



Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

2023 - 2028

Facilitating safe, healthy, and active Communities
Homeless & Rough Sleeping Strategy

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1 The Brief

Review of the existing approach to homelessness and rough sleepers, and to develop a new dedicated strategy for homelessness and rough sleeping.

This was to include:

- Review of the data on homelessness and rough sleepers and produce a summary.
- Consultation with internal and external stakeholders and produce a summary.
- Write the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Delivery Plan.
- Write the Equality Impact Assessment for the Strategy.
- Write the committee report that will be presented to members.
- Handover the documents to be placed in the corporate style and attached to the Council's website.

In addition, a member briefing was to be provided.

2 Executive Summary

Homelessness is a key part of the Government's domestic agenda, with a pledge to end rough sleeping by 2025. The Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy focusses on supporting those residents who may be homeless now or at risk of homelessness in the future. It provides the foundations for the delivery of the Council's homelessness and rough sleeping prevention services and provides an overview of our approach to support those residents needing to access our services.

Prevention is the key issue for the Council to lead and this will only be achieved through partnership working and being proactive in addressing residents' needs.

This strategy offers the opportunity to build upon successful collaborative working across the statutory and voluntary sectors, as well as the private rented sector. This approach maximises homelessness prevention and delivers effective support services when homelessness does arise.

With a proactive approach based on preventative measures, we wish to prevent the social and economic cost of homelessness and rough sleeping being experienced locally. There is a cost to households, the Council and other agencies. By adopting a "spend to save" approach we can work collaboratively with partners to prevent households experiencing homelessness and the negative impact this has.

The strategy's delivery plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the actions remain relevant and capture any emerging issues. The updated delivery plan will be shared with members showing what has been accomplished during the past year and what is expected to be achieved during the year ahead. The update will also highlight any new or emerging issues that need to be addressed.

3 Introduction

Rochford District Council (RDC) has produced this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy in collaboration with partners and other agencies. The strategy looks to develop plans and interventions that help prevent homelessness and rough sleeping in the district.

Homelessness affects many households, including families who have accommodation but have been unable to continue to live there due to their individual circumstances, for example: financial hardship and unemployment.

Many households find themselves homeless when their landlord wants to sell the property the family is renting, forcing them to leave their home.

Rough sleeping is defined as people, mainly individuals who live and sleep on the street. Their circumstances are often chaotic and can be caused by mental health, drug, and alcohol issues.

The risks to this group's health and wellbeing are often significant, involving support from several agencies.

This strategy responds to these challenges and will use innovative ways of working to support those who are most vulnerable to homelessness and rough sleeping in the district. As a result, the strategy focuses on supporting those residents who may be homeless now, or at risk of homelessness in the future as well as preventing repeat homelessness. It provides the structure for the future delivery of the Council's homelessness and rough sleeping prevention services.

In reviewing the current strategy there has been consideration of:

- Levels of homelessness.
- Activities for preventing homelessness.
- Activities for securing accommodation.
- Activities for providing support.
- The resources available to deliver the strategy and delivery plan.

We have cross-referenced the content of this strategy against the advice and guidance that is available, including from the Local Government Association (LGA). The Council's approach has also been compared against other local authorities and the reported examples of good practice.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy aligns itself to the vision and objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan. This will ensure that the strategy is informed by and driven by the expected outcomes of the Corporate Plan and helps contribute to its delivery.

The delivery plan developed to support the strategy's implementation includes the continuing actions, as well as the new actions to address new areas for improvement. The delivery plan includes the areas for partnership working in the district (e.g., voluntary organisations) and others working across the County (e.g., Essex County Council).

4 Background

The strategy covers all forms of homelessness that can happen and includes actions for people who are:

- Sleeping Rough.
- Unable to live with their usual household members.
- Facing possession of their home.
- Being asked to leave their accommodation.
- Illegally evicted.
- Living in accommodation that is unreasonable to occupy, including those at risk of domestic abuse.

Those threatened with homelessness and those due to be homeless when their section 21 expires.

In conducting the review, the following have been considered for the district:

- Current and likely future levels of homelessness.

- Activities carried out for preventing homelessness.
- Activities for ensuring that accommodation is or will be available for people who are or may become homeless.
- Activities for providing support for people who are or who may become homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.
- The Council's housing allocations scheme and tenancy strategy were reviewed to ensure that the approaches implemented by the Council are aligned.
- The resources available to support the implementation of the Council's approach.

The strategy has reviewed the actions in place to prevent homelessness for people who are:

- Leaving prison.
- Leaving care.
- Leaving hospital.
- Leaving the armed forces.
- Escaping domestic abuse.
- Who are vulnerable adults.
- Who are more at risk of becoming homeless (e.g., young adults).

The allocation of social housing in the district is covered by the Council's allocation policy and Registered providers own policies. The Council nominates households to 75% of the social housing properties that become empty each year and the implementation of this is monitored on a regular basis.

The Council's Allocations Policy prioritises the allocation of social rented housing to people who are homeless or owed a homelessness duty, acknowledging the priority that homelessness is given in the district.

As the local housing authority, this legislation enhanced the Council's legal duties towards households who find themselves homeless or threatened with homelessness. The changes introduced in 2018 included:

5 Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

There are three key themes in the existing legislation that the Council takes into account when delivering homelessness and rough sleeping services, they include: prevention, intervention, and recovery.

Significant changes to the law on homelessness were implemented in April 2018 through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

- Extending the time in which a household is defined as "threatened with homelessness" to 56 days.
- Placing homelessness prevention on a statutory basis regardless of priority need or whether someone may be intentionally homeless.
- Requiring authorities to provide personalised assessments and housing plans in all eligible cases, which contain "reasonable steps" for both the Council and the applicant to take to prevent or relieve homelessness.

A comprehensive peer review of service was also undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA) in 2018 which examined how homelessness prevention services were delivered. An improvement plan from this review was implemented to respond to the new duties within the Act and this plan was delivered on. Some of these actions continue to be implemented and included in the delivery plan.

6 Current Challenges

Delivering this strategy is a key priority for the Council and will be implemented in an environment where there are a number of local and national challenges. These include:

- The Welfare Reform Act 2012, which introduced the benefit cap and the removal of the Spare Room Subsidy (bedroom tax). This has impacted negatively on individuals, particularly those on a low income.
- The roll-out of Universal Credit, which has increased the challenges of maintaining a tenancy in the private rented sector.
- High level of demand on the limited local supply of social housing.
- Limited supply of new social housing and affordable homes being built in the district.
- Reducing and removing the need for temporary accommodation to be supplied by the Council.
- Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels are frozen and is a challenge for individuals on a low income who rent privately to continue to live in their home. This also has an effect on the numbers of affordable properties that are available in the district and limits the Council's ability to negotiate with private landlords who seek to charge rents at a local market value.
- A challenging and expensive private market for housing which makes it difficult for households to access housing due to the high costs, either for rent or purchase.
- Supporting victims and meeting the requirements of the new Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Some of these challenges will be addressed through the council's Housing Strategy, and aligning the priorities of this document with the housing strategy will help the Council to achieve its goals.

7 Objectives of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Our strategy has been developed and informed around themes which partners and agencies helped to identify. These are seen as the key issues which impact people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, including rough sleepers. Our strategy will put in place interventions and support to help reduce the impact of these issues.

The objectives of the updated strategy includes:

- Preventing homelessness in the district.
- Ensuring that accommodation is or will be available for people in the district who are or may become homeless.
- To provide support for people who are or who may become homeless or have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.

8 The Current Housing and Homelessness Strategy Document and Action Plan

The current strategy's content has been reviewed and the relevant elements have been included in the updated strategy. The intention of creating a standalone homelessness and rough sleeping strategy was to provide an enhanced level of support and detail to this important area for action.

The action plan in the existing strategy has been implemented. Those actions that will continue in the future have been included in the updated delivery plan. This will help continue the actions that have supported the Council's successful approach to date.

9 Information on local Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

The information recorded and monitored on homelessness and rough sleeping has evolved over time. This will continue to be the case to respond to external requests for information and the monitoring required to support the implementation of a preventive approach.

The following is a summary of the key issues over the last 3 years:

- There has been a reduced reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation, with the number of occasions it is used and the length of use reducing. This has also reduced the financial impact on the Council.
- Over the past 3 years the number of households in nightly paid accommodation has generally been between 10 to 15.
- The main reasons for the loss of a home are: firstly, being asked to leave by family and friends and secondly the end of a tenancy. These are the 2 largest issues impacting on the service.
- This accommodation is provided by both the Council and registered providers in the area, with the Council providing 23 properties through 2 leased buildings.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation is particularly affected by the number of social housing vacancies that become available, and the number of new social housing properties that are built. The limited social housing in the district reduces the opportunities for households to move out of temporary accommodation.
- The length of time in temporary accommodation varies between households and continues to have an impact on their welfare.

- The number of rough sleepers on average per month is 1.25 people, with 2 households recorded in July 2023 at the last formal count. The number of recorded rough sleepers has remained consistent during this period of time.
- There are a limited number of repeat homelessness cases reported and often these are related to the needs of the household. The lessons learnt from these cases help to support the service's future development.

The Council will continue to monitor the levels and types of homelessness and rough sleeping, including repeat homelessness. The trends will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that this strategy and the associated delivery plan remains effective.

10 Current Funding for Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

The main source of funding to address homelessness and rough sleeping is the Council's General Fund, derived from Council Tax payments. This is supplemented from funding from Central Government and joint funding arrangements.

To be able to continue to achieve the outcomes within this strategy, the Council will remain reliant on external funding and jointly funded posts.

This funding is essential to provide services to support and accommodate rough sleepers and homeless families. It does not meet all the costs the council incurs, and we have to use General Fund contributions to meet these costs.

The accommodation used by the Council in the short term varies in cost and the following table sets out these. (Based on costs as of August 2023).

Item	Indicator	Cost per night	Cost per week
Use of bed and breakfast accommodation	Average cost - single room	£50	£350
Nightly paid	Average cost - family room	£90	£630
	Average cost - single room	£40	£280
Temporary accommodation provided by the Council	Average cost - family room	£50	£350
	Average cost for the 23 units	£345	£2,415
	Average cost per unit	£15	£105

Where temporary accommodation is provided by a registered provider this occurs at nil cost to the Council.

The most effective way for the Council to reduce the cost pressures on the General Fund is to work proactively on preventing homelessness and work with registered providers to provide the temporary accommodation within the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates.

The cost to the Council depends upon the type of support that is provided for the household. The more prevention work that occurs, the more likely there will be less cost incurred by the Council and to the General Fund. In addition, the Council can help support in reducing the social cost of homelessness and rough sleeping.

11 Stakeholder Engagement

Consultation on the existing approach to homelessness and rough sleeping in the district took place with public authorities,

voluntary organisations, and others before adopting this strategy. This included:

- Portfolio holders, Councillors, and the Council’s Leadership Team.
- Private Registered Providers of social housing in the district, including: Sanctuary Housing, Chelmsford Housing Partnership (CHP), Notting Hill Genesis, London and Quadrant Housing Association, Moat, Estuary Housing and Hanover Housing, Eastlight Housing Association

Private Rented sector and letting agents, including:

- Joint Health and Well Being Board.
- CHESS - who provide rough sleeper and outreach support.
- Management Providers of the temporary accommodation units that are leased by the Council.
- Peabody - who provide the floating support service in Essex.
- Richmond Fellowship - who provide mental health services.
- YMCA - who provide supported accommodation for young people.
- Essex County Council - in particular, the Housing Growth Lead.
- Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).
- RRAVS (Rayleigh & Rochford Association of Voluntary Services
- Health and Well-being Board.
- Housing SETDAB - provides advice and support to those who are experiencing domestic abuse.
- South Essex Housing Group - in particular, the strategic coordinator.

In addition, the draft strategy document and delivery plan was available through the Council’s website and there was the opportunity for all residents and stakeholders to provide feedback.

The feedback from stakeholders included: Affordability of Housing

Overall, the strategy and delivery plan has been received positively. Feedback from the consultation, demonstrated that respondents agreed with the approach and the 7 themes of Rochford's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Delivery Plan. There were a number of additional areas the consultation highlighted that respondents felt the Council may wish to focus on, which are noted below.

The highest sector respondents came from the Charity Sector, with 40% followed by Registered Providers, Local Authority and Private Landlords. The main geographical areas of response came from Rochford, Rayleigh and Southend.

Prevention of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

100% of respondents agreed with the councils approach on prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, including areas around working with registered providers and using a triage system. Respondents felt the council should have a focus on supporting key personnel and promote working relationships within the private sector. Respondents recommended a focus on tenancy sustainment, working with Registered Providers, and other agencies such as the Police in tackling anti-social behaviour.

Partnership Working:

100% of respondents agreed with the Councils approach to partnership working and felt the council communicates well with partners and forums, delivering joint working initiatives. 50% of respondents felt the council could focus on maintaining these good working relationships and promote inclusivity for disadvantaged groups.

100% of respondents agree with the councils' approach to affordability of housing and agree the council having a key focus on supply of affordable housing, making the best use of stock and the empty homes strategy. Feedback highlighted the strategy could highlight the need to deliver new homes which are designed for residents to live independent and healthy lives including access to high quality specialist and supported accommodation for those who need it.

To prevent homelessness in the private rented sector

100% of respondents agreed with the council's approach to preventing homelessness in the private sector. Respondents felt the council should aim to increase the number of private landlords extending tenancies and increasing the level of private landlords providing quality and safe housing.

To eliminate Rough Sleeping in the District

100% of respondents agree with the councils' approach to preventing homelessness by eliminating rough sleeping in the district and feel the council focuses on the right priorities to eliminate rough sleepers. Respondents felt the council should continue to focus on increasing partner agencies to support reducing rough sleepers.

It was highlighted that a specific mention, would be welcomed of the partnerships and in particular: the Rough Sleeper Outreach Service and the additional supported rough sleeper beds.

Rough Sleeper Navigator, Rough Sleeper Mental Health Navigator as well as the Rough Sleeper Drug and Alcohol Outreach services commissioned by ECC on behalf of this partnership.

Supporting Vulnerable Groups

100% of respondents agree with the council's approach to supporting vulnerable groups, including a focus on monitoring and evaluating outcomes and partnership working with specialist services. 50% of respondents felt there could be a focus to improve the support service with a multi-agency approach and to improve data management to support identifying relevant needs and services.

Effective Temporary Accommodation Provision

100% of respondents agree with the council's approach to providing effective temporary accommodation provision, with a focus on maintaining an effective supply of good quality temporary accommodation and working to reduce the numbers of temporary accommodation. Respondents felt to support this, the council could focus on maximising homes through Empty Homes Schemes and maximise downsizers through the housing register and a focus on incentives. Respondents recommended a new lettable standard to include carpets, and white goods, and a customer support fund to help people settle into their new home.

Further comments included ensuring the delivery plan is reviewed annually, identifying additional Government funding sources, and having additional homelessness categories including those unable to live in their current accommodation because of a deterioration in the physical health, those currently sofa surfing and those households in temporary accommodation.

12 Themes for the strategy

Based on the data and main issues affecting homelessness and rough sleeping in the district the following main themes have been identified in the strategy to address, which were also linked to the consultation survey.

- Prevention of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping.
- Partnership Working.
- Affordability of Housing.
- Prevent Homelessness in the Private Rented Sector.
- To Eliminate Rough Sleeping in the District.
- Supporting Vulnerable Groups.
- Effective Temporary Accommodation Provision.

The themes are outlined below, along with the action the Council will take to continue addressing these issues.

The themes are also used in the delivery plan to highlight the actions to be continued and those to be started.

13 Theme - Prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping

Homelessness prevention will be the key focus of everything the Council and its partners do on homelessness and rough sleeping, and the strategy has considered how the Council can:

- Prevent homelessness.
- Support people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- Support people to remain in their existing home.
- Help households secure alternative accommodation.
- Address the factors that can lead to homelessness, including: the ending of private tenancies, relationship breakdowns, domestic abuse, unemployment, financial hardship or leaving institutions.

Due to the increasing cost of housing in the district, the demand for homeless prevention services is likely to increase over time unless the prevention of homelessness is achieved and is the main focus. The reactive nature of the demand placed on the service and the potential for costs to be incurred for short-term accommodation (e.g., bed and breakfast and nightly paid), means that prevention will continue to be the focus in the service provided.

Sustaining existing housing and having access to support the private sector housing will provide the best solution to dealing with the volume of approaches the Council is likely to receive.

In addition to preventing the need for residents to access the service, another key area is to stop homelessness by focusing on the cause of this and what support or measures can be put in place to assist the household.

The key focus on preventing homelessness includes the following:

- **Registered Providers of social housing** - The Council works with registered providers to help prevent homelessness from this sector and in particular for the provider to sustain the tenancy by providing support where possible. An eviction should be the exception and should produce a limited impact on the Council's service. A protocol with registered providers will be developed should it be needed in the future.
- **New tenants** - Some groups are more likely to experience repeat homelessness due to their lack of experience of having a tenancy or are more likely to cause problems in the property. The Council works with providers for residents to be "tenancy ready" and to reduce the risk of the tenancy not being sustained.

- **Triage of cases** - The Council has recently extended its triage approach, whereby new applicants facing homelessness or sleeping rough are seen promptly and initially assessed. The extension of this approach will be monitored to ensure that the investment made leads to a prioritised service based on a quick assessment of the households' circumstances and targeted interventions.

To continue the progress in preventing homelessness the Council will:

- Continue to provide a comprehensive and preventative housing options service.
- Develop the "triage system" to filter all presenting cases relating to housing options and homelessness prevention.
- The "triage" response will be monitored to identify the learning from the cases that are presented, in particular where households experience repeat homelessness.
- Pre-tenancy information to continue to be available to residents, particularly those who have limited experience of living in their own rented accommodation.
- We have introduced closer monitoring on prevention activity at an early stage and have set targets to increase the prevention performance. We are also improving advice and information for customers at an early stage in their journey and have targeted improving our relationships with partners, who can support the prevention of homelessness.
- These will include Citizens Advice and health and social care partners who deal with vulnerable families and individuals.
- Continue to develop our approach to affordability, including financial assessments, debt, and money advice.
- Strengthen prevention methods by working closely with other agencies to create awareness of housing problems and potential home loss at an early stage.

- Continue to ensure partner agencies and organisations meet their duty to refer under the Homeless Reduction Act.
- Easy access to information on tenancies and the support services available.
- Monitor the implementation of the Prevention Fund (and associated policy) to ensure that it continues to be effective and responds to emerging issues, with the aim for the policy to be reviewed annually.
- Continue to work with registered providers on their approach to tenancy sustainability and to develop working arrangements as needed. In particular, when the Council is engaged to help prevent an eviction or abandoned property.
- Monitor the number of evictions and abandoned properties that occur in the district by registered providers.
- The links between pre-tenancy support and tenancy support provided by Peabody or the registered provider are to be reviewed to identify to ensure the support remains effective.
- Regular training to be provided to the relevant Council staff to help ensure a consistent approach is delivered based on good practice.
- Ensure that the Council's website has a clear directory of services available in the local area for households threatened with or experiencing households, as well as agencies that can support the sustainment of households' tenancies.
- We will implement opportunities for us to collect feedback on the service.
- We will continue to implement case reviews to identify the success of our approach and to identify the areas where improvement can be made.
- Continue to review the tenancy sustainment support methods that are used to prevent homelessness and improve the sustainability of tenancies.
- Ensure a consistent approach to the assessment of affordability of applicants to

maximise the likelihood of a successful tenancy.

- Continue to work with registered providers to ensure that they identify at an early stage tenants that are at risk of eviction (e.g., rent arrears, anti-social behaviour).

The homelessness strategy includes actions to ensure that there is the provision of advice, information and assistance is available from voluntary organisations.

The Council acknowledges the excellent support that agencies provide to households and will continue to support their preventative work.

14 Theme - Partnership Working

This strategy offers exciting opportunities for collaborative working across the statutory and voluntary sectors to maximise the delivery of homelessness prevention and support services in the district. The Council has some strong partnerships with organisations that seek to prevent homelessness, and these include the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), local church community groups and other local authorities.

Good progress has been made in the level and type of partnership working and we will continue to build on these relationships. We will invite our partners to continue to work collaboratively with us, bringing their skills and expertise to support the district's homeless families and to improve our prevention methods.

Co-producing the solutions to homelessness and ensuring these form an effective part of our approach. The views of other organisations on the challenges we face, will continue to help shape what we do and what the Council prioritises and supports.

We will continue to engage with partners on the implementation of this strategy and delivery plan, reviewing annual progress and making changes as needed. The homelessness forum and charter set up to respond to the Homelessness Reduction Act are no longer in place, and the good achieved is now included in this strategy. The intention is to work with the same group of organisations on the annual review of the strategy and provide the opportunity to provide a focus for engagement and discussion with partners.

The duty to refer is an opportunity for all public authorities, voluntary organisations, and others to cooperate to tackle homelessness. There is a good track record of partnership working across the County, along with effective protocols supporting the housing needs of specialist groups of residents (e.g., 16 and 17 year olds). The duty to refer has been embedded and is reflected in the proactive approach that is adopted.

Working with Essex County Council is a key partnership helping to prevent homelessness and supporting households who experience homelessness and rough sleeping.

Essex Prevents is the homelessness work stream of the Essex Vision and this group have been working to develop a countywide picture of homelessness and rough sleeping and there are seven key themes the work is focused on:

- Cultural change and improving the customer experience.
- Reducing rough sleeping.
- Using predictive analytics to put the right service in the right place, at the right time.
- Development of a prison protocol to reduce offenders leaving prison without accommodation (this has been produced).

- Development of a hospital discharge protocol to reduce bed blocking.
- Increasing the flow of affordable housing.
- Supporting complex cases.

The Council actively participates in the Essex wide housing groups, and this helps the Council to shape the response to reflect local needs and priorities.

Locally, the Council works proactively with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) supporting the interventions that implement and helps to prevent homelessness, deal with residents' debts, and improve the sustainability of tenancies and for homeowners.

Without the support of other organisations, the Council would be less successful in delivering its response. As local housing needs change it will remain important to maintain effective partnership working, particularly on emerging issues such as changes in the local population and changes in Central Government's response to refugees.

It is important for the Council to work proactively on both the strategic and operational elements of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, in particular with adult and child social services to help overcome the more complicated cases that occur.

This is an area to be considered locally, along with the Essex wide response to homelessness.

To continue the success that partnership working brings, the Council will:

- Continue to improve partnership working to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- Continue to engage with partners on the delivery of this strategy and the delivery plan.

- Review annually the emerging issues impacting the strategy and the delivery plan, and work with partners on the solutions.
- The Council will continue to work in partnership with neighbouring authorities under the duty to co-operate.
- The Council will work across the wider South Essex region to deliver a joint strategic plan for Essex that delivers the 2050 vision through its membership of ASELA (Association of South Essex Local Authorities) in particular the housing themes that support this strategy.
- Continue to promote the Essex Homeless Memorandum of Understanding and use this to embed the duty to refer.
- Continue the relationships with private registered providers of social housing to help meet housing needs and the supply of affordable housing through regular forums and contact.
- Continue to implement the protocols in place that support effective joint working and the “duty to refer.”
- Continue to work with the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) to ensure that suitable assistance is offered to residents at risk of or who are experiencing homelessness, including any joint protocol for clarifying the threshold for action.
- Continue to work with teams to support the Gypsy and Traveller community when threatened with homelessness.
- Develop further links with armed forces charities to ensure currently serving members of the armed forces and veterans are offered suitable assistance to access and sustain settle accommodation.

15 Theme - Affordability of housing

In common with a number of Local Authorities in the South-East of England, the supply of housing does not meet local housing need. In particular the need for

affordable housing in Essex and Rochford is not being met.

The high level of demand has the impact of increasing property sale prices and also increasing the cost of renting accommodation in the private rented sector. These are significant challenges and the evidence available suggests that this will continue to be the case.

To purchase a property locally means households have to have access to higher than average salaries and significant funds for a deposit.

The local private rented sector is also expensive for a range of households and the size of the sector is relatively small as a proportion of the local housing market when compared to other areas. There are lower rents available in some of the neighbouring districts (e.g., Southend) and where possible the Council works to secure accommodation in those areas.

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) available in the district is usually below the advertised rents in the private rented sector and this makes accessing these properties difficult for households on low incomes or on benefits.

These issues are explored in more detail within the Council's local plan and the Housing Strategy.

The main focus for attention is the significant need for additional affordable housing across a range of tenures that meets the needs of different income groups, including aspiring homeowners.

This combination of issues means that the Council faces issues of affordability from a range of applicants and part of the response has been to work proactively with landlords and agents to access properties for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness.

The challenge is further complicated by the lack of new homes and new affordable homes being built in the district. The Local Plan has identified that 362 properties are needed in the district per annum up to 2026, as well as 238 affordable homes per annum.

There are 2,500 affordable homes in the district, of which around one third (c800 homes) is sheltered housing. There are around 250 voids per annum which is around a 10% turnover in the social housing stock, which has increased from around 200 (8%) in 2022, due to delivery of new affordable homes. The limited amount of social housing and the level of turnover means that there are limited opportunities for households to move into a home with a registered provider.

There is less demand for sheltered housing in the district and in the future discussions about making the best use of the existing stock will need to be progressed. This will particularly be the case where the funding needed to achieve net zero carbon for the homes will mean registered providers considering their long-term asset strategy for their sheltered housing.

To help address a shortfall in the number of affordable homes there are options available on how to do this. These options will be explored by the Council and set out in an affordable housing strategy.

To help address this, the Council will:

- Develop an affordable housing strategy that focusses attention on new affordable homes, as well as making best use of the existing registered providers housing stock in the district.
- The Council will also consider the Council's assets available in the district and if these can be utilised to support the delivery of new homes.

- Continue to work with registered providers in the district to deliver new homes and make best use of the existing stock.
- Review the approach to applicant's affordability assessments to ensure that these are completed in a consistent way.
- Work alongside the approach to bring back empty homes into use.

16 Theme - Prevent homelessness in the private rented sector.

The Council has developed good working relationships with private landlords and letting agents. The approach includes a landlord forum with neighbouring councils to share information and supporting landlords as part of the Council's local offer to this important sector.

The approach has focused on working with private landlords and agents to improve the availability of properties and the opportunities to extend the length of tenancies.

As well as the number of properties to meet the need that is presented to the Council, there is monitoring of the length of tenancies that are created and sustained. This assists with securing accommodation for as long as needed, as well as demonstrating the Council's track record of successful tenancies to private landlords and agents.

By working proactively with the private rented sector, a positive response to meeting local needs can be achieved for both the number of properties needed and the tenancy length achieved. This also helps to prevent repeat homelessness, reducing the demand on the Council's services.

The Council will consider the current offer made to private landlords and identify if approaches adopted by other Local Authorities could apply in the district.

Where the local housing market continues to evolve, the Council will continue to work to develop the offer to the private rented sector and seek to prevent the end of tenancies and to improve the sustainability of tenancies.

The key areas for action include:

- Continue to use the private rented sector for homelessness prevention and relief.
- The Housing Options Team to continue to work with local landlords and letting agents to overcome the barriers of working with people on low incomes to secure accommodation.
- To develop an updated landlord and agent offer that offers value for money from the funding available (i.e., homeless prevention fund policy).
- Ongoing liaison and marketing of the Council's offer to the private rented sector.
- Continue to support households to understand housing standards and responsibilities (of both landlords and tenants) and work to resolve issues when approaches are made to the Council.
- Continue to work with the private landlord forum to share information and the support offer for landlords who may be experiencing issues with their tenants.
- Consider the use of bonds or finder fees to strengthen the local engagement of the private rented sector.

17 Theme - To eliminate Rough Sleeping in the District

The number of people recorded as sleeping rough in the district is low, but the risk for this group of households is high. Eliminating rough sleeping in the district remains a priority in the district because of this.

There are a limited number of specialist services that are provided locally, and which typically would be provided in larger urban

areas, such as night shelters. In Rochford, the focus is on the support available to this group. There is good local support and this forms part of the package available to rough sleepers, and also complements the housing focused support provided by the Council.

The issue of preventing and eliminating rough sleeping in the district is a priority for the Council, and the Council takes the following actions to address this:

- Support individuals to access services to ensure “No second Night Out.”
- Continue to develop services for supporting and helping people who are sleeping rough in partnership with other Local Authorities and local charities with specialist skills, in particular the prevention of rough sleeping.
- Review annually the impact of this strategy and delivery plan on the response to rough sleeping and identify where changes are needed.
- Ensure that there is adequate winter shelter and provide accommodation for rough sleepers, including the Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP).
- Working with CHES (Churches Homeless Emergency Support Schemes) - a number of rough sleepers have a range of needs making them complex cases to work with. The Council works proactively with CHES to assist those sleeping rough and the service is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains effective.
- Review the commissioned Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP) on an annual basis to ensure it supports the needs of those who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

The focus on preventing homelessness applies to those at risk of rough sleeping and the Council is committed to continuing the approach to prevent anyone spending a second night on the streets.

18 Theme - Supporting Vulnerable Groups

There are several households who are threatened with homelessness because of their circumstances and who will require access to a range of support services. Recognising and understanding the different and often complex needs of individuals and families is part of the way the service is delivered and needs to be tackled to ensure that there is effective support alongside the preventative approach to homelessness.

Support may also be available from other agencies and partners, working across the district.

This includes those households by Registered Providers and in the private rented sector. Our strategy will ensure we are engaged with partners who can contribute to supporting residents who are threatened with homelessness.

There is a multi-disciplinary generic floating support service which provides housing related support to vulnerable people in the district. The person-centered service is commissioned by Essex County Council and delivered by Peabody and the main focus of this service has been people with mental health issues.

The review considered the co-operation between different agencies and in particular the protocols in place for: Rough Sleepers, homeless 16 and 17 year olds, prison leavers and hospital discharge.

There are effective protocols and responses in place for each of these groups. For example, care leavers who are homeless can be particularly vulnerable and the Council works in partnership with Essex Social Care and the Young People's panel to help prevent care leavers from approaching the Council as homeless through proactive support and solutions.

There are a number of cases involving residents with mental health issues that appear not to be addressed due to the thresholds for engagement and action. This is an area that the Council will consider with other Local Authorities as part of the work to develop protocols where the threshold for mental health is not met. Some households are affected by mental health issues and are not considered for support, but without intervention will be at risk of homelessness.

The Council will work with partners to commission housing support services that help prevent the reoccurrence of homelessness and effectively implement the protocols that are in place.

In addition to the provision of effective services there is a need for access for specialist accommodation, locally and in Essex.

To achieve this the Council will:

- Review the data on the support provided and how effective it is to continue to adapt our own approach, as well as the support provided by other agencies.
- Continue to work in partnership with other organisations to deliver specialist accommodation and access to it for residents.
- Implement the outcomes for the housing service from the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, including the Essex wide strategy.
- Continue to refer households to receive support, in particular: welfare benefits advice, access to training and employment, debt counselling, furniture and white goods, food banks and volunteering projects.

19 Effective Temporary Accommodation Provision

Affordable accommodation is in short supply in the district, leading to challenges for households to be able to access their own accommodation. The Council provides temporary accommodation in the private rented sector (in the district and out of the district), as well as in a limited supply provided by the Council and registered providers.

Currently the main route out of temporary accommodation is into social housing or the private rented sector. Both options have challenges, including a limited social housing supply and limited affordable private rented sector housing in the district.

The Council will:

- Continue to minimise the use of private sector emergency accommodation (i.e., bed and breakfast accommodation and nightly accommodation).
- Continue to work to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation.
- Continue to work to reduce the length of stay in temporary accommodation.
- Continue to work in partnership with the private rented sector and registered providers to develop the supply of temporary accommodation and eliminate the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation.
- Continue to discharge its duty into the private rented sector.
- Maintain an effective supply of good quality temporary accommodation.
- Review the effectiveness of the transition from Council provided temporary accommodation into accommodation provided by registered providers and the private rented sector, along with the support that is provided.

- Continue to ensure the compliance and quality of the temporary accommodation provided.
- Review the current ways households with affordability issues are provided with furniture and white goods when moving on from temporary accommodation.

20 Emerging Issues

At the time of writing this strategy, one of the emerging issues is the changing number of refugees and the types of arrangements being put in place to support them locally. The response to the war in Ukraine in particular has led to recent changes in the numbers and types of households who are presenting themselves.

The sponsoring and matching arrangements being implemented may not be successful in all cases and as a result the Council may be contacted by households needing support or advice if the household finds themselves homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The impact and the extent of this is not currently known and this issue will continue to develop and the impact of this will be captured in the strategy's annual review in 2024.

21 Renters (Reform) Bill

The Renters (Reform) Bill aims to improve the system for both the 11 million private renters and 2.3 million landlords in England.

The reforms have been developed in consultation with landlord and tenant groups over the past 5 years. The key aims of the bill include:

- Abolish section 21 'no fault' evictions and move to a simpler tenancy structure where all assured tenancies are periodic providing more security for tenants and empowering them to challenge poor practice and unfair rent increases without fear of eviction.
- Introduce more comprehensive possession grounds so landlords can still recover their property (including where they wish to sell their property or move in close family) and to make it easier to repossess properties where tenants are at fault, for example in cases of antisocial behaviour and repeat rent arrears.
- Provide stronger protections to tenants, ensuring tenants are able to appeal excessively above-market rents. Landlords will still be able to increase rents to market price for their properties and an independent tribunal will make a judgement on this, if needed. To avoid

fettering the freedom of the judiciary, the tribunal will continue to be able to determine the actual market rent of a property.

- Introduce a new Private Rented Sector Ombudsman which will provide fair, impartial, and binding resolution to many issues and prove quicker, cheaper, and less adversarial than the court system.

The bill is currently at its second stage reading with the House of Commons. Although, it may be some way from Royal Assent and becoming legislation, it is important to be considering the potential implications for landlords, tenants and RDC's, Homelessness and Rough Sleepers service delivery. The housing options team at RDC, receive regular briefings and will be receiving training around the Renters (Reform) Bill.

22 Governance for the Strategy's Implementation

Delivery plan and performance indicators have been developed to monitor delivery of this strategy. The Council's team will review the implementation of the plan on a regular basis and escalate issues to the senior leadership team as needed.

The delivery plan is attached to this document as Appendix One and the plan's implementation will be monitored on a regular basis. The plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and take account of any changes or emerging issues.

An annual update to members on the progress made with the strategy's delivery plan will be completed. The update will also highlight any amendments needed to the local approach, particularly if there are changes in the number of cases experienced and in response to any emerging issues.

The Council will engage with local groups and partners annually on the review of the delivery plan and to highlight any new or emerging issues that the Council and the delivery plan need to address.

The resources required to deliver the strategy's plan have been considered and have been incorporated into budgets and future plans.

23 Delivery Plan

Attached as appendix one is the delivery plan for the updated strategy document.

The delivery plan includes the actions that will be continued and the new actions that are needed.

24 Appendices

The following appendices are attached:

- Appendix One - Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Delivery Plan.
- Appendix Two - Documents.
- Appendix Three - Equality Impact Assessment Screening

Appendix One - Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Delivery Plan

The plan will help deliver the actions identified in the strategy.

Green – No action needed, ongoing

Amber – Further action required; target date

Red – Urgent action needed required.

Theme	Action	Evidence	Lead Person	Completion Date	RAG Status
Prevention of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping	Continue to provide a comprehensive and preventative housing options service.	Service offer and service standards. Housing staff structure. Performance information.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Develop the “triage system” to filter all presenting cases relating to housing options and homelessness prevention.	Triage service up and running, with full-time employees. Continue to Monitor the triage service.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Pre-tenancy information continues to be available to residents, particularly those who have limited experience of living in their own rented accommodation.	Website information, updated on a regular basis.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Monitoring of prevention activity.	Targets for prevention activity. Information available for residents. Monitoring of the services provided by partners.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	

	Continue to develop our approach to affordability, including financial assessments, debt, and money advice.	Review the use of financial assessments and use of debt and money advice.	Housing Options Manager	January 2024	
	Strengthen prevention methods by working closely with other agencies to create awareness of housing problems and potential home loss at an early stage.	Information received from other agencies. Feedback given on the way risks are managed.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Continue to ensure partner agencies and organisations meet their duty to refer under the Homeless Reduction Act.	Monitoring of cases. Feedback provided to partners.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Easy access to information on tenancies and the support services available.	Website information. Support from the Housing Options Officers.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Monitor the implementation of the Prevention Fund (and associated policy) to ensure that it continues to be effective and responds to emerging issues, with the aim for the policy to be reviewed annually.	Annual review of the fund and the outcomes of its use. Last reviewed and amended June 2023	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Continue to work with registered providers on their approach to tenancy sustainability and to develop working arrangements as needed. In particular, when the Council is engaged to help prevent an eviction or abandoned property.	Monitoring the referrals made for evictions and the timeliness of when contact is made. Receive notifications from providers, banks and building societies. when legal proceedings commence	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	

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	Monitor the number of evictions and abandoned properties that occur in the district by registered providers.	Monitoring through an annual review of the work of registered providers. Working on a protocol with RP's to present to scrutiny committee.	Housing Options Manager	December 2023	
	The links between pre-tenancy support and tenancy support provided by Peabody or the registered provider are to be reviewed to ensure the support remains effective.	Working in partnership with Peabody, with Rochford's community and engagement officer, to support clients.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Regular training to be provided to the relevant Council staff to help ensure a consistent approach is delivered based on good practice.	Annual training plan in place. Records of training maintained. All staff received external, Homelessness & Housing Training June 2023	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Ensure that the Council's website has a clear directory of services available in the local area for households threatened with or experiencing homelessness, as well as agencies that can support the sustainment of households' tenancies.	Website content. Six monthly reviews of the website Last website review April 2023	Housing Options Manager	October 2023	
	We will implement opportunities for us to collect feedback on the service.	Draft new survey for service users, then feedback into service review and include into performance scorecard.	Housing Options Manager	December 2023	
	We will continue to implement case reviews to identify the success of our approach and to identify the areas where improvement can be made.	Case management numbers. Review of the approach to case management. Fortnightly team meetings Minutes of team meetings.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	

	Continue to review the tenancy sustainment support methods that are used to prevent homelessness and improve the sustainability of tenancies.	Review the feedback on the service provided in the private rented sector and social housing sector. Community & engagement officer and private lettings officers collate this information.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Ensure a consistent approach to the assessment of affordability of applicants to maximise the likelihood of a successful tenancy.	Team annual review of the affordability assessments. Affordability calculator is used. Additional review from auditors. Last review May 2023	Housing Options Manager	May 2024	
	Continue to work with registered providers to ensure that they identify at an early-stage tenants that are at risk of eviction (e.g., rent arrears, anti-social behaviour).	Annual review of registered providers. Minutes in meetings. Bimonthly meetings, via local delivery group, partnership working with RP's.	Housing Options Manager	December 2023	
	The Housing Options team will work with local landlords and letting agents to overcome barriers for households on low incomes.	Feedback to the landlord forum. Private lettings officer holds regular meetings with local agents.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Maintain a landlord and letting agent offer to effectively resolve barriers for tenants and homeless applicants.	Use of the Homeless Prevention Fund. Protocols in place with private landlords and letting agents. Working in partnership with landlords	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Prevention fund use reviewed on a regular basis to ensure its use remains effective.	Regular review completion. Annual update on the fund's use to the relevant Council Committee.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	

Partnership working	Continue to improve partnership working to prevent and relieve homelessness.	Engagement with partners on this strategy and delivery plan. Regular meetings and joint community initiatives with local community and statutory services.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Continue to engage with partners on the delivery of this strategy and the delivery plan.	Engagement with partners on this strategy and delivery plan, including involvement in consultation.	Housing Director	Ongoing	
	Review annually the emerging issues impacting the strategy and the delivery plan, and work with partners on the solutions.	Engagement with partners on this strategy and delivery plan, including ongoing consultations and new policies.	Housing Director	December 2023	
	The Council will continue to work in partnership with neighbouring authorities under the duty to co-operate.	Evidence of action taken where the duty to co-operate is not implemented. Monitor through case management reports.	Housing Director	Ongoing	
	The Council will work across the wider South Essex region to deliver a joint strategic plan for Essex that delivers the 2050 vision, in particular the housing themes that support this strategy.	Delivery of the joint strategic plan. Rochford member of ASELA (Association South Essex local authority association)	Housing Director	Ongoing	
	Continue to promote the Essex Homeless Memorandum of Understanding and use this to embed the duty to refer.	Evidence of action taken where the duty to refer is not implemented. Promoted at South Essex Housing Group in quarterly meetings	Housing Director	Ongoing	

	Continue the relationships with private registered providers of social housing to help meet housing needs and the supply of affordable housing through regular forums and contact.	Evidence of the contact made (e.g., review meetings). Regular meetings and contacts with Local delivery groups and RP's	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Continue to work with the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) to ensure that suitable assistance is offered to residents at risk of or who are experiencing homelessness, including any joint protocol for clarifying the threshold for action.	Review of cases involving the CMHT, and the response received. New hospital discharge protocol, through local authorities. Regular case meetings with CMHT	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Continue to work with teams to support the Gypsy and Traveller community when threatened with homelessness.	Review of cases involving the Gypsy and Traveller community.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Develop further links with armed forces charities to ensure currently serving members of the armed forces and veterans are offered suitable assistance to access and sustain settled accommodation.	Evidence of contact made. Work with British Legion, and other local veteran charities.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Continue to work with teams to support the Gypsy and Traveller community when threatened with homelessness.	Review of cases involving the Gypsy and Traveller community.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Develop further links with armed forces charities to ensure currently serving members of the armed forces and veterans are offered suitable assistance to access and sustain settled accommodation.	Evidence of contact made. Work with British Legion, and other local veteran charities.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	

**Rochford District Council –
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy**

Affordability of Housing	Develop an affordable housing strategy that focusses attention on new affordable homes, as well as making best use of the existing registered providers housing stock in the district.	Affordable housing strategy in place. Annually reviewed. Last review was December 2022	Housing Director	December 2023	
	The Council will also consider the Council's assets available in the district and if these can be utilised to support the delivery of new homes.	Content of the affordable housing strategy. Reviewed December 2022	Housing Director	December 2023	
	Continue to work with registered providers in the district to deliver new homes and make best use of the existing stock.	Content of the affordable housing strategy and the delivery plan. Annual review of the works of registered providers.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Work alongside the Council's approach to bring back empty homes into use.	Empty homes plan is included in the Housing Strategy which will report on the progress to be made.	Housing Director	Ongoing	
To prevent homelessness in the private rented sector	Continue to use the private rented sector for homelessness prevention and relief.	Performance monitoring, and providing performance reports	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	The Housing Options Team to continue to work with local landlords and letting agents to overcome the barriers of working with people on low incomes to secure accommodation.	Performance monitoring and providing performance reports. Community and engagement officer working closely with landlords and letting agents.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	To develop an updated landlord and agent offer that offers value for money from the funding available (i.e., homeless prevention fund policy).	Written offer provided to landlords and agents. Information on Council website Performance monitoring.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	

	Ongoing liaison and marketing of the Council's offer to the private rented sector.	Evidence of the marketing of the offer. Attending landlord's forum.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
To eliminate Rough Sleeping in the District	Continue to support households to understand housing standards and responsibilities (of both landlords and tenants) and work to resolve issues when approaches are made to the Council.	Website information. Information provided to new tenants. Partnership working and communication with landlords.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Continue to work with the private landlord forum to share information and the support offer for landlords who may be experiencing issues with their tenants.	Forum records. Working with landlord to support maintain tenancy and relationship. Community & engagement officer leads on this.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Consider the use of bonds or finder fees to strengthen the local engagement of the private rented sector.	Review report into the options and potential costs and benefits.	Housing Director	December 2023	
	Support individuals to access services to ensure "No second Night Out."	Housing advice is provided, and rough sleepers are signposted to other agencies. Work in partnership with CHESS (outreach team)	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Continue to develop services for supporting and helping people who are sleeping rough in partnership with other Local Authorities and local charities with specialist skills, in particular the prevention of rough sleeping.	Evidence of the actions taken locally. Partnership with outreach teams, such as street link. Performance monitoring.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Review annually the impact of this strategy and delivery plan on the response to rough sleeping and identify where changes are needed.	Annual report to members.	Housing Director	October 2024	

	Ensure that there is adequate winter shelter and provide accommodation for rough sleepers, including the Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP).	Records on the SWEP in place. Working with the local community groups and partner organisations.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Work with other organisations to support Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP).	SWEP service in place. Annual review of SWEP. Regular partnership meetings on potential impact.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Working with CHES - a number of rough sleepers have a range of needs making them complex cases to work with. The Council works proactively with CHES to assist those sleeping rough and the service is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains effective.	Performance monitoring. Regular community meetings.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	One CHES support worker working with rough sleepers/singles in Rochford. A 3-year fixed term contract.	Monthly meetings with CHES on outcomes. Performance report on outcomes.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	One Rough Sleeper Navigator working between Rochford, Maldon, and Castle Point. A 1-year fixed term contract.	Outcomes associated with the role.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
Supporting Vulnerable Groups	Review the data on the support provided and how effective it is to continue to adapt our own approach, as well as the support provided by other agencies.	Ongoing monitoring of data, through case reviews, and outcomes. Annual review of effectiveness.	Housing Options Manager	December 2023	
	Continue to work in partnership with other organisations to deliver specialist accommodation and access to it for residents.	Annual review of the strategy and delivery plan. Working in partnership with landlords, agents, and community organisations.	Housing Options Manager	December 2024	

Effective Temporary Accommodation Provision	Implement the outcomes for the housing service from the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, including the Essex wide strategy.	Updated allocations policy. Staff member externally trained and champions support around Domestic Violence. Partnership working with other Local Authorities, refuses, and statutory services. Annual review of the strategy and delivery plan.	Housing Options Manager	December 2024	
	Continue to minimise the use of private sector emergency accommodation (i.e., bed and breakfast accommodation and nightly accommodation).	Numbers of people in emergency accommodation and the length of stay. Annual update report to the relevant committee. Working with landlords and partners around prevention.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Continue to work to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation.	Performance monitoring, reported on scorecard. Partnership working with partners, landlords and community organisations.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Continue to work to reduce the length of stay in temporary accommodation.	Performance monitoring, reported on scorecard. Partnership working with partners, landlords and community organisations.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Continue to work in partnership with the private rented sector and registered providers to develop the supply of temporary accommodation and eliminate the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation.	Performance monitoring, reported on scorecard. Partnership working with partners, landlords and community organisations.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	

	Continue to discharge its duty into the private rented sector.	Performance monitoring, reported on scorecard. Partnership working with partners, landlords and community organisations	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Maintain an effective supply of good quality temporary accommodation.	Working in partnership with landlords and agents. Regular inspections of properties. Communicating standards to tenants and landlords	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Review the effectiveness of the transition from Council provided temporary accommodation into accommodation provided by registered providers and the private rented sector, along with the support that is provided.	Community & Engagement Officer carries out regular reviews of tenancy during transition. Case by case reviews, working in partnership.	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Continue to ensure the compliance and quality of the temporary accommodation provided.	Compliance records. Regular inspections Tenant feedback Monitored through compliments and complaints	Housing Options Manager	Ongoing	
	Review the current ways households with affordability issues are provided with furniture and white goods when moving on from temporary accommodation.	Community & Engagement Officer supports in partnership with local charities and organisation. Minimised delay from moving on from temporary accommodation. Referral routes and funding in place.	Housing Options Manager	December 2023	

The following documents have been used to support the review and the links to these are included below.

Document	Link
Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022 (updated November 2019)	https://www.rochford.gov.uk/homeless-and-housingstrategy
Local Government Association - Making Homelessness Strategies Happen	https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/makinghomelessness-strategies-happen
Local Government Association - Improving the private rented sector (A toolkit for Councils)	https://www.local.gov.uk/improving-private-rentedsector
Local Government Association - Duty to refer: an opportunity to cooperate to tackle homelessness - Advice for local housing authorities	https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/5.44%20Duty%20to%20refer%20advice_v04.pdf
Crisis' Local Housing Authority Checklist: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategies.	https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/240786/lachecklist_homelessness-rough-sleepingstrategies_prototype.pdf
Shelter - Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 - policy and practice briefing 2017	https://assets.ctfassets.net/6sxvmndnnpn0s/ZhIMP1aeh1mOBzBDX2z1H/58b3122b8d18585a6b57c7cd693601ad/Homelessness_HRA17_Implementation_Briefing_FINAL.pdf
Shelter - Value for money in housing options and homelessness services	https://assets.ctfassets.net/6sxvmndnnpn0s/5WnoAvsRkArF0mh2FGIMS1/8e671fbcf72e891d85daa26b37b46636/VFM_in_housing_options_and_homelessness_services_full_report_Oct_2010.pdf
Guide to the Renters (Reform) Bill	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guide-to-the-rentersreform-bill

Appendix 3

An EIA is a way of finding out if:

- Our services are accessible to service users and employees.

An EIA helps us to make sure that:

- Our functions and policies do not have a negative impact or discriminate in any way against any members of our local community.

Name of service or policy being assessed	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	Is this a new or existing Strategy?	New
Directorate	Housing		
Officers completing the assessment			
Date	November 2023		
What is the purpose? What are the outcomes?	<p>This document sets the strategic direction for tackling homelessness and rough sleepers across Rochford and is a legal requirement to produce under the homelessness legislation. It recognises that to tackle homelessness in all its forms and in today's tough external environment, we need to work closely with our partners.</p> <p>The strategy sets out a number of actions detailing how we will deliver on the priorities and ensuring homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring. Project plans and/or proposals will be developed by local homelessness forums in each of the districts to deliver on the actions. Some actions will be carried out on a countywide basis.</p>		
Are there any statutory requirements?	Yes – Homelessness Act 2002		
Are there any other organisations/bodies involved in implementation of this service/policy?	Yes – various stakeholders also provide services to homeless and potentially homeless households.		

Who are the main customer groups / stakeholders?	Local residents and communities, County Council, Registered Providers, Health service providers, Probation, Prisons etc.
What information are you using?	Good practise and the legislation / code of guidance

What impact does the service/policy have on the following equality strands:	
Black and minority ethnic Impact on different ethnic groups, inc migrant communities and Gypsies/Roma/Travellers	Neutral, not a factor in service consideration or delivery
Disability Impact on people with disabilities, inc physical, sensory, and learning disabilities, mental health issues and long-term limiting illnesses	Neutral, not a factor in service consideration or delivery
Gender Impact on people of different genders, inc transgender	Neutral, not a factor in service consideration or delivery
Age Impact on people of all ages, inc younger and older people	Neutral, not a factor in service consideration or delivery
Sexual orientation Impact on people who are gay, lesbian, or bisexual	Neutral, not a factor in service consideration or delivery
Religion or belief Impact on people who practise different religions or have different beliefs (inc non-belief)	Neutral, not a factor in service consideration or delivery
Conclusion Service delivery led by statutory requirements and criteria around service delivery are not affected by any inequalities.	Is a full assessment required? NO
Signed	Date:

A full EIA is required if the initial screening has identified the service or policy is going to have the potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community