

Subject: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy – presentation outline

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Prepared for: Chair of Environment and Community Panel

1. Introduction:

- The need for a new strategy before the current cycle ends
- The legal requirement and what we are trying to achieve – radical responses to issues and aim of eradicating rough sleeping

2. Review of the situation and collection of evidence

- The number of people seeking help
- The numbers we have accepted a full duty to house
- The numbers who are referred to temporary accommodation, and B and B
- The numbers rough sleeping
- How does this picture compare to the rest of the East?

3. Issues and the causes

- Rough sleeping and encampments in the Borough
- Affordability – break between Housing Benefit and rents - £40 PW gap
- Increasing cases of individuals with complex needs
- Declining performance in accessing Private Renting
- Failing to deliver new affordable housing and low levels of stock turnover
- Notice to leave PRS
- Debt policies of some social landlords
- Universal credit
- Reduction access to support services

4. The Homelessness Reduction Act

- Providing a service to all categories of homeless households
- New duty to ‘prevent’ and ‘relief’ duty
- Addressing concerns of inconsistency and poor customer practice as well as rising numbers of single homelessness
- Housing assessment of need and support and a personalised plan
- Everyone’s responsibility – right to refer by public sector bodies

(‘Homelessness prevention’ means providing people with the ways and means to address their housing and other needs to avoid homelessness.

'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.)

5. New strategy

The components of a new strategy, to be developed and consulted on with established stakeholder group, will include:-

Ensure a hierarchy of different forms of temporary accommodation

- Develop new temporary accommodation for families to meet identified gaps in provision i.e. Broad Street, and North Lynn site
- Ensure continuation of existing provision in the context of revenue funding reductions by re-modelling some schemes and utilising the Flexible Homelessness Prevention Fund

Review Prevention toolkit

- Review Council's Discretionary Housing Payment policy in light of government guidance that it should be an important part of prevention strategy
- Consider incentivising PRS access – including rent guarantees in certain circumstances
- Upstream awareness activities – including tenancy forums, landlord forums, school visits - covering rights, responsibilities and the Council's role

Rough Sleeper Outreach Service

- Follow the Government's ambition to eradicate homelessness by 2027 and to halve it by 2022
- New multi-agency team approach
- Newly commissioned Genesis outreach service
- On-going tracking of rough sleepers or those of risk of rough sleeping
- 2018/19 Night Shelter provision

New housing support outreach service and other new support services

- Establish and embed new Home group housing support service to prevent homelessness
- Benjamin Foundation – young person's floating support
Purfleet Trust support service
- Home from hospital service – 12 month pilot

New co-ordination role for Council

- Co-ordination of new services to ensure co-ordinated approach, and that the most vulnerable access support they need, and that best use is made of temporary accommodation options - operational group to meet regularly including police and social services
- Strategy group formed – to include representatives of key housing and housing support providers
- Raise awareness of duty to refer, and monitor effectiveness of the new duty

Access to social housing

- Address issues of the under supply of new housing – review planning policy mechanisms including allocations
- Address issue of mismatch between stock profile and accommodation needs
- Opportunities for new registered provider of social housing Council owned company to invest
- Consider the provision of ‘Housing First’ models

Access to good quality private rented sector (PRS) housing

- Provision of additional new supply of good quality –Council’s opportunity for direct delivery, and opportunities for council owned PRS company
- Continue to explore opportunities to deliver a private sector leasing scheme