

Appendix B – Updated Homelessness Strategy 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 2019	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 awareness of how to	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 Training and awareness

recognise homelessness.				partnership working in the Borough to prevent street homelessness.	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 provided to housing officers to increase awareness of domestic abuse in 2019. A site for the re-provision of the domestic violence refuge has been identified and is in the ownership of an RP partner. The re-provision is at planning stage.	Ensure homelessness services integrate with the Council's Domestic Abuse services.
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	House of Industry funding is currently provided to a third sector organisation to provide a range of debt advice services which incorporates advice relating to rent and mortgage arrears and includes assisting with Court hearings.	There are no resources currently identified to fund a Court Desk Service

Priority 2: - Support					
Objective	By When	By Whom	Resources	Progress at November 2019	Actions Required
a) Support the identification of external funding to re-introduce a Reconnection Service for rough sleepers who have no local connection to the Borough.	April 2017	Housing Services	Staff time and costs incurred in running an effective reconnection service.	This target has been superseded. Although no funding has been obtained to re-introduce the reconnection service funding has successfully been bid for to 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.
d) Extended winter beds provision	Nov 2019	Housing Services, Local Partners	Staff time, Government Funding	Government funding has been secured to enable extended emergency beds to be provided throughout the 2019/20 winter period, over and above the normal Severe Weather Emergency Protocol beds.	Identify a suitable location for extended emergency winter beds and a partner to provide staffing resources.
e) Deliver short-term support to EU nationals sleeping rough who have no recourse to public funds	Dec 2019	Housing Services, Local Partners	Staff time, Government Funding	A small number of authorities, including the Council, have been given dispensation by the Government to provide assistance to EEA nationals who would not normally be eligible. This applies between November 2019 and March 2020 and is for a maximum of 3 months for each individual.	Identify services and a service provider to offer emergency accommodation and support including assistance with finding employment and any health care needs.
Priority 3: - Supply					
Objectives	By When	By Whom	Resources	Progress at November 2019	Actions Required
a) Identify long term need for Temporary	Ongoing Acquisitio	Housing Services Property Services	Staff Time	Needs identified. Capital funding approved for direct	Implement project to acquire properties using

Accommodation.	ns 2019 to 2021; DPS 2019	Procurement and Commissioning		purchase of properties; Vacant Council owned properties brought into use for temporary accommodation; Dynamic Purchasing System being implemented for nightly let properties.	capital allocation; Continue to repurpose vacant Council owned properties where feasible; Complete implementation of dynamic purchasing system.
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. 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.	Actions are ongoing.
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 2019	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.	Work is ongoing to capture and analyse equalities data.
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.	Work is ongoing to capture and analyse equalities data.

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.	February 2020	Housing Services	Staff Time	The requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act are now embedded into day to day operations.	A wider restructure and redesign process under the Digital Operating Model project is taking place which will 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.
h) Maximise the funding available for initiatives to reduce rough sleeping by submitting comprehensive bids for Government Funding	Ongoing	Housing Services, Public Health, Procurement and Commissioning, Local Partners	Staff Time	Funding up to March 2020 has been secured for a range of initiatives and a rapid rehousing pathway scheme.	Further bids to be developed and submitted as and when funding streams become available.
i) Open a "Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub" for anyone at risk of sleeping rough.	Completed	Housing Services, Local Partners	Government Funding, Staff Time	A hub was opened in a formerly disused building at Harpur Street in October 2019. The Hub provides emergency sit-up space and emergency beds, toilets, showers and a food preparation area. Statutory homelessness services and rapid rehousing activities are being provided from the Hub.	Monitor the effectiveness of the Hub in preventing and relieving street homelessness; Develop bids for future funding.
j) Develop comprehensive multi-agency arrangements to improve understandings of the levels of rough sleeping and effective interventions to prevent and reduce rough sleeping.	Ongoing	Housing Services, Local Partners	Government Funding Staff time	A Rough Sleeping C-coordinator has been appointed to co-ordinate multi-agency activities with statutory bodies and third sector organisations. Bi-monthly counts are taking place to provide reliable evidence of the level of rough sleeping. Outreach workers have been employed and are proactive in engaging with people sleeping rough.	Continue to monitor the numbers of people sleeping rough and to improve understanding of the underlying reasons for rough sleeping to shape future interventions.

<p>k) Identify and bid for funding opportunities for dual diagnosis outreach services.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Housing Services, Public Health</p>	<p>External funding, Staff time</p>	<p>An emerging need has been identified for an outreach service combining mental health and drug and alcohol services.</p> <p>A bid for central Government funding was unsuccessful and at present no alternative funding streams have been identified.</p>	<p>To identify potential sources of funding for this form of outreach services. To develop comprehensive bids to secure funding.</p>
<p>l) Half rough sleeping by 2020 and eliminate it by 2027.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Housing Services, Public Health</p>	<p>External funding, Staff time</p>	<p>The target is in accordance with the Government's national target for reducing and eliminating rough sleeping.</p> <p>There has been a significant reduction in the number of people sleeping rough in comparison to the official estimate as at November 2017. It is anticipated that the official estimate/count scheduled for November 2019 will show a reduction of around 50% compared to 2017.</p>	<p>To continue to work with central Government, statutory bodies and third sector partners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the services required locally to meet the target; Develop comprehensive bids for funding streams; Deliver a comprehensive and complementary range of initiatives and interventions to reduce rough sleeping.