

7. Action Plan

This Action Plan will be reviewed, updated and refreshed biannually in the light of the progress made and the resources available.

Key

Blue – Action Completed

Green – Action on Track

Amber – Action Currently off Track but Recoverable

Red – Action off Target not Recoverable

Priority 1: - Prevention of Homelessness					
Objectives	By When	By Whom	Resources	Progress at November 2018	Actions Required
a) Ensure all organisations that have contacts with homeless persons are aware of the full range of services available in the Borough so they are able to make appropriate referrals.	April 2017	Housing Services	Staff Time	From 1 st October 2018 new 'Duty to Refer' legislation in place. Web update complete to notify key stakeholders of our new referral process. Registered with new IT 'Alert' system to facilitate closer working with external organisations.	Action Complete Review effectiveness as part of the Homelessness Strategy Review commencing in 2019.
b) In line with JSNA recommendations, 'to review existing referral systems & examine the value & feasibility of developing a community referral to provide a single point of contact for all non-statutory provision, linking in with statutory providers where appropriate'.	April 2017	Housing Services & other Council departments	Staff Time	As above, this is captured in the new legislative duty to refer requirements. New processes were in place by 1st October 2018.	Action Complete Review effectiveness as part of the Homelessness Strategy Review commencing in 2019.
c) Develop information for referral agencies to raise	April 2017	Housing Services & Supported Housing	Staff Time	We have created a new post 'rough sleeper coordinator' having received additional funding who will lead on	Action Complete

awareness of how to recognise homelessness.				partnership working in the Borough to prevent street homelessness.	Training and awareness for partner organisations to be arranged in early 2019.
d) Review homelessness risks for those households who are in receipt of DHP identifying possible solutions.	Ongoing	Housing Services & Customer Services	Staff Time	Referrals are made to Benefits & Council Tax Support by Housing Options where it is believed the applicant may be eligible for DHP which would potentially prevent them becoming homeless. Home visits are organised by the benefit assessor to determine support for households identified.	Support to be provided for identified households.
e) Review and monitor the effectiveness of the Homelessness Prevention Fund wherever possible implementing improvements identified.	Ongoing	Housing Services	Staff Time	New Homelessness Reduction Act legislation has extended the fund to non-priority cases. Introduction of more robust loan paperwork to be completed with customer to improve capacity to recoup on the loan.	Data is currently being collated to measure the effectiveness of using the fund.
f) Review the range of services available to people fleeing domestic abuse.	Ongoing	Housing Services & Customer Services	Staff Time	A review of services is being undertaken.	Training to be arranged for the housing officers to increase awareness of domestic abuse in 2019.
g) Review the options available to continue providing a Court Desk service in light of the forthcoming relocation of Bedford County Court services to Luton.	January 2017	Housing Services	Staff Time	Currently reviewing the House of Industry funding usage.	Review to be completed and findings considered.
Priority 2: - Support					
Objective	By When	By Whom	Resources	Progress at November 2018	Actions Required
a) Support the identification of external funding to re-introduce a Reconnection Service for rough sleepers	April 2017	Housing Services	Staff time and costs incurred in running an effective	This target has been superseded. Although no funding has been obtained to re-introduce the reconnection service funding has successfully been bid for to	The reconnections protocol needs reviewing in light of new HRA legislation.

who have no local connection to the Borough.			reconnection service.	assist with rough sleeping in the Borough.	
b) Review hospital admittance and discharge procedures wherever possible implementing improvements identified.	April 2017	Housing Services	Staff Time	Duty to Refer new legislation supersedes this.	Action Complete Liaison meeting booked with representative of ELFT.
c) Review discharge procedures for ex-offenders wherever possible implementing improvements identified.	April 2017	Housing Services	Staff Time	Duty to Refer improves process of discharge for ex-offenders. New initiative to visit prison and make early interventions.	Effectiveness of new initiative to be reviewed.
Priority 3: - Supply					
Objectives	By When	By Whom	Resources	Progress at November 2018	Actions Required
a) Identify long term need for Temporary Accommodation.	Ongoing	Housing Services	Staff Time	Needs identified. Working closely with Orchard and Shipman who are providing additional properties.	Ongoing review of needs and measures required to address them.
b) Work to increase affordable housing supply appropriate to homeless households.	Ongoing	Strategic Housing/Housing Services	Staff time. Possible capital funding.	Good progress has been made on delivery of outstanding Local Plan sites. Land North of Bromham Road, Biddenham, South of Fields Road, Wootton and Stewartby are now on site and delivering completions. Wixams Villages 2 and 4 now have planning permission. Some sites that are affordable housing in their entirety have been delivered – Derwent Place and Wixams Parcel J.	Continue to deliver general needs housing on larger local plan sites. Work with Planning Policy colleagues to bring forward new sites allocated in Local Plan 2030 at the appropriate time. Continue to identify potential all affordable housing schemes and work with RPs to bring them forward
c) Work to increase private sector supply accessible to homeless households.	Ongoing	Strategic Housing/Housing Services	Staff time. Possible capital funding.	Recruited to a new post 'private lettings officer' and also developed incentives to landlords to secure new properties.	Actions are ongoing.

				The Housing Strategy Team promotes the TDGS in correspondence to empty home owners. Whenever a potential interest is expressed, details are provided to the Re-housing Team.	
d) Investigate the introduction of a Council run Letting Agency.	December 2017	Housing Services/Strategic Housing	Staff time. Possible feasibility and set up costs.	Idea explored but not currently being pursued.	Action Complete Currently no further action is required.
e) Deliver the Complex Needs Scheme.	November 2017	Strategic Housing/Housing Services	Staff time. Possible capital funding.	The Complex Needs Scheme is now open and taking residents.	Action Complete Monitor the effectiveness of the Scheme in enabling former rough sleepers to move on to and maintain accommodation.
Priority 4: - Corporate					
Key Actions	By When	By Whom	Resources	Progress at November 2018	Actions Required
a) Review the option and feasibility of signing up for the 'Gold Standard'.	April 2017	Housing Services	Staff Time	Idea explored but not being pursued at the moment.	Action Complete To be reconsidered as part of the Homelessness Strategy Review commencing in 2019.
b) Review the delivery of front line services and recommended changes to improve service delivery.	April 2017	Housing Services	Staff Time	The housing team have moved into the customer service centre to improve frontline service delivery. An appointment system has been introduced. In response to feedback all customers are now seen in interview rooms rather than at desks.	Action Complete Service provision will continue to be kept under review.
c) Review accommodation options for traveller households experiencing homelessness.	April 2017	Housing Services/Strategic Housing	Staff Time	The GTAA was published in February 2017.	Action Complete Implement findings of GTAA including working with Property Services to bring forward site identified in Local Plan 2030.

d) Monitor the ethnic breakdown of persons who use the Borough Council's homelessness services and commissioned support services to ensure they are and remain accessible to all sections of the community.	Ongoing	Housing Services & Supported Housing	Staff Time	Equalities assessment needed.	Currently capturing the data required. A meeting has been arranged in April 2019 to review the data in line with the HRA legislation.
e) Monitor the breakdown by disability of persons who use the Borough Council's homelessness services and commissioned support services to ensure they are and remain accessible to all sections of the community.	Ongoing	Housing Services & Supported Housing	Staff Time	Equalities assessment needed.	Currently capturing the data required. A meeting has been arranged in April 2019 to review the data in line with the HRA legislation.
f) Review the provision of Homelessness services and associated partnership working to ensure the Council meets the requirements as set out in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.	Ongoing	Housing Services	Staff Time	As a LA we implemented the new legislation from April 2018. This included reviewing resource and recruiting additional staff and implementing a training programme for all staff. We also introduced a new IT system to support the new legislative requirements.	A wider restructure and redesign process under the Digital Operating Model project is taking place which will need to take into full consideration lessons learned in the first year of implementing new HRA legislation.
g) Take the actions necessary to successfully transfer the operation and administration of the Housing Register from bpha to Bedford Borough Council.	April 2018	Housing Services	Staff Time	Transfer of register completed in April 2018.	Action Complete Action to review the Allocation Scheme to be taken forward.