

## Appendix 1

### Position Statement

This appendix details the demands on the homeless services, the steps that have been taken to address those demands and the work plan to take forward a Housing First Approach.

#### 1.0 Demands on the Homeless Services

- 1.1 The Council's temporary accommodation placement rates have continued to increase with each period of national restrictions and the table below shows that the number of cases placed reduced when national restrictions were not in place and the team were able to move more cases on.

Period	Number of cases placed into Temporary Accommodation	Number of cases placed into B+B	Total number of cases placed	Rate of increase or decrease	Number of Rough Sleepers placed
16 <sup>th</sup> March 2020 (week prior to 1 <sup>st</sup> national restrictions)	102	19	140	N/A	0
June 2020 (at end of 1 <sup>st</sup> national restrictions)	112	69	181	29% increase from March 2020	48
September 2020 (No national restrictions or tier in place)	106	47	153	15% decrease from June 2020	10
13 <sup>th</sup> November 2020 (during 2 <sup>nd</sup> national restrictions)	108	47	155	1% increase from September 2020	26
1 February 2021 (during 3 <sup>rd</sup> national restrictions)	114	73	187	17% increase from November 2020	42

- 1.2 These above figures demonstrate that at, the end of the first national restrictions, our cases placed in bed and breakfast exceeded all historical placement rates. However due to the hard work from the Teams the figures were substantially reduced and bids were made for short term and long term

funding to rehouse the additional rough sleepers accommodated since the start of the pandemic. Unfortunately, these figures have now risen again exceeding those in June.

- 1.3 The Teams have been working at pace to bring forward the actions detailed in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to achieve the 4 priorities which are vital in addressing the additional demands placed on the Council due to COVID.
- 1.4 Since the “Everyone In” Directive of 26 March 2020, the Council has made 156 placements for those who were rough sleeping, or at imminent risk of rough sleeping, into accommodation.
- 1.5 There are 38 cases currently accommodated and of these 27 clients are in nightly let accommodation with a further 15 in the Council’s own Temporary Accommodation stock. The applicants who were accommodated during the first and second national restrictions are not necessarily the same cases that have been accommodated during this third period of national restrictions.
- 1.6 There will always be a constant and steady flow of homelessness approaches that we will need to have resource to meet. Expanding our single homelessness provision such as the Council’s Housing First approach will assist us to manage the ongoing demand.
- 1.7 The information, for each applicant the Council placed, is captured in the Hertfordshire case tracker which was introduced through the Hertfordshire Accommodation Cell. The tracker captures where cases have moved onto, whether they were subsequently evicted owing to serious crime and/or anti-social behaviour or successfully rehoused into alternative accommodation. This data has been used to inform what support services are needed to support this cohort.
- 1.8 Following the third national lockdown introduced in early January 2021 Local Authorities have been directed to follow the “Protect programme” to ensure that rough sleepers have the opportunity to isolate in the same way they did during the first and second national restrictions.
- 1.9 The Council has engaged three rough sleeper workers through the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding, who have worked with the Temporary Accommodation team to provide support to this client group in addition to those cases otherwise owed a statutory duty for accommodation. Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding has been confirmed meaning that we can recruit to the 4<sup>th</sup> vacant Rough Sleeper outreach worker offering more resilience to the Team.
- 1.10 The Council’s No More service also offered support to cases placed and worked with those clients willing to engage. Both the Rough Sleeping team and the No More service continue to work with the clients placed under COVID provision in addition to *Emerging Futures* who are a commissioned provider within Hertfordshire.
- 1.11 The Council’s housing supply team have continued to source accommodation at pace in the privately rented sector (PRS) with 88 new tenancies sourced for cases open to the Council’s housing options team

since April 2020 despite a substantial period of resistance to non-essential moves within the sector for a number of months.

- 1.12 Whilst these figures are comparable to those achieved in the financial year before the pandemic, there is a substantial increase in the number of new units the housing supply team have procured directly from landlords. Since April 2020, 30 new units directly from landlords are being used to assist residents who were homeless or faced with homelessness in comparison to 24 in the whole of the previous financial year. This growth reflects the positive relationship the council's housing supply team have with private landlords in the borough and the development of the next steps let brand.
- 1.13 Our Housing Supply Co-Ordinators support both tenants and landlords throughout the tenancies. This avoids a cycle of homelessness and promotes longer, successful tenancies in the private rented sector. The Team are currently supporting 365 tenancies that were assisted by our tenancy deposit scheme. 158 of these tenancies began before 2019 demonstrating the effectiveness of the support.
- 1.14 The Team continue to have security in place to monitor the high support need placements to ensure safety for applicants, members of the public and council staff

## **2 The demands on the service continues to show year on year growth.**

- 2.1 Approaches to the service are detailed below:
- During 2018 /19 there were 1314 approaches to the service (equates to 25 approaches per week).
  - During 2019/20 there were 1571 approaches to the service (equates to 30 cases per week) which is a year on year increase of 20%.
- 2.2 Our records show that there has also been an increase in approaches during this financial year compared to last:

<b>Approaches to Housing Options</b>		
<b>Period</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage Increase from last financial year</b>
Jan-March 2020 (pre COVID-19 restrictions)	471	36% increase on same quarter last year
April- June 2020 (during national restrictions 1.0)	381	Static on last year
July-Sep 2020	369	Static on last year
Oct 2020	149	81% increase on October 2019
November 2020 (during national restrictions 2.0)	116	68% increase on November 2019

December 2020	99	15% increase on December 2019
January 2021 national restrictions 3.0	124	Decrease of 20% on January 2021

- 2.3 It is important to note that despite many restrictions being in place to ban evictions, to stop all non-essential moves taking place and for the country being under national restrictions from March until July 2020 the service still received the same number of approaches compared to the same quarter last financial year.
- 2.4 In March 2020 the average caseload per full time Housing Options Officer stood at 60 case per officer. At 7 February 2021 the average case load stands at 86 cases per full time officer.
- 2.5 The Housing options team currently have a caseload of 584 cases allocated between 7 officers totalling 83 cases per officer. Due to staff sickness and vacancies the team are operating at a 70% capacity and reliant on 3 temporary members of staff to accommodate this.
- 2.6 There are 6 established Housing Options Caseworkers in the budget and 4 of these are funded through the Homeless Prevention Grant which means that these posts are reliant on this fixed term funding. Without at least 10 Housing Options Caseworkers the caseload will be unmanageable and therefore the team will not be able to meet our statutory functions.
- 2.7 It is important to note that the team are under immense pressures currently due to staff shortages. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in presentations once the law on evictions is no longer in place as it is anticipated that there will be an increase in landlords serving notice in the private rented sector.
- 2.8 For the last financial year 525 preventions were achieved which is approximately 10 preventions per week - which would not have been possible without the funding from the Flexible Homeless Support Grant (FHSG) for these posts - given the sheer volume of cases approaching the service. The FHSG funds a substantial number of staff within the service. The council is yet to hear about the next financial year's allocations.
- 2.9 Preventions financial year 2020-21 are detailed below:

	Preventions achieved in Period	Cumulative total for the year to date
April – June 2020	67	67
July – September 2020	84	151

October –December 2020	68	219
January 2021	4	223

- 2.10 The target for the year is 320 and these figures evidence the pressure in the Housing Options team who have achieved only 4 preventions in the first month of Q4. The team are currently focusing on the initial triage of cases meaning there is no capacity to focus on preventions.
- 2.11 In order to address this there will be two Housing Options Caseworkers who will specialise in single homelessness and relationship breakdown. In addition to this the Housing Supply team are focusing on access to the private rented sector to discharge our statutory duty.
- 2.12 The fund from the FHSG now renamed Homeless Prevention Grant has been allocated for spends in financial year 2021/2022 and the extension of the posts required for statutory provision were agreed with Strategic Directors on 3 February 2021.

### 3 ROUGH SLEEPER RE HOUSING PATHWAYS

- 3.1 As set out in the December Housing First Executive report there are 3 re-housing pathways identified for rough sleeper applicants. Below is an update on number of applicants identified for each pathway.

SUPPORT NEED	Housing Options	Estimated Numbers
<b>Pathway one:</b> Low support needs with established professional and clinical support networks	Secure accommodation directly into Private rented sector or via temporary stay in Council Emergency Accommodation /Temporary Accommodation (EA/TA) if time does not permit  Consider shared accommodation with Floating Support.	There are currently 5 clients which have been assessed as suitable for 'pathway one'  This will be the persons are now in PRS or pending PRS lets
<b>Pathway Two:</b> Medium level support needs with greater connections and referrals to professional support needed	This is for those that experienced a sustained level of rough sleeping and require far more support.  Consider shared TA/EA via staffed Council premises or independent accommodation with higher frequency of multi-agency	There are currently 7 clients whose needs are classed as suitable for 'pathway two'

SUPPORT NEED	Housing Options	Estimated Numbers
	support before finding alternative private sector or Council/Registered Social Landlord accommodation subject to eligibility	
<b>Pathway Three:</b> High level client needs that require the most intensive support due to addiction or underlying clinical issues	Seek specialist partner agency accommodation such as that offered by the Haven hostel for a sustained period before move on accommodation is sought.	Current estimation is that approximately 30 clients in this category
<b>Reconnected (No longer in TA)</b>	Through support, and professional agency referrals it is possible on occasions to secure reconciliation between family networks.	2 reconnected with their children due to being accommodated in Stevenage
<b>Unsuccessful and showing signs of disengaging (No longer in TA)</b>	Sadly, due to violent anti-social behaviour and other criminal activity some clients disengaged, have been evicted or were taken into custody by the Police	15 evicted since November national restrictions.

- 3.2 The above table highlights that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the applicants accommodated require assistance through pathway 3 due to high level support needs. Whilst the analysis provided above hugely under-represents the time required to develop personalised interventions that support staff have been delivering, with huge effort and skill, it does help to highlight that the Council will need to secure more accommodation and support resources to help cater for the increased needs of the clients involved.
- 3.3 Increased accommodation resources are needed to cope with providing the interim pathway accommodation to the group of rough sleepers that are not eligible for long term secure housing support from the Council. The demands from accommodating rough sleeper applicants has caused a knock on impact for the overall EA/TA placement figures with numbers in bed and breakfast being the highest in the Council's history.
- 3.4 The Providing Homes teams and Development team continue to work together to increase the temporary and emergency accommodation available to the Housing Options team to accommodate individuals on a temporary

and interim basis. This includes the proposal to build a 21 bed local authority hostel with a 12 bed move on Housing First project on site. This accommodation (if approved and subject to funding being available) would not be available for 2-3years until the development process is complete.

- 3.5 In the short term, since 3 January 2021, choice based lettings has been suspended taking into account the guidance issued around lettings in the previous national restrictions in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Since this time only urgent moves for those who are homeless or at immediate risk of harm are being completed. The Housing Options team have granted additional direct offers of accommodation to people owed a prevention, relief or main duty in order to free up emergency accommodation for rough sleeper applicants to move into and out of hotel accommodation.
- 3.6 Clients that can manage their own tenancy with minimal support have been assisted with funds from the Next Steps Accommodation Programme grant, to help secure private sector accommodation. The Housing Supply team have assisted 25 cases of rough sleepers since March 2020 into PRS accommodation. The Rough Sleeper Co-ordinators initially support cases and then the Housing Supply Co-ordinators will continue offering support to these clients once housed into the PRS to support them to help sustain their tenancy.
- 3.7 In the event that further accommodation resources are needed for rough sleepers, they will be requested for a time limited and defined purpose, in connection with this current crisis. They will be further subject to the accounting and appropriation regulations governing any transfer of resource from the General Fund and HRA and officers will seek approval in accordance with constitutional and statutory processes.

#### **4 Work programme**

- 4.1 In order to transition the Council's response from immediate relief to one that seeks a more sustainable and longer-term solution, a range of actions will need to be undertaken. The table below summarises the actions and priorities officers will be taking forward over coming weeks:

<b>Work &amp; Decision Theme</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Indicative timescales</b>	<b>Update</b>
Co-ordinated Work by the Rough Sleeper Workers & No More service to complete Support Plans and the assessment of Client capacity for independent living	To identify suitability of individuals ability to live independently or in supported accommodation and identify the correct move on pathway into more suitable accommodation	10 July 2020	Commenced- Support plans have been completed on all clients which are currently housed and are completed within 24 hours of a presentation.

Work & Decision Theme	Purpose	Indicative timescales	Update
To detail a planned programme of reducing the use of Hotel accommodation to minimal levels before 1st August.	To ensure effective use of resources and that the most suitable accommodation is made available to clients  Housing Operations Manager Providing homes supported by seconded resource	17 July 2020	Commenced- Work has been carried out to free up existing EA/TA and repurpose unused housing stock for temporary use as EA/TA/
To develop a Housing First Business Case and appraise development options for the provision of new emergency and temporary accommodation. To develop governance approval routes in line with Council and statutory requirements	To establish new schemes, or repurposed schemes with appropriate council authority. This may include new Executive and Council approvals for the development of temporary/emergency Accommodation.	November 2020	Commenced- Work is underway on 4 properties to create more temporary/emergency accommodation:  These properties will create an estimated 25 new units to ease current pressures on EA/TA and reduce the reliance on B&B and hotel usage.  Further to this, land has been allocated for the creation of 8-16 modular units to provide further EA/TA accommodation. Work is underway to ensure these units are delivered as quickly as possible.
Work with partners to analyse hostel supported housing move on performance in Stevenage.	To ensure effective use of partner resources and to give partners reciprocal support in helping Stevenage residents.  The Council will be working with partners to see what more can be done to improve move	Aug 2020	Commenced- Work is on-going to enhance working partnerships with supported housing and support. Work has been done to understand the areas which clients need the most support to target



Work & Decision Theme	Purpose	Indicative timescales	Update
	on rates through hostels and supported housing and to assess whether there are more people currently within the hostel and supported housing system who would qualify to access private rented accommodation with tailored support packages.		support providers in these areas. NSAP revenue project in place with Emerging Futures an No More Service for work until end of financial year 2020/2021. Arrangement to be put in place for successful capital revenue support over a 3 year period
Submit grant applications for Government Funding as and when they are announced (outlined above)	To secure capital and revenue funding for new supported schemes in Stevenage.	September 2020	Commenced- Funding bid competed by Providing Homes and the Housing Development Team was successful for revenue and capital grant funding. Additional grant funding to be applied for, for rough sleeper provision until Housing First units are available.
Bring Business Case for long term provision of Housing First schemes back to Exec	To agree a long term approach to tackling single homelessness and rough sleeping	March 2021	Conversations are taking place with HCC relating to support, review of current spends and Development
Continue to lobby Government to be able to build new genuinely affordable council homes and for greater resources to support the vulnerable during this difficult period.	Council wide role.	Ongoing	Money available through the next steps funding bid for capital funding over a 4 year period and can apply each year. Application to be made for 2021/2022 when window opens. HCC are reimbursing

Work & Decision Theme	Purpose	Indicative timescales	Update
			for support costs.
Allocate the 32 units of SBC Housing First accommodation and monitor provision	To provide supported accommodation to single homeless clients	April 2021	Planning permission must be obtained for all units of shared occupancy, member briefing and resident engagement taking place for all sites
Monitor arrangements with short term provision through local providers and partnerships with Haven First and Emerging Futures	Increase our single Homeless offer within SBC	June 2021	Haven first are due to manage the modular units and work is starting on this for Q2/Q3  Emerging Futures are providing ongoing support for our RS cases and we will explore the provision of an EF site within SBC
Investigate SBC in-house concierge/security provision and cost neutral Housing First offer	To identify an effective and cost neutral security/ concierge offer for our Haven First sites	Sep 2021	Housing Viability meetings to be introduced
Review provision over the financial year in order to make long term recommendations	Officers to identify a long term and sustainable offer	March 2022	

## 5 Case studies

- 5.1 In reviewing progress of the above work plan in appendix 2 the Housing First report in December 2020 provided some evidence of successful casework and below are some further successful outcomes detailed below:

### Case Study 1

- 5.2 The Council's Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinators were aware of client A during the third national lockdown which began on 4th January 2021. He has a history of mild criminality and substance issues but he been successful in engaging with services so was accommodated at The Lodge Hotel in Stansted. During this time he managed to find employment working at one of the Covid-19 testing sites in Stevenage and was successful. This helped the client maintain engagement and a positive attitude since he was seeing observable results. The client has now been housed in a newly converted Temporary Accommodation units located in Stevenage due to his motivation and willingness. This way client A is going to have the best possible chance of succeeding, he will be regularly spoken to and checked on within the new accommodation and provided with any support he may need. The teams will then get a good idea of what move on accommodation is best, with the Housing Supply team also liaising regularly to ensure once client A is ready that we can source suitable settled accommodation within the private rented sector.

### Case Study 2

- 5.3 Client B was an entrenched rough sleeper for around 8 years. Around 4-5 years ago he was staying at The Haven with his now ex-partner when they were offered a tenancy in the private rented sector. The relationship subsequently broke down and the client was back to sleeping on the streets. He was accommodated through during March - July 2020 in the Holiday Inn Express however consistently broke the curfew and was required to leave for this. The Rough Sleeper Co-ordinators and Police began to see him regularly begging and rough sleeping resulting in him being moved on. The team continued to engage with this client and completed a referral to The Haven, where he was then offered a bed space but missed the interview to secure this due to his difficulty with time keeping. The team arranged for another interview which they attended with the client and he was successful and moved into the Haven the next day.
- 5.4 The work that has been completed by the Rough Sleeper Co-Ordinators since the start of the pandemic has been and continues to be invaluable and making a real difference to the lives of those who had been sleeping rough in Stevenage.