



Not every homeless person sleeps on the street

**Tandridge Homelessness Prevention and
Rough Sleeping Strategy**

2019 - 2023

Extended to 2025



Tandridge Homelessness Prevention Strategy:

Not every homeless person sleeps on the street

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Foreword

The circumstances which can result in a person being homeless are complex and every story is unique. However, as a Council working closely to serve and support our community we understand there are certain factors which may make a person more likely to become homeless. Identifying these has enabled us to create a Strategy which focuses on preventing homelessness by capitalising on partnership working and early intervention.

Homelessness is linked to the complex relationship between poverty and ill health, with poverty being both a consequence and cause of ill health. Understanding this relationship is a key theme within this Homelessness Prevention Strategy and our approach to finding solutions.

It is well documented that people living in any sort of poverty are more likely to have unhealthier lifestyles and poorer wellbeing. They are also likely to borrow money, live in overcrowded and poor quality housing, encounter more violence and abuse and experience homelessness. In addition, according to research undertaken by the homelessness charity CRISIS, two thirds of homeless people cite drug or alcohol use as a reason for first becoming homeless and those who use drugs are seven times more likely to be homeless.

Homelessness also often takes people away from their communities, depriving them of a much needed support network at a time of crises which only compounds their situation.

These factors have associated health problems including poor mental health, depression, suicide, anxiety and stress, diabetes, heart disease and asthma - all of which put people at a greater risk of early death.

Children living in poverty can have chaotic early years and experience stress and depression themselves, which creates a continued downward spiral of health inequality and social exclusion. This can make it more likely they will face poverty, ill health and homelessness when they grow up.

When viewed within this context, homelessness is an urgent housing and public health issue which requires early intervention and support to improve health and wellbeing and thus prevent homelessness wherever possible. Many more people are at threat of being homeless than perhaps is immediately recognisable. Homelessness can also be hidden – we know not every person who needs our help sleeps on the streets.

This Strategy clearly identifies that early intervention is key and our services must be wide ranging and accessible to everyone who needs them. We also need to maximise all opportunities for partnership working and joint commissioning to ensure everyone can access a safe space to call home.

A black and white portrait of a woman with short, light-colored hair, wearing glasses, a white jacket, and a patterned top. She is smiling and looking towards the camera.

Liz Parker

Councillor Liz Parker,
Chair of the Housing Committee

Addendum

Please note the following message from Councillor Jeremy Pursehouse, Chair of the Housing Committee:
This Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-23 will remain in place while we develop a new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy during 2024/25.

Consultation

This Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out the Council's vision and plans to address homelessness in the District for the next five years along with how, through the prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping, the Council aims to protect and improve people's lives and their wellbeing.

This Strategy was subject to public consultation between 9th April 2019 to 6th May 2019. The feedback given during this consultation was used to inform the development of this Strategy and the document has been amended to reflect the comments received during the consultation.

Full details of the consultation can be found in the Consultation Statement that accompanies this Strategy.

Vision:

This five year Homelessness Prevention Strategy (2019 – 2023) sets out the following vision to prevent homelessness in the district:

Working with a strong customer focus to protect and improve peoples' lives and well-being by preventing homelessness and eliminating rough sleeping in the district. We will do this by building more homes, making the best use of the existing housing stock, building strong integrated partnerships to deliver creative solutions and making sure we provide early and widely accessible advice and support.

To achieve this vision, three strategic priorities have been identified:

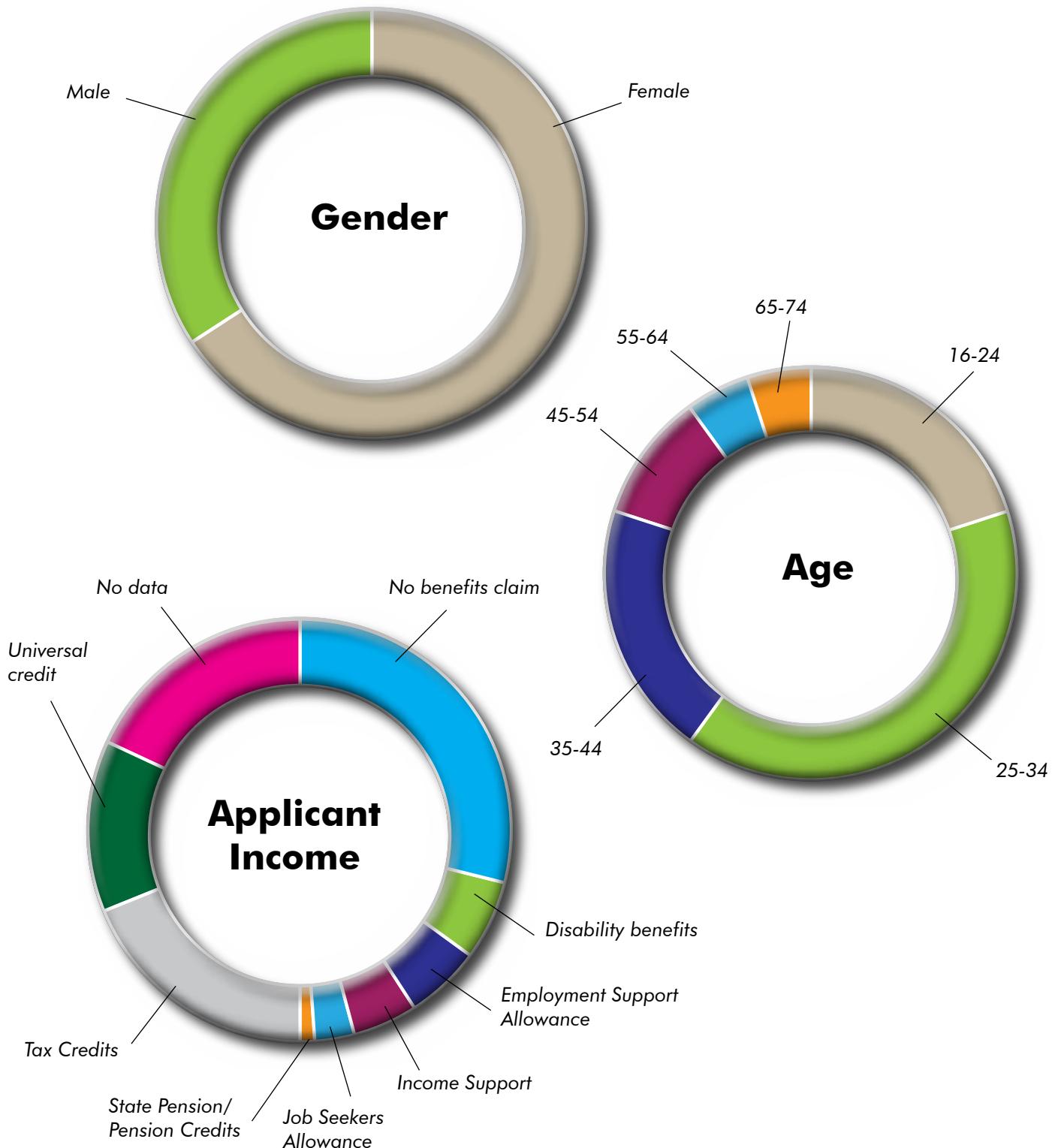
1. Spread the word: Raising awareness of the advice and support available.

2. What works: Identifying the top causes of homelessness and developing innovative housing solutions, including building more homes.

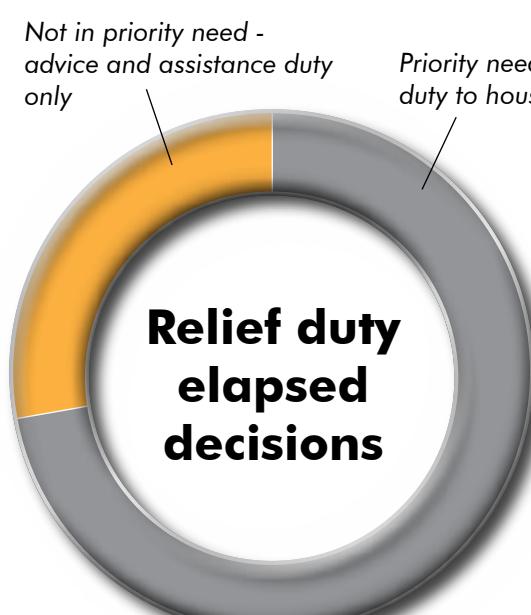
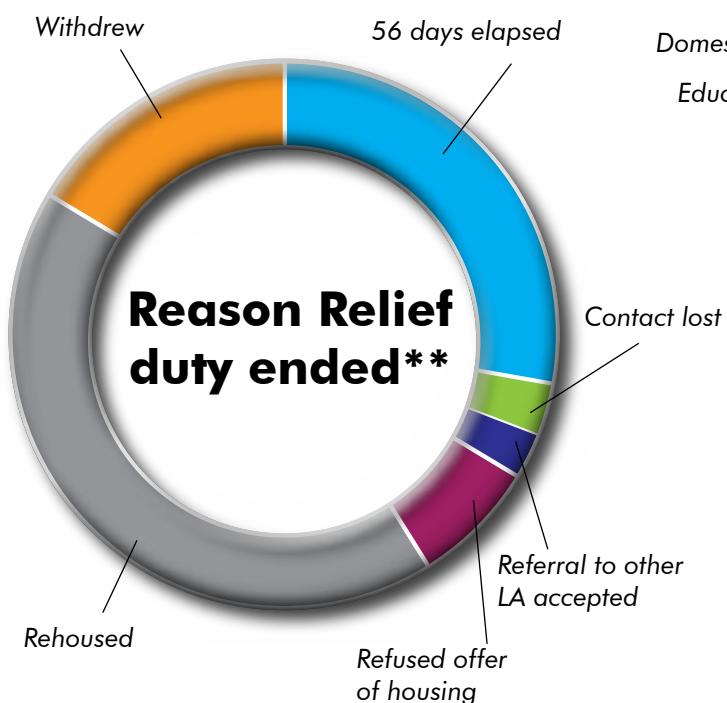
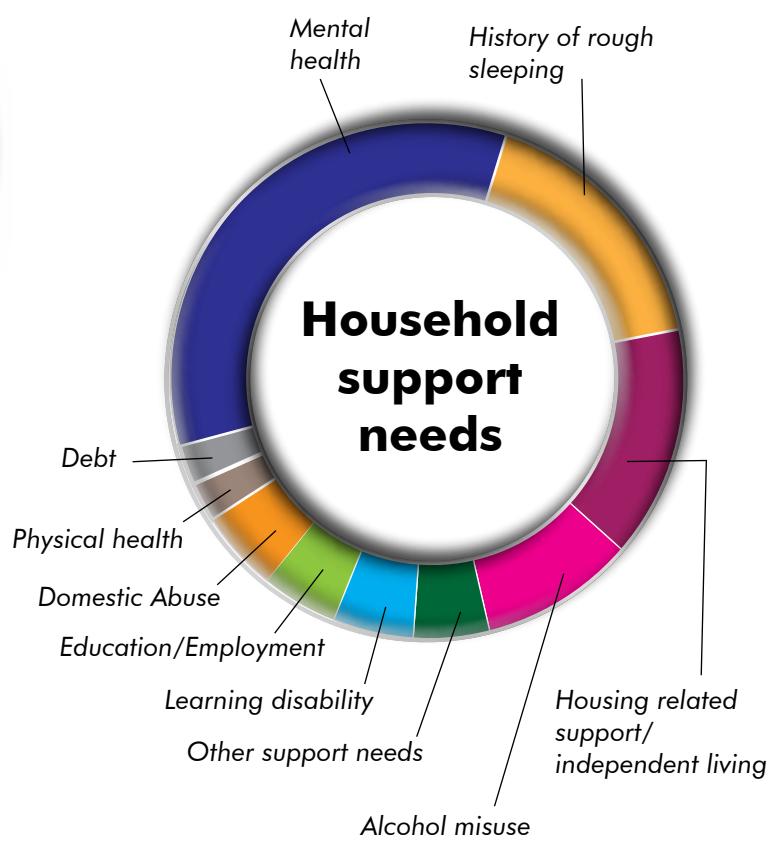
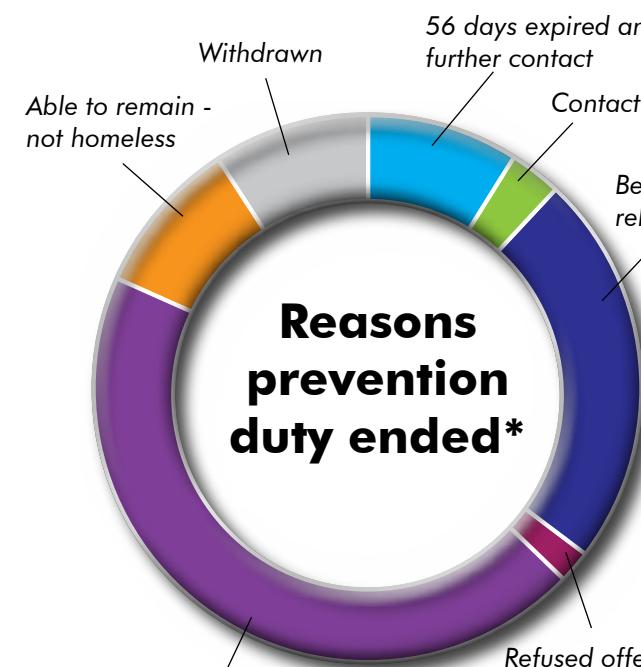
3. More effective together: Developing strong integrated partnerships.

Homelessness Reduction Act Key Facts

The data below is trial data¹, captured under the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017, by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. It gives an illustrative overview of the main characteristics of households approaching the Council for help under the HRA from its enactment in April 2018 and end March 2019.



¹ The aim of these new data sets is to track a household's journey over Local Authority boundaries over a long period of time. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ultimately hopes to link this data with other departments such as benefits, offending, health education and safeguarding.



* A prevention duty is owed when a household is within 56 days of becoming homeless. After 56 days, if there has been no contact the case is closed, or alternatively a relief duty commences.

** A relief duty is owed when a household becomes physically homeless or when the 56 day prevention duty expires, at which point a decision is needed whether the applicant is in priority need (duty to rehouse) or not (advice and assistance duty only).

Introduction

1. The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory duty on local authorities to undertake a review of homelessness in their area and based upon this review, develop and publish a strategy to prevent homelessness. This latest Homelessness Prevention Strategy: Not Every Homeless Person Sleeps on the Streets, sets out the Council's clear and ambitious plans to prevent and address homelessness in the Tandridge district over the next five years.
 - 1.1 The development of this current Strategy is particularly pertinent as it will be published one year after the enactment of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which introduced the biggest change to homelessness legislation in four decades.
 - 1.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced two new duties in addition to the original re-housing duty and places an even greater emphasis on preventing homelessness. The Council is now required to help anyone at risk of homelessness, not just those who are vulnerable in some way. It is also required to work with homeless people at an earlier stage (at 56 days before they become homeless, compared to the previous requirement of 28 days). Furthermore, this legislation introduced a duty to refer, thereby encouraging councils to undertake even more joint working and requiring hospitals and prisons to make referrals to the appropriate housing authority; this aspect of partnership working will be considered further under priority 3: More effective together. Preparing this Strategy provides a timely opportunity to take stock and evaluate the challenges posed by this far reaching legislation and its impact since its enactment.
 - 1.3 This Strategy has been designed to complement the Council's Housing Strategy, taking forward, on an operational level, the priorities that relate to the prevention of homelessness. It has been developed in line with national policy and legislation, while carefully considering the local needs and housing pressures of the district. It also incorporates feedback from the Peer Review of the Council's Homelessness Service undertaken by two independent councils.
 - 1.4 The five-year duration of the previous Homelessness Prevention Strategy has been at a time of fast-paced and significant change in the public sector. As a consequence, the Council has needed to profoundly reconsider how services are delivered to its communities with far fewer resources. This challenge, combined with the extreme shortage of affordable housing, to rent and to buy; the increasing unaffordability of the private rented sector; set against a backdrop of welfare reform which for many reduced the amount of financial support available to cover housing costs, has all served to intensify the challenge of preventing homelessness. As recorded levels of homelessness have continued to rise over the past five years, the number of households assisted by the Council has also risen but there is a need to do even more and reach out to a wider base of people to encourage them to come forward for help at an even earlier stage.
 - 1.5 Designing services to respond to this formidable challenge, when it is not clear what funding will be available to local government post 2020, requires uncompromising leadership, a clear vision and innovation to identify opportunities to continue to develop and transform services for homeless people.
 - 1.6 Innovation through partnership working has become increasingly important as an effective way of achieving the aims of multiple organisations with the same client group and this will be explored throughout this Strategy. The benefit of strengthening the link between housing and health services has already been recognised following the integration of funding for disabled facility grants into the Better Care Fund in 2015. However, there is much more that Housing can offer the Health Service in achieving common goals, e.g. assisting with delayed transfers of care from hospital by linking the provision of disabled facility grants with closer working with colleagues in hospital discharge teams.

1.7 Exploring options for working closely with the Health Service to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people is an important strand of this Strategy as research has long established that homelessness is a consequence of the complicated interaction between poverty and ill health. Research also confirms that homelessness disrupts people's ability to engage with health services and that generally those living in poverty may live unhealthier lifestyles than those not in poverty; for example: the reality of families doing the bulk of their weekly food shop in "pound stores" because other shopping options are too expensive.

Five milestone achievements under the previous Strategy	
1	Completion of successful Diagnostic Practitioner Review*, confirming that the services provided by the Council for homeless people are consistently customer focussed and are of good quality.
2	Investment made in new software improving: data capture, reporting and enhancing case management for homelessness activity.
3	Use of bed and breakfast housing remains exceptionally low, with the Council spending the lowest amount across Surrey on bed and breakfast housing, despite rising numbers of households approaching for advice. No families occupied bed and breakfast for more than six weeks.
4	The Council's Private Sector Access Scheme helped 114 people with deposits and rent in advance payments to secure housing for homeless people.
5	The Council started building housing. Over the life of the previous Strategy (2013 – 2018) a total of 267 affordable housing units were developed, a mix of shared ownership, affordable and socially rented homes. A total of 30 of these new units being new Council homes.

* See information on the Gold Standard, page 34.

District profile and homelessness review

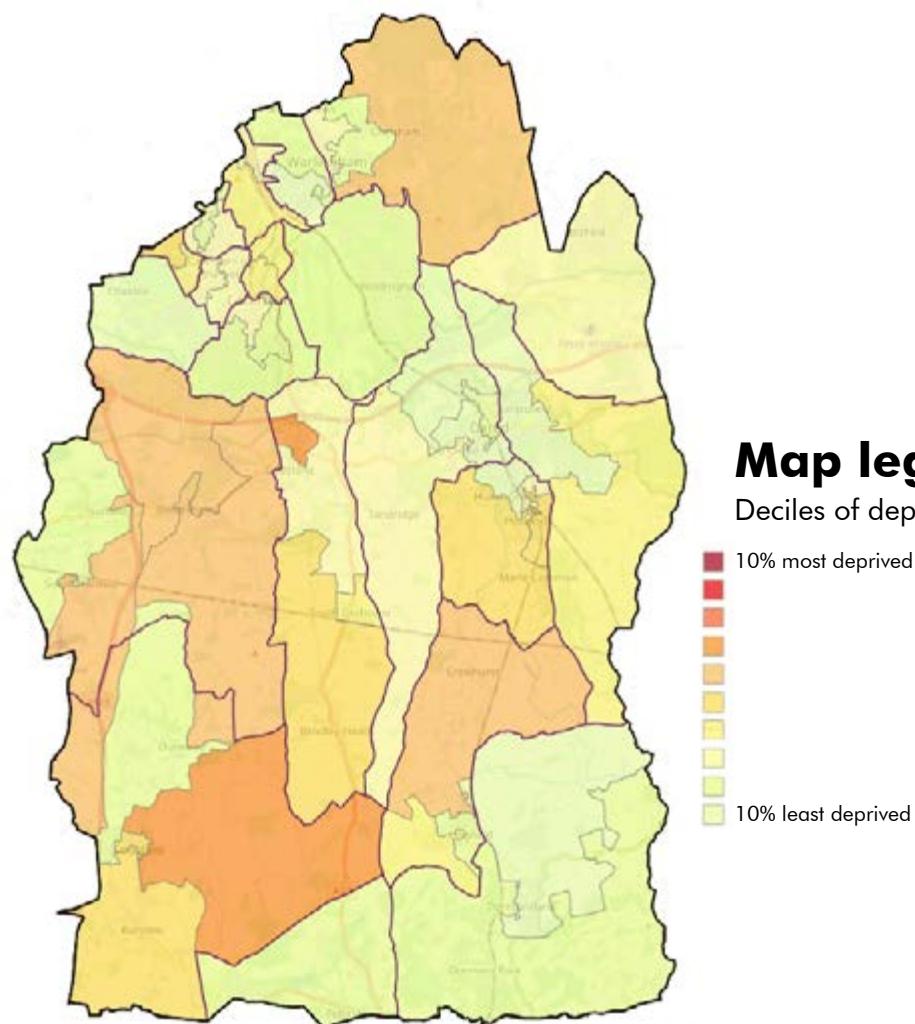
1.8 While Tandridge is geographically the third largest district/borough in Surrey, covering an area of 24,819 hectares, it has the second lowest population density according to 2017 census data; this highlights the rural nature of the district, which is 94% Green Belt. However, its population is projected to increase from the current level of 87,600 to 90,900 by the end of this Strategy (2023).

1.9 There is a higher than average number of residents aged 65 and over in the district with 20.4% of the population being over the age of 65, compared with 17.8% nationally. This trend is set to continue over the next 20 years with this age group forecast to grow by over 50%. By 2023 there is a projected 59% increase in the older population with those aged 85 and over growing by 136%.

1.10 Most of the population currently live in the more built-up areas of Oxted (including Hurst Green and Limpsfield) and the wider Caterham area (including Caterham Valley, Caterham on the Hill, Whyteleafe and Warlingham). The rest of the population reside in a network of smaller towns and villages, much of their setting derived from the countryside that surrounds them.

1.11 The English Indices of Deprivation 2015 compares data across several domains (income, employment, education skills and training, health, crime, barriers to housing and living environment) and gives a score, ranking areas across the whole country from the most deprived to the least deprived. The Tandridge district falls within the 40% least deprived areas in the country, confirming the district as being affluent. However, the predominately rural geography of the district presents particular challenges for some residents, for example: the limited availability of low paid, low skilled work in the district, the unemployment of young people, the high cost of housing and fuel poverty. Figure 1 below is a deprivation map of the district detailing the rating given to different wards within the district.

Fig 1

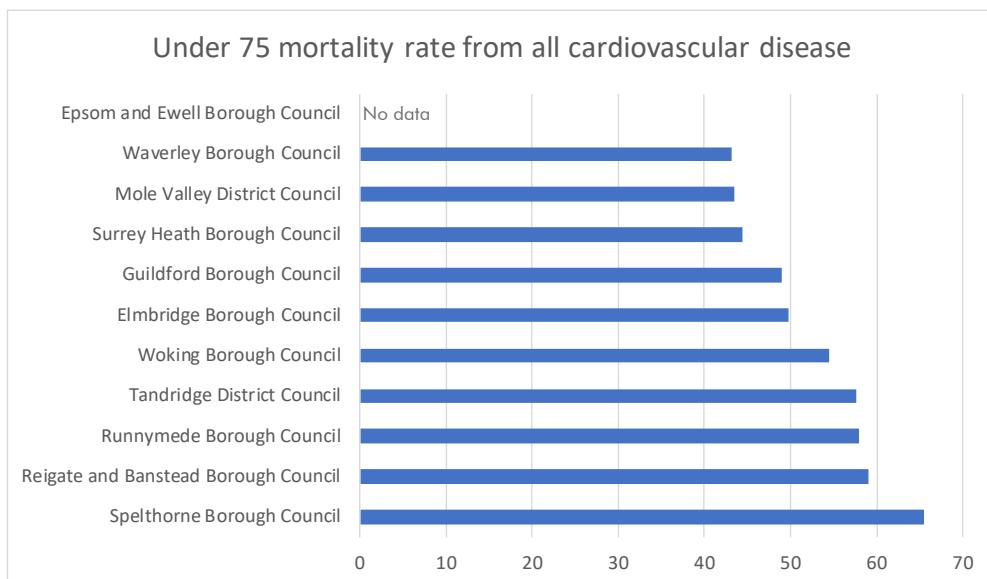


1.12 Access to health services is another pressure; our rural areas have poor public transport links, while the poor broadband and mobile phone networks in rural areas make it harder to access online services such as health, banking, benefits (there is no Jobcentre Plus in the district) and shopping. These factors can also make it difficult, even for those who are not materially disadvantaged, to connect with others thereby creating the risk of social isolation and exclusion. In the context of these challenges, the Indices of Deprivation identify two pockets of relative deprivation in the wards of Godstone and also Burstow, Horne and Outwood, which are ranked as being in the 40% most deprived areas in the country.

Key health impacts for the district

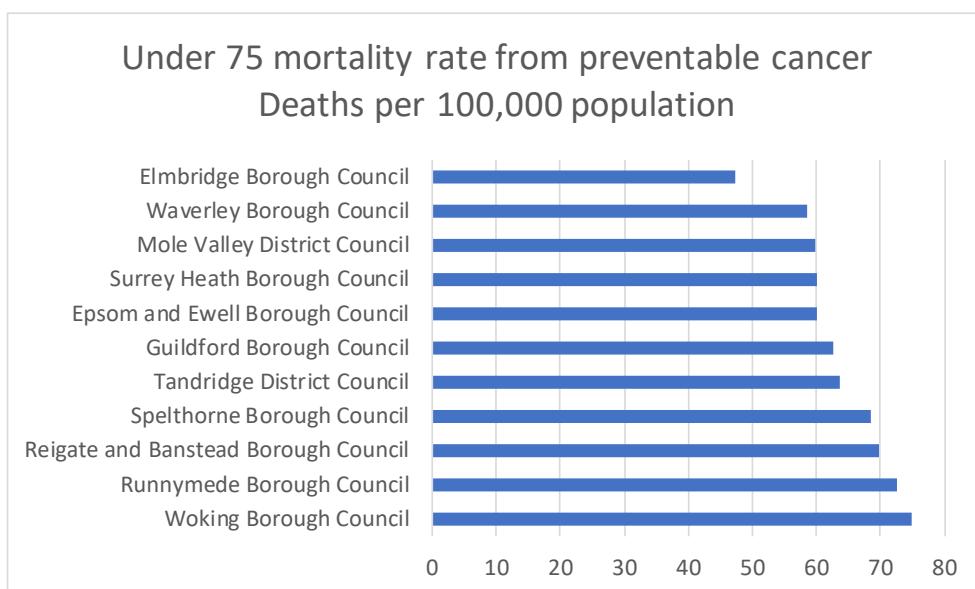
1.13 Despite having one of the lowest population densities in Surrey, combined with a disproportionately older population, Public Health data evidences that the Tandridge district has amongst the highest levels of preventable deaths in Surrey for those aged under 75 from cardiovascular disease and cancer and the third highest early mortality rate due to stroke.

Fig 2



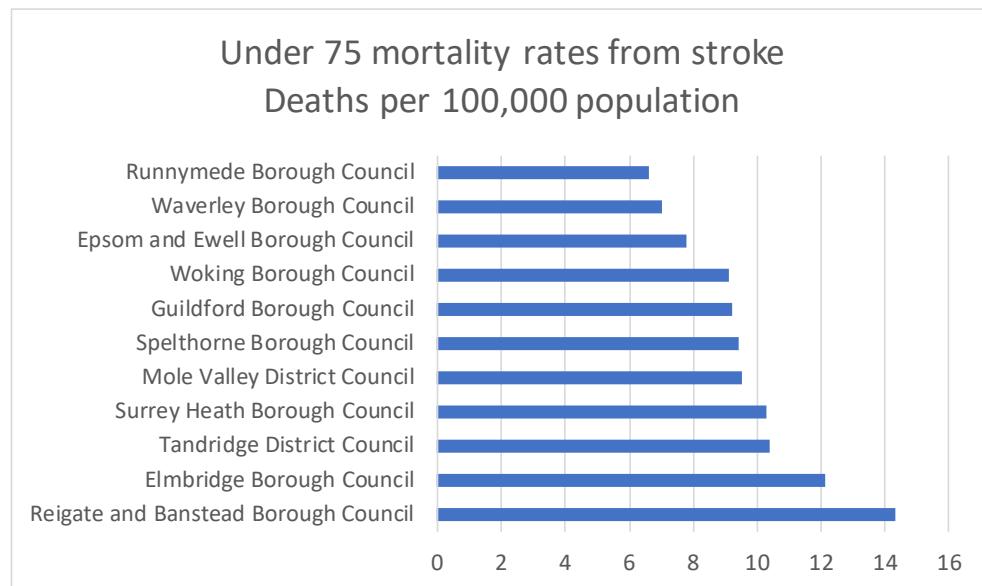
Source: Public Health England Profiles, Mortality Rates (2018)

Fig 3



Source: Public Health England Profiles, Mortality Rates (2018)

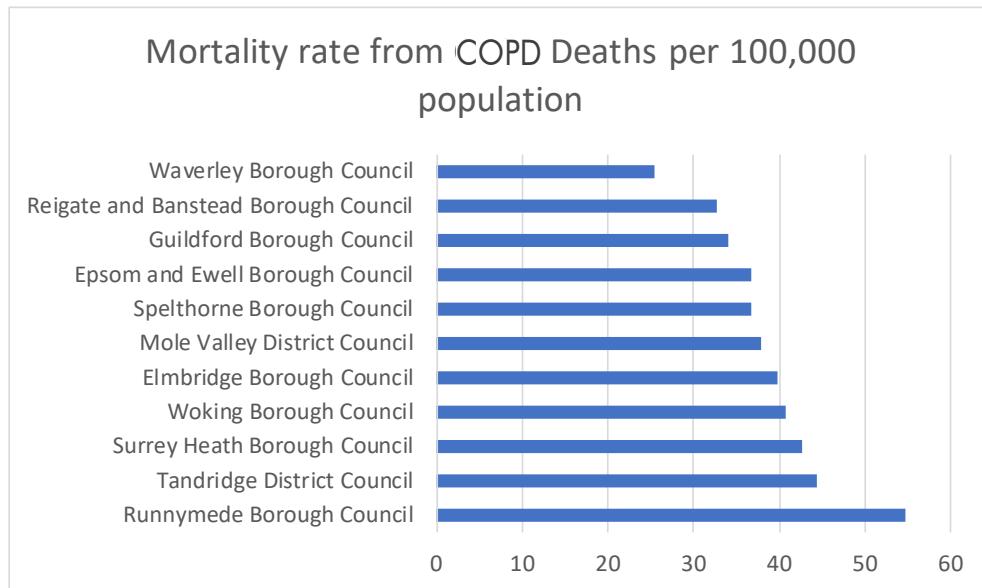
Fig 4



Source: Public Health England Profiles, Mortality Rates (2018)

1.14 However, the district has slightly lower levels of preventable deaths from liver and respiratory disease in the under 75 age group but out of all district/boroughs in Surrey it experiences the second highest level of deaths from COPD¹ and the highest prevalence of adults who smoke. There is no recorded information available on deaths from drug misuse but there is data which demonstrates that the district has experienced an increase in alcohol specific hospital stays for those under 18 over recent years.

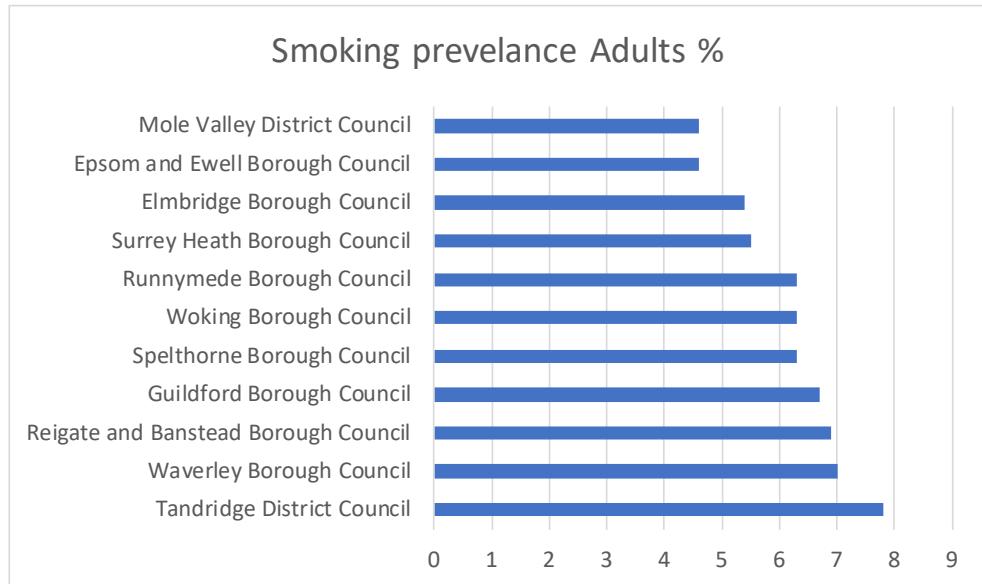
Fig 5



Source: Public Health England Profiles, Mortality Rates (2018)

1 Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Fig 6



Public Health England Profiles: Wider Determinants of Health

Early mortality, homelessness and poverty

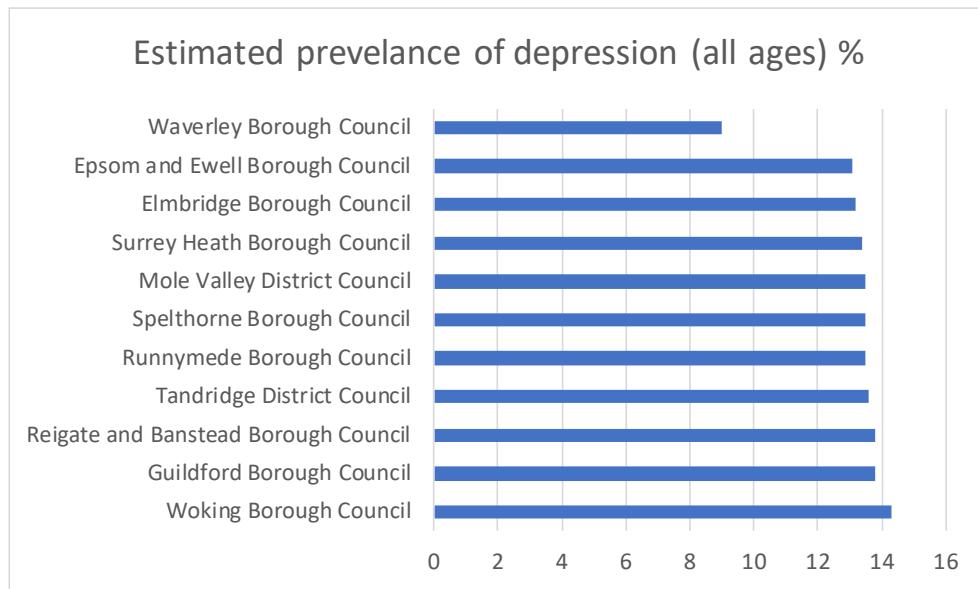
1.15 There are many factors which contribute towards these levels of early mortality identified in the district. However, the link between early mortality outcomes and homelessness is strongly evidenced by data describing the levels of poverty and deprivation in the district. For example, while there are many accepted definitions of poverty², the one consistent link between them all is that households living in any sort of poverty are more likely to have unhealthier lifestyles and poorer wellbeing than the general population. Research³ has established that those in poverty are likely to smoke more, exercise less, drink more alcohol, eat less healthily and be overweight. They are also likely to borrow more to make ends meet, live in the most overcrowded and poor-quality housing, encounter more violence and abuse and experience homelessness more frequently. This establishes homelessness as an urgent public health issue, as one of the key drivers identified for homelessness is the complex interaction between poverty and ill health.

1.16 There are established common health problems associated with poverty: poor mental health such as depression (Public Health data estimates that residents living in the Tandridge district experience one of the highest levels of depression in Surrey), anxiety and stress, diabetes, heart disease and asthma – all factors that give rise to a greater risk of early mortality. It is not a coincidence that these health issues are also drivers for homelessness.

² For example: absolute poverty, relative poverty, child poverty, fuel poverty

³ <https://sunderlandsocialsciences.wordpress.com/2017/10/09/report-relative-poverty-and-unhealthy-lifestyles/>

Fig 7



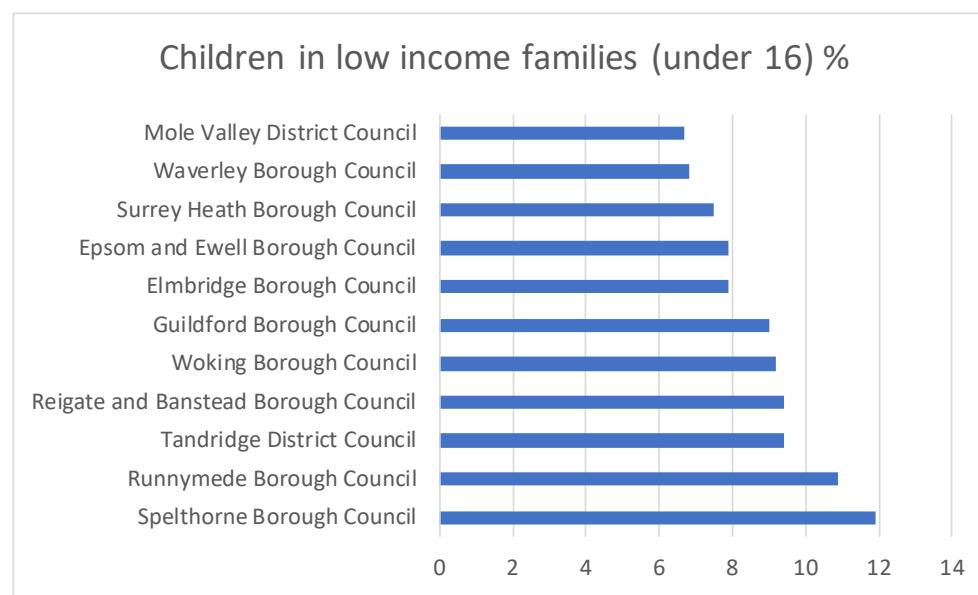
Public Health England Profiles (2018): Wider determinants of health

1.17 Children living with adults who experience multiples of these factors associated with poverty can have chaotic early years, experiencing stress and depression themselves. This often creates a continued downward spiral of health inequality and social exclusion, making poverty, ill health and homelessness intergenerational. Furthermore, homelessness often takes people away from their communities, depriving them of a much-needed support network at a time of crisis, which compounds their situation.

Poverty and deprivation in the Tandridge District

1.18 Despite the district presenting as predominately affluent, it has the third highest level of children aged under 16 living within a low-income household in all of Surrey. This is of some importance as the Marmot Review (2010)⁴ suggests there is evidence that childhood poverty leads to premature mortality and poor health outcomes for adults, which in turn can lead to poverty and potentially, homelessness.

Fig 8



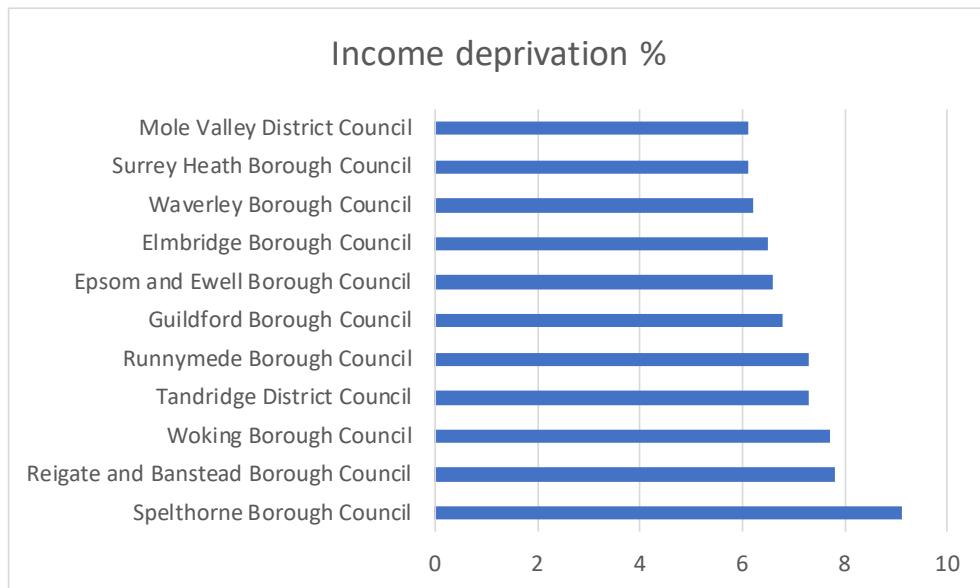
Public Health England Profiles: Wider determinants of health

⁴ <https://www.local.gov.uk/marmot-review-report-fair-society-healthy-lives>. The Marmot Review into health inequalities in England was published on 11 February 2010. It proposes an evidence based strategy to address the social determinants of health, the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age and which can lead to health inequalities.

1.19 The district has one of the highest percentages of income deprivation across Surrey and one of the lowest average weekly earnings. Research has shown that income is related to not just life expectancy but also disability free life expectancy, as it determines the extent to which a person can invest in goods and services which improve health or alternatively can purchase goods and services that are bad for health. Low incomes can also prevent active participation in social life and joining in social norms, affecting feelings of self-worth and status. Conversely, the relationship can work the other way with poor health limiting a person's ability to earn money.

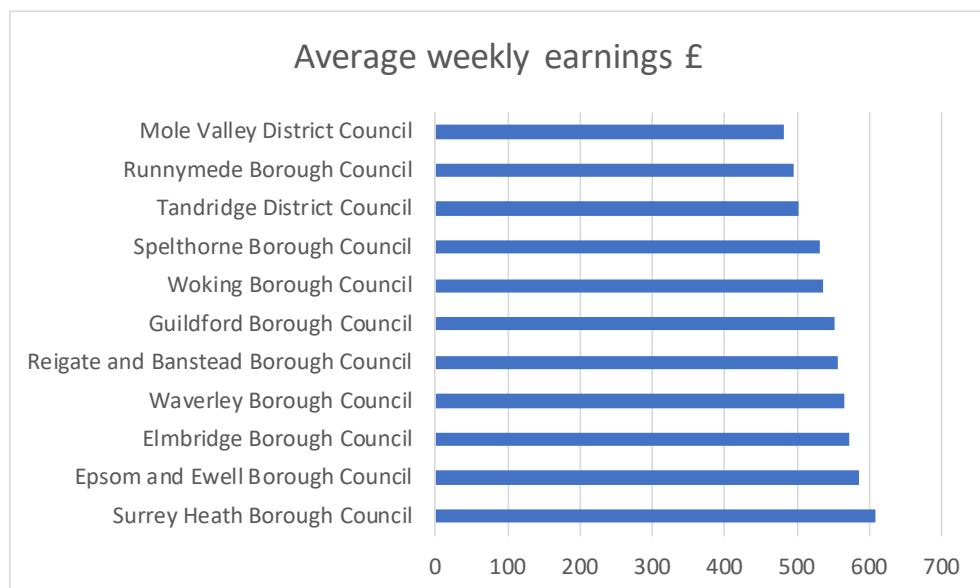
1.20 The income data used is the median average earnings. It has been used to mitigate the impact of the skewed income distribution between lower and higher earners and because it provides insight into the economic resources available to people, rather than comparing wage rates. As the district has one of the the lowest average weekly wages out of all Surrey, this provides compelling evidence which indicates that there are high levels of in-work poverty in the district, making the affordability of housing and promotion of wellbeing very challenging for some.

Fig 9



Public Health England Profiles: Wider determinants of health 2018 (comprises people who are on low incomes defined as those who are out of work and in work but who have low earnings (and who satisfy the respective means tests).

Fig 10



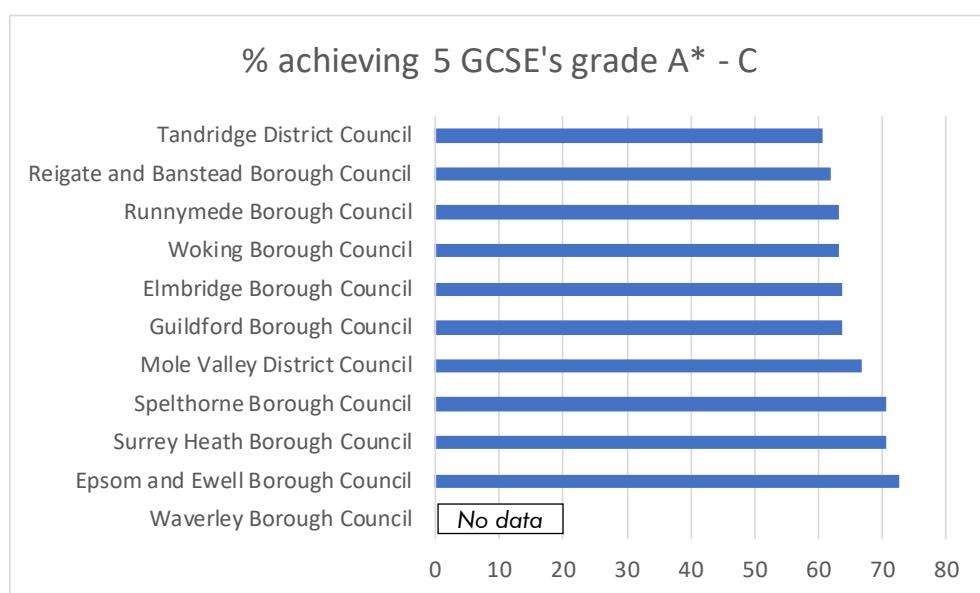
Public Health England Profiles: Wider determinants of health 2018 (Based upon the Annual Survey of Hours and Earning (ASHE) ONS)

Educational attainment in the district and impact on poverty

1.21 The Council's Local Plan evidence base demonstrates that many local state schools are oversubscribed and that demand continues to increase; as a result students are having to commute out of the district to secure a place. The district also contains a significant number of private schools, however these are self-regulating in terms of admissions and their contribution to meeting the educational needs of all. When considering combined performance, the district's state schools have the lowest level of attainment across Surrey for students achieving 5 GCSEs at A* - C grades.

1.22 Low educational attainment perpetuates the poverty trap where only insecure, low skilled, low paid work can be obtained, which provides few, if any routes away from poverty, exacerbating the unaffordability of housing. This is not an issue affecting just young people in the district who are starting out in their working life but extends to middle-aged workers. In this district, low education attainment means that low skilled, low paid job opportunities do not always provide a stepping stone to better paid employment, putting significant long term pressure on the undersupply of affordable housing.⁵

Fig 11



Public Health England Profiles: Wider determinants of health

Cost of Housing

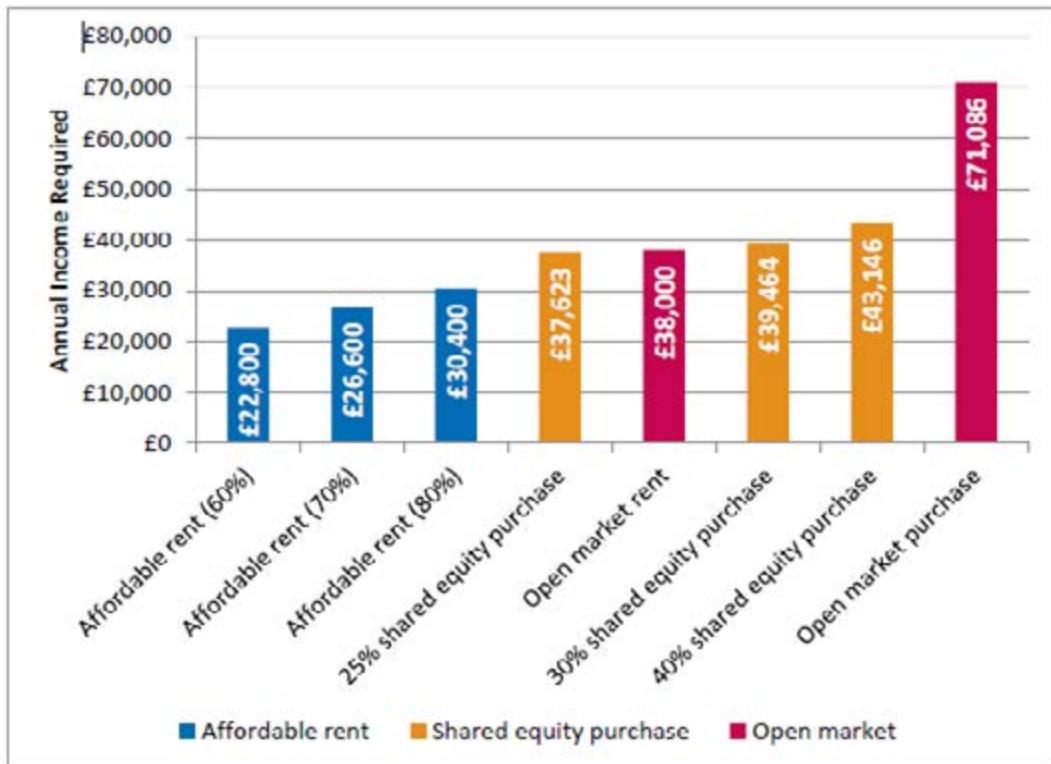
1.23 This data on poverty and ill health is significant for this district as housing is very expensive and there is a known acute shortage of affordable housing. Research⁶ commissioned by the Council has established that an annual income of around £71,000 per year is required to purchase entry level housing in the district. However, 75% of households in the district earn less than £70,000, suggesting that only one in four households in the district can afford to buy their own home.

1.24 Furthermore, a lower income of £38,000 has been established as being needed to be able to privately rent in Tandridge but 44% of households living in the district earn less than £40,000 per year, meaning that the cost of renting is unaffordable for these households. The table at Fig. 12 details the income required to access different types of property occupation in the district.

5 <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/low-pay-no-pay-cycle-understanding-recurrent-poverty>

6 Affordable Housing Needs Assessment June 2018 – Turley

Fig 12 Benchmarking income required to access products



1.25 The private rental sector comprises 14% of the district's housing stock, with rents up to an average of 39% higher than the maximum level of Local Housing Allowance⁷ that can be claimed. The impact of policies such as the benefit cap are felt keenly in the district, with affected households having to fund the gap between benefits for housing costs and actual rent. In turn this impacts on the money available for essentials such as food, heating and clothing. This also has an impact on the health and wellbeing of household members, for example, families who can only afford to do their weekly shop in "pound stores" will not have as varied a diet, with the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables.

1.26 The table below sets out the difference between the weekly private sector rents for different sized properties and local housing allowance (both mean values).

Table 1

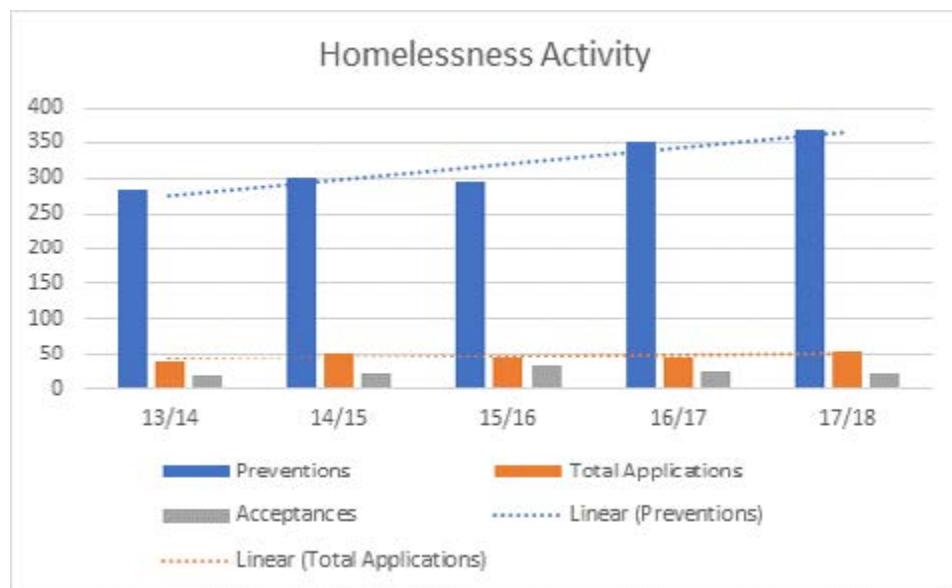
Property size	Mean Weekly Rent (March 2018)	Max Mean Weekly LHA
1 BR	£202	£166
2 BR	£251	£206
3 BR	£340	£250
4 BR	£526	£325

⁷ Local housing allowance (LHA) is used to work out how much housing benefit or universal credit a tenant can claim to pay rent.

Levels and causes of homelessness

1.27 Fig 13 below evidences the Council's work relating to homelessness which has continued to rise during the life of the last Homelessness Prevention Strategy. This Council has always worked in a proactive way to help anyone at risk of homelessness with advice and support and has provided advice to single people of working age whom the Council had no statutory duty to house. The data confirms that the Council's hard won prevention work over the life of the previous Strategy, had a positive impact on the numbers of formal applications taken and accepted, which have remained low.

Fig 13



1.28 The impact on the district of the new Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA), introduced in the last year of the previous Homelessness Prevention Strategy (2013-2018), continues to be monitored. The required recording of data and statutory definition of being threatened with homelessness has been rewritten in the HRA and is completely different to that under previous legislation, meaning that the two data sets do not correlate easily. The trial data recorded under the Homelessness Reduction Act has been presented as a snapshot of the first 12 months of activity under the HRA in the front of this Strategy (pages 6 and 7).

Main causes of homelessness

1.29 The main causes of homelessness in this district have been identified as:

- Loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancy
- Parental eviction
- Eviction by a friend or relative
- Violent relationship breakdown.

1.30 The first three causes are all symptoms of the acute lack of affordable housing in the district but with all these causes often there are wider factors involved and households often become homeless after a long chain of life events.

1.31 Factors that increase a household's risk of becoming homeless are poor physical or mental health, misuse of alcohol and/or drugs, bereavement, having spent time in care and/or the criminal justice system. Wider structural factors that are explored in this Strategy are poverty, inequality, unemployment and welfare and income policies.

1.32 These factors often interrelate, poverty can arise from a lack of education or ill health and/or personal factors such as family and social relationships are also put under pressure, resulting in relationship breakdown and homelessness.

Housing register v supply of new affordable homes.

1.33 Levels of homelessness applications and numbers waiting on the Council's housing register are directly influenced by the supply of affordable housing. In years where limited or no new affordable housing units were delivered, numbers of people coming forward as homeless increased, as did numbers of households registered on the Council's housing waiting list.

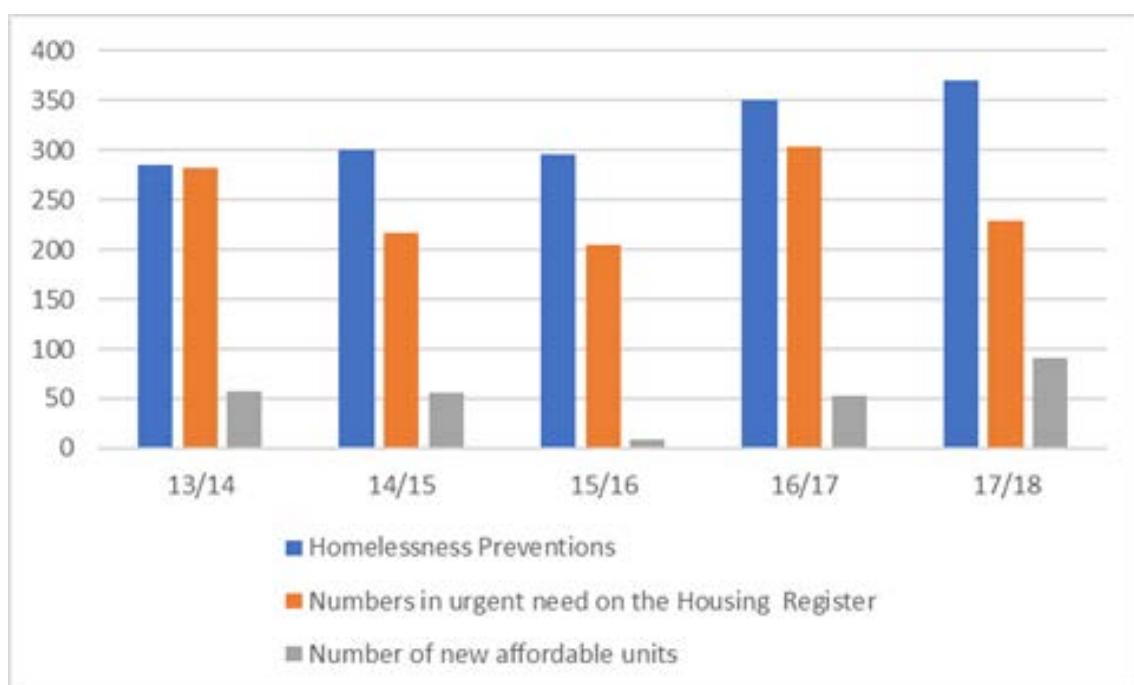
1.34 Fig 13 below shows overall numbers of households registered as being in urgent need on the Housing Register each year over the life of the last Strategy, contrasted with the level of homelessness preventions achieved and the number of new affordable units coming forward each year.

1.35 It is important to note that in 2016, the Council undertook a review of its Allocation Scheme, which resulted in a waiting list more focussed on local housing need with many out of area and out of date applications being cancelled and this is the reason for the drop in numbers registered on the housing register between 2014/2015 and 2015/2016, rather than the reason being that the Council was meeting housing need more successfully.

1.36 Households considered to be in urgent need are those who are living in highly overcrowded or very bad housing conditions or may have issues with serious disrepair or lack basic washing and cooking facilities. Urgent need also includes those households who need to move due to a health problem or disability. Urgent need includes the extra priority for people who have served in the armed forces, along with those households who need to move urgently due to violence or threats of violence or domestic abuse. Households who have been accepted as being statutorily homeless also have a degree of priority and fall within this category.

Fig 14

The table below demonstrates that levels of homelessness and numbers on the register increase according to the amount of affordable housing built.



Priority 1: Spread the word

Raising awareness of the advice and support available.

Introduction

2. The aim of this priority is to:
 - Ensure awareness exists of the support and help the Council can give to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to facilitate a rapid and effective assessment of needs;
 - Ensure this help is easily accessible and promoted in multi-channel formats to anyone who needs it;
 - Enable the Council to improve people's access to information and support that will help them improve their lives;
 - Ensure the Council has an informed workforce that delivers services of the highest standard.
- 2.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has significantly increased the numbers of people approaching the Council for help, as it sets down a duty to assist a wider range of people, much earlier in the process. As such it is important that the Council reaches the right people, with the right information as early as possible. Information about the support and help available to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness needs to be made much more widely available than previously.

Identifying where people go for help

- 2.2 To develop services that are even more effective, the Council aims to develop an even better understanding of where else people might go first when they have a housing problem. This will ensure that the Council is working with the right partners in the best way, raising awareness of the support and help available as effectively and early as possible. We will research this and review data from services that we fund but which are delivered by others, such as outreach services, Citizens Advice or East Surrey Domestic Abuse Services. There is a great resource of partner agencies who operate in the district such as JobCentre plus and the NHS who have contact with people who have housing problems, as well as charities such as Foodbanks and religious groups who can also assist with raising awareness of the help available. The accessibility of services could be tested by "mystery shopping" exercises and the Council will explore working with other groups such as the National Autism Society Mystery Shopper to understand if any further steps can be taken to ensure the accessibility of the housing advice service.
- 2.3 This research will help identify new opportunities to communicate information about the service, for example: working with local schools to raise awareness of what help there is with housing problems or by utilising partnerships with the Health Service more effectively to jointly commission services that make sure we are reaching people who need our help as early as possible. Other options that could be explored are the development of awareness raising articles in the local free newspapers and where available, County Court Court Desks, which provide on the day emergency face to face advice for households facing possession proceedings. It is also important that the Council establishes which charities are operating in the area to compile an even more comprehensive database of help and support available.

Effective ways of engaging with people

- 2.4 The Council holds Mosaic Insight Data, which provides customer insight on demographic and behavioural trends. This can be used to help understand how customers want to be contacted so that

our communication has the most impact. This is likely to be through the usual range of communication methods such as e-mail or direct mail shot but also may identify other opportunities to explore such as social media. Community Hubs such as the Douglas Brunton Centre or the newly designed services that will replace the existing Children's Centres in the District will also provide excellent opportunities to promote what help is available and how to access it. New opportunities could be developing a mobile phone app, using "chat bots" for simple enquiries, or using Skype for Business to talk face to face with people where they can't get to the Council Offices. There are also simpler options such as having a more active presence at different community events to raise awareness of specific aspects of the help available. The Council will also look to develop publicity information that contains a single point of contact.

- 2.5 The Council is in the process of developing a Digital Strategy. The Resident Support Service will contribute towards the development of this Strategy to enhance residents' access to the internet and promote digital inclusion, while ensuring that services are effectively designed to be online where appropriate, enabling ease of use and flexible access. It will also be essential to ensure that vulnerable people who need help with housing are not digitally excluded and that support is in place to ensure that homeless people, who face difficulty accessing on-line services, are able to get the help they need. This activity is in line with the principles of Customer First⁸ and will enable the Council to better balance the demand for services with resources, freeing up staff to spend more time with those who have complex needs.
- 2.6 We will also review the information held on the Council's website regarding housing advice and support. This will have an emphasis on self-help and personal responsibility and will include information on what help is available with housing, as well as health and wellbeing and employment. This will include feedback and testing from service users on the content and usability of the web pages, along with the effectiveness of the Housing Wizard, which provides basic housing advice. The Housing Wizard has been in use now for some years with little or no development so an evaluation of its use going forward is necessary.
- 2.7 The website review will explore changing the emphasis from having lots of information to read, to offering service users practical problem-solving help in a variety of forms to develop the Council's reputation of being an organisation that is really able to help. For example, the Council is already comfortable with using You Tube clips to communicate information around recruitment, so this idea could be explored further to develop some "Explainer Clips" giving practical advice on different subjects, such as finding somewhere to rent privately.
- 2.8 An action point in this Strategy will be to explore how behavioural insights can be used to develop customer communication literature and publicity information to help people understand different pathways to resolving their housing problem, be that finding a private rental or exploring shared home ownership options.
- 2.9 We will also aim to work closely with the Council's Communications Team and explore the options to plan for marketing campaigns on approved topics throughout the life of this Strategy, such as the promotion of shared home ownership products, the marketing of the Private Sector Access Scheme to private landlords and other positive news stories which enhance the reputation of the service. Where this information is marketed will also be considered for example, ensuring posters are located in supermarkets, gyms and leisure centres.

Interview and assessment process

- 2.10 The exploration and development of how the Council communicates with those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness provides a timely opportunity to also review how the Council communicates with service users during the interview and assessment process for homeless people.
- 2.11 An action point for this Strategy will be to explore the introduction of Motivational Interviewing into the assessment process for relevant officers to support them to build upon existing skills to improve client engagement even further.

⁸ The Council's organisation transformation programme in place from February 2019

2.12 Motivational interviewing is a technique frequently used by health professionals to work with clients who are entrenched in certain unhelpful behaviours and/or who have complex needs such as addiction to achieve positive change in their lives. This interview technique can be very effective at empowering individuals to take responsibility for finding a solution to their housing problems.

Customer led continuous improvement

2.13 The benefits and impact of improved communications with our customers can be evaluated through customer feedback, website analytics and take up of different service options. There is limited information on service users' views at present. Introducing a mechanism to capture customer feedback will help bring continuous improvement to the work undertaken by the service, which is led and informed by the customer's experience. Undertaking an evaluation of formal complaints will also provide valuable insight and monitoring of the quality of customer service. This is particularly important following the Council's transition to a new organisation model under Customer First.

LGBTIQ+⁹

2.14 The Council is committed to ensuring it provides services that are welcoming, open and safe for everyone and also that gender and sexual identity is discussed respectfully and inclusively. People who identify as LGBTIQ+ can become homelessness as a direct result of their gender and sexual identification and research suggests that 69% of young LGBT people were rejected by their parents and suffered abuse within the family (often falling within one of the three primary causes of homelessness: parental eviction)¹⁰.

As people who identify as LGBTIQ+ can suffer more discrimination, lack of acceptance and abuse than non LGBTIQ+ people, it can be difficult for them to be open about their gender and sexual identity. This not only makes difficult it to access the right support and help with housing but other needs too, such as mental health and substance misuse, delaying taking the steps needed to address issues and to move away from being homeless. It can also mean that organisations providing services to homeless people who identify as being LGBTIQ+, do not always know about or understand the persons gender or sexual identity and the impact this has on their support needs. These factors can lead to further social exclusion and disadvantage.

Understanding accurately the levels of LGBTIQ+ people in this District who need to access help with housing is complex. Homeless people approaching the Council may not want to disclose their gender or sexuality to Council or other staff, preferring not to say; they may feel unsure about how safe it is to disclose, they may present at a homelessness interview with a family member or friend who does not know about their LGBTIQ+ identification so they are reluctant to discuss it, they may feel their own sexual identity is unclear or they may be going through other physical or psychological changes.

Nationally, a higher proportion of men than women identify as being gay or lesbian and younger people (16-24 year olds) are more likely to identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual than any other age group¹¹. The 16-24 year age group form one of the highest age groups of people that approach the Council for housing advice, so it is likely that the Council provides services for a higher number of LGBTIQ+ people than perhaps initially considered. Outline¹² estimate that the Tandridge district has an estimated LGBT population of 8,300 people.

⁹ LGBTIQ+ is an acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Questioning and +. Definitions and terminology within the LGBTIQ+ community can change but for consistency in this strategy, the term LGBTIQ+ is used. "Q" can also refer to Queer and is indicative of the fact that definitions and terminology in the LGBTIQ+ community are fluid and can change. While Queer has historically been used negatively, the word has now been reclaimed by the community to take away its power as an insult. However, this term should only be used by those who identify as Queer. + is anyone who may feel they do not fit into any of the definitions given e.g. asexual people.

10 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/722314/GEO-LGBT-Survey-Report.pdf

11 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/2017#statisticians-comment>

12 A charity operating in Surrey which provides free information, support and public education on matters of gender and sexual identification, sexual health, drugs and relieving discrimination. <https://outlinesurrey.org.uk/>

To further develop an inclusive service culture, the Council will seek to build closer relationships with LGBTIQ+ services operating in the district by working with such groups through the relaunched Homelessness Forum (see Priority 3: More Effective Together). Through the Forum, such groups could help the Council explore the following ways of ensuring the culture and delivery of services is even more inclusive:

- Arrange training for staff on LGBTIQ+ issues and awareness;
- Revisiting wording on diversity data collection on questionnaires to encourage greater disclosure.
- Exploring what visible signs of inclusion the Council could use in the way services are delivered. For example, the Council could work with the in-house Communications Team to discuss including the LGBT or Trans flags in the corner of forms to identify that the Council supports LGBTIQ+ communities. Making a visible commitment may encourage more people to disclose their sexual identity helping to identify a need for services that is hidden at present, enabling more tailored services to be developed.

Summary of actions:

- Research where people go for help before approaching the Council for assistance to enable improved targeting of promotional material and advice and to explore options for mystery shopping to continue to improve service delivery;
- Use Mosaic data to understand demographic and behavioural trends and preferences in service user communication and identify new ways of communicating with customers. This could include a Tandridge Housing app, chat bots or Skype for Business;
- Contribute towards the development of the Digital Strategy ensuring that homeless people are able to access the help and support they need on-line where appropriate for them to do so;
- Review the Housing Advice and Information area on the website and explore the use of Explainer Clips;
- Develop Housing Advice and Information literature that is available by using behavioural insights to achieve service improvements, efficiencies and improved outcomes for homeless people;
- Introduce Motivational Interviewing training for relevant staff.
- Ensure the Resident Support Service works more effectively with the in-house Communications team to use marketing campaigns to promote different aspects of the service.
- Ensure partnerships are working effectively to promote the service and explore new ways of working with new partners to promote the service to a wider range of people, for example, by working increasingly closer with the Health Service.
- Collate various data, including customer satisfaction data and website analytics for the service to determine the efficacy of the information provided regarding housing options.
- Build closer relationships with LGBTIQ+ services operating in the district and work with them through the relaunched Homelessness Forum to explore how to make services even more inclusive:
- Provision of training for staff on LGBTIQ+ issues and awareness;
- Revisiting wording on diversity data collection questionnaires and exploring ways to encourage greater disclosure in the future;
- Exploring what visible signs of inclusion the Council could use in the way services are delivered.

Priority 2: What works

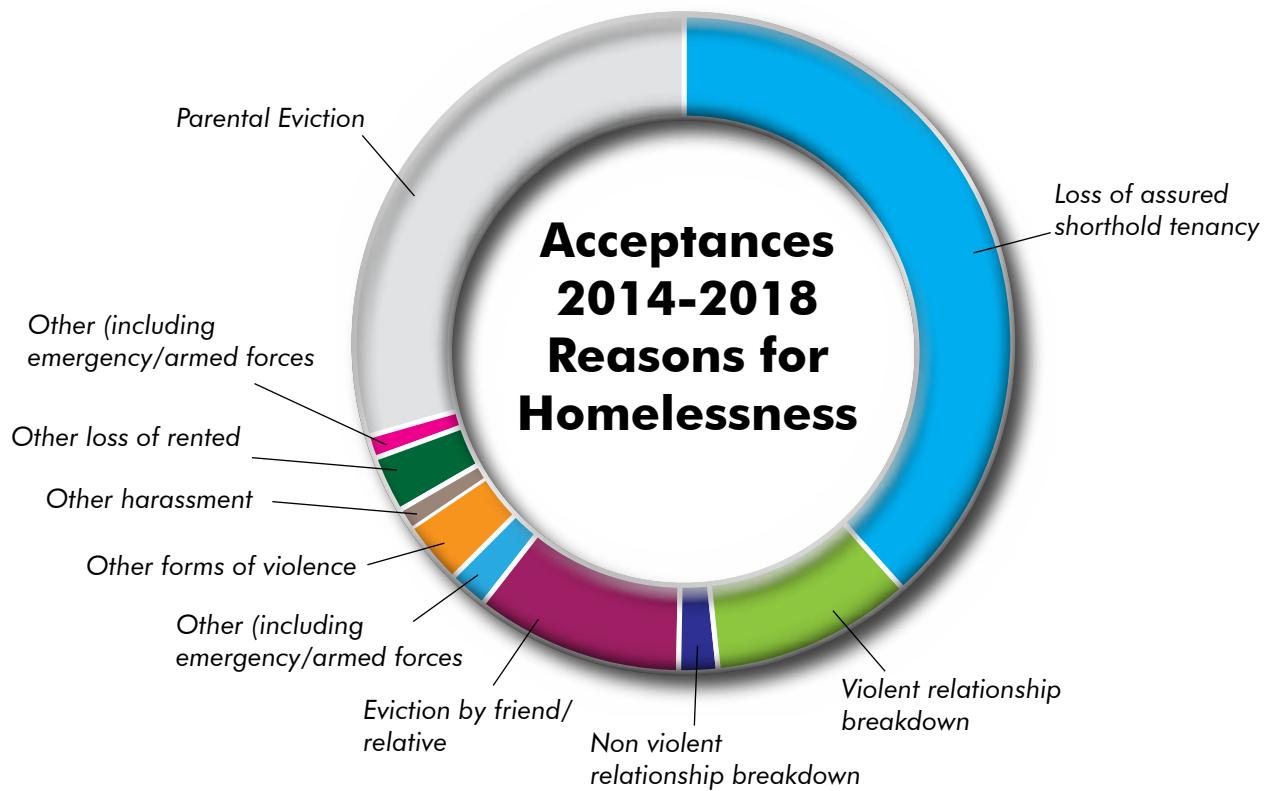
Identifying the top causes of homelessness and developing outcome focussed, innovative housing solutions.

Introduction

3. The review of homelessness activity in the district that took place under the last Strategy established the main causes of homelessness as being:

- Loss of Assured Shorthold Tenancy (38%).
- Parental eviction (29%).
- Eviction by a friend or relative (10%), being at the same level as violent relationship breakdown (10%).

Fig 15



Delivering more affordable housing

- 3.1 The solution to homelessness is the delivery of more affordable housing, of the right type and size and in the right areas, supported by infrastructure.
- 3.2 While changes to the planning system have led to an increase in permissions being granted, there has not been the same increase in new homes being built.
- 3.3 There are a number of reasons for this:
 - The shortage and cost of building land available generally and in particular in the areas which have traditionally been developed, affecting the viability of developing affordable housing;
 - The concentration of development taking place in existing built areas, which often makes the costs of development higher due to the need for mitigation of infrastructure, remediation of contaminated land and demolition costs;
 - The small scale of the sites that have come forward in built up areas;
 - The heavily constrained nature of the district, e.g. the extent of Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
 - Housebuilders who hold land back, develop it gradually, releasing a few properties at a time for sale to maximise the value of their assets, prevent homes coming onto the market to meet housing need.
 - Historically, when Councils stopped developing new homes, the private sector could not match the level built by the state and while Housing Associations were intended to fill the gap, they too were not able to build the level of affordable housing needed.
- 3.4 This Council has begun building again but not yet at the level needed to meet housing need for all the reasons set out above. To stimulate the delivery of new affordable housing, the Council has developed a Local Plan and supporting Housing Strategy to maximise opportunities to deliver new units of affordable housing and has also created its own housing company which will also seek to build new homes both to rent and to buy, some of which will be for affordable rent.

Action:

- Support the objectives in the Housing Strategy which facilitate the delivery of more affordable housing.

Loss of assured shorthold tenancy and working with private landlords

- 3.5 As there is insufficient socially rented stock to meet housing need and, with the main cause of homelessness being the loss of assured shorthold tenancies, the Council's relationship with private landlords is a key factor in addressing escalating levels of homelessness. Therefore, the Council needs to recognise private landlords as important partners to finding solutions to enable families and vulnerable people to live in decent, affordable housing.
- 3.6 One of the principle aims of this Strategy is to increase the supply of good quality, affordable, privately rented homes, which comply with safety requirements and decency standards. While the Council's experience of trying to recruit landlords to work with current schemes¹³ gives some insight into the barriers to securing privately rented accommodation, it would be helpful to undertake direct consultation with private landlords to learn and understand more widely what barriers they perceive exist with regard to working with the Council, so that solutions can be developed. One way the Council could reach landlords more effectively would be to develop a working relationship with regional/national landlords' fora.

¹³ Private Sector Access Scheme (PSAS) which provides rent in advance payments and deposit bonds for low income households

3.7 The private rental market is an area of the housing market that is undergoing much change as the Government seeks to address the imbalance of power between landlords, letting agents and renters following their consultation in 2018 "Strengthening consumer redress in the housing market". One of the outcomes arising from this consultation is that from June 2019 private landlords will no longer be able to charge tenancy set up fees, resulting in a loss of income. Furthermore, there is a proposed legal requirement for private landlords to sign up to a new redress scheme or face a £5,000 fine. Other factors impacting upon this sector are welfare reform, the introduction of universal credit and the proposed changes to electrical safety checks for private landlords and the introduction, from 20th March 2019 of new legislation introduced under the Homes (Fitness of Human Habitation) Act where a tenant (in either the private or social sector) can take legal action against their landlord if they fail to carry out necessary repairs or maintenance. Amongst all these changes, the Council has an enforcement role to regulate housing conditions in the private rented sector but needs to do this in a fair, reasonable and consistent manner, ensuring transparency. Proportionality is key, giving the Council a critical role in providing advice to landlords as well as to tenants.

3.8 Having a constructive relationship with one or several landlord groups will enable the Council to communicate with landlords on a greater scale and more effectively. The Council can offer training and develop joint initiatives with landlords' groups so that private landlords can network and share their experiences, thereby enabling the Council to respond quickly to landlord concerns and needs. The types of initiatives that could be developed include linking homelessness prevention activity at the Council more closely with private sector housing regulatory activity, to tackle multiple issues at the same time, for example; by developing a suite of incentives for private landlords which could include small grants to remove category 1¹⁴ hazards identified under the Housing and Health Safety Rating System in exchange for accepting a homeless household on benefits or a low income as a tenant. Such an approach could improve the condition of the housing stock in the district by tackling issues such as excess cold and dampness in properties, while providing accommodation for a homeless household. By building strong relationships with private landlords the Council can go on to develop schemes that show private landlords that the Council is a serious and credible partner, enabling us to maximise as many opportunities as possible to access the private rental market.

3.9 The relationship with landlords also includes the relationship with and the behaviour of the tenant. An action point for this Strategy is to explore what education and support the Council can provide to prepare people for the responsibility of having a tenancy and what start up help they may need and to try to put a package together that private landlords would find attractive. This might be a project that the Council could commission jointly with a partner where both organisations have a mutual client group.

3.10 Having undertaken meaningful consultation with private landlords, this information could then be combined to link with the action point in the Housing Strategy of exploring the possibility to create a Council letting agency or to explore the case for investing in private sector leasing. Private sector leasing is a scheme where the Council leases a property from the landlord to provide a home for a homeless household and takes on the management of the property for a number of years. In exchange, the landlord receives a guaranteed rental income.

¹⁴ The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is a risk assessment tool used to identify potential risks to the health and safety of occupants in homes. There are 29 identified housing hazards ranging from damp and mould growth to structural collapse and falling elements. If, on evaluation a hazard is identified as a serious and immediate risk to a person's health and safety, this is classed as a category 1 hazard and requires the Council to undertake enforcement action from a range of measures.

Actions:

Seek to increase access to the private rented sector by:

- Consulting with private landlords about the barriers they perceive with regard to working with the Council and accepting a tenant on a low income or benefits;
- Reaching out to private landlords' forums to see if it is possible to create opportunities for partnership working;
- Evaluating the benefit of additional incentives to encourage private landlords to rent their properties to homeless people which link to private sector regulatory activity;
- Identifying the support households may need when taking on the responsibility of a tenancy and exploring the viability of developing a scheme to deliver this;
- Evaluating the options for creating a Council lettings agency, investing in private sector leasing or other vehicle to make private rental properties available to homeless households. This includes exploring working with the Council's Housing Company.

Rent Deposit Schemes

3.11 The Private Sector Access Scheme (PSAS) provides the backbone of the Council's current approach to preventing homelessness for families and vulnerable people. While it is effective in its current form, there is a need to actively attract new landlords to create greater access to decent privately rented accommodation. The rent deposit scheme offered by NextStep, through Redhill YMCA, provides the same type of support for single non-priority households on behalf of the Council. Nextstep is a free service provided by the YMCA to landlords and single people which matches those looking for housing with rooms to rent. The benefits of this service for private landlords are that there are no hidden fees or costs, advice can be provided on landlord responsibilities, there is financial security provided through a deposit bond or in some cases a cash deposit and the tenant remains fully supported throughout the life of the tenancy.

3.12 PSAS offers landlords rent in advance payments and also deposit bonds instead of cash payments for deposits. Landlords like the arrangement of a deposit bond rather than a cash deposit because they do not have to register these with one of the Government's deposit protection schemes. Any dispute about payments claimed under the bond are mediated and negotiated between the landlord and the Council and if a payment is made, this is recovered from the tenant. Landlords also trust and appreciate the reassurance provided through the Council's assessment of the prospective tenant's ability to pay the rent and reasonable daily living expenses before they are put forward for a property. The Council also offers support to landlords where there are issues with benefit claims and delays in payment as well as supporting the potential tenant in maximising their income, e.g. by providing support to obtain employment. However, the landlord retains ultimate control over who goes into their property.

3.13 PSAS and Nextstep rent deposit schemes require continued funding to develop further the Council's offer to private landlords to ensure that our ability to prevent homelessness for a wide range of people is maximised. This funding is currently via grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Action:

- Provide a rent in advance and rent deposit scheme for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, ensuring the scheme continues to achieve excellent results and provide even better value for money.

Making best use of existing stock in the District

Empty Homes

- 3.14 As there is an acute shortage of affordable homes in the district, the Council has set an action in its Housing Strategy to develop an Empty Homes Strategy. The Empty Homes Strategy will aim to encourage owners to bring empty properties back into use but will also explore providing a safety net of some grant funding to help eligible homeowners with renovation costs.
- 3.15 The Empty Homes Strategy and associated policies that will support the prevention of homelessness need to be developed but it is anticipated that where any funding is awarded to bring an empty property up to the decent homes standard, this will be linked to granting a lease to the Council for a number of years to enable it to be rented to a tenant who is homeless and on benefits or a low income.

Private Sector Housing Conditions

- 3.16 This strategy supports the actions set out in the Council's adopted Housing Strategy to ensure the best use of the existing stock is achieved. These actions include undertaking an ongoing survey of the housing conditions in the district and linking this with private sector regulation activity. The Council can assist with Home Improvement Loans to ensure that essential repairs are carried out to ensure properties are habitable and can provide advice on energy efficiency measures to enable people to be able to afford to heat their homes.

Social Housing Tenancy Fraud

- 3.17 The Council's Tenancy Strategy sets out how the Council will make the best use of its housing stock to ensure that it is fully utilised as there is not enough affordable housing for everyone who needs it and demand far outstrips supply. The Council has powers to prosecute those who commit tenancy fraud by subletting their tenancy and living elsewhere and is committed to using these powers to their fullest extent. To this end, the Council will keep the current tenancy conditions under review and will seek to develop a whole Council approach to identifying and responding to allegations of fraud.

Actions:

- Contribute towards the development of the Council's Empty Homes Strategy to enable initiatives to be developed to improve properties and which benefit homeless households and also, provide a return on the Council's investment.
- Provide Home Improvement Loans of a maximum of £5,000 to homeowners to alleviate serious disrepair;
- Review the Council's approach to identifying fraud and responding to allegations of fraud in Council property.

Parental eviction

- 3.18 This is one of the most difficult areas for the Council to prevent homelessness. The point where a homeowner or tenant seeks to evict a family member is a breaking point for all concerned and often follows the accumulation of months, sometimes even years, of difficulty and conflict.
- 3.19 The Council has in place a multi-agency response to the parental/main carer eviction of 16 and 17 year olds. It works closely with Surrey County Council to provide a fast response which includes access to emergency accommodation, mediation to rebuild relationships and trust and the preparation of a long term plan for the young person to obtain their own housing. This also provides the scope to identify whether there are any other issues within the household for which support can be provided, e.g. alcohol misuse or unsupported mental health issues.
- 3.20 The Council also works closely with Surrey County Council to identify care leavers who require housing in the district, encouraging social workers to register the young people they are responsible

for as close as possible to their 16th birthday and thereby give time for housing to be identified by the time the young person reaches 18. However, whilst there are a number of supported housing options¹⁵ for young people, none are in the district.

Action:

- Work with Social Services to identify young people who are considered to be edge of care, in care and leaving care who are at risk of homelessness.

3.21 The Council operates a routine practice of carrying out home visits where a family member is being excluded and undertakes some mediation, however, excluders are often reluctant to work with the Council as some feel they have been “let down” by professional agencies in the past and believe that unless they hold firm and insist on excluding the family member, no support or help will be provided. Education regarding housing issues could help to give an understanding of what options there are for young people and empower them to take steps to resolve their housing issues themselves by explaining the reality of what homelessness is like. An action point in this Strategy is to explore whether some awareness talks can be given in local schools as part of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum. The Council has a strong history of working with schools in the area, including links with Oxted School as part of the Satro young person’s mentoring programme. The Council also provides regular talks at schools in the District on other topics outside housing, such as recycling and the Council is keen to extend this to include education regarding homelessness prevention.

Actions:

- Undertake home visits where a young person is being excluded from parents/main carer’s home.
- Identify ways to work more closely with schools regarding education on housing and homelessness issues.

3.22 The main solution for homelessness is the provision of more affordable housing in the district. While it is anticipated that the steps outlined under “Loss of assured shorthold tenancies and working with private landlords” will help, these steps are most likely to bring forward access to family sized homes in the private rental market, which will not assist young, single people under the age of 35, who require shared, House in Multi Occupation (HMO) style accommodation. Where a single person aged under 35 needs the assistance of Housing Benefit to pay the rent of a privately rented home, then a room in a shared house or HMO style accommodation is the only viable affordable option for them.

3.23 Landlords of HMOs are less likely to come forward simply because this is not the make up or style of the housing stock in the district. While the district has a disproportionate number of larger properties, due to the affluence of the area, these tend to be in occupation by single households, unlike coastal towns where large Victorian houses tend to be broken down into shared housing to provide better return on an investment.

3.24 An action point in this Strategy will be to explore ways of stimulating access into shared housing in the private rented sector by linking homelessness prevention activity with private sector housing regulation activity to target accommodation above shops. The action point would include exploring the feasibility of a pilot scheme identifying one or more appropriate 2-bedroom maisonettes or flats and temporarily altering them to provide shared accommodation for several single homeless people, whilst ensuring the property is not overcrowded and provides sufficient living space and amenities for the number of occupants. The minimum relet period would be five years. However, accommodation above shops is often of poor quality with multiple identifiable hazards under the Housing and Health Safety Rating System, which impact negatively on an occupant’s health. The pilot scheme considers the availability of funding to improve the condition of the empty property, which would be in exchange for the Council having a lease for the maisonette/flat for a minimum period of 5 years. This would

¹⁵ Supported Housing provides both housing and support to help vulnerable people live as independently as possible in the community. Schemes specialise in meeting a particular support need, such as disability, mental health, substance misuse or young people.

achieve multiple aims: bringing an empty unit back into use, preventing homelessness for a number of single households, improving the condition of the housing stock in the district, and providing the Council with a return on its investment through the rental income.

3.25 Managing shared accommodation can be intensive but the Council has a strong track record through the provision of a hostel for homeless households. If successful and financially viable, this is a model that could be rolled out across the district.

Action:

- Evaluate the undertaking of a pilot scheme to convert properties above shops into HMO accommodation, targeting multiple outcomes regarding the condition of the private sector housing stock, bringing an empty property back into use and preventing homelessness.

Adolescent to parent violence and abuse

3.26 Arguments are a part of most people's family life but for some families, arguments form part of a more serious pattern of behaviour, which can include violence towards parents/main carers, damage to property, lying and stealing, swearing and abuse. The Government defines this behaviour as adolescent to parent violence and abuse (APVA). It covers any form of behaviour by a young person which sets out to control and dominate their parents, with the aim of instilling fear, threatening and causing intimidation. It has a serious impact on parents and wider members of the family and it is becoming increasingly recognised as a form of domestic abuse, depending on the age of the child. The behaviour can be, but is not always, driven by a mental health problem, substance misuse, a traumatic event, long-term bullying, behavioural problem or learning difficulty.

3.27 The majority of parental evictions are as a result of relationship breakdown with their adult child, and there is evidence to support that APVA is sometimes a factor in this. Whilst it is often hidden, APVA appears to be an increasingly prevalent problem and it is an action point in this Strategy to explore and understand how prevalent it is in Tandridge and to put in place a protocol for responding to incidents of APVA as required.

3.28 The Council's experience is that parents often don't recognise they are experiencing this form of abuse but know that life with the young person is difficult and sometimes frightening. Parents don't know where to go for help and there are few appropriate support services. An action point of this Strategy will be to develop a protocol for joined up working across agencies to work with families experiencing this problem and develop awareness and training for staff to identify the signs. This action point will also seek to identify and establish appropriate referral pathways, which support the Council's safeguarding responsibilities and include housing advice for both the parent and young person to ensure safety and to avoid homelessness wherever possible. Partners could include the local MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference), the Health Service, Social Care colleagues and the Police.

Action:

- Raise awareness and develop effective pathways for victims and perpetrators of adolescent to parent violence and abuse.

Eviction from friend's or relative's home

3.29 People end up living with friends and relatives for many reasons. They have become estranged from their parents for some reason or their parents are simply not in a position to help with housing. Perhaps their parents do not live locally or by staying at their parent's home, they have to endure more abuse just to keep the roof over their heads than they would if they were homeless, so they stay with any friend or relative as a result of a crisis. Also, people sometimes find themselves in relationships of convenience, that are usually unhelpful and often unstable, just to have somewhere to stay but often, these break down over time and the party who does not have occupation rights is put out of the property, often without notice.

3.30 Homelessness arising from eviction from a friend or relative's home is another symptom of the acute lack of affordable housing in the district and the difficult access into the private rental market.

Taking steps outlined in this Strategy to bring forward more access to the private rental market and to develop initiatives that fill the gaps in provision, combined with the wider range strategic plans set out in the Housing Strategy to develop more affordable housing, means that the Council will be taking positive steps to address the most difficult housing problems faced by 77% of the people who come to the Council for help.

Action:

- Undertake home visits where homelessness occurs as a result of eviction from a friend's or relative's home.

Violent relationship breakdown

3.31 The Council works to the Home Office definition of domestic abuse which is set out below:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

This definition, which is not a legal definition also includes 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

3.32 The Council shares the same vision and commitment as contained in Surrey County Council's Domestic Abuse Strategy towards those who are affected by domestic abuse. The Council is committed to ensuring that all those affected have the right information, services and support, at the earliest opportunity, in order to live lives free from domestic abuse. This includes referring perpetrators who are concerned about their behaviour and are ready to change to support services to help them understand the impact their behaviour has on others and learn strategies to support change. The Council is clear on its safeguarding responsibilities in that some individuals may need safeguarding support to escape abuse.

3.33 It is the Council's Corporate Policy, Projects and Performance Team who take the strategic lead on the Council's response to domestic abuse and while the Council has not developed its own Domestic Abuse Strategy, our response is led by guidance set in SCC's Domestic Abuse Strategy. Resident Support Services will be working closely with the Corporate Policy, Projects and Performance Team on the progression of the Domestic Abuse Bill published on 21st January 2019, which was also published together with a report showing that the economic and social cost of domestic abuse in England Wales exceeded £66bn in 2016/2017.

3.34 The draft Domestic Abuse Bill proposes:

- a statutory definition of domestic abuse.
- a domestic abuse commissioner.

- a new system of domestic abuse protection notices and protection orders to deter and monitor perpetrators.
- prohibiting alleged perpetrators of domestic abuse from cross-examining a complainant in family courts.
- automatic special measures for complainants in criminal courts.
- split payment of universal credit to remain at discretion of case workers at Department for Work and Pensions.
- secure lifetime tenancies for victims of abuse who are offered alternative housing by local authorities.

3.35 The Council also participates in county wide strategic partnerships on domestic abuse issues. This includes participation in regular Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings, which are attended by a wide range of organisations from both the statutory and voluntary sectors. The agencies share known information to build a picture of risk to the household so that the household can be supported better.

3.36 The Council also works closely with East Surrey Domestic Abuse Services (ESDAS) which is an independent charity providing domestic abuse advice and support to individuals across the Tandridge, Reigate and Banstead and Mole Valley areas.

3.37 In addition, the Council operates a Sanctuary scheme, which provides a small amount of funding to install safety measures in the homes of victims of abuse, such as spy holes in doors, fire proof letter boxes, security locks and lighting.

3.38 An action point for this Strategy is to explore appointing a Domestic Abuse Champion for Resident Support Services to ensure there are strong links between the strategic development of policy regarding domestic abuse and its operational delivery.

Actions:

- Work closely with the Council's Policy, Projects and Performance Team on matters regarding domestic abuse.
- Participate in the local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings.
- Refer appropriate cases to East Surrey Domestic Abuse Service (ESDAS) for help and support
- Appoint a Domestic Abuse Champion in Resident Support Services.
- Ensure staff receive relevant training on domestic abuse matters.
- Offer a Sanctuary Scheme.

Other ways in which the Council prevents homelessness

Money Advice Service

3.39 Money advice is far more than just ensuring that an individual is claiming all the benefits they need and submitting the right proofs to get a benefit claim in payment. Many people who claim benefits are extremely vulnerable and when there are problems with a benefit claim or there is a change to their benefit entitlement, these problems can cause serious hardship, such as the loss of their home.

3.40 Problems with benefits can often be enormously difficult and complicated to resolve and as such money advice plays a critical role in helping to resolve these types of problems but it is also critical in terms of sustaining tenancies, preventing homelessness and in encouraging private landlords to accept tenants on low incomes or benefits. It is therefore essential that the right level of personalised expertise is in place at the Council to work longer term with claimants in this way.

3.41 Responsive, personalised money advice will also play a key role in underpinning the plans set out in this Strategy to stimulate improved access to private sector rentals, as it forms a key part of the Council's offer to private landlords. Personalised money advice was also identified as a key priority in the Council's peer review and would be required to enable the Council's service to be awarded a level of recognition under the Government's Gold Standard Framework for Homelessness Services.

3.42 Failure to have the right level of expertise in place would limit the Council's ability to resolve problems quickly and effectively, damaging our credibility with private landlords, and resulting in a loss of trust. Income maximisation is another important aspect of money advice, for example, covering complex assessments such as whether an individual would be better off in work or not.

3.43 Promoting information on welfare reform and benefits changes in a coordinated way forms part of money advice work. An action point in this Strategy is to review the information the Council provides regarding Welfare Reform and how it is publicised to ensure that the help available is being promoted in the most effective way.

3.44 The early data captured after the enactment of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 indicates that a high proportion of households approaching the Council for help with housing do not claim benefits. There are also high levels of households claiming tax credits. This would indicate that there are high levels of in work poverty in the district, making the provision of in house money advice at the Council extremely important. It will be an action point under this Strategy to research levels of in work poverty in the district and tailor the support provided by the Council accordingly.

3.45 Those who need to claim benefits are often the most financially excluded in society in terms of access to good quality money advice and to low cost credit. To ensure no one is excluded, it is extremely important that there is flexible and quickly accessible advice and support. Helping residents manage their debt was identified as a high priority in the Housing Strategy but there is insufficient resource in the district to undertake this work. The demand on Citizens Advice is extremely high and their services are best reserved for the most complex cases requiring licenced debt advisors; this being the case, it is essential that the Council provides a responsive Money Advice service in-house. This could include advice and support regarding initiatives available to enable people to downsize or move home to a more affordable property.

3.46 An action point in this Strategy is for the Council to explore finding the staff resource to deliver in house money advice to both Council and private sector tenants. If effective, this would be a service that helps tenants pay their rent on time and is something the Council could potentially offer to other organisations, generating income.

3.47 Debt related stress and coping with money worries has a huge impact on individual wellbeing and there is the scope to link this important work with health and wellbeing services, perhaps exploring opportunities for joint commissioning services.

Actions:

- Provide an in-house money advice service.
- Review the information available regarding Welfare Reform and how it is promoted.
- Undertake research to identify levels of in work poverty in the district.
- Identify opportunities to provide money advice to both private and social housing tenants.
- Evaluate opportunities for joint commissioning of money advice services to promote wellbeing by offering services that alleviate debt and associated stresses.

Rapid, effective and focussed assessment of needs

3.48 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) introduced a major change in the way the Council provided advice to homeless people. The legislation itself was supported by two additional regulations and a new statutory Code of Guidance.

3.49 This legislation gave Councils two new duties (the prevention duty and the relief duty) which are in addition to the original rehousing duty but switched the emphasis more heavily onto preventing homelessness than ever before. This legislation also requires Councils to help anyone at risk of homelessness, not just those who are vulnerable in some way and at an earlier stage than before, 56 days before a household becomes homeless. Whereas previously, our duties commenced when a household was within 28 days of homelessness.

3.50 The Council has always worked with those who were not a priority under the Housing legislation, but the new law requires more detailed input with households who previously were not considered to be a priority and over a longer period of time. The HRA requires Councils to undertake a thorough assessment of an applicant's circumstances, including the needs of all household members, and provide a personalised response, including a personalised housing plan of the steps they need to take to resolve their housing problem. This assessment takes into account the cause of homelessness, considers what accommodation is suitable and what support would be necessary to help the household sustain accommodation. There are a number of required notifications throughout the process and the applicant has the right of review of each of them.

3.51 The new Act introduced a duty to refer, which encourages Councils to joint work to prevent and resolve homelessness. Under the new legislation organisations such as hospitals and prisons are required to make referrals (with the person's consent) to the appropriate housing authority if someone appears to be homeless or threatened with homelessness and this aspect of partnership working will be considered further under priority 3: More effective together.

3.52 As a consequence of this legislation the Council has purchased new software to ensure efficient data capture; however this software may require further upgrading. It will be an action point in this strategy to explore this and to build the finance into the Council's budgets to purchase the latest version if necessary.

3.53 Another impact arising from this legislation is that more people will require an assessment and at an earlier stage; this will impact on the Council's staff resources. To meet this increased demand, the Council's organisation-wide transformation under Customer First has been designed to enable rapid, effective and focussed assessment of all cases where people are homeless or threatened with homelessness. This will be achieved by differentiating between straightforward matters, which will be handled by caseworkers, and cases where needs are more complex, which will be handled by experienced housing specialists. This arrangement will enable the housing specialists to take the time needed to work with those who are more vulnerable. To ensure there is consistency in the quality of work undertaken, template assessment forms have been designed, with standard letters which will also assist in facilitating assessments.

Actions:

- Review and if necessary upgrade the software in place for managing homelessness activity and by the end of this strategy, seek to integrate it with the Council's organisation wide CRM system.
- Develop efficient workflows, knowledge articles and training to enable the Customer First model for delivering services to be successful.
- Monitor the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and any impacts.

The Gold Standard Programme

3.54 The Gold Standard programme is an accreditation framework designed to enable Councils to achieve continuous improvements in their homelessness service through a process of peer support.

3.55 An application for accreditation under the programme begins with a peer assessment of the Council's homelessness service using the programmes toolkit by two partner authorities. Providing the peer assessment reaches the required standard, the Council can then apply for assessment against a framework of ten local challenges, which were initially set out in the government report *Making Every Contact Count*¹⁶ as follows:

1. Adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services.
2. Actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs.
3. Offer a Housing Options prevention service, including written advice, to all clients.
4. Adopt a *No Second Night Out* model or an effective local alternative.
5. Have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support.
6. Develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both clients and landlords.
7. Actively engage in preventing mortgage reposessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme.
8. Have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs.
9. Not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation.
10. Not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks.

3.56 If a Council can evidence all 10 challenges have been achieved, then Gold accreditation can be applied for but it is not a requirement to apply for Gold status at the outset; many authorities can only deliver some of the challenges and see the award of Gold accreditation as a journey, staircasing upwards from bronze or silver accreditation.

3.57 As it is a nationally recognised quality assurance accreditation, Authorities who have attained "Gold Standard" are identified as having excellent early intervention and homelessness prevention services. Working towards accreditation under this initiative demonstrates the Council's firm commitment to preventing homelessness, to providing excellent customer care and to adhering to best practice. Accreditation under this scheme would also help support any bids for funding that may arise, giving greater credibility to any bid we may make.

3.58 A key milestone achieved under the previous Strategy was securing a peer assessment with a sufficient score to consider applying for a level of accreditation under the standard. However, due to the preparations required for Customer First and the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, it has not been possible to take this forward.

Action:

- Review the peer assessment and explore the merit in achieving a level of accreditation under the Gold Standard.

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-every-contact-count-a-joint-approach-to-preventing-homelessness>

Summary of actions:

- Support the objectives in the Housing Strategy that facilitate the delivery of more affordable housing.
- Seek to increase access to the private rented sector by:
 - Consulting with private landlords about the barriers they perceive with regard to working with the Council and accepting a tenant on a low income or benefits;
 - Reaching out to private landlords' fora to see if it is possible to create opportunities for partnership working;
 - Evaluating incentives to encourage private landlords to rent their properties to homeless people which link to private sector regulatory activity;
 - Identifying the support households may need when taking on the responsibility of a tenancy and exploring the viability of developing a scheme to deliver this;
 - Evaluating the options for creating a council lettings agency, investing in private sector leasing or other vehicle to make private rental properties available to homeless households;
 - Providing rent deposit schemes for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- Work with Social Services to identify young people who are considered to be edge of care, in care and leaving care who are at risk of homelessness.
- Undertake home visits where a young person is being excluded from parents/main carer.
- Identify the opportunities to work more closely with schools regarding education on housing and homelessness issues.
- Explore the possibility of undertaking a pilot scheme of converting one property above a shop into HMO accommodation.
- Raise awareness and develop effective pathways for victims and perpetrators of adolescent to parent violence and abuse.
- Work closely with the Council's Policy, Projects and Performance Team on matters regarding domestic abuse.
- Participate in the local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings.
- Refer appropriate cases to ESDAS for help and support.
- Appoint a Domestic Abuse Champion in Resident Support Services.
- Ensure staff receive relevant training on domestic abuse matters.
- Prevent homelessness by offering a Sanctuary Scheme.
- Provide an in-house money advice service.
- Undertake research to identify levels of in work poverty in the district.
- Identify opportunities to provide money advice to both private and social housing tenants.
- Identify opportunities for joint commissioning services which alleviate debt and associated stress to promote wellbeing.

- Review and explore upgrading the software in place for managing homelessness activity and seek to integrate it with the Council's organisation wide CRM system.
- Develop efficient workflows, knowledge articles and training to enable the Customer First model for delivering services to be successful.
- Monitor the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and any associated impacts.
- Review the peer assessment and explore the merit in achieving a level of accreditation under the Gold Standard.

Priority 3: More effective together

Developing strong integrated partnerships.

Introduction

3.59 The complexity of the interrelating factors that lead to people becoming homeless are such that no one agency can solve homelessness alone. As a community leader, the Council has a critical role in bringing together organisations that can influence the attainment of better, more positive outcomes for homeless households and help create the synergy that can be achieved through joint working and joint commissioning. For example, becoming homeless means more than just losing your home. It is often linked to the breakdown of personal and social relationships and moving away from social networks and connections which can lead to homeless people becoming marginalised and socially isolated. Being socially isolated has a direct negative impact on physical health and wellbeing and can lead to increased reliance on other alcohol or drugs to cope, as well as a worsening of mental health and a greater risk of self harm.

3.60 Working together with other agencies and support providers and making referrals in an integrated way can provide a life line for homeless people, giving them regular contact with someone with a genuine interest in their circumstances with whom they are able to talk and connect with in a meaningful way, rather than just providing a transactional interaction with someone about the practicalities of arranging temporary accommodation or making an appointment.

3.61 To deliver the actions in this Strategy, the Council will seek to identify organisations and individuals to work in partnership with who can:

Shape and influence

3.62 Stakeholders such as the voluntary sector, statutory agencies, teams within the Council and other boards and groups who can help the Council increase its understanding of homelessness, its causes and impacts and who can work alongside the Council to influence issues, decisions and services to minimise the risks of homelessness and to help manage risks when homelessness does occur. This will also include service users.

Help the Council manage performance

3.63 Organisations, teams and other groups who can help the Council manage its performance in achieving the key outcomes that support our aim of reducing homelessness and rough sleeping.

Enhance service provision, achieving multiple aims

3.64 Those who provide services directly to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, who can achieve greater impact by working alongside the Council and can help us implement the actions identified in the action plan for this strategy.

Duty to refer

3.65 Under the Homelessness Reduction Act, public authorities now have a duty to refer to the relevant Council anyone they consider to be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days, providing the individual consents to their referral. However, where there are safeguarding concerns, referrals can still be made without consent.

3.66 Not all organisations are bound by this new duty to refer someone to the Council but any agency can make a referral about anyone who they consider may be homeless or threatened with homelessness, providing they have their consent.

- 3.67 Some people however, will need additional support to engage with the Council regarding their housing problem and the Council will work with other agencies to provide this. One way of ensuring this additional support is in place is by including extra information on the referral.
- 3.68 The Council has developed an online referral process and an action point in this Strategy will be to monitor its effectiveness.

Actions:

- Promote awareness of the duty to refer and monitor outcomes from referrals;
- Promote and review the effectiveness of the ALERT referral software.

Homelessness forum

- 3.69 An action point under this Strategy will be to explore the re-introduction of a local homelessness forum which will bring together any individual or organisation who works with homeless people. The aim of the forum is help the Council increase its understanding of homelessness in the district and its impact, to provide an opportunity for networking and information sharing, for the members of the forum to work together to shape and influence the development and delivery of services for homeless people and to have a lobbying role on matters of mutual interest relating to homelessness. It should be easy for anyone to join the forum and the Council will explore how an on line sign up process can be introduced.

Action:

- Relaunch the local Homelessness Forum.

JobCentre plus

- 3.70 There is no JobCentre Plus in the district and this presents a significant challenge for residents who need to attend the JobCentre to meet with their work coach, in terms of cost and ease of travel, particularly when relying on public transport in what is a very rural district. An action point for this strategy will be to explore the possibility of co-location with JobCentre plus services; perhaps an outreach surgery could be offered from the Council offices on a weekly basis.

Action:

- Explore and actively work towards the possible co-location of some Job Centre Plus activities with Council services

Health

- 3.71 Both Health and Housing Authorities are working to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals by alleviating the impact of poverty wherever possible. There is much synergy to be achieved from this Council working even more closely with The Health Service to improve the wellbeing of individuals and to prevent homelessness. The Council views the new NHS Long Term Plan as an opportunity to secure joint commissioning and to achieve positive outcomes for its residents in terms of improvements in health, wellbeing and the reduction of homelessness and it will be an action point in this Strategy to explore opportunities to work with Health, through the local Health and Wellbeing Board over the life of this strategy.
- 3.72 The Council has an active role in the local Health and Wellbeing Board. Through our membership of this group, the Council will work to encourage NHS and Public Health to incorporate homelessness prevention work within the services they commission for groups known to be at more risk of homelessness. This will extend the Council's reach and help prevent homelessness and to maximise health and wellbeing gains, ensuring children have a healthy start, adults are able to be as independent as possible and to reduce health inequality.

Action:

- Participate in the local Health and Wellbeing board to promote better health outcomes for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Help with getting into work

Ethos

3.73 The Ethos Project works with people who need support with getting into work for the first time or who want to return to the workplace after a period out of work. This is an important way of maximising people's income who are perhaps affected by the benefit cap, as employment of 16 hours a week exempts claimants from the cap and helps to address issues of debt. For many, returning to work after a break or starting work for the first time can be a big step and people often feel they have no skills to offer an employer. Ethos helps people to identify their skills, as well as training or education needed to help people find employment and support them on their journey into work for as long as they need help. Going forward, the Council would like to explore linking the support Ethos offers with the possibility of encouraging Jobcentre plus to operate an outreach service in the district, linking these two services up with the Council's in-house money advice. The continued roll out of Universal Credit may provide an effective rationale for this.

Pathway to Employment - Raven

3.74 The Council also works alongside Raven Housing Trust's Pathway to Employment Scheme. This scheme, jointly funded with funding from the European Social Fund and National Lottery provides support to help people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to secure employment. The project aims to remove barriers that exist and prevent individuals from finding and maintaining work, by offering 1:1 support with a personal employment advisor, workshops, counselling and support, online support and training, support with childcare, confidence building, stress management, job search skills, volunteering and work placements, physical well-being courses, financial management, access to job clubs and in work support.

Action:

- Prevent homelessness by helping to maximise household income through ensuring access to employment support.

Temporary Accommodation

3.75 The Council operates a hostel with an on-site warden for homeless families and works in partnership with Health Visitors from Surrey's 0 – 19 Nursing Team to ensure the health and wellbeing of pregnant women and children living there. This is a very effective partnership which safeguards vulnerable people and helps bring together relevant agencies to work around families and provide support.

3.76 In addition to the support provided by health visitors, the Council also benefits from a partnership with Parashoot who provide housing related support. Where appropriate, referrals are made to Parashoot for residents in temporary accommodation for assistance with, for example, claiming benefits or getting a new home set up.

3.77 The Council also works in partnership with Raven Housing Trust which provides temporary accommodation on behalf of the Council. The Council entered into a partnership with Raven because it was committed to improving the quality of temporary accommodation, which historically was not purpose built and required intensive management to support the residents to avoid issues such as anti social behaviour for the local community. Raven constructed two new schemes of temporary accommodation for the Council in 2006.

3.78 The Council is deeply committed to avoiding the use of bed and breakfast housing wherever possible, except in an absolute emergency. Where there are no alternative options to bed and breakfast, the Council will not use bed and breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks.

Actions:

- Avoid the use of bed and breakfast housing as much as possible and use only in cases of emergency.
- Operate a hostel for homeless households to minimise the use of B&B.
- Work alongside Parashoot floating support to ensure that those living in temporary accommodation or who are threatened with homelessness get the advice and support they need to prevent eviction and continue living in their home.
- Work alongside health visitors at the Council's hostel to ensure the wellbeing of families with children and to help them build capacity and capability to be independent of services in future.

Children's Centres

3.79 Surrey County Council have identified that in the Tandridge area, there are fewer children of the qualifying age (0 – 5) living in low income households which use Children's Centre services and on this basis a decision has been made to close all the Children's Centres in the district but Caterham and replace them with a different type of outreach provision targeted at only the most vulnerable families. This means that the wider support Children Centres provided to support all families was no longer to be available, such as providing somewhere for parents with young children to go to meet and access support across a range of issues such as help with breastfeeding, support with postnatal depression, access to money advice and help with housing. Historically, the Council's Homelessness service has worked closely with Children Centres as many families living in temporary accommodation or in bad housing use their services and by working together better outcomes can be achieved for children at risk earlier and at a cheaper cost than dealing with entrenched problems that are more significant later.

3.80 The Council is extremely concerned about this loss of provision in the district and the negative impact it will have on the ability of all agencies to work together to prevent homelessness. The Council is committed to working in partnership with Surrey County Council to help shape the new service model, to ensure that it meets the needs of local people and to enable the Council to consider tendering for the new contract once it has been determined or to join with another Council to jointly provide it, particularly as the Tandridge area has one of the highest levels of young people aged under 16, living in low income households across Surrey.

Actions:

- To define the Council's future role in delivering services that are currently offered by Children's Centres.

Rough Sleeping

3.81 Historically, the Tandridge district has had relatively few instances where individuals have needed to sleep rough and, over recent years, numbers have stayed very low, remaining in low single figures. However, preventing the need for anyone to have to sleep rough is a priority area for the Council.

3.82 Each year the Council works in partnership with organisations, agencies and teams right across the District, relying on these partners to be the Council's eyes and ears by providing details of any rough sleepers that they may have come across in the course of their work. This enables the Council to provide an accurate estimate for the number of rough sleepers in the District.

3.83 The Council has a strong partnership with Renewed Hope Trust, which provides a "floating" winter night shelter, hosted in various venues across Tandridge District and Reigate & Banstead. The winter night shelter is a service that runs from early December until the end of March each year for any single people who would otherwise have to sleep rough and offers up to 12 crash pads (emergency mattress on the floor).

3.84 The winter night shelter enables the Council to provide a robust service under its Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP). This is a life-saving service, providing a warm place to sleep, food and access to other types of support and healthcare if required when the temperature is 0°C or below for

three consecutive nights. However, in reality the Council will usually initiate SWEP arrangement, on a lower threshold, when the actual temperature is 0°C for a single night or the 'feels like' temperature is 0°C or below for three consecutive nights. If trigger temperatures are reached outside the night shelter's period of operation, the Council will ensure that other arrangements are in place for the provision of emergency accommodation to enable rough sleepers to come in from the cold.

3.85 In recent years the Council has benefited from a very successful partnership with East Surrey Outreach Service (eSOS) which provide a responsive outreach assistance to anyone who is known to be rough sleeping in the District. The service operates on a "No second night out model" ensuring that:

- New rough sleepers can be identified and helped off the streets immediately;
- The public can alert services if they see anyone sleeping rough so they get help;
- Rough sleepers can go to a place of safety, where their needs can be assessed and they can get help;
- Rough sleepers are able to get emergency accommodation and other services they need; and
- Rough sleepers from outside the area can be reconnected with their community, where they can be near family and friends, and can get housing and support.

3.86 The service operates by offering advice and support, helping people to engage with services for substance misuse and mental health. As well as having access to some designated emergency bed spaces at Leatherhead Start (a specialist supported housing scheme), they also make referrals to longer term supported housing or hostels. eSOS works by befriending people and then developing an individual resettlement or support plan that is agreed with the person. The service has recently been re-tendered and from 13 May 2019 has been run by Thames Reach, an organisation that has very extensive experience of providing specialist homelessness outreach services across London. An action point under this Strategy is to review this partnership to ensure that both the Council and eSOS are happy with current working arrangements and that they are fit for purpose for the future.

3.87 It is apparent that, across the East Surrey area, there has been an increase in the number of people, who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping, with complex needs such as high-risk offending history, multiple substance misuse and severe mental health issues, becoming known to Council Homelessness Prevention Services. Furthermore, Such clients regularly present with a combination of these issues. One issue that has been seen more recently is unplanned discharge without notification from prisons and hospitals

3.88 The amount of current outreach support resources that are available makes it very difficult to secure accommodation with providers as they will often decline complex needs clients due to the high level of support they need. Due to current cases loads Homeless Prevention Officers do not have the time to work intensively with those that have complex needs. Nor are they, necessarily, best placed or sufficiently skilled to deliver this area of work.

3.89 It is considered that the situation could be improved if it was possible to guarantee a support package lead by specialist outreach workers. These Specialist Outreach Workers (Navigators) would provide quicker and smarter outreach work with the more complex need cases. The navigators would work with the most complex clients in the region, those who had been assessed by eSOS as having 2 support needs and whose offer of a route away from the streets is likely.

Actions:

- Review the effectiveness of services provided to people who sleep rough to ensure continuous improvement and compliance with legislation, policy and best practice.
- Along with the other East Surrey authorities, explore opportunities for creating one or more navigator posts within eSOS to enhance work with complex needs clients.
- Along with the other East Surrey authorities and other appropriate partners, develop a bid to the Move On Fund with the aim of securing funding to improve move-on arrangements from emergency housing.

Working with people with complex needs

Family Resilience and Family Safeguarding

3.90 The Council works closely with Surrey County Council to prevent homelessness and to help vulnerable families achieve positive outcomes, many of which are threatened with homelessness due to anti-social behaviour. Surrey County Council has recently undertaken a wide-ranging review of its Early Help and Social Work models and launched the Family Resilience service to replace Early Help and Family Safeguarding as the new Social Work Model.

A critical part of this work has been to create one 'front door' through which all requests for support are channelled to ensure that families receive timely support to enable them to overcome difficulties and become more resilient so that they can manage future life challenges independently.

The Family Support Programme across the County continues to form a crucial part of this work and aims to:

- keep their homes and to understand their responsibilities as tenants;
- help families to settle into a community;
- nurture and raise their children;
- reduce the number of clients not in education, employment or training and;
- improve their health and well-being

Action:

- Work with Surrey County Council's "one front door" framework to maximise opportunities to prevent homelessness for vulnerable families and adults.
- To develop further the close working relationship between homelessness prevention activity and Family Resilience and Family Support Services.

Other complex needs – including substance misuse, mental health and dual diagnosis

3.91 Housing solutions for people with complex needs are difficult to identify. This type of homelessness is also known as "Multiple Exclusion Homelessness" and refers to people who have experience of temporary/unsuitable accommodation as well as sleeping rough, and have also experienced one or more of the following domains of deep social exclusion: institutional care (prison, local authority care, mental health units); substance misuse (drug, alcohol, solvent/gas misuse) or participation in street culture activities (begging, street drinking, "survival shoplifting" or sex work). Due to the complexities of an individual's needs, there are serious risks of them falling through the cracks in service provision and resolving this requires an integrated response across health, housing and social care professionals.

3.92 In Surrey, a Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat has been developed which is an agreement between services and agencies involved in the care and support of people in crisis. Many agencies who come into contact or provide services for those with mental illness have signed up to the Concordat via the Surrey Declaration and Action Plan to enable the better delivery of shared goals to meet the needs of those with mental illness who experience crises. This can include those who are entrenched street homeless or those living in unsuitable housing conditions, such as hoarders, who are not engaging with treatment.

3.93 Local Authorities and in particular housing services do not currently form part of this agreement. This Strategy identifies a need to extend this partnership working to include housing services to help deliver the expectations of the Concordat and its supporting delivery plan to make sure people get

access to the help they need. Involving Housing can help prevent homelessness, design effective pathways to get people off the streets, help people be rehoused effectively and appropriately, reduce bed blocking in acute psychiatric wards, safeguard the welfare of those with mental illness and improve the patient experience.

- 3.94 Historically, each agency has undertaken its own assessment of the individual's needs and has set its own objectives for care and support but there is a need, in these complex cases for a different response to the norm, and for a joint assessment to be undertaken with all relevant agencies coming together and a joint personalised plan created for housing and support, which is committed to and delivered upon.
- 3.95 An action point under this strategy is to explore with relevant partners, the creation of a formal joint assessment process for individuals with complex needs and to explore jointly creating a protocol for such working.

Action:

- To explore with relevant partners, the creation of a formal joint assessment process for individuals with complex needs and to explore jointly creating a protocol for such working.

Discharge from hospital

- 3.96 It is known that some people are forced to stay in hospital longer than is necessary because of a problem with the suitability of their home, leaving them effectively homeless or alternatively, they have a complete lack of a home and that this places an increased burden on an already pressurised NHS.
- 3.97 An action point to be explored under this strategy is to investigate whether a hospital discharge protocol can be developed and to determine what funding may be identified to assist with its delivery, enabling the Council to better assist those with housing problems in hospital. It is critical that Housing is involved at as early a stage as possible and that hospitals are able to recognise the value this Council can add to ensure the best outcomes are identified for individuals.
- 3.98 If such a protocol can be agreed and put in place with hospital multidisciplinary teams, it would help considerably with preventing repeat admissions and would support local hospitals when experiencing a "black alert", a serious incident meaning that the NHS is under severe pressure and cannot deliver comprehensive emergency care and that decisive action is needed to restore the hospital's capacity and ensure patient safety.

Action:

- Investigate whether a hospital discharge protocol can be developed to support the discharge of individuals who have no home or who are effectively homeless as their current home is unsuitable.

Supported Housing

- 3.99 The Council works with a wide range of people with complex needs, the most challenging people to work with being those with the multiple needs of substance misuse, mental health and physical illness. Creative ways forward need to be identified in partnership with colleagues from other organisations to safeguard individual wellbeing and often traditional solutions do not work long term, requiring agencies to come up with flexible and new ways approaching housing.
- 3.100 The district has a good provision of supported housing for those suffering with mental illness but must refer out of district for other types of supported housing. This can be difficult for the individual concerned, being moved into a supportive environment in an area they are unfamiliar with is not easy, although the Council retains a commitment to house them within the Tandridge area at the point where they are ready to move on into independent housing.
- 3.101 Few schemes offer 24hr residential support with most offering support during the daytime only.

Action:

- Work closely with supported housing providers to refer people as appropriate and to liaise closely to minimise problems with supported housing tenancies when they arise.

Parashoot

3.102 Parashoot is a free support service available to anyone who lives in the Tandridge district who is threatened with homelessness or is homeless and is delivered by Raven Housing Trust. It is a service open to all, single people, families and older people, and they are able to support people who have a wide range of additional needs including substance misuse and mental illness. Parashoot provides housing related support at the Council's owned and managed Hostel but they also provide this support to anyone living in the Tandridge district.

3.103 Access is via referral only and individuals cannot self-refer. Multiple agencies refer to this support service, including the Council, a person's GP or Adult Social Care.

Action:

- To prevent homelessness by ensuring the provision of floating housing related support in the district.

Citizens Advice

3.104 The Council has provided grant funding to Citizens Advice for many years which is managed by a Service Level Agreement which is reviewed annually due to the uncertainty of funding going forward. The Council highly values its joint working relationship with Citizens Advice and recognises the importance of the independent advocacy role Citizens Advice provides.

3.105 As part of the review of establishing where the front line of the Homelessness and Advice function lies, an action point under this strategy is to work together with Citizens Advice on this and to develop an appendix to the Service Level Agreement which reports on outcomes of housing advice provided to further establish the added value that Citizens Advice provides to residents of the district.

Action:

- Work alongside Citizens Advice.
- Revise the Service Level Agreement to include reporting on Housing outcomes.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

3.106 A key partnership which is effective in preventing homelessness is the partnership between the Housing Options work and Housing Benefit Service, both of which have been combined more closely under the Customer First transformation programme into Resident Support.

3.107 The Council can grant a DHP when it decides that someone needs extra help above their Housing Benefit (HB) entitlement or relevant award of Universal Credit (UC) to meet a shortfall between their HB or UC housing costs element and their rent. DHPs are currently funded through an annual grant from Government.

3.108 DHP is used to promote tenancy sustainment, to enable the Council to discharge its homelessness duties and to safeguard residents in their home by tackling hardship. It is a valuable tool for softening the impact of welfare reform policies, enabling the applicant to have some additional time to take action to improve their circumstances by for example, securing work or moving to smaller accommodation.

Action:

- Work in partnership to administer DHP to ensure opportunities to prevent homelessness are maximised.

Private landlords

3.109 The actions set out under Priority 2 of this Strategy to explore new ways the Council can work with private landlords highlights the importance of this developing partnership.

3.110 Developing this partnership with landlords has to be mutually beneficial to all parties for it to be successful and it will require a whole Council approach. The aim of this strategy is to develop a suite of options that landlords would find attractive in exchange for enabling the Council to fulfil its statutory duties to homeless people.

Action:

- Evaluate the development of incentives to encourage private landlords to rent their properties to homeless people which link to private sector supervisory activity;

Probation

3.111 While some offenders leaving prison do present themselves to the Council on the day of release, this can be as a result of an individual's reluctance to confirm they are homeless in case this impacts on their release. Prison inspection reports released by HM Inspector of prisons show that around a quarter of offenders have concerns about housing on entering prison and charities such as St Giles Trust and St Mungo's provide advice on housing in prisons and these charities support ex offenders to approach the Council when necessary.

3.112 More generally, the Council works closely with Probation and recognises that an integrated approach to housing offenders is the most effective way to prevent reoffending and prevent further rough sleeping. Where necessary, the Council works to a housing pathway of referring ex offenders to supported housing and on into independent accommodation when ready, as well as signposting them to other agencies who can provide assistance and support.

Action:

- To work with Probation to ensure that ex offenders can secure appropriate housing and can access the advice and support they need.

Brexit

3.113 The impact of the vote in 2016 to leave the European Union remains unknown but there does remain great uncertainty about the future. This strategy aims to highlight some of the potential issues that could impact upon homelessness in this District dependant on the United Kingdom's future relationship with the European Union.

3.114 There are schemes that operate in the District which are funded via EU funding which assist individuals back into work who have perhaps not worked for a long time or have never worked. Getting into work helps prevent homelessness and can mitigate the impact of other welfare reforms such as the benefit cap. For example, where households who are affected by the benefit cap secure employment of 16 hours a week or more they become exempt from the cap on their benefits, bringing more money into the household and alleviating issues of debt and child poverty. Whether these "back to work" schemes can continue without EU funding is unknown.

3.115 There is a potential risk for the migration of construction skills from Britain having left the European Union which could impact on how quickly new homes can be built, affecting supply. A small step of trying to ensure that there is some mechanism in place, the Council has made a commitment in its Housing Strategy to ensure wherever possible, there are apprenticeship opportunities in any new schemes the Council builds.

Action:

- Monitor the progression of Brexit and identify any implications relating to homelessness for this Council.

Summary of actions:

- Promote awareness of the duty to refer and monitor outcomes from referrals;
- Promote the use of the ALERT referral software.
- Relaunch the local Homelessness Forum.
- Explore and actively work towards the possible co-location of some Job Centre Plus activities with Council services.
- Participate in the local Health and Wellbeing board to promote better health outcomes for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- Prevent homelessness by helping to maximise household income through ensuring access to employment support.
- Avoid the use of bed and breakfast housing as much as possible and only use in cases of emergency.
- Operate a hostel for homeless households to minimise use of B&B's.
- Prevent homelessness by ensuring the provision of floating housing related support in the district.
- Ensure the wellbeing of families with children living at the Council's Hostel and help them build capacity and capability to be independent of services in future by working alongside Health Visitors.
- To define the Council's future role in delivering services that are currently offered by Children's Centres.
- Review the effectiveness of services provided to people who sleep rough to ensure continuous improvement and compliance with legislation, policy and best practice.
- Develop further the close working relationship between homelessness prevention activity and the work of the Family Support Team.
- To explore with relevant partners, the creation of a formal joint assessment process for individuals with complex needs and to explore jointly creating a protocol for such working.
- Work closely with supported housing providers to refer people as appropriate and to liaise closely to minimise problems with supported housing tenancies when they arise.
- Work alongside Citizens Advice and revise the Service Level Agreement to include reporting on housing outcomes.
- Prevent homelessness by working in partnership to administer DHP to ensure opportunities to prevent homelessness are maximised.
- Evaluate the development of incentives to encourage private landlords to rent their properties to homeless people which link to private sector regulatory activity.

Action Plan

Priority 1 Spread the word	Aim: To raise awareness of the help and support available.				
Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
Research where people go for help before approaching the Council for assistance to enable improved targeting of promotional material and advice and explore options for mystery shopping to continue to improve service delivery.	Resident Support (R. S.) Lead Specialist Resident Support (R. S.) Specialists Customer Services	Housing Project Board	End of 2021	Identified within current staff resources	New opportunities are identified to communicate information about the help available. Effective referral pathways are developed. People experiencing housing problems can access advice at the earliest opportunity.
Use Mosaic data to understand demographic and behavioural trends and preferences in service user communication and identify new ways of communicating with customers. This could include a Tandridge Housing app, chat bots or Skype for Business.	Specialist Services Manager R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	End of 2022	The potential development of software may require funding to be built into Council budgets otherwise will be within current identified staff resources	A greater variety of different ways of interacting with customers are explored and implemented, improving the accessibility of the service.
Contribute towards the development of the Council's Digital Strategy.	Head of Communications & Customer Experience Specialist Services Manager R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	By the end of the life of the strategy	Within existing staff resources	Homeless people are able to access the help and support they need on line where appropriate for them to do so.

Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
Review the housing advice and information area on the website and explore the use of explainer clips.	Head of Communications & Customer Experience R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	By the end of the life of the strategy	Mainly within identified staff costs with the potential for some software costs that need to be built into the Council's budget.	Homeless people are able to access the help and support they need online where appropriate for them to do so.
Develop the housing advice and information literature that is available by using behavioural insights to achieve service improvements, efficiencies and improved outcomes for homeless people.	Head of Communications & Customer Experience R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists Case Services Team Leaders Case officers	Housing Project Board	By the end of the life of the strategy	Within identified staff costs	People with housing problems are given effective information about housing and the help that is available.
Introduce motivational interviewing for relevant staff.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board		Within existing resources	A person centred approach is taken with homeless people with complex needs to empower them to effect positive change in their lives and engage with the help available.
Ensure the Resident Support Service works more effectively with the in-house Communications Team to use marketing campaigns to promote different aspects of the service.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Any costs associated with increased marketing activity will need to be built into the Council's budget.	Greater awareness of the help and support available with housing exists across the District.

Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
Ensure partnerships are working effectively to promote the service and explore new ways of working with new partners to promote the service to a wider range of people, for example, by working closely with Health.	Director of People R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within identified staff costs	Synergy and value for money is achieved through partnership working which prevents homelessness and achieves good outcomes for vulnerable people.
Collate various data, including website analytics to determine the efficacy of the information provided regarding housing options.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within identified staff costs	The information and advice is ensured as being high quality and effective.
Build closer relationships with LGBTIQ+ services operating in the district and work with them through the relaunched Homelessness Forum to explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of training for staff on LGBTIQ+ issues and awareness; • Revisiting wording on diversity data collection questionnaires and exploring ways to encourage greater disclosure in the future; • Exploring what visible signs of inclusion the Council could use in the way services are delivered. 	Specialist Manager R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists Head of Communications and Customer Experience	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	Changes implemented by 2022. Then ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within identified staff resource and budget	Services provided are welcoming, safe and inclusive. People who identify as LGBTIQ+ feel able to declare their identification for diversity monitoring purposes to enable tailored support to be delivered. The Council is compliant with statutory Equality Act duties.

Priority 2 What works	Aim: Identifying the top causes of homelessness and developing outcome focussed, innovative housing solutions
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Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
Support the objectives in the Housing Strategy that facilitate the delivery of more affordable housing.	Director of People Specialist Services Manager R. S. Lead Specialist Housing Development Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within identified staff resources	Opportunities to deliver affordable housing to rent and to buy are maximised.
Consult with private landlords about the barriers they perceive about working with the Council and accepting a tenant on benefits.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	By end 2023	Within identified staff resources	Access to the private rented sector is increased, particularly for households claiming benefits. Opportunities to prevent homelessness are maximised.
Reach out to private landlords' fora to see if it is possible to create opportunities for partnership working.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	By end 2023	Within identified staff resources	Access to the private rented sector is increased, particularly for households claiming benefits. Opportunities to prevent homelessness are maximised.
Evaluate additional incentives to encourage private landlords to rent their properties to homeless people which link with private sector regulatory activity.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	By end 2023	Primarily within existing budgets but may need to be built into the Council budget.	Access to the private rented sector is increased, particularly for households claiming benefits. Opportunities to prevent homelessness are maximised.

Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
Identify the support households may need when taking on the responsibility of a tenancy and exploring the viability of developing a scheme to deliver this.	Specialist Services Manager R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	By end 2023	Funding a new project may require grant funding or to be built into Council budgets	Access to the private rented sector is increased, particularly for households claiming benefits. Opportunities to prevent homelessness are maximised. The risk of early tenancy failure is mitigated.
Evaluate options for creating a Council lettings Agency, investing in private sector leasing or other vehicle to make private rental properties available to homeless households. This includes exploring working with the Council's Housing Company to do this.	R. S. Lead Specialist Lead Housing Development Specialist R. S. Specialists Case Services Team Leaders Case Officers	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing budgets but future growth may be needed to be built into Council budget to meet increased demand	Access to the private rented sector is increased, particularly for households claiming benefits. Opportunities to prevent homelessness are maximised. Standards of rented housing in the District are kept high.
Provide a rent in advance and rent deposit scheme for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.	R. S. Lead Specialist Lead Housing Development Specialist R. S. Specialists Case Services Team Leaders Case Officers	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing budgets but future growth may be needed to be built into Council budget to meet increased demand	Access to the private rented sector is increased, particularly for households claiming benefits. Opportunities to prevent homelessness are maximised. Standards of rented housing in the District are kept high.

Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
Contribute towards the development of the Council's Empty Homes Strategy to enable initiatives that provide a return on the Council's investment to improve properties and which benefit homeless households.	Director of People Head of Strategy R. S. Lead Specialist Housing Development Lead Specialist Strategy Specialists R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	Strategy to be in place by end 2021	Within existing budgets	The estimated target set in the Housing Strategy of 20 homes a year is tested to determine whether it is viable and achievable. Steps are in place to bring empty properties in the District back into use. The possibility of linking empty properties returned to use with other Council initiatives such as preventing homelessness is explored and the viability established.
Provide Home Improvement Loans of up to £5,000 to alleviate serious disrepair.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing budgets	Homelessness due to serious disrepair in owner occupied properties is prevented.
Review the Council's approach to identifying fraud and allegations for fraud in Council property.	Specialist Services Manager R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	By end of 2022	Mainly within internal staff resources but some specialist fraud investigation expertise will also be required and will need to be built into the Council's budgets.	The Council's Housing Stock is effectively utilised, maximising the availability of social housing to rent.
Work with Social Services to identify young people who are edge of care, in care and leaving care who are at risk of homelessness.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within identified existing staff resources	Homelessness for young, vulnerable people is prevented and they are housed in suitable supported housing, until ready to be rehoused through the housing register.

Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
Undertake home visits where a young person is being excluded from the parents/main carers home or from the home of friend or other relative.	R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within identified existing staff resources	Opportunities to mediate and negotiate a return home are maximised. Homelessness is prevented for young vulnerable people. The rehousing of young people is managed in a safe, planned way.
Identify ways to work more closely with schools regarding education on housing and homelessness.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	To commence by 2022 and then ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within identified existing staff resources	Young people receive information and advice about housing, so they can plan their futures appropriately and avoid homelessness.
Evaluate the undertaking of a pilot scheme to convert properties above shops into HMO accommodation, targeting multiple outcomes regarding the condition of the private sector housing stock, bringing an empty property back into use and preventing homelessness.	Director of People R. S. Lead Specialist Head of Strategic Asset Management Lead Housing Development Specialist Housing Development Specialist	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	By end 2023	Some existing identified staff resource but funding the construction work for this pilot project will need to be built into the Housing Company budget	A pilot scheme is undertaken to enable the effectiveness of the model to prevent homelessness, improve conditions in the private rented sector and provide a return on the Council's investment.
Raise awareness and develop effective pathways for victims and perpetrators of adolescent to parent violence and abuse.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	By end 2022	Within existing staff resources	The extent of APVA is explored and understood in the Tandridge District and a protocol is put in place as required.

Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
Work closely with the Council's Policy, Projects and Performance Team on matters regarding domestic abuse.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing staff resources	Knowledge and expertise regarding Domestic Abuse is shared and the Council follows good practice when delivering services to victims of Domestic Abuse.
Participate in the local MARAC meetings.	R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing staff resources	The safety of vulnerable people at risk of Domestic Abuse is prioritised.
Explore the appointment of a Domestic Abuse Champion in Resident Support Services.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	By 2021	Within existing staff resources	Knowledge and expertise regarding Domestic Abuse is shared and the Council follows good practice when delivering services to victims of Domestic Abuse. The safety of vulnerable people at risk of Domestic Abuse is prioritised.
Ensure staff receive training on Domestic Abuse matters.	Specialist Services Manager	Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing staff resources	Knowledge and expertise regarding Domestic Abuse is shared and the Council follows good practice when delivering services to victims of Domestic Abuse. The safety of vulnerable people at risk of Domestic Abuse is prioritised.
Offer a Sanctuary Scheme.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing resources	The safety of vulnerable people at risk of Domestic Abuse is prioritised.

Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
Provide an in-house money advice service and evaluate opportunities for joint commissioning of money advice to promote wellbeing by offering services that alleviate debt and associated stresses.	Specialist Services Manager R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	By end 2021	Internal resources to be identified Commissioning partner to be identified	Individual household incomes are maximised, preventing homelessness. Individual wellbeing is promoted by reducing stress and anxiety as a result of debt. Households experiencing financial stress receive the information and support they need in an effective way and at the earliest opportunity. Synergy and value for money are achieved through joint working.
Review the information available regarding Welfare Reform and how it is promoted.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	By 2021	Within existing resources	Households experiencing financial stress receive the information and support they need in an effective way and at the earliest opportunity.
Undertake research to identify levels of "in work poverty" in the District.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	By end 2021	Within existing resources	Appropriate schemes can be developed to meet the need of households in work but experiencing financial stress and who cannot afford day to day living expenses such as food, heating and housing.
Identify opportunities to provide money advice training to both private and social housing tenants.	Specialist Services Manager R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	By end 2022	Funding any new scheme would need to be built into Council budgets	Appropriate schemes can be developed to meet the need of households in work but experiencing financial stress and who cannot afford day to day living expenses such as food, heating and housing.

Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
Review and explore upgrading the software in place for managing homelessness activity and seek to integrate it with the Council's organisation wide CRM system.	Director of People Director of Resources Support Services Manager IT Lead Specialist Specialist Services Manager R. S. Lead Specialist	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	By the end of this strategy (2023)	Within existing resources but there may be a need to identify funding in future.	Efficiencies in ways of working are achieved. Synergy arising from the Customer First model can be effectively realised. Excellent customer services are provided for residents.
Develop efficient workflows, knowledge articles and training to enable the Customer First model for delivering services to be successful.	Specialist Services Manager R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	By end of 2022	Within existing resources	Efficiencies in ways of working are achieved. Synergy arising from the Customer First model can be effectively realised. Excellent customer services are provided for residents.
Monitor the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and any impacts.	Specialist Services Manager R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing resources	Effective horizon scanning takes place with impacts and challenges identified at the earliest opportunity and mitigation measures put in place.

Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
Review the peer assessment and explore the merit in achieving a level of accreditation under the Gold Standard.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	By end 2022	Within existing resources	The Gold Standard ensures that the services provided to residents are of the highest quality. Achieving recognition highlights the Council as an excellent provider of services to homelessness people.

Priority 3 More effective together	Aim: Developing strong integrated partnerships
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Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
Promote the awareness of the duty to refer and the ALERT referral software and evaluate effectiveness.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing resources	<p>The Council and partner agencies comply with their statutory duties.</p> <p>Any issues with organisations making referrals can be identified early and resolved.</p> <p>Households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness get the help they need at the earliest opportunity.</p>
Relaunch the Homelessness Forum.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	By end of 2019	Within existing resources	<p>Organisations are brought together to help the Council increase further its understanding of homelessness issues in the District.</p> <p>The opportunity to network and share best practice with partner agencies will exist.</p> <p>The group can shape and influence the delivery of services for homeless people.</p>
Explore and actively work towards the possible co-location of some JobCentre Plus activities with Council Services.	Director of People R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	By end of 2019	Within existing resources	<p>JobCentre Plus services will be available for the first time for residents in the District.</p> <p>Residents in the District have easier access to JobCentre Plus services, making it easier to comply with the requirements of their claimant's contracts.</p>

Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
Participate in the local Health and Wellbeing board to promote better health outcomes for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.	Director of People R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing resources	Opportunities for joint commissioning of services are identified that both prevent homelessness and meet better care outcomes.
Prevent homelessness by helping to maximise household income through ensuring access to employment support.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing resources.	The impact of welfare reform is mitigated as far as possible. Financial stress on households is alleviated and their wellbeing promoted. Extra support is available to help households who face additional barriers to securing work.
Avoid the use of bed and breakfast housing as much as possible and use only in cases of emergency.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing resources	PI's set by Housing Committee are met. The negative impacts of B&B on vulnerable adults and children are minimised and eliminated as quickly as possible. The Council is compliant with its statutory duty. Implementing the homelessness prevention measures set out in this strategy will contribute towards keeping use of Bed and Breakfast low.
Operate a hostel for homeless households to minimise the use of B&B.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing resources	Occupancy at the hostel is maximised effectively. The wellbeing of residents is promoted. Rents are collected efficiently through the operation of money advice, floating support and effective rent account management. Households are effectively moved on into alternative accommodation.

Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
Work alongside Parashoot floating support to ensure that those living in temporary accommodation or who are threatened with homelessness get the advice and support they need to prevent eviction and continue living in their home.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing resources	<p>Vulnerable households receive the support they need to maintain their tenancy.</p> <p>Rent arrears are managed and reduced.</p> <p>Vulnerable households are supported to access health services and are connected with the support of other agencies as necessary, for example, support with issues of domestic abuse.</p> <p>Households are assisted with moving on into alternative housing and settled into their new homes.</p> <p>Support is provided to avoid social isolation, improving the wellbeing of households.</p> <p>Safeguarding issues are identified and acted upon.</p>
Work alongside health visitors at the Council's hostel to ensure the wellbeing of families with children and to help them build capacity and capability to be independent of services in future.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the Strategy	Within existing resources	<p>Households who have experienced homelessness are enabled to access health services, removing inequality.</p> <p>Early identification of health issues prevents crises and reduces the number of visits to A&E.</p> <p>Information on healthy lifestyles is promoted.</p> <p>Safeguarding issues are identified and acted upon.</p>

Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
To define the Council's future role in delivering services that are currently offered by Children's Centres.	Chief Executive Director of People R. S. Lead Specialist	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	By end of 2019	Any additional funding will need to be built into the Council's budget.	Children centres provide essential services that promote and protect the wellbeing of young children and families. The Council is committed to finding ways to continue the provision of this support and help as early identification of issues helps to prevent crises and has a direct impact on preventing homelessness.
Review the effectiveness of services provided to people who sleep rough to ensure continuous improvement and compliance with legislation, policy and best practice.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	By end of 2019	Within existing budgets	<p>Effective face to face support is delivered to people who are rough sleeping to enable them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access medical support; • Access housing; • End social isolation; • Reduce anti-social behaviour • Rebuild lives.
Along with the other East Surrey authorities, explore opportunities for creating one or more navigator posts within eSOS to enhance work with complex needs clients.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	By end of 2019	Within existing budgets or through grant funding application	<p>Effective face to face support is delivered to people who are rough sleeping to enable them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access medical support; • Access housing; • End social isolation; • Reduce anti-social behaviour • Rebuild lives.

Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
Along with the other East Surrey authorities and other appropriate partners, develop a bid to the Move On Fund with the aim of securing funding to improve move-on arrangements from emergency housing.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists Lead Housing Development Specialist	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	By end of 2019	Within existing budgets and through grant funding applications.	Effective face to face support is delivered to people who are rough sleeping to enable them to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access medical support; • Access housing; • End social isolation; • Reduce anti-social behaviour • Rebuild lives.
To develop further the close working relationship with Family Resilience and Family Support Services.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing budgets	Safeguarding issues are effectively reported and responded to.
To explore with relevant partners, the creation of a formal joint assessment process for individuals with complex needs and to explore jointly creating a protocol for such working.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	By end of 2022	Within existing budgets	Housing is included in the multi-agency response to when a crisis occurs in individuals with complex needs. <p>Individuals with complex needs are housed appropriately, aiding their recovery and minimising risk.</p>
Investigate whether a hospital discharge protocol can be developed to support the discharge of individuals who have no home or who are effectively homeless as their current home is unsuitable.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	By end 2022	Within existing budgets	Housing is included in the multi-agency response to when a crisis occurs in individuals with complex needs. <p>Individuals with complex needs are housed appropriately, aiding their recovery and minimising risk.</p> <p>The Council assists the NHS as much as possible to alleviate bedblocking.</p>

Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
Work closely with supported housing providers to refer people as appropriate and to liaise closely to minimise problems with supported housing tenancies when they arise.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing budgets and identified staff resource	Vulnerable households receive the support they need to maintain their tenancy. Rent arrears are managed and reduced. Homelessness is prevented. Individuals are rehoused through the housing register when they are ready for independent living.
To prevent homelessness by ensuring the provision of floating housing related support in the district.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing budgets	Vulnerable households receive the support they need to maintain their tenancy, preventing homeless. Rent arrears are managed and reduced. Vulnerable households are supported to access health services and are connected with the support of other agencies as necessary, for example, support with issues of domestic abuse. Support is provided to avoid social isolation, improving the wellbeing of households. Safeguarding issues are identified and acted upon.
Work alongside Citizens Advice and revise the Service Level Agreement to include reporting on Housing outcomes.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing budgets	Value of money is obtained on the Council's grant to Citizens Advice. Households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness can obtain specialist advice.

Action	Who	Reported to	When	Resources	Outcome
Work in partnership to administer DHP to ensure opportunities to prevent homelessness are maximised.	R. S. Specialists Case Officers	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing staff resource and budgets	Emergency financial assistance is provided to qualifying households, easing financial stress and preventing homelessness. The Council's DHP budget is spent in full each year.
To work with Probation and Prison resettlement services which serve the district to ensure that ex-offenders can secure appropriate housing and can access the advice and support they need.	R. S. Lead Specialist R. S. Specialists	Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing staff resource and budgets	Ex-offenders are able to access the advice regarding housing that they need, reducing risks of re-offending.
Monitor the progression of Brexit and identify any implications relating to homelessness for this Council.	Director of People R. S. Lead Specialist	Housing Committee Housing Project Board	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Within existing staff resource	The Council complies with statutory responsibilities.

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