to agree a procedure of notifying the Council should an eviction be decided</li> </ul>	<p>Housing Operations</p>
<p>Giving the right information at the right time</p>	<p>Ensure officers are fully trained for the new legislation and provide basic training for Councillors on the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure up to date details of the services the Council provide are disseminated to those attending the Homelessness Forum and Landlords' Forum</li> </ul>	<p>Housing Operations/Housing Strategy</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review information currently distributed to partners and the public and ensure these are up to date and fit for purpose</li> <li>- Review the information provided on the Council's website to reflect the changes to Council's required duties</li> <li>- Develop an approach with the Council's Customer Services team to ensure accurate information is given and customers are referred to the most appropriate team if necessary.</li> </ul>	
<p>Develop partnerships with local organisations to provide advice at the earliest opportunity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a partnership with Hertfordshire Families First to raise and discuss families that are presenting concerns to either team</li> <li>- Continue funding Herts Young Homeless to provide housing advice and guidance for 16 - 24 year olds</li> <li>- Continue funding Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) to provide generalist housing advice and money and debt advice. The Council will develop its partnership with CAB to ensure the advice provided is in line with any new legislation or changes to the Council's procedures</li> <li>- Develop a clear pathway for all specified public bodies to refer a person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness to the Council under Section 213B duty in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017</li> </ul>	<p>Housing Operations</p>

<b>Support vulnerable people and avoid homelessness (including rough sleepers, those with complex needs and victims of domestic abuse or modern slavery)</b>		
Develop partnerships with statutory organisations such as Adult Care Services and Children Services both at a strategic level and operational level		Housing Strategy/Housing Operations
Ensure appropriate support organisations which are or could be supporting the individual are discussed as part of their Personal Housing Plan completed after an individual approaches as homeless.		Housing Operations
Develop a Temporary Accommodation Policy and review and update procedures.		Housing Strategy
Maintain good links with Customer Services who are often the first point of contact for those struggling with housing to ensure they are aware of current legislation and team structure.		Housing Operations/ Housing Strategy
Carry out the recommendations from the Temporary Accommodation Review and keep under annual review		Housing Strategy

(recommendation 9 from the Homelessness Review).		
To support those with specific vulnerabilities:		
Domestic violence and modern slavery:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure advice given by the Council is correct and easily accessible. This includes advice given via front line officers and on the website</li> <li>- Continue to promote a number of Hertfordshire wide services available to those fleeing domestic Abuse</li> <li>- Ensure temporary accommodation placements for those fleeing domestic abuse are appropriate and the location is suitable. This will be in line with a newly developed Temporary Accommodation policy</li> <li>- Review additional safety measures that could be used in Council temporary accommodation properties such as additional locks</li> <li>- Continue to attend Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences to share relevant and appropriate information to reduce the risk of serious harm to high risk victims and their children</li> <li>- Officers across Housing to raise any concerns for modern slavery after visiting residential or commercial property through the National Referral Mechanism and Hertfordshire Social Care Services</li> <li>- Officers to be trained on recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns</li> </ul>	Housing Operations/ Housing Strategy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Representation at the local Anti-Social Behaviour Action Meeting</li> </ul>	
Gypsy and travellers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct site visits for licensed sites twice a year to highlight any concerns within the community or site and to maintain the relationship officers have developed with the community</li> <li>- Continue to conduct welfare visits to any illegal gypsy site. Private Sector Housing Officers to liaise with Environmental Health and statutory services such as Social Care Services as required</li> <li>- Develop links with Hertfordshire Constabulary's Safer Neighbourhood Teams</li> <li>- Attend Hertfordshire Safeguarding Board training and events to review best practice and develop networks with necessary teams and organisations</li> <li>- Continue making best use of injunctions to tackle unauthorised traveller encampments</li> </ul>	Housing Strategy
Children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop links on a management level with Herts Young Homeless to ensure both organisations are collaboratively working when possible</li> <li>- Continue funding Herts Young Homeless to provide housing advice and guidance to young people and develop a partnership with Hertfordshire's Families First.</li> </ul>	Housing Operations
Mental health needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a strategic relationship with Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust who offer specialist mental health services for residents</li> </ul>	Housing Operations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure the Council and mental health partners are aware of the services provided by each team and the appropriate pathways into these</li> </ul>	
Rough sleepers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review which Housing Officers are most appropriate to be visiting those reported to be rough sleeping and make changes if necessary (recommendation 5 from the Homelessness Review)</li> <li>- Develop a Severe Weather Emergency Policy (SWEP) with local organisations to safeguard those who regularly sleep rough in particularly challenging weather (recommendation 6 from the Homelessness Review)</li> </ul>	Housing Strategy
<b>Increase the supply of affordable accommodation</b>		
Review the offers and schemes for private sector landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The introduction of a new position within the Housing team focusing on developing relationships with private sector landlords to house those in housing need</li> <li>- Relaunch of a new private sector offer to encourage private landlords to support local need in coordination with the Local Housing Allowance rates</li> <li>- Regular reviews of new schemes and their successes/shortfalls in order to constantly improve the services available</li> <li>- Working with the Private Sector Housing team</li> </ul>	Housing Strategy

	<p>to identify landlords who may benefit from additional support in exchange for use of the property to let their property with us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to develop the Landlord Forum and Housing managers to attend to present information on Private Sector Offer schemes and to provide detail on the type of clients who may approach the Council as homeless to tackle reluctance from private sector landlords to house those in housing need (recommendation 2 from the Homelessness Review)</li> </ul>	
<p>Involvement in new development proposals and consultations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue liaising with the Council's Planning department to consult on all planning applications which require Affordable Housing</li> <li>- Undertake regular analysis of the Housing Register to review housing need. This should in turn be considered when consulting on tenure mix (property/household size requirements) for planning applications submitted</li> <li>- Carry out a review of size and type of affordable homes in the borough to use as a tool to support the Housing Options team and to inform understanding about where new housing provision (and what size/type) should be located (Recommendation 1 in the Homelessness Review)</li> </ul>	<p>Housing Strategy/ Housing Operations</p>
<p>Develop strategic links with Registered Providers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To understand any resistance or difficulties in building new social housing developments within the Borough</li> <li>- Develop Service Level Agreements with all Registered Providers</li> </ul>	<p>Housing Operations/ Housing Strategy</p>

	- Develop approaches to make best use of current social housing stock within the borough.	
<b>Continue to develop partnership initiatives to prevent Homelessness</b>		
Develop partnerships with relevant organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategic relationships with Registered Providers including quarterly meetings to discuss and implement good practice, highlight concerns and develop ways of working to prevent homelessness</li> <li>- Ensure senior homelessness staff attend multi-agency partner meetings with Hertfordshire County Council (recommendation 7 from the Homelessness Review)</li> <li>- Strategic and operational relationship with Hertfordshire County Council Safeguarding and Social Care teams to identify best approach to notifying both teams of concerns</li> <li>- Establish a relationship at a senior level with local mental health services and ensure both teams are aware of the services and appropriate pathways into these (recommendation 8 from the Homelessness Review)</li> <li>- Further develop and host a twice yearly Homelessness Forum with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies and Registered Providers (recommendation 4 from the Homelessness Review)</li> </ul>	Housing Operations



<p>Make best use of existing housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop approaches to supporting residents to maintain tenancies in coordination with Registered Providers</li> <li>- Establish protocols with social housing providers in relation to the eviction of social housing tenants (recommendation 3 from the Homelessness Review)</li> <li>- Promote and encourage reporting of empty homes across the borough to the Private Sector Housing team</li> <li>- Tailored approach to tackling empty homes including support and enforcement action when required e.g. Compulsory Purchases and Empty Dwelling Management Orders</li> <li>- Working with internal teams such as Council Tax for accurate data to support a tailored approach to minimising empty properties</li> <li>- Develop and deliver Empty Homes Refurbishment Scheme, PLACE Scheme where interest free loans to rent to those in housing need or loans to sell are offered and continue presence at County wide forums</li> </ul>	<p>Housing Strategy/ Housing Operations</p>
<p>Continue to engage with private sector landlords</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to develop the Landlord Forum and use as a platform to engage with landlords across the Borough</li> <li>- Re-launch the private sector offers to engage with private landlords willing to let their properties in coordination with the Council's schemes including:</li> </ul>	<p>Housing Strategy</p>

	<p>review of Private Sector Leasing Scheme, Bond Deposit Scheme and PLACE scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Actively promote private sector offers and engage with those interested regularly</li> <li>- Regular communication and monitoring of popularity of private sector offers and providing an opportunity for landlords and tenants to raise any concerns</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Continue to work towards the Gold Standard for Housing Services</b></p>		
<p>Adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Our commitment to tackling homelessness to continue to be highlighted in the Corporate Plan</li> <li>- Operating the Homelessness Forum twice a year to provide a platform to develop awareness of the local response to homelessness and importance of preventing homelessness and provide updates with internal departments and voluntary and community organisations</li> <li>- Continued buy in to preventing homelessness from senior officers and local Councillors</li> <li>- Continue to joint commission key organisations and services within the borough to respond to housing need and deliver training to tackle preventing homeless</li> </ul>	<p>Housing Strategy</p>
<p>Actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to part fund key partners to develop support for local residents</li> </ul>	<p>Housing Strategy/ Housing Operations</p>

<p>education, employment and training needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertake service mapping within the borough of all voluntary and community organisations and actively work, in partnership with other key partners, to reduce any gaps in service provision</li> <li>- Develop key links and contacts with each partner organisation across the borough including voluntary and statutory organisations</li> <li>- Representative at the Health and Wellbeing board to ensure Housing's involvement with wider Challenges</li> <li>- Consult with voluntary and statutory partners when developing or reviewing strategic or changes to policies</li> <li>- The Council's Partnerships team continue to engage with job clubs, volunteering, training and skills opportunities for customers</li> </ul>	
<p>To offer a Housing Options prevention service to all customers including written advice.</p>		<p>Housing Operations</p>
<p>To adopt a No Second Night Out model or effective local alternative</p>		<p>Housing Operations/ Housing Strategy</p>
<p>Have housing pathways agreed with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proactively work with key partners and organisations across the borough to ensure understanding of referrals to the Housing team</li> <li>- Maintain the Duty to Refer pathway for referrals in to the Housing team for professionals</li> <li>- Develop protocols to ensure residents leaving</li> </ul>	<p>Housing Operations</p>

	<p>care (residential, hospital or prison) are provided with support to apply for housing and have a suitable offer of accommodation upon discharge/release</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Actively engage with Hertfordshire County Council and Registered Providers to ensure the gateway in to supported accommodation is fit for purpose for residents in need</li> <li>- Provide each individual who approaches as homeless a Personal Housing Plan as set out in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and ensure these are regularly reviewed with the client</li> <li>- Employment, education and training advice is available to all customers through referrals/ signposting from the Council through partner agencies such as CAB</li> </ul>	
Develop a private rented sector offer for all client groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of the current private sector offers available</li> <li>- Ensure the properties used through the scheme are of a high standard and fit for purpose for the households requiring housing within the borough</li> <li>- Ensure the scheme falls within appropriate affordability criteria for residents</li> </ul>	Housing Strategy
To actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions		Housing Operations
Proactive approach to preventing homelessness committed to in the		Housing Operations/ Housing Strategy

Homelessness Strategy which will be reviewed annually.		
Not to place any young person 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation		Housing Operations/ Housing Strategy
Not to place any families with children or pregnant households in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks		Housing Operations/ Housing Strategy