



Stage 2 - Full Equality Impact Assessment Form

1. What is the service area(s) and who is the lead officer?

Service Area - Housing Needs
Assistant Director - Duncan Hall
Lead Officers - Nikki Patton & Andy King

2. What change are you proposing?

All housing authorities are required by law to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy once every five years (Home. 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 earlier this year and laid the foundation for developing an effective strategy: led by data and supported by professional and lived experience.

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.

A report setting out the process by which a new Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy has been developed and how progress will be monitored and evaluated along with the strategy will be presented to Cabinet on 17th September 2024 for adoption.

The report all seeks adoption by Cabinet 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.



3. How will this change help the council achieve its Corporate Strategy priorities (and therefore your Directorate/service objectives)?

The Strategy help to achieve the following Corporate Business Plan priorities/objectives:

Support our communities :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.

- A key focus of the strategy is to end homelessness and prevent it from happening in the first instance thus supporting people/households to thrive

Promote growth and prosperity to benefit West Norfolk: To create job opportunities, support economic growth, develop skills needed locally, encourage housing development and infrastructure that meets local need and promote West Norfolk as a destination.

Specifically:

- Creating of new accommodation (and accommodation opportunities) including:
 - Improved emergency accommodation options
 - Improved access to social housing
 - Improved access to emergency accommodation
- Improved employment and meaningful activity opportunities for people with lived experience of homelessness.

Efficient and effective delivery of our services To provide cost-effective, efficient services that meet the needs of our local communities, promote good governance, and provide sustainable financial planning and appropriate staffing.

Specifically:

- A reduction in the council's spend on emergency accommodation
- An improvement in contract monitoring for commissioned services relating to homelessness.



4. What is your evidence of need for change?

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, all housing authorities are required by law to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy once every five years. In January 2020 a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2019-2024) and action plan was agreed and published by the Council. This Strategy is nearing the end of the 5 year period.

The need for a refreshed strategy is timely, given the acute pressures currently faced, both by homeless households and the services supporting them.

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 provides the evidence for change: 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.

5. How will this change deliver improved value for money and/or release efficiency savings?

As detailed in Q3, this will result in:

- A reduction in the council's spend on emergency accommodation
- An improvement in contract monitoring for commissioned services relating to homelessness (and thus an improvement in the value-for-money of commissioned services).

It will also enable existing council staff to work more efficiently, reducing levels of complaints (and associated costs), improving staff retention (and thus reducing recruitment costs) and so on.



6. What geographical area does this proposal cover?

The Strategy covers the Borough of King's Lynn & West Norfolk.



7. What is the impact of your proposal?

What outputs will be achieved as a result?

Key outputs will include:

- An increase in the proportion of people presenting as homeless at 'prevention stage' and an increase in the proportion of work dedicated to upstream prevention
- A reduction in the number, and cost, of people in nightly-paid / B&B accommodation, and their length of stay
- A reduction in the number of people verified as sleeping rough
- An increase in the number of social housing lets achieved
- A reduction in complaints received by the service. After an initial benchmarking exercise, an increase in the level of satisfaction experienced by homeless applicants.

What will change?

The strategy document sets this out in more detail, but we are seeking to deliver transformational change to the way we deliver homelessness services: aiming towards ending homelessness, person by person, and delivering services in line with core values of dignity, transparency, flexibility, collaboration and empowerment.

How will service users experience the change?

The aim is for service users to experience a service that is:

- Easier to access – with a greater emphasis on in-person services and partnership working
- Easier to understand – with simpler, more accessible communications
- Easier to navigate – with partnership work in place to overcome barriers.

Have you considered the needs / barriers of those currently using / not using the service?

As detailed elsewhere, the strategy has been developed with the voices of people with lived experience. Among the 118 people who took part in the creation of the strategy, at least 27 had current or past experience of homelessness.

As part of the implementation of the strategy, 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.

What is the frequency of the impact?

Ongoing. However the impact will be felt incrementally as new procedures and ways of working take effect.



8. What data have you used to support your assessment of the impact of your proposal?

Data included:

Review stage

- **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.

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 Council's website and other social media channels.

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.



9. What consultation has been undertaken/will need to be undertaken with stakeholders/ groups directly or indirectly impacted by the proposals and how do you intend to use this information to inform the decision?

See Q8. The consultation work has directly impacted the creation of the proposals, with many of the sub-strands arising from ideas submitted by other staff, external partners and people with lived experience.

10. Are there any implications for other service areas?

The Strategy contains a strong emphasis on partnership working both internally and externally.

- Many of the actions contained within the action plan will require input from services such as Revenues and teams within the Health, Wellbeing & Public Protection Department.
- There is strong emphasis to work both collaboratively and efficiently to be more effective.
- The Communications Team are aware of the new strategy and will be kept up to date with adoption and implementation timescales to enable proactive communications and any ongoing communications arising from achievements/ outputs being achieved.

11. What impact (either positive or negative) will this change have on different groups of the population?



The pre-screening identified potential positive impacts on individuals with the following characteristics:

- **Age:** the strategy addresses issues faced by young people, particularly care leavers. It commits to a review of the housing needs of young carers and their families, as well as individuals exiting the care system.
- **Disability:** the strategy commits to improving access to mainstream health services for homeless people with physical and mental health issues, as well as developing the offer for people with brain injuries and learning difficulties, and improving the recovery offer for people with alcohol dependency who are experiencing homelessness, dovetailing accommodation and support.
- **Gender and gender reassignment:** whilst the strategy does not 'major' on either characteristic, it commits to achieving accreditation with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance, which will improve housing outcomes for vulnerable people of all genders (with specific provision for male and trans victim-survivors).
- **Pregnancy and maternity:** the strategy commits to ensuring that people who are homeless are identified quickly and placed into suitable, cost-effective accommodation where necessary. It commits to avoiding and reducing the use of Bed and Breakfast and nightly-paid accommodation. This will have a positive knock-on effect on homeless applicants who are pregnant or who have recently given birth.
- **Race:** the strategy links with the forthcoming Housing Needs Assessment, which will positive impact people from traveller communities.
- **Other:** in general terms, the strategy seeks to improve housing, health and wellbeing outcomes for vulnerable people across the borough.



12. Other Staff Involved in Assessment (including Corporate Equality Group Representatives), and comments from Equality Work Group Reps

The homelessness and rough sleeping strategy has been designed in collaboration with representatives from key local services and people with lived experience of homelessness and rough sleeping. It focuses on ending homelessness person by person, which means that each person will be supported as an individual, considering their needs at the time.

It will positively impact on those with specific protected characteristics, as identified above, and support other council commitments, such as signing the Care Leavers Covenant and the Armed Forces Covenant.

C. Marriott



Full EIA Action Plan

Risk/adverse impact identified (Q11)	Action to be taken to mitigate	By who <i>Include a lead officer for implementing the actions</i>	By when <i>Deadlines/timescales for implementing the actions</i>	Monitoring mechanism <i>What indicators will you use to track the impact of the change when implemented?</i> <i>How will you review its implementation?</i> <i>How do you intend to monitor service take-up?</i>

Assessment Completed By:

Job Title:

Date: