

Draft 01 - 2019

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2024

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



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

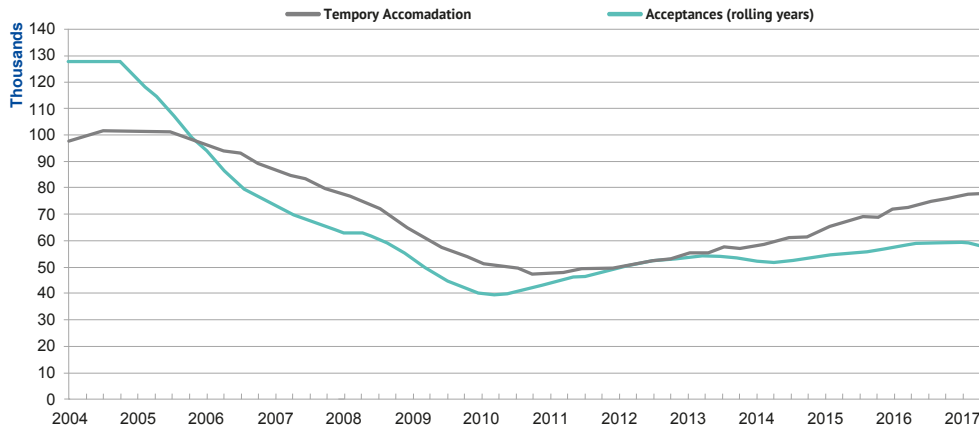
Ward	% of children before housing costs	% of children after housing costs
North Lynn	41.9%	55.6%
South & West Lynn	32%	46.8%
St Margarets with St Nicho	32%	46.8%
Springwood	28.6%	42.5%
Fairstead	28.6%	42.5%
Old Gaywood	27.2%	41.4%

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.

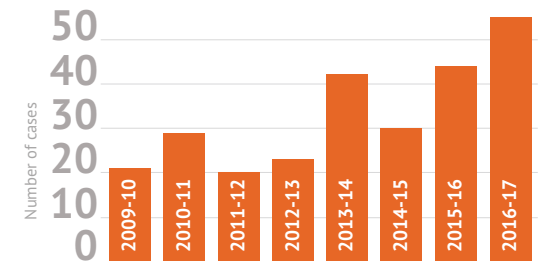
Graphic 1.8 shows the decline in the cases of homelessness prevention – it shows the number of households where homelessness

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:

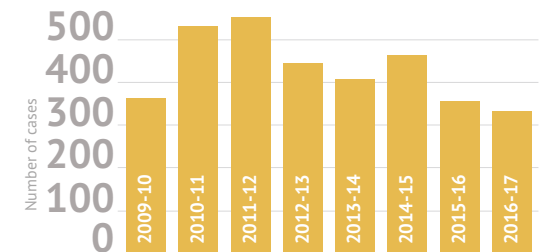
- strong demand
- poor accessibility into PRS
- a big gap between low income and the cost of private rent sector properties

Graphic 1.7
Housed in temporary accommodation
 King's Lynn & West Norfolk



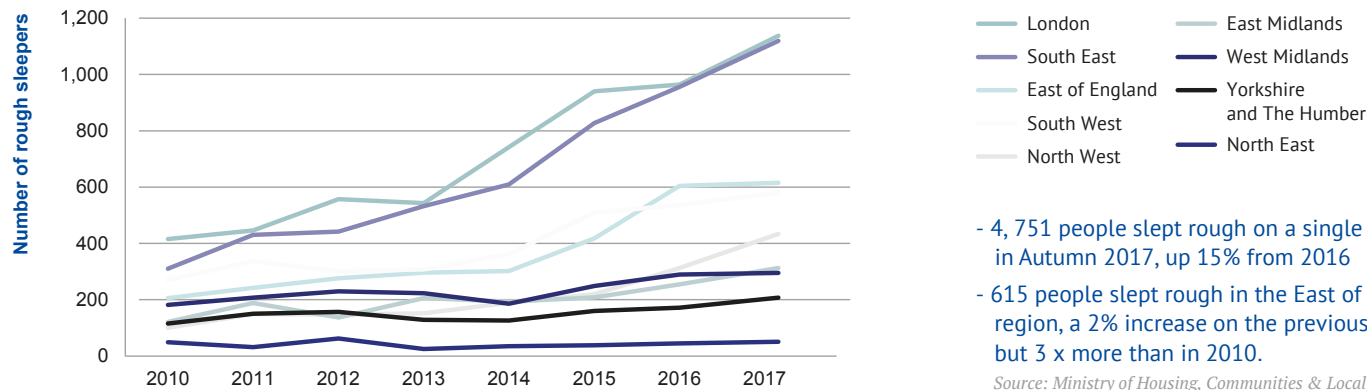
Source: National Audit Office, Homelessness in England Visualisation, Published 14 Jun 2017 <https://www.nao.org.uk/other/homelessness-in-england-visualisation/>

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/>

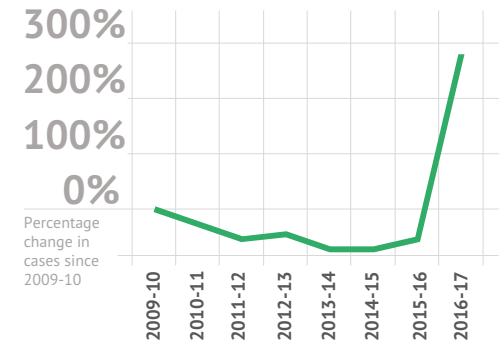
Graphic 2.1 Homelessness - the current position:
Rough sleeping has more than doubled since 2010
 Number of rough sleepers by region 2010 - 2017



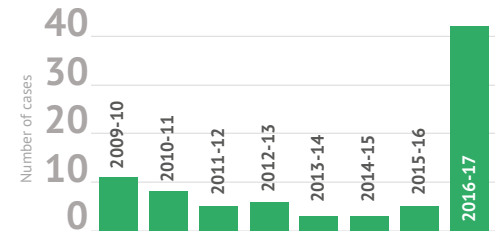
- 4,751 people slept rough on a single night in Autumn 2017, up 15% from 2016
- 615 people slept rough in the East of England region, a 2% increase on the previous year, but 3 x more than in 2010.

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.

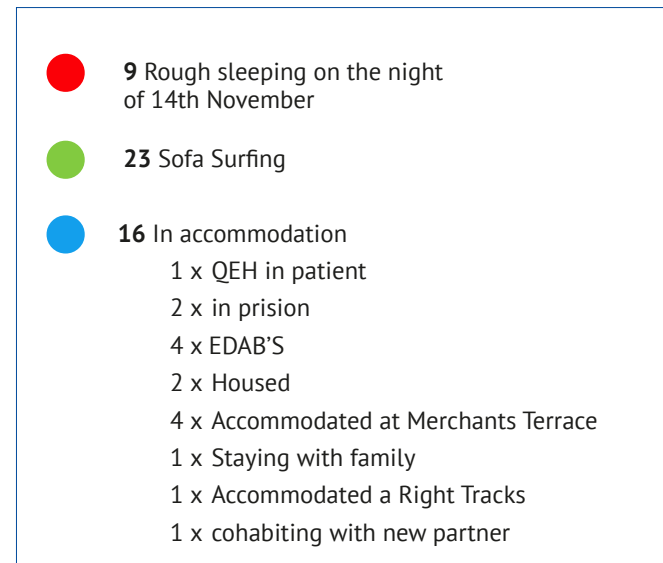
The council and its partners have now adopted an ongoing monitoring arrangement of those who are rough sleeping or threatened with rough sleeping. This monitoring captures circumstances where people may be in danger of rough sleeping including those:

- 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.

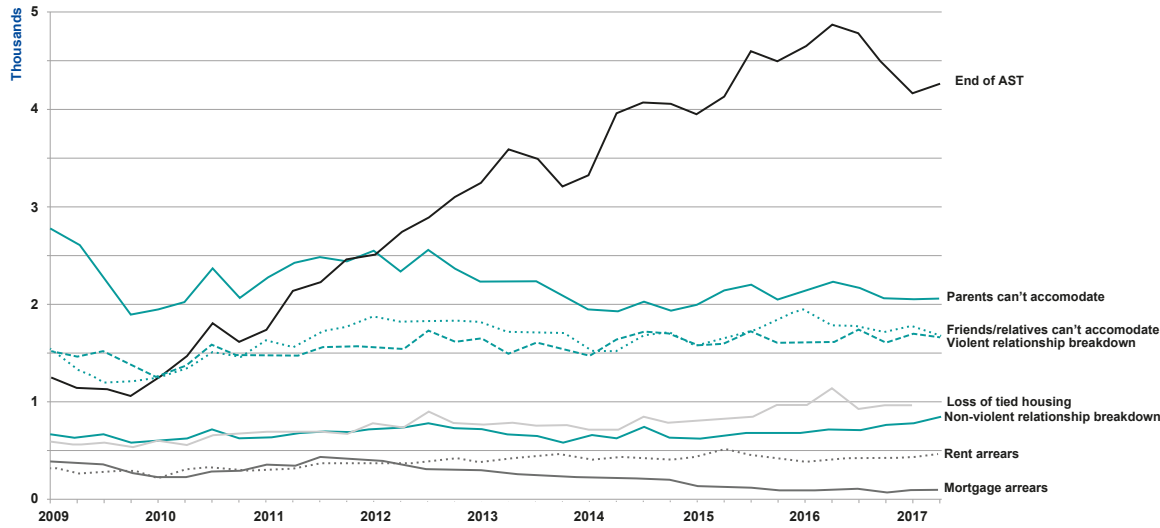
Graphic 2.4
On-going record of those rough sleeping, or in danger of rough sleeping



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

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)

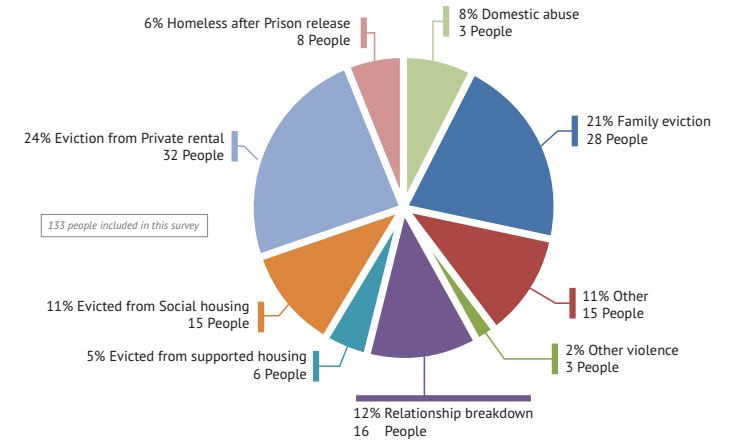
Relationship breakdown is another common reason for homelessness (locally

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.

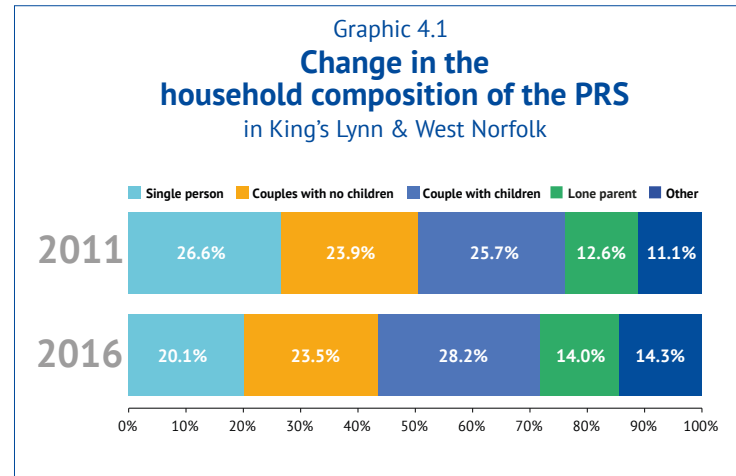
At the time the strategy has been prepared the numbers moving on to Universal Credit (UC) from Housing Benefit is accelerating. There have been changes as a result of lessons learned from pilots. Some of the changes relate to provisions for certain categories of tenants to have Alternative Payment Arrangements (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

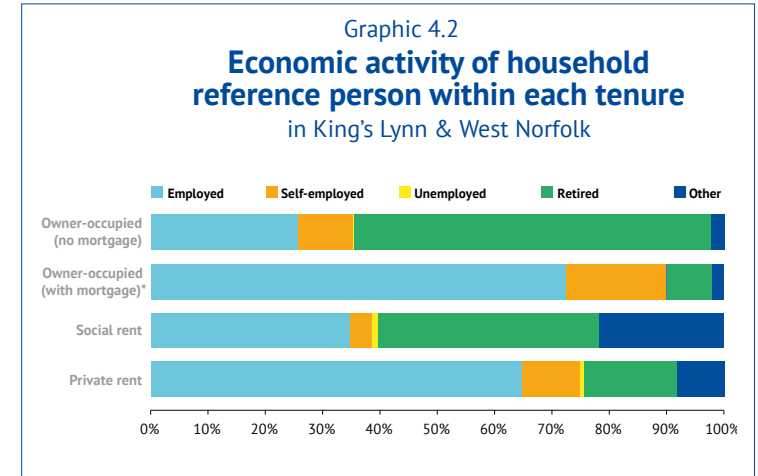
10.2. Accessing the Private Rented Sector (PRS)

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 it 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 - operational 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.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>The aim of the service will be to :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. make the first contact and build trust 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 <p>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.</p> <p>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</p> <p>d) Engage with people who are found to be rough sleeping – individuals or encampments of people – primarily through the commissioned ‘rough</p> | <p>sleeper outreach’ service. The aim of the service will be to :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. make the first contact and build trust 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 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 | <p>to primary and secondary mental health services, and will also take a clinical role in assessing mental health and administering medication where appropriate</p> <p>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</p> |
|---|--|---|

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.



King's Lynn and West Norfolk Temporary Accommodation

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



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
		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

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

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) housingt	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 ha 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
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

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



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

Appendix B

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

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>		
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

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

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