

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERSHIPS)** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE 0.1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 6TH FEBRUARY 2020** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

## **AGENDA**

### **APOLOGIES**

**1. MINUTES** (Pages 3 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships) meeting held on 9th January 2020.

**Contact Officer: A Green 01480 388008**

**2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary and other interests in relation to any Agenda item.

**3. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS** (Pages 7 - 14)

A copy of the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions is attached. Members are invited to note the Plan and to comment as appropriate on any items contained therein.

**Contact Officer: H Peacey 01480 388007**

**4. HOMELESSNESS REVIEW AND STRATEGY** (Pages 15 - 48)

The Panel are to receive the Homelessness Review and Strategy.

**Contact Officer: J Collen 01480 388220**

**5. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 49 - 58)

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme is to be presented to the Panel.

**Contact Officer: A Green 01480 388008**



Head of Paid Service

### **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Non-Statutory Disclosable Interests**

Further information on [Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Non - Statutory Disclosable Interests is available in the Council's Constitution](#)

### **Filming, Photography and Recording at Council Meetings**

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Arrangements for these activities should operate in accordance with [guidelines](#) agreed by the Council.

**Please contact Mr Adam Green, Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny), Tel No. 01480 388008/e-mail [Adam.Green@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:Adam.Green@huntingdonshire.gov.uk) if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee/Panel.**

Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the [District Council's website](#).

### **Emergency Procedure**

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit.

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERSHIPS) held in the Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 9th January 2020

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs A Dickinson – Chairman.

Councillors T D Alban, B S Banks, R E Bellamy, S Bywater, S J Criswell, J W Davies, Ms A Diaz, D A Giles, Mrs S Smith and Mrs J Tavener.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs S R Wilson.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor K I Prentice.

### **48 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2019 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **49 MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No declarations of interest were received.

### **50 NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Panel received and noted the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions (a copy of which has been appended in the Minute Book) which has been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st January 2020 to 30th April 2020.

*(At 7.02pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor Mrs J Tavener entered the meeting.)*

### **51 CLINICAL WASTE COLLECTION BRIEFING REPORT**

With the aid of a briefing note (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel received an update on clinical waste collection by the Council. In introducing the briefing note, the Recycling and Waste Operations Manager informed the Panel that it was down to the individual pharmacy manager to sign their pharmacy up to scheme. As a result, no Tesco pharmacy has been signed up to the scheme. In addition, the Council conduct 11 free of charge collections because the recipients of the collections have met eligibility criteria.

Councillor Smith noted that take up was limited, however Mr Rogan informed the Panel that a slow take up has meant that the service has not cost the Council as much as anticipated. Members were informed that NHS England only recorded the number of prescriptions issued and not how many sharps received back. This means there is a risk that uptake might increase, meaning costs will rise.

Following a query, the Panel was informed that clinical waste gets incinerated. It was confirmed that offensive waste can go into black bin but that clinical waste must be incinerated. However, a health care professional changing dressing is commercial waste and should not be disposed of in domestic waste. The Panel suggested that additional information is issued to health managers which explain that health care professionals changing dressings is commercial waste and should be disposed of commercially.

In response to the question of what options are there to expand the pharmacy element beyond the existing 18 pharmacies, Mr Rogan stated that the Council pays pharmacies £600 per year to be part of the scheme and that there isn't any options to expand the service if the pharmacy managers refuse to join. It was noted that the 18 pharmacies within the scheme cover a good geographical spread.

A Member asked how should residents dispose of unused medicines, in response the Panel was informed that medicines can be taken back to a pharmacy and that the pharmacy will send them off to be destroyed.

It was noted that what the Panel was witnessing with the presentation of the briefing note was how a decision by a partner organisation has meant that the costs have been shunted on to the Council. The Annual Governance Statement highlighted how financial pressures on external partners is a risk for the Council. The Panel was informed that there were 10,000 sharps boxes issued to Huntingdonshire residents the previous year.

A Member asked if there was any opportunity for recycling any part of the clinical waste, however it was confirmed that there wasn't as it is classified as a biological hazard.

Some Members stated that the Council should do all it can regarding communicating the clinical waste service.

**RESOLVED**

that the Panel receive an update report at the meeting in July 2020.

## **52 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme was presented to the Panel.

In considering other topics for a potential study, the Panel decided to look into environmental enforcement. The Panel resolved to establish a task and finish group comprised of the following Members: Councillors T D Alban, B S Banks, Mrs A Diaz, D A Giles and Mrs J Tavener.

Chairman

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**NOTICE OF EXECUTIVE KEY DECISIONS INCLUDING THOSE TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE**

**Prepared by:** Councillor R Fuller, Executive Leader of the Council  
**Date of Publication:** 15 January 2020  
**For Period:** 1 February 2020 to 31 May 2020

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

Councillor Details		Councillor Contact Details
Councillor Mrs M L Beuttell	Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment	Care of Huntingdonshire District Council Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon PE29 3TN  Tel: 01480 388388 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Marge.Beuttell@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Marge.Beuttell@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
Councillor R Fuller	Executive Leader of the Council and Executive Councillor for Housing and Economic Development	8 Sarah Grace Court New Road St Ives Huntingdon PE27 5DS  Tel: 01480 388311 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Ryan.Fuller@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Ryan.Fuller@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
Councillor J A Gray	Executive Councillor for Resources	Vine Cottage 2 Station Road Catworth Huntingdon PE28 OPE  Tel: 01832 710799 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Jonathan.Gray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Jonathan.Gray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>

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Agenda Item 3

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Councillor J Neish	Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning	7 Willow Green Needingworth St Ives Cambridgeshire PE27 4SW  Tel: 01480 466110 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Jon.Neish@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Jon.Neish@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
Councillor J M Palmer	Executive Councillor for Leisure and Health	143 Great Whyte Ramsey Huntingdon PE26 1HP  Tel: 01487 814063 E-mail: <a href="mailto:John.Palmer@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">John.Palmer@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
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Notice is hereby given of:

- Key decisions that will be taken by the Cabinet (or other decision maker)
- Confidential or exempt executive decisions that will be taken in a meeting from which the public will be excluded (for whole or part).



A notice/agenda together with reports and supporting documents for each meeting will be published at least five working days before the date of the meeting. In order to enquire about the availability of documents and subject to any restrictions on their disclosure, copies may be requested by contacting the Democratic Services Team on 01480 388169 or E-mail [Democratic.Services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.Services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk).

Agendas may be accessed electronically at the [District Council's website](#).

Formal notice is hereby given under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that, where indicated part of the meetings listed in this notice will be held in private because the agenda and reports for the meeting will contain confidential or exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. See the relevant paragraphs below.

Any person who wishes to make representations to the decision maker about a decision which is to be made or wishes to object to an item being considered in private may do so by emailing [Democratic.Services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.Services@huntingdonshire.gov.uk) or by contacting the Democratic Services Team. If representations are received at least eight working days before the date of the meeting, they will be published with the agenda together with a statement of the District Council's response. Any representations received after this time will be verbally reported and considered at the meeting.

**Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) (Reason for the report to be considered in private)**

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the Financial and Business Affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations that are arising between the Authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of or office holders under the Authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
6. Information which reveals that the Authority proposes:-
  - (a) To give under any announcement a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
  - (b) To make an Order or Direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Huntingdonshire District Council  
Pathfinder House  
St Mary's Street  
Huntingdon PE29 3TN.

- Notes:-
- (i) Additions changes from the previous Forward Plan are annotated \*\*\*
  - (ii) Part II confidential items which will be considered in private are annotated ## and shown in italic.

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Future High Streets Fund Draft Business Plan***	Cabinet	13 Feb 2020		Clara Kerr, Service Manager - Growth Tel No: 01480 388430 or email: Clara.Kerr@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		R Fuller	Performance and Growth
Prospectus' for growth - Huntingdon, St Ives and Ramsey	Cabinet	13 Feb 2020		Clara Kerr, Service Manager - Growth Tel No: 01480 388430 or email: Clara.Kerr@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		R Fuller	Performance and Growth
Treasury Management Strategy	Cabinet	13 Feb 2020		Oliver Colbert, Principal Accountant Tel No: 01480 388067 or email Oliver.Colbert@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J A Gray	Performance and Growth

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Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Final Budget 2020/21 and Medium Term Financial Strategy	Cabinet	13 Feb 2020		Claire Edwards, Finance Manager Tel No: 01480 388822 or email Claire.Edwards@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J A Gray	Performance and Growth
Homelessness Review and Strategy	Cabinet	13 Feb 2020		Jon Collen, Housing Needs and Resource Manager Tel No: 01480 388220 or email Jon.Collen@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		R Fuller	Customers and Partnerships
St Ives Outdoor Centre Feasibility Study	Cabinet	19 Mar 2020		Paul France, Business Manager Operations Tel No: 01480 388705 or email Paul.France@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J M Palmer	Customers and Partnerships

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Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency Performance Report	Cabinet	19 Mar 2020		Finlay Flett, Operational Manager (People) Tel No: 01480 388377 or email Finlay.Flett@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		R Fuller	Customers and Partnerships
Cambridgeshire Housing Adaptations and Repairs Policy	Cabinet	19 Mar 2020		Finlay Flett, Operational Manager (People) Tel No: 01480 388377 or email Finlay.Flett@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		R Fuller	Customers and Partnerships
Establishment of Employment Company##	Cabinet	19 Mar 2020		Oliver Morley, Corporate Director (People) Tel No: 01480 388103 or email Oliver.Morley@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	3	J A Gray	Performance and Growth

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Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private (paragraph no.)	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
HDCV Housing Ltd##	Cabinet	19 Mar 2020		Nigel McCurdy, Corporate Director (Place) Tel No: 01480 388332 or email Nigel.McCurdy@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	3	J A Gray	Performance and Growth
Shared Services Business Plans 2020/21##	Cabinet	19 Mar 2020		Oliver Morley, Corporate Director (People) Tel No: 01480 388103 or email Oliver.Morley@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	3	D Keane	Performance and Growth
Lettings Policy Review	Cabinet	23 Apr 2020		Jon Collen, Housing Needs and Resource Manager Tel No: 01480 388220 or email Jon.Collen@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		R Fuller	Customers and Partnerships

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**Public**  
**Key Decision - Yes**

## **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Title/Subject Matter:** Homelessness and Rough Sleeping – Review and Strategy

**Meeting/Date:** Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships) – 6th February 2020

**Executive Portfolio:** Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Housing and Economic Development

**Report by:** Housing Needs and Resources Manager

**Wards affected:** All

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to consider and comment on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2020 included in the Cabinet report attached at Appendix A, prior to consideration and adoption by the Cabinet as a consultation document.

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**Public**  
**Key Decision - Yes**

## **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

<b>Title/Subject Matter:</b>	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping – Review and Strategy
<b>Meeting/Date:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships) – 6th February 2020 Cabinet – 13th February 2020
<b>Executive Portfolio:</b>	Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Housing and Economic Development
<b>Report by:</b>	Housing Needs and Resources Manager
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All

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### **Executive Summary:**

The Huntingdonshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy sets out how the Council intends to address homelessness issues within the district. It is a statutory requirement to complete a review of homelessness and produce a strategy and it is a sub-strategy to the Council's Housing Strategy. It is also a statutory requirement to consult widely before formally adopting a Strategy. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to consult on this Strategy before formal adoption.

The Review & Strategy has four main purposes:

- To address the causes of homelessness in the area;
- To introduce initiatives to prevent homelessness wherever possible;
- To ensure that the Council provides sufficient temporary accommodation for those households that are or may become homeless; and
- To ensure that appropriate support is available for people who have previously experienced homelessness in order to prevent it happening again.

The Strategy gives a national and local context to homelessness, explaining the main trends, in particular the growth of homelessness primarily as a result of evictions from private rented sector tenancies. It also explains the new legislative framework introduced in 2018 by the Homelessness Reduction Act, and the range of initiatives within the Council as well as those being progressed with partners that aim to stem the flow of homelessness by earlier interventions through a range of prevention measures.

The Strategy, together with the Housing Strategy, explains the options that the Council will follow to deliver an adequate supply of housing providing a range of affordable tenures, to help meet local needs – another key component in the prevention of homelessness by helping households into new homes.

The Strategy identifies four main priorities that our work will focus on delivering.

These are:

- Priority 1:** Preventing homelessness
- Priority 2:** Providing appropriate temporary accommodation and aiming to reduce its overall use by securing accommodation for people who are homeless.
- Priority 3:** Establishing effective partnerships, working arrangements and support to those who are threatened with homelessness, to improve their resilience and reduce the risk homelessness occurring.
- Priority 4:** Supporting rough sleepers to address their housing and other needs.

**Recommendation(s):**

- a) That Cabinet approves the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2020 as a consultation document; and
- b) That Cabinet give delegated authority for the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the Executive Leader to adopt the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy 2020 after reviewing consultation responses.

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The Homelessness Strategy is a major policy item for the Council. The Strategy sets out the key role that the Council plays in preventing homelessness, assisting households where homelessness cannot be prevented and how homelessness can be resolved, primarily by ensuring that there are sufficient options within the private or social rented sectors to provide new homes.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to consult widely on this Strategy prior to formal adoption.

## **2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY**

- 2.1 There is a statutory requirement for all housing authorities to publish a Homelessness Strategy every 5 years. Although the last review and strategy was completed in 2017 and is therefore not due again until 2022, it was timely to go through this process given that we are almost two years into a transformed way of working, as introduced by the implementation of new legislation. It also allows us to reflect on more recent changes within the national policy context as well as reflecting on emerging local issues and pressures.

## **3. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

- 3.1 The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

## **4. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS**

- 4.1 Homelessness has a devastating effect on households and delivering on the priorities and objectives contained within the Strategy will help to prevent homelessness and mitigate against its causes. The potential risks are that prevention measures are not successful and that the Council delivers insufficient numbers of affordable housing solutions for households requiring new homes. The Housing Strategy focuses on the delivery of affordable housing, amongst other things, and ensuring that the objectives of that Strategy together with the new Homelessness Strategy are met, will help contribute to the health and wellbeing of our residents, especially those faced with the threat of homelessness..

## **5. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 5.1 A great deal of work has already begun as part of the joint working around earlier interventions that contribute to the prevention of homelessness. Much of this has been progressed through the Homelessness Trailblazer programme and the Housing Needs team reviewing protocols and pathways with partner organisations and we will build on many of the new ways of working preventatively that have been trialled.

- 5.2 This five-year strategy covers the period 2020-25 and from the review of homelessness in the area we have highlighted 4 broad priorities that will be the focus of our efforts over the life of this strategy. There are a range of objectives linked to each of these priorities and we will develop annual action plans around these objectives to help us, working with our partners and the wider community, achieve those objectives. By developing an annual action plan this will allow us to respond to the evidence base as this develops throughout the lifetime of the strategy as well as any emerging national and local policies.

## **6. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

- 6.1 The Homelessness Strategy links to specific actions within the Corporate Plan:
- Continue to develop and support early homelessness prevention initiatives in line with the new duties contained within the Homelessness Reduction Act, to help residents remain in their current homes or find alternative housing
  - Ensure that the principles of earlier interventions aimed at preventing homelessness are embedded within public sector organisations and other stakeholder partners

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 The Council is required to consult widely prior to adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy. We will consult for a period of 8 weeks and responses will inform whether the priorities and objectives that we have identified are the correct ones.

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Preparation of the Strategy involves staffing resource that is met within existing budgets. The annual Action Plans that will be developed will commit the Council to exploring and delivering on various activities that are likely to have resource implications, should the Council decide to pursue any of these options. These resource implications will be explored as part of the delivery against the Action Plan.
- 8.2 The cost of providing temporary accommodation for households that become homeless is a significant one. As homelessness has risen the Council has incurred increasing costs as more households have been accommodated in temporary housing. However the most significant resource implications are likely to be associated with the delivery of adequate numbers of affordable housing solutions through the Council's Housing Strategy Action Plan. The cost of providing successful prevention measures, together with these affordable housing solutions will need to be considered as proposals are brought forward.

## **9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 9.1 The Council is required to publish a Homelessness Strategy every five years to review homelessness in the area and produce a strategy to say how it will prevent homelessness and fulfil its wider duties under the homelessness legislation.

## **10. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

Appendix 1 – Homelessness & Rough Sleeping - Review & Strategy 2020

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

[Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities – MHCLG Feb 2018](#)

### **CONTACT OFFICER**

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Draft

## **Huntingdonshire District Council**

# **HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING - REVIEW & STRATEGY**

**January 2020**



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## 1. Introduction

The Council is required to review homelessness within the district and update its Homelessness Strategy every five years. The previous review and strategy took place in 2017 just prior to the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which came into effect in April 2018. The Act implemented the most significant changes to the homelessness legislation in 40 years, by amending certain parts of Homelessness Act 2002, and this review and revised strategy is timely given that we are almost two years into a transformed way of working. It also allows us to reflect on more recent changes within the national policy context as well as reflecting on emerging local issues and pressures.

The legal framework that we must consider when preparing this strategy is contained within the Homelessness Act 2002, as amended. The Act requires all Councils to formulate a Homelessness Strategy and in preparing this they must carry out a review of homelessness in their area. The strategy must then:

- address the causes of homelessness in the area;
- introduce initiatives to prevent homelessness wherever possible;
- provide sufficient temporary accommodation for those households that are or may become homeless; and
- ensure that appropriate support is available for people who have previously experienced homelessness in order to prevent it happening again.

The Council recognises the devastating effect that homelessness can have on households and that good quality housing providing a stable and secure home environment contributes to the health and wellbeing of our residents. It was one of five key improvement areas that were highlighted within the Council's 2018/19 Annual Governance Statement (AGS). This identified the link between housing affordability leading to homelessness and constraining growth.

Each theme within the AGS is wide ranging and will be delivered only if a strategic and collaborative approach is taken. The fact that homelessness and the associated area of affordable housing delivery is registered as a key risk places this on the highest possible footing in terms of the priorities that the Council must tackle.

The Council has included within its strategic priorities, contained within the Corporate Plan 2018-22, objectives and key actions that support the work that will flow from this strategy to help address homelessness:

## Corporate Plan 2018-22:

Vision:	People – Support people to improve their health and well-being.	
Objective:	Meeting the housing & support needs of our population	Develop stronger and more resilient communities to enable people to help themselves
Key Action:	Continue to develop and support early homelessness prevention initiatives in line with the new duties contained within the Homelessness Reduction Act, to help residents remain in their current homes or find alternative housing  Ensure that the principles of earlier interventions aimed at preventing homelessness are embedded within public sector organisations and other stakeholder partners	Working with communities to build resilience.  Supporting community development and enabling the voluntary and community sector to develop

## 2. National Policy Context

### Homelessness Reduction Act

The Homeless Reduction Act was introduced in April 2018, making some of the most significant change in terms of how local authorities should work towards preventing homeless in their area. The Act's main thrust is to refocus local authorities' efforts to prevent homeless and to do this in co-operation with other local partners. The Act has amended Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and its measures include:

- An extension of the period during which an authority should treat someone as threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days.
- A new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness irrespective of priority need.
- A new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants irrespective of priority need.
- A new duty on public services to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- Clarification of the action an authority should take when someone applies for assistance having been served with a section 21 notice of intention to seek possession from an assured shorthold tenancy.

## **Rough Sleeping Strategy**

The Government launched its Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018. It is based around three core pillars:

- Prevention - providing timely support before someone becomes homeless;
- Intervention – helping people who are already in crisis get swift, targeted support to get them off the streets;
- Recovery - supporting people to find a new home quickly and rebuild their lives via a new rapid rehousing approach.

The principles of this strategy are very much in line with those introduced through the Homelessness Reduction Act and the Government's commitment is to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027.

The Government has introduced several funding bid rounds since the launch of its strategy to help local authorities devise innovative solutions to help deliver on the three core pillars explained above.

The Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy highlights that those who sleep rough are more likely to have experience of institutions such as prisons, the care system or the armed forces. Local authorities should be mindful of the impact of these types of institutional backgrounds that may lead to rough sleeping and put in place assistance and timely interventions. This should include putting in place effective pathways for those prior to leaving these types of institutions so as to minimise the chances of homelessness and rough sleeping.

## **Welfare reform policy**

In 2015 the Government announced a package of welfare reforms which would have an impact on household incomes in general, with some having a direct impact on the ability of households to meet their housing costs. These included:

- Lowering the household benefit cap threshold from £26,000 for a family and £18,200 for a single person, to £23,000 in London (£15,410 for a single person) and £20,000 (£13,400 for a single person) elsewhere in the UK.
- A four-year benefits freeze.
- Limiting support through Child Tax Credits/Universal Credit
- Replacing Support for Mortgage Interest with Loans for Mortgage Interest
- Reducing social housing rent levels by 1% in each year for four years from 2016-17

The National Audit Office's report 'Homelessness' in 2017 examined the impact of certain welfare reforms. It found that a substantial amount of variation in levels of homelessness between different local authorities is associated both with the

broad character of different areas and with the proportion of households in an area receiving housing benefit to help pay their rent. The risk of homelessness is greatest for households in areas of high economic activity on the margins of being able to pay market rents for their homes.

The impact of welfare reforms that change the balance between welfare benefits received and the affordability of local housing is therefore likely to have a wider impact on homelessness.

### **Troubled Families Programme**

This programme has been running from 2015 to 2020, being run and delivered by all 150 upper tier Local Authorities and their partners. Although this programme is not specifically aimed as homeless prevention it aims to address many of the issues that are the main risk factors associated with homelessness, for example worklessness and problem debt, poor school attendance and attainment, mental and physical health problems, crime and anti-social behaviour, domestic violence and abuse and children who are deemed as in need of help.

The programme is driving service transformation in local authorities; changing structures and processes, strengthening partnership working and promoting 'whole-family' working. These are the same objectives that local housing authorities are aiming to achieve in order to deliver effective homelessness prevention. Innovative local authorities are therefore building on the foundations of the Troubled Families Programme in order to help achieve transformation in the delivery of homelessness prevention services.

### **3. Local context – policies, projects and transformative programmes.**

The Council has a clear commitment to address and resolve the housing difficulties faced by our communities, and in particular those that lead to homelessness. There are a number of local policies, projects and transformative programmes that will shape how public services as a whole respond to homelessness. These are summarised below:

#### **The Grand Challenges**

The Cambridgeshire Public Services Board (the Chief Executives' group representing the public sector agencies across the area) has defined a vision for Cambridgeshire. This vision is split into four Grand Challenges that each public sector service should aim to contribute to and there are clear links as to how successful homelessness prevention may contribute to these challenges. The Grand Challenges are:

- Giving people a good start in life
- Ensuring that people have good work
- Creating a place where people want to live

- Ensuring that people are healthy throughout their lives

### **Housing Advice & Options preventative services**

The Council invested in a restructured and increased homelessness prevention service at the time of the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. Initially the immediate response was for Council to ensure it fulfilled the new duties contained within the Act but recognised that the change in the law was only the beginning. A significant cultural shift was needed to change ways of working; to accelerate the better use of data, use new methods and improve collaboration between different institutions and services early on.

Establishing these new ways of working has been the focus of this team over the last 18 months and continues to be so. The following transformative programmes link directly to this different way of working and so must be considered in the whole to ensure that efforts and resources are aligned with partners to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

### **Homelessness Trailblazer Programme**

The Council together with partners from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough successfully bid for funding through the Government's Trailblazer scheme in September 2016. This was in preparation for the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act, identifying distinct areas of work that could contribute to homelessness prevention through earlier interventions. The funding was available for 2 years, going live in the second half of 2017.

Over the last 2 years the Trailblazer team has led on reviewing pathways between partners that contribute to the homelessness prevention agenda and establishing new pathways where they previously did not exist. Through these pathways they have received 1365 referrals from other agencies and achieved 482 successful homelessness preventions across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area. Although the funding from Government has now lapsed the partnership has committed to continue with the Trailblazer programme through to September 2020. This will allow the completion of certain priority areas of work as well as an evaluation of the programme and how it links into the wider homelessness transformation agenda (see below).

### **Housing related support commissioning and the potential for wider homelessness system transformation**

In counties with two tier local government, the County Council has historically received the funding for and commissioned housing related support services.

These services help people to live independently or move on to independent living, supporting a wide range of client groups such as: older people or frail elderly people with mental health problems; homeless people; women at risk of domestic violence; people with substance misuse problems; offenders; young

people and teenage parents; people with physical or sensory disabilities; and people with learning disabilities.

A key part of these services is to support the individuals or families to be able to sustain their accommodation, or help set up their home for the first time, so that they are able to live independently successfully. They play an important part in both preventing homelessness across all the client groups listed above as well as helping households move through a homelessness crisis back into settled accommodation.

Cambridgeshire County Council is reviewing the services it commissions, specifically looking at those that support homeless households. To support this the County Council has consulted with the District and City Councils on the steps it intends to take to re-commission certain services as well as investigating whether there are opportunities at the same time to re-design services. This work is being supported by a commissioned piece of research to ensure that the Housing Related Support review and service redesign work is underpinned by the best possible understanding of the needs of our vulnerable homeless population.

The research will report in April 2020 informing the drafting of the County Council's Housing Related Support Strategy and the possible opportunities to redesign or reconfigure models of delivery, taking account of relevant recommendations and any identified good practice.

### **Think Communities Approach**

The Think Communities Approach is being developed with partners from across the public sector in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This approach focuses on developing an innovative set of principles and ways of working that the public sector across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will implement to ensure our citizens are at the heart of our decision making.

8 workstreams have been identified as part of this approach with many of these intrinsically linked to the delivery of 'joined up' services that will help facilitate homelessness prevention within our communities. Examples of how these principles will be linked to transforming homelessness prevention services include:

**Strategic Coherence & System Facilitation** – that will provide the system with the strategic leadership to ensure Think Communities is delivered, and to ensure the public sector works as a single system, with communities at the heart of place-based delivery.

**Communications** - developing new communication platforms that engage our communities and workforce, making it easier to find the right information, and that enable new behaviours that help residents and staff identify and access alternative services.

**Workforce Reform** - transforming and engaging our workforce to deliver Think Communities outcomes. This will be achieved by:

- Developing new skills and core behaviours
- ‘Unlearning’ traditional ways of working
- Listening to and understanding our communities
- Enabling our staff to work in a ‘less permission, more innovation’ environment
- Blurring organisational boundaries where appropriate, lawful and safe to do so.

As the Think Communities approach is developed and refined this will help inform any transformative opportunities for the delivery of homelessness prevention activities across the range of public sector organisations.

The following two projects have strong synergies with the ‘Think Communities’ approach and we will ensure that the commonalities between these are brought together to avoid duplication and to maximise efficiency and scale in terms of transforming multi agency prevention working.

### **Project Pathways**

The Council has initiated a project to generate proposals for how we structure and deliver services to our most vulnerable customers, preventing a revolving door of presentations. This takes into scope all frontline customer contact and the interplay between Citizens Advice, Job Centre Plus, CGL (substance misuse services) and Everyone Health (health & well-being services) who all offer services at the same location in Huntingdon.

We recognised that despite ever greater collaboration between our teams, services remain silo based and this project aims to create a seamless service for customers. Evidence shows that to meet growing demand the most cost-effective response is to prevent it and so working in partnership with others to proactively predict and solve problems, building self-reliance and social capital on the way, we aim to deliver services to customers that better resolve the range of difficulties they face.

A particular strand of this project will include workforce development and reform, with the aim of achieving the same outcomes as highlighted under the Think Communities approach above.

### **Huntingdon North Initiative**

The Oxmoor is within Huntingdon North ward making up the majority of its residential areas. It is characterised by social housing built between 1965 and 1975 as ‘London Overspill’ to accommodate the additional housing needs of the capital. Individuals with their families moved to the area with their employers and as a result enjoyed a life as one big community.

More recently things have changed and Huntingdon North Ward is now one of the most deprived wards in Cambridgeshire. This deprivation assessment takes

account of factors such as income, employment, education, health, crime and access to housing.

The Council held two 'Developing Oxmoor' events involving a wide range of partners and stakeholders to identify the local issues. The priorities identified at those events all linked to the Grand Challenges that have been set by the Cambridgeshire Public Service Board and operational boards under each of these headings have now been established to deliver against the identified priorities for the ward.

These boards are sponsored by representatives from the wider public sector services and there are clear synergies between this work and the transformative work of the Think Communities approach. We will ensure that opportunities to trial different ways of working under the Huntingdon North project also inform the wider homelessness transformation agenda.

### **Delivery of affordable housing**

The Council's Local Plan to 2036 was adopted in May 2019 and it sets out the approach to securing sustainable development in the district to meet identified needs. This includes ensuring that housing development in Huntingdonshire contributes to the delivery of affordable housing. As is looked at in later sections of this strategy, affordable rented housing is one of the main ways in which homelessness can be prevented and relieved and so making sure that sufficient numbers of affordable homes in order to meet identified needs, is essential.

### **The Council's Lettings Policy**

This policy determines who will be considered for the social rented housing that becomes available in the district and how these households should be prioritised. The policy ensures that those households that legislation states must be prioritised, including those that are owed certain homelessness duties, are offered sufficient priority. This helps with the prevention of homelessness as well as assisting those households placed in temporary accommodation to move into a settled home so as to minimise the impact of becoming homeless. The Letting's Policy was amended to take account of the changes introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act and we are reviewing whether these changes have been successful in contributing to homelessness prevention. This review is due to be completed later in 2020.

### **Health & Well-Being Strategy**

Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council are developing a new joint Health and Well-Being Strategy that aims to address many of the important factors which affect residents' health and social, economic and environmental well-being. The upper tier local authorities recognise that the lower tier authorities, including Huntingdonshire, provide many services which are key to health and wellbeing, and so are being engaged in the development of this strategy.



Many of the factors affecting health and well-being are recognised as contributory factors leading to homelessness or are experienced as a consequence of someone suffering homelessness. The Health & Well-Being Board's draft strategy includes an objective directly relating to the prevention of homelessness and improving pathways into housing for vulnerable people and the Council will be actively involved in the contributing to the workstreams that develop from this.

#### **4. Homelessness in Context - The National Picture**

The introduction of new duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) from April 2018 has led to changes in how homelessness is recorded by local authorities and reported nationally. This has led to some issues with direct comparison with earlier years as well as the monitoring of some on-going trends. It is therefore best to consider what has happened before the introduction of the HRA and early indicators of what has changed post-April 2018.

Prior to April 2018 local authorities recorded the number of households that they owed a duty to secure accommodation because of their homelessness (called the main housing duty and acceptance rates are shown in the table below). Over the last 9 years the general trend has been an increase in homelessness, measured by the number of households that local authorities in England accepted as 'statutorily' homeless.

The financial year 2010/11 saw a 10% increase in homelessness acceptances by local authorities over the previous year, representing the first financial year increase since 2003/4. Homelessness acceptances continued to rise over the next three years but fell by 3% between 2012/13 and 2013/14. The 2014/15 financial year recorded a further increase, with acceptances 36% higher than in 2009/10. Acceptances increased again in 2015/16 and 2016/17 but fell by 4% in 2017/18 compared to the previous year.

The figures covering the period after April 2018 (see table below) are not fully comparable with figures from before that date, because of the additional statutory duties created by the HRA. Households are now initially assessed as being owed either a prevention or a relief duty – the relief duty applies for 56 days and is replaced with a main duty (the same main duty as recorded in the graph above) if the household meets the criteria and homelessness has not been relieved within 56 days.

The number of households recorded as being owed this main duty after April 2018 is therefore considerably lower than the number in the same quarter in previous years. For example, in January - March 2019 there were 7,570 households accepted as owed a main duty, 43% fewer than in the same quarter in 2018.

This does not mean that homeless has reduced, it just means that local authorities are attempting to resolve homelessness through earlier interventions at the prevention and relief duty stages, as intended through the introduction of

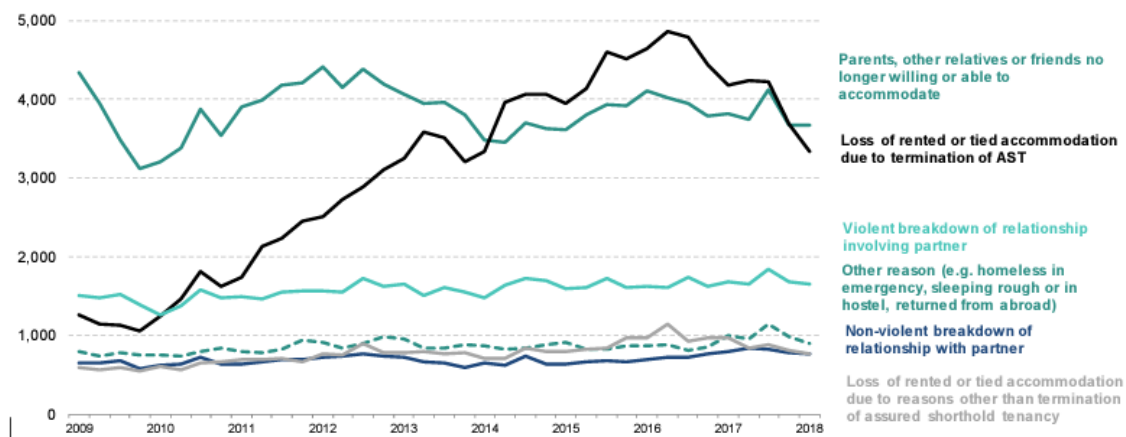
the HRA. The graph below illustrates the reduction in households being considered by local authorities at the main duty stage.

### Causes of homelessness

The most significant factor contributing to the increase in homelessness since 2010/11 has been the growth in the number of households being evicted from private sector tenancies through no fault of their own. This growth correlates to the introduction of the welfare reform programme, in particular changes to the Housing Benefit system. The indication is that this has led to affordability becoming an increasingly significant issue, as more households facing the end of a private tenancy are unable to find an alternative that they are able to afford through their own income or with the assistance offered through the Housing Benefit system. This affordability issue has led to some households having only one option, to approach local housing authorities for help with housing.

This trend continued, leading to it becoming the leading cause of homelessness in 2014. There was a downturn in the number of households accepted as homeless caused by loss of a private sector tenancy in 2017/18, although it still accounted for 1 in four of all homelessness acceptances by local authorities. This slight downturn led to evictions of households by family or friends becoming the highest cause of homelessness nationally at the end of 2017/18, being slightly above evictions from private sector tenancies.

### Households accepted as statutorily homeless by reason for loss of last home - for England between 2008/09 - 2017/18



Source: MHCLG Housing Statistical Release December 2018

### Impact on numbers of households placed into temporary accommodation

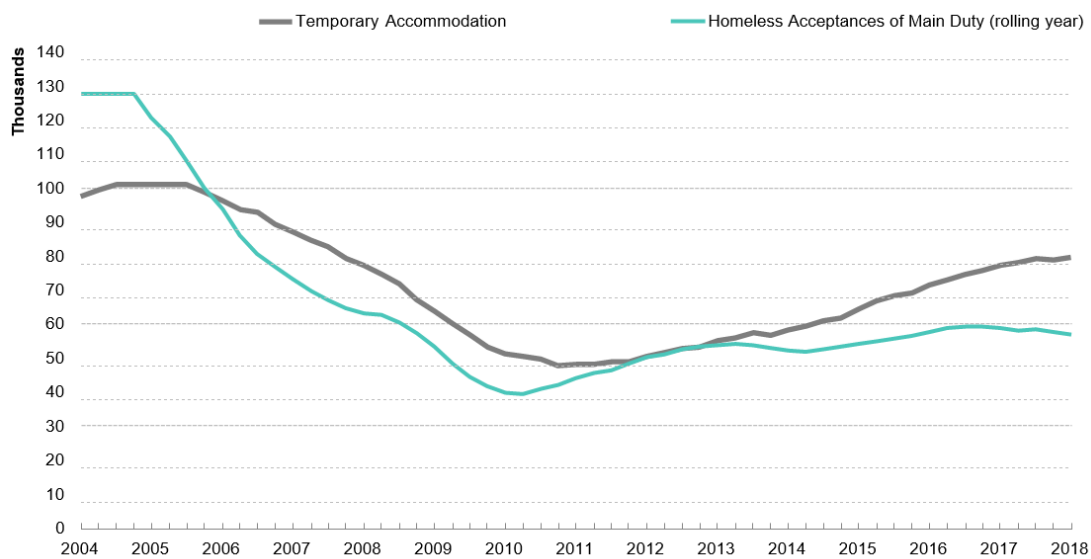
As homelessness rates have increased local authorities have been required to find temporary accommodation and ultimately settled housing solutions for those households in need. The ability to find permanent housing solutions is challenging and influenced by the same issues affecting affordability as explained

earlier. These are the same issues that have often led to homelessness in the first place and so homelessness cannot be resolved by finding a settled home in the private sector if this is not a realistically affordable solution. In areas of high private rental prices this means that the opportunity to find a home in the private sector is unlikely for those on lower incomes, meaning that social rented housing is likely to be the only realistic solution.

The availability of social, or affordable rented properties in appropriate numbers therefore affects the ability of local authorities to move households from temporary accommodation into settled homes. During a period where lower numbers of new affordable homes have been delivered, at a time of rising demand, the impact has been for increasing numbers of households being accommodated in temporary accommodation awaiting moves into settled homes.

The chart below illustrates the national impact of increases in homelessness and households being accommodated in temporary accommodation during a period of limited affordable housing solutions.

**Households accepted by local authorities as owed a homelessness main duty, and the number of households in temporary accommodation, quarterly 2004 to 2018, England**



Source: MHCLG Housing Statistical Release December 2018

**Types of households owed a homelessness duty**

Considering the makeup of households being assisted by local authorities under the new homelessness duties we can see that nearly two-thirds of these were single households (households without children) – see table below. An emerging trend under the HRA appears to be that local authorities are assisting a higher proportion of households that do not have dependent children but may have support needs or medical conditions.

The knock on effect of this is that if homelessness cannot be prevented where households then reach crisis point, and local authorities have a duty to provide temporary accommodation, a higher proportion of households being accommodated are single people that may have associated support or medical needs.

## **Rough Sleeping**

Local authorities are required to carry out street counts or evidence-based estimates of the number of people sleeping rough in their local areas. These are single night snapshots of the number of people sleeping rough that allow authorities to understand the extent and impact of rough sleeping so that they are able to provide or commission appropriate services to assist rough sleepers off the streets.

The most recent published figures from counts and estimates show that 4,677 people were found sleeping rough in England on a single night in autumn 2018. This is a 2% reduction from the autumn 2017 total of 4,751, and up by 2,909 (165%) from the autumn of 2010.

As may be expected rough sleeping is more apparent in the larger cities, with London accounting for 27% of the total figure for England, up from 23% in 2016. From the published statistics one thing is apparent, that the rate of rough sleeping in the rest of England has increased since 2014 at a quicker rate than in London.

The national statistics break down instances of rough sleeping by region and certain regions have seen significant increases (the West Midlands a 42% increase from 2017 to 2018 and the North East a 29% increase over the same period) Others, have seen reductions with the East of England recording the joint largest reduction of 21% from 2017 to 2018.

Although rough sleeping is not solely problem faced by men, of the 4,677 people found sleeping rough in the autumn 2018, 84% of these were male.

## **5. The Local Picture – a review of homelessness and rough sleeping in Huntingdonshire**

### **Pre-Homelessness Reduction Act**

The trend in homelessness in the district has been similar to national trends, showing an increase in the number of statutory acceptances by the Council up until the introduction of the HRA in April 2018. The number of households accepted as homelessness increased from 169 in 2010/11 to 254 in 2017/18, a 50% increase, although the number of homelessness acceptances plateaued and remained constant between 2015 and 2018.

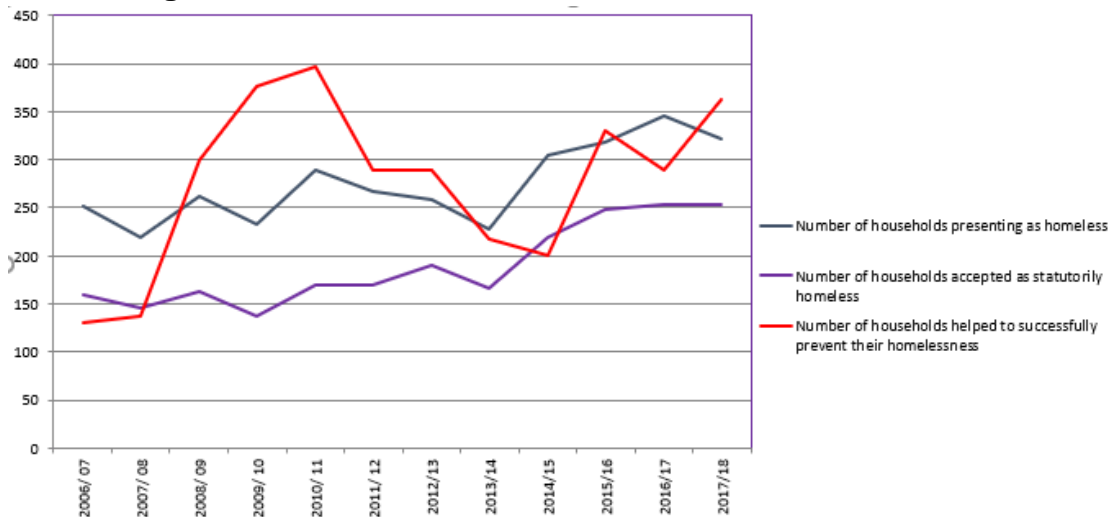
The welfare reform programme and continued increases in the cost of privately renting in the district has meant that more households see social/affordable rented housing as their only realistic option. This has undoubtedly contributed to

the number of households approaching the Council for assistance when faced with homelessness.

The lack of properties available within Local Housing Allowance rates in the private rented sector meant that opportunities to help households into this sector as a successful homelessness prevention reduced, resulting in fewer successful preventions from 2010 to 2014.

However, refocusing prevention efforts in areas where earlier interventions have been able to have an impact has led to an increase in overall preventions since 2014. (see graph below). This has undoubtedly contributed to keeping statutory homelessness acceptances constant from 2015 to 2018 and it is likely that acceptances would have been at a higher level without these successes.

**Total homelessness decisions, those that were accepted as statutorily homeless and successful homelessness preventions – no. of households for Huntingdonshire between 2006/07 & 2017/18**



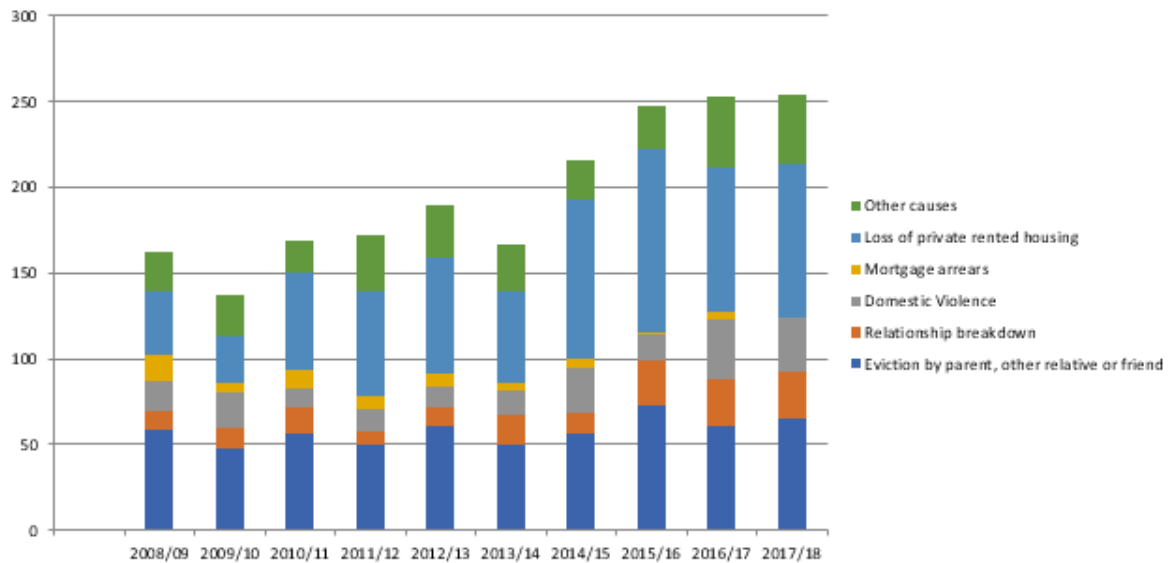
Source: MHCLG Statutory Homelessness Live Tables

**Local main causes of homelessness**

The causes of homelessness within the district are consistent with the national picture: eviction by parents, other relatives and friends and relationship breakdown (violent and non-violent) continues to be significant causes but as at the national level the end of private sector tenancies has grown considerably and since 2010/11 has been the single largest cause of homelessness in the district.

Although national trends saw a downturn in the number of households becoming homeless from the private sector in 2017/18 this was not experienced locally (although the previous year had seen a slight downturn). It remained the largest cause of homelessness accounting for a third of all homelessness acceptances.

**Households accepted as statutorily homeless (main duty) by reason for loss of last home - for Huntingdonshire between 2009/10 - 2017/18**

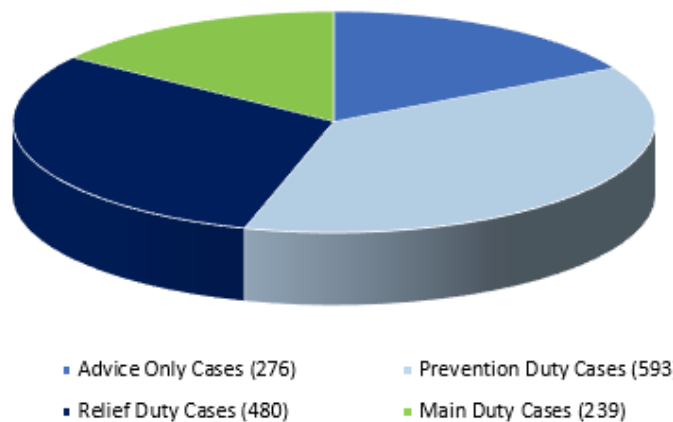


Source: MHCLG Statutory Homelessness Live Tables

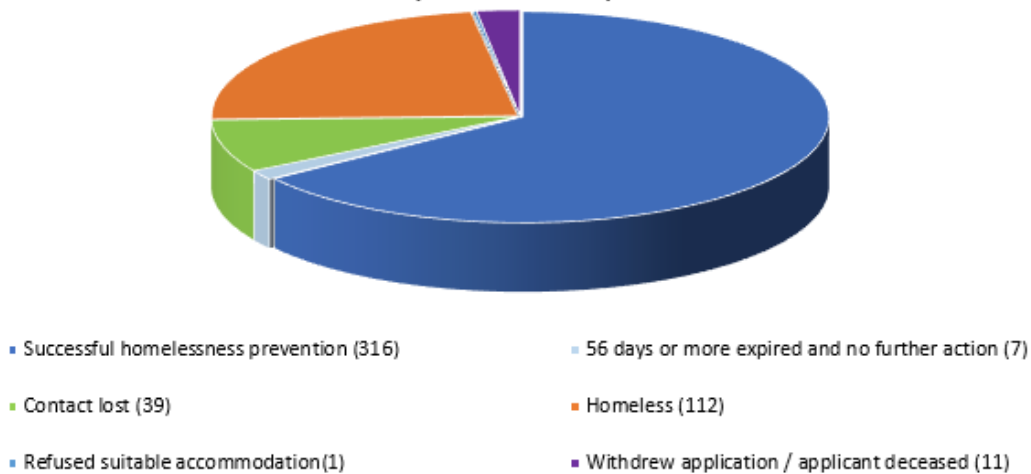
**Post Homelessness Reduction Act**

2018/19 saw the first year of recording homelessness under the terms of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA). The Council assisted 1500 applicants that year under the various duties within the Act, although it is important to remember that some households that did not have their homelessness prevented at the initial stage will have been considered under later duties (leading to some double counting). The breakdown of the differing stages of assistance are shown in the chart below.

**Number of Homeless Applications Opened At the Various Duty Stages, Huntingdonshire 2018/19**



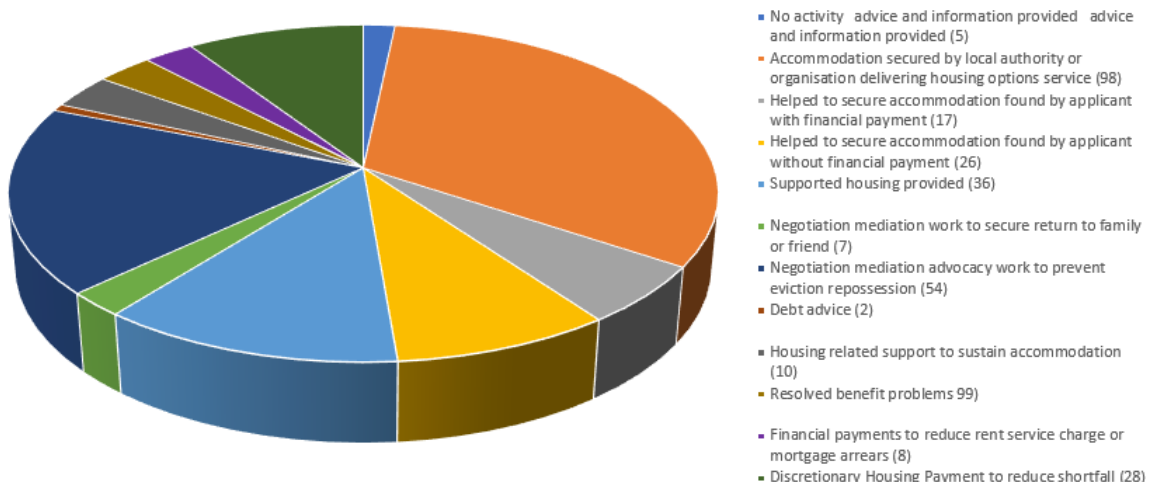
## Outcomes At The Prevention Duty Stage, Huntingdonshire 2018/19



The chart above shows the outcomes that were achieved from preventatively working with households prior to their actual homelessness (the Prevention Duty stage). Almost two out of every three instances of homelessness at this stage resulted in a positive outcome, by either securing the household's current home or helping to find alternative accommodation.

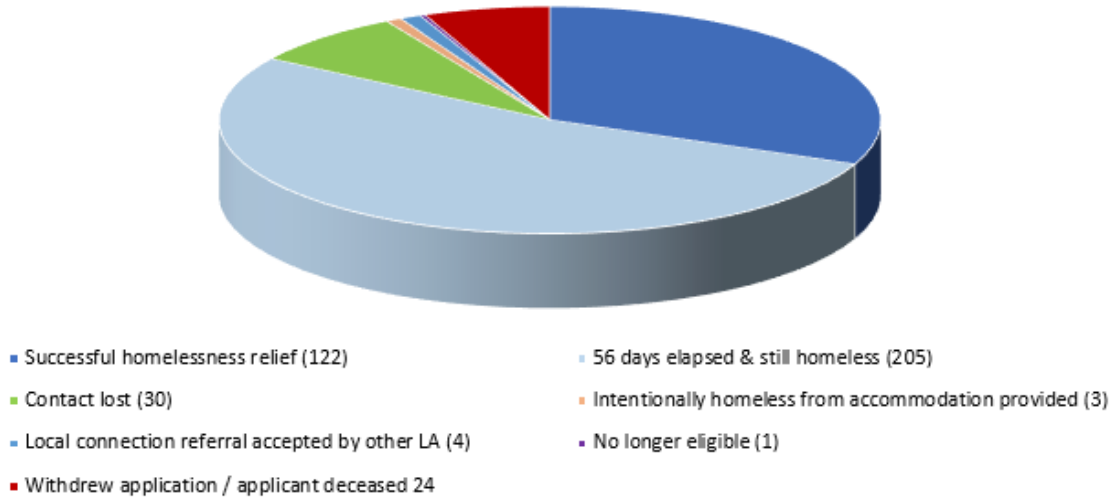
The 'prevention toolkit' offers a range of options that may be used to try and prevent a household lose their existing home or where this is not possible, find an alternative home before homelessness actually occurs. The options investigated at this stage will be informed by the particular cause of homelessness and what actions and solutions may help prevent this. In 2018/19, 60% of situations were successfully resolved by dealing with financial issues and arrears that were threatening homelessness. These actions included negotiating with landlords; resolving benefit problems; helping access Discretionary Housing Payments or homeless prevention payments. Almost one-third of cases were resolved by helping households into alternative accommodation through the Home-Link scheme, ensuring that they were appropriately prioritised when under a threat of homelessness (see chart below).

## Actions to achieve successful homelessness preventions, Huntingdonshire 2018/19



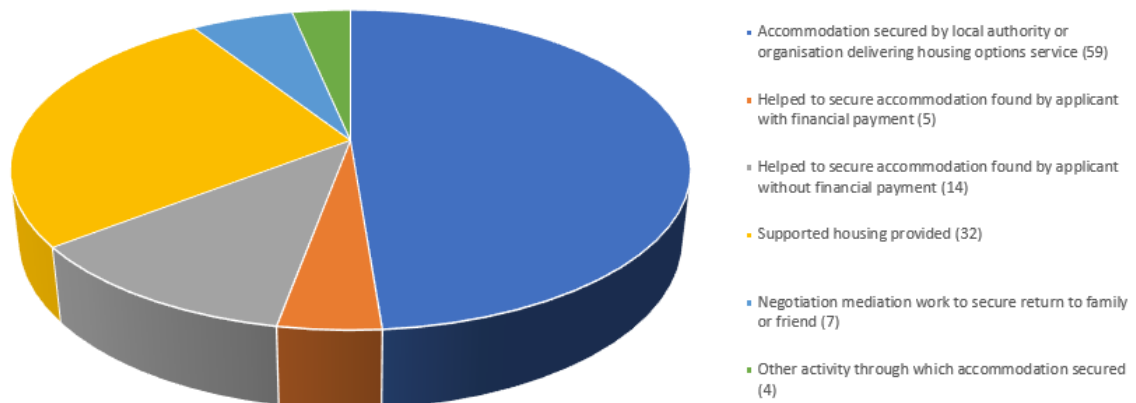
For those households where prevention work was unsuccessful the Council would then go on to see what assistance could be offered to help relieve their homelessness (the Relief Duty stage) – see the following chart.

### Outcomes At The Relief Duty Stage, Huntingdonshire 2018/19



In situations where households reached the crisis point of homelessness the Council managed to help to successfully resolve their homelessness in almost one-third of cases. This stage of assistance lasts for a period of 56 days after actual homelessness and where this is not successfully resolved the Council must consider whether it owes the household the main housing duty. If the Council does not owe a main housing duty it can continue to assist the household at the relief stage in order to try and achieve a positive outcome.

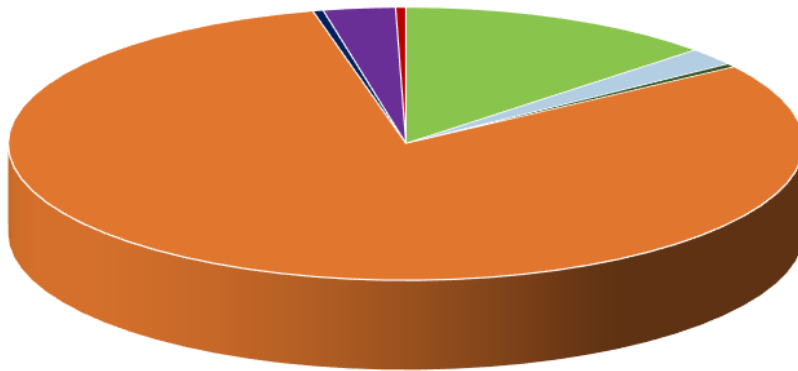
### Actions to achieve successful homelessness relief, Huntingdonshire 2018/19



The chart above shows the actions that were successful in relieving homelessness, with 75% of successes being as a result of helping the household access social rented housing through Home-Link scheme or sourcing appropriate supported accommodation.



## Outcomes At The Main Duty Stage, Huntingdonshire 2018/19



- Homeless & no priority need (31)
- Homeless, priority need & intentionally homeless (5)
- Homeless, priority need & unintentional duty owed but referred to another Local Authority (1)
- Homeless, priority need and unintentional – s193(2) duty (193)
- Lost contact prior to assessment (1)
- Not homeless (7)
- Withdrew prior to assessment (1)

The Council accepted over 80% of households as ‘statutorily’ homeless at the main duty stage – see chart above. By reaching this stage it means that their homelessness was not successfully prevented by earlier interventions, the 56 day relief period did not give further opportunity to come up with solutions and so, subject to final assessment, the main homelessness duty is owed to those households. The solution for households that are accepted at the main duty stage is not limited to, but most likely to be, an offer of social rented housing through the Council’s housing register.

### Temporary Accommodation

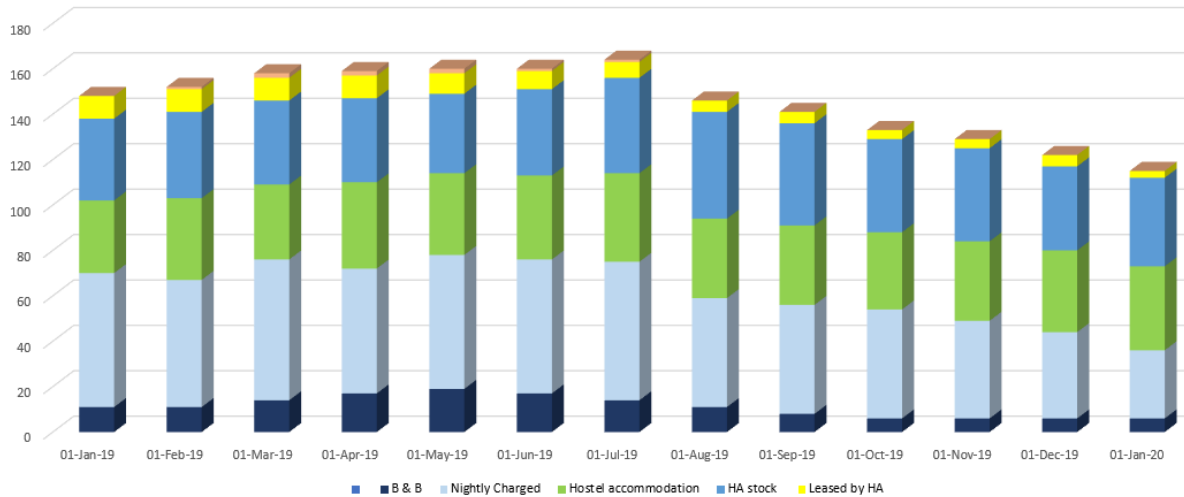
The HRA did not amend the Council’s duty to provide temporary accommodation to certain households that become homeless. Under the new legislative framework Councils must consider whether to provide temporary accommodation at the relief duty stage, when homelessness actually occurs. As with the national picture, we have seen an increasing number of households placed in temporary accommodation, whilst relief activities are carried out.

There is a significant cost to the Council associated with the provision of temporary accommodation placing an increased emphasis on achieving positive outcomes at the prevention stage, so that households do not have the need to be placed into temporary accommodation. It is similarly important that there is a steady supply of suitable properties through the housing register as this allows households to quickly move into settled homes, resolving their homelessness and limiting their time in temporary accommodation.

The number of new build affordable rented homes completed in 2019/20 has contributed to a reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation in latter stages of 2019. We saw a peak of 164 households in temporary accommodation in July and this reduced to 110 households at the end

of December. This has allowed us to reduce our use of bed & breakfast and nightly paid accommodation, the most costly forms of temporary accommodation – see chart below.

### Number of households in temporary accommodation, Huntingdonshire 2019.



The Council has one scheme in the pipeline with a partner housing association that will deliver additional units of temporary accommodation, further contributing to our reduced use of bed & breakfast and nightly paid accommodation.

### Rough Sleeping

The Council is required to carry out either an annual count or an intelligence based estimate of the number of people sleeping rough in the district on an average night. As in previous years the Cambridgeshire local authorities agreed to complete this on the same night in November 2019 so as to avoid the potential for double counting of rough sleepers who may move between districts.

Given the large geographic area of the district we completed an intelligence based estimate collating information from a wide range of partners from the public sector, voluntary organisations and faith groups that work with or come into contact with rough sleepers. This information and the processes used were then independently verified.

From the intelligence gathered it is estimated that there were 4 people sleeping rough on the chosen night in November 2019, a slight reduction from the estimate of 5 people the previous year. The 4 people were all men aged over the age of 25 years, with three of these known to be EU nationals.

The Council was successful in securing funding from Government in 2019 through the Rough Sleeper Initiative which has allowed us to pilot a homeless street outreach service. This is a service covering the combined areas of Huntingdonshire, South & East Cambridgeshire Councils and was launched in

December 2019. It provides rough sleepers with a level of support to help them address a wide range of issues, such as accessing health services, but with the ultimate aim of trying to assist rough sleepers off the streets.

Evidence on the level of rough sleeping identified together with the successes achieved by the pilot will be used to evaluate the on-going need for this type of service.

## **The Cost of Homelessness**

Homelessness has a huge impact on the households affected in both social and economic terms. Homelessness also has a huge financial impact on local authorities particularly in relation to the provision of temporary accommodation, with many authorities having to make significant provision within their budgets to meet these costs. The net cost of providing temporary accommodation in Huntingdonshire in 2018/19 was £840,000. Further investment in enhanced ways of working preventatively, achieving higher rates of success and limiting the number of households that require help with temporary accommodation, will help reduce this cost to the Council as well as minimising the devastating effect of homelessness on those households affected.

The range of measures in place to try to prevent and relieve homelessness, together with the links that we will continue to make as highlighted earlier in this strategy, show a commitment to combat homelessness wherever possible. The annual action plans associated with this strategy will also focus on the financial impact of homelessness and how this may be addressed.

## **6. Our Strategic Priorities.**

This five-year strategy covers the period 2020-25 and from the review of homelessness in the area we have highlighted 4 broad priorities that will be the focus of our efforts over the life of this strategy.

There are a range of objectives linked to each of these priorities and we will develop annual action plans around these objectives to help us, working with our partners and the wider community, achieve those objectives. By developing an annual action plan this will allow us to respond to the evidence base as this develops throughout the lifetime of the strategy as well as any emerging national and local policies.

### **Priority 1: Preventing homelessness.**

Given the challenges we face around increasing homelessness it is critical that we continue to put homeless prevention at the heart of everything we do. We will find new ways of both understanding and addressing the factors that can lead to homelessness - such as the ending of private sector tenancies, family/relationship breakdown and discharge from institutions. We will also develop a greater understanding of the impact of wider social issues such as poverty and disadvantage, unemployment, poor health and wellbeing and lack of

access to affordable, decent homes. We believe this will greatly increase the chances of positive outcomes for people at risk of becoming homeless.

### **Key Objectives**

- Develop further preventative actions based on the evidence of what has previously been successful in preventing homelessness both at a local and national level.
- Embed the early intervention principles and systems that were seen to be successful through the Homelessness Trailblazer pilot.
- Develop greater understanding of the ‘triggers’ that are causing tenancies to end, especially in the private rented sector; and why relationships and/or families are breaking down – to allow new opportunities for prevention to be identified and implemented.
- Monitor and act on the impact of the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act within the Council’s Housing Advice & Options service and with partner agencies.
- Review and analyse the information that we gather in relation to homelessness and we will adapt future services and interventions in response to what we learn.
- Continue to effectively communicate with people about how to avoid the risk of homelessness, ensuring that advice and appropriate support is readily available.

### **Priority 2: Providing appropriate temporary accommodation and aiming to reduce its overall use by securing accommodation for people who are homeless.**

#### **Key Objectives**

- To link this strategy with the targets to increase affordable housing supply including an increase in the supply of move on accommodation for all supported housing pathways.
- Reduce the use of bed and breakfast and nightly paid temporary accommodation, instead providing appropriate temporary accommodation options in partnership with Registered Provider partners.
- Provide support to households placed in temporary accommodation to help them address issues that may be barriers to moving into settled housing.
- Develop a greater understanding of what may encourage private landlords to increase the supply of affordable rented accommodation and how we may assist with making this a realistic housing solution.

### **Priority 3: Establishing effective partnerships, working arrangements and support to those who are threatened with homelessness, to improve their resilience and reduce the risk homelessness occurring.**

The previous homelessness strategy emphasised partnership working to co-ordinate activity and focus combined energies on preventing homelessness and improving services for homeless people. With this new strategy we wish to develop this approach further. Over the life of this strategy, we will forge new relationships with our partners and ensure that our collective efforts to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping are effectively aligned.

#### **Key Objectives**

- Continue to establish appropriate pathways for customers between agencies which reinforce the early identification of factors that may be likely to lead to a risk of homelessness.
- Align efforts and resources with partners to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Establish a shared workspace for agencies working across the North Huntingdon ward to help facilitate joint discussions and problem solving for professionals with shared customers and clients.
- Build on and improve existing processes to ensure an effective 'duty to refer' from all relevant public sector bodies as set out in the Homelessness Reduction Act.
- Work with Cambridgeshire County Council to embed the 'Think Communities' approach across the district.
- Ensure that the Council's workforce have the appropriate skills to apply 'Making every contact counts' principles when assisting customers
- Challenge and resolve barriers to effective service delivery as part of business as usual.

### **Priority 4: Supporting rough sleepers to address their housing and other needs.**

Although the intelligence-based estimates show low numbers of rough sleepers in the district our priority remains to prevent all forms of rough sleeping. We recognise that these figures represent just the 'tip of the iceberg', for example with many more people having to 'sofa surfing' and at risk of rough sleeping.

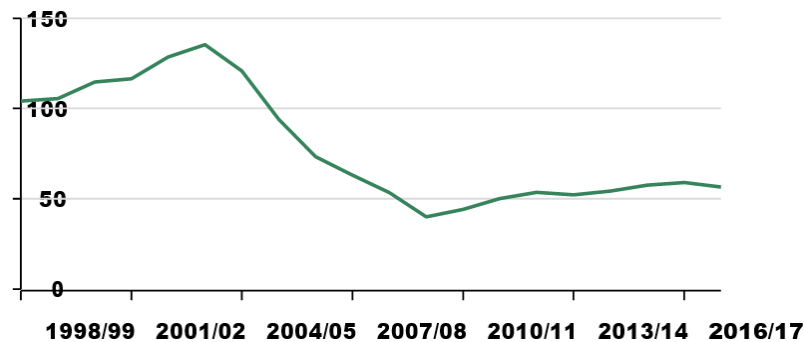
#### **Key Objectives**

- Support and evaluate the pilot Street Outreach service, in particular to better understand the causes of local rough sleeping as well as the pattern and locations of rough sleepers.
- Support rough sleepers who are ready for independent living to move into longer-term accommodation and to sustain their tenancy.

- Evaluate and adapt housing pathways, and develop new ones where they do not exist, to ensure they meet the needs of those living with complex needs as well as new/emergent client groups.
- Build on existing work with partner organisations to develop appropriate supported housing solutions, such as a 'Housing First' model, for homeless people with the highest level of need.

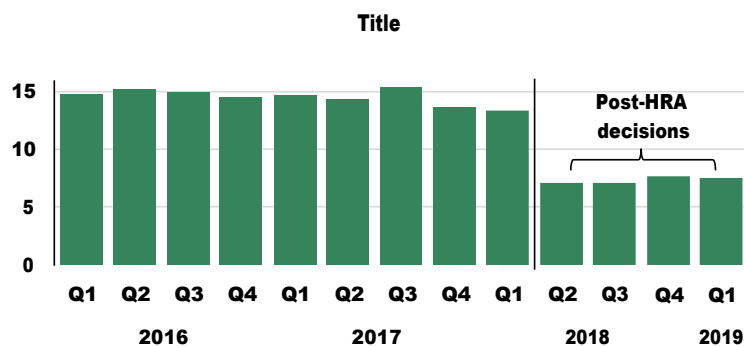
## Appendix A - Homelessness in Context – charts showing the national picture.

### HOMELESS MAIN DUTY ACCEPTANCES Thousands, 1998/99 to 2017/18, England



Source: MHCLG, [Main duty tables: Table MD1](#) (13 December 2018)

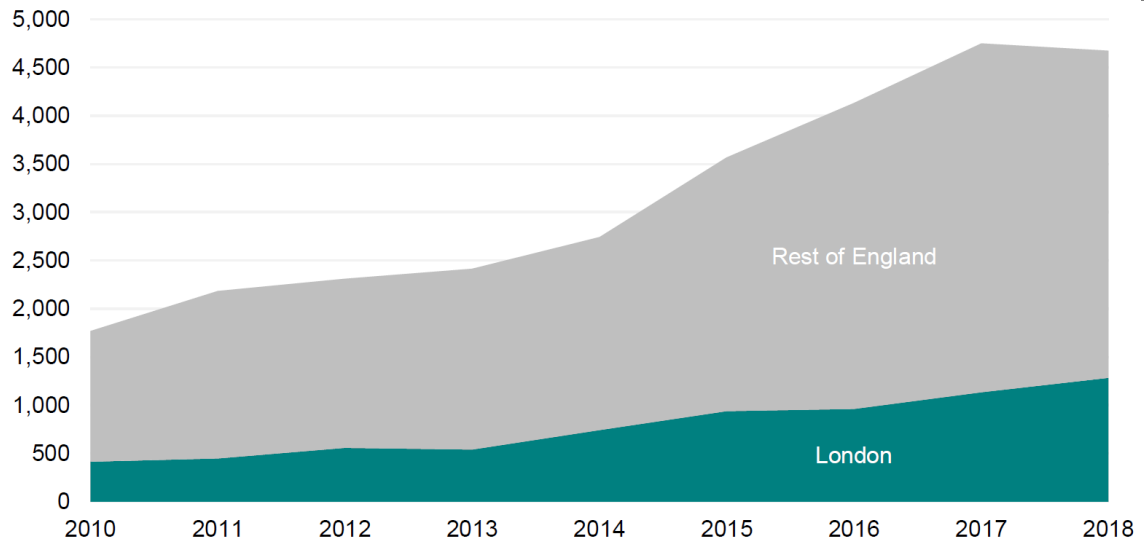
### QUARTERLY MAIN DUTY ACCEPTANCES Thousands, 2016-2019, England



**Notes:** Figures are rounded to the nearest 10. These figures are an underestimate because they exclude five local authorities that didn't provide data (another four have had data imputed). Other data quality issues are explained above.

Source: MHCLG, [Main duty tables: Table MD1](#) (12 September 2019)

**Number of people sleeping rough, England, London and Rest of England, autumn 2010 to autumn 2018**



**MHCLG - Housing Statistical Release 25 February 2019**

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## Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Work Programme 2019/2020

### Active Studies

#### O&S (Customers and Partnerships)

O&S (Customers and Partnerships)	Summary of Scope	Advisors	Progress	Interim Reporting Date
<p><b>Lifelong Health – Part Two</b></p> <p>Identify ways in which the Council can improve the lifelong health of residents. Identify the benefits of a whole system approach for the Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify ways of developing better health outcomes.</li> <li>• Discuss with the CCG and Public Health in order to establish if collaboration between the Council, the CCG and Public Health is worthwhile.</li> </ul>	<p>CCG CCC Public Health 'Friends of the Rec' Jayne Wisely Cllr J Palmer Cllr Mrs J Tavener</p>	<p>12th September 2019 – The Panel received the final report of Part One and agreed to continue the study under the guise of 'Part Two'.</p> <p>14th October 2019 – The Task and Finish Group met with Liz Robin, Public Health.</p> <p>10th December 2019 – Following the presentation of the Part One report to Cabinet and the meeting with the Director of Public Health, the Task and Finish Group met to refocus the scope of the study. The study will now focus primarily on collaboration with Parish &amp; Town Councils and community groups in order to improve residents' physical activity and well-being.</p> <p>13th January 2020 – The Task and Finish Group received a presentation from Active Lifestyles and assessed the interaction the service has with Parish &amp; Town Councils and community groups.</p> <p>28th January 2020 – Members are to discuss with Alyce Barber, Community Development Officer, her work with projects that helps build social contact, builds support networks and addresses mental health issues. Members will also discuss the evidence that links an individual's mental health with physical health.</p>	<p><b>04/06/2020</b></p>

O&S (Customers and Partnerships)	Summary of Scope	Advisors	Progress	Interim Reporting Date
<b>Environmental Enforcement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be confirmed</li> </ul>		9th January 2020 – The Panel agreed to establish a task and finish group comprised of the following Members: Councillors T D Alban, B S Banks, Mrs A Diaz, D A Giles and Mrs J Tavener.	<b>TBC</b>

**O&S (Performance and Growth)**

O&S (Performance and Growth)	Summary of Scope	Advisors	Progress	Interim Reporting Date
<b>Wider Economic Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be confirmed</li> </ul>		<p>During a discussion on the work programme at their meeting in October 2019, the Panel decided to review the topic Wider Economic Environment and identify potential areas of study.</p> <p>The Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) has been prepared an Options Paper. Once the paper has been finalised by Senior Officers it will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny.</p>	<b>04/03/2020</b>

## Prospective Future Studies

### O&S (Customers and Partnerships)

O&S (Customers and Partnerships) idea	Objective test ideas	Advisor potential	Suggested Scope	Progress
<p><b>Health</b> – What are the issues facing the young and elderly populations of Huntingdonshire. How can HDC, either with partners or on its own initiative, assist with the health and well-being of residents in the District.</p>	<p>1. Reducing isolation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reducing age-specific dependency rates by 1 per cent per year would reduce public expenditure by £940m per year by 2031</li> <li>- reducing the rate of institutionalisation by 1 per cent a year could save £3.8bn.</li> </ul>	Age UK	<p>Identifying opportunities (particularly technology) to deliver key activities identified by Age UK, to address isolation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creating a new social link</li> <li>- Developing wider social networks</li> <li>- Meeting like-minded people through clubs and groups</li> <li>- Meeting people with similar needs and supporting each other</li> <li>- Using local services and facilities</li> <li>- Changing social attitudes so that users become accepted and valued as full members of the community in their own right.</li> </ul>	Dependent upon outcome of bid for inclusion in CCC digital services programme – Spring 2018
	<p>2. Improving mental health</p> <p>Contributes to addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Worklessness</li> <li>- Homelessness</li> <li>- Poor health outcomes</li> <li>- Self-reliance</li> </ul>	CCG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quantifying the cost and impacts of isolation</li> <li>- Recommendations for our services to address</li> <li>- Designing communities for the future</li> </ul>	
	<p>3. Reducing hospital admissions in over 65's</p>	Sports England/Active Lifestyles/CCG	<p>Identifying non health interventions that can support mental health – e.g. social referral, links to community activities, volunteering activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunities to improve impact of DFG's?</li> <li>- Assisted collections. Investigate if having an assisted collection is an indicator that a resident may require a DFG.</li> </ul>	

O&S (Customers and Partnerships) idea	Objective test ideas	Advisor potential	Suggested Scope	Progress	
<b>Homelessness</b> – Investigating the links between homelessness and housing supply. Finding triggers for homelessness. Discovering options and opportunities to reduce homelessness in Huntingdonshire.	1. Increase supply of affordable property.	Development Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Closer partnership working with health</li> <li>- Establishing greater community resilience</li> <li>- Engagement with Places for People/Luminus</li> </ul>		
	2. Reduce number of homelessness presentations.	Jon Collen / Helen Brown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working with Private Sector landlords to understand reasons behind end of AST and incentives to address</li> <li>- Looking to develop options to incentivise Private landlords to take social tenants.</li> <li>- Strategies around use of HMOs</li> <li>- Testing effectiveness of Trailblazer</li> <li>- Testing Homelessness pilot work</li> <li>- Looking at opportunities for partners to signpost and intervene</li> <li>- Taking evidence from best practice providers elsewhere</li> <li>- Working with Registered Providers to maximise housing stock utilisation and fit</li> </ul>		
	3. Increase number of homelessness preventions – solutions that prevent people losing their home	Jon Collen			
	4. Increase number of empty properties brought back into use				
<b>Environment</b> – What are the environmental (and lifestyle) quality issues facing Huntingdonshire,	1. Reducing air pollution	Chris Stopford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transport options</li> <li>- Natural environment – exploring opportunities to enhance HDC country parks (Hinchbrook / Paxton Pits)</li> </ul>		
	2. Reducing long term flood issues	Environment Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Role of Great Fen as a regionally significant habitat / tourism destination</li> </ul>		

O&S (Customers and Partnerships) idea	Objective test ideas	Advisor potential	Suggested Scope	Progress
	3. The community role in grounds maintenance and cleansing	Neil Sloper	- A14 and Cam Ox corridor – actively influencing Govt and key transport agencies on investment pipeline and funding options - Exploring the options and Council/communities appetite for scalable growth linked to new infrastructure and 'healthy places' with sustainable living choices	
	4. Definition of 'Place' and 'People' vision for Huntingdonshire		- Role of Neighbourhood Plans and Market Town Master Plans in promoting and directing employment and housing growth - Influencing long term utility provision – water/power	

#### O&S (Performance and Growth)

O&S (Performance and Growth)	Objective test ideas	Advisor potential	Suggested Scope	Progress
<b>Housing</b> – Increasing quality of housing developments and increasing supply of Affordable/Social housing – specifically in the villages.	1. Increase in the number of affordable houses built in the District – positively impacting on the quality of developments	Andy Moffat Cllr Corney (a builder by trade)/ Developers	- Review the effectiveness of rural exception sites and 60/40 policy - Explore viability assessment mechanisms to ensure proper value is created form development sites - Review of CIL charging regime and utilisation of funds	
	2. Reduce voids of all types, inc empty homes and RP turnaround times	Homes England	- Relationships with RPs (Registered Providers) and options to increase pace and tenure type of supply plans	
	3. Increase the availability of social housing	Registered Providers	- Utilisation of HDC non-operational land assets to increase supply and generate	

O&S (Performance and Growth)	Objective test ideas	Advisor potential	Suggested Scope	Progress
<b>Wider Economic Environment</b> – How to best position Huntingdonshire as an attractive place to do business	4. Reduce Council spend on Homelessness	Andy Moffat / Clive Mason	system savings (eg reduction in B&B spend. - Improving infrastructure on developments to enhance liveability, including digital, environmental – flooding etc, energy use, health land and space for wildlife. Supporting positive transport choices, and community self-reliance.	
	5. Enhanced infrastructure and liveability on developments		- Creation of an Investment prospectus for Huntingdonshire - Input into a Local Industrial Strategy - Digital infrastructure and Connected Cambridgeshire roll-out across market towns	
	1. A Local Industrial Strategy for Cambridgeshire within which Huntingdonshire is prominent	CA Business Board / Company CEOs – reasons for locations choices and future workforce aspirations	- Better Business for All pilot initiative matching regulatory services to advice and promotion	
	2. GVA (Gross Value Added) net increase		- Roads and rail infrastructure investment deal with Govt / CA	
	3. Increase in business rates receipts and invest to accumulate utilisation thereof (subject to Govt regs)		- Business rates retention and utilisation of AW Enterprise Zone NNRD receipts	
4. Increase average earnings and percentage earnings derived in Huntingdonshire/Cambridgeshire	- Role of strategic sites such as Alconbury Weald in delivering floor space and clusters			
5. Opportunities to enhance the Councils industrial portfolio and Corporate Investment Strategy in facilitating,	- Sector analysis - what are the indicators of existing success and productivity. Sectors to nurture and attract.			
			- Understanding locational advantages of Huntingdonshire and investment decisions of business leaders to stay/relocate here.	
			- Scope and mechanisms for HDC interventions in infrastructure/redevelopment programmes	

O&S (Performance and Growth)	Objective test ideas	Advisor potential	Suggested Scope	Progress
<p><b>Skills</b> - Increase in educational attainment, and achievement of key skills.</p>	<p>retaining and securing new business opportunities</p> <p>A package of 'Deals':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HDC &amp; Govt/CA</li> <li>- HDC and Local Councils</li> <li>- HDC and communities</li> <li>- An increase in key skill areas.</li> <li>- An increase in educational attainment.</li> </ul>	<p>Andy Moffat John T Hill - CPCA</p> <p>CA Business Board / Company CEOs – reasons for locations choices and future workforce aspiration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Authority strategy impacts, particularly advancing recommendations from CPIER.</li> <li>• Alignment to future skills and sectoral demand identified through EMSI study.</li> <li>• Role of EDGE programme and wider Combined Authority skills and business support advisory services.</li> <li>• Relationship to CPBS 'Grand Challenges' outcomes.</li> </ul>	

## Closed Studies

### O&S (Customers and Partnerships)

O&S (Customers and Partnerships)	Summary of Scope	Advisors	Progress	Outcome
<p><b>Lifelong Health – Part One</b></p> <p>Identify ways in which the Council can improve the lifelong health of residents.</p> <p>Identify the benefits of a whole system approach for the Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify what the main health issues facing the residents of Huntingdonshire are (and if there are any problem areas).</li> <li>To discover what leisure activities/provision residents enjoy and/or want.</li> <li>Identify what leisure provision/facilities are most effective. (Investment shouldn't be made in a particular facility if the benefits are minimal.)</li> <li>Discuss with the CCG in order to establish if collaboration between the Council and the CCG is worthwhile.</li> </ul>	<p>CCG CCC Public Health Jayne Wisely Cllr J Palmer Cllr Mrs J Taverer</p>	<p>10th January 2019 – The Task and Finish (T&amp;F) Group met and reviewed the scoping document. Based on the Group's discussion the scoping document is being revised. The revised scoping document will be presented to the Group at their next meeting for approval.</p> <p>7th February 2019 – The T&amp;F Group met and agreed the scoping document. Members planned out the next steps of work and agreed to focus on collaboration with Parish Councils.</p> <p>20th March 2019 – Members visited Little Paxton Parish Council to view their physical activity equipment and learn how they engage with the community. Members had a further meeting on 4th April to discuss key learning points of the visit.</p> <p>8th July 2019 – The T&amp;F Group visited Yaxley Parish Council and discovered what leisure facilities there are and how they engage with the community.</p> <p>31st July 2019 – Members met to discuss their findings, agree the content of the final report and discuss future work programming.</p> <p>12th September 2019 – The Panel received a final report which outlined the Group's recommendations and proposed timetable for future study work.</p>	<p><b>Members agreed the recommendations within the report and agreed to conduct further study under 'Part Two'.</b></p> <p><b>The report was presented to Cabinet for comment in October 2019.</b></p>



O&S (Customers and Partnerships)	Summary of Scope	Advisors	Progress	Outcome
<b>Tree Strategy Working Group</b>  Membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Mrs J Tavener (Lead)</li> <li>• Cllr B Banks</li> <li>• Cllr J W Davies</li> </ul>	At the O&S Panel (Communities and Environment) meeting in September 2017, Members agreed to establish a working group with the aim of refreshing the Tree Strategy and scrutinising the Action Plan.	Andy Moffat Tamsin Miles Adrian Sargeant	5th September 2017 – O&S Panel (Communities and Environment) established the Tree Strategy Working Group.  6th February 2018 – Councillor Mrs J Tavener updated Members on the progress of the Working Group.  12th July 2018 – The Panel received an update from Councillor Mrs J Tavener.  February 2019 – The Arboricultural Officer (Planning) and the Arboricultural Officer (Operations) began liaising with the Working Group in order to review and update the Council’s Tree Strategy.  3rd October 2019 – The final report was presented to O&S. In addition, the Arboricultural Officer (Planning) gave a presentation on the next steps of the Tree Strategy Revision.	<b>The Tree Strategy Working Group was dissolved. A revised Tree Strategy will be presented to O&amp;S in March 2020.</b>

## O&S (Performance and Growth)

O&S (Performance and Growth)	Summary of Scope	Advisors	Progress	Outcome
<p><b>Delivery of Affordable Housing</b> (Accelerating the delivery of Affordable Housing across Huntingdonshire communities primarily through Rural Exception Site mechanisms)</p> <p>• Increase in the number of affordable houses built in the District – positively impacting on the quality of developments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To explore methods that maximise the effectiveness of the Council's approach to achieving additional affordable housing provision beyond allocated sites.</li> <li>To advise on a strategic programme and range of mechanisms to promote and secure rural exception sites (RES) appropriate to settlement scale and need across the District.</li> <li>To explore how RES sites can best be promoted locally, including the role of Ward Members and Parish /Town Councils.</li> </ul>	<p>Andy Moffat</p> <p>Cllr Corney (a builder by trade)/Developers</p>	<p>8th January 2019 – The Panel reviewed and agreed the scoping document.</p> <p>12th February 2019 – The Task and Finish Group met and reminded themselves of the scoping document. Members also discussed the documents presented to them and considered them when planning future work.</p> <p>12th March 2019 – Mark Deas, Cambridgeshire ACRE, was in attendance to discuss the work of the organisation and the mechanism of Rural Exception Sites (RES). Members are keen to discuss with Housing Associations their development plans for Huntingdonshire.</p> <p>23rd April 2019 – Mark Hanson, Cross Keys Homes and Ian Jackson, Longhurst were in attendance to discuss RES and opportunities to accelerate the supply of affordable housing.</p> <p>30th April 2019 – Nigel Finney and John Walton of Luminus were in attendance to discuss ways that HDC and Luminus could accelerate the delivery of affordable housing in Huntingdonshire.</p> <p>1st October 2019 – The final report was presented to O&amp;S.</p>	<p><b>The report was presented to Cabinet for comment in October 2019.</b></p>