

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Review 2025	
Executive Summary	This report sets out the findings from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review, which is a key stage in the development of the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
Options considered	The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review stage draws together intelligence on the demands, activities and resources associated with homelessness and rough sleeping. The Review has identified areas for further consideration. A range of options will be considered as part of the development of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
Consultation(s)	A wide range of stakeholders have been consulted in drawing together the Review – as set out in the main document – including partners, customers, and staff.
Recommendations	That Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the report and provide feedback on the findings in the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Review.
Reasons for recommendations	To provide an opportunity for Overview & Scrutiny Committee to comment on the Review findings ahead of the development of the full strategy.
Background papers	Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Review – report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee 16 th July 2025 Homelessness Task & Finish Group – report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee 20 th September 2024 Officer Update to the Homelessness Task and Finish Group Recommendations – 12 th February 2025.

Wards affected	District-wide
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr Fredericks, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Peoples' Services
Contact Officers	Karen Hill, Assistant Director People Services, karen.hill@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	Meeting our Housing Need.
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	Effectively tackling homelessness should reduce the need for, and therefore the cost of, temporary accommodation for homeless households the Council has a duty to accommodate

Council Policies & Strategies	NNDC Housing Strategy 2021-2025 Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019- 2024
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Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	NA
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review, which is a key stage in the development of the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

2. Introduction & Background

- 2.1 There is a legal requirement for the Council to undertake a review of homelessness in the district and develop a strategy at least every 5 years. The approach to this is set out in the Homelessness Code of Guidance for local authorities. The Council's current Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy covers the period 2019 to 2024, although we continue to deliver the actions in that strategy. The government is due to publish a National Homelessness Strategy (which was expected this summer) which we had hoped would be in place to provide national context to the development North Norfolk's strategy.
- 2.2 In line with the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002 and Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018 (as amended February 2024), the review covers:
- the levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness in the district
 - the activities which are carried out towards the prevention and relief of homelessness
 - the resources available to the council, the social services authority, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons for such activities
- 2.3 The review seeks to identify useful practice, gaps, challenges and opportunities within the district. However, the review does not make any recommendations as to how to address the issues raised. The review will inform the production of the Council's next Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030.
- 2.4 The review is a comprehensive piece of work, and the Review document contains much detail. Some of the key points from the main sections in the Review are set out below.
- 2.5 **Analysis of homelessness data:**

- Initial / triaged approaches have risen in recent years and are forecast to exceed 1,200 in 2025/26
- The number of households assessed as owed a duty in 2024/25 was 384, with 143 owed a prevention duty and 226 owed a relief duty
- The main reasons for homelessness have been constant, with loss of privately rented accommodation being the main reason, followed by family or friends no longer willing/able to accommodate. In 2022/23 domestic abuse overtook non-violent relationship breakdown as the third main cause
- The main reason for loss of private rented tenancies (Assured Shorthold Tenancy) was landlords wishing to sell (or re-let) the property – 80%
- In 2023/24 there were 151 households accepted as Homeless in priority need and unintentionally homeless. The majority of these households (84%) go on to accept a social housing tenancy
- 51% of homeless households are aged 25-45 years, with virtually no young (16-17 years) and relatively few older (65+) households
- Under half of all applicants have any form of support need, with the most common support need being a history of mental health problems
- The numbers of rough sleepers and those with a history of rough sleeping remains low

2.6 **Key Challenges and opportunities** – the landscape in which the council tackles homelessness is always changing with new challenges and some opportunities. A PESTLE analysis is included in the Review document (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental).

2.7 This PESTLE, together with analysis of the homelessness data, leads to conclusion that the number of households approaching the Council will continue to increase. Due to the limited opportunity to prevent homelessness across the three main reasons for homelessness it is expected that the number of households being assessed as having a main housing duty will continue to exceed the opportunity to discharge these main duties and this will result in more households requiring temporary accommodation and requiring this accommodation for longer.

2.8 **Activities – prevention, relief, and accommodating**

- The Council itself has many teams involved in tackling homelessness – in addition to the Housing Options Team this includes Community Outreach, Financial Inclusion, Social Prescribing and Benefits
- Additionally, there are other organisations who provide support and advice to prevent or relieve homelessness - although not as many as operate in other districts
- 175 households were placed in temporary accommodation in 2024/25, which was 48% higher than the number placed in 2019/20, but 8% lower than the number placed in the peak year 2022/23
- The Council is only able to recover a small proportion, £98.08 per week of the Housing Benefit paid out on nightly paid accommodation whereas the actual cost varies from £329 for a single room and £762 for a family accommodation with a degree of self-containment, leaving the Council to pick up the shortfall
- The Council has invested in a portfolio of in-house self-contained properties for TA - by the end of this year we have 27 properties (plus five move-on homes for ex rough sleepers)

- There is a limited range of supported housing in the district. There is a good supply and geographical spread of supported housing for young people, but a shortage of other provision.
- There are 6,415 housing association homes in the district. General need affordable rented homes are the most likely to be used to discharge main housing duties for those accepted as homeless; these account for 77% of the affordable housing stock in the district.
- 286 affordable homes were let in 2024/25 – 46% of these were 2-beds.
- In 2019/20 only 4% of all social housing lets went to households who were threatened with or accepted as homeless, in 2024/25 the figure was 56% (N.B. total lets include RP's transfer quota, local lets properties and age restricted properties – all less likely to be for homeless households)
- An average of 74 new affordable homes have been built each year over the last 6-years. 34% of the delivery has been for general need rented homes
- An average of 42 affordable homes a year have been lost through voluntary sales or Right to Buy
- The forecast for medium to longer term delivery of new homes is good, with 1,137 expected in the next 6 years but there is a shortfall in the short-medium term
- There is a declining supply of private rented homes nationally, which we expect to be the case locally. Very few lets are available within Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels – local monitoring shows only 2 so far in 2025
- Community and voluntary groups play a crucial role in supporting individuals experiencing homelessness by providing essential resources, social support, warm space/food and a pathway to re-integration into the community.
- There are several processes and systems that provide independent and objective feedback on the work undertaken by the Council to tackle homelessness. The Council is open to the opportunity to learn and improve and encourages challenge
- The last Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2019 – 2024) included five priority areas. The Action Plan was updated in 2022 and new actions identified across all priority areas. The majority of these actions have been completed, integrated into business as usual or are in progress.

2.9 **Resources** – many of the activities set out in the Activities section in the Review document include an outline the resources available to tackle homelessness – including both in-house staff but also partner organisations. Much of the funding for the in-house homelessness service comes from annually allocated grants. Most Council staff delivering homelessness prevention and relief are funded via these grants and, as a result, are on fixed term contracts. The short-term nature of the funding hampers long term planning and commissioning or development of a system with a longer-term strategic view. External / grant funding support to the homeless service was £366k in 2019/20 and had risen to £840k in 2024/25.

2.10 **Next Steps** - The Review document is a very comprehensive assessment of homelessness in the district. From this assessment, it is clear that there are no major gaps or failings in the current service provision, and there are no 'silver bullets' available to prevent or relieve homelessness. However, the

review does identify several areas for further consideration and inclusion in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. These include:

- Better understanding of homelessness approaches (that do not result in prevention or relief duty) to help identify how best to manage these approaches to ensure that upstream prevention opportunities are maximised
- Consider developing expertise/specialisms in service delivery to reflect the three main reasons for homelessness (accessing the private rented sector, family mediation and relationship breakdown/domestic abuse) in order to maximise prevention opportunities.
- Consider developing services for the three main demographic groups who are owed homelessness duties – families with children, single people with complex health needs (physical and mental) and single people with no support needs (relief).
- Consider how rough sleeping resources can be used to develop services covering prevention, relief and recovery for single people with complex health needs (physical and mental) and single people with no support needs (relief) – to help prevent rough sleeping.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of community outreach in the prevention, relief and recovery of homelessness.
- Consider how to most effectively deal with housing related approaches and maximise opportunities for prevention whilst ensuring the Housing Options Team can focus on relief and management of homelessness. This would allow for triage of cases and referral to appropriate services including Financial Inclusion, Social Prescribing or Community Outreach.
- Continue to invest in the provision of self-contained temporary accommodation to reduce the use of nightly paid accommodation. Consider an annual capital programme for the purchase of additional council temporary accommodation units until the number of affordable housing lets is sufficient to adequately manage the demand from homelessness with an acceptable level of use of nightly paid accommodation.
- Ahead of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 work with supported housing providers to maximise outcomes delivered through the supported housing schemes. Continue to seek opportunities to increase the supply of supported housing for single people
- Develop a SMART and manageable action plan, limit the number of actions in each year and review the action plan annually
- Over the next strategy period develop more formal arrangements with partners and include specific actions for partners to deliver in the annual action plan.
- Consider how the risk of losing staff on fixed term contracts essential to delivering the Council's statutory duties and maintaining service delivery can be mitigated, especially in light of Local Government Re-organisation.

2.11 The Overview & Scrutiny Task and Finish Group identified a number of specific actions from their evidence gathering into homelessness. The officers' response to the Task Group's findings set out how many of these actions are being addressed, and how others would be considered as part of the development of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. Now the

comprehensive review of homelessness has been completed, and areas of priority for the Strategy identified, we can revisit the O&S recommendations and pick these up where appropriate.

- 2.12 The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy is due to be presented to Cabinet (3 November) and to Overview and Scrutiny (12 November) ahead of formal adoption at Full Council (17 December)

3. Corporate Priorities

- 3.1 Effectively preventing and tackling homelessness – the most acute form of housing need – is fundamental to delivery of the Council's key corporate priority "Meeting our Housing Need".

4. Comments from the S151 Officer

Actions to address homelessness and rough sleeping will need to be considered in light of the Council's budget and financial position

5. Comments from the Monitoring Officer

Legal advice may need to be provided for any specific actions identified in the Strategy.

6. Risks

At this stage the Review sets out the position with homelessness and rough sleeping in the district. However, the risks associated with not effectively tackling homelessness are significant – financial, reputational, legal. A risk assessment will be required for any significant actions arising from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

7. Net Zero Target

No specific implications

8. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

No specific implications

9. Community Safety issues

No specific implications

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

It is recommended that Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the report and provide feedback on the findings within the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review.