

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**

**HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING DELIVERY TASK GROUP**

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Homelessness & Housing Delivery Task Group held on Monday, 13th November, 2023 at 11.30 am in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn, PE30 5DQ**

**PRESENT:** Councillors A Bubb, S Collop, A Kemp and S Sandell (Chair)

**PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:**

Councillor J Rust – Portfolio Holder for People and Communities

**OFFICERS:**

Duncan Hall – Assistant Director

Nikki Patton – Housing Services Manager

Andy King – Senior Housing Manager

1 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

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**RESOLVED:** That Councillor S Sandell be appointed as Chair for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

2 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

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**RESOLVED:** That Councillor A Bubb be appointed as Vice-Chair for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

3 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs V Spikings.

4 **NOTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes from the previous meeting held on 1 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

5 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

6 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

7 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business to report.

8 **MEMBERS ATTENDING UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

There were no Members present under Standing Order 34.

9 **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no Chair's correspondence to report.

10 **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

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Councillor Collop commented that at the last meeting of the Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task Group, it was agreed that the terms of reference would need to be updated and explained the current terms of reference stated that the Group met roughly on a monthly basis, but Councillor Collop advised this was not always the case.

The Assistant Director responded and explained they would be happy to have discussions around the frequency of meetings. He advised changes had been made before to the terms of reference in terms of the scope of what would be covered at the Task Group meetings and asked the Group to consider whether that was still relevant.

The Housing Services Manager referred to the terms of reference and explained the core purpose of the Group was to look at the requirements of the National Rough Sleeper Strategy August 2018 and reminded the Group that a new area had been added to look at the suitability of the strategy.

In response to a question raised by the Chair, Councillor Collop suggested that the Task Group should meet monthly within the winter period but maybe not monthly in the summer months as she felt homelessness was more prevalent in the winter.

The Chair agreed and supported the comments made by Councillor Collop and asked Officers whether this was something which could be accommodated. The Assistant Director confirmed this could be looked into.

**AGREED:** The Task Group to meet on a monthly basis within the winter months but not in the summer months.

11

## **PRESENTATION ON HOMELESSNESS OVERVIEW - TRENDS AND CHALLENGES**

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The Senior Housing Manager presented the Group with a presentation on the current trends and challenges around Homelessness in the Borough. A copy of the presentation is attached.

The Chair thanked the Senior Housing Manager for the informative presentation.

Councillor Collop asked about the Broad Street complex and about the new properties which were going to be built on the North Lynn Industrial Site and the Housing Services Manager explained planning permission was received a few years ago for family temporary accommodation and added they were proceeding with Broadland Housing. She advised there had been some delays around the supply element and the type of construction but confirmed they now had a new supplier and hoped to see some progress on the site early in the new year.

In response to a further question from Councillor Collop, the Housing Services Manager explained she had not got a completion date but confirmed she could bring something back to the next meeting.

In response to questions raised by Councillor Kemp, the Housing Services Manager explained they had a range of temporary accommodation options available and reassured they always worked with families to ensure they were placing them as close as possible to schools to try and help minimise disruption to families but explained they had to balance that with what was available.

The Senior Housing Manager responded to Councillor Kemp's question in relation to individuals in a cycle of being in accommodation, being evicted then ending up back in emergency accommodation, and explained the organisation Housing First was there to try and help break that cycle. The Senior Housing Manager referred back to the presentation and highlighted to the Group that the success rate was very high at the moment.

Councillor Kemp asked what was being done to assist Care Leavers. The Senior Housing Manager explained they would need to look at them on a case by case basis. He added they would look to put in place a personal housing plan for them and if there were support

issues that had arisen during their time in care, they would link them into other services.

In response to Councillor Kemp's question, Councillor Rust advised the Care Leavers Covenant was yet to go to Full Council and explained it was a framework to look at what could be provided to those people that they knew were currently in care and for those that had left care.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Bubb, the Housing Services Manager explained there would be more data emerging and added they were seeing strong challenges around affordability for people who were in work or relying on a local housing allowance.

Councillor Kemp stated they had the Boost Project in the town which helped young people up to the age of 30 to get jobs and she asked officers running the Boost Project to get in contact with the Nightshelter as they were not aware of this and expressed this should be promoted better.

**AGREED:** The Housing Services Manager would bring something back to the next meeting in relation to the completion date on the new properties being built on the North Lynn Industrial Site.

## 12 **HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY REVIEW TIMETABLE**

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The Housing Services Manager introduced the item and explained they currently had a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy which was coming to an end at the end of 2024. She explained they had recently commenced their review with a view to having a new strategy in place in 2024.

The Senior Housing Manager presented the Group with a presentation which set out the timeline and provided a brief outline with where they were at and how they were planning to take things forward. A copy of the presentation is attached.

The Chair thanked the Senior Housing Manager for the presentation.

The Chair asked if there were many homelessness presentations coming from rural villages and the Senior Housing Manager advised this would be difficult to analyse but explained they did go out to rural locations to verify rough sleepers.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Kemp, the Senior Housing Manager confirmed the King's Lynn Night Shelter would be included within the review and they had been invited to one of the partner sessions. He went on to explain they were focusing their efforts

around single people which was being hosted by the Purfleet Trust. In terms of families they were focussing their efforts on existing housing association tenants and people in temporary accommodation to get the true experience of homelessness to enable them to feed it into their review.

The Chair indicated she liked the idea of working with outside partnerships, especially businesses and explained this could provide options which had not been utilised before.

The Housing Services Manager highlighted to the Group that it was an important point and explained there was an action plan attached to the Strategy which showed the challenges, trends and critically also showed the things which could be done to respond to it and felt this would give businesses the opportunity to see which part of it they could play a part in to help deliver.

Councillor Kemp asked whether derelict homes would be considered for accommodating people and the Housing Services Manager explained they would look at all options and that this could be explored.

In response to a further question raised by Councillor Kemp, the Housing Services Manager explained their area of focus was to try and prevent homelessness in the first instance but where it does occur, to have appropriate solutions to end that homelessness and added that was the focus of their strategy.

Councillor Rust commented that the Council were taking other steps to try to alleviate and address the need for more private rented houses at an affordable rate through the two Housing Companies.

Councillor Bubb commented that the Borough Charity were in a position to help families and explained they had a system in place but they did not get enough of a variety of applications come forward. The Housing Services Manager confirmed they were always signposting people where necessary and where needed to try and help support them and confirmed they would continue to remind the Housing teams that that was available.

## 13 **FEEDBACK FROM DISTRICT COUNCIL NETWORK EMERGENCY HOMELESS SUMMIT**

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The Housing Services Manager explained she had attended an emergency summit alongside Councillor Kemp which was arranged by the District Council's Network and hosted by Eastbourne Council to talk about the scale of the problem and what was being experienced at local levels particularly around Homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation. She explained an outcome of that meeting

was that there was a letter which had been sent by District Council's to the Chancellor ahead of the Autumn Statement setting out specific asks.

The Housing Services Manager went through the five key asks with the Group. A copy of the letter is attached.

The Housing Services Manager advised their strategy would be focused on what could be done at a local level to respond to the pressures but explained there were structural issues which would need to be addressed at a central government level if they were to change the trends and the challenges. The Housing Services Manager confirmed the Leader of the authority had signed the letter which had gone off to the Chancellor.

14 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be arranged.

**The meeting closed at 12.33 pm**

# King's Lynn and West Norfolk Homelessness trends and challenges

7

Minute Item 11

Nikki Patton, Housing Services Manager

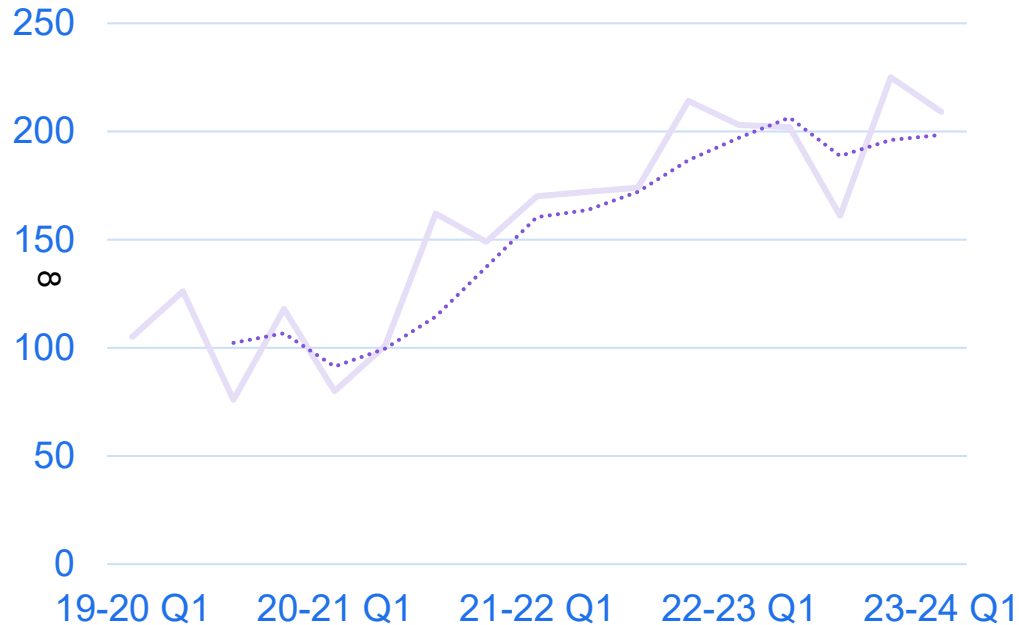
Andy King, Senior Housing Manager

November 2023

Borough Council of  
King's Lynn &  
West Norfolk



# Homelessness Presentations

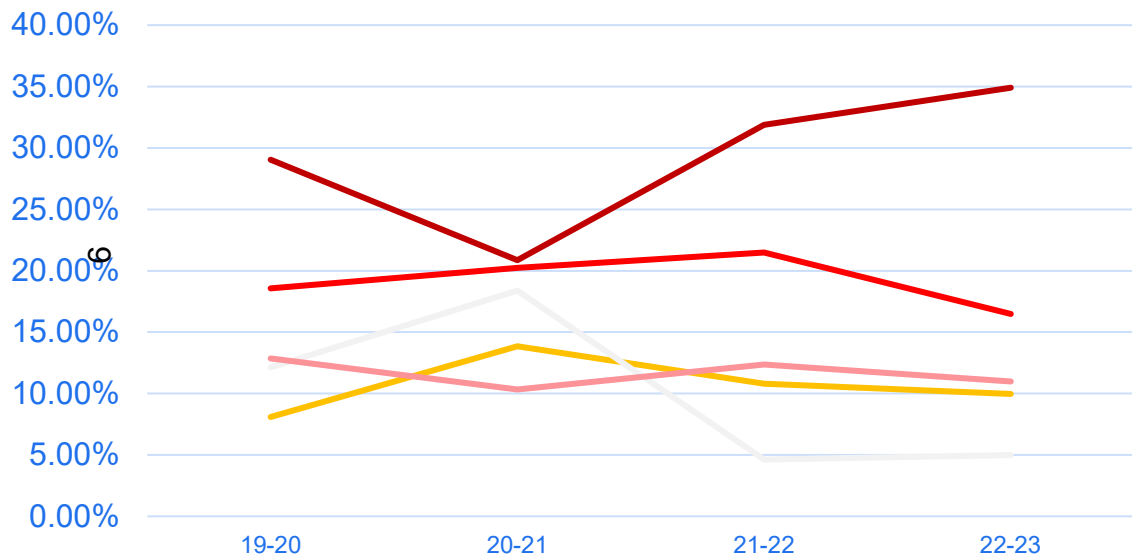


- Presentations averaged at c.100 per quarter in 2019/20
- Steady increase over COVID pandemic
- Now at average of c.200 per quarter





# Reason for presentation



- Domestic abuse
- End of private rented tenancy
- Family no longer willing or able to accommodate
- Other reason
- Relationship breakdown (non-abuse)

Chart shows key increases relating to:

- End of PRS tenancy
- Domestic abuse

Other significant factors include:

- Family no longer willing/able to accommodate
- Relationship breakdown



# The Private Rented Sector

## Demand



- Presentations doubled since 2019
- 80+ households in TA at huge cost to council

## Supply



- Landlord exodus driven by legislative changes, mortgage rates and house prices

## Accessibility

- Local Housing Allowance frozen
- No affordable properties for families on benefits
- Typical £3-400 shortfall per month



# Domestic Abuse

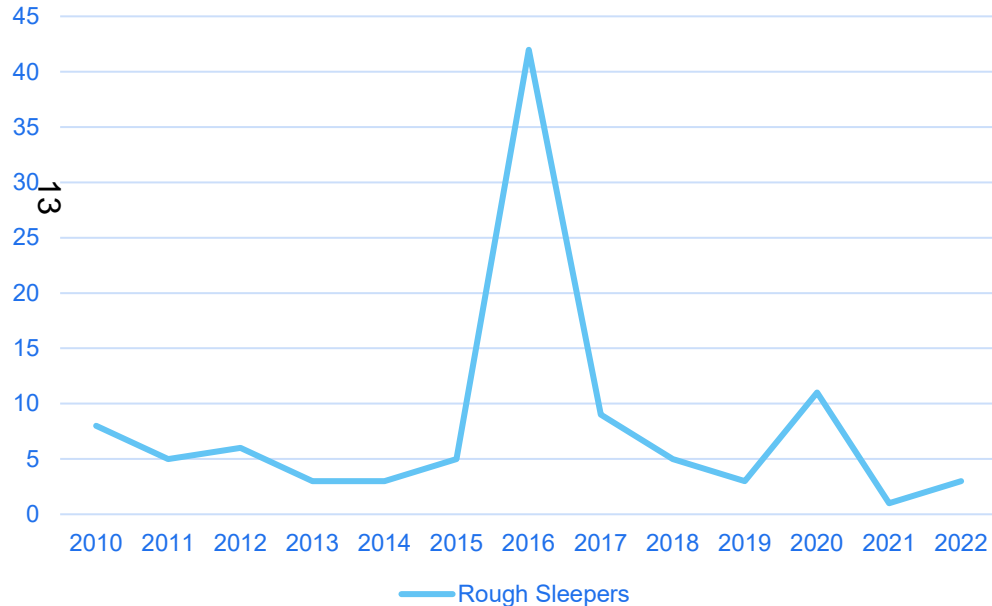
- **Domestic Abuse Act 2021** – Automatic priority need for victim-survivors of domestic abuse
- **Increased awareness** – and improved support from support providers e.g. Leeway and Pandora Project
- **New Sanctuary Scheme** – : two dispersed properties suitable for any gender (plus children)
- **DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance)** – aiming for accreditation in Spring/Summer 2024

# Other contributory factors

- **Physical Health** – 21% of applicants, up from 16%
- **Mental Health** (30%); **Alcohol Dependency** (9%) – slight increases
- ⇒ ● **Reductions** in numbers with drug dependency (4.6%) and 16-17 year olds (0.4%)
- **Horizon Scanning:**
  - Homes for Ukraine ending 2024
  - Asylum and Immigration
  - Renters (Reform) Bill – impact on PRS



# Rough Sleeping



- **Rough sleeping peaked in late 2010s** following end of Supporting People contracts and other contributory factors
- 2016 figure of 42 on a par with Southend, Cambridge, Exeter – 17<sup>th</sup> highest nationally



# Rough Sleeping – action taken

- **Commissioned intensive support service** (Purfleet Trust) providing outreach and in-reach (through DLUHC RSI)
- **Housing First (x8) and Housing-led accommodation (x10)** for people with longer-term histories of sleeping rough
- **Enhanced homelessness prevention service** through the Sustainable Housing Partnership Service (SHPS) (county funded)
- **Welfare cabins** for people with higher support needs

14



# Rough Sleeping – impact

15

- **Rough Sleeping reduced to 0-3 on a single night consistently**
  - 6<sup>th</sup> largest reduction in RS numbers nationally between 2016-22
- **Housing First accommodation** has high level of success with people with long-term history of sleeping rough
- **Purfleet Pathways houses** – 100% success rate of people moving into PRS/social accommodation in 2022
- **Able to focus on prevention and recovery-** ie preventing RS from occurring in first place as opposed to responding to high numbers on the street into emergency accommodation. Where RS does occur we want it to be rare, brief and non-reoccurring.
- **However:**
  - DLUHC RSI funding ends March 2025
  - Local success set against national trend of increasing RS numbers



# KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK - OUTLINE MAP OF SERVICES – SIMPLIFIED VERSION

**Prevention** – to prevent people sleeping rough for the first time

**Intervention** – to support people sleeping rough / at imminent risk

**Accommodation** – short, mid and long-term accommodation for single people who are sleeping rough or at risk

**Recovery** – activities to sustain accom. and address support needs

		<b>First Stage</b>	<b>Second Stage</b>	<b>Long-term</b>	
<p>Criminal Justice collab.</p> <p>Hospital discharge</p> <p>Adult Social Care Help Hub</p> <p>BCKLWN Housing Needs</p> <p>SHPS</p>	<p>BCKLWN – Housing Needs (inc. out of hours)</p> <p>Purfleet Trust – outreach service</p> <p>Purfleet Trust – day centre</p>	<p>Welfare Cabins (pods)</p> <p>Nightly-paid / B&amp;B accom.</p> <p>Temporary Accom. (Council owned)</p> <p>King's Lynn Night Shelter (October-June)</p>	<p>Supported accom. (hostels etc)</p> <p>Youth Accom.</p> <p>Housing-led accom.</p> <p>Refuge and specialist accom.</p> <p>Ex-offenders</p>	<p>Housing First</p> <p>Social Housing</p> <p>Private Rented Accom.</p>	<p>Purfleet Trust – intensive support</p> <p>SHPS – sustainment</p> <p>CGL – drug and alcohol</p> <p>General services e.g. Money Advice, Steam Café, Purfleet Trust, Shelter</p>

**SYSTEM SUPPORT** – underlying strategies and practices to ensure the best service for people sleeping rough or at risk

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy; council's Corporate Plan.  
 Homelessness and Housing Delivery Task Group. Multi-agency strategic and operational meetings  
 Protocols including care leavers, 16/17 year olds



# Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Nikki Patton, Housing Services Manager  
Andy King, Senior Housing Manager

Borough Council of  
King's Lynn &  
West Norfolk



# Background – why are we doing this?

- **Legal requirement**
  - Section 1(1) of the Homelessness Act 2002
- **Good practice, regardless**
  - Significant developments since 2019 in terms of demographic, demand and the nature and scope of the borough's resource
  - Necessary to identify resources and services required

18

# Timeline



# Review – Oct 2023 to Jan 2024

20

- **Data ‘deep dive’**
  - BCKLWN - all homelessness presentations 2019-23
  - Data ‘ask’ of partner agencies
  - Specific ‘ask’ of social services
- **Focus Groups**
  - BCKLWN – Housing Options; other council departments
  - Partners – Accommodation; support
  - Lived experience – families; people who have slept rough
- **Summary paper**



# Formulate – Jan-Apr 2024

21

- **Further focus groups**
  - Co-production focus with partners and lived experience
- **Research**
  - What works well elsewhere?
- **Key elements**
  - Advice and information
  - Early identification and intervention
  - Breaking cycles of homelessness
  - Developing partnerships

# Launch! – May 2024 (TBC)

- **A borough-wide strategy**
- **Created and owned** by the borough
- **Recognise** successes and achievements
- 22 ● **Acknowledge** the work to come

# Questions / Discussion

23

The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP  
Chancellor of the Exchequer  
HM Treasury  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London, SW1A 2HQ

Dear Jeremy,

**The unprecedented pressure on temporary accommodation services**

An unprecedented number of people are turning to councils as the last option for support when they face homelessness. As councils, we are proud of the help we give to people when they need it, but our situation is becoming untenable. We have had no option but to rapidly escalate our use of temporary accommodation, which is threatening to overwhelm our budgets.

The level of concern was demonstrated when 158 councils attended a 31 October summit on the issue, organised by the District Councils' Network (DCN) and Eastbourne Borough Council. The scale of the problem was also shown by a recent DCN survey in which 96% of our member councils reported an increase in use of temporary accommodation – four-fifths of them describing this as 'significant'.

The ensuing increase in costs is a critical risk to the financial sustainability of many local authorities and we urge you to act swiftly to ensure we can continue our vital work. The pressure is particularly acute for district councils because housing costs constitute a far bigger proportion of our overall expenditure.

Without urgent intervention, the existence of our safety net is under threat. The danger is that we have no option but to start withdrawing services which currently help so many families to avoid hitting crisis point. There will also be a knock-on impact on other cherished council services, which councils could also have to scale back, and on other parts of the public sector – such as the NHS – which will be left to pick up the pieces.

Councils and our partner organisations in health, policing and education, as well as the voluntary sector, have had considerable success in recent years in moving the whole local system towards preventing homelessness, rather than just dealing with the consequences.

However, the supply of permanent, affordable housing has fallen in many places while the impact of the rising cost of living is making housing too costly for many people. This impacts on the health and wellbeing of households affected. Some areas also experience added pressure due to the placement of asylum seekers in local hotels and other temporary accommodation.

We do believe there is a way forward, as DCN set out to you in our Autumn Statement submission on 13 October. We are urgently calling on the Government to:

- Raise Local Housing Allowance rates to a level that will cover at least 30% of local market rent and commit to annual uprating.
- Provide £100m additional funding for Discretionary Housing Payments in 2023-24 and an additional £200m in 2024-25.
- Provide a £150m top-up to the Homelessness Prevention Grant for 2024-25.



- Review the cap for housing benefit subsidy rate for local authority homelessness placements.
- Develop policy to stimulate retention and supply in the privately rented sector.
- Give councils the long-term funding, flexibility and certainty needed to increase the supply of social housing.

Considering the urgency of these matters, we would welcome a meeting with you ahead of the Autumn Statement.

We firmly believe that action on these issues will ensure that district councils can continue to provide an effective homelessness safety net. We also believe that these measures will be cost effective by ensuring homelessness is prevented, reducing public expenditure in future.

The human cost of homelessness is immense. With your help we can prevent it worsening.

Yours sincerely,

**Councillor Sam Chapman-Allen**  
**Chairman, DCN**

**Councillor Stephen Holt**

CC: The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities  
The Rt Hon Mel Stride MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions