

Borough Council of
**King's Lynn &
West Norfolk**



Environment and Community Panel

Agenda

Tuesday, 16th July, 2024
at 4.30 pm

in the

**Council Chamber, Town Hall and available
for the public to view on [WestNorfolkBC on
You Tube](#)**



King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 1EX
Telephone: 01553 616200

Monday, 8 July 2024

Dear Member

Environment and Community Panel

You are invited to attend a meeting of the above-mentioned Panel which will be held on **Tuesday, 16th July, 2024 at 4.30 pm** in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn** to discuss the business shown below.

Yours sincerely

Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. Minutes (Pages 5 - 8)

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting.

3. Declarations of interest (Page 9)

Please indicate if there are any interests which should be declared. A declaration of an interest should indicate the nature of the interest (if not already declared on the Register of Interests) and the agenda item to which it relates. If a disclosable pecuniary interest is declared, the Member should withdraw from the room whilst the matter is discussed.

Those declarations apply to all Members present, whether the Member is part of the meeting, attending to speak as a local Member on an item or simply observing the meeting from the public seating area.

4. Urgent Business

To consider any business which, by reason of special circumstances, the Chair proposed to accept as urgent under Section 100(b)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972.

5. Members Present Pursuant to Standing Order 34

Members wishing to speak pursuant to Standing Order 34 should inform the Chair of their intention to do so and what items they wish to be heard before a decision on that item is taken.

6. Chair's Correspondence

If any.

7. Cabinet Report- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (Pages 10 - 159)

8. Cabinet Report- Alive West Norfolk Arrangements (Pages 160 - 184)

9. Work Programme and Forward Decision List (Pages 185 - 187)

10. Date of the next meeting

To note that the next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel is scheduled to take place on **Tuesday 3rd September 2024 at 4:30pm** in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall.**

11. Exclusion of Press and Public

To consider passing the following resolution:

“That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act”.

12. EXEMPT- Cabinet Report- Alive West Norfolk Arrangements (Page 188)

To:

Environment and Community Panel: T Barclay, P Bland, A Bullen, S Collop (Chair), P Devulapalli (Vice-Chair), D Heneghan, P Hodson, A Kemp, J Kirk, P Kunes and S Sandell

Portfolio Holders:

Councillor J Rust
Councillor de Whalley
Councillor Ring

Officers

Paul Billington, Interim Assistant Director - Alive West Norfolk
Duncan Hall, Assistant Director, Regeneration, Housing and Place
Honor Howell, Assistant to the Chief Executive
Nikki Patton, Housing Strategy Officer
Andy King, Senior Housing Manager
Martin Chisholm, Assistant Director, Operations and Commercial

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Environment and Community Panel held on
Tuesday, 4th June, 2024 at 4.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall,
Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

PRESENT: S Collop (Chair)

Councillors P Bland, A Bullen, P Devulapalli, D Heneghan, P Hodson, A Kemp
and P Kunes, A Bubb (Substitute) and S Lintern (Substitute).

Portfolio Holders

Councillor J Rust,
Councillor M de Whalley,
Councillor S Ring,

Officers:

Debbie Ess- Corporate Performance Officer
Honor Howell- Corporate Governance Manager/ Assistant to the Chief
Executive
Martin Chisholm- Assistant Director

EC1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.](#)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kirk, Radcliffe,
Sandell, Beales.

EC2: MINUTES

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.](#)

Councillor Devulapalli asked for the minutes from the meeting held on
the 9th April 2024 for Item 7 to be amended.

RESOLVED: The Minutes of the 9th April 2024 were amended.

EC3: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

EC4: URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

EC5: **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

There was no members present under Standing Order 34.

EC6: **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was none.

EC7: **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.](#)

RESOLVED: That Councillor Devulapalli be appointed Vice Chair of the Panel for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

EC8: **MEMBERSHIP OF TASK GROUPS AND INFORMAL WORKING GROUPS 2024/2025**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.](#)

The Panel considered the appointment of Members to serve on the Informal Working Groups and Task groups, which had previously been established by the Panel, for the municipal year 2024/25.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task Group continues to operate as a 7 Member Task Group and the Democratic Services Officer be instructed to seek Membership of the Task Group from Group Leaders for the 2024/2025 municipal year.
2. That the Single Use Plastic Informal Working Group be disbanded as it had not met in a year.
3. That the Climate Change Informal Working Group remain established and continue to operate.
4. That the Tourism Informal Working Group remain established, and the Chair liaise with the Chair of the Regeneration and Development Panel to finalise Membership.

EC9: **NOMINATIONS TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND PARTNERSHIPS**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.](#)

The Panel were invited to nominate representatives to participate in the outside bodies and partnerships which fall within the remit of the Panel.

The Panel noted that nominations would be presented to the full Council meeting on 27th June 2024 for consideration.

RESOLVED: That the Panel submit the following nominations to Council:

1. Borough Council/College of West Anglia Liaison Board – Vacancy
2. King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee – Councillor Bland, Bubb and Non-Councillor William Davidson
3. King’s Lynn Football Club – Councillor Bland
4. Norfolk County Council – Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub-Panel – Councillor Rose and Kemp as substitute.
5. Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Devulapalli and Substitute Vacancy.
6. West Norfolk Community Transport Project – Councillor Everett

EC10: **COUNCILLOR COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.](#)

The Corporate Performance Officer present the Councillor Community Grant Scheme to the panel.

The Corporate Performance Officer advised the report was an overview of the Scheme for the last 12 months. She highlighted the Scheme had been running for 3 years and had helped 256 Groups with funding totalling £121,000.

The Corporate Performance Officer advised the Panel the Scheme was to continue for 2026-27. She advised that refresher annual training for members can be arranged at request.

The report focused on what has been achieved which is 77 Grants and highlighted the funding not used.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Performance Officer and invited questions and comments from the panel.

The Vice Chair, Councillor Devulapalli sought clarification on the timeline of the Scheme and highlighted how the scheme was beneficial for the community.

The Corporate Performance Officer clarified the Scheme relaunched in August following the members training and ran to March 2025.

Councillor Lintern referred to the impact this had made in her ward and endorsed the Community Grant Scheme. Councillor Lintern thanked the Corporate Performance Officer.

Councillor Bullen agreed with Councillor Lintern comments and stated without the Community Grants there was projects that would have not been able to have gone ahead without the Grant.

Councillor Kunes supported the Community Grants continuation.

Councillor Kemp referred to the benefits the Community Grant Scheme had provided activities for young people in South and West Lynn. She supported the Community Grant Scheme continued.

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the report.

EC11: **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD DECISION LIST**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.](#)

Members of the Panel were reminded that an eform was available on the Intranet which could be completed and submitted if Members had items which they would like to be considered for addition to the Work Programme.

RESOLVED: The Panel's Work Programme was noted.

Councillor Bullen invited all members are invited to visit Marthas Meadow in Southery. He advised the Panel that, Marthas Meadow is a remarkable project which was a development of redundant piece of land to wildlife haven and encourage members to visit to see how wildlife areas were managed.

EC12: **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

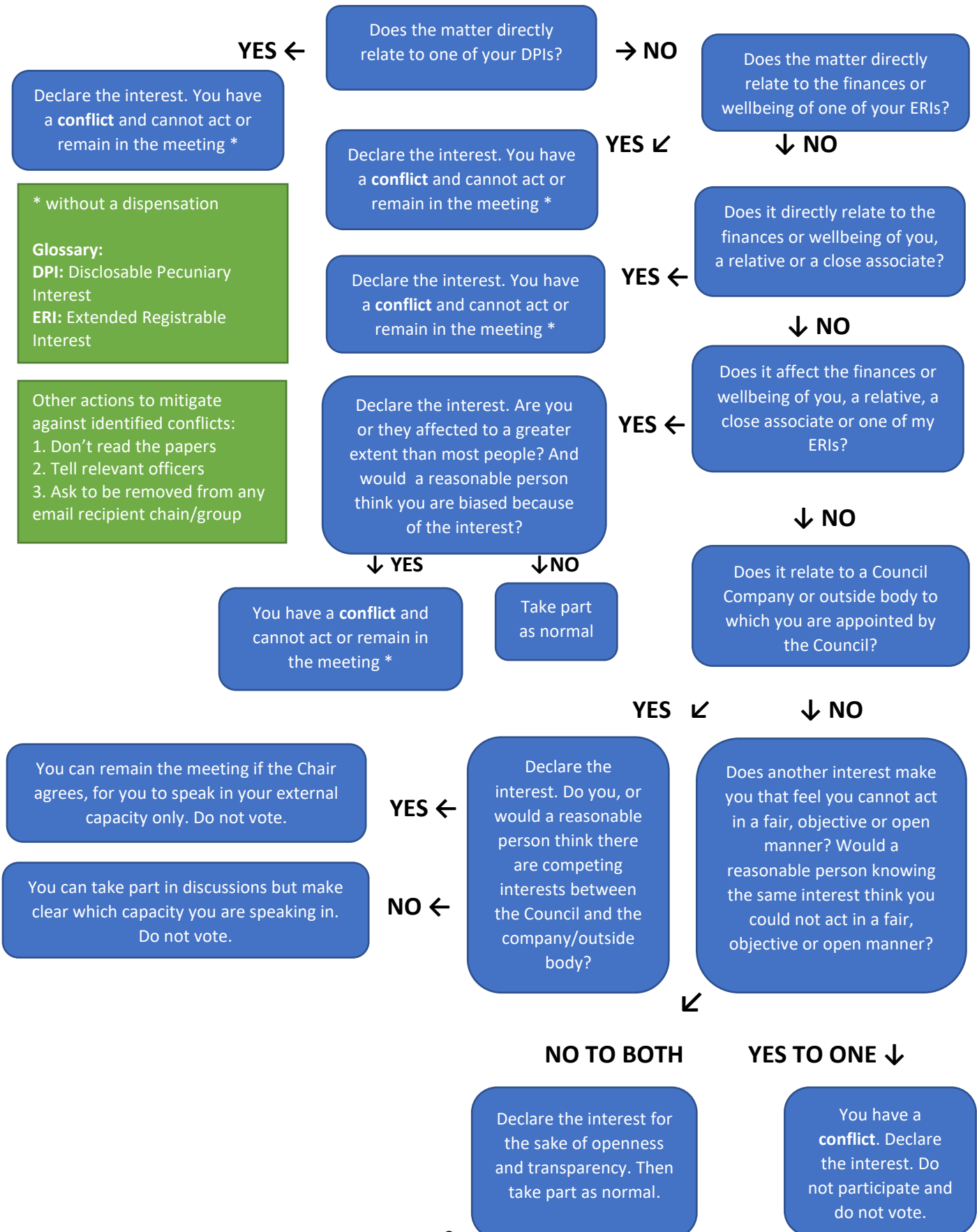
The next meeting of the Environment and Community Panel would be held on **16th July 2024** in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, King's Lynn.**

The meeting closed at 4.52 pm

DECLARING AN INTEREST AND MANAGING ANY CONFLICTS FLOWCHART



START



Declare the interest. You have a **conflict** and cannot act or remain in the meeting *

* without a dispensation

Glossary:

DPI: Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

ERI: Extended Registrable Interest

Other actions to mitigate against identified conflicts:

1. Don't read the papers
2. Tell relevant officers
3. Ask to be removed from any email recipient chain/group

YES ←

Does the matter directly relate to one of your DPIs?

→ NO

Does the matter directly relate to the finances or wellbeing of one of your ERIs?

↓ NO

Declare the interest. You have a **conflict** and cannot act or remain in the meeting *

YES ↙

Does it directly relate to the finances or wellbeing of you, a relative or a close associate?

↓ NO

Declare the interest. You have a **conflict** and cannot act or remain in the meeting *

YES ←

Does it affect the finances or wellbeing of you, a relative, a close associate or one of my ERIs?

↓ NO

Declare the interest. Are you or they affected to a greater extent than most people? And would a reasonable person think you are biased because of the interest?

YES ←

↓ YES

↓ NO

You have a **conflict** and cannot act or remain in the meeting *

Take part as normal

Does it relate to a Council Company or outside body to which you are appointed by the Council?

YES ↙

↓ NO

You can remain the meeting if the Chair agrees, for you to speak in your external capacity only. Do not vote.

YES ←

Declare the interest. Do you, or would a reasonable person think there are competing interests between the Council and the company/outside body?

Does another interest make you that feel you cannot act in a fair, objective or open manner? Would a reasonable person knowing the same interest think you could not act in a fair, objective or open manner?

You can take part in discussions but make clear which capacity you are speaking in. Do not vote.

NO ←

↙

NO TO BOTH

YES TO ONE ↓

Declare the interest for the sake of openness and transparency. Then take part as normal.

You have a **conflict**. Declare the interest. Do not participate and do not vote.

POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	Environment and Community Panel		
DATE:	16 th July 2024		
TITLE:	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy		
TYPE OF REPORT:	Cabinet Report		
PORTFOLIO(S):	People and Communities		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Nikki Patton, Housing Service Needs and Andy King, Senior Housing Manager		
OPEN/EXEMPT	Open	WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	Yes

REPORT SUMMARY/COVER PAGE

PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:
To consider the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
KEY ISSUES:
Members are directed to the attached report for full details of the key issues.
OPTIONS CONSIDERED:
There is no option to consider as under the Homelessness Act 2002, all housing authorities are required by law to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy once every five years. The approach taken builds on the latest best practice including co-production and engaging with people with lived experience of homelessness. This represents a new way for the preparation of the Strategy.
RECOMMENDATIONS:
That the 2024-2029 Strategy is adopted and that the role of the Environment and Community Panel group - Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task Group in overseeing the delivery of the Action Plan within the strategy is endorsed.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Council has a statutory duty to produce a homelessness strategy

(Homelessness Act 2002) setting out the issues it faces locally and what it is doing to prevent homelessness. The Council's commitments to preventing homelessness are set out in the Corporate Plan.

REPORT TO CABINET

Open		Would any decisions proposed :			
Any especially affected Wards	Discretionary	Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide	Yes		
		Need to be recommendations to Council	Yes		
		Is it a Key Decision			
Lead Member: Cllr Rust E-mail: cllr.rust@west-norfolk.gov.uk			Other Cabinet Members consulted: None		
			Other Members consulted:		
Lead Officer: Nikki Patton E-mail: Nikki.patton@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial: 01553616726 Andy King Andy.King@west-norfolk.gov.uk			Other Officers consulted: Duncan Hall Assistant Director of Regeneration, Housing & Place		
Financial Implications Yes	Policy/ Personnel Implications No	Statutory Implications YES	Equal Impact Assessment YES If YES: Pre-screening/	Risk Management Implications Yes	Environmental Considerations No
If not for publication, the paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act considered to justify that is (are) paragraph(s)					

Date of meeting: 17th September 2024

Summary

All housing authorities are required by law to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy once every five years. This report sets out the process by which a new Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy has been developed and how progress will be monitored and evaluated. Before publishing the strategy, housing authorities have the power to carry out a review of homelessness services in their district.

A Homelessness Review has been completed this year and laid the foundation for developing an effective strategy: led by data and supported by professional and lived experience. The Homelessness Review looks at the current situation and provides analysis on the reasons, causes and wider factors affecting homelessness in this area. The Homelessness Review and its findings were endorsed by the Environment and Community Panel on 9th April 2024.

The new Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029 responds to the issues identified in the review and provides a framework for responding to homelessness in Borough. It replaces the 2019- 2024 strategy.

Recommendation

That the 2024-2029 Strategy is adopted and that the role of the Environment and Community Panel group - Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task

Group in overseeing the delivery of the Action Plan within the strategy is endorsed.

Reason for Decision

The Council has a statutory duty to produce a homelessness strategy (Homelessness Act 2002) setting out the issues it faces locally and what it is doing to prevent homelessness. The Council's commitments to preventing homelessness are set out in the Corporate Plan.

Background

When the 2019 to 2024 strategy was written, West Norfolk was responding to an all-time peak in rough sleeping, the most visible form of homelessness.

In 2024 we face a different set of circumstances and challenges. There has been a sustained and successful partnership effort to reduce instances of rough sleeping locally. Looking forward, though, we have a different, less visible set of challenges.

Homelessness in the borough is largely hidden, but the volume of households approaching the council as homeless has doubled since the COVID pandemic. Levels of rough sleeping in the borough are comparatively low, but there are people in the borough who are neither street homeless nor adequately housed. Services exist to help prevent homelessness, but we don't always get to people early enough.

The review of the 2019-2024 strategy was carried out in the autumn and winter of 2023/24, with extensive input from council officers, partner agencies and people with lived experience of homelessness. The findings were presented to the Environment and Community Panel on 9th April 2024 and endorsed by the panel. The findings of the Review laid the foundations for the new Strategy 2024-2029.

The Review

In summary the Review identified that the Council's effectiveness in preventing homelessness since the publication of the last strategy (2019-2024) has improved but this is being ebbed away due to new challenges in part coming from the cost of living pressures and an over heated private rented sector.

The Homelessness Review provides an overview of homelessness experience and provision in King's Lynn and West Norfolk. It looks at:

- The current and future levels of homelessness in the borough,
- The available provision of services for people experiencing or facing homelessness,
- The ability of such services to meet current and future demand.

The review highlighted that the number of households approaching the council as homeless (or at risk) doubled in a two-year period, driven by:

- An increasingly inaccessible private rental market,
- An increase in reports of domestic abuse,
- An increase in families seeking help, and
- An increase in homeless presentations for people in some form of employment.

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029

Following the review further strategy development work, was conducted between April and June 2024.

Overall, 118 people contributed towards the development of the strategy, including at least 27 people with lived experience of homelessness. Others included, Council staff across a number of departments, Councillors, local partners from Charity organisations, to other statutory agencies and housing providers and a public survey that was promoted on the Councils website and other social media channels.

The strategy provides **a framework for responding to homelessness in the borough**. As such, the actions laid out in the strategy are not exhaustive. There is much good work being carried out within the partnership that already fits within the framework (as laid out in part four of the Homelessness Review) and that we expect to continue in line with the partnership's vision, values and key strategy aims.

As a framework, it is designed to respond flexibly to unexpected challenges beyond the partnership's control. The strategy was developed during a pre-election period, which may culminate in a change in national government. This in turn may result in a shift on national government policy, a change in funding structures, and a set of national priorities.

Regardless of the outcome and impact of the July 2024 General Election, the action plan will be updated regularly by the Strategy Implementation Partnership in response to emerging priorities and available resources.

The Strategy consists of five key themes which are consistent with the whole system approach of the national strategy- Ending Rough Sleeping for Good September 2022. They are as follows;

Prevention- To end homelessness we need to prevent it from happening in the first place.

Intervention- Ensure that people who are homeless are identified quickly and placed into suitable cost-effective accommodation as where necessary.

Accommodation- Good quality accommodation is central to ending homelessness.

Recovery- to help people avoid a return to homelessness and to address the underlying issues that led to them losing their home.

Systems and Service Culture- To end homelessness, our good work and innovative services need to be underpinned by comprehensive, positive and effective structures and partnerships.

The Strategy 2024 to 2029 was presented to the Homelessness & Housing Delivery Task Group on 9th July 2024 and to the Environment and Community Panel on 16th July 2024.

Monitoring & Evaluation

We will record and monitor a number of data indicators to track progress of the actions in the strategy. Full details of the indicators are set out on page 42 of the Strategy. Additionally, the following new measures will be introduced to ensure that homeless applicants' voices are listened to:

- A customer feedback button ("how did we do?") at the foot of standard emails from the Housing Needs Service, linking to a brief survey about their experience
- A quarterly review of any complaints received to the Housing Needs Service, with a record kept of lessons learnt and remedial action taken
- A clear interface between the work of the council and the work of the newly formed coproduction group

Progress against the actions in the Strategy will be reviewed at least once every three months at the Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group meeting (partners meeting), with key successes and challenges reported to the Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task Group on a quarterly basis. An annual report to the council's Environment and Communities Panel, outlining progress and updating the plan to reflect any changes in circumstance.

2. Options Considered

- 2.1 There is no option to consider as under the Homelessness Act 2002, all housing authorities are required by law to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy once every five years.
- 2.2 The approach taken builds on the latest best practice including co-production and engaging with people with lived experience of homelessness. This represents a new way for the preparation of the Strategy.

3. Policy Implications

There are actions identified in the Strategy that will have policy implications for the Council. Of particular importance will be any policy change proposals following a review of the Social Housing Allocations policy. A further policy implication related to the review/redesign of the homelessness prevention grant scheme for individuals. Further details on these areas of work will be brought back to a future Cabinet meeting to agree.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Council utilises some of the funding it receives from Central Government ringfenced for Housing Services to support actions in the strategy. The Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) that Council receives annually from Central Government specifies that it is to be used 'in maximising wider prevention of homelessness activities and reducing reliance upon temporary accommodation'. The Strategy sets out how we will do this. This funding alone will not be enough to support all actions and activities within the strategy. We will continue to maximise funding opportunities presented by Central Government. Its important to note that the Strategy has been prepared a time where there is no certainty relating to future central government funding for homelessness services. Therefore, it has been costed on a likely 'worst case scenario' basis as set out at section A1.5 of the Strategy. An implication of not having funding to support all activities in the strategy is that we could see a rise in B&B, temporary accommodation costs. Whilst the strategy seeks to address this, it relies upon central government funding.

5. Personnel Implications

- 5.1 Any new activities or roles that are proposed to be explored as part of the action plan contained within the strategy to respond to a particular action/area of work may be absorbed within existing roles. Where a new role is created this could be funded through the ring fenced Homelessness Prevention Grant.

6. Environmental Considerations

- 6.1 None

6.2 Community Considerations

- 6.3 The delivery of the strategy and further decision making and development of some of the proposals set out in the Strategy will be made in the context of the forth coming work on becoming a Marmot Place and reflect its principles.

7. Statutory Considerations

- 7.1 Homelessness Prevention activities and the publication of a Homelessness Strategy are a statutory requirement. The scope and content of the Strategy is prescribed in the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities.

8. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1 Pre-screening report attached.

9. Risk Management Implications

- 9.1 As referred to above the strategy has been developed at a time where there is no certainty relating to future central government funding for homelessness services. The Housing team will maintain a risk register



along side the Strategy and action plan to monitor threats to delivery. Full details of the threats to delivery are set out in section A1.6 of the Strategy.

- 9.2 Given the 2024 General Election any changes that would impact on the Strategy from a national policy perspective will be monitored and potentially amendments made.

10. Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted

None

11. Background Papers

Homelessness: A Review February 2024
Homelessness & Rough Strategy 2019-2024
Ending Homelessness Person by Person King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Draft 2024-2029

Name of policy/service/function	Housing Needs				
Is this a new or existing policy/service/function?	New Strategy – Actions identified that will have future policy implications				
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. Please state if this policy/service is rigidly constrained by statutory obligations	Homelessness Prevention activities and the publication of a Homelessness Strategy are a statutory requirement (Housing Act 2002). The scope and content of the Strategy is prescribed in the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities.				
Question	Answer				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups according to their different protected characteristic, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age	x			
	Disability	x			
	Gender	x			
	Gender Re-assignment	x			
	Marriage/civil partnership			x	
	Pregnancy & maternity	x			
	Race	x			
	Religion or belief			x	
	Sexual orientation			x	
Other (eg low income)	x				

Question	Answer	Comments
<p>2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?</p>	No	
<p>3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?</p>	Yes	
<p>4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?</p>	Yes	To ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory duties in relation to homelessness
<p>5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions?</p> <p>If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p>	No	<p>Actions: N/A</p> <hr/> <p>Actions agreed by EWG member: </p>
<p>If 'yes' to questions 2 - 4 a full impact assessment will be required unless comments are provided to explain why this is not felt necessary:</p> <p>A full impact assessment will be undertaken in advance of the Strategy being considered by Cabinet in September 2024.</p> <p>Decision agreed by EWG member:Claire Dorgan...(5/7/2024).....</p>		
<p>Assessment completed by:</p> <p>Name</p>	<p>Nikki Patton</p>	
<p>Job title</p>	<p>Housing Services Manager</p>	
<p>Date</p>	<p>4th July 2024</p>	

ENDING HOMELESSNESS, PERSON BY PERSON

The King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
2024-2029

[picture to follow]

DRAFT – NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION



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How will we measure success?

Get involved

FOREWORD

Cllr. Jo Rust, Cabinet Member for People and Communities

The King's Lynn and West Norfolk Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is titled "Ending Homelessness, Person by Person". It puts people first and foremost.

The strategy recognises the need for support and, most importantly, a secure roof over each person's head. It has been developed alongside people who have lived experience of homelessness and rough sleeping. It fully integrates people's voices into what we plan to do and how we plan to do it.

It is a 'live' document that won't gather dust, but that will act as a framework for the next five years.

We recognise the huge efforts that have been taken to reduce rough sleeping, the most visible form of homelessness, in the borough. But we also recognise our new set of challenges, many of which are hidden from sight.

Hidden homelessness includes families living in temporary accommodation. We don't want local children to face the uncertainty of not knowing if they're going to have a space to do their homework or the stability to sustain friendships. We seek to move families into safe, sustainable tenancies where children can grow and thrive. Crucially, we will further develop services and systems to avoid them needing temporary accommodation in the first place. Our strategy aims to provide housing security for residents of all ages, contributing to them being able to live life to its fullest potential.

As a council – a public body with a legal responsibility to respond to homelessness – we recognise how we can improve the services that we offer. The staff that deliver these vital services have my thanks for the work that they do and for the way they continue to develop their offer for the people that they serve.

This strategy doesn't set out every single action that we need to take but sets the tone for the way that we will deliver these services: with care, compassion and an intention to end homelessness, person by person.

I hope that you will be able to support the work to deliver this strategy, whether as an employer who provides mentorship and employment support to someone with lived experience, a landlord who will work with us to keep a family in a tenancy, or a partner organisation working with us to provide crucial services.

PART A: INTRODUCTION, VISION AND VALUES

A1 INTRODUCTION

A1.1 Setting the Scene

The council published its last Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in January 2020. The strategy document was illustrated heavily with images that members of the public might associate with homelessness: abandoned mattresses, tent encampments, and sheds that people were sleeping in. When the strategy was written, West Norfolk was responding to an all-time peak in rough sleeping, the most visible form of homelessness.

We are in a different place as a borough¹. There has been a sustained and successful partnership effort to reduce instances of rough sleeping locally. Looking forward, though, we have a different, less visible set of challenges.

Homelessness in the borough is largely hidden, but the volume of households approaching the council as homeless has doubled since the COVID pandemic. Levels of rough sleeping in the borough are comparatively low², but there are people in the borough who are neither street homeless nor adequately housed. Services exist to help prevent homelessness, but we don't always get to people early enough.

Harvard Business Review describes strategy as:

***“An integrative set of choices,
that positions you on a playing field of your choice,
in a way that you win.”³***

The 2024-2029 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been developed with this definition in mind. It is *integrative*, in that it relies on systems, services and resources beyond those of the council's housing teams. It is *a set of choices*, made by a partnership of people who have chosen to use their collective skills and energy to support local people in housing need. And it doesn't merely set its sights towards each individual organisation “doing its thing well”. It is a tactics sheet that considers and addresses the likely barriers it will face, making the most of the resources available.

The strategy doesn't play out every move, but it establishes key principles and priorities that can be used as a basis for the borough's response over the next five years.

In short: this document describes a shared vision towards ending homelessness in the borough, along with measurable steps towards achieving the vision.

A1.2 The Story So Far – Homelessness Review

During the autumn and winter of 2023/24, the council conducted a Homelessness Review, to examine:

¹ In this document “the borough” refers to King's Lynn and West Norfolk as a whole – including partners working with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness - as opposed to the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

² Compared with other districts in the region, the average total monthly rough sleepers per 100,000 population was one of the lowest. See [BCKLWN – Homelessness: A Review](#), section 3.5 'Rough Sleeping'.

³ Harvard Business Review, 2023. A Plan Is Not A Strategy. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuYIGRnC7J8>

- The current and predicted future levels of homelessness in the borough,
- The available provision of services for people experiencing or facing homelessness,
- The ability of such services to meet current and future demand.

The review highlighted that the number of households approaching the council as homeless (or at risk) doubled in a two-year period, driven by:

- An increasingly inaccessible private rental market,
- An increase in reports of domestic abuse,
- An increase in families seeking help, and
- An increase in homeless presentations for people in some form of employment.

The document outlined the broad range of services available to support homeless households (and those at risk of homelessness). It concluded that:

“There is a clear focus on prevention within the partnership, with some strong results, but the effectiveness of the partnership towards homelessness prevention appears to be ebbing away due to significant external influences.”

“There is a strong and varied ‘off-the-street’ offer to people sleeping rough or at risk, but the cost of accommodating homeless households is unsustainably expensive.”

“The partnership has benefitted from the impact of new services across the pathway, but many of these services are vulnerable to future reductions in central government funding.”

“There are strong informal partnerships between services, but the partnership would benefit from a stronger “whole system” vision, bringing in a wider net of service.”

“Services were able to identify some strong individual outcomes, and some good work towards building services around service users, but there is still a clear gap between some key services and the people that they serve.”

The review was presented to external partners and elected members and was endorsed publicly in April 2024⁴.

A1.3 Developing Our Strategy - Methodology

The Homelessness Review laid a foundation for developing a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy. As written in the review, *“it is like the first act of a play, setting the scene, leaving questions unanswered”*. The review formed the basis of the council’s strategy development work, which was conducted between April and June 2024.

Overall, 118 people contributed towards the development of the strategy, including at least 27 people with lived experience of homelessness.

⁴ [BCKLWN Homelessness Review 2024 - draft.pdf \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)

This included:

- **Sessions with council staff:** housing staff, as well as other council departments who play an important part in preventing and relieving homelessness.
- **Sessions with local partners:** we were pleased to welcome over 30 local partners to two sessions at the King's Lynn Town Hall. As well as homelessness charities and housing providers, partners attended from mental health services, social care, social prescribers, probation, police, substance recovery, advice services, domestic abuse services and key local charities.
- **Sessions with people with lived experience of homelessness:** we carried out development sessions at The Purfleet Trust and the King's Lynn Night Shelter, with just under 20 people with lived experience of homelessness attending across the two sessions.
- **A public survey:** we received 28 responses to a public survey that was promoted on the council's website, on social media and in local news outlets. These included eight responses from people who declared that they were homeless or at risk (or had been homeless in the past).

We encouraged participants to contribute ideas around five themes:

<p>Prevention What can we do to work further upstream?</p> <p>What specific tools for homelessness prevention could we use?</p> <p>What should our Homelessness Prevention Fund look like?</p> <p>How can we educate the borough to help avoid homelessness?</p>	<p>Intervention How can we reduce our B&B spend?</p> <p>What should we offer to people sleeping rough?</p> <p>How can people be involved more effectively in their own homeless application?</p> <p>How should we support people who are long-term homeless?</p>	<p>Accommodation How can we improve 'flow' through the hostel system?</p> <p>What accommodation is missing in the pathway?</p> <p>How can we improve the supply of good-quality private sector housing?</p>	<p>Recovery How can we support people with higher support needs?</p> <p>What should 'floating support' like?</p> <p>What health support would be effective to prevent repeated homelessness?</p> <p>What should the substance recovery pathway look like?</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Systems support and service culture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What should good partnership work look like? How can we better recruit and retain staff? How can we narrow the gap between services and people who are homeless?</p>			

These themes have been developed from (and informed by) a framework within the national Rough Sleeping Strategy, published in 2022⁵.

⁵ [Ending rough sleeping for good - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/ending-rough-sleeping-for-good)

We also asked participants to describe their vision (and hopes) relating to homelessness prevention in the borough, and their views as to how the partnership should work. In the sessions with people with lived experience of homelessness, we asked participants how they would like to be treated by services supporting them. Their answers have been used to develop several of the ideas underpinning this strategy.

We would like to thank the following organisations for contributing towards the creation of this strategy:

Access Community Trust	Money Advice Hub
Broadland Housing Association	NHS Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care Board
Change, Grow, Live	Norfolk Constabulary
Freebridge Community Housing	Norfolk County Council
Headway Norfolk and Waveney	Sanctuary Supported Living
HM Prison and Probation Service	Shelter
Home Group	The Benjamin Foundation
King's Lynn Foodbank	The Bridge for Heroes
King's Lynn Night Shelter	The Purfleet Trust
Leeway Domestic Violence and Abuse Services	West Norfolk Coastal Primary Care Network
MAP Norfolk	

A1.4 Scope

This strategy provides a **framework for responding to homelessness in the borough**. As such, the actions laid out in the strategy are not exhaustive. There is much good work being carried out within the partnership that already fits within the framework (as laid out in part four of the Homelessness Review) and that we expect to continue in line with the partnership's vision, values and key strategy aims.

As a framework, it is designed to respond flexibly to unexpected challenges beyond the partnership's control. The strategy was developed during a pre-election period, which may culminate in a change in national government. This in turn may result in a shift on national government policy, a change in funding structures, and a set of national priorities.

Regardless of the outcome and impact of the July 2024 General Election, the action plan will be updated regularly by the newly formed Strategy Implementation Partnership (see [B5.1](#)) in response to emerging priorities and available resources.

A1.5 Funding

This strategy has been developed at a time where there is no certainty relating to future central government funding for homelessness services. Therefore, it has been costed on a likely 'worst case scenario' basis, as follows:

- The DLUHC Rough Sleeping Initiative⁶ ceases in March 2025 and is not replaced.
- The DLUHC Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme⁷ ceases in March 2025 and is not replaced.

⁶ [Rough Sleeping Initiative: 2022 to 2025 funding allocations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁷ [Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme 2021-24 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

- The DLUHC Homelessness Prevention Grant⁸ reduces significantly from 1 April 2025.
- The council relies on ringfenced central government homelessness funds to commission services.
- No cuts are made to the council's 'core budget' for housing needs and allocations.

Due to uncertainty around central government funding for activities set out in the strategy, we have been conservative around how much funding will be available. We have therefore planned activities prudently at this stage. The strategy and action plan outlines where (a) we can commit to funding, and (b) where we will seek funding towards strengthening a particular strategy aim. Any new services included in the strategy will be commissioned for a minimum of three years.

A1.6 Threats to delivery

Alongside the strategy and action plan, we will maintain a Risk Register outlining the key threats to delivery. Key potential risks and threats include:

- **A change in policy direction / funding** because of a new government, meaning that we could not afford (or were not permitted) to deliver in line with the strategy.
- **An end to Rough Sleeping Initiative funding** which could limit the scope of our strategic objective.
- **An increase in homelessness presentations** which could outstrip the supply of emergency and move-on accommodation and increase the council's Bed and Breakfast / nightly-paid⁹ accommodation costs.
- **Recruitment and retention issues** for key partners including the council, impacting on the ability to mobilise and deliver strategic aims.
- **A lack of buy-in from partners** regarding the strategic aims, impacting on the effectiveness of the strategy.

Senior managers within the Council will update the risk register regularly and present key issues to the Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task Group.

⁸ [Homelessness Prevention Grant: 2023 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/homelessness-prevention-grant-2023-to-2025)

⁹ Nightly-paid accommodation includes accommodation where individuals have access to their own cooking and washing facilities (as opposed to a traditional B&B set-up)

A2 VISION

“My hope is that there would be an end to homelessness. I would like the future to look hopeful. A future where every person has a safe and private place to lay their head.” – survey respondent

“Anyone who wants a home should be able to have one.” – survey respondent

“What would I like the future to look like for me? Just to have a future.” – group participant.

A2.1 Our Vision

Put simply, our vision is:

ENDING HOMELESSNESS, PERSON BY PERSON

This means that we are aiming for a future where we:

Prevent homelessness where possible.

Provide accessible, immediate help in a crisis.

Deliver a pathway of good, sustainable accommodation for all.

Build personal strength, resilience and independence.

Deliver everything in partnership.

As described in the Homelessness Review, many services in the borough are already set towards this vision. However, this strategy sets out to address the gaps and challenges identified in the review.

A2.2 In Practice

As part of the development of this strategy, we discussed at length whether we should include “ending homelessness” in our vision. We considered whether to adopt a vision that may not be achievable within the lifetime of the strategy, if at all. We reflected that there are many uncontrollable factors that create homelessness. And we reflected upon the risk of creating ‘mission fatigue’ if we set our vision towards something that may be many years away from being achieved.

However, we concluded that:

- **We should set our sights towards ending homelessness.** As services, we want to achieve more than “delivering our service well”. We should avoid creating an environment where we perpetuate the need for services that people should never have to access in the first place.
- **We should measure, recognise and (where appropriate) celebrate progress** towards ending homelessness. By ending homelessness, person by person, we recognise the person-centred efforts of frontline workers, as well as the role played by people experiencing homelessness in working towards their own recovery.

A3 VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

“I think that being kind and supportive towards people is key and [is] something that can be done without cost. In addition, being able to explain the system in a way that is understandable, and being patient with helping people understand, will help with transparency, as well as setting expectations for service users and staff.” – survey respondent.

“[Be] person-centred, personal, informed. [Place an] emphasis on choice. Simple actions can have huge impact e.g. space to talk, time for people to express how they feel” – group participant.

“[Treat me with] respect and dignity: as a human being and not a number.” – group participant.

A3.1 Our Values and Behaviours

During the process of developing the strategy, much of the discussion focused on *how* we do things, rather than what we do. This is consistent with the tone of the Homelessness Review. The borough has an impressive range of services dedicated to supporting homeless people¹⁰, but some of the key challenges identified related to how we communicate with people experiencing homelessness, how we work in partnership with one another, and how quickly we intervene to prevent a crisis from escalating.

In our development meetings, we discussed the importance of identifying behaviours – the practical outworking of our values – so that our values are framed authentically and accountably. This is reflected in the five statements below.

A3.2 In practice

The table below reflects the central themes shared by partners, survey respondents and people with lived experience of homelessness.

Value	What this looks like	Notes
Dignity	We will treat people with dignity and compassion, in the light of current and past traumas.	This was the biggest theme emerging from discussions with people with lived experience of homelessness. Many homeless applicants have experienced multiple layers of trauma – our approach must be informed by this.
Transparency	We will make it clear why we are doing things, what we’re doing, what people can expect and how it’s going.	As a partnership, we make difficult decisions on how to manage limited housing and support resources. These decisions need to be transparent. As one respondent stated, “we appreciate you can’t please everyone, but we at least need to understand your reasons.” We will be up-front and clear about our performance in key areas.

¹⁰ This report may use the term “homeless people” to cover people who are currently experiencing homelessness, those at risk of homelessness, and those who are recovering from an experience of homelessness.

Flexibility	Where we can, we will work services flexibly around the needs of an individual.	Our services need to be underpinned by clear processes and principles to provide a fair service. However, processes should be sufficiently flexible to ensure that people (especially those facing multiple disadvantage) are able to access them.
Collaboration	We will work with each other to get the best results.	As part of this, we will be curious: we will listen and be prepared to learn from each other, wherever we are in the partnership.
Empowerment	We will enable people to engage in, shape, and benefit fully from the services they use.	We will design services in a way that enables people to develop 'social capital' – positive connections with others in the borough, beyond the network of services explicitly designed to address homelessness. We will ensure that the voices of people with lived experience are central to the development of services.

We acknowledge that values and behaviours take time to develop and be embedded, but we will develop our services in line with these principles.

DRAFT

PART B: STRATEGY IN DETAIL

B1 PREVENTION

Overall aim

Prevention is perhaps the most important strand of the 2024-2029 Strategy. To end homelessness, we need to prevent it happening in the first place. Homelessness prevention should go beyond identifying people at the 'crisis' stage, where our chances of success in a 56-day period are limited.

The Homelessness Review identified that, whilst the council is more effective at prevention than it was five years ago, its effectiveness has ebbed away because of significant external pressures.

This strand aims to:

Ensure that, where possible, a person at risk of homelessness does not become homeless.

Identify at-risk groups and individuals as early as possible.

Support “universal” measures that will reduce the risk of homelessness for all residents.

B1.1 Education and communication

WHY?

During the strategy development sessions, participants suggested that some members of the public, and some public-facing services, lack confidence to support and signpost people who are at risk of homelessness. Recent public campaigns around safeguarding, domestic abuse and mental health demonstrate that it is possible to change public perceptions of (and responses to) social issues.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

We will develop a clear and universal, proactive, **borough-wide education plan** around homelessness prevention. Mirroring other public campaigns, this will communicate central messages as widely as resources allow, including to schools, GPs, faith groups, local employers and businesses.

Alongside the education plan, we will develop an online “**early help portal**” for homelessness prevention. Rather than waiting for situations where a referral *must* be made, the portal will encourage early help, linked with the partnership’s existing Early Help Hub. An accessible online portal will accompany this, but consideration will be given to groups who may struggle to access online content.

We will also develop a **proactive campaign with letting agents** towards homelessness prevention. This strand will focus specifically on informing and supporting local letting agents, to identify at-risk tenants before crisis stage. A new role will be created to support this work (see strands [B1.4](#) and [B3.2](#)).

B1.2 Client-centred prevention services

WHY?

Although many people will be able to avoid homelessness independently, some will require support through the process. For people who are facing homelessness because of money problems, there are certain remedies (such as Debt Relief Orders) that can only be accessed through a qualified debt adviser.

We choose to work in partnership with local providers, to give people the widest range of support and expertise possible.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

The council has recently commissioned a new **information, advice and guidance contract** – held by Citizens Advice Norfolk and Shelter – covering money advice, income maximisation and housing. We will work closely with both partners to ensure that all opportunities for homelessness prevention are maximised, and that the service coordinates well with other prevention services.

Linked to this, the council (alongside Norfolk County Council) has co-commissioned the **Sustainable Housing Pathways Service (SHPS)** – a homelessness prevention service – for a further year. This year, the service has developed to receive referrals further ‘upstream’, particularly from individuals identified by Social Services.

We will work with SHPS to ensure that there is enough ‘flex’ to work further upstream where possible, maximising the service’s chance of success.

During the COVID pandemic, the council’s **home visiting function** for households at risk of homelessness ceased. Since then, the service has been unable to reinstate the function due to staff shortages and increased homelessness applications. We will aim to reinstate the function with a particular focus on preventing family/parental evictions.

Since 2022, the council (through central government funding) has commissioned an **Intensive Support Service** – currently delivered by the Purfleet Trust – focused on people who are sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough. We will aim to redesign and recommission this service when the current funding ends in 2025.

We plan to extend the new service to provide targeted support to families, with a firm emphasis on prevention, as well as those who are neither at risk of rough sleeping nor adequately and sustainably housed.

B1.3 Community Links

WHY?

We need to provide every opportunity for the public to learn what we do, so that people at risk of homelessness can access advice as early as possible. There are multiple existing venues and platforms that could be used to spread the word.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

Shared sites such as the forthcoming Multi-Use Community Hub present an excellent opportunity to promote services and maximise opportunities for homelessness prevention. We will work closely with delivery partners to ensure that services are co-located and easily accessible.

We will also ensure that homelessness prevention services are **accessible to rural communities**. We will work with local parishes and community contacts (making good use of existing communication channels) to achieve this. We will explore working with local partners such as West Norfolk Community Transport where travel costs are a barrier to accessing support.

The Homelessness Review identified a relative shortage of services for families facing homelessness, who represent a growing proportion of people approaching the council for assistance. We will ensure that prevention activities have a **specific remit towards families**, based in the community. Existing partnerships and networks provide a strong opportunity to promote homelessness prevention.

B1.4 Grants and Incentives

WHY?

The cost to the state of a homeless person is estimated to be £20-£30,000 per year¹¹. A pragmatic, strategic “spend to save” approach will enable us to reduce the cost of emergency accommodation, as well as achieving wider savings to the public purse.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

We will work with **private rented sector (PRS) landlords** to reduce homelessness arising from the end of PRS tenancies. We will create a flexible, early intervention fund to support landlords where eviction could be avoided, linking PRS tenants with support services to address underlying support needs.

We will explore creating a new strategic, enabling role, bringing together multiple PRS liaison functions across internal and external partners, and encouraging positive engagement with PRS landlords and letting agents.

Linked to this, we will **redesign our grant scheme for individuals** to better meet the needs of households at risk of homelessness. The scheme will have a wider scope, greater flexibility, a clearer application process and more explicit links with other services.

We will explore the possibility of opening the scheme to “match funding”, so that individuals’ compassion towards homeless households can be harnessed to prevent homelessness (and prevent repeated instances). This enables members of the public, local businesses and charitable organisations to work together, provide funding to support individuals facing (or recovering from) homelessness¹².

Working with the Benefits team, we will explore carrying out **a review of regular Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) recipients**, to maximise the effectiveness of DHPs for the purpose of

¹¹ [Cost of homelessness | Crisis UK | Together we will end homelessness; Ending homelessness isn't just morally right, it's cost-effective \(connection-at-stmartins.org.uk\)](#)

¹² The [Street Aid](#) model (launched in Cambridge and now operational in other cities such as Norwich and York) provides one example of how public generosity can be harnessed effectively.

homelessness prevention. We will improve joint-working and signposting, where there is a clear housing need that has been masked by DHP use.

B1.5 Partnerships and Data

WHY?

A partnership-led approach is crucial to preventing homelessness. We rely on people across the borough to be the 'eyes and ears' in the community, ensuring that people are supported and encouraged to seek early help. We need to underpin our approach with clear, accessible data, to identify individuals and groups at particular risk of homelessness.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

We will **develop a homelessness champion function** to be rolled out borough-wide to all interested services and settings. We will model this on existing safeguarding and domestic abuse champion roles, also learning from the 'mental health first aider' model¹³.

Ultimately, the aim is for at least one person in every public setting (school, hospital department, major employer, faith group and so on) to have a good knowledge of homelessness services and support and be able to direct colleagues and customers for support. Initially though, the function will focus on settings most likely to identify people at risk of homelessness.

Improved data collection, analysis and data presentation forms an integral part of delivering the objectives of the strategy, as well as forming a condition of the council's annual homelessness prevention grant¹⁴. In response, we have recently appointed a new **Housing Data Analyst**, covering a wide range of functions within the department but with a focus on improving the quality of homelessness data, partnership wide.

The post will monitor and evaluate housing data to help improve performance, and to support the commissioning of appropriate services, in line with service demand. We will embed this new role to better identify people at risk of homelessness.

¹³ [Mental health training online and face to face](#) · MHFA England

¹⁴ The government has proposed changes to how the [Homelessness Prevention Grant](#) is calculated, which are due to take effect in 2025. Robust and accurate data is critical in ensuring the Council receives the correct funding allocation to support key homelessness services.

B2 INTERVENTION

Overall aim

This strategy aims to prevent homelessness wherever possible. However, even with the best efforts of the partnership, there will be occasions where we cannot avoid homelessness – such as a family fleeing domestic abuse, or an individual migrating to the borough from elsewhere.

In these emergency situations, we aim to provide a rapid, dignified and cost-effective service, assessing individuals' needs and addressing the factors contributing to a small number of repeated homelessness presentations.

This strand aims to:

Ensure that people who are homeless are identified quickly and placed into suitable, cost-effective accommodation where necessary.

Avoid and reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast and nightly-paid accommodation.

Ensure that support is provided to overcome barriers to accessing (and sustaining) emergency accommodation.

B2.1 Accommodation

WHY?

At present, the cost of accommodating homeless households is at an all-time high. More importantly, there is a profoundly negative impact on individuals' wellbeing of staying in emergency accommodation. Whilst we have developed good relationships with local providers locally and keep out-of-area placements to a minimum, bed and breakfast and nightly-paid accommodation is regarded in national guidance as a 'last resort'¹⁵.

Additionally, the welfare cabins, procured by the council to accommodate people sleeping rough during the COVID-19 pandemic, are unsustainably expensive to manage.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

As part of our strategy, we will work towards **commissioning and designing sufficient emergency accommodation to meet need**. Our Housing Strategy team will lead this work, developing accommodation in line with the volume of homeless applicants and likely future demand¹⁶. We will develop and procure any new accommodation in sustainable locations and ensure it is cost-effective for the council.

¹⁵ Homelessness Code of Guidance 16.30 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-16-securing-accommodation>

¹⁶ This information will be gathered by the new Data Analyst post (see [B1.5](#)).

To support this objective, the council is currently working with Broadland Housing Association to deliver seven units of temporary accommodation in Reid Way, King's Lynn in the next two years, and with West Norfolk Housing Company to deliver another seven units in Fairstead by September this year. All units will offer good quality emergency housing for homeless families, linked with support. This objective will link with work to **address the continued under-supply of new social housing in the borough.**

As a council, we will ensure planning policy mechanisms are in place to deliver new affordable housing in line with need. We will monitor and respond to any national policy changes in relation to increasing the supply of housing – particularly new opportunities arising from future changes to the National Planning Policy Framework. We will also continue to work with Housing Providers to maximise opportunities for investment-led affordable housing schemes in the borough.

The council's two wholly owned Housing Companies will continue to support the supply of suitable accommodation for households who are homeless or at risk. The **West Norfolk Housing Company**¹⁷ will continue to be agile in responding opportunities that will assist the Council in meeting the priorities of the strategy, as it was during the COVID-19 pandemic and in response to the conflict in Ukraine.

The company cannot predict the potential interventions that could be needed but will only deliver interventions that align with the council's strategic objectives.

West Norfolk Property¹⁸ was set up to provide high-quality accommodation in the private rented sector within the borough. The company currently lets 74 private rented homes in King's Lynn and has plans to increase this to 139 homes by 2028. West Norfolk Property offers three-year, fixed-term tenancies and is committed to providing exemplary customer service.

Over recent years, the council has been proactive in **responding to asylum and migration pressures** and will continue to do so as part of its strategy implementation. This has included the delivery of 29 newbuild homes, arising from rounds one and two of the Local Authority Housing Fund. The council will continue to take advantage of funding opportunities to meet demand, whilst seeking to manage the impact of any increased pressures on existing housing and homelessness systems.

As part of our emergency accommodation offer for those sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough, we will **design and commission emergency accommodation to replace the remaining four welfare cabins**. The cabins have proven a life-saving option for people who would struggle in a shared setting and who may have higher levels of support need.

We will work with partners and people with lived experience to design an offer that would suit this small group of people, who may be sleeping rough or at risk.

In general terms, we will **review our offer of accommodation to people sleeping rough**¹⁹. Following feedback from our development sessions, the offer should be clearly communicated and transparent to partner agencies. We will also review the effectiveness of the discretionary placements made for people sleeping rough and explore alternatives to the use of nightly-paid accommodation in such circumstances.

¹⁷ [West Norfolk Housing Company – A registered provider of social housing \(wnhc.co.uk\)](http://wnhc.co.uk)

¹⁸ [West Norfolk Property Limited – An independent private rental property company wholly owned by the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(wnpl.co.uk\)](http://wnpl.co.uk)

¹⁹ This relates to offers of accommodation to those who may be sleeping rough but may not be owed a legal duty to accommodate under s.188 Housing Act 1996 ([see Homelessness Code of Guidance ch. 15](#))

B2.2 Support

WHY?

We have processes in place to ensure that people facing immediate homelessness are accommodated and supported, but feedback tells us that we need to go further, particularly in terms of our communication with homeless applicants and partner agencies. Clear, empathetic communication will improve the effectiveness of the support provided during what can be a traumatic and unsettling experience.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

Firstly, we will **redesign and redevelop the Personal Housing Plans (PHPs)** issued by the council to homeless applicants. PHPs are intended as a two-way agreement between council and applicant, but since their introduction in 2018²⁰ they have not worked as effectively as intended. We will produce an easy-to-read document that can be used as a conversation starter and an ongoing support plan, exploring whether other partner agencies can amend and co-develop them.

We will also **develop a “what to expect” document for homeless applicants and partner agencies**, providing clear guidance as to what the housing needs service can do and what the service asks of others. We will develop this in partnership with a new “co-production group” (see [section B5.2](#)) to ensure that the advice given is clear to all.

We will make it clear how members of the public can help people sleeping rough. This will include improving the promotion of the national Streetlink²¹ service – an online reporting tool, linked to local outreach services.

As part of our accommodation offer, we will **review the provision of basic items** to meet the need of all people who are living in emergency accommodation²². We will work with local homelessness charities to achieve this. We will aim to ensure that, where there is no alternative but to make an emergency accommodation placement, the placement is dignified and sustainable.

As part of our wider work to achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation²³, and linked to the countywide Domestic Abuse Strategy, we will **review the emergency offer (and processes) for victim-survivors of domestic abuse**. This will include reviewing emergency accommodation placements made for victim-survivors. We will review the use of DASH²⁴ forms to ensure that these are completed in a sensitive, trauma-informed manner.

As part of our wider accommodation review, we will explore further accommodation options for victim-survivors of domestic abuse who have wider support needs.

²⁰ Introduced under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. [Personal housing plans - Shelter England](#)

²¹ [StreetLink - Connecting people sleeping rough to local services \(thestreetlink.org.uk\)](#)

²² Note that some basic items are already provided to households by charities – this strand aims to ensure that there is a universal basic standard of provision for all occupants of emergency accommodation.

²³ Accreditation covers eight priority areas: Policies and procedures; staff development and support; partnerships and collaboration; safety led case management; survivor led support; intersectional & anti racist practice; perpetrator accountability; publicity and awareness raising.

²⁴ [Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour Based Violence \(DASH 2009-2024\) Risk Identification and Assessment and Management Model](#)

B2.3 Partnerships

WHY?

Homeless households often have a complex network of support services around them. We need to ensure that the partnership works well for them: that advice and support is comprehensive, clear, coordinated and consistent. Partnership work stretches beyond the examples below – as expressed in the homelessness review, it takes a borough-wide effort to end homelessness.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

The Homelessness Review identified a cohort of people who are the furthest away from having their accommodation needs met permanently and sustainably. We will **develop a “by name” meeting / partnership**, working creatively and collaboratively to address individuals’ accommodation and support needs. We will work in partnership with local probation services, who are beginning to coordinate a similar piece of work, through the lens of people who are currently in prison and who are at risk of homelessness upon release.

Linked to this, we will explore opportunities to assist people with no recourse to public funding and consider whether accommodation or support is required to meet the needs of this vulnerable group. We will forge closer links with organisations who can provide humanitarian help to people who have no recourse to public funds and improve data monitoring of this group.

As mentioned previously ([B1.2](#)), we will seek to **recommission the Intensive Support Service** (currently funded to March 2025) to meet current need. We will ensure that the service retains an assertive outreach function, to identify and support people sleeping rough, but we will also ensure that families are supported where necessary, as well as other households at risk. We will ensure that this service is joined up with other services such as NIHCSS²⁵ and SHPS.

Crucially, we will also **improve our working relationship with local Social Care partners** to ensure immediate crisis assessment where needed. We will establish regular strategic meetings, re-establishing a clear first point of contact and escalation routes. We will continue to work with Norfolk County Council to strengthen the offer to care leavers facing homelessness. We will monitor closely to address any gaps in provision for individuals assessed.

²⁵ [Norfolk Integrated Housing and Community Support Services](#)

B3 ACCOMMODATION

Overall aim

Good quality accommodation is central to ending homelessness, and central to many individuals' personal vision for the future. In the words of one respondent during the strategy development sessions, *"I just want a flat, to have well-being and to get on with all I've got planned"*.

The Homelessness Review identified the lack of local accommodation as a key barrier to personal and collective progress, as well as a key contributor to the volume (and cost) of people accessing emergency accommodation at any given time.

This strand aims to:

Ensure that safe accommodation is available to everyone who needs it.

Ensure that accommodation is suitable to a household's needs.

Ensure that people residing in short/medium-term accommodation (such as hostels) are supported to move on in a timely and sustainable manner.

B3.1 Single Person Accommodation

WHY?

Although the proportion has reduced over time, applicants without children²⁶ represent the greatest proportion of those approaching the council for assistance over the last four years. There are more than 110 bed spaces in the borough²⁷ for people who are single and homeless (or at risk of homelessness), tailored to age and support need. Supported accommodation forms an essential part of the borough's efforts to end homelessness.

For our strategy to be effective, supported accommodation should operate as a cohesive system, with the expectation that residents will gain independence, gain resilience, and move on into sustainable 'mainstream' housing.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

To ensure that single person accommodation is operating effectively, we will work with partners **to review the effectiveness of the existing hostel pathway**. Amongst other factors, we will consider the expectations that residents have when entering accommodation, the level of positive and sustained outcomes, the factors leading to an unsuccessful stay, and the proportion of individuals accessing supported accommodation repeatedly.

²⁶ More accurately: applicants who do not have custodial access to their children. The strategy acknowledges the importance of parental responsibility and family ties (see [B4.2](#))

²⁷ BCKLWN Homelessness Review 2024, 4.3 "Accommodation"

We will work with support workers to help maximise the effectiveness of their communication and support, particularly with a view to empowering residents towards employment or other meaningful activity.

We are due to launch a **Supported Housing Partnership** this summer, to improve the coordination of referrals into supported housing. The partnership will be tested initially with three local accommodation providers. Currently, each provider has its own referral form, resulting in multiple referrals from multiple agencies into multiple supported housing providers.

Through the partnership, all referrals to supported housing providers will be made using a common referral form, with the partnership acting as a 'gateway', so that cases can be discussed by partners before identifying suitable accommodation.

The partnership will ensure that all individuals who need supported accommodation are considered and prioritised appropriately, identifying barriers to move-on and preventing multiple and repeated periods for clients living in supported accommodation. Once established, we will look to extend the scope of the partnership to youth and other provision.

Based on the success of the model since its launch in 2022, we will issue a tender to **recommission the Housing First model**²⁸ when the current commissioned service expires in March 2025. We will aim to extend the project to support up to 18 individuals at a time (subject to funding), ensuring that the model aligns as closely as possible to Housing First England principles.

As part of the exercise, we will review the 'entry criteria' for the service, to ensure that Housing First accommodation and support is available to those who need it the most.

We will also seek to develop **single person accommodation that incentivises paid employment**. We will work with partners to develop a model where an individual's rent is affordable even when in work²⁹. We will link this to the revised Homelessness Prevention Fund ([B1.4](#)) to create 'flow' through the supported accommodation system, by helping people to move out of accommodation when ready.

B3.2 Private Rented Sector (PRS)

WHY?

The Homelessness Review identified the end of PRS tenancies as the most common cause of people presenting to the council as homeless or at risk of homelessness. As well as working to prevent PRS tenants from becoming homeless (see [B1.4](#)), the strategy seeks to develop opportunities for homeless households to find and sustain PRS accommodation.

²⁸ Housing First provides intensive support to individuals with a history of rough sleeping, who have previously been unsuccessful in sustaining housing through the hostel route. By providing the housing 'first' (rather than as a reward for graduating through the hostel system) and providing wrap-around support, the scheme aims to break the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping for individuals facing multiple disadvantages. Further details can be found on the [Homeless Link website](#)

²⁹ Much supported accommodation is let on an Intensive Housing Management (IHM) basis – an above-average rent (typically between £200-300 per week), which funds the support provided to residents, who claim housing benefit when out of work. As a model, IHM can (in some circumstances) serve to disincentivise work, due to the reduction in housing benefit received (and increase in net rent) when in paid employment. Conversely: if the same person moves into a room in a PRS shared house, the typical rent may be much lower. They would still stand to lose their housing benefit if they gained work, but they could see the benefits of paid work more quickly. Therefore, we could work towards commissioning PRS-style accommodation, of good quality, that is priced in line with the wider market, rather than in line with supported accommodation rates.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

At the core of the strategy, **we will re-engage PRS landlords and agents**. We will create a new strategic, enabling role to bring together various existing strands of work and to develop and re-establish relationships with PRS landlords. The role will act as a central point of contact for landlords and agents, to de-escalate concerns and to work creatively for the benefit of landlords and tenants alike.

We will create **a new PRS access fund** to incentivise landlords and clients. This could potentially include small grants for repairs or to bring a property up to standard, for use by a homeless household. We will explore the possibility of extending the rent guarantor product currently used by SHPS or guaranteeing rent to landlords (where this may secure a property for a homeless household). The fund will operate flexibly and pragmatically in line with household need.³⁰

We will ensure that this fund is linked with incentives elsewhere (such as energy efficiency grants) to maximise the support available. We will work closely with our colleagues in Housing Standards to ensure that households are supported into safe, good-quality homes. We will also review the effectiveness and impact of offering rent deposits and rents in advance as a loan at the start of a tenancy, rather than offering as a grant.

Additionally, we will **explore the viability of a rent-a-room scheme** to link suitable single households with residents who have available spare rooms. Such schemes have worked well in other settings (for young people or for Ukrainians seeking accommodation). We will carry out 'market engagement' first to establish whether there is sufficient supply and demand to launch such a scheme.

We will also explore the viability of a **"tenant swap" scheme for private sector tenants**. Where a household is unable to sustain PRS accommodation – for example, a family living in a 3-bed house who cannot afford the rent due to ill health – we would accept a homelessness duty for them. We would then nominate a suitable household – for example, another family who are in temporary accommodation and have recently gained employment – to replace them³¹. Both above schemes would link with the wider engagement work with current and prospective PRS landlords.

B3.3 Social Housing and Other Accommodation

WHY?

There is a proportion of homeless households whose needs will only be met by social housing³². This may be because of their income, support needs or support network. As part of our strategy, we will work with partners to maximise the supply of good quality social housing, including developing the specialist accommodation available to the borough's residents.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

As part of this strand, we will **conduct a review of the council's allocations policy for social housing**, to ensure the best use of both social housing and PRS. Linked to the review of supported

³⁰ Here, the key is creativity: the fund is likely to be limited at first but may be increased if a clear financial gain / saving to the council can be demonstrated.

³¹ We would assist the household at risk into alternative accommodation before possession action is taken if the landlord agrees to accommodate the household in temporary accommodation. The landlord avoids having to take the tenant to court for rent arrears and avoids having to pay a letting agent to find another family to occupy the property. The tenant avoids the trauma of eviction; the other household moves into suitable long-term accommodation.

³² This figure will be included in the forthcoming Housing Needs Assessment

accommodation, we will explore creating a 'gateway' out of the hostel system, ensuring that social housing is prioritised for those who cannot move on elsewhere. This will link with the work to understand and evaluate the effectiveness of the current hostel system, and the barriers towards move-on.

The review will include a review of the housing needs of young carers and their families, as well as individuals exiting the care system.

We will also explore the viability of **creating good-quality, shared accommodation for homeless applicants** who choose to share with others. During the strategy development sessions, some participants expressed a desire for such accommodation. If viable, we would look for accommodation that is good quality, low energy and low cost, incentivising paid employment where possible and encouraging positive relationships between tenants and with the wider community.

We will continue work with housing providers to **reduce levels of void properties**. The supply of good-quality social housing is essential to the success of our strategy – we will continue to work proactively with housing providers, challenging them to bring properties into use promptly, and working collaboratively and creatively to achieve this.

Finally, we will work with partners to **develop a pathway to support and accommodate substance users**. In a recent meeting, inclusion health partners described alcohol use as the key contributing factor to deaths of their patients over the last year. During the strategy development sessions, participants described a common scenario whereby individuals could not access residential treatment services because of the lack of suitable post-treatment accommodation. We will work to remove accommodation as a barrier to substance treatment and recovery. When complete, a pathway would provide a harm-reduction setting in advance of treatment, and a safe 'dry house' post-treatment.

B4 RECOVERY

Overall aim

For many, the process of recovering from the trauma of homelessness will occur naturally, through social ties, existing support networks and personal resilience. Others will need the help of specialist services, both to help them avoid a return to homelessness and to address the underlying issues that led to them losing their home.

This strand aims to:

Ensure that nobody experiences homelessness more than once.

Ensure that formerly homeless people are empowered to thrive in the borough.

B4.1 Health and substances

WHY?

More than 70% of homeless applicants over the last four years have expressed that they have at least one support need. Health issues, whether physical, mental or substance related, are the most common support needs identified by homeless applicants.

To enable formerly homeless people to live safe, independent lives, the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy needs to align and coordinate with the work of local health partners. The strategy will also align with the wider work to establish West Norfolk as a Marmot Place (see [B5.1](#)).

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

To help achieve this, we will **improve access to mainstream health services for homeless people**. Currently, there are 21 GP surgeries signed up as Inclusion Health practices. Using the Inclusion Health framework and existing Integrated Care Boards (ICB) contacts, we will develop our work with partners to ensure homeless people have access to suitable treatment, wherever they are in their housing journey.

We will also explore the possibility of establishing health outreach functions operating from two or three practices, focused around the areas of highest need but ensuring that rural locations are served well.

As described in the previous chapter, we will **develop a recovery offer for people with alcohol dependency** who are experiencing homelessness, dovetailing accommodation and support. We will develop this in partnership with local support services, including CGL and NIHCSS.

Additionally, we will review and **develop the offer for people with brain injuries and/or learning difficulties** – both of which are key contributory factors to homelessness. Working with Norfolk County Council and with local specialist partners, we will assess the level of need locally and identify areas that need strengthening. We will review and develop risk management plans for those commencing tenancies, to ensure they have the best chance of success in their new setting.

B4.2 Community

WHY?

To enable formerly homeless people to live fulfilling lives, we need to improve access to the range of facilities and opportunities offered by the wider community. We have some excellent local services that specialise in supporting homeless and formerly homeless people, but we don't want people to be limited in what they can access. This strategy aims to build and strengthen bridges between specialist and mainstream services and structures.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

As part of this, we will seek to **engage local businesses in the recovery process through employment placements and apprenticeships**. We will build on existing links with the DWP, as well as drawing upon existing relationships between local homelessness services and local employers. Existing covenants are in place locally for armed forces veterans and care leavers – such covenants may act as models that could inspire or inform local agreements between employers and formerly homeless people.

Linked to this, we will engage residents to support formerly homeless people through a **'skills-based' mentoring scheme**. Several of the respondents to our online survey indicated a desire to work as a mentor to someone looking to recover from homelessness and gain independence. Building on a model established in Cambridge, we will seek to match residents with people who have experienced homelessness, based on a shared interest.

The aim of such a model is to avoid a 'paternalistic' mentoring scheme, and instead identify shared strengths, such as guitar playing, board games or sports. The scheme will help to tackle loneliness, ensuring that people have equal access to the facilities offered by the borough.

Working with local social prescribers, we will ensure all **formerly homeless people have access to a range of leisure and cultural facilities** to aid their recovery. This work will be driven and guided by a new co-production group (see [B5.2](#)).

Finally in this section, we will **make use of 'father-inclusive' practices**, particularly for single people looking to develop and/or restore their relationship with their children. Father-Inclusive Practice is a key current priority for the Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Partnership (NCSP)³³. In the words of a recent report, "fathers are a point of reference for all children as they grow up and they have a significant impact on the health, safety, wellbeing and life chances for those children"³⁴.

Additionally, many formerly homeless people have found that their recovery has been strengthened by regaining/developing contact with their children, strengthening their social capital and improving their wellbeing.

The above services could be delivered by existing services, but (subject to funding) we will look to create a new project coordination role, with a specific remit of developing links between specialist services, homeless people and 'mainstream' life in the borough.

³³ <https://norfolkscsp.org.uk/people-working-with-children/nscp-priorities>

³⁴ Norfolk Children's Safeguarding Partnership, "[Keeping Fathers In Sight: Good Practice Guid for Engaging and Working With Fathers](#)"

B4.3 Sustainment

WHY?

To end homelessness, we should ensure that people who experience homelessness never experience it again. The borough already benefits from several services that work towards this aim – this strategy seeks to strengthen and emphasise the work to ensure that formerly homeless people sustain their accommodation and live resilient, independent lives.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

As mentioned in previous chapters, we will **recommission the existing Intensive Support Service**, placing a firm emphasis on sustainment and the inclusion of families. The service has already begun to move away from crisis intervention in the light of reduced rough sleeping numbers – we will aim to commission a service that prioritises upstream prevention and longer-term sustainment, linking with the community development strands described above.

As described in the Prevention chapter, we have **recommissioned SHPS** and will use the new framework to measure recovery and sustainment outcomes. We have worked closely with Bridges Outcomes Partnership and the Benjamin Foundation to ensure that SHPS service users identify realistic targets that address the underlying causes of their homelessness. We will examine these measures periodically and seek to learn lessons that can be applied to other strands of our work.

We will ensure that the **new information and advice service (B1.2)** incorporates a focus on **sustainment**. As well as dealing with immediate crises, we will work with Shelter and Norfolk Citizens Advice to identify opportunities for building financial capability and developing resilience in service users. We will ensure that the commissioned services work well with each other, potentially developing a ‘recovery subgroup’ to share good practice and coordinate work effectively.

We will work with external partners to **review the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Scheme (AfEO)³⁵**. This strand of work will link with the ‘by-name’ reviews of homeless offenders described in the Intervention chapter. Working with other commissioned providers above, we will identify and address barriers to recovery for ex-offenders.

Finally, we will **develop a programme of “multi agency check-ins”** for new tenants who are identified as being at risk of losing the accommodation that they have found. This could work as an extension of (or could be based on) the principles developed by the West Norfolk Help Hub³⁶, seeking to identify and resolve issues before they escalate, and viewing sustainment as a form of prevention. We will work with partners to identify where similar work is already taking place, developing on any good and effective practice.

This will link with work planned with Shelter for prospective tenants, under their new Information and Advice contract with the council. This work will support prospective tenants to understand their rights and responsibilities, reducing the risk of tenancy failure and fostering good landlord-tenant relationships.

³⁵ [Accommodation for Ex-Offenders scheme: local authority funding allocations between July 2021 and March 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

³⁶ [West Norfolk Help Hub | West Norfolk Help Hub | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk)

B5 SYSTEMS SUPPORT AND SERVICE CULTURE

Overall aim

Strong systems support and service culture acts as a framework upon which to build excellent services. During the process of developing this strategy, partners and service users talked about how we do things, and how we do things together, more than possibly any other area of work. To end homelessness, our good work and innovative services need to be underpinned by comprehensive, positive and effective structures and partnerships.

Our service culture must be developed with and alongside homeless people, closing the 'communications gap' (identified in the Homelessness Review) between key services and the people they serve.

This strand aims to:

Work as one borough to achieve prevention, intervention, accommodation and recovery aims.

Design services *with* service users.

Deliver services in line with the values of the partnership.

B5.1 Partnerships and Staffing

WHY?

Strong partnerships, consisting of well-trained, resilient staff, are at the centre of this strategy. Frontline staff, service leaders and people with lived experience of homelessness all talked passionately on this subject during our development sessions. As stated in the introduction, strategy is "*an integrative set of choices*". To end homelessness, we need to work more effectively as an integrated system, both in terms of 'core' homelessness services and the wider system that supports often vulnerable residents.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

Following the launch of this strategy, we will create a **multi-disciplinary Strategy Implementation Partnership**, to replace the existing Strategic Housing Collaboration Group. We will create several sub-groups to implement the strategy, as well as acting as a platform for training, networking and mutual support. The partnership will share characteristics with Communities of Practice³⁷ - partners will be given opportunities to lead each other in their areas of specialism, with the council acting as a facilitator.

The partnership will link closely with the wider countywide strategic work including No Homelessness in Norfolk, the Norfolk Homelessness Solutions Forum, the Norfolk Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and others. It will link with, and reinforce, the countywide commitments under Homes for Cathy³⁸.

³⁷ [Communities of Practice: The Organizational Frontier \(hbr.org\)](https://www.hbr.org)

³⁸ [Homes for Cathy - Broadland Housing Association \(broadlandgroup.org\)](https://www.broadlandgroup.org)

As well as strengthening links between core services, we will further **develop links between key services, other council departments and elected members**. This could include training and development for staff and members on what the partnership does, and how to take part in its work. With the consent of the group, we could explore opening up the Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task Group, so that key frontline services (and even service users) are invited to share their experiences, successes and challenges with group members.

We will also **develop a partnership-wide “best practice” guide to supporting and developing staff**. The Homelessness Review identified the recruitment and retention of staff as a key challenge (and barrier) to effective service delivery. We will work as a partnership to share what works well in terms of recruiting, training and retaining staff within services that support homeless people. This may include training and progression opportunities, team development, embedding trauma-informed ways of working, rewarding and celebrating success, reflective practice and so on.

The Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy will link with the borough-wide work to **establish West Norfolk as a Marmot Place**. Marmot principles will address health inequalities in the borough “[arising] from a complex interaction of many factors - housing, income, education, social isolation, disability - all of which are strongly affected by one's economic and social status”³⁹.

Positive health outcomes will impact, and will be impacted by, positive housing outcomes. We will work closely with Norfolk County Council and the local Integrated Care Board towards Marmot principles, over a timeline beyond the length of this strategy.

B5.2 Lived Experience and Co-Production

WHY?

To position our services effectively, we need to understand what works well for the people who are using the services. We cannot end homelessness without understanding the needs and aspirations of people who are experiencing (or who have experienced) homelessness. We will work with partners towards a co-production model, where services are shaped and developed by the people who may use (or may have used) them.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

Alongside the Strategy Implementation Partnership, we will **establish a co-production group** comprising individuals with lived experience of homelessness. We will draw on good practice from elsewhere in the country to ensure that group members are trained and empowered to contribute effectively to the group. The group will act as a ‘feedback loop’ to key services, to shape policy and practice.

We will also **embed trauma-informed principles and practices**⁴⁰ across all services, drawing on feedback from service users and partners. This work also forms one of the Norfolk Children's Safeguarding Board's current priorities, and links well with Marmot principles previously mentioned. Trauma-informed principles are regarded as particularly effective in supporting people who have multiple barriers to sustaining accommodation but will be of value to all homeless applicants.

³⁹ [Marmot Review report – 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives | Local Government Association](#)

⁴⁰ [Working definition of trauma-informed practice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Linked to the above (and to the 'best practice' guide for staff), we will **develop a career pathway model** to actively encourage people with lived experience into homelessness support roles. As described in the Homelessness Review, many local services employ people with lived experience in either paid or voluntary roles, but further intentional work is needed to develop a partnership-wide approach.

The above aims could be delivered by existing services, but (subject to funding) we will look to create a new "lived experience coordination" role, with a specific remit of amplifying the voices of people with lived experience in the borough.

B5.3 Communication

WHY?

Communication was a key theme arising from the sessions that supported the development of this strategy. To be effective in ending homelessness, we should communicate clearly and empathetically with people who have approached us in crisis, and we should communicate effectively with partners and with the wider borough. Our messages should be underpinned by reliable and transparent data.

WHAT WILL THIS INCLUDE?

We will develop a **clear and comprehensive communications strategy** around homelessness. This will include explaining who we are and what we do. It will set out the goals we are aiming for and the progress we have made towards these, celebrating success and acknowledging challenges faced by the partnership.

The strategy will also include a section designed to help members of the public who are concerned about homelessness and want to help, explaining how they can take part in the work to end homelessness. This will include a "myth busting" section to address common misconceptions about homelessness.

We will also **review and refresh all advice letters, leaflets and external communications** issued by the Housing Options Service. As part of our statutory duties, we have an obligation to communicate legal decisions to homeless applicants. The review will ensure that letters and communications are both clear and empathetic. We will explore digital means of communication to do this, whilst recognising that more traditional means of communication are necessary for some client groups. Where possible, we will involve people with lived experience in this process, linking with the new co-production group ([B5.2](#)).

We will establish a **clear, public-facing data portal** to support the communications strategy. We have begun work on the portal, using BI technology to present information clearly. The portal will convey the partnership's successes and challenges in relation to key performance indicators. Amongst other applications, this will be used to support and inform the work of the Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task Group.

Finally, we will develop a **clear and straightforward Information Sharing Protocol** between partners, to improve joint-working and problem-solving around homeless applicants and those at risk. We have drafted an Information Sharing Protocol to support the work of the Supported Housing Partnership ([B3.1](#)) – we will explore the possibility of extending this protocol for the benefit of other services.

PART C – DRAFT ACTION PLAN

KEY

AfEO	Accommodation for Ex Offenders
BCKLWN	Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payment
HNS	Housing Needs Service (BCKLWN)
HPG	Homelessness Prevention Grant (DLUHC)
HSIP	Homelessness Strategy Implementation Partnership
ICB	Integrated Care Board
MUCH	Multi Use Community Hub
NCA	Norfolk Citizens Advice
NCC	Norfolk County Council
SHPS	Sustainable Housing Pathway Service
s.106	Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
WNCT	West Norfolk Community Transport

C1. PREVENTION

Aim: To ensure that, wherever possible, a person at risk of homelessness does not become homeless. To identify at-risk groups and individuals as early as possible and to support “universal” measures that will reduce the risk of homelessness for all residents.

No	Sub-strand	Action	Owner(s)	Funding and Resourcing	Target Date for Completion	Next steps
1.1	Education and Communication	Develop a clear and universal proactive borough-wide education plan around homelessness prevention	BCKLWN HNS HSIP	Partially funded. Can be delivered to an extent by existing staff / website but may need additional resourcing dependent on the scope of the plan and the design of the portal.	Within one year	Initial meeting with comms
1.2		Develop a universal “ early help portal ” for homelessness prevention to include a “power to refer” function			Within two years	
1.3		Develop a proactive campaign with letting agents towards homelessness prevention in line with 1.1 and 1.2	BCKLWN HNS, working with Housing Standards, SHPS, AfEO	Fully funded 3 years - HPG	Within one year	Create and advertise job role
1.4		“ Road test ” the above with people with lived experience.	Co-production group	Partially funded. Could deliver limited lived experience coordination with existing resources / services.	Ongoing but commence within one year	Create co-production group (see 5.5)
1.5	Client-centred Prevention Services	Embed the new information advice and guidance contract to ensure that all opportunities for homelessness prevention are maximised	BCKLWN; Shelter; NCA	Fully funded committed for 3+2 years	Ongoing but initial work within three months	Meet regularly with Shelter and NCAB; confirm and monitor KPIs

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1.6		Embed new SHPS upstream service and ensure that lessons are learned from data gathered.	BCKLWN; SHPS; NCC	Fully funded committed annually via HPG – possibility to extend funding subject to NCC match commitment	Within 3-6 months	Review contract; ensure that SHPS aligns with Intensive Support Service
1.7		Reinstate a home visiting function aimed at preventing family evictions	BCKLWN	Existing resource – achieved with changes within budget or changes to work practices	Within 6-9 months	Agree plan with HNS staff
1.8		Redesign and recommission the existing Intensive Support Service	BCKLWN	Fully funded 3 years – will use HPG funding	Within 3-6 months	Draft and issue Invitation to Tender
1.9	Community Links	Maximise use of shared sites to deliver homelessness prevention	BCKLWN; HSIP; NCC	Existing resource – existing staff working flexibly in multiple locations	Ongoing but commence within first year	Initial scoping of suitable sites; liaison with NCC re: MUCH
1.10		Ensure that homelessness prevention services are accessible to rural communities	BCKLWN; HSIP; WNCT	Existing resource – may need a small amount of HPG to cover transport costs	Ongoing but commence within first year	Initial needs analysis; liaison with WNCT.
1.11		Ensure that prevention activities have a specific remit towards families , based in the community	BCKLWN; HSIP; SHPS, Shelter, NCA etc	Existing resource – ensure that strand is included in Invitations to Tender	Ongoing but commence within first year	Link with Draft Invitations to Tender
1.12		Grants and Incentives	Work with private rented sector (PRS) landlords to reduce homelessness arising from the end of PRS tenancies	BCKLWN; all prevention partners	Fully funded for 3 years – will use HPG funding for new role	Within 3-6 months
1.13	Redesign homelessness prevention grant scheme to better meet the needs of		BCKLWN	Repurpose existing funding – extend scope of existing Homelessness Prevention Grants	Within 3-6 months but by April 2025 at latest	Review existing payments; consult with partners to map out gaps in provision

		households at risk of homelessness				
1.14		Review allocations of discretionary housing payments (DHPs) and identify where prevention has been achieved	BCKLWN	Develop existing DHP pot.	Within first year	Initial meeting with Benefits team; review of allocations
1.15	Partnerships and Data	Develop a homelessness champion function to be rolled out borough-wide to all interested services	BCKLWN; HSIP	Existing resource and staffing – though new roles elsewhere in strategy will help feed into this.	Ongoing but commence within first year	Initial actions to emerge from strands 1.1 and 1.2
1.16		Embed new data analyst role to better identify people at risk of homelessness		Develop existing job role	Within 3 months and then ongoing	Launch of Power BI homelessness information portal

DRAFT

C2. INTERVENTION

Aim: To ensure that people who are homeless are identified quickly and placed into suitable, cost-effective accommodation where necessary, avoiding the use of Bed and Breakfast and nightly-paid accommodation. To ensure that support is provided to overcome barriers to accessing (and sustaining) emergency accommodation.

No	Sub-strand	Action	Owner(s)	Funding and Resourcing	Target Date for Completion	Next steps
2.1	Accommodation	Using data, commission and design sufficient emergency accommodation to meet need.	BCKLWN Housing Strategy	Partially funded – could use monies arising from s.106 payments.	Within six months – in line with audit recommendation	Continued liaison with Housing Strategy. Needs assessment already carried out. Fairstead 7 units Sept 2024 Reid Way 7 units by 2026
2.2		Design and commission sufficient emergency accommodation to replace Welfare Cabins.	BCKLWN Housing Strategy	Partially funded – could use monies arising from s.106 payments.	By October 2024	Initial discussion with potential supplier July 2024
2.3		Review offer of accommodation to people sleeping rough.	BCKLWN	Existing resource staff and partners.	Within first year	Conduct analysis of all offers of accommodation outside s.188 duty
2.4	Support	Redesign and redevelop Personal Housing Plans (PHPs) issued by the council to homeless applicants.	BCKLWN plus coproduction group, HSIP	Existing resource staff and partners – but would benefit from coproduction coordinator	Within first year	Schedule initial review of current PHPs
2.5		Develop a “what to expect” document for homeless applicants and partner agencies.	BCKLWN plus coproduction group, HSIP, comms team	Existing resource staff and partners – but would benefit from coproduction coordinator	Within first year	Schedule initial review of current comms

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2.6		Review the provision of basic items to meet the need of people accessing emergency accommodation.	BCKLWN plus co-production group, HSIP, comms	Fully funded based on estimate of current provision. Could use HPG to top-up.	Within first year	Schedule initial review of current provision
2.7		Embed processes introduced during Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation . Review the emergency offer (and processes) for victim-survivors of domestic abuse.	BCKLWN plus DAHA implementation group	Existing resource staff and partners	Ongoing but commence by December 2024	Work towards DAHA accreditation, with Standing Together charity
2.8	Partnerships	Develop a “by name” meeting / partnership to resolve the homelessness of those who are furthest away from having their housing needs met.	BCKLWN plus probation and HSIP members	Existing resource staff and partners	Ongoing but commence by December 2024	Coordinate with Probation services to expand quarterly meeting
2.9		(linked to 1.8) Recommission Intensive Support Service , reflecting current need	BCKLWN	Fully funded 3 years – will use HPG funding	Within 3-6 months	Draft and issue Invitation to Tender
2.10		Improve working relationship with local Social Care partners to ensure immediate crisis assessment where needed.	BCKLWN; NCC	Existing resource staff and partners	Ongoing but commence within six months	Initial meeting with NCC

C3. ACCOMMODATION

Aim: To ensure that safe affordable accommodation, suitable to their needs, is available to everyone who needs it. To ensure that people residing in short/medium term accommodation (such as hostels) are supported to move on in a timely and sustainable manner.

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No	Sub-strand	Action	Owner(s)	Funding	Target Date for Completion	Next steps
3.1	Single Person Accommodation	Review the effectiveness of the existing hostel pathway, conducting a needs assessment of all residents	BCKLWN; accommodation partners	Existing resource staff and partners	Within first year	Establish initial parameters of review with partners and data analyst
3.2		Embed Supported Housing Partnership to develop the effectiveness of the hostel pathway	Supported Housing Partnership	Existing partnership and services		Complete Info sharing agreement and arrange first meeting
3.3		Recommission the Housing First model	BCKLWN	Fully funded 3 years – will use HPG funding	Within 3-6 months	Draft and issue Invitation to Tender
3.4		Develop single person accommodation that incentivises paid employment.	HSIP	Partially funded – could use HPG funding to fund incentives, or use partner resources / s.106 / Housing Companies to develop accommodation	Within two years	Explore accommodation options arising from pathway review.
3.5	Private Rented Sector	Re-engage Private Rented Sector (PRS) landlords and agents. Create a flexible PRS access fund to incentivise landlords and clients.	BCKLWN plus key partners e.g. SHPS, AfEO	Partially funded – new PRS enabling role plus small incentives fund (will need to test against demand)	Within six months	Develop and advertise new job role
3.6		Explore viability of a rent-a-room scheme for single homeless households	BCKLWN, HSIP	Partially funded through new roles and existing	Within two years	Commence once PRS liaison work is well-established

				capacity but may need incentives fund (HPG?)		
3.7		Explore viability of “tenant swap” scheme for private sector tenants	BCKLWN, HSIP	Partially funded through new roles and existing capacity but may need incentives fund (HPG?)	Within two years	Commence once PRS liaison work is well-established
3.8	Social Housing and other accommodation	Conduct a review of the council’s allocations policy for social housing	BCKLWN; HSIP	Existing resource but will need to shift priorities to enable within timescales	By September 2025	Initial scoping and consultation
3.9		Explore the viability of creating good quality shared accommodation for homeless applicants who choose to share with others.	BCKLWN; HSIP	Partially funded through new roles and existing capacity but may need incentives fund (HPG?)	Within two years	Commence once PRS liaison work is well-established
3.10		Continue work with housing providers to reduce levels of void properties	BCKLWN; housing providers	Existing resource to work with housing providers	Ongoing, immediate	Continued work
3.11		Develop a pathway to support and accommodate substance users.	BCKLWN; health partners	Not yet funded other than existing resource to research. Could use s.106 money to commission suitable accommodation.	Completion within three years	Initial design with health partners

C4. RECOVERY

Aim: To ensure that nobody experiences homelessness more than once, and that formerly homeless people are empowered to thrive in the borough.

No	Sub-strand	Action	Owner(s)	Funding	Target Date for Completion	Next steps
4.1	Health and substances	Improve access to mainstream health services for homeless people	BCKLWN; ICB	Existing resources including ICB provision	Ongoing but commence within six months	Initial scoping exercise re: GP outreach services
4.2		Develop recovery offer for people seeking to address alcohol dependency	BCKLWN; health partners	Not yet funded other than existing resource to research. Could use s.106 money to commission suitable accommodation.	Completion within three years	Initial design with health partners
4.3		Develop support for people with brain injuries and/or learning difficulties	BCKLWN; health partners	To be confirmed – existing resource to scope out level of need	Commence within first year	Initial scoping exercise with partners and data analyst
4.4	Community	Engage local businesses in the recovery process through employment placements and apprenticeships	BCKLWN; HSIP; DWP	Partially funded – could be delivered through existing roles and partnership, but may benefit from specific recovery/activity coordinator, linked to partners' existing streams of work	Commence work within first year	Establish "community" subgroup from HSIP
4.5		Engage residents to support formerly homeless people through a 'skills-based' mentoring scheme	BCKLWN; HSIP			
4.6		Develop and improve access to leisure and cultural facilities for formerly homeless people.	BCKLWN; HSIP; Alive Leisure?			

4.7		Make use of ‘father-inclusive’ practices , particularly for single people looking to develop and/or restore their relationship with their children	BCKLWN; HSIP; NCC		Commence work within six months	Further training / liaison with Dr Mark Dobson – possible bespoke advice
4.8	Sustainment	Ensure that recommissioned Intensive Support Service emphasises sustainment and the inclusion of families	BCKLWN	Fully funded 3 years – will use HPG funding	Within 3-6 months	Draft and issue Invitation to Tender
4.9		Review SHPS framework to measure recovery and sustainment	BCKLWN; SHPS; NCC	Fully funded committed annually via HPG – possibility to extend funding subject to NCC match commitment	Within 3-6 months	Review contract; ensure that SHPS aligns with Intensive Support Service
4.10		Ensure that new information and advice service incorporates sustainment skills	BCKLWN; Shelter; NCAB	Fully funded committed for 3+2 years	Ongoing but initial work within three months	Meet regularly with Shelter and NCAB; confirm and monitor KPIs
4.11		Review “accommodation for ex-offenders” programme , identifying and addressing barriers for recovery.	BCKLWN; Shelter; NCC	Existing resources and partnership.	Within six to nine months	Work with other districts to establish scope of review
4.12		Develop “multi-agency check-ins” for new tenants who may be at risk of losing accommodation	BCKLWN; Help Hub partners	Could be delivered through existing services but may need new project coordinator	Commence within first year	Initial meeting with help hub coordinators

C5. SYSTEMS SUPPORT AND SERVICE CULTURE

Aim: To work as one borough to achieve prevention, intervention, accommodation and recovery aims, designing services with service users and in line with the values of the partnership.

No	Sub-strand	Action	Owner(s)	Funding	Target Date for Completion	Next steps
5.1	Partnerships and staffing	Create a multi-disciplinary Strategy Implementation Partnership	BCKLWN; HSIP	Existing resources and partnership.	Launch within three months of strategy	Draw up invitation list and Terms of Reference
5.2		Further develop links between key services , other council departments and elected members.	BCKLWN	Existing resources and partnership.	Commence within three months of strategy	Draw up engagement action plan prioritising departments
5.3		Develop a “best practice” guide for the partnership for supporting staff	HSIP	Existing staffing and partnership	Within one year	Initial meeting with personnel – learn from staff survey
5.4		Link with the borough-wide work to establish West Norfolk as a Marmot Place	BCKLWN; NCC; ICB	Existing resources and partnership.	Ongoing throughout strategy	Continue liaison with NCC and ICB
5.5	Lived Experience	Establish a co-production group comprising individuals with lived experience of homelessness	BCKLWN; HSIP	Partially funded – could be delivered through existing roles and partnership, but may benefit from specific lived experience coordinator, linked to partners’ existing streams of work	Commence within first year	Establish “lived experience” subgroup from HSIP
5.6		Embed trauma-informed principles and practices across all services	BCKLWN; HSIP; NCC		Commence within first year	
		Develop a career pathway to actively encourage people with	BCKLWN; HSIP		Commence within two years	

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		lived experience into homelessness roles				
5.7	Communications	Develop a clear and comprehensive communications strategy around homelessness	BCKLWN; comms team; HSIP	Existing staffing and partnership including council comms team	Within six months	Initial meeting with comms team and HSIP members
5.8		Review and refresh all advice letters, leaflets and external communications issued by the Housing Needs Service	BCKLWN; co-production group	Existing staffing and partnership including council comms team	Within one year	Set up task group within Housing Needs
5.9	Data and information	Establish a clear, public-facing data portal	BCKLWN Housing Strategy	Existing staffing and partnership including data analyst	Within three months	Meeting between members and data analyst July 2024
5.10		Develop a clear and straightforward Information Sharing Protocol between partners	BCKLWN; HSIP	Existing staffing and partnership	Within six months	Circulate Supported Housing Partnership protocol once agreed

HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Progress against the above actions will be reviewed at least once every three months at the Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group meeting, with key successes and challenges reported to the Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task Group. We will also present an annual report to the council’s Environment and Communities Panel, outlining our progress and updating the plan to reflect any changes in circumstance.

We will also record and monitor the following, as an indication of our progress towards ending homelessness:

Strand	Key indicator(s)
Prevention	Number of households with a homelessness declaration
Prevention	Number of households: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at risk of becoming homeless e.g., insecure accommodation, sofa surfing prevented from becoming homeless for a minimum of 6 months accepted as homeless with a need to be rehoused (Full housing duty)
Intervention	Percentage of homeless households who were offered a prevention and relief duty, who remain homeless and are owed no further duty.
Intervention	Nightly paid accommodation (inc. B&B): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number in accommodation Spend on accommodation
Intervention	Average length of stay in temporary accommodation
Intervention	Number of people verified as sleeping rough: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly total Monthly new to sleeping rough Snapshot (single night) total Snapshot – new to sleeping rough
Accommodation	Number of applicants on the HomeChoice register, by priority band
Accommodation	Number of lettings to social housing
Accommodation	Number of new Safe Accommodation units and places delivered.

Additionally, we will introduce the following new measures, to ensure that homeless applicants' voices are listened to:

- A customer feedback button ("how did we do?") at the foot of standard emails from the Housing Needs Service, linking to a brief survey about their experience
- A quarterly review of any complaints received to the Housing Needs Service, with a record kept of lessons learnt and remedial action taken
- A clear interface between the work of the council and the work of the newly formed co-production group.

DRAFT

GET INVOLVED

The King's Lynn and West Norfolk Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is a framework for ending homelessness in the borough. It makes clear where we want to be heading, how we want to do things, and the key aims and objectives of the partnership.

The extent to which we achieve our aims and objectives is proportionate to the resources at our disposal. As written in our Homelessness Review earlier in the year: it takes a borough to end homelessness.

Over the next year, we will be launching many of the initiatives described in the strategy, including:

- Strengthening our relationship with private sector landlords.
- Procuring accommodation to replace expensive bed and breakfast use.
- Creating a 'co-production group' so that our future work is designed with people who have used (or are currently using) homelessness services.
- Support improving access to job opportunities and leisure/cultural facilities for people recovering from homelessness.

If you would like to be involved in the work to end homelessness in the borough – through any of the initiatives described in this document, or through any other ideas that would fit well within the framework – please email us at Strategic.Housing@west-norfolk.gov.uk or call 01553 616200.



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Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024

Partners:

Borough Council of
King's Lynn &
West Norfolk



Norfolk County Council



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NORFOLK
CONSTABULARY
Our Priority is You

Freebridge
COMMUNITY HOUSING



Shelter



YMCA

the **purfleet**
trust
supporting homeless people



break
Changing young lives





Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024



Foreword

Cllr Adrian Lawrence
Cabinet Member for Housing
Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

This document has been prepared during a period of high demand for housing and homelessness services in King's Lynn and West Norfolk and at a time when the borough has witnessed an increase in the number of people sleeping rough.

This council's new corporate plan identifies preventing homelessness, increasing housing supply and meeting housing need as corporate priorities. There is a real will to make a difference and to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping across the borough.

Identifying the reasons and causes of homelessness is complex. We know that some of the local underlying issues accord with those highlighted at a national level. These include:

- access to affordable accommodation;
- changes to the welfare system which, for working age households, has created

a gap between rents charged and the amount payable under the housing subsidy system;

- increased demands on services for people who need support; and
- many more people have difficulty accessing appropriate support making it harder for them to secure accommodation or keep it.

In producing this strategy, we have undertaken a thorough review of the current situation. We have utilised available data and government policies to establish a programme of measurable activities that will help us eradicate rough sleeping and homelessness

This associated action plan sets out what this council will do over the next few years to tackle the issues identified in the review.

Some of these actions will be tried-and-

tested approaches with proven results. Others will be trialled for the first time.

We will continue working with representatives from central government to ensure that we are maximising funding opportunities, using the most effective practices, and that we are complying with our statutory and legal requirements.

We will continue to work with a range of partners, including other public bodies, voluntary sector organisations, housing providers, housing support providers, and charities. Any effort on behalf of the council will only be successful with the support of our partners.

Together we will achieve these goals and ensure that all people have access to housing and support to stay there.

Signature



Cllr Adrian Lawrence

Executive Summary

The existing Homelessness Strategy needs to be replaced, and needs to reflect recent changes to the legislative framework and local circumstances in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping. Whilst preparing a strategy is recognised as a requirement, the Council is committed to plan in any event to maximise efforts to prevent homelessness amongst those it serves.

The Council has a statutory duty to produce a homelessness strategy setting out the issues it faces locally and what it is doing to prevent homelessness. Whilst a new plan will not be drawn up each year a review of progress and a review of any changes or new requirements will be undertaken annually.

Assessment of homelessness and rough sleeping local trends

In the last 5 years we have seen a greater use of temporary accommodation. Greater numbers of households have lost accommodation before we can help prevent homelessness. In 2016/17 we saw a significant increase in rough sleeping. The issue of rough sleeping remains a critical one, and this winter will see the highest ever numbers of emergency beds and winter night shelter provision.

The total numbers seeking help each year has remained fairly consistent over the last 5 years – however, the circumstances in which

people approach the council have changed. More households have unmet support needs, and it is increasingly harder to help them into the right type of accommodation.

People are presenting to the Council more often now than in the past as ‘homeless tonight’ – leaving the contact with the Council until circumstances have reached crisis point. Many of these households - single person and families have complex needs. Problems with addiction and mental health problems are common amongst this group, and particularly prevalent amongst rough sleepers. Such issues for those without support can make securing accommodation, or keeping accommodation more difficult.

The new legislative framework that came into effect in 2018 means that we are working with homelessness households for a longer period, and focussing more on preventing homelessness. The Council has a duty to assess the accommodation and

support needs of all households including single people. The workload a significantly greater and additional resources have been put in place to support this.

The reasons for homelessness

The 3 most common reasons for people approaching the Council as homeless or threatened with homelessness are:-

1. The ending of a private rented tenancy
2. Family eviction/ exclusion and,
3. Eviction by a social landlord

The most common reason – ending of a private rented tenancy is also the most common reason across the country.

The second reason has been subject to significant increase in recent years and often involves young people being asked to leave the family home, often when the composition of the family changes.

The third most common reason, eviction by social landlord and is a matter that the Council with its partners, could have most influence of changing, and therefore reducing evictions in this way is a priority.

The causes of homelessness

The underlying causes include critically the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) freeze. LHA is the name for housing benefit that is paid for private renters. It has not kept pace with private rent levels since 2010, and has been frozen since 2016. This has created a gap between housing costs and housing benefit. Young claimants are particularly affected.

Homelessness can be connected with the difficulty some people face in accessing appropriate support or health services - particularly mental health services that can put people at greater risk of losing their accommodation.

Rough sleeping represents homelessness in its most dangerous and shocking way. Some people who sleep rough avoid

engaging the Council and authorities for a variety of reasons. It is clear that with some people a degree of trust needs to be earned before any meaningful engagement can happen. This is what the 'rough sleeper outreach service' aims to do. The route back to a more stable lifestyle and settled accommodation can be difficult. The causes of rough sleeping can be complex, but can often involve people being affected by a series of challenging events; multiple disadvantage; and having limited resilience.

Future priorities

The priorities reflect the identified issues, and include:

- Securing appropriate accommodation and support for those suffering from mental health problems.
- Ensuring the provision of a range of temporary accommodation – particularly for those leaving institutional care
- Housing for care leavers

- Those leaving hospital with accommodation needs
- Move on accommodation from hostels
- Commitment to the provision of effective housing and debt advice services
- Increase the delivery of new housing to meet the needs of the area including social housing, part ownership, and private rented homes.

The Council's role activities include a customer facing assessment role; a co-ordinating role to help people access accommodation and support they need; and a commissioning role to provide services that meet identified need or gaps. The Council's success in its role in preventing homelessness depends significantly on how effectively it works with those organisations that deliver services in the community. The value of our working relationships with these organisations cannot be overstated.



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¹⁾ 'Homelessness prevention' means providing people with the ways and means to address their housing and other needs to avoid homelessness.

²⁾ 'Homelessness relief' is where an authority has been unable to prevent homelessness but helps someone to secure accommodation, even though the authority is under no statutory obligation to do so.

1. Government policy

The Government made a commitment to develop a national strategy to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it altogether by 2027.

A Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Implementation Taskforce has been established. We will engage with this group for the duration of our Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy 2019-2024, using the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy (August 2018) as a point of reference.

2. Legal requirement to produce a strategy

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local housing authorities to publish a homelessness Strategy every 5 years. To produce the 2019-2024 strategy we have undertaken a comprehensive review of the situation in west Norfolk and compared this to national data.

This strategy sets out what actions the council will focus on in the next 5 years to 2024. This includes responding to the increasing demand for housing and homelessness services, which has occurred over the last

3-4 years. It also includes assessing changes to the way services are accessed, welfare reform, and access to and affordability of rented homes (private and social).

This strategy serves to highlight some of these issues and proposes actions to mitigate their impact. It will also cover wider challenges relating to housing for people with support needs and actions to address the supply of new housing.

It is not a description of the council's day-to-day operational activities in relation to homelessness and housing advice – much of this information can be found on the website.

In addition to this strategy, an associated action plan has been produced which will be reviewed annually and update for the following year.

3. Legal requirement to review Housing Needs

Housing authorities are required under section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by section 124 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016) to review periodically the housing needs of their area. This review has just been undertaken and we will be publishing the findings online. We will

take the findings of the Housing Needs Review into account in the development of this strategy's associated action plan.

4. Duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Housing Act 1996 (Part 7) is the primary legislation setting out a local authority's duties towards homeless households. The Act outlines a main duty to secure accommodation for applicants who meet 5 'tests':-

1. Are eligible,
2. Are homeless or threatened with homelessness (within 28 days)
3. Are in 'priority need' for housing (categories of more vulnerable households) and where
4. Homeless unintentionally (individuals hadn't worsened their circumstances through their own actions)
5. Have a local connection

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has amended the 1996 Act to introduce additional new statutory duties to 'prevent'⁽¹⁾ and 'relieve'⁽²⁾ homelessness for all eligible applicants homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days.

One of the objectives of the amendment to the Act is to ensure that all categories of homeless households receive an appropriate service. On a national basis, this is intended to address concerns of inconsistency and poor customer practice in the context of rising numbers of single homeless people.

This puts the onus on local authority staff, including our own, to work for a longer period of time in both the ‘prevention’ duty period (56 days) and the ‘relief’ duty period (also 56 days) before a decision on whether a main duty is owed.

The Act puts homelessness prevention activities on a statutory footing.

It requires us to assess everyone’s housing needs and support needs and to complete a Personalised Housing Plan (PHP).

The Act also introduced a new ‘duty to refer’ on other public bodies. This means a requirement for a range of organisations to help identify and refer people threatened with homelessness. The Government in early 2019 has consulted on the introduction of Homelessness Reduction Boards. Such boards seek to strengthen a ‘whole system’ approach to homelessness reduction

involving multi-agency partnership working, as well as structures that are accountable.

5. What is homelessness?

Homelessness is not just people sleeping on the streets. Homelessness exists in many different forms, and often the scale and complexity of the issue is hidden.

The law defines someone as being homeless if they do not have a legal right to occupy accommodation, or if their accommodation is unsuitable to live in. This can cover a wide range of circumstances, including, but not restricted to, the following:

- having no accommodation at all
- having accommodation that is not reasonable to live in, even in the short-term (e.g. because of violence or health reasons)
- having a legal right to accommodation that you cannot access (e.g. if you have been evicted illegally)
- Living in accommodation you have no legal right to occupy (e.g. living in a squat or staying with friends temporarily).

Housing authorities have a legal duty to provide advice and assistance to people who are legally defined as homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The vast majority of homeless people are families or single people who are not sleeping rough, but who are facing difficulty circumstances where their accommodation is temporary, or inappropriate. Some may be staying with relatives and friends on a temporary basis. Others live in temporary accommodation, such as bed and breakfast hotels, hostels, night shelters and refuges.

This may mean people are living in poor quality accommodation that could be detrimental to their health and well-being, prosperity and education. In many cases, the uncertainty of not having a permanent home causes stress and anxiety as well as practical difficulties.

6. What is rough sleeping?

The most extreme form of homelessness is when people are sleeping rough. Sleeping rough is defined as: people bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters); or people in buildings or other places not designated for habitation (such as

What is H-Clic?

H-Clic is the Government's new data collection system. It provides a central record of homelessness and its causes and is intended to help guide councils' homelessness reduction activities.

barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations or card board boxes).

The number of people sleeping rough has increased in the area in recent years. Prior to 2016/17 each year, on a designated day, the council was required to undertake a 'count' of rough sleepers. It was usual to report only a handful; some years none at all. Since then the annual count numbers have been considerably higher.

The ambition of any local strategy must ultimately be to eradicate this problem. Anything less does not reflect the immediate danger to life of exposure to the cold in winter and the health problems associated with living this way. Such a local ambition mirrors the Government's policy to eradicate rough sleeping.

7. Review of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in the area

To understand the issues in the area fully, we must look at more than just the data we have to submit to central government.

In future local data will be collected in a different way. As well as needing to meet the requirements of H-Clic it is important to go beyond capturing the date from people who approach the council.

Information will be collected from a range of partners relating to those who are rough sleeping or in danger of rough sleeping, but who are not necessarily working directly with us.

This includes:-

- Views of local stakeholders - including views captured at strategy meetings,
- Information from commissioned housing related support services
- Engagement with rough sleeper outreach and Winter Night shelter operation – on-going monitoring of rough sleeper population.
- Colleague discussions and review of national publications including the NAO report on homelessness in 2017.

The information presented graphically in this section runs for the period 2010 to 2016/17 and shows a trend over this period. A separate section is included to reflect on the period 2017/2018 and 2018/2019. This includes information from the new H-Clic data collection system.

In the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy, research published in a report titled 'Hard Edges' (Bramley and Fitzpatrick, 2015) identifies poverty, and particularly childhood poverty as the most powerful

predictor of all forms of homelessness. Information produced by the campaign to end child poverty using census data from 2011 showed high levels of children living in poverty in King's Lynn. Many areas south-east have rates of 20% or less.

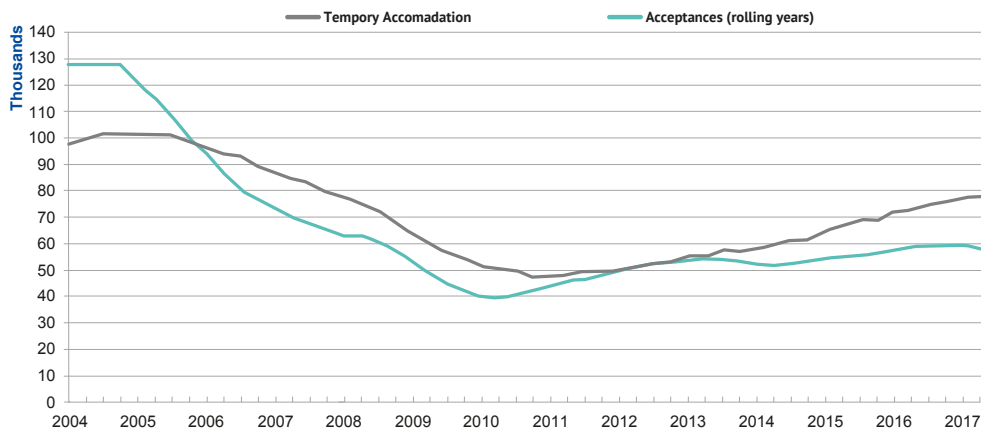
Table 1.1
King's Lynn wards with highest level of child poverty rates before and after housing costs

Ward	% of children before housing costs	% of children after housing costs
North Lynn	41.9%	55.6%
South & West Lynn	32%	46.8%
St Margarets with St Nicho	32%	46.8%
Springwood	28.6%	42.5%
Fairstead	28.6%	42.5%
Old Gaywood	27.2%	41.4%

Source: Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Table 1.1 above shows child poverty rates before and after housing costs are taken into consideration in the wards with the highest levels. These wards are on par with the constituency in Britain with the highest levels of child poverty. Bethnal Green and Bow constituency is second in the rankings of highest areas at 55.3% of children living in poverty after housing costs. North Lynn Ward is 55.6% after housing costs.

Table 1.2
Homelessness - national trends
 Acceptances and households in temporary accommodation



Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Table 1.2 above demonstrates how, through two measures of homelessness (homelessness acceptances and households in temporary accommodation) the position nationally has worsened from 2010 to 2016/17. This plateaued in 2016/2017. A comparable graph produced now would show a fall in ‘acceptances’.

The term ‘homelessness acceptances’ describes the number of households where a main duty is owed (as described above), and the five tests are met.

Looking locally from 2010/2011 onwards (see

table 1.3 above) – similarly a rise in main duty cases took place until 2016/17 and then a decrease. This trend reflects significant changes to the legislative framework, namely the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

There are fewer main duty decisions because the decision is delayed while the council works with the households firstly under the Prevention Duty (56 days) and then the Relief Duty (56 days). This means that homelessness can be resolved before the full duty is owed. As detailed above, it has been necessary to review and change the homelessness measures in order that

Table 1.3
Main duty cases

Measure	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Main Duty	79	87	81	106
2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
99	116	117	84	31

Source: Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk

an accurate evidence base is created for informed decision making. We will present the information collected on a quarterly basis on a dedicated page on our website.

The measures need to change in order to align with the government’s new data requirement and the new legislative framework. It is important that no single measure should be looked at in isolation, and that some measures including the rough sleeper count are snapshots at one moment in time and may not reflect an accurate picture.

Table 1.4
Local Authority
 B&B rent, deposit spend and rough sleeper count

Measure	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Bed & Breakfast spend	£16,946	£13,153	£4,223	£5,934	£18,226	£12,794	£40,789	£16,641	£45,649
Deposits / rent in advance				65	55	38	28	14	29
Rough Sleeper Count	8	5	6	3	3	5	42	9	5

Source: Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Analysing table 1.4 above together with other relevant sources of information, we can draw the following conclusions:

- Bed and Breakfast spend has increased as numbers of homelessness acceptances have increased and the numbers of households where we have an obligation to provide temporary accommodation has increased.
- The number of households where we

have financially assisted with loans for deposits or rent in advance has decreased as access to the private rented sector has become more difficult due to competition and affordability.

The table above shows that the council's use of bed and breakfast has increased in recent years, which is in line with national trends. Whilst this trend is concerning, table 1.5 shows that the council's bed and breakfast expenditure

Table 1.5
Local Authority
 B&B spend 2015/2016

Local Authority	B&B spend 2015/16
Breckland	£104,000
Broadland	£65,000
Great Yarmouth	£58,000
North Norfolk	£78,000
Norwich	£100,000
South Norfolk	£256,000

2015/16 was considerably lower than some other local authorities in Norfolk.

It should be noted that the use of bed and breakfast is a matter of last resort. It is particularly inappropriate for families.

It is unlawful to use such accommodation for families beyond a period of six weeks. The council's objective is to minimise the use of such an option.

Table 1.6

New measures introduced 2019 - 2020

King's Lynn & West Norfolk

Ref	Link to Corporate Priority	Name	Good Performance	2018/19 cumulative performance	Q1 2019/20 target	Q1 2019/20 cumulative performance
HS1	2	% of HMO's inspected in accordance with the programmed inspection regime	Aim to maximise	-	100%	100%
HS2	2	Spend on bed and breakfast accommodation (gross)	Aim to minimise	£51,794	-	£6,975
HS3	2	No of households with a homelessness declaration	Aim to minimise	-	-	122
HS4	2	No of households prevented from becoming homeless for a minimum of 6 months	Aim to maximise	489	-	13
HS5	2	No of households accepted as homeless with a need to be rehoused (Full housing duty)	Aim to minimise	-	-	6
HS6	2	% of cases who were offered a prevention and relief duty who remain homeless and are owed no further duty.	Aim to minimise	-	-	41.8%
HS7	2	No of rough sleepers	Aim to minimise	5	-	27
HS8	2	No in temporary accommodation - bed and breakfast	Aim to minimise	55	-	14
HS9	2	No of social housing lettings - against a baseline	Aim to maximise	464	-	144

Source: Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Table 1.6 above shows some of the new measures reported for the 1st quarter of 2019/2020.

Looking at the local picture in terms of the use of temporary accommodation graphic 1.7 shows an upward trend in line with regional and national trends.

Graphic 1.8 shows the decline in the cases of homelessness prevention – it shows the number of households where homelessness

has been prevented including access into private rented tenancies and assistance to remain in their existing home. In King's Lynn and West Norfolk this has shown a trend of decline from 2011/12. One of the key points relevant to this measure is it represents the council's ability to make effective use of the private rented sector (PRS) to prevent homelessness.

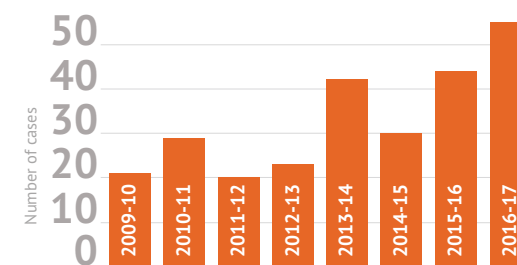
The extant conditions for the period of this graph were:

- strong demand
- poor accessibility into PRS
- a big gap between low income and the cost of private rent sector properties

Graphic 1.7

Housed in temporary accommodation

King's Lynn & West Norfolk

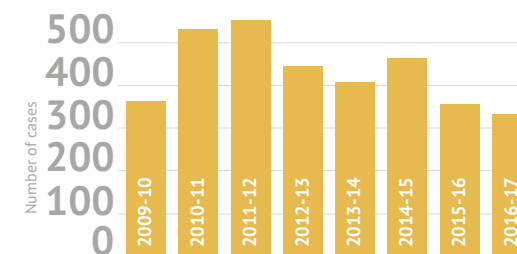


Source: National Audit Office, Homelessness in England Visualisation, Published 14 Jun 2017 <https://www.nao.org.uk/other/homelessness-in-england-visualisation/>

Graphic 1.8

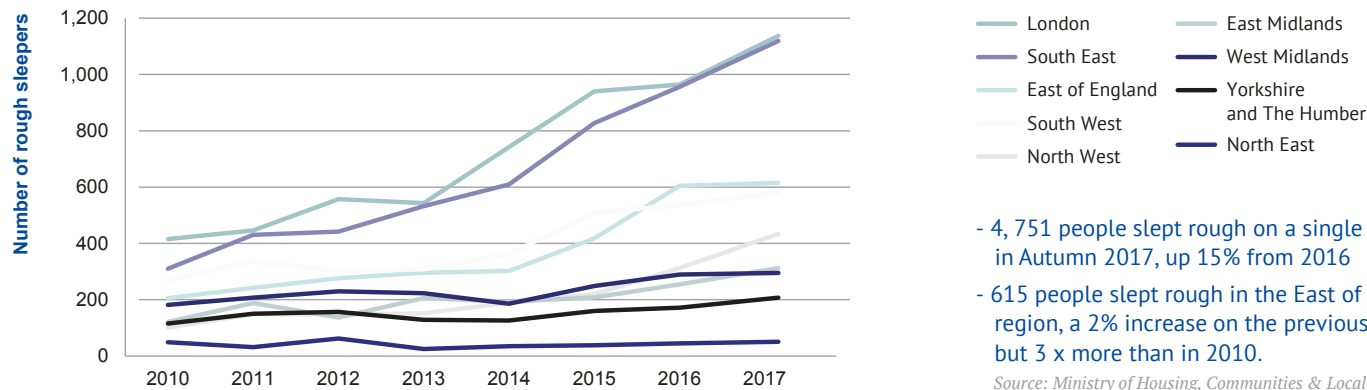
Cases of homelessness prevention

King's Lynn & West Norfolk



Source: National Audit Office, Homelessness in England Visualisation, Published 14 Jun 2017 <https://www.nao.org.uk/other/homelessness-in-england-visualisation/>

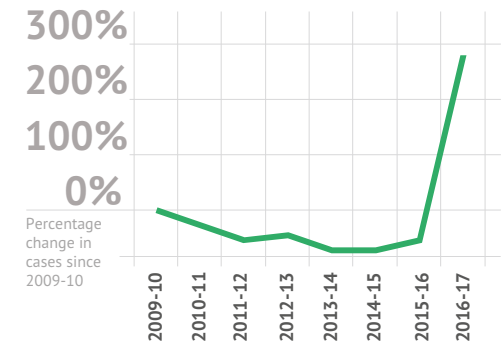
Graphic 2.1 **Homelessness - the current position:**
Rough sleeping has more than doubled since 2010
Number of rough sleepers by region 2010 - 2017



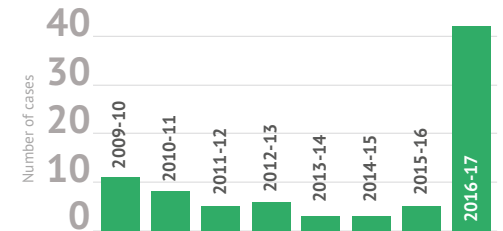
- 4,751 people slept rough on a single night in Autumn 2017, up 15% from 2016
- 615 people slept rough in the East of England region, a 2% increase on the previous year, but 3 x more than in 2010.

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Graphic 2.2
Percentage change in measures of homelessness since 2010-11
King's Lynn & West Norfolk



Graphic 2.3
Rough Sleepers in
King's Lynn & West Norfolk



Source: National Audit Office, Homelessness in England Visualisation, Published 14 Jun 2017
<https://www.nao.org.uk/other/homelessness-in-england-visualisation/>

8. Review of rough sleeping and rough sleeper encampments in the borough

The Government requires councils to undertake an annual count of the number of people in its area that are rough sleeping. This is a snapshot taken on a specified night in the winter. Officers go out and physically count the number of people bedded down on the streets.

It is recognised that there are clear limitations to this count as a measure.

Historically this area has very low rates of rough sleeping, with high

rates being confined to large cities.

The picture has changed in the last 2-3 years, as it has in other cities and towns in the country. The graphic 2.1 above shows the trends in rough sleeping estimates since 2010 across different regions of the country. The rates of rough sleeping by 2017 in the East of England were 3 times more than they had been in 2010.

The annual rough sleeping count for Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk in 2016/17 revealed 42 people rough sleeping (graphic 2.2 and 2.3). The same count in 2017/2018 recorded nine,

and the 2018/19 recorded five. Again it must be noted that this figure doesn't represent the true picture of rough sleeping – which according to other sources of intelligence has increased.

Any number of rough sleepers represents an emergency, as evidence shows that it is a highly dangerous thing to do. It is evident that, whether through the rough sleeping count, or evidence of encampments of rough sleepers that the council has identified, that the prevalence of rough sleeping is higher than it has been in the past, and is consistent with aggregate information across the East of England.



The way in which the Government sets out the methodology means that the true picture of homelessness can be understated or misunderstood.

The council and its partners have now adopted an ongoing monitoring arrangement of those who are rough sleeping or threatened with rough sleeping. This monitoring captures circumstances where people may be in danger of rough sleeping including those:

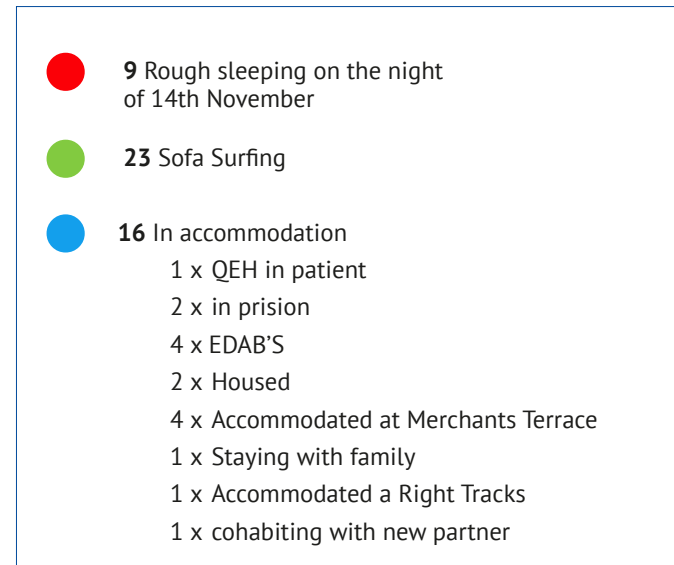
- in emergency hostel beds,

- in hospital (without accommodation),
- in prison (close to discharge),
- sofa surfing or at friends with no prospect of remaining in the future.

Graphic 2.4 represents the categories of information captured. In the last winter period 2018/19 a count of rough sleepers in the town would not have included those staying overnight in the town's night shelter. At times, the shelter accommodated up to 20 people over night.

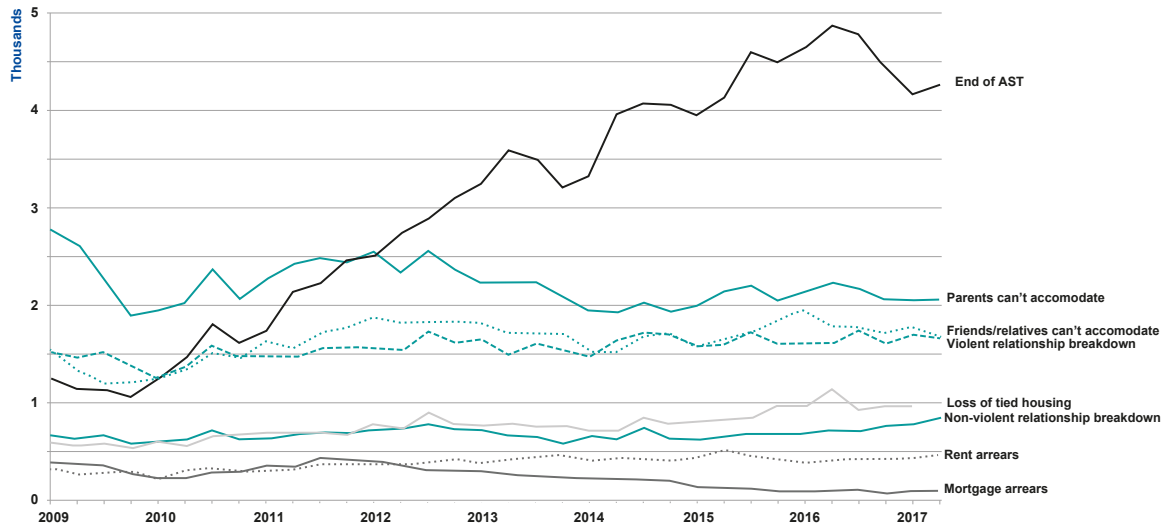
Graphic 2.4

On-going record of those rough sleeping, or in danger of rough sleeping



Source: Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Graphic 3.1
Homelessness - the national position:
Acceptances by reason for loss of last settled home



Ending of an assured shorthold tenancy continues to be the most common reason for loss of a settled home: 27% of acceptances (31% in London) Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

82

9. The Reasons for homelessness or being threatened with homelessness

Central Government record the reasons that people become homeless. The reasons that people lose accommodation are varied, but the most commonly reported reason locally, in the East of England, and nationwide is through ending of a private assured shorthold tenancy (graphic 3.1)

Relationship breakdown is another common reason for homelessness (locally

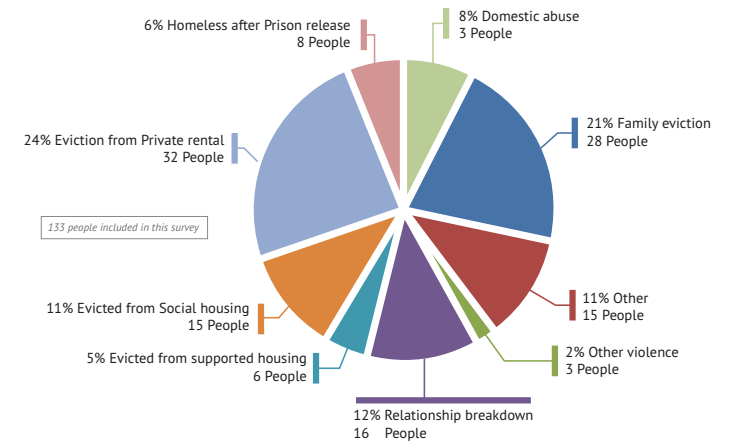
and nationally). Locally there has been a recent rapid increase in the reason for homelessness being parental exclusion.

Other reasons identified for losing accommodation include:-

- Rent / mortgage arrears
- Friends/ relatives can't accommodate
- Violent relationship breakdown
- Non-violent relationship breakdown

Graphic 3.2

King's Lynn and West Norfolk Q3 2018 - 2019
Reason for approach as homeless or threatened with homelessness



Source: Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Graphic 3.2 above shows the reasons that people have approached the council as homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Notably evictions from social housing and supported housing (both categories will involve social housing landlords) total 16% of all cases. This matter is something identified in work with partner landlords under the 'Homes for Cathy' working group as detailed in the action plan.

10. Identifying issues, causes and gaps in service provision

Once someone is homeless or at risk of homelessness, they can be faced with other issues that make it difficult to gain accommodation and keep it.

Many of these factors are consistent with factors identified nationally through research undertaken by The National Audit Office and presented in their report on Homelessness in 2017.

- Changes to Local Housing Allowance and the impact this has on the affordability of private rented sector accommodation.
- Difficulties in accessing PRS accommodation at a certain price point because of high demand
- Difficulties in accessing social housing because of limited new supply and lower rates of turnover of existing stock.
- Challenges of securing appropriate accommodation with support for people with ‘complex needs’, particularly those who are seeking help late in the day after they have lost their last home.

There are many other relevant factors including reductions in funding and service provision to housing related support (Supporting People administered by Adult Social services), in mental health services, in probation services. As a result of these changes there are some gaps in provision that are identified in this document.

10.1. Welfare Reforms

Available evidence points to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) reforms as a major driver to link loss of private tenancies and increasing cases of homelessness. LHA rates were frozen on 1 April 2016. This has created affordability issues and a widening gap between Housing Benefit (Local Housing Allowance rates) and rents. The gap locally is approximately £40pw on a single shared room, in the context of single claimants

Cost of shared room pw	£95
Housing Benefit pw	£55
Shortfall pw	£40
Employment Support Allowance pw	£57.90
Left to live on pw	£17.90

(particularly under 35s and under 25s) on Employment Support Allowance. The LHA cap ends in 2020 – policy options thereafter. The scenario below (based on data from 2018) for an under 25 year old adult in the borough claiming employment support allowance serves as an example of the impact on the LHA cap and rising rents:-

As all working aged benefits have been frozen during the same period of time households have less disposable income to cover the shortfall between housing benefit and rents.

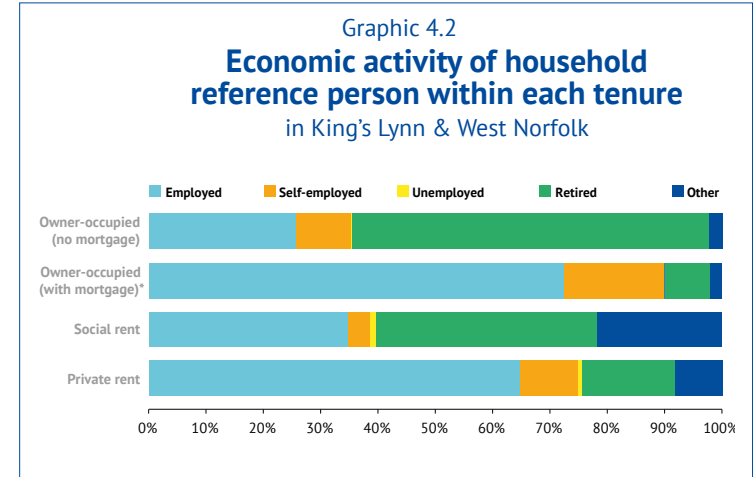
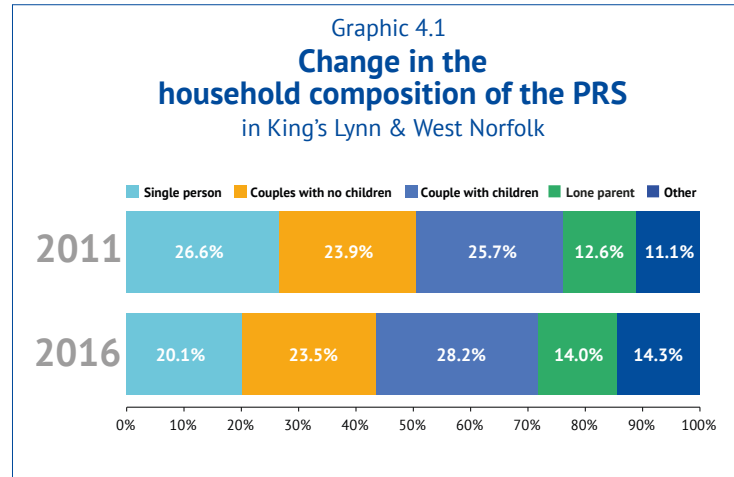
At the time the strategy has been prepared the numbers moving on to Universal Credit (UC) from Housing Benefit is accelerating. There have been changes as a result of lessons learned from pilots. Some of the changes relate to provisions for certain categories of tenants to have Alternative Payment Arrangements (APAs – allowing tenants to have the housing element of their UC paid directly to their landlord). Over the life of the strategy working with internal colleagues and partners we will monitor the impacts of UC on housing debt and homelessness.

Table 4.3
Affordable lets
in King's Lynn
& West Norfolk

Year	Number of lets
07/08	859
08/09	711
09/10	948
10/11	828
11/12	919
12/13	658
13/14	816
14/15	823
15/16	641
16/17	571
17/18	548
18/19	479

Table 4.4
New build affordable housing
in King's Lynn
& West Norfolk

Year	New build affordable
10/11	157
11/12	148
12/13	109
13/14	27
14/15	60
15/16	73
16/17	28 (net gain of 24)
17/18	29 (net gain 25) 30 RT
18/19	61



Source: King's Lynn and West Norfolk Housing Needs Assessment - Draft November 2019

10.2. Accessing the Private Rented Sector (PRS)

The LHA reforms detailed above have come about at a time when demand has continued to increase, in a period of extended growth of the PRS sector (at both a local and national level). Between 2011 and 2016 the PRS sector in the borough increased by 34.2%. This is a greater rate than is recorded both regionally and nationally. Graphic 4.1 taken from the council's draft Housing Needs Assessment shows that not only has the PRS expanded, but the households within it have diversified. The most notable change has been the growth in families now residing in the PRS.

Additionally graphic 4.2 shows that the majority of household heads in the private rented sector are in work. In this context those on low incomes with limited choices have had to compete with increasing numbers of other renters. Rents levels, the requirement for rent in advance, and high deposits continue to be barriers to accessing the PRS.

10.3. Declining delivery of new social housing and the declining opportunity to access existing social housing

The turnover of existing social housing has declined in recent years. With fewer properties becoming available via re-lets

there has been less affordable housing to meet need. Table 4.3 shows that there has been almost a 50% reduction in the number of affordable properties becoming available in recent years. Note this includes new build affordable housing.

Additionally the supply of new social housing (that is in part linked to market sale housing delivery) has also been declining over recent years. Table 4.4 provides figures on the supply of new build affordable housing in the borough since 2010. The net figures are once we have taken into account conversions of existing dwellings and right to buy sales.

10.4. Challenges of securing accommodation for people with complex needs

We have seen an increase in the proportion of people seeking help who have complex needs. For example, people who experience a combination of high support needs including those with mental health problems, substance misuse issues or learning difficulties. The challenges worsened when people present to us as being 'homeless tonight' when they have not sought help until they have reached crisis point.

The accommodation and support options for this group are limited which makes securing the right type of accommodation challenging.

A number of such cases are characterised by a person having a crisis that might necessitate a stay in an institutional setting. Then the individual is discharged to a situation of no accommodation. Often, this cycle is then repeated many times.

11. Identified gaps in provision

a) **Move on accommodation** – There is a real issue that we have identified with stakeholders in the availability of

accommodation to move people from a temporary arrangement to permanent housing. As a result temporary accommodation is used for longer than intended and limits opportunities to relieve homelessness for some households. This can mean a greater use of less appropriate accommodation such as the use of bed and breakfast. Move on accommodation can help move people through temporary accommodation, and provide them, with a more medium-term housing solution (often with a degree of support) in a central location. Efforts to secure a permanent housing solution can continue without the same pressure on temporary accommodation.

b) **Step down accommodation** for people with mental health problems. Step down accommodation is for people who no longer need to be in hospital but need a degree of support whilst they adjust to independent living. The local hospital has indicated that such accommodation could prove invaluable in addressing the needs of patients who don't need to stay in hospital but need a degree of support and access to services

immediately if someone's mental health condition worsens. There has also been a gap identified in the provision of short-term accommodation for people in mental health crisis – where existing accommodation including hostel accommodation or other forms of temporary accommodation is unsuitable or individuals face the danger of rough sleeping.

c) **Specialist accommodation**
Finding accommodation for those leaving prison is as much of an issue locally as it is in other parts of the country. Funding reductions to the probation service and funding reductions made by Norfolk County Council (Supporting People funding) mean there is currently no specialist accommodation or housing support services for people leaving prison. Information from the Ministry of Justice reveals that 16% of all prisoners are homeless, well above the average of 0.5% of the whole population. There is evidence that providing accommodation for people leaving custody can reduce re-offending.

d) **Younger persons' accommodation**
Young people, including care leavers, face difficulties in accessing private rented housing. This has become more apparent since changes to the welfare system. Young people can find themselves relocated to an area where they have no local connection which makes the problem even more challenging.

e) **Review of Social Housing Providers (RPs) Policies**
The policy approaches of Registered Providers can be part of the solution or part of the problem in terms of the barriers to tackling homelessness. Debt, eviction and allocations policies can be a barrier to some homeless households being able to secure accommodation.

A collective of housing associations with a progressive approach to their contribution to homelessness reduction has been formed – called 'Homes for Cathy'. Some actions have been identified in order to support this work.

12. Our strategy objectives

The review has enabled us to identify the following objectives, which cover the term of this strategy.

Each year we will produce an associated action plan to ensure progress is being made against our strategy objectives.

12.1. Prevention of homelessness

- a) Work very closely with the council's recently-commissioned homelessness prevention services to ensure that those at greatest risk of being homeless are assisted.

These services include:

- i. **Homegroup Community Support service** – to support those identified by the council as being at crisis point and at greatest risk in terms of losing a tenancy in the future.
- ii. **Benjamin Foundation** – floating support for young people/care leavers that have moved on from Right Tracks (young persons supported housing)
- iii. **Purfleet Trust** – who deliver intensive housing services, working with the

those people with the most complex needs. The council has successfully bid for funding the Government has made available to tackle rough sleeping (Rapid Rehousing Pathway). The £106K allocated for 2019/20 will fund 3 posts hosted by The Purfleet Trust. Two rough sleeping 'navigators' will help rough sleepers into settled accommodation, and support them in an intensive way to access health and other services they need. A further role will involve on-going support in a less intensive way to those re-settled in private rented accommodation to ensure their tenancy is sustained. The Purfleet Trust with the council is working with some private landlords to identify some properties for this purpose. Funding bid extension to central government

- iv. The coordination of work with these services will be achieved through regular meeting with locally based staff, and through the preparation of personalised housing plans by the council's Housing Options team.
- b) Ensure that the council's Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) resources are

used most effectively in order to prevent homelessness. Officers across housing options and housing benefit teams to work to recent government guidance that highlights that DHP should be an important part of homelessness prevention strategy. The use of this fund will include cases where there is a gap between rent and housing costs on an on-going basis identified at the commencement of a tenancy.

- c) Improve opportunities for access to the PRS for households into the private rented sector. Utilising loans offered to households for tenancy deposits / rent in advance. In the context of increasing difficulty accessing PRS, pilot and then evaluate the use of rent guarantees in circumstances where a tenancy support package is in place to give the best chances of success.
- d) Seek to review and challenge the approach that Registered Provider (RP) partners take to dealing with tenants and future tenants in the context of preventing homelessness. This is in the context of some of the RPs acknowledging that their own

practices can be part of the problem not the solution. Using the 'Homes for Cathy' Appendix A, housing association initiative, launched last year, the review will address the 9 commitments made by the associations signed up to this initiative. Broadland Housing association and Freebridge Community Housing are members of the initiative. Examples of practices that have already been initiated by some of the RPs involved include:-

- i. Transferring housing debt to a credit union (or similar) avoiding eviction and homelessness, but not avoiding the need to repay the debt
- ii. Rent arrears freezing in circumstances where payment and re-payment may not be sustainable and lead to further problems and threatened homelessness
- iii. Subsidised accommodation delivered at a loss for homeless households with no recourse to public funds
- e) Undertake awareness raising

activities in relation to both tenant and landlords respective rights and responsibilities. The rationale for this is that increased awareness can reduce the likelihood of conflict and a break down in the relationships between landlord and tenant that can lead to ending of a tenancy.

- i. Awareness activities will include tenancy forums and tenancy training for first time renters and landlord forums that will cover regulatory matters. In addition continue to raise awareness regarding the new duties on specified public bodies to refer cases of homelessness to the council.

12.2. Temporary Accommodation Options - Develop a hierarchy of different types of temporary accommodation

- a) Develop additional new temporary accommodation for families (to meet identified gaps in provision). Examine solutions that bring provision on line in a very timely way making use particularly of modern modular constructed (off-

site constructed) products that can be deployed and re- used flexibly.

- b) Ensure continuation of existing temporary accommodation provision in the context of re-modelling some schemes that have lost former revenue streams (reductions in Supporting People funding regime) and utilising the new Flexible Homelessness Prevention Fund (which replaced the management fee of the temporary Accommodation subsidy).
- c) Ensure that a minimum level of support is offered to those in temporary accommodation by putting in suitable commissioned support service arrangements that seek to help equip people with what they need to sustainably move on to more permanent housing. In doing this ensure that housing benefit system is used in the most effective way – maximising the use of additional 'Intensive Housing Management' housing benefit, and reducing levels of Housing Benefit Subsidy (-an element of housing benefit not recoverable from central government).

- d) Continue working with Freebridge Community Housing and other RPs on the provision of general needs temporary accommodation. This enables properties to be identified near to where families are living and are beneficial in reducing any associated impacts like changing schools or losing support networks.

12.3. Access to social housing – for those in most need

- a) Address issues of the under supply of new social housing. A review of planning policy mechanisms to deliver new affordable housing will take place late in 2019 in the context of the Local Plan review/review of the council's Affordable Housing Development policy. This could include for example allocating sites for new exceptions site housing, creating more certainty over delivery.
- b) Undertake a review of the Social Housing Allocation policy giving consideration to prevailing circumstances, equality of access, the views of Registered Providers of social housing.
- c) Seek to address issue of mismatch between stock profile and accommo-

dation needs including the needs of working age families and young people.

- d) Opportunities for new council owned registered provider of social housing to invest in new affordable housing.

12.4. Access to good quality private rented sector (PRS) housing

The council has an opportunity to both strategically enable the supply of private rented homes through the planning system, as well as directly deliver PRS through its major housing project.

- a) The council has sought to earmark 20% of new housing developed by the council to be transferred to a new council owned company to hold and manage as privately rented homes. The council's ambition is to deliver good quality homes and set the bar for high quality management services. The business plan of the new company sets out the objective of using long-term tenancies to provide stability for families wishing to rent.
- b) Continue to explore opportunities to deliver a private sector leasing (PSL) scheme – such a scheme can benefit

landlords particularly those with a relatively small portfolio) who can benefit from economies of scale under a pooled management/maintenance arrangement and tenants can benefit from the accreditation standards that would be a requirement of the scheme.

- c) It is a planning requirement to assess the needs of people who wish to privately rent their homes. The new National Planning Policy Framework and associated guidance supports central government ambitions to accelerate investment in purpose build to rent. The council (as part of the Local Plan review) will develop a policy to create the environment for investment in high quality, family friendly professionally managed PRS as described in the governments 'Build-to-rent Guidance' published in 2018.

12.5. Support Needs – Ensure appropriate support needs both:- accommodation based and non-accommodation based housing related support

- a) District Direct West Project – The service was initiated in response to

amongst other things increasing cases of people being discharged from hospital and being homeless that night. The pilot started in 2018 and has involved staff from Care and Repair and the Housing Options team working directly with members of the hospital discharge team at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has proved a success 12 months on. One of the drivers for this service was the situation of people being discharged with no home to go to. The early identification of housing issues (including the need for adaptations; disrepair; homelessness) at a point someone is admitted, rather than when they are leaving creates time for some planning and co-ordination of services. This valuable time is resulting in fewer inappropriate hospital discharge cases.

12.6. Accommodation based supported housing models to meet gaps in provision

- a) Consider and evaluate the provision of 'Housing First' models. These are models of housing that avoid transitions through different types of housing from temporary to permanent and seek to provide 'housing first' in the

first instance. Support appropriate to individual needs is then provided. This approach takes away one of the fundamental barriers in helping people with complex needs who have had a history of rough sleeping, as it takes away the uncertainty of securing accommodation straight away. This is an intensive and expensive model but evidence from other parts of the world and pilots in the UK has shown that it can work, particularly in relation to repeat homelessness amongst people with multiple disadvantage.

- b) Crisis House provision for homeless people with mental health issues needing immediate and very short term accommodation. This type of service can provide accommodation and support to people in order to prevent them deteriorating, and thereby avoiding hospital admission. Such approaches have been proven to be effective in other areas, and is something that mental health crisis team colleagues have raised with the council. This type of project is often delivered by registered providers or other voluntary sector organisations.

- c) Work with the existing providers including the Benjamin Foundation and YMCA on the development of recognition of the issues facing younger persons including those leaving institutional care/ prison. Developing shared living models including YMCA's 'transition model' that facilitate a mix of people who may be working.
- d) Work with the charity Break on a supported accommodation model for vulnerable care leavers

12.7. A new co-ordination role for the council

It should be clear that the success of the council's efforts in reducing homelessness is determined by the effectiveness of how it works with partners, and its role in helping co-ordinate activities. With a myriad of services developing the need for effective co-ordination couldn't be more important, and therefore objectives include:

- a. Dedicated role to include co-ordination of new services to ensure a 'joined up approach', and that the most vulnerable access support they

- need, and that best use is made of temporary accommodation options - operation al group to meet regularly including police and social services
- b. Strategy group formed – to include representatives of key housing and housing support providers to inform approaches that the council will take and provide opportunity to share and develop ideas for new services
 - c. Efforts to raise awareness of the ‘duty to refer’ (under the Homelessness Reduction Act), and monitor effectiveness of the new duty.
 - d. West Norfolk Early Help Hub – The help hub offers a referral route for professionals who are supporting individuals or families with emerging needs - these could include housing, debt, domestic abuse, or health/ well-being issues. The council together with other public sector organisations including the police, children’s and adults social services and voluntary sector partners have come together to form a new service. The service exists to help professionals involved in supporting individuals or families

in need find the most appropriate services that can help. The ‘Help Hub’ co-coordinator facilitates weekly meetings where cases referred in can be presented and decisions made on getting the right help in a timely way.

13. Housing advice and debt advice services

Any strategy to reduce homelessness needs to include the provision of high quality independent advice. The need for effective advice services, and access to such services needs to be seen in the context of a rapidly expanding private rented sector and demand for certain priced PRS homes out-stripping supply. It also needs to be viewed in the context of difficulties in accessing legal support through the legal aid system.

The council will procure an independent housing advice service for the area to give opportunity to timely advice where people face defending possession claims or cases relating to illegal eviction/protection from eviction. Alongside a housing advice service will be a debt advice service. Housing advice and debt issues can go hand in hand therefore we expect a degree of interaction between the two services.

The council has re-tendered in 2019 the advice and information services relating to housing and homelessness and debt and income maximisation. Shelter is delivering the housing advice service, and a new organisation ‘Money Advice Hub’ the debt management advice service. Both have a local presence and are focussed on making services highly accessible.

14. Eradicating rough sleeping

Rough sleeping is a dangerous and addressing it is a priority for central Government. The Government has committed to eradicate homelessness by 2027 and to halve it by 2022. The Government has made funding available in order that we in local government can see that ambition being met.

- a) Develop the newly commissioned Rough Sleeper outreach service. In response to a significant increase in rough sleeping in the town over the last 2-3 years a new outreach service was commissioned in 2018/19. The service currently delivered by Genesis seeks to engage with those known to be sleeping rough on streets or encampments, or at risk of sleeping rough -for example those using the Night Shelter, or people.

The aim of the service will be to :-	sleeper outreach' service. The aim of the service will be to :-	to primary and secondary mental health services, and will also
i. make the first contact and build trust	i. make the first contact and build trust	take a clinical role in assessing mental health and administering medication where appropriate
ii. address any immediate health issues including mental health issues	ii. address any immediate health issues including mental health issues	
iii. look at accommodation options, or other actions that can help people off the streets	iii. look at accommodation options, or other actions that can help people off the streets	v. The council will in line with Governments expectations ensure that it provision is made for those who are rough sleeping and need night shelter from a period of extreme cold weather. The council will provide an effective response to help people shelter from the elements during the winter months, in periods of extreme cold weather. Efforts will be made to engage with those known to be rough sleeping to encourage them to use emergency shelter provision. The council will support the work of the Night Shelter charity whose aims to continue to provide their services at 5 St Ann's Fort in the town for the winter months (Nov-March). The council will review the provision and seek further capacity in other locations with other providers if necessary. Funding opportunities will be identified from various sources particularly the
b) Record and maintain information on those rough sleeping (or suspected of rough sleeping) or those in danger of rough sleeping in conjunction with partner agencies – for the purpose of a co-ordinated plan to support individuals off the streets. This could take the form of temporary / or supported accommodation or a return to their area of origin.	iv. Aligned to the rough sleeping outreach team is a mental health nurse appointed in 2019. The aim of this role is to help those sleeping rough (or threatened with sleeping rough) get treatment for mental health issues. The link between homelessness and mental health issues is well documented. This provision helps meet an identified gap in services. The service facilitates referrals to the Norfolk Integrated Housing and Community Support service. This service exists to provide housing related support to those with a diagnosis of severe mental illness. It also facilitates direct referrals	
c) Promote the use of Street-Link in order that the wider public are familiar with reporting welfare concerns over those seen to be rough sleeping		
d) Engage with people who are found to be rough sleeping – individuals or encampments of people – primarily through the commissioned 'rough		

Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government.

15. The Council's strategic role in tackling homelessness and rough sleeping

In a strategic context the following activities will be undertaken;-

- a) Support the work of the council's Homelessness and Housing Supply task group. This group is examining other areas of council activity to ensure that all resources are being used effectively to prevent homelessness. The group will have a role in monitoring progress of this strategy.
- b) Given the nature of the council's activities in relation to homelessness prevention is very orientated around partnership working, and commissioning services with other stakeholders it is important that there is a commitment to an on-going engagement at a strategic level. This will ensure that decision making processes are effective
- c) Ensure a coordinated way to effectively

monitor the commissioned services established. Assess performance against agreed objective sand targets, and review strategic relevance of services.

- d) Promoting the 9 commitments within the Homes for Cathy initiative looking to change approaches from social landlords
- e) The Government introduced a new system in 2018 for collecting data from local housing authorities in relation to homelessness and housing advice activities. An investment has been made in the council's Housing Options IT platform that means that the data is collected and produced in the format required by government t in a fully automated way.

16. Cultural Changes

Before the Homelessness Reduction Act the majority of homeless applicants – single people were entitled to advice and assistance, however, their needs were often not assessed. Prevention activities locally were prioritised but they weren't everywhere. Housing authorities were seen as 'gate keepers' with assessment and

legal process driving activities. Nationally the relationship between council staff and applicants was characterised as being conflictual.

Under the new regime all eligible applicants have an assessment of their housing and support needs. The focus is on council staff and applicants working together (with a personalised plan being obligatory) to prevent or relive homelessness. This is a significant cultural change as well as legal change. There is a continued requirement for training and supervision to ensure this change is embedded.



17. Threats to delivery

We have identified actions and opportunities to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in this document, however there are factors outside of the control of the council that need to be considered in future planning and decision making. Highlighted below are some identified issues that could significantly impact on the council's activities and therefore the delivery of this strategy:

- Future reductions to funding from Norfolk County Council that contribute to the costs of some key borough council commissioned support services
- Uncertainty around future central government funding associated with homelessness prevention activities – including Flexible Homelessness Support Grant, Homelessness Prevention Grant, New Burdens
- funding for the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act
- Homes England funding to support the delivery of new build affordable/ social housing
- Local Housing Allowance - current freeze ends in April 2020. Uncertainty about the future policy direction and potential impact on private rented housing affordability
- The impact of any future Government's policy decision in connection with the use of section 21 notices (1988 Housing Act) given a recent consultation initiative and ministerial statement.
- Changes in housing market activity – including lower demand for market housing, or falling house prices could impact on the council's plans for direct new delivery of housing



King's Lynn Winter Night Shelter

18. Action Plan for 2019/2020

Time Scale Keys

Short = within 12 months

Medium = next 2-3 years

Long term = by end of plan i.e 5 years

Area of work	Objective	Action	By Who	By When	Progress	Time scale
Temporary accommodation	Develop a hierarchy of different types of temporary accommodation	Encourage partner organisations (including private sector partners as well as social sector) to bid for Government 'Move – on' accommodation fund - in response to the identified need for such accommodation, and the issue of hostel bed blocking.	Strategic Housing Team (SHT)	March 2021 latest for funding requirements	Potential site identified, RP engaged, and bid to Homes England being considered.	Short-Medium
		Develop temporary accommodation utilising modern modular/ park home style factory built housing units on Council owned land.	SHT & Property Services & Broadland Housing	Ongoing	Potential site identified, RP engaged and preparing planning application submission	Short-Medium
Support needs	Provide appropriate support needs both:- accommodation & non- accommodation based housing related support	Evaluate 'District Direct West' and make any recommendations for future operation – seek funding from CCG with a view to mainstreaming service.	Housing Options Team/ Care & Repair Team	Ongoing	CCG Executive Management Team has now approved funding for the District Direct Service. Time period uncertain.	Short
		In conjunction with NSFT develop and examine proposals for a Mental Health crisis House provision/ step down accommodation and move-on accommodation. Implementation subject to funding opportunities.	SHT	Ongoing	Early discussions with Mental Health Crisis Board have commenced. Working with NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups to deliver a Mental Health Housing Summit in the New Year	Medium Short-Medium
		Work with Broadland Housing association and any other partners on the potential for the provision of a Housing First initiative.	SHT	April 2020	No progress	Short
		Explore opportunities to assist people with no recourse to public funding and consider whether accommodation or support is required in order to meet the needs of this vulnerable group.	SHT	Ongoing	No progress	Short-Medium
		Forge closer links with organisations who can provide humanitarian help to people who have no recourse to public funds and improve data monitoring of this group.	SHT	Ongoing	No progress	Short-Medium

Time Scale Keys

Short = within 12 months

Medium = next 2-3 years

Long term = by end of plan i.e 5 years

18. Action Plan for 2019/2020 continued

Area of work	Objective	Action	By Who	By When	Progress	Time scale
Support needs	Provide appropriate support needs both:- accommodation & non- accommodation based housing related support	Secure the opportunity for an additional Domestic Violence refuge in the area.	SHT & RP	April 2020	Ongoing dialogue with RP	Short
		Work with Break to secure supported accommodation for vulnerable care leavers.	SHT	Ongoing	Early discussions commenced Sep 2019	Medium
		Work with the YMCA on their proposal for supported accommodation for young people including those leaving prison, and their transition model for young peoples shared housing.	SHT	Ongoing	Early discussions commenced Sep 2019	Short-Medium
Rough sleeping	Eradicate rough sleeping in the Borough	In conjunction with NSFT recruit and establish a mental health nurse outreach post.	Housing Options & SHT	End 2019	Post filled in summer 2019. In place until Mar 2021	Medium
		Promote use of Street- Link to increase public awareness on reporting welfare concerns surrounding rough sleepers.	Housing Options & SHT	April 2020	Ongoing (website updated & ongoing media alerts)	Short
		Take opportunities to bid for money from the MHCLG Rough Sleeping Task Force – under the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding bidding round.	Housing Options & partners	Ongoing	Submission made for funding in relation to severe weather provision. Awaiting outcome	Short
		Work with HAST, MHCLG, and Housing Justice in connection with funding opportunities for the Night Shelter and work connected with it.	SHT & Housing Options	Ongoing	Early discussions commenced Oct 19	Short
		Work with hostels/ housing support providers to ensure there are severe weather emergency beds in addition to the Night Shelter available given assessed demand.	SHT & Housing Options, RPs & Night Shelter	Ongoing	7 additional beds planned imminently for winter 19/20	Short
		Explore the potential to have wrap around shelter including day provision when the Night Shelter is closed.	SHT, Housing Options	Ongoing	Funding bid submitted to government for additional cold weather provision, awaiting outcome	Short

18. Action Plan for 2019/2020 continued

Time Scale Keys

Short = within 12 months

Medium = next 2-3 years

Long term = by end of plan i.e 5 years

Area of work	Objective	Action	By Who	By When	Progress	Time scale
Homelessness prevention	Introduce new measures to enhance existing homelessness prevention options	In partnership with Shelter and YMCA organise some training for prospective tenants on rights and responsibilities to avoid early tenancy failure. Explore landlord training at the same time.	Housing Options & Housing Standards	April 2020	No progress	Short
		Review commitments under flexible homelessness grant – ensuring that available resources are focussed on the most effective services.	SHT	Jan 2020	Early stages.	Short
		In respect of the need to access the private rented sector tenancies trial incentive initiatives – including rent guarantees in circumstances where appropriate tenancy support is put in place.	Housing Options & SHT	April 2020	No progress	Short
		Work with internal colleagues & RP Partners to identify measures to monitor the impacts of Universal Credit on housing debt and homelessness.	SHT, Revenue Services & RP partners	April 2020	No progress	Short-Medium term
Access to social housing	Improve access to social housing for those most in need	Ensure Local Plan review encompasses identified policy work in relation to affordable housing and build to rent housing – particularly new opportunities arising from changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.	SHT & Planning Policy Team, Local Plan task Group,	Jan 2020	Work has commenced. Housing needs assessment commissioned and first draft imminent.	Short
		Undertake a review of the social housing allocation policy and encourage key partners at the same time to review housing policies and stock profile to ensure social housing is used to benefit those who most need it.	SHT & Housing Provider Partners	April 2020	Borough Councils review of allocation policy commenced Nov 2019. Ongoing dialogue with RPs	Short
		As part of the review into the allocations policy, as well as in a wider sense consider the housing needs/ access to housing of young carers and their families.	SHT & Housing Provider Partners	April 2020	Borough Councils review of allocation policy commenced Nov 2019.	Short

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Time Scale Keys

Short = within 12 months

Medium = next 2-3 years

Long term = by end of plan i.e 5 years

18. Action Plan for 2019/2020 continued

Area of work	Objective	Action	By Who	By When	Progress	Time scale
Private Rented Sector	Increase the supply of good quality private rented sector (PRS) housing	Commence delivery of PRS via the Councils major development programme (20% of new housing developed by Council).	SHT, West Norfolk	June 2021	PRS Council Owned Company established in 2018. Business Plan has identified 179 units over next 3-5 years	Long term
		Explore and evaluate opportunities to establish a Private Sector Leasing Scheme.	SHT, RP partners	April 2021	No progress	Medium-Long term
86 Coordinating role	Achieve effective collaboration with partners and coordination of services	Establish a help hub – a service that assists professionals who are supporting households with complex needs by identifying suitable organisations interventions.	Housing Options, OPT, Children's & Adults Services	Ongoing	Service established in May 2019	Long term
		Work with Genesis Notting Hill to ensure a smooth transfer of their services including Park Road, Merchants Terrace and the rough sleep outreach service to a new provider following their decision to leave East Anglia.	SHT & Genesis & New Provider	Ongoing	Early dialogue has commenced	Short
		Establish and maintain a stakeholder group to help inform the strategy and update it.	SHT	Jan 2020 ongoing	Initial discussions with partners 2018/19. Formal group yet to be formed	Short
		Establish & maintain collaborative working group with RP partners to respond to the gaps identified.	SHT	Jan 2020 On going	No progress	Short
		“Work with local support services to develop a “No Wrong Door Policy” in order to ensure that where referrals are made to the wrong service, wherever possible, an appropriate service is identified and the referral is forwarded on”.	SHT	July 2020	No progress	Short-medium

18. Action Plan for 2019/2020 continued

Time Scale Keys

Short = within 12 months

Medium = next 2-3 years

Long term = by end of plan i.e 5 years

Area of work	Objective	Action	By Who	By When	Progress	Time scale
Strategic role	Provide on going commitment to engage at a strategic level	Participate in the Homes for Cathy regional working group led by Broadland Housing Group.	SHT & RP Partners	Ongoing	FCH board have agreed to review a set of policies including those relating to evictions for arrears and lettings in the context of Home for Cathy commitments	Short
		Ongoing monitoring of commissioned services & performance against agreed objectives and targets.	SHT	Ongoing	Quarterly Monitoring commenced for commissioned services	Short-medium
		Review of strategic relevance of services.	SHT	Yet to commence		Short-medium
		Review contractual arrangements for year 3 of the Home group Community support service.	SHT, NCC & internal	Jan 2020	No progress	

19. Monitoring and evaluation of the strategy and action plan

The effectiveness of this strategy is measured and monitored within the organisation, and beyond in a transparent way. In order to ensure this happens a set of measures have been selected that are detailed in **appendix B**. These are 12 measures that will be monitored continuously and will help understanding around trends and help us evaluate the effectiveness of our actions. Where appropriate these will be presented using info -graphics to aid interpretation

and will be useful for tracking changes over time. A suitable presentational format is currently being devised that will form the basis of future reporting.

We will review this action plan annually for the duration of the strategy. We will report our review findings to the council's Environment and Community Panel and update the strategy and plan as necessary to reflect any changing circumstances. New actions will be prepared in 2020/2021.

20. Appendices

A – The 'Homes for Cathy' 9 commitments

B – Homelessness Measures and explanations



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Affordable housing at Dewside, delivered by West Norfolk Housing and the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

Appendix A



9 Commitments:

1. To contribute to the development and execution of local authority homelessness strategies
2. To operate flexible allocations and eligibility policies which allow individual applicants unique sets of circumstances and housing history to be considered
3. To offer constructive solutions to applicants who aren't deemed eligible for an offer of a home
4. To not make any tenant seeking to prevent their homelessness, homeless
5. To commit to meeting the needs of vulnerable tenant groups
6. To work in partnership to provide a range of affordable housing options, which meets the needs of all homeless people in their local communities
7. To ensure that properties offered to homeless people should be ready to move into
8. To contribute the ending migrant homelessness in the areas Housing Associations operate
9. To lobby, challenge and inspire other to support ending homelessness

HS2			
Rationale	This is the most inappropriate and costly form of temporary accommodation, and our efforts should be focussed on minimising or avoiding its use altogether by working on delivering adequate provision of more suitable forms of temporary accommodation.		
Definition	Measured by the gross spend on B&B in each quarter. Some of the costs can be recovered through housing benefit payments. The 'net' figure is not used as it may be some time before these payments are received, and there is a degree of uncertainty over predicting the amount that could be recovered.		
Formula	Quarterly aggregate sum of spending on B&B in that period.		
Collection interval	Quarterly	Good performance	Low figure

HS3 No of households with a homelessness declaration			
Rationale	The purpose of this is to measure the numbers of households we deem likely to be homeless or threatened with homelessness as opposed to those who will contact us and receive some initial advice and assistance and not go beyond this level of interaction. This is important in determining the levels of homelessness, and consequently demands on the Council's housing services; and can help inform resource planning and prioritisation.		
Definition	This is the point where a household that has approached the Council is deemed by the Council to be in circumstances that warrant a homelessness assessment - because there is sufficient reason to believe they are homeless or threatened with homelessness. From this point onwards the case is on a statutory footing with a detailed processes to follow.		
Formula	The aggregate number of cases captured through the homelessness reduction software system		
Collection interval	Quarterly	Good performance	Low figure

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HS4 No of households prevented from becoming homeless for a minimum of 6 months			
Rationale	Preventing homelessness is a key area of focus - prevention is deemed successful where it last for six months or more. The direction of this quarterly measure will indicate to a degree the effectiveness of the prevention tools and activities used by the Council.		
Definition	This measure is one that is captured directly by the governments H-Click data system. It is determined through the answers to a number of questions that are covered during the assessment process, and captured on the homelessness reduction software. It does not seek to measure individual prevention cases into the future - monitoring prevention beyond 6 months, but rather is an outcome measure after the prevention activity. For example where a negotiation with a landlord has resulted in the grant of a new tenancy and it is understood that there is no intention for the landlord to sell their property this would be considered a successful prevention outcome and would be counted.		
Formula	This is captured directly from the homelessness reduction software		
Collection interval	Quarterly	Good performance	High figure

HS5 No of households accepted as homeless with a need to be rehoused (Main housing duty)			
Rationale	The Homelessness Reduction act introduced a number of new duties including the 'prevention' and 'relief' duties. The main or full duty under previous legislation however remains. The number of households who are homeless and owed this main duty has been a key measure of homelessness in the past. As the duty is harder to meet i.e. securing appropriate accommodation (social housing or private rented for a minimum of 2 years) for increasing numbers of households an impact of the new legislation will be to aim to prevent homelessness in the first place through early interventions, and avoid this duty being owed.		
Definition	Households who are owed a main duty are those eligible for assistance, in priority need (a vulnerable category), and unintentionally homeless. A main duty is owed at the end of the prevention and relief duties. A positive decision that a main duty is owed cannot be made in prevention or relief duty periods.		
Formula	A main duty decision will be recorded and this measure automatically generated from the Homelessness Reduction software		
Collection interval	Quarterly	Good performance	Low figure

Appendix B continued

HS6 % of cases who were offered a prevention and relief duty who remain homeless and are owed no further duty.			
Rationale	<p>The rationale of this measure is to seek to understand the effectiveness of greater involvement with all categories of homeless households that has arisen from the new legislation effective from 2018. Working to prevent homelessness and relieve homelessness are now on a statutory footing. This measure seeks to understand what proportion of these cases remain homeless despite the efforts made. This will help analyse effectiveness of intervention, but also the degree to which existing provision of local accommodation and support services meet the needs of these households. ('Homelessness prevention' means providing people with the ways and means to address their housing and other needs to avoid homelessness.</p> <p>'Homelessness relief' is where an authority has been unable to prevent homelessness but helps someone to secure accommodation including temporary accommodation, even though the authority is under no statutory obligation to do so.)</p>		
Definition	<p>New legislation in 2018 introduced a 'prevention' duty (56 days) and a 'relief' duty (56 days). This measures the percentage of those owed these new duties who after both periods totalling 112 days remain homeless despite the involvement of officers at the Council.</p>		
103 Formula	<p>This will be generated through a Business Intelligence tool - part of the homelessness reduction software</p>		
Collection interval	Quarterly	Good performance	Low figure

HS7 No of rough sleepers			
Rationale	<p>Rough sleeping is a dangerous activity, the most extreme form of homelessness, and a highly visible sign of it when people are in town centres. This area has seen a significant increase in rough sleeping, and if there is an ambition to tackle the problem, it is important that evidence is collected to assess trends, and the effectiveness of interventions made.</p>		
	<p>The Government requires Council's to undertake a count of rough sleepers once a year in autumn. The arrangements for this count are very prescribed, and clearly there are questions of its usefulness based on frequency and definitions used. People who have no accommodation who are temporarily in hospital or sheltering in a night shelter are not included for the purposes of the count. A more comprehensive record of rough sleepers or those that are at risk of rough sleeping will be maintained on an on-going basis and reported quarterly.</p>		
Formula	<p>Data will be collected from a number of different sources including housing support providers, hostel providers, and the rough sleeper outreach team. Whilst this will provide a source of information for wider purposes, for this monitoring simply the numbers recorded will be supplied. This will be based on snapshot at the end of each reporting period. There will not be an aggregate count for each period.</p>		
Collection interval	Quarterly - snapshot from spreadsheet not aggregated	Good performance	Low figure

HS8 No in temporary accommodation - bed and breakfast			
Rationale	<p>The use of temporary accommodation is important in relieving homelessness and meeting statutory duties. There are several different forms of temporary accommodation including bed and breakfast type accommodation. This is the least appropriate type and we aim to use such accommodation as a last resort. It is often small, with no kitchen and provision for preparing meals. It is expensive and there are cost implications for the Council. It is unlawful to use such accommodation to house families for more than six weeks.</p>		
Definition	<p>This measures the number of households that have stayed in B&B during the period. It does not measure nights stayed or costs incurred - these are captured in other sources of information. Bed & Breakfast type accommodation is characterised by being paid for nightly and not having any arrangements for cooking / food storage and preparation.</p>		
Formula	<p>This will be generated through a Business Intelligence tool - part of the homelessness reduction software</p>		
Collection interval	Quarterly	Good performance	Low figure

HS9 No of social housing lettings - against a baseline			
Rationale	<p>For vulnerable people and people on very low incomes the opportunity to access social housing is important for avoiding homelessness, as well as providing security of tenure, and a home that is suitable for their needs and is affordable. An adequate supply of social housing (existing and new) is important to help reduce homelessness and meet the wider obligation to plan for and meet the needs of people in the area who cannot afford a market housing solution to meet their housing needs</p>		
Definition	<p>The number of social housing lettings through the Council's Choice Based Lettings system (West Norfolk Homechoice)</p>		
Formula	<p>This figure is generated through the Choice Based Lettings software</p>		
Collection interval	Quarterly	Good performance	High figure

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024

Borough Council of
King's Lynn &
West Norfolk





Volunteers at King's Lynn Winter Night Shelter painting the stairsway

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024

Borough Council of
King's Lynn &
West Norfolk





Homelessness: A Review

February 2024
Draft

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Homelessness Review provides an overview of homelessness experience and provision in King's Lynn and West Norfolk. It looks at:

- The **current and future levels of homelessness** in the borough,
- The **available provision of services** for people experiencing or facing homelessness,
- The **ability of such services to meet current and future demand**.

The review has been carried out in the autumn and winter of 2023/24, with extensive input from council officers, partner agencies and people with lived experience of homelessness.

The council last produced a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in January 2020. By law, the council is required to produce a renewed strategy every five years. The need for a refreshed strategy is timely, given the acute pressures faced by homeless households and the services supporting them. The Homelessness Review lays the foundation for developing an effective strategy: led by data and supported by professional and lived experience.

KEY FINDINGS

Current homelessness trends

The council reports that homelessness presentations, per quarter, have doubled during the lifetime of the last strategy. Data shows no single cause for this increase, but shows an increase in:

The proportion of homelessness presentations arising from **Private Rented tenancies** ending.

The proportion of homelessness presentations arising from **people fleeing domestic abuse**.

The proportion of **households with children** making homeless presentations.

The proportion of homelessness households where **at least one member is in employment**.

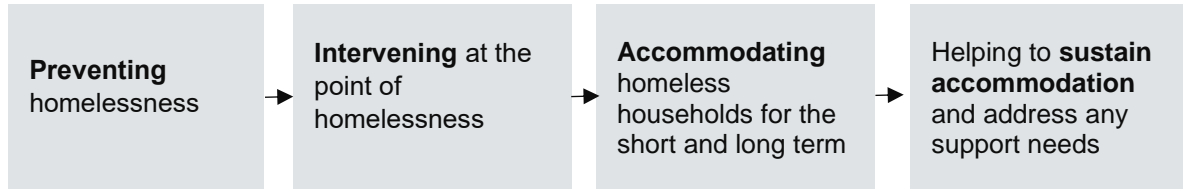
Data shows that the council's effectiveness in preventing homelessness has improved since the publication of the last strategy, but has ebbed away over the last two years, due (in part) to cost-of-living pressures and the overheating of the private rented sector (PRS).

The council provided a substantial data set towards the review; partners were able to identify trends that corroborated this data. They also reported that homeless applicants displayed a greater level of support needs – particularly, mental health and substance misuse. Council officers reported difficulties accessing adequate levels of support for such applicants.

The council has gathered data over the last three years to track its progress towards ending rough sleeping. Council data shows that the level of people found sleeping rough in any given month, since Autumn 2020, has been steady, with some seasonal fluctuations. The proportion of people sleeping rough in the borough (per 100,000 population) is lower than most other local authorities in the region. Nevertheless, partners describe a cohort of people who are neither sleeping rough nor adequately housed, who need support to find and sustain accommodation.

Current provision of services

Within the borough, the council and partners provide a wide range of support to people who are homeless or facing homelessness. This includes services aimed at:



Since the publication of the last strategy, local provision has been influenced by:

The COVID-19 pandemic and 'Everyone In'	including a funded programme to (1) bring people sleeping rough into a place of safety and (2) assist them to move into suitable longer-term housing.
A period of relative funding stability	with core government-funded services benefitting from three years of financial support.
A period of wider economic instability	resulting in food and fuel poverty and an overheated PRS market.
The council's own strategic planning	which meant that the council was able to deliver programmes such as Housing First rapidly, once funding was available.

Evaluation of services

The council talked to external partners and to homeless applicants to evaluate the strength of the services provided by the partnership. The council has used the following 'pillars', in line with government strategies and national good practice, in its evaluation:

- **Prevention** of homelessness and rough sleeping.
- **Intervention** to assess and accommodate people without a home.
- **Accommodation** that is suitable and sustainable for all applicants.
- **Recovery** to address underlying support needs.
- **Systems support** to provide processes and partnerships to underpin the above.

The evaluation included a detailed questionnaire sent to partners, as well as group sessions with service providers and service users. A more detailed evaluation can be found in section 5, but some of the key strengths, challenges and gaps are as follows:

Strengths	Challenges	Gaps
Partnership working to prevent homelessness, with emphasis on customer empowerment.	Prevention does not always happen early enough, limiting chances of success.	Limited access to financial tools and resources including staffing.
Effective outreach service. Diverse 'off-the-street' offer for people sleeping rough.	Overuse of expensive bed and breakfast / nightly-paid accommodation.	Lack of specialist mental health and substance use outreach.
Good relationship with some private sector (PRS) landlords; Housing First for higher needs.	Lack of social / affordable accommodation, partly due to high levels of void properties.	Access to PRS (including cost); insufficient high needs housing e.g. Housing First.
A strong focus on wellbeing. Some good links with services such as Steam Café.	Mixed levels of effectiveness with clients, especially those with higher support needs.	Lack of "in-tenancy support" and recovery specialisms such as Dual Diagnosis.
A flexible culture with an emphasis on communication and information sharing.	Recruitment and retention of staff. Effective "join-up" of multiple working groups. Further embedding of trauma-informed practice.	Co-production with people with lived experience. Consortium funding bids.

While some service users were able to speak positively about the help they received, others expressed difficulties accessing homelessness advice and support throughout their journey. While the council aims to continually improve its service, respondents perceived a lack of empathy at times, as well as difficulties getting through to their adviser in periods of sickness and short staffing.

More widely, respondents expressed concerns with accessing treatment for substance misuse, transport links to and from their accommodation, and a degree of mistrust in the wider 'system'.

Future demands and trends

The 2024-2029 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be implemented during a period of uncertainty. Food and fuel prices remain high; the private rented sector continues to shrink; and the borough continues to struggle to attract investment in social and affordable housing.

However, there is considerable opportunity ahead: a new local administration, a possible new national government, legislative changes (such as reforms to private renting and supported housing) and the first signs that the PRS market may be starting to cool. The West Norfolk Housing Company and West Norfolk Property Company, both wholly owned by the council, are well-placed to capitalise on future changes to the local property market.

The Strategy will need to be agile: meeting the changing needs of homeless households and capitalising on potential opportunities – a deliberate set of actions to give the partnership the best chance of success.

Next steps

The review marks the end of the first stage of the strategy process. The council will lead the process of developing the 2024-2029 strategy, but anyone in King's Lynn and West Norfolk is welcome to contribute ideas and resources towards its success. The council aims to approve the new strategy in September 2024, with a launch event to be held shortly afterwards.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why are we doing this?

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, all housing authorities are required by law to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy once every five years. Before publishing the strategy, housing authorities have the power to carry out a review of homelessness services in their district. The Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk ("The council" or "BCKLWN") published its last strategy in January 2020. It aims to publish its next strategy document by the autumn of 2024.

More importantly, the council is conducting this review because so much has changed in the last five years. The UK has left the EU, lived through a global pandemic and responded to both the war in Ukraine and the crisis in Afghanistan. In terms of homelessness: presentations to the council's housing needs service have doubled since the last strategy was published.

The council's Corporate Strategy¹ projects a vision of the borough as "a place where people can thrive". The council will "support the health and wellbeing of our communities, help prevent homelessness, assist people with access to benefits advice and ensure there is equal access to opportunities." To achieve this, residents need housing that is safe, affordable and sustainable.

1.2 What do we mean by homelessness?

The Housing Act 1996 defines a person as homeless if they:

- have no accommodation available to occupy, or
- are at risk of violence or domestic abuse, or
- have accommodation but it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy it, or
- have accommodation but cannot secure entry to it, or
- have no legal right to occupy their accommodation, or
- live in a mobile home or houseboat but have no place to put it or live in it.²

During the consultation sessions carried out as part of this review, one participant described homelessness as a "wicked problem" – that is, a social or cultural problem that is difficult to resolve because of its complex and interconnected nature. "The term 'wicked' in this context is used, not in the sense of evil, but rather as an issue highly resistant to resolution."³ Homelessness is a problem that the council seeks to resolve in partnership, because no agency possesses the skills and resources to resolve homelessness on its own.

1.3 What does the review cover?

In line with the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002, the review covers:

- the levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness in the borough,
- the activities which are carried out for any purpose (towards the prevention and relief of homelessness),

¹ [Our priorities | Corporate Strategy 2023 - 2027 | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)

² [Shelter Legal England - Legal definition of homelessness and threatened homelessness - Shelter England](#)

³ [Tackling wicked problems : A public policy perspective - APSC \(archive.org\)](#)

- the resources available to the council, the social services authority for their district, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons for such activities⁴.

The review seeks to identify useful practice, gaps, challenges, opportunities and threats within the borough. **However, the review does not make any recommendations** at this stage as to *how* to address the issues raised.

The review is like the first act of a play, with participants invited to help write the next act – the council’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029.

1.4 How was the review carried out?

The review consisted of the following:

- **Data analysis: the council.** The council’s Housing Needs Service records the numbers and demographics of individuals presenting for homelessness assistance. These figures are submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) every quarter. A dataset was produced, using records gathered from April 2019 to June 2023. The council has used this as the basis for much of [section 3](#).
- **Data analysis: partners.** The council also obtained data gathered by its partners, in the form of regular monthly reports and bespoke datasets.
- **Questionnaire: partners.** The council produced a questionnaire, circulated to partners. A reformatted version of this questionnaire is included in Appendix One.
- **Group sessions.** The council facilitated group sessions to review its homelessness provision with over 40 attendees, including:
 - Internal partners (council’s housing option team; other council departments)
 - External partners (accommodation, support, health)
 - People with lived experience of homelessness (single households; households with children. 14 attendees across two sessions).
- **Individual meetings.** The council met with various partner agencies over the course of the review period and has included information gathered from notes taken during these meetings.

The council would like to thank the following external partners for their assistance in carrying out the review:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Benjamin Foundation – Sustainable Housing Partnership Service (SHPS) • Broadland Housing Group • Change, Grow, Live (CGL) • Freebridge Community Housing • Home Group • King’s Lynn Night Shelter • Leeway Domestic Abuse and Advice Services • Money Advice Hub | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norfolk County Council Children’s Services • Norfolk Integrated Housing and Community Support Services (NIHCSS - part of Together UK). • Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust • The Purfleet Trust • Shelter Norfolk • YMCA Norfolk |
|---|--|

⁴ [Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities - Chapter 2: Homelessness strategies and reviews - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100000/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities-chapter-2-homelessness-strategies-and-reviews-guidance-gov.uk)

The council gives particular thanks to the Purfleet Trust and Freebridge Community Housing for hosting sessions for people with lived experience of homelessness, as well as those attending for sharing their personal experiences of homelessness.

1.5 Reviewing the review – what did we miss?

Although the council is grateful to its partners for their support, there are areas where we would have benefited from a greater level of input and insight.

In terms of **health and social care**, the review would have benefited from more robust data in terms of numbers of people encountering, for example, emergency medical provision, or adult social care, with a homelessness issue flagged.

As the councils develop its strategy, it intends to engage with **the private sector** - local landlords, businesses, and other organisations – to establish what part they may wish to play in the council's vision for reducing and ending homelessness. The council hears regularly that private rented sector (PRS) landlords are selling their properties but lacks local data to establish their reasons for doing so.

The council were incredibly grateful for the people who participated in our **service user** sessions, for sharing their current and past experiences, including accessing homelessness services. Nevertheless, the council received feedback that the sessions could have been advertised more widely, attracting more attendees.

2. ABOUT KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK – IN BRIEF

2.1 Geography

King's Lynn and West Norfolk marks its 50th anniversary as a district this year. It is a largely rural local authority area: the second largest by area in England. It contains the two market towns of King's Lynn and Downham Market, the coastal resort of Hunstanton, and many coastal and countryside villages. As highlighted in the recent Corporate Peer Challenge report⁵, the borough has "enormous potential" with "beautiful sandy beaches [and a] thriving tourist economy".

King's Lynn and Downham Market (as well as the village of Watlington) are connected to London and Cambridge by train. The borough is served by a network of bus routes that has grown in recent years, with the locally owned Lynx Bus⁶ and Go to Town⁷ services having been established in the last decade.

Much of the borough is low-lying, with land having been reclaimed from the sea in previous centuries. According to a National Audit Office report, over 19,000 properties were at risk of flooding in 2020⁸. This has had a knock-on impact on the cost of building and insuring houses, and on the availability of suitable land for development.

2.2 Demographics

The borough was home to 154,300 people as at the 2021 Census⁹. The population grew by 4.7% in ten years, compared with 8.3% regionally and 6.6% nationally.

In this period, the borough's population aged significantly. There was an 18% increase in the number of people aged over 65, with the average age in the borough increasing to 47 from 45. This has had an impact on the size of the labour market locally, as well as the proportion of the population who require additional care. The Census is unclear as to how comparatively healthy the borough is – 44% of the population report "very good" health (well below average) but 37% report "good" health (well above average).

2.3 Economics

The 2021 Census reports a significant increase in the proportion of people renting privately. The figure of 18.8% has risen from 14.7% in 2011. As the next section shows, this has contributed towards a significant 'pressure point' in terms of the numbers of private renters subsequently facing homelessness. The borough is home to a higher-than-average proportion of people who own their homes outright (41.6%), perhaps reflecting the proportion of people who either retire to the borough or who stay local upon retirement.

The last ten years has seen a slight reduction in the proportion of people employed in the borough – 52.8%, down from 53.8%.

⁵ [LGA Corporate Peer Challenge: Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk | Local Government Association](#)

⁶ [Home | Lynx \(lynxbus.co.uk\)](#)

⁷ [News | Go To Town \(gtt-online.co.uk\)](#)

⁸ [Managing flood risk \(nao.org.uk\)](#)

⁹ [How life has changed in King's Lynn and West Norfolk: Census 2021 \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

The borough is rated as the 134th most deprived local authority – just outside the top third. 56% of households are reported to be deprived in at least one dimension.¹⁰

One of the borough's key areas of deprivation is its level of academic attainment. 23.4% of residents hold no formal qualifications (one of the highest proportions in the country); 23.3% hold a qualification at level 4¹¹ or above (one of the lowest in the country)¹². Again, this has an impact on the ability of local employers to recruit and retain skilled staff.

Ultimately, King's Lynn and West Norfolk is a borough of contrasts. While seven of its wards are in the 20% least deprived, nine are in the 20% most deprived – with some of these wards neighbouring each other¹³.

¹⁰ [Household deprivation - Census Maps, ONS](#)

¹¹ Equivalent to the first year of an undergraduate degree

¹² [Highest level of qualification - Census Maps, ONS](#)

¹³ Due to limitations in the data gathered, we were unable to provide a ward-by-ward breakdown of the proportions of people homeless or under threat of homelessness.

3. CURRENT AND FUTURE LEVELS OF HOMELESSNESS

3.1 Volume of approaches

Since the publication of the last Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, demand for the council’s homelessness service has increased significantly:

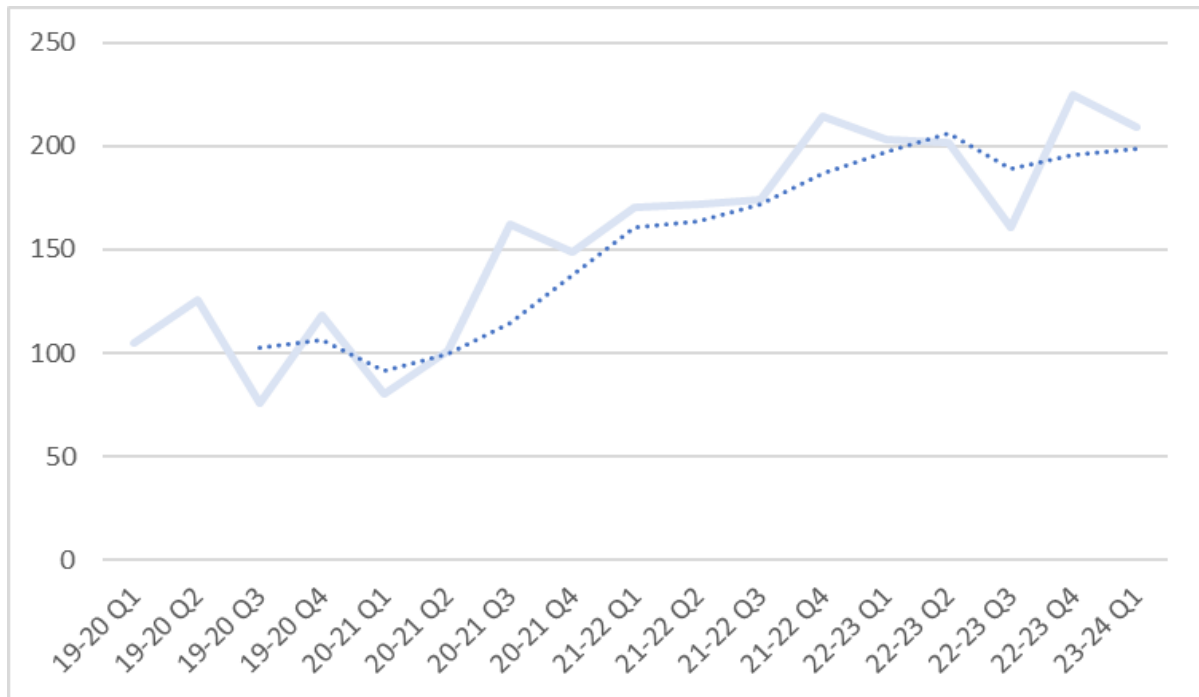


Fig 1. Homelessness applications (by quarter, with three-month trendline) made to BCKLWN. April 2019 to June 2023. BCKLWN

The trendline in Figure 1 shows:

- A relatively steady level of approaches up to the spring of 2020 (coinciding with the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic) – approx. 100 per quarter,
- A steady but significant increase in approaches over the subsequent two years,
- A ‘new normal’ of around 200 approaches per quarter from Spring 2022.

3.2 Reason for approaches

The council records data of the reason for households requiring homelessness assistance. This information is submitted every quarter to DLUHC and published alongside other authorities’ data. The last four years’ data demonstrates a shift in the proportion of homeless households seeking assistance for various reasons:

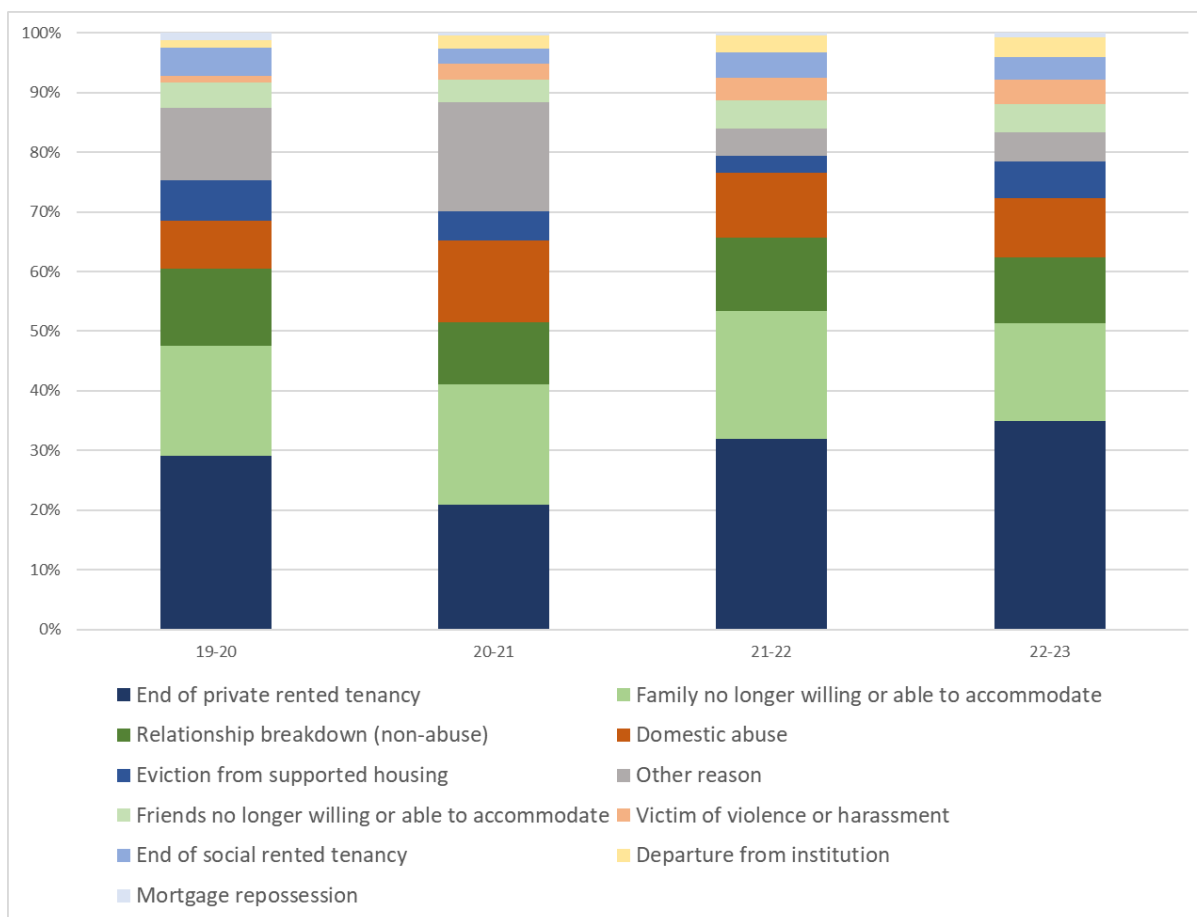


Fig 2. Reason for homelessness approach, by financial year – April 2019 to March 2023. BCKLWN

Considering the increase by 100% in homelessness presentations, one might expect a single driving force behind the change. However, the top three reasons for approach are the same in 2022/23 as they were in 2019/20.

Nevertheless, the data highlights the following trends:

- **End of private rented tenancy:** the proportion of presentations arising from the end of PRS tenancies increased by over 50% in two years. Contributory factors include:
 - **Demand:** as mortgage rates have increased, the ability of renters to buy their own properties has decreased, thus increasing demand for PRS housing. According to Rightmove¹⁴, “as at October 2023, the number of enquiries from would-be tenants has more than tripled to 25 [per property] from eight at this time in 2019”.
 - **Supply:** At the same time, the national supply of PRS properties has reduced by 35%. Landlords cite “government sentiment towards the industry (48%), rising taxation (41%) and increasing compliance requirements (33%)”¹⁵ as key reasons for selling their properties. Anecdotally, local private landlords have expressed concern about the unintended consequences of the Renters Reform Bill¹⁶, including the abolition of ‘no-fault’

¹⁴ [Rental-Trends-Tracker-Q3-2023-FINAL.pdf \(rightmove.co.uk\)](#) . NOTE – the Q4 report indicates a slight reduction in demand going into 2024 – 11 per property compared with 14 the previous year – but still almost triple the 2019 figure.

¹⁵ [Rental Trends Tracker: Q2 2023 - Rightmove Hub](#)

¹⁶ [Guide to the Renters \(Reform\) Bill - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Section 21 notices. West Norfolk remains an attractive borough for retirees and second homeowners¹⁷, impacting on supply.

- **Accessibility:** It has become progressively harder for households to find and sustain PRS accommodation. Local Housing Allowance (LHA) has been frozen since 2020¹⁸. At the time of writing, there were no family properties advertised in King’s Lynn¹⁹ at LHA rate or below, and just one property within £100 of LHA rate.
- **Domestic abuse:** the proportion of homelessness applications arising from domestic abuse has increased from 8% to 10%:
 - Statistics suggest that whilst the reporting of domestic abuse *crimes* has increased since 2020²⁰, the prevalence of domestic abuse *instances* has reduced from 6.1% of the population to 5.1% in the same period²¹.
 - During this period, the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act has given “those who are homeless as a result of domestic abuse priority need for accommodation secured by the local authority” – so that victim-survivors²² of domestic abuse can access safe accommodation more easily.
 - The new legislation, as well as the introduction of new support services, aims to make services for victim-survivors more accessible.
- **Relationship breakdowns:** the proportion of homelessness applications arising from families being unwilling or unable to accommodate has reduced from 18.5% to 16.5%. Similarly, applications relating to relationship breakdowns have reduced from 13% to 11%.

Although no comparative data is available, one in six homelessness applicants made two or more applications in the period April 2020 to June 2023. One in 27 applicants made three or more applications in the same period. This demonstrates that there is still a cohort of households who experience homelessness repeatedly.

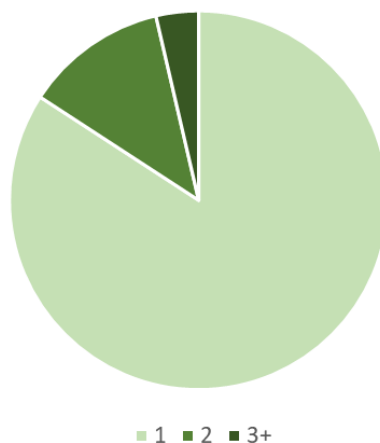


Fig 3. Number of presentations (by NI number of main applicant) – April 2019 to March 2023. BCKLWN

¹⁷ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/dvc1589/secondhomes/index.html>

¹⁸ [Local Housing Allowance | Local Housing Allowance | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/Local-Housing-Allowance) shows live LHA rates, which are due to increase in April 2024.

¹⁹ [Properties To Rent in King's Lynn | Rightmove](https://www.rightmove.co.uk/property-for-rent/details/123456789) – search identified one two-bed apartment at £75 above LHA rate, and no other 2/3/4 properties within a 5-mile radius of King’s Lynn within £100 of the current LHA rates.

²⁰ [Domestic Abuse Statistics UK • NCDV](https://www.ncdv.org.uk/)

²¹ [Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/domestic-abuse-prevalence-and-trends)

²² Note – this report uses the term victim-survivor to describe both “someone still recovering from the harm that has come to them [from domestic abuse] and “someone who has gone through the recovery process”. Whilst other organisations may separate the two terms “victim” and “survivor”, the term “victim-survivor” reflects the reality that people who have experienced domestic abuse may be both a victim and a survivor concurrently. This is in line with terminology used by the Norfolk Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.

3.3 Timing and outcome of approaches

Council data suggests an increase since the last strategy in terms of the proportion of people seeking help prior to becoming homeless:

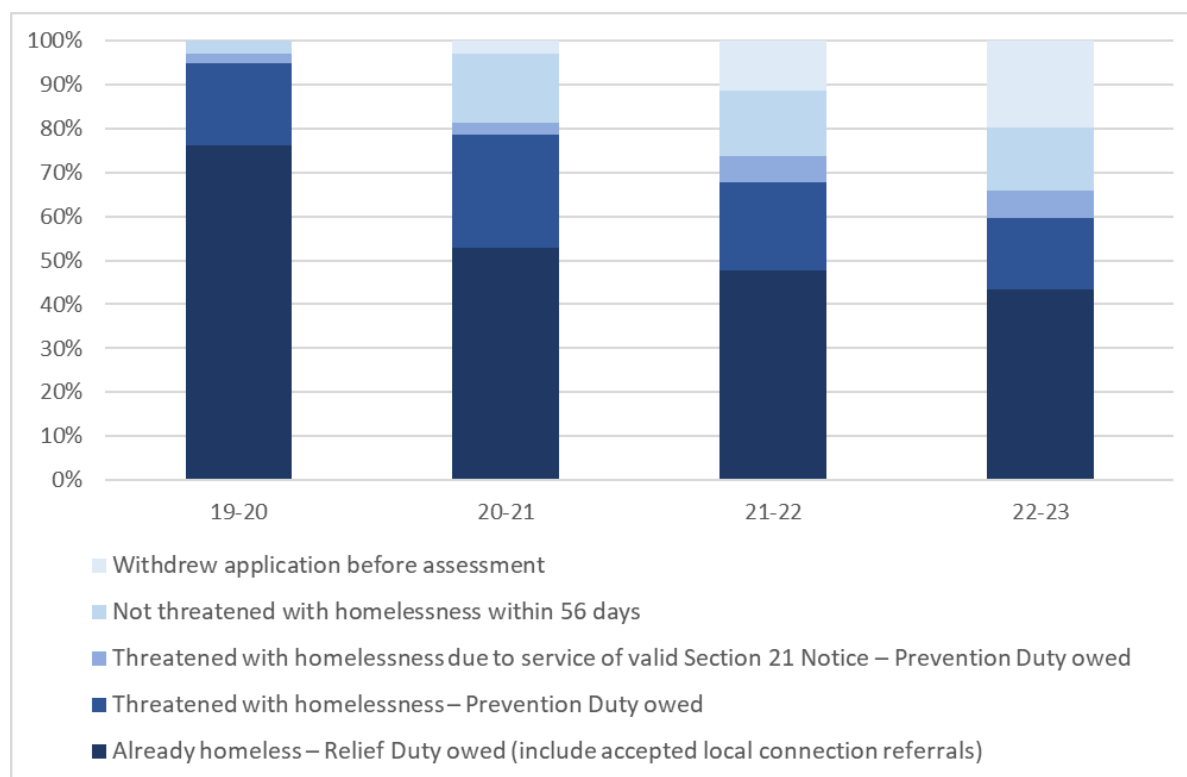


Fig 4. Duty owed at presentation – April 2019 to March 2023. BCKLWN

Figure 4 (above) shows a reduction in the proportion of people approaching as ‘already homeless’ from 76% to 43%. This might reflect the partnership’s focus on homelessness prevention. However, the proportion of people (20% in 22/23) withdrawing their applications before assessment needs investigating further. The above table highlights the growing proportion of homeless applications due to a valid Section 21 notice²³ being issued.

The council’s ability to prevent homelessness has fluctuated over the term of the strategy. Figure 5 (overleaf) shows a significant increase in the proportion of prevention outcomes (from 38% to 67%) between 2019/20 and 2020/21, but a steady reduction since then. This could be due to the following:

- The uplift in LHA rates in April 2020²⁴ along with the national Everyone In²⁵ initiative, which gave local authorities improved tools to prevent homelessness.
- The commissioning of homelessness prevention services locally (see [section 4](#)).
- In the last two years, the ‘overheating’ of the PRS market ([as outlined in 3.2](#)) and cost-of-living crisis, which made it more difficult for households to avoid homelessness
- The doubling in homelessness presentations, which made it harder for the council’s housing options team to work preventatively.

²³ [Evicting tenants in England: Section 21 and Section 8 notices - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/evicting-tenants-in-england-section-21-and-section-8-notice)

²⁴ [Local Housing Allowance \(LHA\) rates applicable from April 2020 to March 2021 - amendment as instructed by The Social Security \(Coronavirus\) \(Further Measures\) Regulations 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-housing-allowance-lha-rates-applicable-from-april-2020-to-march-2021-amendment-as-instructed-by-the-social-security-coronavirus-further-measures-regulations-2020)

²⁵ [Coronavirus: Support for rough sleepers \(England\) - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-only/housing-and-communities/sub-committees/coronavirus-support-for-rough-sleepers-in-england/)

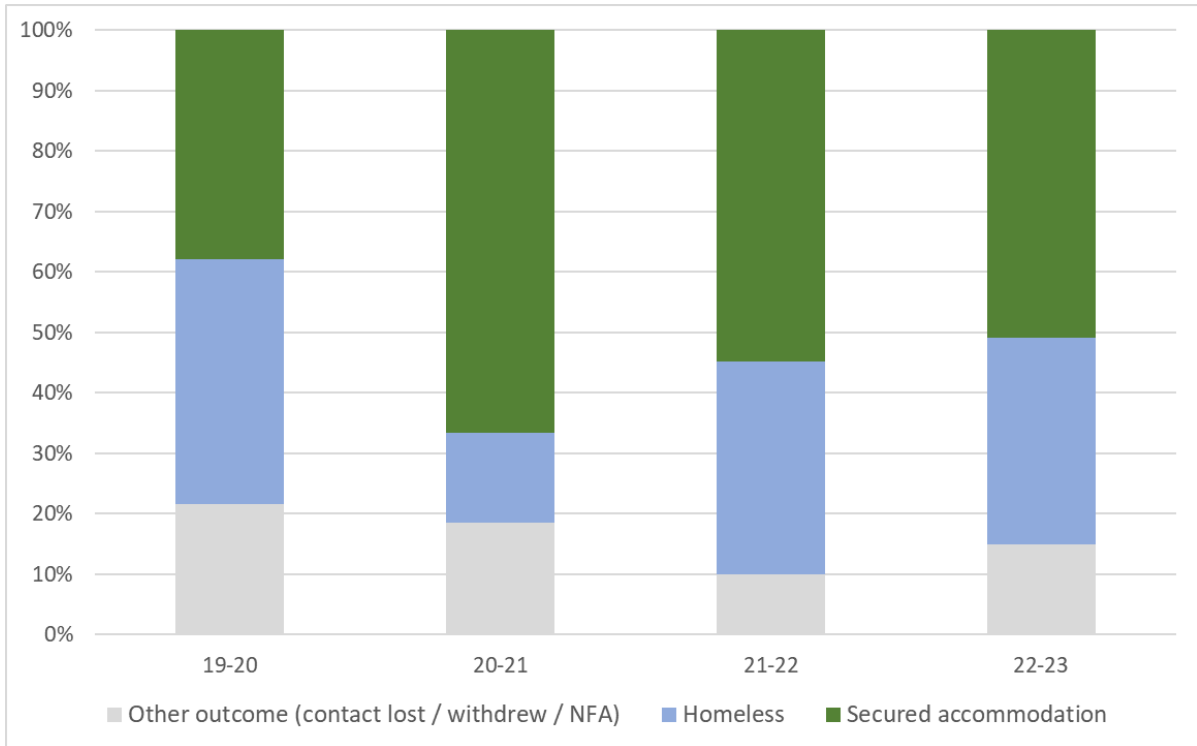


Fig 5. Outcome of Prevention Duty – April 2019 to March 2023. BCKLWN

3.4 Demographics of approaches

Council data has identified some changes in the demographics of homeless households. These include:

- **A higher proportion of families approaching:** Figure 6 (below) shows that households with children comprised 39% of applications in 22/23, compared with 28% in 2019/20:

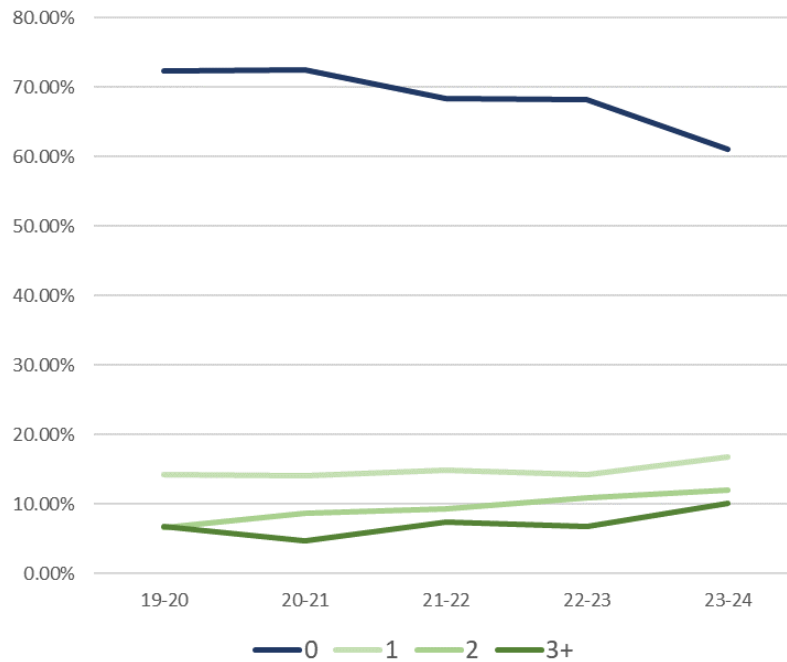


Fig 6. Number of children per homeless applicant – April 2019 to March 2023. BCKLWN

The data did not identify the reason for this change. Possible factors include an increase in cases arising from domestic abuse and the end of PRS tenancies, as well as improved services for single applicants since Everyone In (see [section 4](#) for further details).

The data shows an increase in the proportion of female applicants²⁶ (53% in 22/23 compared with 48% in 2019/20) and the proportion of female homelessness applicants with children (28% in 22/23 compared with 23% in 2019/20).

- **A lower proportion of young people approaching:** Figure 7 (below) shows that under-25s comprised 17% of applicants in 2022/23, compared with 24% in 2019/20:

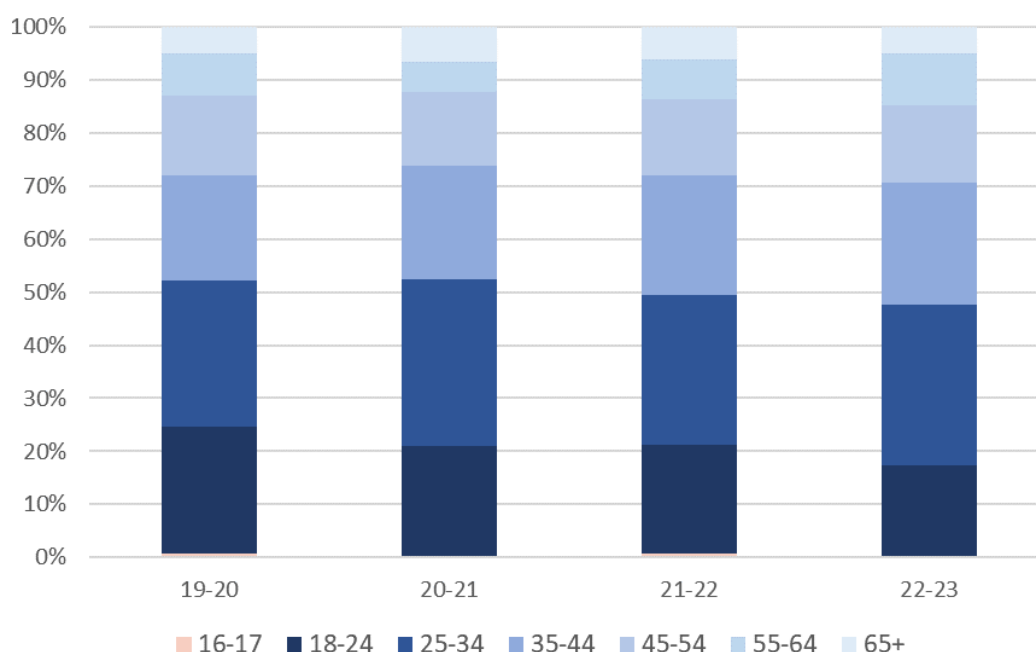


Fig 7. Age profile of homelessness applications – April 2019 to March 2023. BCKLWN

The last four years has seen a near-elimination of applications from 16/17-year-olds (just 0.13% in 22/23), partly due to the development of a countywide protocol for 16/17 years olds facing homelessness.

- **A higher proportion of workers approaching:** Figure 8 (overleaf) shows the proportion of homelessness applicants in work has increased from 19% in 2019/20 to 25% in 2022/23. This includes 16% of applicants in full-time work – almost double the proportion in the same period. The increase could be due to:
 - The tightening of the private rented sector, resulting in ‘first time’ homelessness for some working families.
 - The rise of ‘in-work’ poverty, as evidenced by increasing levels of food instability and foodbank usage amongst workers²⁷.

²⁶ NOTE: council data records the gender of the *main* applicant in each homeless application but does not easily record the gender of the *second* applicant (where a couple approaches as homeless). Therefore the data may not record the *overall* gender proportion of applicants.

²⁷ An increase from 1 in 7 [Do working people need food banks? - The Trussell Trust](#) to 1 in 5 [Microsoft Word - EYS UK Factsheet 2022-23_FINAL \(trusselltrust.org\)](#)

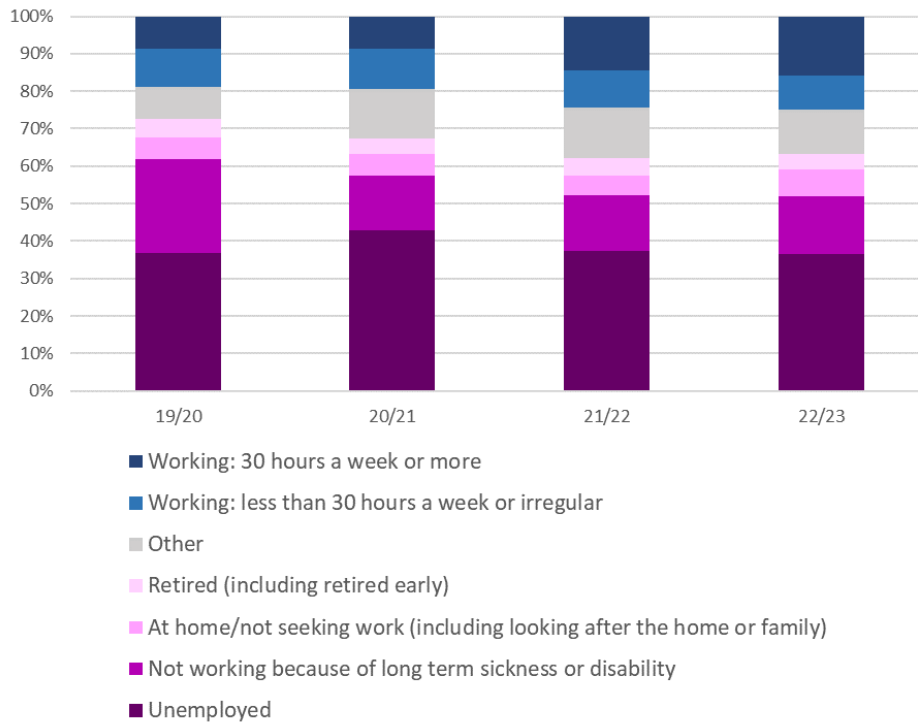


Fig 8. Employment profile of homelessness applications – April 2019 to March 2023. BCKLWN

- **A consistently high level of applicants** with British or Irish citizenship. The number of EEA and other non-UK nationals approaching for assistance has grown steadily, but this is broadly consistent with the changing demographics of the borough:

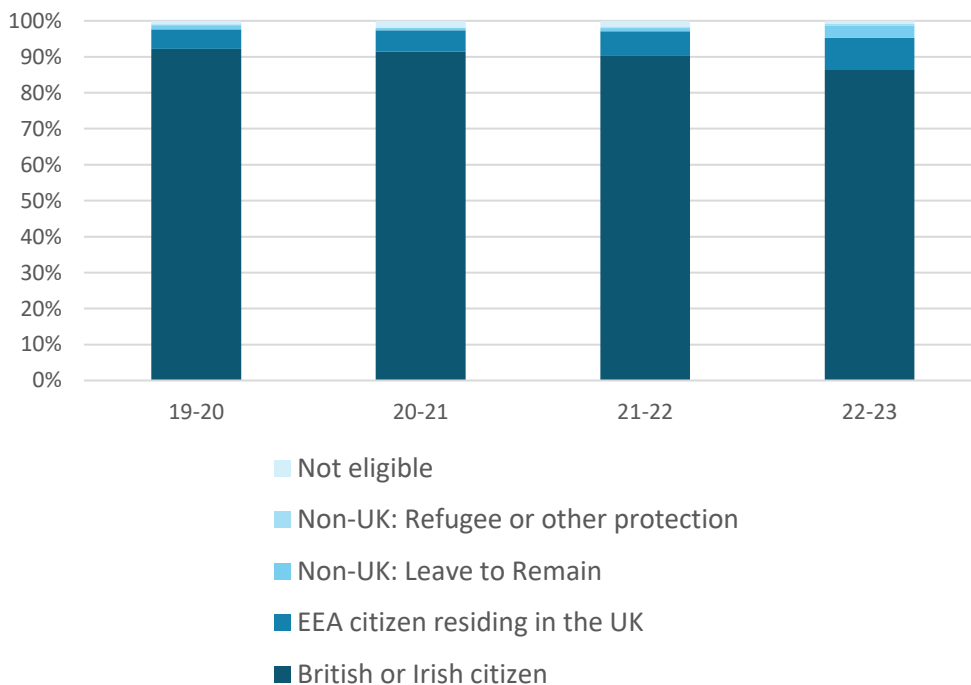


Fig 9. Eligibility profile of homelessness applications – April 2019 to March 2023. BCKLWN

3.5 Rough Sleeping

Rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness. The definition of rough sleeping “includes sleeping outside or, in places that aren't designed for people to live in, including cars, doorways and abandoned buildings”²⁸. It excludes people in hostels or shelters, ‘sofa surfers’, squatters and other defined groups with unmet housing needs. The council measures and records the number of people known to be sleeping rough in the borough.

The annual Rough Sleeping autumn snapshot²⁹ provides the most widely publicised data on rough sleeping. In 2023, the snapshot showed a national increase of 27% - the second increase in succession. Figure 10 (below) shows the borough's reported snapshot figures from 2010 to 2023:

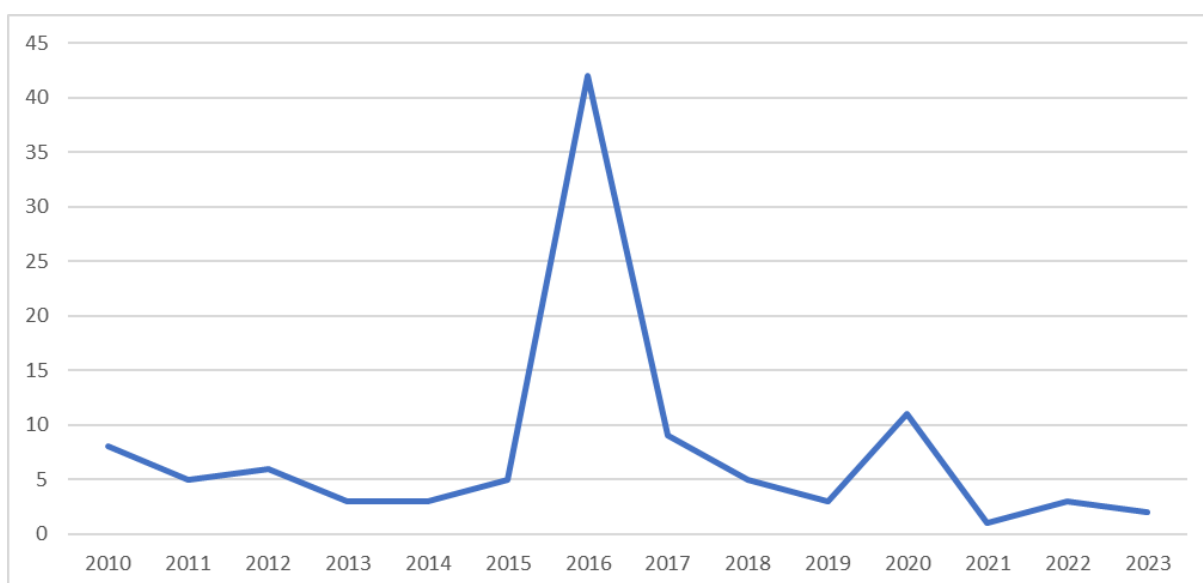


Fig 10. Annual rough sleeping snapshot, 2010-2023, King's Lynn and West Norfolk. BCKLWN/DLUHC.

Although this graph points towards a dramatic reduction in rough sleeping numbers in the borough since 2015, the snapshot figure is based on the number of people sleeping rough on a single night, which could be affected by weather or other factors. In recent years, the annual count has been carried out during the months of operation of the King's Lynn Night Shelter.

Therefore, a more accurate picture may be obtained by examining the total number of people found sleeping rough in a month, based on evidence from the Purfleet Trust's Intensive Support Service, the police, CCTV footage and other sources.

Figure 11 (below) shows that:

- Rough sleeping numbers fluctuate during the year, peaking each winter.
- Rough sleeping numbers have remained relatively stable for the last three winters, based on the trendline.

²⁸ [Rough sleeping | Crisis UK | Together we will end homelessness](#). The full definition, for the purpose of rough sleeping counts and estimates can be found here: [Homelessness data: notes and definitions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

²⁹ [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)



Fig 11. Monthly no. of people found sleeping rough (total; new; with trendlines) Oct 2020 - Dec 2023. BCKLWN

Although the council does not hold data for the number of people sleeping rough per month *prior* to October 2020, the current position demonstrates a significant and sustained reduction in rough sleeping since the development of the last strategy.

Figure 11 also shows the proportion people found sleeping rough for the first time that month. Since November 2020, 81% of those found rough sleeping were new to the streets that month (and therefore did not sleep rough the previous month). This means that services are working effectively to identify and accommodate people sleeping rough quickly, but that further work is required to prevent people sleeping rough in the borough for the first time.

Compared with other local authorities in the region, King’s Lynn and West Norfolk has a low proportion of people sleeping rough, as per figure 12 below:

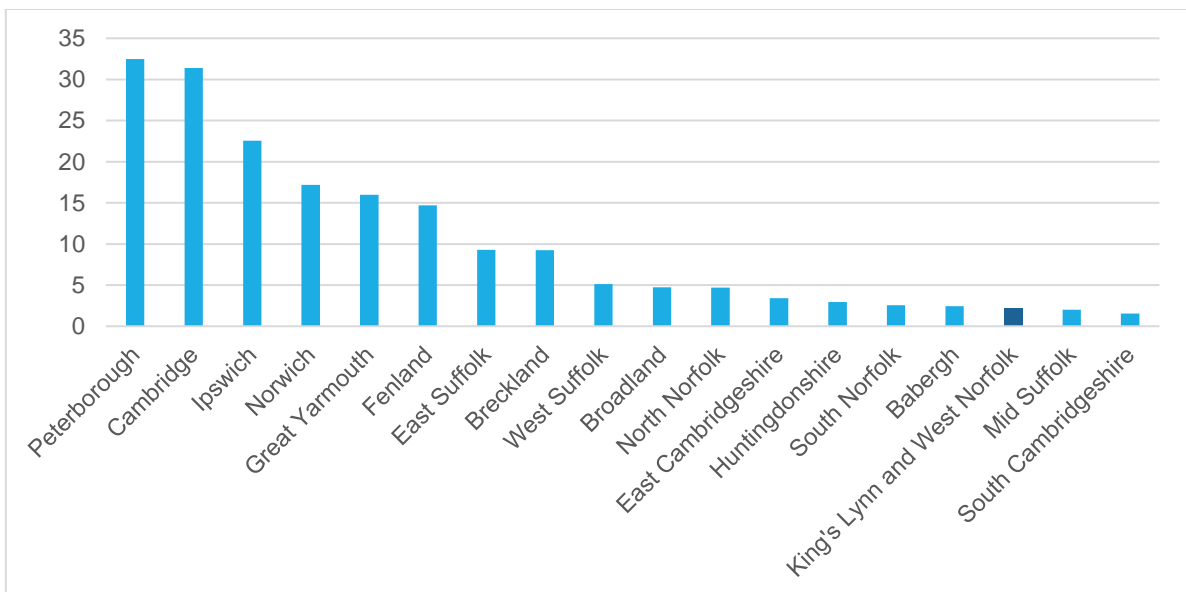


Fig 12. Average monthly total rough sleepers per 100,000 population, Oct 2022-Sep 2023. [ONS](#), [DLUHC](#)

This reflects the good work of the partnership towards ending rough sleeping (see [section 4](#)) at a time when levels of rough sleeping appear to be rising nationally. However, the council is not yet satisfied that rough sleeping has been ended in the borough.

Since last year, the council has worked with DLUHC and the Centre for Homelessness Impact to measure its progress towards ending rough sleeping – that is, “if it is prevented or is otherwise rare, brief and non-recurring”³⁰. Council data points towards a level of rough sleeping that is relatively rare and relatively brief. Nevertheless, council staff and partner agencies describe a core of people with increasingly complex support needs, whose homelessness appears to be recurring and who are at the greatest risk of sleeping rough again.

3.6 What the agencies say

Through the questionnaire, group sessions and individual interviews, partner agencies provided further insight into current levels of homelessness. Partners identified the following key themes:

- **An increase in demand**

Several agencies identified an increase in demand for their services. The council’s Customer Information Centre (CIC) identified a year-on-year increase in housing enquiries of 11% at the end of 2023. One partner identified “a higher volume of referrals due to fewer advice agencies and demand outstripping resources”.

- **An increase in complexity and vulnerability**

Many agencies reported an increase the number of vulnerable people with multiple support needs approaching their services:

“Over the last five years we have found the clients we are supporting are presenting with more complex support needs.”

“We are seeing more customers being referred in crisis, often presenting with higher complex needs e.g. high levels of mental health and substance misuse.”

“We have had a higher proportion of guests since 2020 with higher support needs [...] the Charity makes a conscious effort to prioritise referrals of guests with higher support needs if we can care for them safely.”

“[The service has seen a] sharp increase in service users with mental health conditions – [this] started in lockdown and is increasing year on year rather than levelling out or reducing.”

Council data (Figure 13 below) shows that, whilst the total number of homeless applications has increased, the proportion of applicants with support needs has remained largely stable over the past four years:

³⁰ [Defining an end to rough sleeping \(homelessnessimpact.org\)](#)

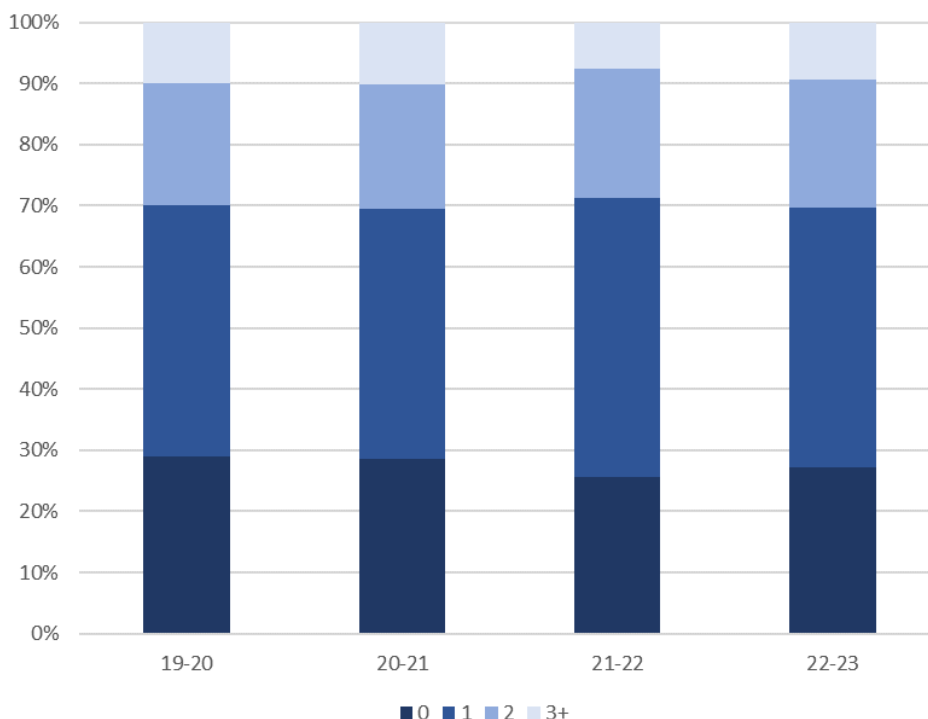


Fig 13. Number of recorded support needs by homelessness application. Apr 2020-Mar 2023 BCKLWN

Although the raw data appears to conflict with the experience of frontline staff and partner services, the following factors should be considered:

- The impact of an overall increase in homeless presentations, resulting in a higher *number* of applicants with multiple support needs.
- The impact of a *reduction* in the face-to-face support provided to some individuals. As one council officer writes, “*clients with mental health issues [were] nearly always accompanied into the office and supported through the process. There doesn’t seem to be any of that [...] and the direction of travel is towards [generalist services].*”
- Possible under-reporting by council staff in terms of the number of support needs per homeless applicant.

An increase in homeless families

Several agencies reported an increase in the number of families seeking help. One agency reports that “*[the number of] households with dependent children seeking our advice is beginning to rise because of the post-pandemic section 21 possession action increases and [the] effects of the cost-of-living crisis*”. Another agency reports that “*in King’s Lynn we are working with more families compared to other district areas.*” The Purfleet Trust opened The Purfleet Pantry in 2023 and has seen “*more families presenting who are at risk of homelessness*”.

This tallies with the council’s own data ([section 3.4](#)).

An increase in poverty

Partners reported the impact of the ‘cost of living crisis’ on their services. The Money Advice Hub reported “*the energy crisis and rise in energy bills is causing poverty for old and new service users*”. They reported an increase in Personal Independence Payment applications, grant and Discretionary

Housing Payment applications, without the resources to cope with the increased demand. Council staff reported increased issues arising from rising interest rates, insufficient Universal Credit rates and frozen Local Housing Allowance rates.

Although the data shows the impact of the partnership's work in preventing and relieving homelessness and rough sleeping, the partnership faces challenges to meet future levels of demand. As one partner put it, *"every customer appears to be vulnerable"*.

The following sections outline the current services available to support households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, as well as attempting to evaluate their effectiveness.

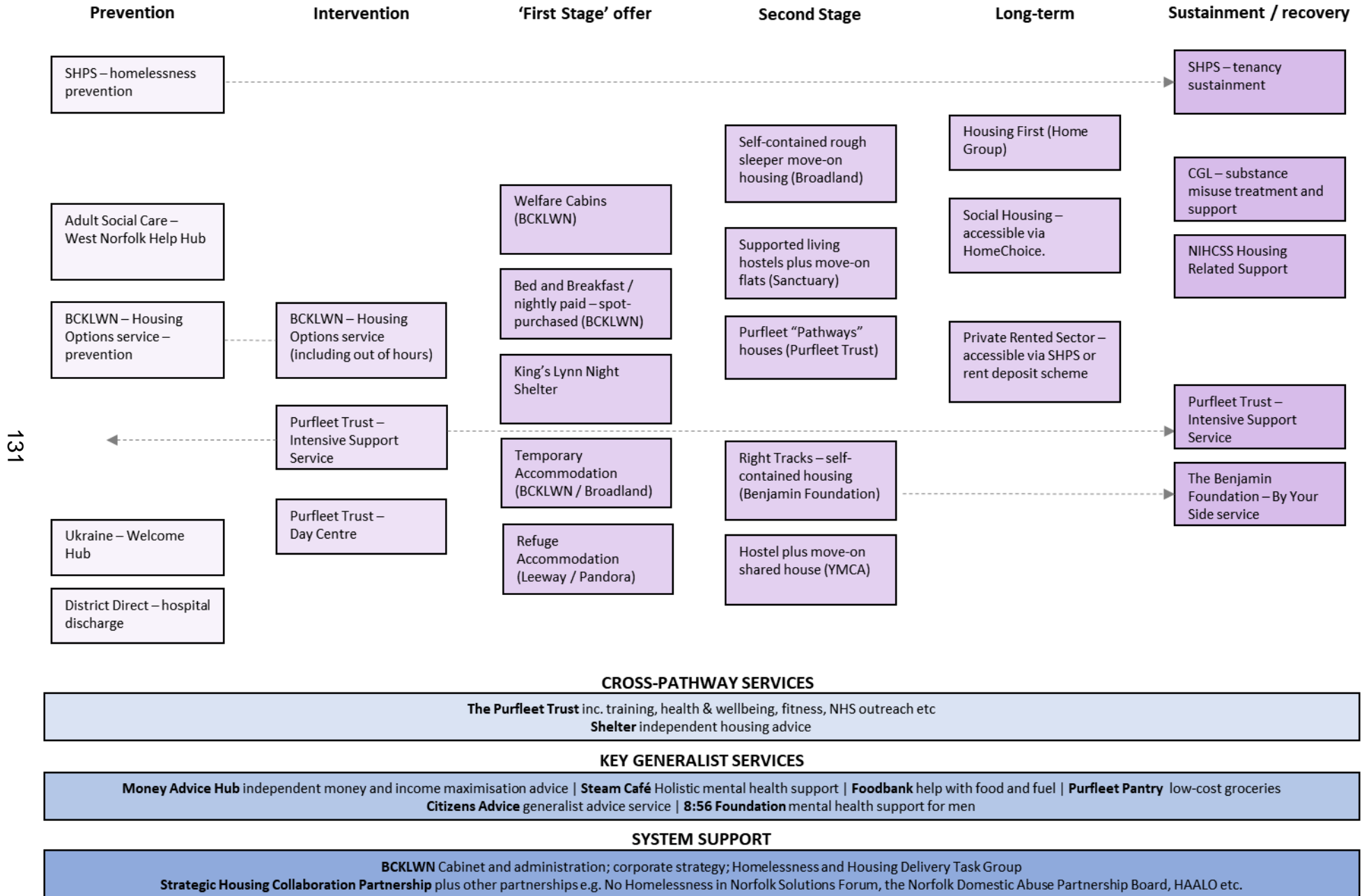
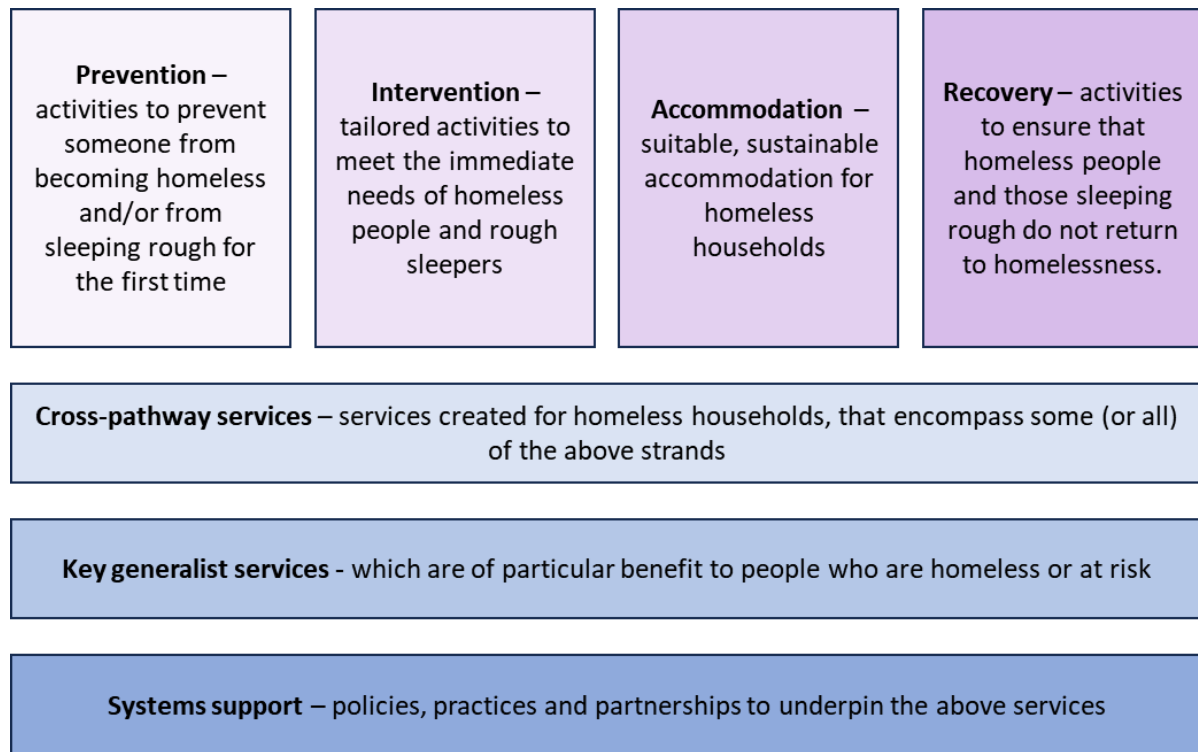


Fig.14 – King's Lynn and West Norfolk – outline of homelessness services pathway

4. SERVICES AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS

The borough's response to homelessness is delivered by a wide partnership of statutory, commissioned, non-commissioned and voluntary/faith sector services, with the council holding the statutory responsibility. Some services have been created specifically for the benefit of homeless households and/or people sleeping rough; others have a wider remit.

Figure 14 (previous page) loosely groups these services as follows³¹:



Although the pathway has been presented as a straight line, it could better be represented as a circle. Many of the tools required to prevent someone from becoming homeless for the first time are the same as those required to ensure that someone does not return to homelessness or rough sleeping.

Whilst every effort has been made to include the key services within the borough's homelessness partnership, **this section is by no means exhaustive**. Everyone in the borough has a potential part to play in preventing and relieving homelessness, and this report acknowledges the unsung work carried out by individuals, businesses and employers to support people in housing need. To borrow a phrase: it takes a borough³² to end homelessness.

³¹ Groupings based on the prevention/intervention/recovery/systems support strands outlined in the 2022 Rough Sleeping Strategy [Ending Rough Sleeping for Good \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

³² This is the approach of [It Takes A City, Cambridge](#), which “brings together ‘experts through experience’, managers and frontline workers, members of faith communities, public sector officials, business owners and managers, teachers, students and concerned individuals, working in partnership to end rough sleeping due to homelessness.”

4.1 Homelessness Prevention

Homelessness, in all forms, is an unacceptable and traumatic outcome. Key homelessness prevention services in the borough include:

Service	Details
BCKLWN Housing Options Service	The council helps prevent homelessness as part of its statutory housing options service. Applicants are supported to complete a Personal Housing Plan, identifying steps to prevent them from becoming homeless.
SHPS (Sustainable Housing Partnership Service)	SHPS is a homeless prevention service, commissioned “to [...] achieve long-term housing outcomes for those who hadn’t previously been able to receive support, [typically] providing a pathway into the private rented sector.”
West Norfolk Help Hub	The Help Hub is aimed at professionals looking to address their customers’ needs “before their difficulties become unmanageable”. “The Help Hub is for low level emerging needs that can be met through early intervention” such as advice, guidance and practical support.
District Direct	District Direct provides a service to people leaving hospital who are either homeless or who require an adaptation to their properties. The local hospital makes homelessness referrals to the council via the Duty to Refer scheme.
Ukraine – Welcome Hub	The council has provided a homelessness prevention and sustainment service to households fleeing the Ukraine war, matching applicants with host families. Further support is provided through the Hanseatic Union ³³ .

4.2 Intervention

If an individual or household becomes homeless, there are services available to respond rapidly, including:

Service	Details
BCKLWN Housing Options Service	As well as preventing homelessness, the council supports households who have an immediate housing need, providing emergency accommodation for eligible households and signposting/referring to partners where there is no duty owed.

³³ [Hanseatic Union – King’s Lynn & West Norfolk](#)

<u>Out-of-Hours Service</u>	The council commissions an external provider to assess homeless households outside office hours. The provider liaises with a nominated council officer, who decides whether to accommodate the household, in line with legislation.
<u>The Purfleet Trust Intensive Support Service</u>	The Purfleet Trust provides an assertive outreach service to verify and support people sleeping rough. The service responds to referrals from Streetlink ³⁴ and partner agencies to ensure that people sleeping rough are supported into accommodation as quickly and safely as possible.

4.3 Accommodation

There is a range of mainstream and specialist accommodation suitable for homeless households depending on their household type and support need. This has been broken down into three broad stages – though not every household will access each stage.

- **“First Stage” accommodation** - This comprises accommodation potentially available to households at the point they become homeless:

Service	Details
Temporary accommodation (commissioned by BCKLWN)	The council works with partners to provide temporary accommodation at two key sites. Support is provided by Broadland Housing. The council also works with partners to provide dispersed units of accommodation for families.
Welfare Cabins (commissioned by BCKLWN)	The council provides four welfare cabins for people who would otherwise be homeless or sleeping rough. Residents benefit from ‘in-reach’ support from Purfleet Trust staff, as well as on-site security.
Bed and Breakfast (B&B)/ nightly-paid accommodation	Where there is no other option available and where it is necessary to accommodate a homeless individual / household, the council pays for B&B or other nightly-paid accommodation. Where possible (and safe), the council aims to provide accommodation that is local, with self-contained cooking / washing facilities.
<u>King’s Lynn Night Shelter</u>	KLNS “is open for nine months of the year offering 24-hour emergency accommodation in single rooms to anyone with nowhere safe to stay” as well as support to help residents access help and find a longer-term home.
<u>Leeway</u>	Leeway operates nine safe houses (refuges) across Norfolk for female victim-survivors of domestic abuse, aiming to provide “overnight accommodation the same day.

³⁴ [StreetLink - Connecting people sleeping rough to local services \(thestreetlink.org.uk\)](http://thestreetlink.org.uk)

[Pandora Project](#)

Pandora Project provides “support in safe and secure accommodation for people fleeing domestic abuse”. Accommodation is available to all victim-survivors: female and male victims as well as those in the LGBT+ community.

- **“Second Stage” accommodation** – This comprises accommodation available to single homeless people and (in limited instances) couples, typically as move-on from first-stage accommodation. Each service supports residents to seek and sustain longer-term housing, and to address underlying support needs. There are approximately 117 bed spaces, over the following services:

Service	Details
<u>Sanctuary Supported Living</u>	Sanctuary operates three hostels in the borough (plus eight move-on flats), each with a different level of support needs in mind.
<u>Purfleet Pathways Houses</u>	The Purfleet Trust manages a network of shared houses across the borough, aimed at people who can share with others and who “require more intensive tenancy support to maintain stable accommodation.”
<u>Broadland Housing</u>	The council works with Broadland Housing to deliver self-contained housing for people either (a) “ready to move on from hostels but not quite ready for their own tenancy” or (b) people with a history of rough sleeping ³⁵ .
<u>The Benjamin Foundation – Right Tracks</u>	Right Tracks provides self-contained supported accommodation in King’s Lynn to people aged 16-25. “These are designed to give residents more responsibility than a room” so that residents maximise their chances of sustaining permanent accommodation.
<u>YMCA Norfolk</u>	The YMCA provides an “intensive tenancy management support within a variety of mixed housing”. The accommodation comprises a 15-bed hostel and a move-on site within a shared home.

- **Long-term accommodation** – This comprises accommodation with no defined end date, including ‘mainstream’ housing.

Service	Details
<u>Social / Affordable Housing</u>	Homeless applicants (and those in second-stage accommodation) can apply for social and affordable housing through the HomeChoice

³⁵ Properties can also be used as move-on for hostel residents, if the hostel space will subsequently be used to rehouse someone who is sleeping rough.

	<p>system. Applicants are awarded banding according to their housing need and in line with the council’s allocation policy³⁶.</p> <p>Additionally, the West Norfolk Housing Company³⁷ was established by the council as a registered provider to acquire further affordable housing in the borough. Tenancy management is carried out by a housing association.</p>
Private Rented Sector	<p>Homeless applicants (and those in second-stage accommodation) can receive assistance to access the private rented sector. The council provides loans towards rent deposits; SHPS provides practical help with accessing the PRS.</p> <p>Additionally, the West Norfolk Property Company³⁸ was established by the council to purchase homes to be rented privately. Tenancy management is carried out by a property management company.</p>
Housing First	<p>The council works with Home Group and several partner housing associations to deliver up to 12 properties under Housing First principles³⁹. Housing First provides intensive support to individuals with a history of rough sleeping, who have previously been unsuccessful in sustaining housing through the hostel route.</p> <p>By providing the housing ‘first’ (rather than as a reward for graduating through the hostel system) and providing wrap-around support, the scheme aims to break the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping for individuals facing multiple disadvantages.</p>

4.4 Recovery

The partnership includes a range of services designed to support homeless individuals and households sustain their accommodation and address any barriers that may affect their ability to do so:

Service	Details
<u>SHPS - tenancy sustainment</u>	As well as preventing homelessness, SHPS provides up to eight months’ support for new tenants to ensure that they thrive in their new homes.
<u>Change, Grow, Live (CGL)</u>	CGL provides support to help people with problematic drug or alcohol use “break free from harmful patterns of behaviour and feel healthier

³⁶ [Social Housing Allocations Policy | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)

³⁷ [West Norfolk Housing Company – A registered provider of social housing \(wnhc.co.uk\)](#)

³⁸ [West Norfolk Property Limited – An independent private rental property company wholly owned by the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(wnpl.co.uk\)](#)

³⁹ [The Principles of Housing First | Homeless Link](#)

	and happier". Services include medical treatment, 1:1 and group support, as well as harm-reduction services such as needle exchanges and advice.
<u>NIHCSS Housing Related Support</u>	The Norfolk Integrated Housing and Community Support Service (NIHCSS) provides tailored tenancy sustainment support to people engaged in structured treatment with CGL.
<u>Purfleet Trust Intensive Support Service</u>	Linked to its outreach service, the Purfleet Trust provides intensive support to people who are most at risk of returning to the streets, to ensure that they sustain their tenancies.
<u>Benjamin Foundation – By Your Side</u>	Alongside their Right Tracks accommodation, the Benjamin Foundation provides support to young people leaving accommodation to ensure that they maintain their tenancies and live healthy lives.

4.5 Cross-pathway services

The borough benefits from several services that are targeted at people facing (and/or recovering from) homelessness, but which are accessible at various points of the pathway.

(Note that many of the services featured in sections 4.1 to 4.4 are, to an extent, cross-pathway services – SHPS in particular).

Service	Details
<u>The Purfleet Trust</u>	The Purfleet Trust provides advice, support and opportunities for meaningful activity. This includes laundry services, counselling, gym equipment and training opportunities. The health and wellbeing centre acts as a hub for people facing (or recovering from) homelessness to provide mutual support.
<u>Shelter Norfolk</u>	Shelter provides a local advice and advocacy service to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, as well as providing emergency county court assistance to people facing possession claims. It provides a specific service to ex-offenders to assist them to sustain accommodation.

4.6 Key Generalist Services

There are several services locally that are aimed at the wider population, but which are of particular benefit to homeless (or potentially homeless) households. Some of the key providers include:

Service	Details
Money Advice Hub	The Money Advice Hub is a regulated Debt Advice and income maximisation service provider. Staff are approved Debt Relief Order intermediaries and facilitate all formal debt solutions, as well as advising on welfare benefits, housing and digital skills.
Steam House Café	STEAM provides “holistic support to adults experiencing mental health crisis” in a “unique and safe café-style space”, supporting primary health services.
Citizens Advice	Citizens Advice provides advice, support and guidance on a wide range of topics including employment, housing, welfare benefits and family law.
Purfleet Pantry	The Purfleet Pantry is a social supermarket offering “everyday food and essentials at affordable prices”. The Pantry also sells affordable furniture and often has free donated food available.
8:56 Foundation	The 8:56 Foundation supports men to develop their mental health and wellbeing through Time to Talk sessions, online support and social activities.
King's Lynn Foodbank	The Foodbank provides emergency food support to households in crisis. On-site support is available from Citizens Advice, and visitors are signposted to other support services

4.7 Systems support

The above services are underpinned by coordination to bring services together, ensuring they contribute to the wider social aims of the borough.

Internally, this includes:

- **A new administration** – the new Independent Group leads the council, with support from the Labour Group. The Cabinet Member for People and Communities oversees “all housing related matters including strategy, homelessness and housing standards”⁴⁰
- **A new corporate strategy** – the council’s Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 was published towards the end of last year. The strategy includes a commitment “to support the health and wellbeing of our communities, help prevent homelessness, assist people with access to benefits advice and ensure there is equal access to opportunities.”⁴¹
- **A relaunched Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task Group** – this cross-party group works with senior council officers, providing oversight and strategic guidance.

⁴⁰ [Executive post - Cabinet Member for People and Communities \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴¹ [Our priorities | Corporate Strategy 2023 - 2027 | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)

External systems support includes:

- **Strategic Housing Collaboration Partnership** – a multi-agency group, established during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the aim of enabling services to respond to homelessness more effectively. Partnership members have assisted with this review.
- **Other partnership groups** – the council contributes to a variety of partnership groups designed to improve services for homeless households. These include (but are not limited to) the No Homelessness in Norfolk Solutions Forum, the Norfolk Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, the Domestic Abuse and Housing regional group, and the Housing Advice and Allocations Lead Officer Group (HAALO).

4.8 What has changed?

As outlined in the introduction, the borough’s residents have experienced significant changes since the last strategy was published. Political and economic factors have influenced the partnership’s response to a changing social and economic environment. Key changes include:

- **The impact of COVID-19**

COVID-19 acted as a catalyst for change within homelessness services. The lifesaving Everyone In programme injected funding to provide people sleeping rough with a safe space to stay (including those previously ineligible for assistance). Although the council no longer operates a full ‘Everyone In’ offer, it offers emergency housing on a case-by-case basis to people who are known to be sleeping rough. Additionally, the council retains four of the 14 welfare cabins commissioned in response to COVID-19.

With government funding, the King’s Lynn Night Shelter changed its model in autumn 2020, from providing a communal sleeping area to providing eight single rooms for guests, in line with government guidelines⁴².

In the wake of the pandemic, the borough received funding for the Housing First and Housing Led accommodation described in section 4.3.

The above changes contributed towards a reduction in rough sleeping over the period of the last strategy. However, COVID-19 also had a disruptive effect on the work of the partnership. Following the introduction of government restrictions, some formal and informal partnership meetings ceased, and some in-person homelessness activities moved to online/telephone-based services.

Nevertheless, the response to the COVID-19 pandemic could not have been carried out without the hard, joined-up work of partners in the borough.

- **A three-year DLUHC funding settlement**

Following several years of receiving year-on-year RSI and other funding, the borough’s DLUHC funding has been underpinned by a three-year settlement. Although this period is due to expire next year, it has provided the partnership with a degree of security (and the ability to plan more strategically) across a range of government-funded interventions.

⁴² [Operating principles for night shelters - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/operating-principles-for-night-shelters)

- **An emphasis on ending rough sleeping, underpinned by a refreshed Strategy**

Rough sleeping has been the subject of considerable national scrutiny and, linked to the above, the government's Rough Sleeper Strategy (and its manifesto commitment) provided a mandate for funding some of the borough's response.

- **The Domestic Abuse Act**

As previously mentioned, the Domestic Abuse Act ensures that households fleeing abuse are treated as being in priority need for housing. Furthermore, the Act places new responsibilities on 'top tier' authorities (locally, Norfolk County Council), resulting in new services being commissioned to support victim-survivors.

- **Market conditions**

Finally, the impact of cost-of-living pressures and rising interest rates has resulted in the partnership having to do things differently. The Purfleet Pantry has been set up partly in response to the need of local households, including families. The King's Lynn Foodbank has begun to issue fuel vouchers, with year-on-year usage rising dramatically. The council holds an internal working group to develop its responses, including Beat Your Bills⁴³ and Food for Thought⁴⁴ events. And the council's own rent deposit service has had to become more generous considering the tightening of the PRS market.

In summary: the partnership consists of a wide range of services designed to prevent people from becoming homeless, resolve people's homelessness quickly, and ensure that they do not become homeless again, underpinned by mutual and external accountability. But despite the sustained efforts and innovations of partners, and improved outcomes for homeless households, the borough has not yet ended homelessness, nor has it ended rough sleeping.

The next section seeks to review what is working well, what is missing from the service, and what could be improved for the benefit of people in housing need.

⁴³ [How the council is helping people to beat their bills this winter | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/news/2023/12/14/how-the-council-is-helping-people-to-beat-their-bills-this-winter)

⁴⁴ [LILY | Food for Thought \(asklily.org.uk\)](https://www.asklily.org.uk/)

5. REVIEW OF CURRENT PROVISION

The previous two sections outline the extent of homelessness in the borough, as well as the extent of the borough’s response to homelessness. This next section, based on feedback from partners and from people with lived experience of homelessness, attempts to evaluate whether the partnership is doing the right things, and whether it is doing things right.

5.1 Prevention

PREVENTION - What’s working well?	
Partnership working	<p>Several partners spoke of good relationships between themselves and others towards homelessness prevention. Council officers stated that Duty to Refer⁴⁵ forms from partner agencies are generally of a good quality.</p> <p>As one example of positive partnership working, Money Advice Hub described a good relationship between themselves and Shelter, who have households at risk to the Breathing Space⁴⁶ scheme.</p>
Diversionsary services	<p>Council officers spoke highly of the work carried out through the Lily team and the Hanseatic League to support Ukrainian refugees as part of the Ukraine Families Scheme and Homes for Ukraine, resulting in low levels of homeless approaches from Ukrainian nationals.</p>
Underlying prevention commitments	<p>Many local accommodation providers are subscribed to the Homes for Cathy Commitments⁴⁷, “<i>seeing eviction as a last resort</i>”. Recently, supported accommodation providers have agreed a protocol to minimise evictions. Data shows that evictions from supported accommodation providers have reduced over the term of the last strategy.</p>
Customer empowerment	<p>Both Shelter and SHPS reported success with helping homeless households understand their rights and navigate the “system”, such as progressing a homeless application or selling themselves to a prospective landlord. Both agencies describe a balance between empowerment, support and advocacy.</p>

PREVENTION - What are the challenges?	
Early intervention	<p>Agencies report a lack of time to enable homelessness to be prevented – either because customers do not approach early enough, or because referrals to services are not made early enough. One partner stated, “56</p>

⁴⁵ [Duty to refer | Duty to refer | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴⁶ [Debt Respite Scheme \(Breathing Space\) guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴⁷ [Our Commitments | Homes for Cathy](#)

	<i>days⁴⁸ is often still too late for prevention. Identifying and reaching people before this time would be beneficial to reduce escalation.”</i>
Achieving a prevention	Council officers reported difficulties <i>“managing the expectations of customers and other departments”</i> . Whilst the council holds the statutory duty to prevent homelessness, and the partnership takes steps to achieve this, prevention is not always possible. This causes frustration to both applicants and staff.

PREVENTION - What are the gaps?

Tools and resources	<p>Council officers reported difficulties preventing homelessness, due to increasing caseloads and limited resources. Although the council has worked to increase staffing capacity and improve retention, new staff are not yet embedded. The recent Corporate Peer Challenge report identified recruitment as a particular challenge. Council officers also reported a <i>“lack of prevention tools”</i> other than those previously identified.</p> <p>One agency identified a need for <i>“improved and integrated technology in terms of managing volume and sharing information”</i> in the face of increasing levels of need.</p>
Access to financial assistance	At present, the offer to households facing eviction is limited. Rent deposit (and other) payments are made as loans, which some recipients struggle to repay. Partners expressed a desire to review the use of Discretionary Housing Payments in relation to homelessness prevention, to maximise their effectiveness.
A new generation	One partner described <i>“a whole group of people who are new to poverty [...] and ill-equipped to respond to the challenges they are facing”</i> . If true, this suggests that some households lack the knowledge and confidence to seek early, appropriate help to prevent their homelessness.

5.2 Intervention (including emergency / off-the-street accommodation)

INTERVENTION - What’s working well?

Improved off-the-street offer	Council officers report that the welfare cabins have improved the local offer for people sleeping rough with complex needs. Officers report that the cabins have saved lives for people who have previously refused other offers of accommodation.
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⁴⁸ 56 days relates to the typical length of a [homelessness prevention duty](#) – though this can be cut short or extended, depending on circumstances

	Additionally, KLNS is pleased to provide “24-hour accommodation with single rooms – [we are] glad that the emphasis has changed nationally” from the previous communal model.
Outreach	Partners viewed the work of the Purfleet outreach service positively, which (based on rough sleeping data) is working well to quickly identify and accommodate people found sleeping rough.
Processes	The council has recently amended its process and supplier for out-of-hours homelessness enquiries, strengthening the support available in an emergency. Council officers describe “a strong culture of following legislation and avoiding gatekeeping ⁴⁹ ”.

INTERVENTION - What are the challenges?

Cost, and use, of bed and breakfast accommodation	<p>The council spent over £280,000 on bed and breakfast accommodation in 2022/23 and is likely to exceed this figure in 2023/24. Clearly, this is an unsustainable position for the council. The sharp increase in expenditure could be attributed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An increasing level of households requiring temporary accommodation – this has been driven in part by the overall increase in homelessness presentations, the lack of tools and resources to prevent homelessness, and caselaw⁵⁰ which ‘lowers the bar’ to temporary housing for single homeless people and couples. ○ A lack of resources to work proactively with households in temporary accommodation towards a swifter resolution to their homelessness. ○ A lack of suitable permanent accommodation for those moving out of temporary accommodation (see below for further analysis). <p>As previously stated, B&B and nightly-paid accommodation has a negative impact on the wellbeing of households, regardless of the cost. Whilst the council is by no means alone in their position, reduction in B&B use will need to form part of the forthcoming strategy.</p>
Communication	One partner reported a degree of confusion regarding the offer for people sleeping rough. Whilst the council endeavours to provide safe accommodation (where possible) to people sleeping rough, there is currently no written external guidance on the matter.

⁴⁹ [Gatekeeping \(UK housing term\) - Wikipedia](#)

⁵⁰ Following [Hotak v Southwark \(2015\)](#), local authorities should consider whether a homeless applicant is “more vulnerable than the average person” rather than “more vulnerable than the average *homeless* person”. Furthermore, para 15.5 of the [Homelessness Code of Guidance](#) states “the threshold for triggering the section 188(1) duty is low as the housing authority only has to have a reason to believe (rather than being satisfied) that the applicant may be homeless, eligible for assistance and have a priority need.” Whilst the council aims to be diligent in ensuring that it follows case law and guidance, avoiding gatekeeping, this is at significant cost to the local authority.

Co-production	Whilst the council develops and issues Personal Housing Plans for homeless applicants, partners felt that these needed to be utilised more effectively, so that they are a <i>“two-way street between applicant and council”</i> . Council officers felt there was a lack of clear policies to support the progression of a personal housing plan.
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INTERVENTION - What are the gaps?

Health and substance misuse outreach	Research ⁵¹ shows that assertive outreach is an effective method of support for dependent drinkers, as well as others with enduring support needs. Partners report a lack of funding and staffing to carry out regular assertive outreach sessions.
Teams around the person	Whilst the Early Help Hub is effective for individuals with lower support needs, and whilst some multi-agency meetings are carried out for vulnerable individuals, the partnership would benefit from a more structured approach to supporting people who are at the greatest risk of a return to homelessness or rough sleeping.
Response to increasing complexity	One partner reports an increase in the level of complexity, aggression and violence amongst its service users. Further work is required to meet the immediate needs of people who may be challenging to support.

5.3 Accommodation

ACCOMMODATION - What’s working well?

Partnerships	SHPS has developed and maintained good relationships with landlords in the private rented sector to secure and sustain accommodation for homeless households. They have <i>“worked hard on developing an ‘estate agent’ skillset – selling the person.”</i>
Housing First	The initiative has been welcomed by partners, <i>enabling “chaotic and vulnerable people to keep their housing”</i> . The service reports that 83% of tenants have sustained their accommodation after two years. This is an impressive result, given the challenges its tenants have previously faced finding and sustaining accommodation. KLNS commented, <i>“I wish everybody who came to the night shelter had a housing first solution.”</i>

⁵¹ [The Blue Light approach | Alcohol Change UK](#)

ACCOMMODATION - What are the challenges?

<p>Void properties</p>	<p>Freebridge Community Housing, the largest landlord in the borough, have a significant backlog of approximately 170 void properties on general lettable stock, as well as many tenanted properties that need to be brought up to standard. Freebridge staff described it as <i>“a tightrope in terms of dual priorities.”</i> The lack of available social and affordable housing is one of the key reasons for the level of households in temporary accommodation in the district.</p>
<p>Service charges</p>	<p>Partners reported high levels of service charges in some sheltered housing – over £80 per week for heating alone, in one case. As a is prohibitive and renders such housing unaffordable.</p>
<p>Move-on</p>	<p>Many partners expressed difficulties finding affordable accommodation especially for those claiming benefits. Partners have struggled finding landlords who will take homeless households without a guarantor. This has resulted in long waits on the housing register and in temporary accommodation, and slow move on from the hostel system. As one partner said, <i>“people are ready to move on, but they can’t.”</i></p>
<p>Funding</p>	<p>While Housing First has been effective in reducing cyclical homelessness, the revenue funding underpinning the service is only guaranteed to March 2025, along with much of the homelessness funding that the borough receives.</p>

ACCOMMODATION - What are the gaps?

<p>Accessible and specialist accommodation</p>	<p>Partners and council colleagues commented on the lack of accommodation for single people with higher levels of support needs. Some suggested that the district needs a high needs hostel, with others suggesting that it needs more Housing First accommodation. Some partners also reported a lack of accessible accommodation on the housing register.</p>
<p>Accommodation with time limits</p>	<p>One domestic abuse provider reported a reduction in the length of time residents were expected to stay in the property from 2 years to one year.</p> <p>Broadland explained that much of their housing-led accommodation was let to people on a two-year basis, with the expectation that they will move on to permanent accommodation after this point. They explained that this is contrary to Housing First principles, which recommend open-ended housing and support.</p>

Private rented accommodation	Partners commented on the lack of available private rented accommodation for people moving on from hostels and temporary accommodation. There is a particular lack of HMO accommodation for younger people, according to SHPS. As a result, a higher than desired number of outcomes from SHPS referrals are into the social housing sector.
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5.4 Recovery

RECOVERY - What's working well?

A focus on wellbeing	<p>Many partners described the efforts made towards improving the wellbeing of their residents and service users. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Empowerment groups, arts and craft therapy” (Leeway) • “A wellbeing toolkit” (Money Advice Hub) • A new outdoor gym and emphasis on “health, fitness and wellbeing” (YMCA) <p>Other respondents (such as Broadland and Purfleet) described the practical support available to help people move into their houses.</p>
Links with other services	<p>Many respondents reported use of other partnership services such as the Steam Café, as well as applying for grant funding and longer-term assistance elsewhere such as the disabled facilities grant. SHPS spoke of <i>“[good] working relationships with DWP and Seetec to increase clients’ [ability to gain] employment – often increasing their income is the only option for people to find affordable accommodation.”</i></p>
Emphasis on developing independence	<p>Respondents emphasised the importance of developing the resilience and independence of their residents and service users. YMCA reported, <i>“In January we [launched] our Life Ready programme in Kings Lynn which will deliver qualifications, independent living skills and positive activities”</i>. SHPS spoke of adopting an <i>“asset-based approach”</i>, which has enabled 84% of people to sustain their tenancy at the end of eight months. Shelter aims to help people <i>“gain confidence to act alone [...] by helping people to help themselves, meaning that change is sustainable”</i>.</p>

RECOVERY - What are the challenges?

Engagement	<p>Agencies spoke of the difficulties assisting some tenants and service users, particularly when guests are in <i>“difficult/abusive relationships”</i> or where support needs are combined with drug or alcohol issues.</p>
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Complexity	As mentioned previously, some agencies expressed concern with the prevalence of people with multiple support needs (other than housing). One partner said, <i>“we are so busy with acute cases that we don’t get to people who are upstream”</i> .
Strategic planning	One agency spoke of the need to be <i>“cleverer and more strategic”</i> when supporting residents. They gave the example of how a referral for financial assistance can only be made via an appointment for money advice, creating a bottleneck.

RECOVERY - What are the gaps?

Outreach	<p>One agency identified a <i>“lack of services offering outreach support for those struggling in their accommodation”</i>. As mentioned previously, there has been a sense from partners that many face-to-face services withdrew in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and have not been restored since.</p> <p>Another provider stated that <i>“the reduction in our in-house Tenancy Support Team means we are not able to provide the low-level support to as many people as we used to.”</i></p>
Medical expertise	The partnership described gaps in mental health treatment services, as well as <i>“difficulty accessing drug and alcohol support”</i> . Partners identified a lack of a Dual Diagnosis specialism within the borough, and a disparity across Norfolk in terms of the breadth and depth of treatment services.
Recovery and Accommodation	One agency spoke of difficulties accessing in-patient alcohol detox and rehabilitation. Treatment is only available to people who have stable accommodation upon release, but many people requiring treatment live in an environment with many other drinkers or have no accommodation at all.

5.5 Systems Support and service culture

SYSTEMS SUPPORT AND SERVICE CULTURE - What’s working well?

Collaboration and information sharing	Many partners spoke of a <i>“good culture of information sharing”</i> , taking a <i>“multi-agency approach to complex problems”</i> . One agency stated, <i>“West Norfolk is one of the best places I’ve worked for in [terms of] collaboration and partnership working”</i> , whilst acknowledging that there is still room for improvement.
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	As a general impression, all partners could identify other agencies they worked well with.
Flexibility	Partners spoke of <i>“a dedicated team with good teamwork and support”</i> where <i>“people aren’t territorial about their work – doing the bit that we can do well, and passing on the bit that others can do better”</i> .
Technological and data management changes	<p>The council’s case management system has been transformed since the publication of the last policy – and as a result, the council has been able to produce a strong dataset to support the review (as detail in section 3). The council has recruited to a new Housing Data Analyst post, using BI and other tools to better identify trends and monitor performance.</p> <p>Money Advice Hub has invested in a new case management system with <i>“robotic”</i> processes and integrated WhatsApp functionality, thus enabling the service to increase its capacity.</p>
Some inclusion of lived experience	KLNS’s recruitment <i>“includes staff and volunteers with lived experience”</i> – Purfleet Trust and others employ people with lived experience as staff and volunteers. YMCA state that they are <i>“client led in service delivery”</i> , for example, ensuring residents are on the panel for interviews.

SYSTEMS SUPPORT AND SERVICE CULTURE - What are the challenges?

Working Groups and partnerships	Partners reported being unclear as to the purposes of the many borough and countywide partnership groups, with one partner asking, <i>“what are they all there for? What is the purpose? Are there too many?”</i> Some partners expressed concern about the level of resource taken up by multi-agency meetings, that <i>“lots of chatting about different cases”</i> is not a constructive use of time. One partner stated, <i>“at the least, we need structured services with a clear mandate so that everyone can see.”</i>
Recruitment	As previously stated, partners (especially council departments) expressed that the ability to recruit and retain staff remains a challenge, particularly in the face of an increased workload.
Decision-making	Agencies reported that some frontline workers face barriers in terms of making decisions (where authorisation is required from senior staff). Agencies suggestion that a more agile culture in services would enable decisions to be make more promptly and effectively.

Trauma-informed practice	Many services reported that they work in a trauma-informed manner to support homeless applicants. However, there is still further work to be done, to ensure that all services work well with individuals who may have experienced trauma (either through homelessness, or as a contributory factor to their homelessness).
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SYSTEMS SUPPORT AND SERVICE CULTURE - What are the gaps?

Co-production with service users	Services spoke of the need to work with <i>“those most directly affected, to dismantle barriers and build better systems together”</i> . One agency spoke of the need for <i>“time to develop trusting relationships”</i> between individuals and agencies, especially where there has been a historic lack of trust. Linked to this, partners spoke of a need for improved information sharing <i>“so that people don’t have to tell their story more than once”</i> .
Funding	Many agencies expressed concern about the funding landscape in the borough, with much funding coming to an end in March 2025. One partner spoke of the need to work more effectively as a partnership or cohort to <i>“go after the bigger money”</i> .
A wider partnership	Partners explained of the importance of widening the partnership. Whilst each organisation was able to identify effective partnerships, the network did not encompass the wide range of services who regularly encounter people who are homeless or facing homelessness.

5.6 What are services like for the people we support?

The review asked services, as well as individuals with lived experience of homelessness, what services were like for them. This was carried out:

- As part of the questionnaire sent to partner agencies
- Via two sessions for people with lived experience of homelessness.

Partners provided examples of where services had worked well for their customers. Some of the comments received include the following:

“Thank you very much for being with us at the conclusion of the contract. This made our task very easy and helped us establish communication with the landlord. Thank you for always being ready to answer our questions and help us with current issues and needs. I understand that it’s your job. It’s so nice that you carry it out conscientiously and are even ready to do more.” (SHPS)

“Without Housing First, I’d be in jail, in hospital, or dead” (Home Group)

“Many clients will tell us that we are their voice and that when we speak on their behalf other professionals listen.” (Purfleet)

"We would like to thank Shelter for all their guidance and great support throughout our case-whether via phone or in person. Not sure we'd have got where we are without your input. Special thanks to our caseworker" (Shelter)

"The welcome, the support, the helpfulness – it was what I needed" (KLNS)

"Thank you for all your help throughout the whole housing journey. I am so happy as I am moving into a new home today." (BCKLWN)

However, the two in-person sessions identified challenges in terms of people's experiences as homeless applicants, particularly in terms of accessing homelessness advice during a time of high demand and reduced staffing. Some of the key themes identified included:

- **Accessibility** – applicants expressed difficulties contacting the people dealing with their case, with *"nobody checking in"* with them. One applicant said, *"it's not that I've been forgotten – I've not even been remembered"*. Applicants perceived a lack of empathy and transparency from professionals, with one applicant saying, *"There's a real gap in terms of accessibility – basics in terms of information and communication."* Another said *"It's really painful where you've hit a low point [...] if you're treated in a way that makes you feel like you deserve to get evicted. The gap gets bigger, and the fear gets wider."*
- **Evictions** – applicants explained the impact of having to wait to be evicted before receiving temporary accommodation, due to lack of accommodation. One applicant said, *"Do I enjoy Christmas when I'm just waiting for a knock on the door [from a bailiff]?"* Another described their experience when the bailiffs called. *"The landlords just stood there [...] I was made to feel [gestures with finger and thumb] this big."*
- **Emergency accommodation** – whilst the council has made efforts to improve its emergency accommodation offer in recent months, both applicants and support workers have expressed concerns about the use of bed and breakfast and nightly-paid accommodation.

Additionally, session attendees identified difficulties with the wider system:

- **Drug and alcohol treatment** – one attendee explained the difficulties he faced obtaining prompt help from drug and alcohol treatment providers. *"It works well [for me] now but it took six weeks to get help – not good when you are ready for change."*
- **Economic and transport issues** – attendees expressed concern about transport links to and from accommodation they were offered, especially in terms of attending work. Attendees also expressed difficulties budgeting and managing money when Universal Credit and other benefits are paid monthly in arrears.
- **The system itself** – attendees said *"I'm just a number like everybody else"... "The housing system has been non-existent for 35 years. It's got worse, not better"... "I don't trust the system, social workers, authority, anyone"*

Attendees were keen to be involved in the development of the forthcoming strategy. The council has committed to including the voices and ideas of people with lived experience in its development.

5.7 Summary

The above evaluation shows that, through diligence, intelligence and determination, the partnership has made a sustained impact on the lives of homeless households in the borough. However, its job is not done yet. In summary:

- There is a clear focus on prevention within the partnership, with some strong results, but the effectiveness of the partnership towards homelessness prevention appears to be ebbing away due to significant external influences.
- There is a strong and varied “off-the-street” offer to people sleeping rough or at risk, but the cost of accommodating homeless households is unsustainably expensive.
- The partnership has benefitted from the impact of new services across the pathway, but many of these services are vulnerable to future reductions in central government funding.
- There are strong informal partnerships between services, but the partnership would benefit from a stronger “whole system” vision, bringing in a wider net of service.
- Services were able to identify some strong individual outcomes, and some good work towards building services around service users, but there is still a clear gap between some key services and the people that they serve.

Once again, the council would like to thank its partners, as well as local people with lived experience of homelessness, for helping to evaluate local homeless services. This evaluation summarises the progress made by the partnership and provides a foundation for building the 2024-2029 strategy.

6. FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

BCKLWN is one of many councils whose previous homelessness and rough sleeping strategy was devised prior to COVID-19. It is unlikely that anyone preparing a strategy in 2019 would have predicted a global pandemic and developed their strategy in response⁵². The 2024-29 strategy must be sufficiently agile to respond to unanticipated challenges. Nevertheless, there are future threats and opportunities⁵³ we can predict, as identified by the council and its partners.

	Threats	Opportunities
Political	<p>A potential change in government – which could affect (a) the length of funding settlements post-2025 and (b) the national response to rough sleeping and homelessness.</p> <p>Policy decisions around the Homes for Ukraine programme, which may affect funding.</p>	<p>New local administration – an opportunity to develop the relevant strands of the Corporate Strategy for the benefit of homelessness households.</p> <p>Political sensitivity of homelessness – an opportunity to highlight the difficulties faced by households facing homelessness and advocate for change.</p> <p>Lived experience – through co-production, an opportunity to educate and empower customers to challenge policy decisions.</p>
Economic	<p>State Funding - many externally funded programmes are due to end in March 2025, leaving a potential cliff-edge. This affects wider services (e.g. social services) and is a key recurring theme.</p> <p>Cost of living – the current economic crisis is a considerable threat to the viability of local services, in terms of higher costs, lower income and increased demand⁵⁴.</p> <p>Fuel Poverty – according to partners: <i>“every other client is an energy problem.”</i></p>	<p>Local Housing Allowance – LHA rates are to be raised to the 30th centile of local market rates in April 2024⁵⁵. This presents a temporary opportunity for homelessness households to access previously unaffordable accommodation. (NB: LHA is not due to be increased again in April 2025, so any positive impact will erode gradually)</p> <p>Cooling of PRS market – Zoopla⁵⁶ reports that “there are signs that the UK rental market will turn in 2024” with demand beginning to slow.</p> <p>Cross-departmental funding – under a new government, there may be opportunity to</p>

⁵² Nevertheless, initiatives such as Housing First formed part of the council’s 2019-2024 strategy and

⁵³ Of course, few factors are as polarised as being a clear threat or clear opportunity. For example, there will be elements of both threat and opportunity to a new national government, should this occur in 2024.

⁵⁴ [The Road Ahead 2023: The ongoing impact of cost of living | NCVO](#)

⁵⁵ [Indicative Local Housing Allowance rates for 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

⁵⁶ [Rental Market Report: December 2023 - Zoopla](#)

Economic

People are hanging on a string. 2024 is going to be a nightmare year”.

Unintended consequences of rise in minimum wage – partners expressed concern about the impact of the rise in minimum wage on (a) employers’ ability to recruit part-time workers and (b) individuals’ entitlement to Universal Credit.

lobby for joined-up funding (across health, justice, communities and so on) that may better suit the needs of vulnerable households.

Use current pressures as a catalyst for change – such as the clearly unacceptable level of B&B use nationally and locally.

Social

Challenges of staff recruitment and retention – with a potential impact on quality of customer service.

Increasing proportions of adults with mental health needs – increasing demand on services.

National trend of rough sleeping – DLUHC data⁵⁷ showed an increase of between 18% and 27% between Sept 2022 and Sept 2023. Whilst numbers remain steady in the borough, there is a risk of inward migration⁵⁸.

Hunger – the King’s Lynn Foodbank reported a 46% increase in usage in 22/23⁵⁹. As one partner said, *“we have a problem with hungry people”*.

Service design and expectation – the partnership has an opportunity, as part of the development of the strategy, to co-produce with people with lived experience, drawing on good practice elsewhere⁶⁰.

Norfolk Anti-Poverty Partnership – the council is working with partners towards a countywide anti-poverty partnership, which could improve opportunities for homeless households.

Technological

Word-of-mouth – there is a risk that individuals and services may continue to spread information by word-of-mouth alone, rather than technology to inform residents.

Data collection and sharing – there is an opportunity to improve data sharing using SharePoint and other cloud-based tools (subject to appropriate information governance policies).

⁵⁷ DLUHC, Ending Rough Sleeping Data Led Framework, September 2023. Snapshot figure 3,418 across England compared with 2,898 Sept 2022; monthly figure 8,442 compared with 6,627 Sept 2022.

⁵⁸ In fact, both individuals found rough sleeping on the night of the 2023 snapshot had recently migrated to the area from other districts.

⁵⁹ [King’s Lynn Food Bank reveals almost 50% rise in emergency food parcels compared to previous year \(lynnnews.co.uk\)](https://www.lynnnews.co.uk)

⁶⁰ Changing Futures Sheffield is a good example of co-production – “when individuals with lived experience are involved in the design, delivery, and evaluation of services.” [Changing Futures Sheffield - Changing Futures - Sheffield, England](#)

Tech...

Partners reported a need for “system improvement, working collaboratively” to ensure services reach those who need them the most.

Use of BI – the council could use new BI tools (as well as existing data collection methods) to improve analysis, forecasting and performance monitoring.

Legal

Renters Reform Bill – whilst the Bill aims to “bring in a better deal for renters⁶¹”, it may contribute towards PRS landlords exiting the market (for reasons previously set out in [section 3.2](#)).

Continued impact of policies such as Right to Buy – partners expressed a concern of the impact of Right to Buy on affordable housing stock.

Impact of Universal Credit migration⁶² – which is due to affect borough residents in 2024.

Impact of Home Office policies – at the time of writing, the impact of the closure of hotels for asylum seekers has yet to be seen in the borough.

Homelessness Legislation – the Welsh government recently published a White Paper⁶³ proposing a transformation to the homelessness and housing system. Given that the Homelessness Reduction Act was first introduced in Wales, English authorities will observe developments with interest.

Renters Reform Bill – the bill offers an opportunity to work collaboratively and proactively with PRS landlords for the mutual benefit of landlords and tenants.

The Supported Housing Act⁶⁴ – the Act aims to improve the sector and tackle “rogue operators and bad faith providers”. While the council retains positive relationships with all supported housing providers, the Act provides an opportunity to improve standards for homeless individuals.

Environmental

Climate Change – the local risk of flooding and other extreme weather events continues to act as a ‘push’ factor away from local developments.

Planning restrictions – partners identified the risk of the impact of local planning restrictions on the sector’s ability to build affordable housing.

Nutrient Neutrality⁶⁵ – whilst West Norfolk is not directly affected,, an extension would create difficulties.

Changes to the Town Centre – the changing shape of the town centre in King’s Lynn (as well as Downham Market and Hunstanton) may present opportunities to develop accommodation for homeless households.

The council could use the West Norfolk Housing Company (here and elsewhere) to maximise any s.106 opportunities arising.

Likewise, a reduction in car (and car park) use could release land suitable for affordable and/or specialist housing.

⁶¹ [Guide to the Renters \(Reform\) Bill - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁶² [Moving to Universal Credit from other benefits - Citizens Advice](#)

⁶³ [Annex B: A white paper on ending homelessness – summary \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

⁶⁴ [The Supported Housing \(Regulatory Oversight\) Act 2023: debate in parliament - House of Commons Library](#)

⁶⁵ [Nutrient Neutrality and the planning system | Local Government Association](#)

7. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

This review has set out:

- The current and future levels of homelessness in the borough,
- The resources available, as a partnership, to support homelessness applicants of various household types and support needs,
- An evaluation of the partnership’s effectiveness in dealing with demand,
- The likely opportunities and challenges for the partnership.

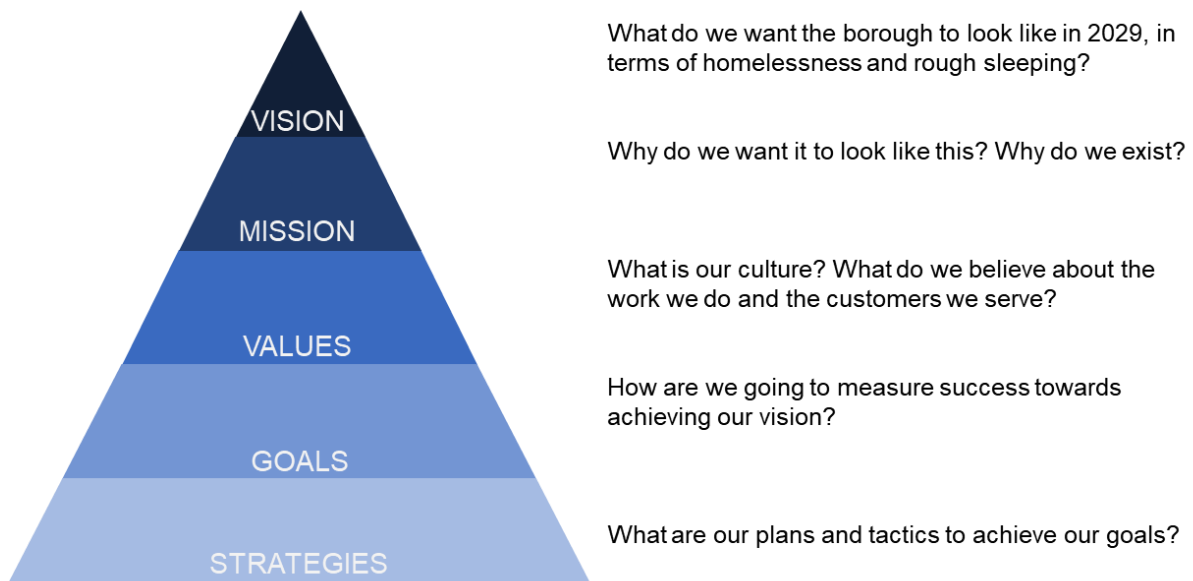
Led by the council, the partnership will work to develop its strategy over the next six months, with approximate timings as follows:

April to June 2024	<p>Development of strategy with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness partnership • People with lived experience (possibly laying the foundations for a future co-production group) • “Wider net” of employers, businesses, residents, faith and community groups • Council staff; Homeless and Housing Delivery Task Group
July 2024	<p>Production of key themes, with a series of deliverable goals, strategies and projects linked to each theme.</p> <p>“Check-back” with partners and lived experience contributors. Briefings to councillors and key partners.</p>
September 2024	<p>Formal adoption by council</p>
October 2024	<p>Partnership-wide launch event.</p>

Importantly: this review has highlighted gaps and challenges that the council and partners will begin to address before the strategy is adopted. For example, work to reduce the service’s reliance on B&B and nightly-paid accommodation has already commenced, whilst acknowledging the importance of a long-term strategy to eliminate B&B use.

The purpose of this review has been to set the scene for the development and implementation of the 2024-2029 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. This will consider the following⁶⁶:

⁶⁶ Adapted from [Strategic Planning - Experience On Demand \(experience-on-demand.com\)](https://www.experience-on-demand.com)



As stated in the introduction, this review is like the first act of a play, setting the scene, leaving questions unanswered. **Everyone in the borough is invited to contribute towards the next act.**

APPENDIX ONE – questionnaire to partners, Autumn 2023. Reformatted.

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. Homelessness Review 2023

BACKGROUND

You are invited to contribute to the council's review of homelessness services in the borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. The review is a chance to take stock of where we are at as a partnership:

- What has changed over the last five years – particularly in terms of the numbers and types of people approaching our services,
- What services have developed,
- What has worked well,
- What challenges have been faced,
- What gaps and opportunities have emerged because of the above.
-

NOTE: *If your organisation has more than one distinct service, please feel free to complete this form for each service.*

NOTE: *Please regard this questionnaire as a guide to help you review your service and the partnership. Please feel free to attach any relevant reports or publications that would help with our review.*

ABOUT YOUR SERVICE

- Service name
- When was your service established?
- Please give a brief outline of your service (max 100 words)
- Who funds your service? And until when?

WHO DO YOU SUPPORT?

- Tell us more about who you support (max 250 words). This could be in relation to (but is not limited to):
Age | Gender | Sexuality | Ethnicity | Disabilities | Health Conditions | Support Needs

If you have a recent, relevant report or other published data, please attach this to your response instead.

- Thinking about **the last five years** (or the lifespan of your service if less than five years), what has changed in terms of:
 - the demographic of the people you support,
 - the nature of the service?

And what has driven this? (max 250 words)

WHAT WORKS WELL?

Thinking about your service, and the partnership, what works well in the following areas? (max. 100 words per section)

Activity	Your service	The partnership
PREVENTION – activities to stop people becoming homeless and/or sleeping rough for the first time.	<i>e.g. trained mediators to help young people stay in the family somewhere safe</i>	<i>e.g. strong partnership with debt advice charity to assist service users in area Strong partnerships with some partner agencies but some require improvement</i>
INTERVENTION – activities to support people into accommodation, who are homeless and/or sleeping rough.	<i>e.g. trauma-informed outreach service for people sleeping rough</i>	<i>e.g. effective links with housing options service to support people into temporary accommodation</i>
RECOVERY – activities to sustain accommodation and address underlying support needs.	<i>e.g. weekly group therapy sessions at Steam Café for residents</i>	<i>e.g. joint ‘meetings around the person’ for people recently housed</i>
SYSTEM SUPPORT – underlying strategies and practices to ensure the best service for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.	<i>e.g. co-production group set up with service users</i>	<i>e.g. joint strategy developed to rehouse Ukrainian nationals</i>

WHERE ARE THE GAPS AND CHALLENGES?

Thinking about your service, and the partnership, where are the gaps and challenges in the following areas? (max. 100 words per section)

Activity	Your service	The partnership
PREVENTION – activities to stop people becoming homeless and/or sleeping rough for the first time.		
INTERVENTION – activities to support people into accommodation, who are homeless and/or sleeping rough.		
RECOVERY – activities to sustain accommodation and address underlying support needs.		

SYSTEM SUPPORT – underlying strategies and practices to ensure the best service for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.		
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AND FINALLY...

- What do your customers/guests/residents/service users say about you?
- Is there any other information that would help us complete a homelessness review for King's Lynn and West Norfolk?

POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	Environment and Community Panel		
DATE:	16 th July 2024		
TITLE:	Options for future management arrangements of Alive West Norfolk		
TYPE OF REPORT:	Cabinet Report		
PORTFOLIO(S):	Business and Culture		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Honor Howell, Corporate Governance Manager/Assistant to the Chief Executive		
OPEN/EXEMPT	Part Exempt	WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	Yes

REPORT SUMMARY/COVER PAGE

PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:
To consider options for future management arrangements of Alive West Norfolk
KEY ISSUES:
Members are directed to the attached report for full details of the key issues.
OPTIONS CONSIDERED:
Members are directed to the attached report for full details of the options.
RECOMMENDATIONS:
To consider the report and make any appropriate recommendations to Cabinet.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To scrutinise recommendations being made for an executive decision.

REPORT TO CABINET

Open/Exempt <i>Appendix A Exempt</i>		Would any decisions proposed :			
		Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide		YES/NO	
		Need to be recommendations to Council		YES/NO	
Any especially affected Wards	Mandatory/	Is it a Key Decision		YES/NO	
	Discretionary / Operational				
Lead Member: Cllr Simon Ring E-mail: <i>cllr.simon.ring@west-norfolk.gov.uk</i>		Other Cabinet Members consulted: Cabinet			
		Other Members consulted: Joint scrutiny panels - E & C and CPP			
Lead Officer: Honor Howell E-mail: honor.howell@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial: 01553 616550		Other Officers consulted: Senior Leadership Team; Alive West Norfolk Management Team; Alive West Norfolk Board of Directors			
Financial Implications YES/NO	Policy/ Personnel Implications YES/NO	Statutory Implications YES/NO	Equal Impact Assessment YES/NO If YES: Pre-screening/ Full Assessment	Risk Management Implications YES/NO	Environmental Considerations YES/NO
If not for publication, the paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act considered to justify that is (are) paragraph(s) Part Public and part Private – Contains exempt information under paragraph 3 – information relating to the business affairs of any person (including the authority).					

Date of meeting: 30 July 2024

OPTIONS FOR FUTURE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS OF ALIVE WEST NORFOLK Summary

The Council established Alive West Norfolk (AWN) in 2018. It has been trading as a Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC) since July 2019. The Cabinet report which proposed the setting up of AWN outlined a number of aspirations for the company. After five years of trading these aspirations remain challenging, largely as a result of the difficult external environment, coupled with the need for investment in aging facilities.

AWN continues to require substantial council subsidy, and this is projected to increase in the coming years. AWN have not received capital investment grants from the council to make the required improvements to the facilities. At the same time there is an urgent need to seek major capital investment in the

venues.

The council has previously agreed to increase the independence of the company's board which potentially creates an unsustainable position for the council of increasing cost, reducing control, possible limitations on contributions to council corporate priorities and the growing risks of failure to secure capital investment to renew the venues. Alongside this, the Authority has key corporate objectives around health and wellbeing, to include reducing health inequalities which would be supported by closer integration between staff employed by the council and AWN employees. This together with impending changes in Senior Management at the council, and the recent retirement of the AWN Managing Director calls for consideration of alternative management options.

This report assesses four options for the future operating model for AWN – an independent trust, tendering to external operators, continuing with the LACC model and in-house council management.

The conclusion is that the first two options would give no better outcomes than the current model (at least for now) and the existing model is unlikely to substantially improve the financial and policy outcomes for the council, mainly due to external forces. It is therefore recommended that in-house management by the council with AWN staff TUPE'd to the Authority is the best option for the foreseeable future.

Recommendation

Cabinet Resolves:

- That the governance and operation of Alive West Norfolk is returned to in-house council management under a management structure which will need to be considered as part of any review of senior level resourcing requirements, to be undertaken by the new Chief Executive.
- That the new arrangements to be in place by 1st January 2025 with an implementation deadline of April 2025
- That a budget of £20,000 is set aside to cover one-off set up costs (changes to ICT systems etc) related to the transfer of the service to an in-house provision.
- To agree the transfer of contracts by way of novation or assignment in accordance with the existing Scheme of Delegation.
- To delegate the negotiations for the termination of the Management Agreement with the Alive West Norfolk Board of Directors to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture and the council's AWN Client Officer.
- To delegate all necessary powers and authority to implement the transfer

to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture and the council's Client Officer.

- A separate report to consider capital investment proposals for the leisure facilities to come to a future cabinet meeting.

Reason for Decision

A key priority of the council as outlined in the Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 is to provide access to leisure, cultural and outreach experiences, to reduce isolation, to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and to reduce health and social inequalities. The cost of providing leisure and cultural services continues to rise and the leisure facilities require substantial investment and improvement. Returning these services to an in-house function will enable the council to directly influence and control this essential service, to plan for capital investment and benefit from simplifying the operational management of AWN, eliminating client officer and Shareholder costs.

1. Background

- 1.1 The borough council has a 'Best Value' duty to secure continuous improvement in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. This report examines the delivery model for its leisure/arts venues.
- 1.2 The [Cabinet report](#) in August 2018 which led to the setting up of Alive West Norfolk (a Local Authority Controlled Company or LACC) outlined a number of aspirations for the new company. These are summarised below with an update on performance against each of them.
- 1.3 Reduce cost to the council: The budget for AWN in 2024/25 shows a cost to be paid by the council of £2.05m. Critically, forecasts for the subsequent three years show this increasing. Therefore, the expectation in the 2018 Cabinet report of reducing the cost to the council has not been realised. The increase is partly explained by the continued impact of COVID on visit levels and by the current 'cost of living crisis' resulting in residents having less income to spend on leisure activities, together with much higher utility costs. However, all operators have faced these challenges and a comparison of AWN performance with industry standards shows that on the key performance indicator of 'cost recovery' (income contribution to costs) – AWN achieves only 76% compared to the industry average of 101%. This is in part due to the ageing condition of some of the facilities as other facilities do not incur the same level of costs.
- 1.4 Since AWN was established, an option to grow its business by bidding for contracts outside the borough may have been a possibility. However, external factors such as

covid and the cost-of-living crisis has meant AWN has had to focus its provision within the Borough and has not had capacity to bid for alternative contracts.

- 1.5 As a result, AWN remains a small operator with management overheads, spread across a limited number of aging venues. This inbuilt 'diseconomy of scale' is unlikely to be resolved without the transfer of AWN into a larger partner organisation.
- 1.6 Reduce complexity and duplication: although the AWN model is less complex than its predecessor trust model, it still requires the council to resource a separate board with senior officers and members attending the board as directors. Furthermore, the council is required to commit senior officer time to act as 'client' for AWN with an oversight, approval, and performance review function. Although AWN is a 'controlled' company of the council, the board and its directors always act in the best interests of the company – and these may not always align with the council's interests.
- 1.7 Furthermore, in 2022, the council agreed to enhance the independence of the AWN Board (including the appointment of new independent directors) and establish a new Shareholder Committee within the council to oversee the performance of the company. This decision increases the pressure on the council to ensure oversight of the company, particularly given there is no up to date Service Level Agreement or performance specification in place which sets out the council's requirements and these have been placed on hold whilst this review is ongoing.
- 1.8 Increase visit levels and activity levels in the borough: whilst direct comparisons of the pre and post COVID period are difficult, it is worth noting that at the area level, the number of adults classed as physically active is significantly lower than the England and Norfolk averages. Only 51% of the adult population are defined as active, 10% lower than the regional average and 12% lower than the England average. In 2019 the percentage of adults classed as active was 61%, 10% higher than the current levels. By comparison, national activity levels have almost recovered to pre-Covid levels.
 - 1.8.1 Similarly local activity levels for children and young people remain stubbornly lower than the averages for Norfolk and England.
 - 1.8.2 At the same time, visit levels to its leisure/sport venues have marginally reduced and remained static for the Corn Exchange. Again, COVID is a factor in this, but compared to other parts of England, the recovery of visit levels to venues has been slower and the leisure venues in particular are struggling to hit pre-COVID visit rates.
- 1.9 Greater contribution to the council's strategic objectives: the 2018 Cabinet report predicted that a LACC would have much greater alignment with the council's goals than the predecessor trust model. As outlined above there is now an opportunity to further align resources and expertise to tackle the authority's significant health inequalities. Furthermore, the prevailing perception amongst members and senior officers is one of AWN being 'outside the council' and this has resulted in a policy void between the company and the council, especially at Senior Management level.

1.10 A key concern for the council is that the current structure does not maximise the potential for AWN staff and BCKLWN staff to jointly explore wider synergies and additional value for development of staff with wider opportunities working within the council.

1.11 In summary, whilst the relationship between the company and council is good and constructive, there continue to be a number of financial, policy, governance and investment challenges presented by the current arrangements of AWN to the borough council. It should be emphasised that this is in no way a reflection of the management of AWN by its officers, which has been exemplary.

2 Options Considered

2.1 There are four main options for managing the services currently provided by AWN: -

- Independent trust
- Tendering to external operators
- The current LACC model but with improved outcomes
- Operating the services within the council

2.2 **Independent Trust:** as set out in the August 2018 Cabinet report, the previous Trust model that preceded AWN was not considered a sustainable delivery model. Given this was a relatively recent decision, it would appear counter intuitive for the council at this time to switch back to the same model.

- Trusts in the UK have generally remained small in their operating scale. This problem of scale often results in relatively low efficiency and poor economies of scale, with disproportionate management overheads. As a result, several councils have wound up their agreements with trusts and either moved services in-house or tendered them to larger external operators.
- It is not possible for the council to set up a trust or to exclusively partner with an existing trust and then to simply transfer across the services. Procurement rules and/or the requirement to demonstrate best value would require the council to openly tender the services to all potential bidders – i.e., trusts and other external operators. The only alternative to this would be a narrowly scoped property lease to a chosen trust, but this would prohibit the council having any meaningful influence over the direction or detail of the services provided.
- The experience of working with trusts is that they are disproportionately dependent on the performance of a small number of key individuals. This carries significant risks in terms of relationship management and the successful delivery of outcomes.

2.3 **Tendering to external operators:** whilst an external commercial or social enterprise operator can offer a council a number of benefits – industry expertise, economies of scale, risk sharing and financial certainty - there are a number of reasons why the tendering model may not be right for the council at this time including:

- The need for major capital investment in the council's leisure venues means that a tendered contract to manage them would be relatively unattractive to potential bidders, given the bidders' likely concerns about declining quality, high costs and low income. Also, in advance of a secured and committed council investment programme, bidders would be required to submit double bids – one assuming investment and one not. This makes the tendering process much more complex and costly for the council and bidders and introduces significant uncertainty, potentially inflated tender prices, and complex renegotiations if and when investment is delivered
- The tender option is further complicated by the mix of arts and leisure venues currently managed by AWN. It is unlikely that the council would get a competitive response from the market if the services were tendered as one lot given there are very few operators who successfully manage leisure and arts venues. The council would therefore be best to tender two contracts – one for the Corn Exchange and one for the leisure venues. This substantially increases the cost and complexity of tendering and the subsequent long-term costs of contract management.
- There are potentially significant operating efficiencies that the council could achieve in advance of tendering the services. These are yet to be realised. These should be fully explored and implemented prior to a decision to tender so that the full benefit will accrue to the council – which could for example be in the form of corporate savings and/or recycled into borrowing capital to fund renewed facilities
- New or refurbished facilities will deliver significant revenue savings as operating costs fall and income increases. A detailed investment plan should therefore be developed and implemented by the council prior to any potential tendering because the council can then benefit fully from the resulting major revenue savings – again giving it the option to recycle this into borrowing to support the capital investment costs
- The council does not currently have the capacity to manage a tendering exercise – especially a highly complex one based on pre and post capital investment scenarios and separate tenders for arts and leisure. An officer team would have to be established and funded and it would also probably require significant spend on an extended engagement of consultants to provide the industry-specific tendering expertise.
- More importantly, the time and resources required to manage a major and complex tendering programme would almost certainly result in a further and protracted delay in the council securing a facility investment plan. Given the increasing urgency of this, it is considered that priority over the less urgent distraction of a major tendering exercise.

2.4 **Continue with the current model but with improved outcomes:** Another option would be for the council to give the current LACC model more time to see better outcomes. Whilst this would avoid the disruption and potential costs and risks of switching to an alternative model, it has a number of disadvantages.

- Unless the company was able to significantly grow its business – both within and beyond the borough – it would continue to suffer from low economies of scale and disproportionate overheads and therefore likely to require major on-going subsidy from the council.
- Whilst COVID has played a part in suppressing the company’s business, as stated earlier, a post-COVID comparison continues to show it performing below industry averages – both in visit levels and cost recovery. After five years of operation, there are no obvious or rational reasons to suggest this will gap will be closed in the near future under the current model with limited capital investment. Indeed, operating efficiencies will remain difficult to implement in the company given its limitations of scale. For example, potential staff efficiencies are more challenging given the limited scope for redeployment.
- The cost to the council of providing leisure and culture facilities is forecast to increase in the coming years and there are no obvious ‘levers’ available to reverse this trend under the current model. At the same time, the retirement of existing board members would hasten the need for the council to implement its 2022 decision to give the AWN board greater independence. Therefore the ‘double disadvantage’ of increasing council costs and reducing council control/influence will almost certainly grow under the current model.

2.5 In summary, the alternative models of trusts and tendering have significant limitations at the current time and are arguably worse than continuing with the LACC model. However, the existing model also has major and potentially growing shortcomings with few signs of likely improvement as things currently stand. It is therefore logical for the council to consider the fourth and final option – in-house management – as potentially offering the best medium-term solution.

3. Operating the services within the council

3.1 By transferring AWN back into the council, there is an opportunity to address many of the limitations presented by both the current model and the alternative trust and tendering models. The potential benefits of an insourced operation are summarised below.

- Reduce cost to the council – the integration of the AWN services into the council will provide new opportunities for recurring annual savings on reduced management overheads and significant VAT and administrative savings. These are summarised in the Financial Implications section of this report.
- All AWN staff are currently on council terms and conditions and the council carries all major risks - for example, energy and maintenance costs. AWN can therefore be insourced without additional recurring costs or risks to the council. By contrast, many other councils face a major increase in costs and risk from insourcing – primarily where staff are employed on non-local authority terms and conditions.
- Create a single focus on a facility investment plan – merging the strategic role of the council with the operational role of the company significantly strengthens the focus, capacity and expertise required to develop and deliver the major capital investment plan needed over the coming three to five years.
- Retain and recycle revenue savings - both the initial recurring savings resulting from insourcing and a much bigger second wave of savings from new/refurbished facilities can be fully retained by the council. It then has the option of recycling some or all the savings into capital borrowing to help fund the investment plan – with facilities thereby making a significant ‘self-funded’ contribution to their renewal costs.
- Simplify organisational arrangements and eliminate client costs – integrating AWN services into the council will not require additional or dedicated performance or contract management resources. It will also eliminate the need for ‘client’ roles and the demands of servicing a board. There will also be no requirement to address the current absence of a service contract and specification and importantly, it will allow the council to continue to operate the AWN brand in all public facing interactions (website, staff uniform, venue signage etc).
- Achieve full alignment with council priorities and goals – bringing AWN services into the council will automatically align them with the council’s goals and significantly increase their contribution to strategic priorities. This is particularly the case with the crucial challenge of reducing health inequalities. There will also be the potential for a mutually beneficial relationship between council and company staff – each offering to the other complementary expertise and experience.
- Retain the flexibility to review operating options in the future – whilst there appears to be a compelling case to bring AWN back into the council and to synchronise this with the development of a new capital investment plan for the venues - the council has the option to further review the operating options post investment in 3 to 5 years.

- Finally, a major benefit of insourcing is that it offers the opportunity for the council to ‘twin track’ i.e., transferring to an alternative management model at the same time as developing and delivering a major capital investment programme. One of the benefits of insourcing – especially given AWN staff are already on council terms and conditions – is that the processing of a transfer is relatively straight forward and can be done quickly. This avoids the risk of the time critical need for an investment plan being further delayed by a protracted process of switching to an alternative management model or continuing to be undermined by a decision to continue with the current model.

4. Policy Implications

- 4.1 The recommendation to transfer AWN to the Council, for the reasons outlined in this report, is consistent with the objectives outlined in the Council’s Corporate Strategy for 2023-2027 which includes a commitment to “actively and continually examine and review the way we deliver our services in-house, through our companies, through procurement and other channels, to ensure they offer value for money and meet the needs of our communities”. Bringing leisure and cultural services back inhouse will help to support our local communities by enabling the Council to have direct influence over access to leisure and cultural experiences, ensuring these services continue to make a vital contribution to improving health and wellbeing in the borough and joining up approaches to tackling health inequalities. Insourcing these services will also help to ensure their effective and efficient delivery going forward, including reducing complexity and duplication, ensuring value for money in service delivery and providing opportunities for capital expenditure.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 A summary of the Alive West Norfolk projected financial position is detailed below: the detailed breakdown is in Appendix A (Exempt Document).
- 5.2 The financial position of Alive West Norfolk over the past 4 years is attached at Appendix B. This demonstrates an increase in the costs between 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, which are largely due to increases in utility prices (Appendix C).
- 5.3 The current agreement between the Council and AWN has a provision for the Company to pay the Council an annual ‘management fee’ of £412k. Because of the performance challenges faced by the Company – outlined elsewhere in this report – the Company has not yet been able to pay the target figure of £412k.
- 5.4 Since the Company started trading in July 2019 to the year ended 31/03/2023, a total of c.£357k has been paid to the Council in regard to the management fee. It is estimated that payment of £145k will be made to the Council for year ended 31/03/2024. The repeated shortfalls on the fee payment have been covered at year end by the council’s budget.

- 5.5 As a result of the 2024/2025 budgets prepared for AWN, the Council has not budgeted for management fee income in 2024/2025. The council's Medium Term Financial Plan does include a target management fee income figure of £412k for the three years inclusive 2025/2026 to 2027/2028.
- 5.6 If it is agreed to transfer AWN into the Council, it is suggested that the principle of an annual payment in the form of an 'operating surplus' be agreed internally between the AWN services and the Council. This should be set at a level that reflects the realistic income potential and operating costs of AWN. This will make no material difference to the Council's overall financial risk and should lead to greater financial control.
- 5.7 Due to recent changes in HMRC's interpretation of VAT legislation, which resulted in leisure services being classified as non-business supplies for VAT purposes, one of the main beneficial factors of having AWN as a separate company is no longer applicable. Under the current company model, there is a proportion of input VAT which is unrecoverable of c.£400k and therefore a cost to the company. If agreed, the transition back into the council will allow for this element of VAT to be fully recovered, as long as the council's de minimis limits are not breached. These limits have been reviewed and based on current levels; it has been confirmed that there would be no breach.
- 5.8 The other main beneficial factor of having a company model was the saving on Discretionary Rates Relief for the leisure facilities. Currently this saving to the Council is c.£360k, as this cost is currently covered by Norfolk County Council and Central Government. If the transfer is agreed, this would become a cost to the Council.
- 5.9 Transferring AWN back into the council will offer the opportunity to review management costs of the operation. The proposal is to integrate the service into existing staffing resources within the council would result in a potential reduction in management costs in the order of £140k.
- 5.10 If agreed, the transition back into the Council will result in some additional one-off work for the finance, Human Resources and ICT departments to undertake. For example, finance system integration/set up, customer and supplier migration/set up, banking/DD transfers. All work is fundamental to avoid disruption to services and ensure business continuity. A realistic timescale for the transition will be set to ensure this work can be completed accurately.
- 5.11 Customers, suppliers, and any other external stakeholders will be communicated with if the transition back into the Council is agreed.

- 5.12 A transfer will also create efficiencies within the department by removing the duplicated processes currently being undertaken as two separate entities. For example, there would only be one VAT return being prepared instead of two, one external audit. Although these additional administrative costs would not realise a financial saving, unless staffing resources were reviewed, it will free up staff capacity.
- 5.13 It has also been identified that there will be a number of one-off costs incurred to complete the transition, if the transfer is agreed. A review across all impacted areas has been undertaken and it is expected that a budget of £20k will be required to implement the transfer.
- 5.14 Overall, therefore, there are a number of financial gains and losses for the council. However, the overall net financial gain from the VAT savings, taking into account the business rates change in the order of c. £200k per annum.

6 Legal Implications

6.1 Powers

If the Council acts commercially, it must be linked to a mandatory or discretionary power that the Council has available to it, otherwise it must be done through a company. A review has been carried out of the activities carried out by AWN commercially and they all come within the Council's statutory powers, namely: section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, sections 144 & 145 of the Local Government Act 1972, and section 12 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. Accordingly, the Council can continue all activities carried on by AWN for commercial gain, in the event of future in-house Council management.

6.2 Termination of Management Agreement and Leases

The Management Agreement provides for a six-month termination notice period. A termination notice can be served at any time. All leases for the leisure facilities contain a reciprocal clause meaning that termination of the Management Agreement will act as a termination of the leases as well, with the same notice period. These termination notice provisions will need to be complied with in the event Cabinet resolves that the Management Agreement with AWN should end.

6.3 Novation of Contracts

A list of all contracts held by AWN has been compiled and checks are being made with each contractor to see that they would agree to a novation of the relevant

contract to the Council. Further checks would be made if it were resolved to award the leisure and/or culture provision to a different provider.

6.4 Asset Transfer Agreement

AWN holds little in the way of assets as the leisure facilities are leased and the leisure equipment is hired. A full list will, however, need to be compiled of all miscellaneous assets of AWN to append to an Asset Transfer Agreement in the event that leisure and culture services are resolved to be transferred, whether to the Council or another provider. The value of the assets is likely to be negligible and the agreement will address any tax consequences where relevant.

7. **Personnel Implications**

7.1 If agreed, the recommended option would mean that those staff currently employed by Alive West Norfolk would transfer to the Council's employment with effect from the transfer date. The Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations (commonly known as TUPE) will apply in these circumstances and the transfer will be handled in accordance with the requirements of these regulations.

7.2 Staff employed by Alive West Norfolk are already engaged on the same terms and conditions of employment as Borough Council staff. This includes all staffing related policies and procedures operated by the Council, such as arrangements for performance related pay, sickness absence management and holiday arrangements. Therefore, the TUPE transfer to the Borough Council's employment will therefore have no impact on staff terms and conditions.

7.3 It will be necessary to undertake a communication and consultation process with staff, to inform them of the proposed changes to the operating model for Alive West Norfolk, and to consult with them regarding the TUPE transfer. This will include consultation with trade unions in accordance with agreed procedures. Alive West Norfolk are the current employers, and it is proposed that a joint communication and consultation process be adopted by the AWN Board and the Council to ensure this part of the transfer is undertaken smoothly.

7.4 Transferring AWN back into the Council will remove the need for a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the provision of HR services to the company and remove the need for the Council's HR team to run a second payroll each month, which will remove some duplication of administrative processes which have been burdensome for the team.

7.5 If Cabinet agrees the recommendation, officers will review the options for integrating the staff into council management structures. This may require an initial temporary solution to facilitate a timely transfer, particularly if the wider council staffing structures are under review following the appointment of a new Chief Executive.

8. Property Implications: Leases and Management Agreement

8.1 A number of lease agreements have been created between the borough council (as landlord) and Alive West Norfolk (as tenant) for the following premises:

- Lynnsport : King's Lynn
- St James Pool: King's Lynn
- Oasis Leisure Centre: Hunstanton
- Corn Exchange Theatre: King's Lynn

And a sub-tenancy arrangement has been created at:

- Downham Leisure Centre: Downham Market [Note: this sub-tenancy issue should not be problematic as the main contractual agreement is between the borough council and its head lessor]

8.2 All of the above leasing arrangements are Business Tenancy arrangements between the borough council (as landlord) and Alive West Norfolk (as tenant), and all the leases have the same lease date, lease commencement date, length of lease term, and generally all the other terms and conditions are the same throughout each lease.

8.3 Although the contractual lease term is due to end in June 2024, there is no need to seek to extend the leasing arrangement formally. Within commercial Business Tenancies there is "common practice" that the tenant can continue on in occupation, under the terms of the time-expired lease agreement, until such time as the tenancy is formally brought to an end (by the execution of a relevant Notice under the Landlord & Tenant Act 1954), and a new lease is granted (or the tenancy if formally brought to an end (by formal Notice) and the landlord takes possession of the property). This is called "holding over".

9. Environmental Considerations

9.1 There are no environmental considerations emerging from this report in respect of the possible transfer from a LACC back to the council.

10. Statutory Considerations

10.1 Statutory considerations are included in section 6.

11. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

11.1 Pre-screening EIA form attached. Full assessment not required at this stage.

12. Risk Management Implications



Stage 1 - Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment

121 An analysis of the risk has been attached at Appendix D.

13. Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted

13.1 None.

14. Background Papers

[Cabinet Report 2018](#)

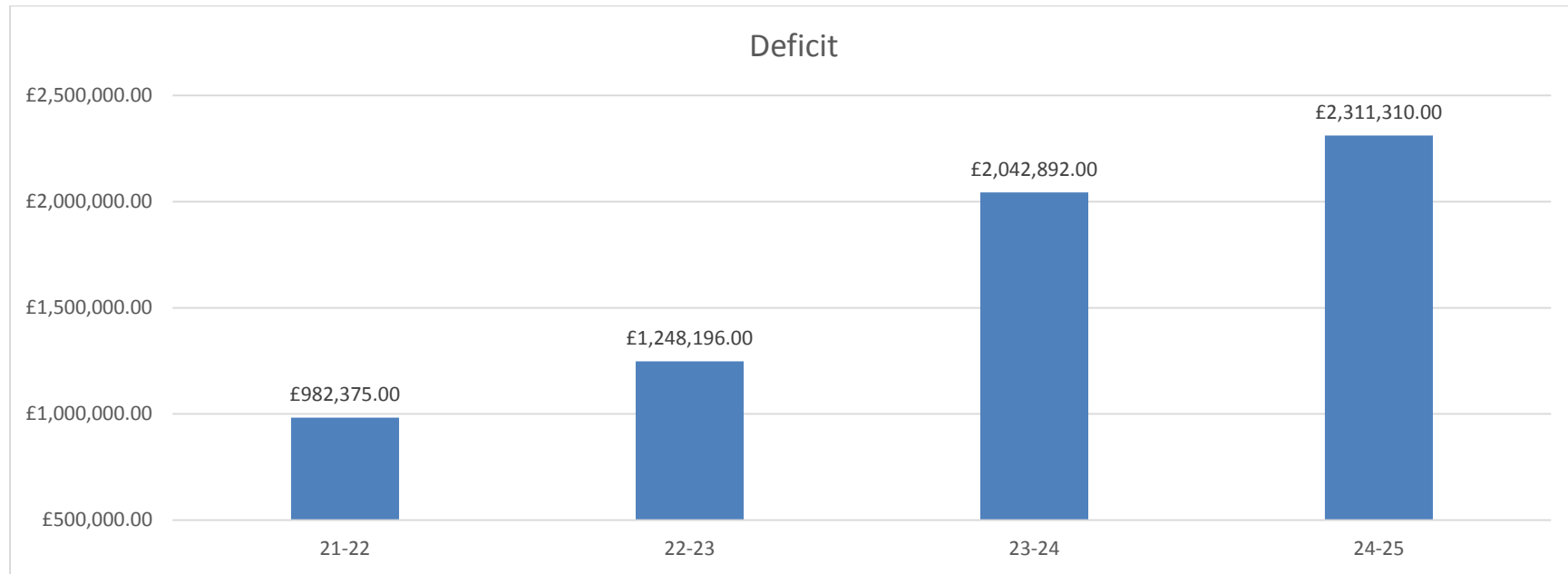
(Definition: Unpublished work relied on to a material extent in preparing the report that discloses facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based. A copy of all background papers must be supplied to Democratic Services with the report for publishing with the agenda)

Name of policy/service/function	Options for future management arrangements of Alive West Norfolk				
Is this a new or existing policy/ service/function? (tick as appropriate)	New		Existing	✓	
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. Please state if this policy/service is rigidly constrained by statutory obligations, and identify relevant legislation.	Report to cabinet that outlines four options for the future management of Alive West Norfolk – 1 An independent trust, 2 Tendering to external operators, 3 Continuing with the LACC model 4 In-house council management.				
Who has been consulted as part of the development of the policy/service/function? – new only (identify stakeholders consulted with)	Borough Council's Senior Leadership Team – Chief Executive, Executive Directors, and Assistant Directors. Senior Leadership for Alive West Norfolk.				
Question	Answer				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p> <p>If potential adverse impacts are identified, then a full Equality Impact Assessment (Stage 2) will be required.</p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age			✓	
	Disability			✓	
	Sex			✓	
	Gender Re-assignment			✓	
	Marriage/civil partnership			✓	
	Pregnancy & maternity			✓	
	Race			✓	
	Religion or belief			✓	
	Sexual orientation			✓	
Other (eg low income, caring responsibilities)			✓		

Question	Answer	Comments
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Complete EIA Pre-screening Form to be shared with Corporate Policy (corporate.policy@west-norfolk.gov.uk)

APPENDIX B



APPENDIX C

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	22/23	23/24	Variance
Utilities	£776,900.00	£1,269,459.00	£492,559.00
Maintenance	£522,712.03	£561,505.00	£38,792.97
U/Supported Borrowing (Capital)	£11,420.00	£150,120.00	£138,700.00
Repayment of Covid Grant	(£85,000)	-	£85,000
		Total	£755,051.97
		Difference between 22/23 and 23/24	<u>£794,696.00</u>
			£39,644.03

APPENDIX D – RISK ANALYSIS

RAG rated risks by option

Green = likely better outcome Orange = likely poorer outcome Yellow = some issues/neutral

Operational Model	Option 1 – Trust	Option 2 – External tender/outsourced provision	Option 3 LACC	Option 4 – Fully in-house provision
Risk Topic				
Financial	Unlikely to achieve beyond good	Unlikely to achieve beyond good currently due to low attractiveness to providers/ need for investment	No Change VAT changes loss of benefit of LACC status	Net gain c. £200k Opportunity to integrate support services unify management structures resulting in potential efficiencies Business rates exemption will no longer apply - £300k exposure but mitigated by Business Rates Pool
Operational	Union and staff consultation required	Uncertainty for staff; Union and staff consultation required	Current position Staff are on council Terms and Conditions; engagement with union and Board Currently a void on council responsibility for capital investment decisions (officer side)	Fully in control of council to reshape and realign for achievement of direct and indirect policy objectives and Corporate Priorities Staff already on council Terms and Conditions Eliminate requirement for Client role Council management restructure already being considered following changes at Management Team
Strategic/Governance		Contractual; potential for conflict or disagreement	Financial/ Value for money	As standard decision making

			Participation in physical activity has declined.	<p>Alignment between Corporate Strategy and provision of health and wellbeing and reduction of health inequalities</p> <p>Link into Marmot Project</p> <p>Information governance – all Data Protection, GDPR and other policies will align with the council</p> <p>Remove requirement for resource to manage Board meetings, Shareholder Function and other functions required for an LACC.</p>
Legislative, Regulatory and Compliance		Responsibility passes to operator	Unclear lines of accountability re increasing independence of Board	Very clear lines of accountability are achievable
Technological		Responsibility passes to operator, likely separate operating systems	No change	All ICT is currently hosted/maintained by the borough council. Some systems will require updating but overall, minimal change will be required, therefore less disruption to services.
Community and Reputational	Previous model: would be counterintuitive for the council to revert to a model deemed not suitable for Leisure	Dependent on service quality; may bring disruption to service delivery during transfer, may increase costs to residents, may improve offer to residents	Venues require investment; inaction may reduce resident trust in services	<p>Transfer will not disrupt service delivery</p> <p>Service quality may not improve Alive has only been operational for 5 years. Perception of</p>

	Services			cost, initial decision to set up LACC.
Environmental		Model would still require significant capital investment from the Shareholder	Capital investment required	<p>The council has declared a climate emergency and has a target to be carbon neutral by 2030. In-house operation is more likely to align the priorities and create ownership and accountability for carbon emissions.</p> <p>Capital investment will incorporate environmental considerations</p>
CONCLUSION				Likely best outcome for the medium-term

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2024/2025

DATE OF MEETING	TITLE	TYPE OF REPORT	LEAD OFFICER/ ATTENDEE	OBJECTIVES AND DESIRED OUTCOMES
4th June 2024	Membership of Task Groups and Informal Working Groups 2024/2025	Operational	Democratic Services Officer	To appoint Members to Task Groups and Informal Working Groups established by the Panel
	Nominations to Outside Bodies and Partnerships	Operational	Democratic Services Officer	To nominate representatives to outside bodies and partnerships
	Appointment of Vice Chair for the Municipal Year	Operational		
	Councillor Community Grants		Debbie Ess/ Honor Howell	For information
	Any Cabinet Reports which fall within the remit of the Panel – to be confirmed.			
16th July 2024	Any Cabinet Reports which fall within the remit of the Panel – to be confirmed.			
	Cabinet Report – Alive West Norfolk Arrangements	Cabinet Report		After Joint Panel and prior to Cabinet on 30 th July 2024
	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	Cabinet Report	Andy King	Update, recommendations before going to Cabinet on 17 th September 2024
3rd September 2024	Any Cabinet Reports which fall within the remit of the Panel – to be confirmed.			
	Wash East Coast Management Strategy – Unit C – Technical Report		Dave Robson	To address the Notice of Motion on Coastal Management referred to

				the Panel from Full Council in October 2023.
	Recommendations from the Biodiversity Task Group	Cabinet Report	Stuart Ashworth	To consider the report and make any appropriate recommendations to Cabinet
	Air Quality Action Plan	Cabinet Report	Dave Robson	Going to Cabinet on 17 th September 2024
8th October 2024	Any Cabinet Reports which fall within the remit of the Panel – to be confirmed.			
	DFG Framework		Jo Russell Ryan Wilson Mark Whitmore	Before going to Cabinet on 5 th November 2024
	Gambling Act Policy		Marie Malt	Policy Review
26th November 2024	Any Cabinet Reports which fall within the remit of the Panel – to be confirmed.			
8th January 2025	Any Cabinet Reports which fall within the remit of the Panel – to be confirmed.			
25th February 2025	Any Cabinet Reports which fall within the remit of the Panel – to be confirmed.			
8th April 2025	Any Cabinet Reports which fall within the remit of the Panel – to be confirmed.			

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To be scheduled

- Gayton Road Cemetery – to come back once alternative locations had been identified.
- Policy Development – Review of Tree and Woodland Strategy and update from the Arboricultural Officers
- Notice of Motion – Dentistry
- Service Level Agreement for Council Approved testing Stations

- Informal Working Group – Wash Barrier
- Wash East Coast Management Strategy – Unit C

Document is Restricted