



# HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019 - 2024



Lisa Grice  
NORTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

## CONTENTS

### The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019/2024

|           |   |                 |
|-----------|---|-----------------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Introduction</b>                               | <b>Page. 3</b>  |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>National Drivers</b>                           | <b>Page. 5</b>  |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Local Policies</b>                             | <b>Page. 7</b>  |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Key Findings</b>                               | <b>Page. 11</b> |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>Successes From Last Strategy</b>               | <b>Page. 15</b> |
| <b>6.</b> | <b>Key Objectives</b>                             | <b>Page. 16</b> |
| <b>7.</b> | <b>Policy Statement</b>                           | <b>Page. 19</b> |
| <b>8.</b> | <b>Document Information &amp; Version Control</b> | <b>Page. 20</b> |
|           | <b>Appendix 1</b>                                 | <b>Page. 21</b> |
|           | <b>Appendix 2 Action plan</b>                     | <b>Page. 25</b> |
|           |   |                 |

DRAFT

## 1. Introduction

The Homeless Act 2002 Section 1(1) requires all Local Authorities to undertake a review of homelessness in their area and publish a Homelessness Strategy based upon the findings of the review every 5 years. North Norfolk District Council has undertaken reviews in 2003, 2008, 2014 and 2019.

Both the review and the development of the strategy were undertaken in consultation with key partners and stakeholders operating within the district.

The strategy covers homelessness, homelessness prevention, and rough sleeping and seeks to deliver an enhanced housing options service, responds and relates to the Acts of Parliament and statutory guidance that set out the Governments intentions for protecting homeless people, preventing homelessness and ending rough sleeping.

In formulating the strategy, a housing authority will need to consider the necessary levels of activity required to achieve the aims set out in the paragraph below and the sufficiency of the resources available to them as revealed by the review, Under Section 3(1) of the 2002 Act a homelessness strategy means for a strategy to:

- a) Identifying action that can be taken to prevent homelessness in the district;
- b) Providing suitable services and accommodation for people who are, or may become homeless; and
- c) Supporting people who are homeless or potentially homeless and those who were formally homeless and need support, to prevent them becoming homeless again.

The Strategy must cover:

- **Advice and Information:** available to residents in the district, or who may return to the district, which assists them in having appropriate information or access to services that will help to prevent them becoming homeless.
- **Early identification:** authorities should consider how they might identify people at risk of homelessness at an earlier stage, and the interventions that could be put in place to prevent them from being threatened with or becoming homeless. The 'Duty to Refer' should engage public bodies to assist with earlier identification, and housing authorities should develop local protocols or referral arrangements with appropriate agencies, whether or not they are included within that duty.
- **Pre-crisis intervention:** authorities should consider whether sufficient activity is in place to intervene proactively where a household may be at risk of homelessness in the future. This might include, for example, having joint working arrangements with environmental health services to ensure tenants are not displaced through enforcement action other than in a planned way, involving children's early help services to support families at risk of losing their social tenancy, or funding a court duty advice service that identifies households at risk of mortgage repossession or loss of private rented accommodation.
- **Preventing recurring homelessness:** an analysis of local data should identify applicants most at risk of repeat homelessness which will inform decisions about allocation of resources, particularly for rehousing related support to help sustain settled accommodation.
- **Partnership arrangements:** the homelessness strategy should set out how partners will be involved in all of the above activities, and what practical arrangements are

needed (for example, joint protocols and procedures) to ensure the continued commitment to joint working to prevent homelessness improve outcomes and reduce the incidents of rough sleeping across the district of North Norfolk.

DRAFT

## 2. National Drivers

Since the previous strategy was published there have been a number of fundamental changes which have had an impact on how homelessness has evolved and how local authorities respond to these issues.

Below are a number of key policies that will have a direct impact on how the local authority delivers its services in the life time of this new strategy.

**The Homeless Code of Guidance** explains how the Act should be implemented. In practice it is a guide that tells the Council how to review the effectiveness of its homelessness provisions and to produce a new strategy every five years. It states the requirements that all organisations, within all sectors, whose work can help to prevent homelessness and/or meet the needs of homeless people in their district, must be involved in the development of the strategy.

**The Localism Act (2011)** allowed local authorities to adopt a more robust approach towards a local residency connection in their housing allocations policy and also granted local authorities the power to discharge their homeless duty by placing households in the private sector.

**Making Every Contact Count (2012)** encouraged agencies to work together to target those at risk of homelessness.

**The Welfare Reform Act (2012)** created the biggest change to the welfare system for over 60 years, giving people on benefits increased personal responsibility for money management and improved incentives to work.

**No Second Night Out (2011)** aimed at tackling the problem of rough sleepers by ensuring that any new homeless person should have a chance to find accommodation and not to fall into a rough sleeping lifestyle. It is also recommended that partners work together to tackle underlying causes of rough sleeping and improve support services to help people access healthcare and employment. Within the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 Government has set out a cross government manifesto to reduce the number of people sleeping rough with the aim to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it altogether by 2027.

**The Deregulation Act (2015)** Introduced protection for private rented tenants against so called retaliatory evictions which occur when a tenant makes a legitimate complaint to their landlord about the condition of their property and instead of carrying-out the repair the landlord serves them with an eviction notice. All new Assured Shorthold tenants starting on or after 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 are covered by the provisions of the Act.

**The Care Act (2014)** sets out how peoples care and support needs should be met and introduces the right to an assessment for anyone, including carers and self-funders in need of support. The purpose of a needs assessment is to identify any adults needs, how they impact on their well-being and the outcomes they want to achieve, which could include access to supported housing.

**Homelessness Reduction Act (2017)** The introduction of this Act is the most significant change to the Homelessness legislation since it was first introduced in 1970. The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) strengthens statutory duties to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants including those who do not have priority need or may be considered intentionally homeless and regardless of local connection. The HRA 2017 Act also creates a new duty on certain public authorities to refer users of their services who are threatened with homelessness to a housing authority of their choice, which enables earlier identification of people at risk of becoming homeless through their interactions with other services.

**Rough Sleeping Strategy (August 2018)** – The strategy sets out the vision to support every person who sleeps rough off the streets and into a home by 2027. This is backed up by £100 million funding over the next two years. Rough sleeping is the most extreme form of homelessness and it is therefore right that action is taken to help people off the streets.

DRAFT

### 3. Local Policies

This homelessness strategy supports and works alongside the following North Norfolk District Council strategies and policies:

#### **Housing Strategy:**

[https://portal.north-norfolk.gov.uk/doc-centre/Documents/Housing\\_Strategy\\_2016-2020.pdf#search=housing%](https://portal.north-norfolk.gov.uk/doc-centre/Documents/Housing_Strategy_2016-2020.pdf#search=housing%)

North Norfolk District Councils Housing Strategy 2016-2020. This strategy is split into two sections:

- New Housing
- Existing Housing and meeting housing related needs

In addition, there is a separate action plan which details how the actions and interventions identified in the strategy will be delivered:

#### **New Housing**

The Council's priorities for new housing are to:

- Deliver more new homes across the district
- Ensure that new homes are of the right size, type and tenure to meet the needs of current and future occupiers
- Ensure that new homes support the economic needs of the district

#### **Existing Housing and meeting Housing related needs:**

The Councils priorities for existing housing and meeting housing related needs are too:

- Make the most effective use of the existing housing stock
- Ensure that existing housing is fit for purpose and contributes to the health and wellbeing of its occupiers
- Ensure a range of support is available for those that require it
- Reduce the number of long term empty homes

#### **Tenancy Strategy:**

[https://portal.north-norfolk.gov.uk/doc-centre/Documents/Tenancy\\_Strategy.pdf#search=tenancy%20strategy](https://portal.north-norfolk.gov.uk/doc-centre/Documents/Tenancy_Strategy.pdf#search=tenancy%20strategy)

The Council would like to achieve the following objectives through its Tenancy Strategy:

- To maintain stable and sustainable communities especially in more rural parts of the district where local community infrastructure such as schools and shops are supported by balanced populations including newly forming households and young families
- To make better use of the existing social housing stock through enabling a reduction in under-occupation

- To ensure that specialist accommodation can be made available to households most in need

### **Empty Homes Policy:**

[https://portal.north-norfolk.gov.uk/doc-centre/Documents/Empty\\_Homes\\_Policy.pdf#search=empty%20homes%20policy](https://portal.north-norfolk.gov.uk/doc-centre/Documents/Empty_Homes_Policy.pdf#search=empty%20homes%20policy)

The Council has set itself an ambition that ‘Everyone in North Norfolk should have the opportunity to buy or rent a decent home at a price they can afford, in a community where they want to live or work’.

This requires that the existing housing stock in North Norfolk is used efficiently and effectively and that the number of properties which are empty is minimised to increase the supply of housing to meet housing need and housing demand.

Properties become empty for a number of reasons and most are reoccupied within a short period of time. Recent report by ‘Action on Empty Homes’ reported the following number of empty homes across the district

2017 - 603

2018 – 482 (total homes 54,801)

Reduction of 121

<https://www.actiononemptyhomes.org/facts-and-figures>

The Empty Homes Policy focuses on bringing long term empty properties back into use that otherwise would remain empty through the Enforcement Board and currently are working on 32 complex cases.

### **Housing Allocation Scheme:**

[https://portal.north-norfolk.gov.uk/doc-centre/Documents/Housing\\_Allocations\\_Scheme.pdf#search=housing%20allocation%20scheme](https://portal.north-norfolk.gov.uk/doc-centre/Documents/Housing_Allocations_Scheme.pdf#search=housing%20allocation%20scheme)

The Allocation scheme has been developed in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 Part VI as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The scheme has been developed to utilize the flexibilities afforded by the Localism Act 2011 to achieve the Councils ambition that ‘everyone in North Norfolk should have the opportunity to buy or rent a decent home at a price they can afford in a community where they want to live or work’. The scheme has also been developed in line with the Councils Housing Strategy objectives to make best use of the existing housing stock and support vulnerable residents to live independently in the community.

The Scheme consists of three registers being:

- Housing Register – will include those applicants in the very highest levels of housing need, including homeless applicants where the authority has accepted, Final Duties, Prevention Duties or Relief Duties
- Housing Options Register – will include those in lower levels of housing need



- Transfer Register – will include all tenants in social or affordable rented properties within the district of North Norfolk

### **Your Choice Your Home**

The Allocation Scheme sits alongside 'Your Choice Your Home' (YCYH) which is a choice based lettings system. YCYH works in partnership with all Registered Social Landlords within the district of North Norfolk. This enables transparent allocation of all properties advertised through Your Choice Your Home with strong partnership working. The group meets on a regular basis to review the scheme and discuss particular issues facing the district. The agreed objectives of the Scheme are as follow:

- To ensure that there is transparency and choice in the way that affordable housing is allocated in North Norfolk by:
  - Improving the customer experience of applying for and being part of the housing list by providing clear information on what affordable housing is available across the district and advertising vacant properties for let or sale.
  - Enabling the customer to gain an understanding of the likelihood of obtaining an affordable home and to empower them to take control of their housing situation through the provision of information, advice and support.
- To ensure that the best use is made of the housing stock so that the needs and aspirations of applicants and existing tenants can be met as often as possible.
- To ensure that housing is allocated taking into account housing need and ensure that applicants in high housing need are given reasonable opportunity to meet their housing need.
- To operate the scheme so that it is open and fair, quick and easy to use and consistently operated by all the parties.
- To ensure that the scheme is operating in accordance with statutory requirements and that it is not directly or indirectly discriminating against applicants on the basis of age, race, religion and belief, ethnic group, gender or gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage and partnership, pregnancy and maternity or disability.

Within the last financial year 2018/19 there were 395 lets through Your Choice Your Home, 91 of these went to customers that had been assessed under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 at risk of being homeless or were homeless.

### **Partnership working with Norfolk County Council and Norfolk Local Authorities:**

The authority has a strong working relationship with Norfolk County Council and Local Authorities and have worked closely together on key documents which have been formulated to be used across the county of Norfolk.

The authorities have jointly been key in the planning and funding of the homelessness and rough sleeping prevention initiative which covers some of the tenancy support for people who have been homeless in North Norfolk and extends to the joint funding for Severe Weather Emergency Provision arrangements when these are needed.

The authority and Norfolk County council jointly fund a range of hostel and supported housing provision for people who have been homeless or who are at risk provided by Notting Hill Genesis for adults and Benjamin Foundation and Empanda for young people.

Young Person Protocol for 16 & 17 year olds has jointly been produced with Norfolk County council and the other Local Authorities within Norfolk. This document details joint working and responsibilities in relation to duties owned between Children Services & District councils.

Intentionally Homeless families protocol has jointly been produced with Norfolk County council and the other Local Authorities within Norfolk. This document details joint working and responsibilities in relation to duties between Children Services and District Councils.

These documents ensure that the customer is placed at the centre of these relationships.

Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP) – joint funding arrangements with Norfolk County Council as and when these are needed. Arrangements are made with local Hostel - Notting Hill Genesis, local B&B provides to ensure that no one has to sleep rough in the district when the weather is severe.

#### 4. Key Findings

With continuing demands and challenges and following recent changes to Welfare Reform and the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 the council has worked extremely hard to ensure that the customer has been the main focus whilst striving to improve the service and implement the Council's aspirations and aims.

Historically, homelessness within North Norfolk had been relatively low with 90 households being accepted in 2013/14 and 206 homeless decisions being made in 2014/15 compared to 201 in 2003/04. Evidence now shows that since 2013/14 there has been a steady increase of customers presenting to the authority as homeless or at risk of being homeless, this is despite the council putting in place prevention measures and offering early advice to individuals that approach the service.

|                      | 14/15 | 15/16 | 16/17 | 17/18 |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Assessed             | 148   | 165   | 148   | 191   |
| Accepted Duty        | 85    | 95    | 95    | 124   |
| Intentional Homeless | 7     | 12    | 5     | 3     |
| Non-Priority Need    | 42    | 41    | 30    | 48    |
| Not Homeless         | 14    | 17    | 18    | 16    |
| Ineligible           | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
| Prevented            | 71    | 48    | 62    | 66    |

At the end of financial year 17/18 the authority made decisions on 191 homelessness applications, accepted duties to house 124 and prevented 66 clients from becoming homeless.

Since the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 on 3 April 2018 evidence shows the authority is now working with individual customers for a longer period of time and the nature of these cases is increasingly becoming more complex with ongoing support being provided by the team. Within the county of Norfolk there has been a reduction of support services and this is now impacting on the team. During financial year 2018/2019 the team assessed the following cases:

|                          |     |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Initial Assessment       | 430 |
| Assessed as owned a duty | 421 |
| Prevention Duty owned    | 279 |
| Relief Duty owned        | 142 |
| Not Homeless             | 9   |

Of these:

223 clients were prevented from being homeless

148 clients were relieved from being homeless  
Made Main Duty decisions of 66 case of these:

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Homeless + priority need + unintentional | 39 |
| Homeless + priority need + intentional   | 6  |
| Homeless + No priority need              | 20 |
| Not Homeless                             | 1  |

*Data obtained:*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/831054/Assessments\\_201903.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831054/Assessments_201903.xlsx)

### **Main Reason for Approach**

The main reason for customers seeking assistances with homelessness has remained consistent over the years with the main reasons being as follows:

- 123 households in 2018/19 were given notice by their landlord
- 89 Households were under threat of losing their social housing tenancy
- 73 families/friends being unable to accommodate them any longer

*Data obtained:*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/831054/Assessments\\_201903.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831054/Assessments_201903.xlsx)

Since 2018, the Housing Options team have been working closely with its largest Social Housing Landlord to prevent evictions due to rent arrears.

2018/19 – 110 cases of which: 67 prevented from being evicted  
10 Closed due to no contact/moved  
5 Unsuccessful (Evicted)  
28 cases still being supported

### **Age Profile**

In the 2011 census the population of North Norfolk was 101,499 and is made up of approximately 52% females and 48% males. The average age of people in North Norfolk is 47, while the median age is higher at 51, and this has been further confirmed in a recent article in the Eastern Daily Press (Sept 2019) that confirmed the following:

*While the average age in the country is 40 years old, that figure rises to 48 years, 11 months in North Norfolk.*

*The figures come from an analysis by price comparison website comparethemarket.com, which looked at the UK's generation split to discover just where the youngest places and oldest places are.*

*The UK's Top 3 Oldest Places (and average age):*

**-North Norfolk - 48 years, 11 months**

*-Rother - 48 years, 2 months*

*-East Lindsey - 47 years, 1 month*

*The UK's Top 3 Youngest Places (and average age):*

*-Manchester - 33 years, 2 months*

*-Slough - 34 years, 2 months*

*-Nottingham - 34 years, 5 months*

Most clients presenting to the authority are in the age group 25-44 with 75+ age group being negligible. This could be considered as unusual given the high proportion of elderly people in the district. However, the majority of such households are owner occupiers with no mortgage commitment which is reflective of the local census carried out in 2011.

Data obtained:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/831054/Assessments\\_201903.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831054/Assessments_201903.xlsx)

### **Support Needs**

Within the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 there is now a requirement to capture data around support needs of clients where the authority has accepted duties under the Prevention and Relief duty. This has shown that 38% of the clients that the authority has been assessed as having a support need. This is further backed up from the complexity of the clients that the team are now working with.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Total Households Assessed as owed a duty           | 421 |
| Total Households assessed as having a support need | 160 |

Data obtained:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/831054/Assessments\\_201903.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831054/Assessments_201903.xlsx)  
refer to table at page 9

### **Household Type**

2018/19 of the 279 households that approached the authority for assistants the largest was single parents (85) and Families (79), with 115 singles approaching the service

| Household type owed a:   | prevention Duty | relief duty |
|--|-----------------|-------------|
| Single parent with dependent children - Male                     | 14              | 1           |
| Single parent with dependent children - Female                   | 71              | 28          |
| Single parent with dependent children - Other / gender not known | 0               | 0           |
| Single adult - Male  | 68              | 64          |
| Single adult - Female  | 46              | 39          |
| Single adult - Other / gender not known                          | 1               | 1           |
| Couple with dependent children                                   | 48              | 4           |
| Couple / two adults without dependent children                   | 24              | 5           |
| Three or more adults with dependent children                     | 4               | 0           |
| Three or more adults without dependent children                  | 3               | 0           |
| Not known  | 0               | 0           |

*Data obtained:*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/831054/Assessments\\_201903.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831054/Assessments_201903.xlsx) – refer to table at page 9

### Rough Sleeping

Rough Sleeping across the district is transient in nature with rough sleepers moving in to the area for a short period of time before moving on. The authority has seen an increase of rough sleepers over the last three years, this can be shown in the table below. Of those that are determined as rough sleeping, the majority do have a connection to North Norfolk, however just recently there has been an increase in rough sleepers with no connection to North Norfolk. When having discussions with rough sleepers to establish the reasons for coming to North Norfolk it is common for them to be escaping problems where they were previously living the main locations they have fled are Norwich, Kings Lynn & Great Yarmouth, and of these the majority have abandoned tenancies or have tenancies still open to them in those areas.

|                      | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|----------------------|------|------|------|
| England              | 4134 | 4751 | 4677 |
| East England         | 604  | 615  | 484  |
| <b>North Norfolk</b> | 2    | 5    | 9    |

MHCLG AUTUMN STATS 2016/17/18 Rough Sleepers increase year on year

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/778662/RS\\_STATS\\_2018\\_LiveTables.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/778662/RS_STATS_2018_LiveTables.xlsx)

To support the Governments Rough sleeping agenda, the service was successful in securing Rapid Rehousing Pathway and Rough Sleeping Initiative grant funding totalling £112,536. The funding has enabled the appointment of 3 new team members supporting the work to preventing homelessness and Rough Sleeping including:

- 1 x 2 year fixed post – Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator
- 1 x 1 year fixed post - Complex Health Officer– focus on supporting those that are rough sleeping to engage with services and those at risk of rough sleeping

- 1 x year fixed post - Tenancy Sustainment Officer – to support those that were rough sleeping or previous rough sleeping to maintain tenancies
- Fund Starter Packs for those that have been rough sleeping and secured tenancies
- Spot purchase B&B accommodation for rough sleepers to enable assessment

## **5. Successes from the last Strategy**

This Strategy will continue to build on the success of the previous Homeless Strategy 2014 – 2019 which identified 5 key aspirations being:

- Work with registered providers
- Improve Housing Advice/Options/Solutions
- Not to place any families in Bed & Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks and provide suitable temporary accommodation
- Aspiration to deliver the challenge set to deliver 'A Gold Standard Service'
- Deliver Customer Focused Service Standards

Details of these successes can be shown at Appendix 1

## **6. Key Objectives for North Norfolk District Council in Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping 2019 – 2024**

The review of homelessness within the district has identified that there have been a significant number of achievements. However, to ensure the service continues to provide an excellent level of service we need to ensure that the council continues to challenge service delivery. Taking this on board there are some key areas of work that have been identified to improve service delivery but also to continue with the strong working relationship we have with both statutory and voluntary agencies.

The Strategy proposes the following key objectives

### **1. Early Intervention and Prevention of Homelessness**

The Council currently works hard to provide an excellent and informative service to the customer. Key to this is providing the customer with effective housing options in a clear understandable manner and paramount to the prevention of homelessness is earlier intervention supported by the tools the authority already has in place to assist with prevention.

Tools the authority already has available:

- Loans for Damage Deposits, Rent in Advance, clearing arrears, agency fees (where applicable)
- Move on interviews offered to all clients in supported accommodation that are ready to move on
- Joint working with Discretionary Housing Benefit Team

To enhance the above the authority will:

- Ensure Housing Options services continue to be accessible offering a range of housing options to meet individuals housing and support needs.
- Produce guidance for officers in the allocation of financial assistances in preventing homelessness.
- Continue to Strengthen partnership working around the prevention of homelessness with Registered Providers, Norfolk Local Authorities and Norfolk County Council.
- To produce a Service Level Agreement with Registered Provides that supports the work the teams do in proactively prevent homelessness due to rent arrears.
- Support & work in partnership with local Registered Providers to sign up-to meet the 9 Commitments of “Homes for Cathy” to relieve Homelessness.
- To keep under review, the joint working Protocols with Norfolk County Council for 16/17 year olds and Intentionally Homeless families.
- Continue to work with the Early Help Hub to intervene at the earliest opportunity to prevent people from becoming homeless.
- Provide a seamless service with a single named Housing Options Officer working with the applicant from initial interview to closure.
- To work with the Norfolk Integrated Housing and Community Support Service led by Together to support people with poor mental health.
- To work with the Mental Health Trust in production of a county wide Mental Health Discharge and Homelessness Prevention Protocol.
- To work with the Local Prison to produce a county wide Prison Release and Homelessness Prevention Protocol.



## **2. Increase Access to Good Quality Accommodation in the Private Rented Sector**

There is a strong corporate commitment to address affordable homes across North Norfolk and following a change in Leadership there are emerging corporate priorities with Housing being a key priority feature. The council is in the process of becoming a trusted landlord for PSR properties by the formation of a Housing Company.

North Norfolk District Council has one of the highest proportion of second homes within the UK and coupled with homes increasingly becoming used as commercial holiday lets across the district this makes it more difficult for customers to secure private rented accommodation.

To achieve this the authority will:

- Pilot a Private Rented Sector Officer to work with landlords to provide a range of suitable options for homeless clients this could include:
  - a) Private Sector Leasing
  - b) Long term lets
  - c) Short term lets
- Pilot Tenancy Sustainment Officer – the post holder will give additional reassurance to private landlords to encourage them to take clients that have been rough sleeping or have a history of rough sleeping to enable the tenant to sustain long term tenancies.
- Pursue the formation of a trusted landlord with the intention of acquiring a suitable mix of long term lets to meet identified need.

## **3. Working with local partners to provide solutions which prevent homelessness**

Homelessness is more likely to be solved through multi-agency approach and the authority will ensure that we will work with partners to develop and provide a range of options for prevention and relieving homelessness.

To achieve this the authority will:

- Work with local partners to ensure the wider needs of all households are considered when developing Housing Support plans and ensure that support is provided to access and sustain accommodation
- Work with the current refuge provider 'Leeway' to improve move on plans for domestic abuse victims leaving refuges.
- Promote more joined up working with other registered providers, health, prison and probation services to prevent homelessness on discharge where appropriate
- Work closely with partners in the criminal justice sector through Multi-Agency Risk Assessment conference (MARAC) and multi-agency public protection arrangement (MAPPA) arrangement to provide appropriate support and advise.

- Continue to work closely with Norfolk County Council in ensuring the provision of hostels and supporting housing provision for people who have been homeless or who are at risk of being homeless remains within North Norfolk. Currently these services are provided by Notting Hill Genesis for adults and young people being The Benjamin Foundation & Empanda.

#### **4. Reduce the incidence of Rough Sleeping in the District.**

The government are committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027. This will require central and local government, as well as local communities, faith and voluntary groups and the general public to work together.

The government has already has committed since £100 million of funding to meet its target to end rough sleeping by 2027.

North Norfolk District Council will work to reduce the incidences of rough sleeping across the district.

The Authority works in partnership with Norfolk County Council and have been key in the planning and funding of the homeless & rough sleeping agenda, the funding received is being used to part fund Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinator which is providing much needed support to rough sleepers across the district of North Norfolk.

The authority has been successful with securing £112K in funding to assist with the aims of reducing rough sleeping within the District

To achieve this the authority will:

- Employ Rough a Sleeper Co-Ordinator
- Employ a Complex Health Worker
- Employ a Tenancy Sustainment Officer
- Spot Purchase Accommodation for identified rough sleepers to enable assessment of needs to be carried out
- Provide tenancy starter packs once rough sleeper has secured accommodation
- Offer Tenancy Training courses
- Adopt a 'No Second Night Out Model' or an effective local alternative

**5. To Reduce the use of temporary accommodation for households accepted as homeless and where temporary accommodation has to be used to ensure that it is a reasonable standard and in a location which enables the household to maintain stability**

Due to the nature of the clients that approach the service there will always be a need for temporary accommodation. During the last 6 months this need has increased. Whilst we accept the need for temporary accommodation we need to ensure that this is suitable and of a reasonable standard. Due to the lack of suitable options within North Norfolk the authority is more likely to place a client outside of the district which is both away from the customer's support networks, employment and schooling and is also a costly option.

To achieve our aim, we will:

- To keep under review, the available temporary accommodation units to ensure that we have a suitable supply of good quality temporary accommodation that can be used to meet the needs of all households that approach the authority
- Support the purchase and supply of suitable properties across the district to be used as temporary accommodation
- Produce a Temporary Accommodation Procedure along with risk assessment, suitability requirement and out of area protocol.
- To actively reduce the need for temporary accommodation by working with customers in a more proactive way to prevent or relieve homelessness

**How will we deliver key objectives?**

The above objectives will be delivered over the life time of the strategy. We will continue to work on our own and in partnership with a range of agencies to ensure delivery of the objectives identified in the Service Plan delivery process. Appendix 2

**7. Policy Statement**

The master copy of this document, a record of review and decision making process will be held by Housing Options Team. All documentation will be available for audit if necessary.

The policy will be available to all staff, Members of the corporate document register on the intranet and for Public view within NNDC website Homeless pages

## 8. Document Information and Version Control

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Document Name                               | Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy                             |
| Document Description                        | Under take review and publish strategy of homelessness within area |
| Document Status                             | Waiting Approval   |
| Lead Officer                                | Lisa Grice   |
| Sponsor                                     | Housing Portfolio Holder Cllr Andrew Brown                         |
| Produced by (service name)                  | Housing Options – Customer Services                                |
| Relevant to the Services Listed or all NNDC | All NNDC   |
| Approved by                                 |  |
| Approval Date                               |  |
| Type of Document                            | Strategy   |
| Equality Impact Assessment Details          |  |
| Review Internal                             |  |
| Next review date                            |  |

| Version | Originator | Description including reason for changes                          | Date      |
|---------|------------|---|-----------|
| V0.01   | LG         | Copy provided for initial discussion at CLT                       | 01 Oct 19 |
| V0.02   | LG         | Amended following CLT discussion in preparation Business Planning | 07 Oct 19 |
| V0.03   | LG         | Updated following consultation                                    | 08 Nov 19 |

## Appendix 1

### Successes from the last Strategy

#### Aim 1 – Work with Registered Providers

The focus was to improve closer working relationships with the registered providers with the introduction of Universal Credit to ensure that residents on a low income received the necessary support with the transition. A working group was set up with the main registered provider with in North Norfolk to assist with this process. Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 the authority now works much more closely with the registered provider to prevent tenants from being evicted due to rent arrears. The authority now has an officer that will work both with the registered provider, tenant, housing benefit teams and DWP to look at ways to stop the tenant from having to be evicted facing legal procedures and possible eviction. This will involve supporting the applicant to ensure that they are in receipt of the correct benefits, help with will applying for DHP payments to clear rent arrears, or offer affordable loans to clear rent arrears and prevent the eviction from going ahead. The Council is currently working with our largest RP to establish a service level agreement for managing tenants and applicants with a history of rent arrears and or anti-social behaviour to assist them to secure and sustain their tenancy.

#### Aim 2 – Improve Housing Advice/Options/Solutions

|                         | 2017/2018 | 2018/2019 | 2019/2020  | 2020/2021 | Total      |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
|                         | £         | £         | £          | £         | £          |
| New Burdens Funding     | 50,139.00 | 45,927.00 | 52,783.00  | 00        | 148,849.00 |
| Overhaul data grant     | 9202.00   | 0.00      | 0.00       | 0.00      | 9,202.00   |
| Cold Weather Fund       | 0.00      | 10,000.00 | 0.00       | 0.00      | 10,000.00  |
| Flexible Homeless Grant | 82,813.00 | 93,773.00 | 135,362.00 | 0.00      | 311,948.00 |
| Flexible Homeless       | 0.00      | 65,000.00 | 0.00       | 0.00      | 65,000.00  |

|                    |            |            |            |      |            |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------|------------|
| Grant Top Up       |            |            |            |      |            |
| New Burdens Top up | 0.00       | 3,548.00   | 0.00       | 0.00 | 3,548.00   |
|                    | 142,154.00 | 218,248.00 | 188,145.00 | 0.00 | 548,547.00 |

Service delivery is key to how we work with customers. Prior to the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 the authority undertook a review of its service so that on 3 April 2018 the authority was able to deliver the requirements of the Homeless Reduction Act.

It was anticipated that there would be an increase in demand for services due to the strengths made with in the statutory duties to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants, including those that do not have a priority need for may be considered intentionally homelessness and regardless of local connection.

The government has provided a 3year funding stream through Flexible Homeless Grant and New Burdens Funding:

This money has been vital to enable the council to:

- Increase staffing to add additional capacity and offer wider service provision to meet the individual needs of our clients.
- Fund training and ongoing training to ensure that the team had the skills to meet the new demands due to the changes within the Act
- Funded changes to the IT system, NNDC was a key player in the implementation of the changes with its current IT provider to ensure that all systems were compliant with the legislative requirements in advance of the 3 April 2018.
- Provide options to customers to enable them secure private rented accommodation, or enabling them to remain in tenancies by offering loans
- Provide a pilot of tenancy sustainment training to clients that are in crisis to give them the skills to secure and maintain tenancies.

**Aim 3 – Not to Place any families in Bed & Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks and provide suitable temporary accommodation.**

Early effective homelessness prevention is key to enable this aim to be carried out. The authority has purchased a 2-bedroom bungalow which has been adapted to meet the needs of wheelchair users. This accommodation is able to house: disabled person, families and two single persons.

The authority continues to review its temporary accommodation usage and continues to work to the aim of not placing families into bed & breakfast unless in an emergency and will look to move the customer into self-contained room as soon as they become available.

**Aim 4 – Aspiration to deliver the challenge set to deliver ‘A Gold Standard Service’**

In April 2013, the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) was established to support local authorities to meet the 10 Local Challenges set out in the ‘Making every contact count’ report, which had been published the previous year by the Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness.

| Challenge   | Current Position |
|---|------------------|
| Adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy-in across all local authority services   | Complete         |
| Actively work in partnership with the voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs                    | Not met          |
| Offer a Housing Options prevention service, including written advise to all clients   | Complete         |
| Adopt a ‘No Second Night Out Model’ or an effective local alternative   | Not met          |
| Having housing pathways agreed or developed with key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support                               | Not met          |
| Develop suitable private rented sector officer for all clients groups including advise and support to both clients and landlords                                | In progress      |
| Actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the mortgage rescue scheme   | Not met          |
| Have a Homelessness Strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs | In progress      |
| Not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed & Breakfast accommodation   | Met              |
| Not place any families in Bed & Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks.   | Met              |

During the lifetime of this strategy the authority was committed to focus on these challenges and will continue to focus on these areas.

#### **Aim 5 – Deliver Customer Focused Service Standards**

The council continues with its aspiration to deliver an excellent customer focused service. Some of these elements are being delivered corporately within the Business Transformation programme.

Since the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 the way that the Housing Options team interact with is customers has changed. The primary elements within the act brought new duties to the authority to work with customers for a longer period of time to support the customers to prevent or relieve homelessness.

DRAFT



## Appendix 2

### Action Plan

| Aim  | Action  | Agency | Time Scale | Resource | Outcome |
|--|---|--------|------------|----------|---------|
| 1. Early Intervention and Prevention of Homelessness |   |        |            |          |         |
|  | Ensure Housing Options services continue to be accessible offering a range of housing options to meet individuals housing and support needs                       |        |            |          |         |
|  | Produce guidance for officers in the allocation of financial assistances in preventing homelessness.  |        |            |          |         |
|  | Continue to Strengthen partnership working around the prevention of homelessness with Registered Providers, Norfolk Local Authorities and Norfolk County Council. |        |            |          |         |
|  | To produce a Service Level Agreement with Registered Provides that supports the work the teams do to proactively prevent homelessness due to rent arrears.        |        |            |          |         |
|  | Support & work in partnership with local Registered Providers to sign up-to meet the 9 Commitments of “Homes for Cathy” to relieve Homelessness.                  |        |            |          |         |
|  | To keep under review, the joint working Protocols with Norfolk  |        |            |          |         |

|   |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
|   | County Council for 16/17 year olds and Intentionally Homeless families.  |  |  |  |  |
|   | Continue to work with the Early Help Hub to intervene at the earliest opportunity to prevent people from becoming homeless   |  |  |  |  |
|   | Provide a seamless service with a single named Housing Options Officer working with the applicant from initial interview to closure.   |  |  |  |  |
|   | To work with the Norfolk Integrated Housing and Community Support Service led by Together to support people with poor mental health.   |  |  |  |  |
|   | To work with the Mental Health Trust in production of a county wide Mental Health Discharge and Homelessness Prevention Protocol.  |  |  |  |  |
|   | To work with the Local Prison to produce a county wide Prison Release and Homelessness Prevention Protocol.  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. Increase Access to Good Quality Accommodation in the Private Rented Sector |  |  |  |  |  |
|   | Pilot a Private Rented Sector Officer to work with landlords to provide a range of suitable options for homeless clients this could include:<br>a) Private Sector Leasing<br>b) Long term lets<br>c) Short term lets |  |  |  |  |

|  |   |  |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|
|  | Pilot Tenancy Sustainment Officer – the post holder will additional reassurance to private landlords to encourage them to take clients that have been rough sleeping or have a history of rough sleeping to enable the tenant to sustain long term tenancies. |  |  |  |  |
|  | Pursue the formation of council managed housing company with the intention of acquiring suitable mix of long term lets and temporary accommodation to meet identified need  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. Working with local partners to provide solutions which prevent homelessness |   |  |  |  |  |
|  | Work with local partners to ensure the wider needs of all households are considered when developing Housing Support plans and ensure that support is provided to access and sustain accommodation   |  |  |  |  |
|  | Work with the current refuge provider 'Leeway' to improve move on plans for domestic abuse victims leaving refuges.   |  |  |  |  |
|  | Promote more joined up working with other registered providers, health, prison and probation services to prevent homelessness on discharge where appropriate  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  | Work closely with partners in the criminal justice sector through Multi-Agency Risk Assessment conference (MARAC) and multi-agency public protection arrangement (MAPP) arrangement to provide appropriate support and advise.   |  |  |  |  |
|  | Continue to work closely with Norfolk County Council in ensuring the provision of hostels and supporting housing provision for people who have been homeless or who are at risk of being homeless remains within North Norfolk. Currently these services are provided by Notting Hill Genesis for adults and young people being The Benjamin Foundation & Empanda. |  |  |  |  |
| 4. Reduce the incidence of Rough Sleeping in the District. |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Employ a Rough a Sleeper Co-Ordinator  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Employ a Complex Health Worker   |  |  |  |  |
|  | Employ a Tenancy Sustainment Officer   |  |  |  |  |
|  | Spot Purchase Accommodation for identified rough sleepers to enable assessment of needs to be carried out  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Provide tenancy starter packs once rough sleeper has secured accommodation   |  |  |  |  |

|   |   |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|
|   | Offer Tenancy Training courses  |  |  |  |  |
|   | Adopt a 'No Second Night Out Model' or an effective local alternative   |  |  |  |  |
| 5. To Reduce the use of temporary accommodation for households accepted as homeless and where temporary accommodation has to be used to ensure that it is a reasonable standard and in a location which enables the household to maintain stability | To keep under review, the available temporary accommodation units to ensure that we have a suitable supply of good quality temporary accommodation that can be used to meet the needs of all households that approach the authority |  |  |  |  |
|   | Support the purchase and supply of suitable properties across the district to be used as temporary accommodation  |  |  |  |  |
|   | Produce a Temporary Accommodation Procedure along with risk assessment, suitability requirement and out of area protocol.   |  |  |  |  |
|   | To actively reduce the need for temporary accommodation by working with customers in a more proactive way to prevent or relieve homelessness  |  |  |  |  |

