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Legal and Democratic Services



COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE

Thursday 17 March 2022 at 7.30 pm

Place: Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall

Link for public online access to this meeting:

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Telephone (listen-only): 0330 221 9914, Telephone Access code: 228-053-816

The members listed below are summoned to attend the Community and Wellbeing Committee meeting, on the day and at the time and place stated, to consider the business set out in this agenda.

Councillor Alex Coley (Chairman)
Councillor Luke Giles (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Christine Cleveland
Councillor Bernice Froud
Councillor Debbie Monksfield

Councillor Julie Morris
Councillor Phil Neale
Councillor Guy Robbins
Councillor Clive Smitheram
Councillor Peter Webb

Yours sincerely

Chief Executive

For further information, please contact Democratic Services, 01372 732122 or democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

No emergency drill is planned to take place during the meeting. If the fire alarm sounds continuously, or if you are instructed to do so, you must leave the building by the nearest available exit. You will be directed to the nearest exit by council staff. It is vital that you follow their instructions.

- You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts;
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings;
- Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building, but move to the assembly point at Dullshot Green and await further instructions; and
- Do not re-enter the building until told that it is safe to do so.

Public information

Please note that this meeting will be held at the Town Hall, Epsom and will be available to observe live on the internet

This meeting will be open to the press and public to attend as an observer using free GoToWebinar software, or by telephone.

A link to the online address for this meeting is provided on the first page of this agenda and on the Council's website. A telephone connection number is also provided on the front page of this agenda as a way to observe the meeting, and will relay the full audio from the meeting as an alternative to online connection. A limited number of seats will also be available in the public gallery at the Town Hall. For further information please contact Democratic Services, email: democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk, telephone: 01372 732000.

Information about the terms of reference and membership of this Committee are available on the [Council's website](#). The website also provides copies of agendas, reports and minutes.

Agendas, reports and minutes for the Committee are also available on the free Modern.Gov app for iPad, Android and Windows devices. For further information on how to access information regarding this Committee, please email us at Democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk.

Exclusion of the Press and the Public

There are matters scheduled to be discussed at this meeting that would appear to disclose confidential or exempt information under the provisions Schedule 12A of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. The Committee is likely to resolve to exclude the press and public during discussion of these matters by virtue of the private nature of the business to be transacted.

Questions from the Public

Questions from the public are permitted at meetings of the Committee. Any person wishing to ask a question at a meeting of the Committee must register to do so, as set out below.

Up to 30 minutes will be set aside for written or oral questions from any member of the public who lives, works, attends an educational establishment or owns or leases land in the Borough on matters within the Terms of Reference of the Community and Wellbeing Committee which may not include matters listed on a Committee Agenda.

All questions whether written or oral must consist of one question only, they cannot consist of multi parts or of a statement.

The question or topic may not relate to a specific planning application or decision under the Planning Acts, a specific application for a licence or permit of any kind, the personal affairs of an individual, or a matter which is exempt from disclosure or confidential under the Local Government Act 1972. Questions which in the view of the Chairman are vexatious or frivolous will not be accepted.

To register to ask a question at a meeting of the Committee, please contact Democratic Services, email: democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk, telephone: 01372 732000.

Written questions must be received by Democratic Services by noon on the tenth working day before the day of the meeting. For this meeting this is **Noon, 3 March 2022**

Registration for oral questions is open until noon on the second working day before the day of the meeting. For this meeting this is **Noon, 15 March 2022**

AGENDA

1. QUESTION TIME

To take any questions from members of the Public.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in respect of any item of business to be considered at the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 5 - 8)

The Committee is asked to confirm as a true record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 18 January 2022 (attached) and to authorise the Chair to sign them.

4. MOTION: HERITAGE TOURS (Pages 9 - 14)

At its meeting on the 7 December 2021, Council agreed to refer the proposed Summer programme of Heritage tours motion on to this Committee for consideration.

5. AFGHAN CITIZENS RESETTLEMENT SCHEME (Pages 15 - 46)

The report sets out the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and proposes the council extends its offer of accommodating Afghan families arriving in the UK under the Afghan Locally Employed Staff (LES) Resettlement Scheme, to those arriving under the ACRS.

6. HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY (Pages 47 - 100)

This report presents the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan 2022 – 2027 and Homelessness Review and seeks agreement to consult on these documents prior to returning to Committee for approval to adopt.

7. TENNIS IN THE BOROUGH (Pages 101 - 108)

To present a non-repayable grant funding opportunity from the Lawn Tennis Association to refurbish and upgrade all tennis courts in the borough.

8. ALLOTMENTS REVIEW (Pages 109 - 114)

This report presents a review of all allotments in the borough and sets out recommendations for the future of council managed and self-managed sites.

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Minutes of the Meeting of the COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 18 January 2022

PRESENT -

Councillor Alex Coley (Chairman); Councillor Bernice Froud (Vice-Chair); Councillors Christine Cleveland, Previn Jagutpal, Debbie Monksfield, Julie Morris, Phil Neale, Guy Robbins, Clive Smitheram and Peter Webb

In Attendance:

Absent: Councillor Luke Giles

Officers present: Clare Lawrence (Director of Environment, Housing & Regeneration), Rod Brown (Head of Housing and Community), Ian Dyer (Head of Operational Services), Teresa Wingfield (Senior Accountant), Serena Powis (Community and Voluntary Sector Liaison Officer) and Stephanie Gray (Democratic Services Officer)

9 QUESTION TIME

No questions were received from members of the public.

10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations were made in respect of items on the agenda.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Christine Cleveland, Other Interest: In the interests of openness and transparency, Councillor Christine Cleveland declared that she is an allotment holder.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Christine Cleveland, Other Interest: In the interests of openness and transparency, Councillor Christine Cleveland declared that she is one of the allocated Councillors for Age Concern, Epsom & Ewell.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Guy Robbins, Other Interest: In the interests of openness and transparency, Councillor Guy Robbins declared that he is one of the allocated Councillors for Age Concern Epsom and Ewell.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Julie Morris, Other Interest: In the interests of openness and transparency, Councillor Julie Morris declared that she is an allotment holder.

11 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee held on 5 October 2021 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

12 VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING 2022-2023

The Committee received a report on the continued future support of voluntary organisations and setting out the proposed funding arrangements for 2022-2023.

The Head of Housing and Regeneration introduced the report.

The following matters were considered by the Committee:

- a) **Increase in parking fees:** two separate line items (Volunteer Parking Subsidy and Staff Parking Subsidy) have now been consolidated under a single item, which appears to reflect a large increase (30%), which is not in fact the case.
- b) **Limited Increase in Financial Support:** the Council is conscious of its own financial pressures and needs to have a balanced budget. Regarding the sustainability of the voluntary sector organisations, the Council is assisting these organisations to access other areas of funding such as the National Lottery, in order to maximise the funding opportunities available.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved unanimously to:

- (1) **Approve the proposed support for voluntary organisations in 2022-2023 as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.**

13 FEES AND CHARGES REPORT 2022-23

The Committee received a report recommending fees and charges for which this Committee is responsible, with the new charges being effective from 1 April 2022.

The following matters were considered by the Committee:

- a) **Allotment Forum:** the Forum will be reintroduced and a report in this regard will be brought to the next meeting.

- b) **Increase in discretionary fees and charges of 3%:** this figure was set by the Strategy & Resource Committee as a guideline; however it is up to Officers to assess current market conditions.
- c) **Private Sector Housing Charge:** in respect of multiple houses with multiple occupants it was clarified that the Council is not permitted to make a profit on this item, but may merely cover its costs.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved to:

- (1) Authorise the Chief Finance Officer to vary fees and charges for items generating income under £1,000 per annum and/or for one-off services or items;

And, subject to the approval of Council:

- (2) Agree the fees and charges for 2022/23 as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

14 REVENUE BUDGET REPORT

The Committee received a report setting out budget estimates for income and expenditure for Community & Wellbeing services in 2022/23.

The following items were considered by the Committee:

- a) **New Initiatives:** it was confirmed that the funding of the new initiatives set out in paragraph 6.1 of the report, was indicated for one year only. These initiatives had been requested by Members. If these initiatives are agreed, funding will be sought.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved to:

- (1) **Recommend the 2022/23 service estimates for approval at the budget meeting of Full Council in February 2022.**
- (2) **Support the three new initiatives in section 6 of the report;**
- (3) **Note that the supported initiatives from section 6 will only be progressed if a funding option can be identified during the year, in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and budget virement policy.**

15 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23

The Committee received a report summarising the proposed 2022/23 capital programme and a provisional programme for 2023/24 to 2026/27. The

Committee's approval is sought for the programme to be submitted to Council in February 2022.

The following matters were considered by the Committee:

- a) **Availability of resources internally to deliver project:** should staffing levels not remain constant, taken with a high level of underspend, additional resources would have to be considered to extend service delivery of the scheme.
- b) **Maintenance of Bourne Hall:** a significant backlog in terms of this item has built up over several years, to the extent that a large amount of money is required to bring Bourne Hall up to standard.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved to:

- (1) **submit the capital programme for 2022/23 as identified in section 3 of this report to the Council for approval on 15 February 2022;**
- (2) **note the provisional list of schemes for the capital programme for 2023/24 to 2026/27;**
- (3) **note that schemes subject to external funding from Disabled Facilities Grants only proceed once funding has been received.**

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.15 pm

COUNCILLOR ALEX COLEY (CHAIRMAN)

MOTION: HERITAGE TOURS

Head of Service:	Ian Dyer, Head of Operational Services
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1: Motion

Summary

At its meeting on the 7 December 2021, Council agreed to refer the proposed Summer programme of Heritage tours motion on to this Committee for consideration.

Recommendation (s)

That the Committee:

- (1) Notes the Motion;**
- (2) Agrees to establish a programme of Heritage Tours to begin in Summer 2022.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 To consider the Motion brought to Council in December 2021 (attached as Appendix 1).

2 Background

- 2.1 The Heritage Week last year was well supported and the tours, in particular, sold out very quickly. The borough has a wealth of historic sites and assets which could encourage visitors to come and experience what we have to offer.
- 2.2 One of the approved 2022/23 priorities is to establish Heritage tours as part of our cultural and historic development.

3 Motion to Council

- 3.1 At the Council meeting on 7 December 2021, a Motion was proposed requesting the Council introduce a Summer programme of tours.

- 3.2 The Council voted to refer the Motion to the Community and Wellbeing Committee for consideration.

4 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

4.1 Impact Assessment

- 4.1.1 There are no equality impacts arising from the contents of this report. Access to tours would be offered to all and consideration to disabled requirements addressed on a case by case basis.

4.2 Crime & Disorder

- 4.2.1 None arising from the contents of this report

4.3 Safeguarding

- 4.3.1 None arising from the contents of this report

4.4 Dependencies

- 4.4.1 None arising from the contents of this report

4.5 Other

- 4.5.1 None arising from the contents of this report

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 Costs for the provision of tours would be presented to this Committee in a business case setting out the required income to prove cost effective and/or generate an income for the council.

- 5.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** Costs of providing tours will need to be met from existing budgets.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

- 6.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

7 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

7.1 Council's Key Priorities:

The following Key Priorities are engaged:

Cultural and Creative

7.2 **Service Plans:**

Heritage tours are included in the 2022/23 Service Delivery Plan.

7.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None

7.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None

7.5 **Partnerships:** None

8 Background papers

8.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- [Minutes of meeting of the Council on 7 December 2021](#)

Other papers:

- None

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Motions to Council Request Form

Please complete all boxes	
Proposed Title of Motion	Introduce regular Heritage Tours during summer
Proposer	Julie Morris
Secunder	David Gulland
Motion Set out motion in full	<i>Following on from this year's Heritage Week, this Council agrees to investigate a business case for offering a regular Heritage Tour during the summer months.</i>
<i>Background :</i>	<i>The Heritage Week was well supported in some parts, indeed the tour of the tunnels in Ashley Road quickly sold out. Our borough has a wealth of assets, both graded and locally listed, which could be attractive both educationally and for sightseers and could attract visitors to the borough. The Racecourse, the ice house, the Ewell gaol, Nonsuch kitchens and elsewhere are all visitor attractions. Is there is enough support for a regular fee-paying tour during the summer months perhaps, utilising an electric vehicle and possibly a volunteer historian acting as driver/guide? Tours could begin on a trial basis if the finances are sound.</i>
Relevant Committee(s) Motion would relate to	Community & Wellbeing
Name of the Chairman of such Committee	Alex Coley

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AFGHAN CITIZENS RESETTLEMENT SCHEME

Head of Service:	Rod Brown, Head of Housing & Community
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision? (yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	No
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1: Council Report – Afghan LES Resettlement Scheme Appendix 2: Financial Model LES/ACRS Appendix 3: MCHLG Letter Afghan Resettlement and Relocation

Summary

The report sets out the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and proposes the council extends its offer of accommodating Afghan families arriving in the UK under the Afghan Locally Employed Staff (LES) Resettlement Scheme, to those arriving under the ACRS

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Agree to the Council participating in the ACRS as detailed in this report and therefore extending its offer to accommodate and support up-to 5 Afghan families arriving in the UK under both the LES Resettlement Scheme and ACRS**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 Participation in the ACRS will allow the Council to extend the offer agreed by Full Council on 30th September 2021 to support the LES Scheme to more widely support Afghan families that have entered the UK through both the LES and ACRS schemes.
- 1.2 By extending the Councils support to the ACRS the Council can be more flexible in matching the families in need, to the size and availability of properties within the borough.

2 Background

2.1 LES Resettlement Scheme / ARAP:

2.2 On 30th September a report was taken to Full Council detailing the LES Resettlement Scheme, and the supporting policy, referred to as the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP).

2.3 The report set out the government's funding instruction and tariff, with confirmation that the financial support package would extend to 3-years for each family under the scheme

2.4 The report also set out the expectation for the Council to ensure an Integration Support Package for each family (to be paid for by government funds set out in the funding instruction) was in place in preparation for a family's arrival.

2.5 The report taken to Full Council can be located in Appendix 1.

2.6 Full Council agreed that the Council could:

- Participate in the LES Resettlement Scheme and that the offer of accommodation and support was to be offered to 5 Afghan families under the ARAP
- Work with the Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network (EERN) in securing the properties

2.7 Since this decision was taken, the Council has:

- Secured a 4-bed property in the borough, and made an application to be matched to its first family under ARAP
- Secured (in principle) an additional 2-bed property
- Continued working with EERN to secure additional properties for Afghan families
- Agreed to the Integration Support Package being delivered by EERN for a period of (up-to) 3-years per family subject to a Service Level Agreement. This will include coordinating and delivering all aspects of integration and orientation.

2.8 Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)

2.9 The Government confirmed the launch of the ACRS on 13th September 2021.

- 2.10 The report taken to Full Council on 30th September stipulated that in the event the Council wishes to extend its offer of accommodation and support to the ACRS, this would be subject to a further report.
- 2.11 The ACRS will prioritise the following Afghan Citizens:
- Those who have assisted UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for values such as democracy, women's rights, freedom of speech and rule of law
 - Vulnerable people, including women and girls at risk, and members of minority groups (including ethnic and religious minorities and LGBT+)
- 2.12 The Government has committed to resettling 5,000 Afghans under this scheme in the first year, and up-to 20,000 in the proceeding years.
- 2.13 Referral and prioritisation for the ACRS is to be determined by 3 routes:
- Vulnerable and at-risk individuals who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme will be the first to be resettled under the ACRS. People who were notified by the UK Government that they had been called forward or specifically authorised for evacuation, but were not able to board flights, will also be offered a place under the scheme if they subsequently come to the UK.
 - Working with United National High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to identify people most at risk and refer them for resettlement, replicating the approach the UK has taken in response to the conflict in Syria
 - The Government will work with our international partners in the region to implement a referral process for those inside Afghanistan (where safe passage can be arranged), and for those who have recently fled to countries in the region. This process will likely be affected by the ongoing situation within Afghanistan.
- 2.14 Anyone who is resettled through the ACRS will receive indefinite leave to remain in the UK and will be able to apply for British citizenship after 5 years under existing rules.
- 2.15 As outlined in the MHCLG Letter on Afghan Resettlement and Relocation (Appendix 3) the funding instruction and tariff for families arriving under ACRS is aligned to those under ARAP.
- 2.16 A further funding instruction received by the Council in October 21, confirmed that funding under both ARAP and ACRS would align, and subsequently all families arriving in the UK under both ARAP and ACRS will be eligible for the same financial support package and tariff, over a 3-year duration.

- 2.17 Whilst the Council has made its first application for a family under ARAP, as the same funding instructions apply under ACRS, the Council wishes to be able to extend their offer to ensure and increase the successful matching of families to the properties available.
- 2.18 By extending the scheme we ensure the Council is not limited in its offer of support and can meet the needs of those refugees from both schemes. This can be achieved without the Council incurring any additional risks or needing to consider any additional financial implications than those already agreed to in the report submitted to the Council contained in Appendix 1.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Impact Assessment

- 3.1.1** An Impact assessment was presented in the report taken to Full Council on 30th September 2022 – refer to Appendix 1. These considerations are upheld for the purposes of this report as families under both ARAP and ACRS are subject to same eligibility in respect of housing, securing indefinite leave to remain, the Government funding instruction and tariff, and subsequent support package.
- 3.1.2** Consideration would need to be given to families under ACRS and any impact in respect of having more complex needs and more support in integration. This issue may be mitigated by ERRN who, having supported the Council in hosting two Syrian families, are experienced in addressing the complex needs of refugee families.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

- 3.2.2** The emphasis on the funded resettlement of Afghan refugees through an identified Government scheme ensures the best opportunities for successful integration and a positive future contribution to the UK.
- 3.2.3** The Council will work closely with the police in identifying suitable property and would ensure risks to the refugee family were identified and minimised and any community concerns addressed promptly

3.3 Safeguarding

- 3.3.1 Any refugee household accommodated through the ARAP or ACRS scheme would benefit from close integration support by a case worker provide by the EERN. This would include safeguarding considerations with a duty to report safeguarding concerns in line with statutory requirements

3.4 Dependencies

- 3.4.1 It has been advised by Southeast Strategic Partnership for Migration (SESPM) that matching families successfully against the properties secured is likely to be increased whereby we are willing to accept families under both the ACRS and ARAP. This is due to the size of the families arriving in the UK, in relation to the size of property the Council has or may go on to secure. Smaller properties may prove more challenging to fill and extending our offer to both ARAP an ACRS, risks are reduced.
- 3.4.2 The Council has already committed financially to a 4-bed property, and to the Integration Support Package being provided by EERN based on supporting up-to 5 families. Both financial and reputational risks are identified whereby we are unable to welcome/match a family due to them being eligible under ACRS but whereby we have both the support and property in place. By extending the Council's offer to welcome families under both schemes this is mitigated.

3.5 Other

- 3.5.1 None

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 All implications for funding of the ACRS are aligned to those identified for LES/ARAP. As such the funding implications and the financial model that were presented to Full Council on 30th September 2021 remain applicable to ACRS and can be relied upon for the purpose of this report.
- 4.2 These are detailed in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, which is now referred to as the Afghan ARAP/ACRS finance model.
- 4.3 The amount the Council can claim for integration support from the Home Office per beneficiary under both ARAP and ACRS in year 1 is £10,500, reducing to £6,000 in year 2, and £4,020 in year 3.
- 4.4 For a family of 4 over a 3-year period (for example), the Council may claim £82,080. This is aligned to the tariff that was made available to Syrian households VPRS

4.5 As with ARAP, a percentage of these funds will contribute towards any shortfalls in housing costs. As such, and as per the report taken to Full Council, the Council will not accept a single-person household on the grounds of financial viability. Education costs remain subject to separate funding.

4.6 The below table sets out the funding across each of the 3-years:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
LA Tariff (per person)	£10,500	£6,000	£4,020	£20,520
Education (per child)	Up to £4,500	0	0	Up to £4,500
English Language (per adult)	£850	0	0	£850
Health (per person)	£2,600	0	0	£2,600

4.7 The three-year funding offer is intended to taper with increasing independence and integration of the family. In the report taken to Full Council on 30th September it was anticipated that the support required under the LES/ARAP scheme would be within the funding envelope available, as support needs are expected to be lower than those required under the previous Syrian VPRS. This is due to most LES households lacking the vulnerabilities inherent in VPRS households.

4.8 Notwithstanding, by extending the Council's offer to the ACRS, there is a risk of families moving to the borough with more complex needs and requiring greater levels of support. To mitigate this, the Council is working with the EERN to deliver the Integration Support Package. EERN have extensive experience of supporting refugee families to integrate and have the significant added value of a volunteer network to help address need within a 3-year period, mitigating such risks.

- 4.9 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** It is expected that support costs should be fully covered by funding from the Home Office for the three-year period. However, should any unforeseen costs in excess of the funding arise, these will need to be met from existing budgets within the housing service.
- 4.10 Should support be required beyond the funded three-year period, a report should be brought back to the appropriate Committee to inform members and to identify a funding option.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There is no legal obligation on the Council to participate in the Government's ACRS. Should the Council agree to participate in the ACRS to be eligible for the funding the Council will be required to abide by the Government's requirements for the scheme.
- 5.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** Both the schemes are conveniently dealt with under the same funding instruction dated 6th January 2022. Members are referred to the legal advice given previously. The recommendation is sound, and the matter need not be resolved by full Council.

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
- 6.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 6.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations -** There are no known climate change implications
- 6.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** Successful integration of refugee families is identified as being a significant factor in ensuring community safety issues are minimised. The ACRS scheme is funded over three years offering reasonable assurance that accommodated families will integrate successfully.
- 6.5 **Partnerships:** - The Council is working effectively with Surrey County Council, Surrey Police, NHS organisations, neighbouring Councils, and various voluntary groups, in particular Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network in providing support to Afghan refugees.

7 Background papers

- 7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

Afghan Locally Employed Staff (LES) Relocation Scheme – Full Council –
30th September 2021 (Appendix 1)

Afghan LES/ACRS Finance Model (Appendix 2)

MHCLG Letter on Afghan Resettlement and Relocation – 13th September
2021 (Appendix 3)

Other papers:

Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS) S&R Committee
22nd November 2016

AFGAN LOCALLY EMPLOYED STAFF (LES) RELOCATION SCHEME

Head of Service:	Rod Brown, Head of Housing & Community
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 : Table of participation in the LES relation scheme across Surrey Appendix2: Financial model for accommodation costs Appendix 3: Home Office and MHCLG letter

Summary

The report sets out the issues associated with the Government's Afghan refugee Locally Employed Staff (LES) relocation scheme with a recommendation that the Council agrees to accommodate up to 2 Afghan households, using accommodation specifically made available for those arriving under this scheme.

Recommendation (s)

The Council is asked to:

- (1) Agree that the Council will offer to participate in the Afghan Locally Employed Staff resettlement scheme as detailed in this report.**
- (2) Agree to offer to assist up to 2 Afghan households under that resettlement scheme by making use of the accommodation currently available to the Council.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 To be able to formally respond to the Home Office request to accommodate Afghan refugees under the LES relocation scheme.

2 Background to the Afghan LES Scheme

- 2.1 On 29 December 2020, a cross-government operation announced the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) which was subsequently launched in April 2021. This is a new scheme that offers relocation and assistance to current and former LES in Afghanistan.
- 2.2 On 30th July 2021 a Ministerial letter was sent to all council leaders and chief executives in England, Scotland and Wales regarding the ARAP and urgently requested their support to welcome and assist LES to the UK.
- 2.3 During the 20-year UK military presence in Afghanistan, LES provided help in various roles such as interpreters, security guards and cultural advisors. In these roles Afghans may have exposed their identities and placed themselves and their families at significant risk of reprisal by working with the UK Government. The ARAP and other policies are designed to honour the service and reflect their work and the risks involved.
- 2.4 When the ARAP was announced it was envisaged Afghan LES would be relocated to the UK at their request. In reality, following NATO's decision to withdraw military forces from Afghanistan and the UK's evacuation flights from Afghanistan in August 2021, the ARAP is now being used to assist claimants who have already been relocated to the UK and are eligible to and want to remain in the UK.
- 2.5 Those who are being resettled in the UK are considered to be "under serious threat to life" if they remain in Afghanistan.
- 2.6 Those who are eligible for relocation in the UK and choose not to return to Afghanistan will be offered the indefinite right to remain in the UK, which enables such households to stay and work in the UK and access welfare benefits.
- 2.7 This Committee is familiar with considerations relevant to refugee and vulnerable person resettlement. For example, the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) was supported by this Committee in 2016. The VPRS was specifically aimed at households fleeing Syria who presented with defined vulnerabilities, often disabilities or serious health conditions. In light of their vulnerabilities, the funding support was spread over five years.
- 2.8 The LES scheme is substantially different from the VPRS. In contrast the LES scheme is restricted to those previously employed by the UK government and are expected to find it easier to adjust to living in the UK. As such it is anticipated an appropriate level of support will need to last for the duration of the scheme.

- 2.9 Many of those Afghan refugees seeking resettlement through the LES scheme are already in quarantine hotels or other hotel accommodation in the UK. It is anticipated the demand for properties and Council support will be immediate and not spaced out over several months.

3 Acceleration of the Afghan LES Relocation Scheme

- 3.1 Following the announcement that NATO military forces would withdraw from Afghanistan, the UK Government has accelerated the pace of relocations. This included a mass military airlift of thousands of eligible Afghan households during 'Operation PITTING' which concluded on 28 August with the departure of the final UK military and diplomatic personnel from the country.
- 3.2 Relocated Afghan households have been accommodated in temporary quarantine and bridging hotels pending resettlement in council provided accommodation.
- 3.3 The Surrey Councils have been considering their response from the arrival of Afghan refugees. The table in Appendix 1 summarises the current known offers from the 11 Districts and Boroughs in Surrey as of early September 2021.

4 Afghan citizens resettlement scheme (ACRS)

- 4.1 On 13th September 2021 the government announced the launch of a separate Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). The ACRS is intended to assist vulnerable Afghans and those put at risk by recent events in Afghanistan and as such is likely to be a cohort of refugees with different needs to those considered under the ARAP.
- 4.2 Given the short notice the Council has of ACRS it is proposed that a decision on whether to participate in this scheme will be subject to a separate report to a subsequent meeting.

5 Proposed integration offer

- 5.1 The Government has proposed an “integration offer” that is broken down into six categories as follows:
- 5.1.1 **Status** – All those resettled will benefit from full rights and entitlements through Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK, providing them with certainty and stability needed to rebuild their lives in the UK
 - 5.1.2 **Caseworker support** – All households will have access to a caseworker to help navigate, access and register with mainstream services (including schools, GPs, Job Centres, banks and utility companies)
 - 5.1.3 **Accommodation** – For those evacuated, immediate quarantine accommodation was provided together with follow-on temporary accommodation (Bridging Hotels) until resettlement is effected by local authorities. The costs associated with the temporary accommodation has been met by the Government.
 - 5.1.4 **Education** – School places will be provided and nursery places for children aged 2 – 4 will be facilitated. Those over 19 years’ old will be eligible for funding to access further education.
 - 5.1.5 **Health services** – Mainstream health and mental health services will be provided for new arrivals settled with local authorities. We understand health care professionals have been supporting individuals in temporary accommodation.
 - 5.1.6 **Benefits and Employment support** – All adults have recourse to public funds and immediate rights to work. This will include access to the full range of benefits including Universal Credit.

6 The local proposed Housing Offer

- 6.1 The availability of suitably sized accommodation is expected to be the most significant limiting factor on whether Afghan households can be resettled locally.
- 6.2 Given the current levels of homelessness within the borough it is not proposed that accommodation identified for relieving current local homelessness would be used to accommodate refugee households under this scheme.
- 6.3 Property that would be utilised under this scheme would be through the use of the private rented sector property that is offered to the Council expressly for the purpose of helping Afghan households qualifying under the LES or similar schemes. This would minimise any detrimental impact on those households already on the Council’s Housing Needs Register.

- 6.4 The Council has already appealed to local landlords for any suitable accommodation. So far only smaller properties have been offered including 1- and 2-bedroom properties. However, discussions have been initiated with Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network to establish whether there are other suitable properties which would be offered to accommodate Afghan refugee households.
- 6.5 The South East Strategic Migration Partnership (SESMP) which is assisting the Home Office in the implementation of Afghan resettlement, has indicated typically Afghan households are large in comparison to those in the UK with 3 and 4 bedroom properties being in much higher demand than 2 bedroom properties. There is thought to be very little demand for 1 bed properties amongst the refugees already in the UK.
- 6.6 Suitable accommodation would have to be identified before any Afghan refugee family was accepted and the Council would be able to stipulate the size of the household so that the family can be accommodated in the identified property.
- 6.7 It is a pre-requisite for participation in the LES scheme that the accommodation is available for at least the first 12 months and ideally for a period of 2 years from the date of arrival of the refugee household. This accommodation must be a self-contained (i.e., not a spare room) furnished home.
- 6.8 Given the current shortage of suitable properties, it is suggested the Council's commitment to support the scheme is limited to 2 households. In the event that there are more properties identified and sufficient funding and resources available, there is a possibility that the Council could extend its commitment. This would be subject to a subsequent report to this Committee or the full Council.

7 Support offered by the Council

- 7.1 As noted, the provision of a dedicated caseworker will be part of the *integration support* expected from the local authority accepting the Afghan household. The Council can also rely on its experience of supporting refugee families that was obtained when the Council used the Family Support Service (FSS) to support the two Syrian refugee households successfully resettled under the VPRS.
- 7.2 Currently there are several options for how the Council can provide this support for Afghan households. We could operate under a partnership approach with Reigate and Banstead Borough Council who will be employing an Afghan support caseworker, or through the FSS as previously used or possibly through an agreement with the local charitable sector, such as Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network. Discussions are continuing. The anticipated costs associated with providing this support are outlined in the financial implications section of this report and included in the finance model outlined in Appendix 2.

8 Risk Assessment

8.1 Legal or other duties

8.1.1 The Council is not required to determine eligibility of ARAP claimants. If any offer of support by the Council is accepted, the Council will be required to participate in the scheme and comply with the conditions of participation and follow government guidance to local authorities regarding the scheme.

8.1.2 These conditions set out the specific requirements that participating Councils must comply with in the provision of accommodation and support and how funding from the scheme is managed.

8.2 Impact Assessment

8.2.1 The impact on existing local communities and infrastructure, such as schools, medical and dental practices from the recommendation contained in this report has been considered.

8.2.2 As the composition and identities of any refugee families accepted is unknown it is difficult to predict the eventual impact of participating in the LES scheme.

8.2.3 Although there is inevitably some uncertainty, the process by which the Council works with the SEMSP to match a refugee family closely to the accommodation and local facilities available will minimise such a risk.

8.2.4 The impact of the recommendation on the borough's existing homelessness requirement will be mitigated by restricting properties involved in the LES scheme to those not available for use to offer to other homelessness households.

8.2.5 Under the LES scheme the typical level of proficiency in speaking English Language, even if only one family member, will mitigate the risks of long term unemployment.

8.2.6 Should the household fail to integrate and become self-sufficient after year 3, there is a risk that they will continue to need council support without any additional government funding. This could include being eligible for assistance under the Homelessness Reduction Act including the use of temporary accommodation.

8.2.7 Should households with indefinite leave to remain present to the Council outside the LES scheme the Council would need to assess and meet any statutory duties that may be owed to the household under Homelessness Reduction Act.

8.2.8 As a result of recent changes made to the Habitual Residence Test (HRT) these households are able to approach council's directly from 16 September 2021 onwards.

8.2.9 A decision not to participate in the Afghan LES resettlement scheme might be open to criticism from the public, other participating councils and the Home Office and MHCLG. In contrast a decision to participate in any refugee settlement may generate some criticism although this is likely to be less than that from not participating.

8.3 Crime & Disorder

8.3.1 The emphasis on funded resettlement of Afghan refugees through an identified Government scheme ensures the best opportunities for successful integration and a positive future contribution to the UK.

8.3.2 The recommendation to accommodate up to 2 refugee households would minimise the risk of community anxiety or increased vulnerability of the refugee household to unwanted attention or anti-social behaviour.

8.3.3 Should the decision be to support the LES scheme, the Council will work closely with the police in identifying suitable property and would ensure risks to the refugee family were identified and minimised and any community concerns addressed promptly.

8.4 Safeguarding

8.4.1 Any refugee household accommodated through the LES scheme would benefit from close integration support by a case worker. This would include safeguarding considerations. Any support workers employed by the Council would be appropriately DBS checked.

8.5 Dependencies

8.5.1 The most significant dependency is obtaining the use of sufficient suitable accommodation at an affordable rent.

9 Financial Implications

9.1 In a joint announcement on 13th September 2021, the Home Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have announced a revised financial support package to those local authorities agreeing to take in households under the Locally Employed Staff (LES) scheme. This is attached as Annex 3.

- 9.2 The improved financial support offered has been extended from year 1 into years 2 and 3. The support includes funding for welcoming, integration and support services, plus additional funding for children's education, English language training and costs associated with health services.
- 9.3 The table below sets out the improved integration package for ARAP claimants.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
LA Tariff (per person)	£10,500	£6,000	£4,020	£20,520
Education (per child)	Up to £4,500	0	0	Up to £4,500
English Language (per adult)	£850	0	0	£850
Health (per person)	£2,600	0	0	£2,600

- 9.4 The funding provided by the LES scheme is operated through a Home Office Funding Instruction where the Council is allocated a specific amount for each person in each household accommodated.
- 9.5 The Council claims an initial payment on arrival and further payments staged over the 3 year period.
- 9.6 The three-year funding offer is intended to taper with increasing independence and integration of the family. It is expected that support required under the LES scheme will be significantly less than the Council provided under the previous VPRS as most LES households will lack the vulnerabilities inherent in VPRS households and have significantly more developed English language skills.
- 9.7 It is clear that the Government's LES scheme is intended to meet the Council's costs associated with participation. However there is a risk that costs incurred outside the scheme may fall to the Council, National Health Service or the Education Authority.

- 9.8 For example, there is no provision for costs arising after year 1 for education, English Language or Health and limited TA Tariff in years 2 and 3 of £6,000 and £4,020 per person respectively.
- 9.9 The Council's most significant costs will be associated with securing appropriate accommodation and meeting any rental shortfall. As the funding available under LES/ARAP is calculated on a per person basis, the household size will determine the total amount of funding available to the Council. In turn the household size that the Council is able to consider will be determined by the size of any properties available.
- 9.10 In Appendix 2 the finance model illustrates the anticipated costs and funding income associated with accepting households of various sizes financed under the LES resettlement scheme, ranging from 1 adult household to a family with 2 adults 4 children.
- 9.11 It is a reasonable assumption there may be a shortfall between the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) payable through either Universal Credit or Housing Benefit and the rent demanded by the landlord. In these circumstances the LA Tariff would be expected to provide rent subsidy for up to three years as well as provide for a case worker to support the family which would also be scaled down across the three years.
- 9.12 The offer of the rent subsidy would assist in securing properties in a very competitive rental market as well as help sustain the tenancy, making it affordable, whilst the family establish themselves and gain employment.
- 9.13 The finance model set out in Appendix 2 includes an assumption that the rent subsidy will reduce over the 3 years. The model shows that for families of 1 to 6 members, the scheme should be fully funded. Should the Council be allocated a single person household, the model shows there would be a shortfall in funding of up to £8k per year which would need to be met from existing housing service budgets. The Council would however be able to stipulate the size of the household they would be willing to accept.
- 9.14 The cost of providing the Afghan support worker will be met from the LA Tariff outlined in the table in 9.3 above. The eventual cost of this support will be dependent on which provider is chosen. Negotiations are on-going but it is anticipated this support would cost approximately £6,000 per household per year and this cost is included in the financial model set out in Appendix 2. Any subsidy required that is not funded through the LES scheme would need to be funded from existing Council budgets.
- 9.15 Whilst the LES appears to be a sufficiently funded scheme, financial risks are inherent in any refugee scheme where the precise household composition and their specific needs and health needs are not known. Any decision to participate will need to accept an obligation to provide reasonable support to the household and the individuals within it.

- 9.16 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** It is expected that the LES scheme will be fully funded for the three year period. However, should any unforeseen costs in excess of the funding arise, these will need to be met from existing budgets within the housing service.
- 9.17 Should support be required beyond the funded three year period, a report should be brought back to update the appropriate Committee to inform members and to identify a funding option.

10 Legal Implications

- 10.1 There is no legal obligation on the Council to participate in the Government's LES resettlement scheme. Should the Council agree to participate in the LES resettlement scheme, to be eligible for the funding the Council will be required to abide by the Government's requirements for the scheme.
- 10.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** None arising from the content of this report.

11 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 11.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
- 11.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 11.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations -There are no known climate change implications**
- 11.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** - Successful integration of refugee families is identified as being a significant factor in ensuring community safety issues are minimised. The LES scheme is funded over three years offering reasonable assurance that accommodated families will integrate successfully.
- 11.5 **Partnerships:-** The Council is working effectively with Surrey County Council, Surrey Police, NHS organisations, neighbouring Councils and various voluntary groups, in particular Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network in providing support to Afghan refugees.

12 Background papers

- 12.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS) S&R Committee 22nd November 2016

Other papers:

- Home Office and MHCLG letter 13th September 2021
- Home Office Afghan Locally Employed Staff – relocation scheme (published 1 September 2021)
- Funding instruction for local authorities in support of the United Kingdom's resettlement schemes: 2021 to 2022

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1 adult - 1 bedroom property			
Expenditure	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Void costs for 56 days (£35 x 56)	-£1,960		
6 Months' rent for a 1 bed property (£1049 pcm)	-£6,294		
1 Months deposit (£1049)	-£1,049		
LHA rent shortfall £176pcm for 6 months (£1049-£873 pcm)	-£1,056	-£2,112	-£2,112
Property set up	-£3,000		
4 Months bills	-£1,200		
Subtotal rent & set up costs	-£14,559	-£2,112	-£2,112
Support Staffing costs per household	-£6,000	-£6,000	-£6,000
Total Expenditure	-£20,559	-£8,112	-£8,112
Income/Funding - 1 adult - 1 bed			
4 months' rent (£15 per day per person)	£1,820		
Integration support (£10,500 pp Yr. 1; £6000 pp Yr2; £4020 pp Yr3)	£10,500	£6,000	£4,020
Total income/funding	£12,320	£6,000	£4,020
Balance	-£8,239	-£2,112	-£4,092

2 adults -1-bedroom property			
Expenditure	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Void costs for 56 days (£35 x 56)	-£1,960		
6 Months' rent for a 1 bed property (£1049 pcm)	-£6,294		
1 Months deposit (£1049)	-£1,049		
LHA rent shortfall £176pcm for 6 months (£1049-£873 pcm)	-£1,056	-£2,112	-£2,112
Property set up	-£3,000		

4 Months bills	-£1,200		
Subtotal rent & set up costs	-£14,562	-£2,112	-£2,112
Support Staffing costs per household	-£6,000	-£6,000	-£6,000
Total Expenditure	-£20,562	-£8,112	-£8,112
Income/Funding - 2 adults - 1 bed			
4 months' rent (£15 per day per person)	£3,640		
Integration support (£10,500 pp Yr. 1; £6000 pp Yr2; £4020 pp Yr3)	£21,000	£12,000	£8,040
Total income/funding	£24,640	£12,000	£8,040
Balance	£4,078	£3,888	-£72
2 adults & 2 children - 2-bedroom property			
Expenditure	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Void costs for 56 days (£45 x 56)	-£2,520		
6 Months' rent for a 2-bed property (£1350 pcm)	-£8,100		
1 Months deposit (£1350)	-£1,350		
LHA rent shortfall £253pcm for 6 months (£1350-£1096.98 pcm)	-£1,518	-£3,036	-£3,036
Property set up	-£3,000		
4 Months bills	-£1,200		
Subtotal rent & set up costs	-£17,688	-£3,036	-£3,036
Support Staffing costs per household	-£6,000	-£6,000	-£6,000
Total Expenditure	-£23,688	-£9,036	-£9,036
Income/Funding - 2 adults & 2 children - 2 bed			
Up to 4 months' rent (15 per day per person)	£7,280		
Integration support (£10,500 pp Yr. 1; £6000 pp Yr2; £4020 pp Yr3)	£42,000	£24,000	£16,080

Total income/funding	£49,280	£24,000	£16,680
Balance	£25,592	£14,964	£7,044

2 adults & 3 children - 3-bedroom property			
Expenditure	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Void costs for 56 days (£64 x 56)	-£3,584		
6 Months' rent for a 3-bed property (£1925 pcm)	-£11,550		
1 Months deposit (£1925)	-£1,925		
LHA rent shortfall £554pcm for 6 months (£1925-£1371.24 pcm)	-£3,324	-£6,648	-£6,648
Property set up	-£3,000		
4 Months bills	-£1,200		
Subtotal rent & set up costs	-£24,583	-£6,648	-£6,648
Support Staffing costs per household	-£6,000	-£6,000	-£6,000
Total Expenditure	-£30,583	-£12,648	-£12,648
Income/Funding - 2 adults & 3 children - 3 bed			
4 months' rent (15 per day per person)	£9,100		
Integration support (£10,500 pp Yr. 1; £6000 pp Yr2; £4020 pp Yr3)	£52,500	£30,000	£20,100
Total income/funding	£61,600	£30,000	£20,100
Balance	£31,017	£17,352	£7,452

2 adults & 4 children - 4-bedroom property			
Expenditure	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3

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Appendix 2

Void costs for 84 days (£76 x 84)	-£6,384		
6 Months' rent for a 4-bed property (£2303pcm)	-£13,818		
1 Months deposit (£2303)	-£2,303		
LHA rent shortfall £573pcm for 6 months (£2303-£1730 pcm) Property set up	-£3,438	-£6,876	-£6,876
4 Months bills	-£3,000		
	-£1,200		
Subtotal rent & set up costs	-£30,143	-£6,876	-£6,876
Support Staffing per household	-£6,000	-£6,000	-£6,000
Total Expenditure	-£36,143	-£12,876	-£12,876
Income/Funding - 2 adults & 4 children - 4 bed			
4 months' rent (£15 per day per person)	£10,920		
Integration support (£10,500 pp Yr. 1; £6000 pp Yr2; £4020 pp Yr3)	£63,000	£36,000	£24,120
Total income/funding	£73,920	£36,000	£24,120
Balance	£37,777	£23,124	£11,244

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Home Office



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

To: All Council Leaders and Chief Executives in England, Scotland and Wales;
Chair of the Northern Ireland Cross Organisational Strategic Planning Group (Afghan Refugees)

13 September 2021

AFGHAN RESETTLEMENT AND RELOCATION

Since we last wrote to you, we have been delighted to see so many local authorities come forward with offers of support for Afghan citizens and their families who are seeking to rebuild their lives in the UK. We are grateful for this positive response and would like to thank all local authorities across the country that have already provided offers of support, assistance, and accommodation.

But now we must go further. There are many thousands of Afghan families who in recent weeks arrived as part of our Afghanistan relocation programme, many of whom have found homes and a warm welcome from local authority partners across the UK. However, many are in interim hotel accommodation, unable to settle, find jobs and send their children to school.

If every council agreed to resettle a number of Afghan families today, we would quickly be able to provide the warm welcome that those families already here deserve. With funding now in place, we expect to see many more firm offers of support coming forward at pace, from local authorities across the whole of the United Kingdom. We would both like to see offers from all UK councils within the next ten days.

New funding in place to welcome Afghan families to the UK

Today, we have formally announced the details of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and how this interacts with the existing Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme. This letter contains further detail how local authorities can offer their support.

Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)

The ACRS will welcome up to 5,000 people in the first year, up to a total of 20,000 over the coming years, leading the way in the global response to the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. The scheme will provide vulnerable refugees from Afghanistan and those put at risk by recent events in Afghanistan with a route to safety. The scheme will prioritise:

- those who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for values such as democracy, women's rights and freedom of speech, rule of law (for example, judges, women's rights activists, journalists); and
- vulnerable people, including women and girls at risk, and members of minority groups at risk (including ethnic and religious minorities and LGBT+).

Some of those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which included individuals who were considered to be at particular risk – including women's rights activists, prosecutors and journalists – will be the first to be resettled under the ACRS. People who were notified by the UK

government that they had been called forward or specifically authorised for evacuation, but were not able to board flights, will also be offered a place under the scheme if they subsequently come to the UK.

Further detail is being published today on GOV.uk.

Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)

This ACRS will be separate from, and in addition to, the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), which offers eligible current or former locally employed staff who are assessed to be under serious threat to life priority relocation to the UK. Since the first flight landed on 22 June, we have welcomed around 7,000 Locally Employed Staff and their families under the ARAP scheme, including around 5,000 people who were evacuated during August.

Integration package

Those arriving through either ARAP or ACRS will be granted immediate Indefinite Leave to Remain allowing them to benefit from full rights and entitlements and providing them with the certainty and stability they need to build their life here.

We are pleased to confirm that the integration packages for the ACRS and ARAP will be aligned, providing one comprehensive offer to individuals, local authorities and mainstream services. A generous resettlement package has been developed to support ARAP/ACRS arrivals to acclimatise to the UK, learn the language (where appropriate), and find work, thus enabling rapid self-sufficiency and social integration in UK communities.

The Government will match the tariff for the successful Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) to provide a complete package covering health, education and integration support costs. The core local authority tariff of £20,520 per person will be provided over a shorter period of three years (unlike the five-year VPRS provision), enabling more funding in those crucial early years to support resettled Afghans to integrate into British society and become self-sufficient more quickly. We expect the tariff for each person to be frontloaded in year one, to deliver the vital support needed in the early stages of resettlement, tapering down over the remaining years. As with the VPRS, additional tariffs for health, English language and education services will also be provided in year one only.

Full details of the package are annexed to this letter at Annex A, including a table showing the potential profile of the fund over three years. The full package will cover:

- £20,520 to cover the local authority welcome, integration offer and provision of services
- up to £4,500 per child to cover education provision, subject to their age (year one only)
- £850 to cover English language provision, for adults requiring this support (year one only)
- £2,600 to cover health provision (year one only)

We have also agreed a further £20m fund of flexible funding in the current financial year (2021/22) to support local authorities with higher cost bases with any additional costs in the provision of services.

Further accommodation funding and support

This Government is committed to resettling up to 5,000 people through the ACRS over the coming year and the need for suitable accommodation to support resettlement is pressing. Government has already announced an additional £5m housing fund to help local authorities provide the necessary housing and support for ARAP families and minimise their stays in short-term emergency accommodation.

We can today confirm that the Government is now increasing that funding to £10m in the first year and extending it with £5m available in year 2 and £2m in year 3. This will provide local authorities with longer-term certainty that there will be funding to draw on if needed. In addition to ARAP families, the funding will also be available for local authorities to draw on if they bring forward offers of homes for the families who were brought to the UK as part of the evacuation and who will be the first to be resettled under the ACRS.

Civil society have a crucial role to play in the welcome and support of newcomers to the UK. The Community Sponsorship Scheme enables groups of friends and neighbours, charities and faith groups to support a refugee family as they restart their new lives in our country. Many local authorities have supported the resettlement of Syrian and other refugees through community sponsorship, successfully complementing their own efforts.

We strongly encourage local authorities to promote and support local community sponsor groups, and advocate partnership working with local volunteer groups at this critical time. Advice and information for local authorities is available from Reset, the UK Community Sponsorship hub, at www.resetuk.org.

Seeking your urgent offers of support for Afghan families

With confirmation of this integration and funding package, we now expect that many more local authority offers of accommodation and welcome will be forthcoming. We still have large numbers of Afghan people in hotels and short-term accommodation across the country. We would quickly be able to provide the guarantee of a new life if every local authority in the UK stepped forward and agreed to resettle those families already here.

We cannot fulfil the UK's duty to these people without your vital support and we will continue to work in partnership with all local authorities.

Therefore, to reiterate, now that the funding is in place, we would both like to see offers from councils within ten days.

Local authorities seeking to make a firm offer of support should first contact their own local Strategic Migration Partnership. Contact details for the 11 Strategic Migration Partnerships across England, Wales and Scotland, are attached at Annex B. We also welcome confirmation from the Executive Office on Northern Ireland's position.

In the meantime, we will continue to listen to your feedback and our cross-Government teams will continue to engage with local authorities and stand ready to answer any questions you may have.

We are grateful for your continued support and the continued joint efforts as we work in partnership to fulfil our moral duty to those who have fled Afghanistan, many of whom have stood shoulder to shoulder with our armed forces and now seek a new life in the UK.



RT HON PRITI PATEL
Home Secretary



RT HON ROBERT JENRICK MP
Secretary of State for Housing,
Communities and Local Government

ANNEX A

Integration package for Afghan citizens and other refugees resettled under ARAP and ACRS

ACRS/ARAP	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
LA Tariff [per person]	£10,500	£6,000	£4,020	£20,520
Education [per child]	Up to £4,500			Up to £4,500
English Language [per adult]	£850			£850
Health [per person]	£2,600			£2,600

The integration package being put in place covers:

1. Status

- All those who are resettled, whether they have arrived through ARAP or ACRS, will benefit from full rights and entitlements through Indefinite Leave to Remain, providing them with the certainty and stability they need to build their life here.

2. Caseworker support

- All families will have access to a caseworker to help them navigate, access and register with mainstream services (including schools' registration, GP registration, Job Centre Plus appointments and utility registration). The caseworker will also provide advice around and referral to appropriate mental health services.

3. Accommodation

- For those evacuated, immediate quarantine accommodation (also known as 'managed quarantine service' or MQS) and temporary accommodation (whilst waiting for permanent accommodation) will be provided and paid for by the Government.
- For all new arrivals, permanent accommodation will be found and furnished appropriately including white goods. Individuals will cover rental costs themselves using Universal Credit, Housing Benefit or other income.

4. Education

- School places will be provided and nursery places for 2-4 year olds facilitated.
- Further education will be available for 16-19 year olds.
- Those aged 19 and over are also eligible for access to funding for Further Education places.
- In line with the VPRS, a tariff of up to £4,500 per child aged 5-18 years old and £2,250 for ages 3-5), additional to the local authority tariff, will also be provided in year one.
- Also in line with the VPRS, local authorities will receive £850 per adult to provide additional support for English language learning. Where eligible, adults will also have access to mainstream Adult Education Budget funding.

5. Health services

- A health tariff of £2,600 per person in year one only, additional to the local authority tariff, will be provided to support access to mainstream health and mental health services for arrivals settled with local authorities.

6. Benefits and Employment support

- All adults will have recourse to public funds and the immediate right to work.
- DWP will be providing tailored onsite support in the bridging hotels and arranging follow up appointments.

- All adults will have access to their own work coach (once a UC claim is successfully made). This includes personalised and tailored coaching and support to access the full range of DWP support. It also includes an automatic referral to the National Careers Service Skill Audit to understand immediate skills levels and jobs that may be available.
- DWP and the Refugee Employment Network (REN) will work together with local partners to build better links between jobcentres and the organisations supporting integration in local areas. DWP and REN are also coordinating external offers of employment support and jobs. The REN is a network of over 120 organisations supporting refugees and those on resettlement schemes to access appropriate, fulfilling, paid employment or self-employment.

7. Small cash payment

- Where necessary, arrivals will receive weekly cash and rent support up to the day before the first UC payment is due, in order to maintain continuity of support. The amount of support received will be dependent on circumstances - £59.20 per week (for single adults under 25); £74.70 per week (for single adults over 25); £117.40 per week (for couples); £37.75 per week (for children) – together with £15 per person per day for rent until they receive the UC Housing element.

In addition to the above support package:

- We have also agreed a further £20m fund of flexible funding in the current financial year (2021/22) to support local authorities with higher cost bases with any additional costs in the provision of services.
- We are also considering what enhanced integration support could be made available to help with longer term integration and employment once immediate needs have been met.
- We are working to ensure effective transfer of individual information gained whilst in Managed Quarantine Service (MQS) to the relevant agencies as individuals depart for their next location.
- We are creating a portal where the many offers of support from individuals, organisations and businesses can be registered. This portal is already available to submit offers of housing and work is now underway to expand this to further offers, such as job opportunities, professional skills training or donations of items like clothes or toys.
- Whilst many individuals will require the full support provided here, some may not have the same needs. We are exploring options to manage this difference in need.

ANNEX B

Contact details for Strategic Migration Partnerships

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East Midlands	brein.fisher@emcouncils.gov.uk
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North West	katie.jones@manchester.gov.uk
South East	roymillard@secouncils.gov.uk
South West	bronwyn.prosser@swcouncils.gov.uk
West Midlands	dally.panesar@wolverhampton.gov.uk
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HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY

Head of Service:	Rod Brown, Head of Housing & Community
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27 Appendix 2 Draft Action Plan Appendix 3 Homelessness Review

Summary

This report presents the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan 2022 – 2027 and Homelessness Review and seeks agreement to consult on these documents prior to returning to Committee for approval to adopt.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) To agree that the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, Action Plan 2022 – 2027 and Homelessness Review as set out in Appendix 1, 2 and 3 to this report, are submitted to public consultation.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 To ensure the Council has a current Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and Action Plan.

2 Background

- 2.1 As a Housing Authority, the Council is required to publish a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy based on the results of a review of homelessness within the borough. The strategy must be reviewed at least every five years.

- 2.2 During the last five years, homelessness across the borough has been affected by a wide range of factors. In April 2018, the government enacted the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) that brought new legislative requirements on local authorities including creating a focus on prevention and relieving homelessness and placing new duties on Housing Authorities to intervene at an earlier stage. Also, to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who were protected under the existing legislation.
- 2.3 The government's Rough Sleeper Strategy was published in August 2018 and made a commitment to halve rough sleeping in the borough by 2022 and end it by 2027. Delivery of this ambitious commitment will require action at both national and local level.
- 2.4 The draft action plan in Appendix 2 includes actions to help support this commitment. In addition, the Council has been successful in bidding for central government funds to deliver initiatives to help accommodate rough sleepers, encouraging them off the streets and into alternative accommodation with appropriate support to prevent a return to rough sleeping.
- 2.5 The introduction of welfare reforms, Brexit, COVID, new domestic abuse legislation and the impact of wider economic factors have all affected the numbers of people presenting as homelessness, at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping. The impact on both workload and council budgets of these reforms has been significant with a large increase in the number of people presenting to the Council as homeless. Some government funding has been made available but this does not cover the true cost of the reforms of the additional responsibilities which fall to the Council. The draft strategy and action plan considers these factors and how the Council might respond to these changes.
- 2.6 Other impacts on homelessness and rough sleeping over the previous 5 years have included COVID (including the "Everyone in" initiative for rough sleepers), BREXIT, welfare reform, as well as wider national economic factors.

3 The homelessness review

- 3.1 The homelessness review is a statutory requirement of all Housing Authorities to inform their strategies and action plans. The review considered a range of information to better understand homelessness and rough sleeping across the borough.
- 3.2 In particular, the review considered
 - Number of homeless approaches
 - Reasons for homelessness
 - Homeless Prevention and Relief cases and outcomes
 - Support needs of homeless households

- The type of individuals and households becoming homeless
- Households in nightly paid accommodation & in-borough temporary accommodation
- Supply and Demand of Affordable housing - Housing Needs Register and social housing lettings
- Private rented housing & the Rent Deposit Scheme
- Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness
- The current Housing Options Service & existing homelessness prevention measures

3.3 The key findings from the review are summarised in Appendix 1 and the full Review and the data used in the review in Appendix 3 to this report.

4 Draft strategic objectives

4.1 The Homelessness and rough sleeper strategy sets out 6 key objectives that the action plan is intended to address. These objectives are:

- The early identification, intervention and prevention of homelessness
- Reduce rough sleeping
- Increase accommodation options including social rented, private rented, supported and move on accommodation and in borough temporary accommodation
- Improving the health and wellbeing of homeless people
- Ensuring sufficient support is available for homeless people
- Partnership working

5 Draft action plan

5.1 The strategy includes a detailed action plan structured around the 6 key objectives. The action plan is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

5.2 The actions identified range from the operational and procedural in nature, to more strategic actions such as reviewing the planning policies related to provision of affordable housing, discussions with Homes England (the non-departmental public body that funds new affordable housing in England) as well as a review of all Council owned land for its suitability for bringing forward new affordable homes.

6 Consultation

6.1 Before adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy the Council must consult such public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons as they consider appropriate.

- 6.2 The Council propose to initiate a 6-week period of consultation on the strategy, action plan and homeless review, including a wide range of stakeholders, residents and service users. The consultation will include the use of social media, focus groups and questionnaires.
- 6.3 Following consultation, the draft strategy and action plan will be reviewed and be brought back to this Committee later this year for consideration, and if agreed, it would then be adopted.

7 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

7.1 Impact Assessment

7.1.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment regarding the post consultation strategy and action plan will accompany the subsequent report to this committee.

7.2 Crime & Disorder

7.2.1 There are no implications arising from this report

7.3 Safeguarding

7.3.1 Meeting housing need, particularly for those who are vulnerable, will have a positive impact on safeguarding.

7.4 Dependencies

7.4.1 The ability of the council to continue provision of homelessness and rough sleeper support will be dependent on continued sufficient funding the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and other government funding opportunities.

8 Financial Implications

- 8.1 The main source of external funding for our homelessness service comes to the council from the DLUHC in the form of the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG). The HPG for the council in 2021/22 was £472,041. In addition, a further allocation of £98,976 was received as winter top-up funding. The current anticipated spend on homelessness for 2021/22 is expected to be £1.997 million.
- 8.2 In addition to HPG, the Council has successfully bid for additional DLUHC funding to support intervention for rough sleeping and move-on initiatives to reduce the risk of rough sleepers returning to sleeping on the streets.

- 8.3 The draft strategy and action plan, as set out in the appendices to this report, would seek to minimise future expenditure on the service by increasing the provision of additional accommodation, particularly reducing the reliance on expensive out of borough emergency nightly paid accommodation. Opportunities arising from future announcements from DLUHC for funding will be explored.
- 8.4 The Council has some capital funds and reserves that could be available for investment in initiatives aimed at reducing the costs of homelessness. Uncommitted S106 funds earmarked for affordable housing currently total £1.57 million, and the residential property fund has an uncommitted balance of £965k.
- 8.5 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** Homelessness continues to be a challenge for the Council due to the numbers requiring support and the high costs of managing the service. The development of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan will assist in the Council's financial planning and management of the service.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 Under the Homelessness Act 2002 local authorities have a strategic responsibility for tackling and preventing homelessness. S.1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 (the Act) requires the Local Authority to have a strategy in place to prevent and deal with homelessness and rough sleeping aimed at preventing homelessness in the local authority area and ensure that sufficient room is available for people who are or may become homeless. It is a requirement of the Act that councils prepare a new Homelessness Strategy published every 5 years for their district.
- 9.2 The housing review and this strategy have been produced in accordance with the Homeless Acts 2002 and 2017 (and the accompanying code of guidance and related legislation).
- 9.3 **Legal Officer's comments:** all relevant legal implications have been considered as stated above

10 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 10.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
- An Effective Council – effective provision of the Council's homelessness and rough sleeper service.
- Safe and Well –Ensuring current housing need is identified and availability of suitable accommodation.
- 10.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.

- 10.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None arising from this report
- 10.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** The strategy and action plan would have a positive impact on community safety.
- 10.5 **Partnerships:** Homelessness and the causes of homelessness requires a genuine partnership approach and the Council works with core agencies such as mental health, social service professionals, Housing Associations, Police and hospitals and the prison and probation service, as well as established and new landlords and estate agencies.

11 Background papers

11.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- None

Other papers:

- Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities (DLUHC)_



Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027

Consultation draft

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Vision and Summary of the Key Objective over the next 5 years
3. Legal background and the purpose of the review and strategy
4. Defining homelessness
5. Cost of homelessness
6. National & Local Context
7. Strategic fit
8. The Homelessness Review
9. The Key Objectives
10. Consultation
11. Resourcing the Strategy
12. Monitoring and Review
13. The Action Plan
14. Equality Impact Assessment
15. Publication
16. Appendices

Version Control & Tracking

Policy Title			
SMT sign off			
Committee		Date approved	
Review due date		Review completed	
Service			

Revision History

Revision Date	Revisor	Previous Version	Description of Revision

1. Forward & Introduction**2. Vision & Summary of the Key Objectives over the next 5 years**

This Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out how Epsom & Ewell Borough Council intends to meet the needs of our residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including rough sleeping and single people over the next 5 years.

The strategy outlines our strategic vision and the key objectives we aim to achieve when addressing homelessness within the borough. It sets out our commitment to preventing homelessness at an earlier stage and how we will work with our partners across all sectors to develop an integrated approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping.

Our strategic vision is to see: ***“The council and its partners working collaboratively to prevent homelessness, to proactively reduce and end rough sleeping, assist homeless households to find affordable housing solutions and ensure the right support is available to promote recovery and improve health and wellbeing.”***

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is informed by a detailed review of all forms of homelessness within the borough. The priorities identified in the strategy are based on the findings in the review.

In this strategy we have identified six key objectives for the next 5 years and these emphasise the importance of early intervention and prevention as promoted in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Each objective is supported by a number of actions to enable the priorities to be achieved.

These six key objectives are:-

1. The early identification, intervention & prevention of homelessness
2. Reduce Rough Sleeping
3. Increase accommodation options
 - Social Rented Housing
 - Private Rented Accommodation
 - Supported and move-on Accommodation
 - In-borough Temporary Accommodation
4. Improve the Health & Wellbeing of homeless people
5. Ensuring sufficient support is available for homeless people
6. Partnership working

Delivery of the strategy will be supported by an Action Plan, which sets out the individual actions and activities to be undertaken and details how the Council will achieve the aims and objectives of the strategy. The strategy and Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis through a multi-agency Homelessness Forum.

3. Legal background and the purpose of the review and strategy

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on every local authority to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy, setting out how the local authority intends to tackle and prevent homelessness in their area.

The strategy must be based on a review of all forms of homelessness within that local authority’s area and should be reviewed at least every five years. The purpose of the Homelessness Review is to establish the extent of homelessness in the area, identify future trends and any gaps in the service currently being provided.

The review should assess the:

- Levels and likely future levels of homelessness in the borough
- Activities that are carried out which prevent homelessness, secure accommodation for homeless people and provide support to people who are or may become homeless
- Resources available to carry out these activities.

In addition, the Homelessness Code of Guidance for local authorities sets out some requirements for the Homelessness Strategy. It should:

- Link to the wider contributory factors of homelessness, such as health, wellbeing, employment and economic factors.
- Be consistent with other corporate strategies and objectives.
- Involve partners in implementing the strategic homelessness objectives.
- Have an Action Plan to show how the strategic objectives will be achieved.
- Be monitored and reviewed during the life of the Strategy.

In 2018 the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) also published its “Rough Sleeping Strategy” which set out the government’s vision “to support every person who sleeps rough off the streets and into a home”; to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027. It focuses on three key themes: Prevention; Intervention; and Recovery. In 2021 this was further enhanced to include Systems Support to embed change and monitor progress.

4. Defining homelessness

Crisis defines Homelessness as follows: -

“Homelessness is about more than rooflessness. A home is not just a physical space, it also has a legal and social dimension. A home provides roots, identity, a sense of belonging and a place of emotional wellbeing. Homelessness is about the loss of all these. It is an isolating and destructive experience and homeless people are some of the most vulnerable and socially excluded in our society.”

Homelessness includes:

Statutory Homelessness:

The Housing Act 1996 defines homelessness as “A household is legally homeless if, either, they do not have accommodation that they are entitled to occupy, which is accessible and physically available to them, or they have accommodation but it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy this accommodation”

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into force on 3 April 2018. It has made significant changes to Part 7 of the 1996 Act. Its main effect is to place increased duties on local authorities to assess an applicant’s needs and to prevent and relieve homelessness.

A person is threatened with homelessness if it is likely that they will become homeless within 56 days. Where a person is threatened with homelessness, the Council will owe that person a prevention duty and must take reasonable steps to prevent them from becoming homeless either by helping to avoid the loss of their existing accommodation or by trying to help them find new accommodation before they become homeless.

When a person is already homeless or becomes homeless after the prevention stage, the Council will owe that person a relief duty for up to 56 days and must take or continue to take reasonable steps to relieve them from being homeless by trying to help them find new accommodation.

Under both the prevention and relief stage the Council will have a duty to carry out an assessment with the person to look into the circumstances that caused them to become homeless or threatened with homelessness and to establish their housing and support needs. A Personalised Housing Plan will then be agreed which will set out the actions (or ‘reasonable steps’) to be taken by the Council and the person to help them remain in their current accommodation or to find alternative accommodation.

If the person is homeless or threatened with homelessness the Council will have some form of duty towards them. This ranges from advice and assistance, or providing interim or temporary accommodation, to a main housing duty of securing accommodation for a continuing period.

The extent of the duty will depend on whether or not they are eligible for assistance, in priority need, intentionally homeless, or have a local connection. The Council will also be required to carry out enquiries and assess what duty, if any, may be owed to the person under the homelessness legislation.

It is important to note that there is only a duty to secure interim accommodation for those who are eligible for assistance and have a priority need.

- Pregnant women
- Households with dependent children
- 16 and 17 year olds
- Care leavers aged 18,19 or 20
- People made homeless by an emergency
- People vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness or physical disability, having been in care, having served in the armed forces, having been in custody, having to leave accommodation because of violence or abuse or vulnerable for some other special reason.

Hidden/Concealed homelessness: These are individuals or households who do not have access to suitable housing, but who may be staying with friends or family on a very short-term basis or who need to move because they are living in insecure or overcrowded circumstances. They are sometimes referred to as “sofa surfers and are often not known to services. This can also include those who have no recourse to public funds.

Rough Sleeping: Rough sleepers are those who sleep or live on the streets and this is the most visible form of homelessness. Many of those sleeping rough or with a history of rough sleeping have multiple and complex needs with the predominant factors being poor mental health and substance misuse. Other characteristics are offending, low self-esteem, unemployment, chaotic behaviour, and some are difficult to engage.

5. Cost of homelessness

Human Cost

The impact of homelessness on people is huge, particularly children born into homelessness. Research shows that homeless infants experience a significant decline in general development function between 4 and 40 months. Evidence also shows that being homeless or in temporary accommodation during pregnancy are associated with an increased risk of preterm birth, low birth weight, poor mental health in infants and children and developmental delay. All of these factors are, in turn, associated with the risk of poor outcomes in later life. As a result of a preoccupation with addressing their unstable and unsafe living conditions, a person’s capacity to effectively parent can be significantly impaired.

For a lot of people who face homelessness, this is not the only issue. Homelessness is closely linked with multiple and complex needs such as mental health problems, drugs and alcohol dependencies, experience of prison or care systems. A traumatic childhood is often part of a homeless person’s life history. There is significant evidence that links homelessness with the impact on a person’s health and wellbeing. Homeless households often experience health inequalities, poorer health and wellbeing as well as a lower life expectancy than the general population.

Financial Cost

The financial cost of dealing with homelessness is high, with the National Audit Office estimating that the cost of homelessness in all its forms to be in excess of £1 billion per year. For Epsom and Ewell Borough Council the current anticipated spend on homelessness for 2021/22 is expected to be £1.997 million. This comprises of staffing, costs associated with homelessness preventions measures such as the Rent Depot Scheme, Sanctuary Scheme and the provision of temporary and nightly paid accommodation.

The associated costs of homelessness do not only fall on a local housing authority. Homeless people typically require additional support from other public services such as police, hospitals, GPs etc. Evidence shows that people who experience homelessness for three months or longer cost on average £4,298 per person to the NHS service, £2,099 per person for mental health services and £11,991 per person in contact with the criminal justice system. The impact of homelessness is significant on the person, the community and on public services.

6. Context of Homelessness

6.1 National Context

The Government’s White Paper on housing, ‘Fixing our broken housing market’, in March 2016, identified the scale of the problem in providing a range of housing that meets a cross-section of need. Due to the imbalance in the market, the result has been a national increase in all forms of housing need, exhibiting itself in the most acute forms of housing need – homelessness and rough sleeping.

Figures released by the then Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (now DLUHC) show there were 96,060 households in temporary accommodation at the end of September 2021. This was a 1.5% increase on the number a year previously and is part of a long-term increase.

Affordability and the issue of households on low incomes being able to resolve their housing need is particularly challenging in London and the South East.

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) has not kept pace with the market resulting in an increasingly unaffordable private rented market for households on low incomes who are dependent either wholly or in part for assistance with their housing costs. A direct correlation can be made between the increasing disparity between the LHA and the increase in the number of homelessness applications resulting from a loss of accommodation within that sector.

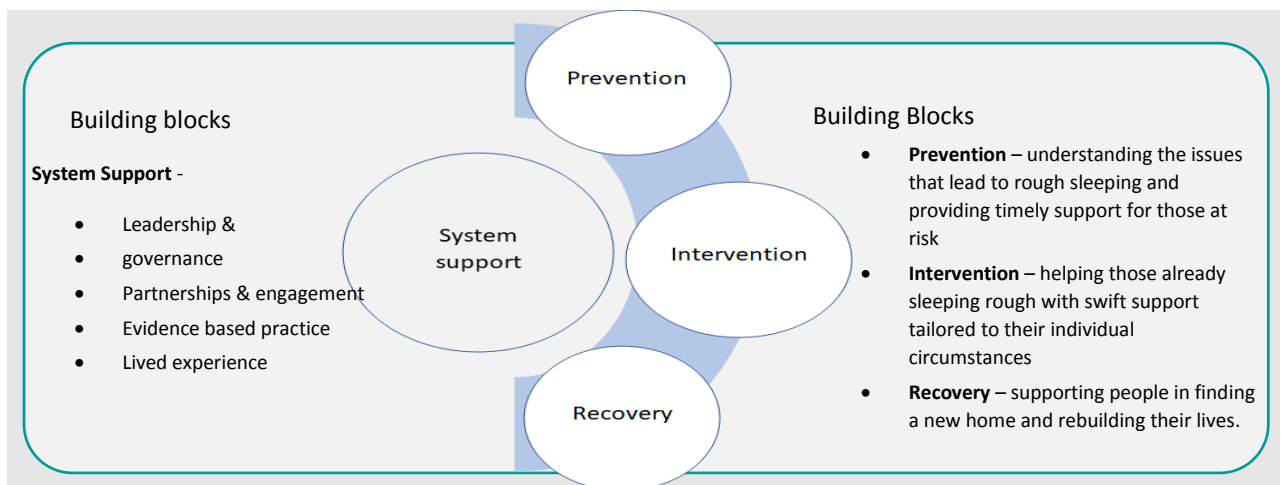
Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Homeless households are provided with assistance under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (‘the HRA’), which came into force on 3rd April 2018. The HRA renewed the focus on preventing and relieving homelessness, placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages, and to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those in priority need.

On 1st October 2018 the ‘duty to refer’ process came into force, giving certain public bodies a legal duty to refer households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to a local authority for advice and assistance. Whilst registered providers do not have a duty to refer, a number have signed up to the ‘Commitment to Refer’, which is a voluntary commitment to make referrals. The Council encourages registered providers with housing stock in the borough to adopt such practices as it provides earlier opportunities to intervene and potentially prevent homelessness.

Rough Sleeping Strategy

The Government published a Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018 that lays out their commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. Work to deliver these aims is built around three core pillars: Prevention (understanding the issues that lead to rough sleeping and providing timely support for those at risk), Intervention (helping those already sleeping rough with swift support tailored to their individual circumstances) and Recovery (supporting people in finding a new home and rebuilding their lives). In 2021 this was further enhanced to include Systems Support to embed change and monitor progress.



The strategy acknowledges that ending rough sleeping will require central and local government, as well as business, communities, faith and voluntary groups and the general public to work together to tackle the problem.

Welfare reforms presents ongoing challenges to households in receipt of benefits and to the organisations and individuals that house and support them.

Most notably local authorities and social housing providers have reported its impact on claimants' ability to meet their household costs and there has been a reported increase in rent arrears and issues of affordability across all sectors.

- **Benefit Cap** – Benefits have been capped to limit the amount households can receive unless they are working for the required hours: Outside Greater London this is £384.62 per week (£ 1,666.67 per month or £20,000 per year) for couples and lone parents and £257.69 per week (£1,116.67 per month or £13,400 per year) for single adults.
- **Single Room Rate** – Single people under the age of 35 are only able to claim the single room Local Housing Allowance Rate – this is the rate of a room in a shared house. This makes it very difficult for those under 35 to secure a home in the private rented sector that they can afford.
- **Spare Room Subsidy** – Children of different sexes are expected to share a bedroom until aged 10 and of the same sex until aged 16. Housing benefit/Universal Credit is calculated on this basis and where families are 'under-occupying', tenants are required to meet any shortfall in rent.
- **Local Housing Allowance** – In 2016 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates were frozen for four years until 2020.
- **Personal Independence Payment** – Personal Independence Payment (PIP) has replaced Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people aged 16 to 64 making new claims. This is based on how a person's condition affects them, not the condition they have.
- **Universal Credit** – Universal Credit (UC) sees all working age benefits (excluding Personal Independence Payment and Carer's Allowance) rolled into one single monthly payment. This payment includes the housing element and is paid direct to the tenant.

In 2018 Crisis report **Preventing Homelessness its everybody's business**, focussed on actions for 5 government departments, with key recommendations:

- The Department for Work and Pensions should establish a network of housing and homelessness specialists in Jobcentres to ensure that once people are rehoused they are also supported to move into employment.
- The Ministry of Justice should include successfully meeting the long-term accommodation needs of people leaving prison as a measure of success in the new probation contracts. They should also ensure that evidence-based housing-led solutions that have proved effective at preventing homelessness for prison leavers, such as Critical Time Interventions, are implemented consistently across the country.
- The Department of Health and Social Care should require every hospital that sees more than 200 homeless patients each year to have a full Pathway team, including a GP, nursing staff, care navigators and a dedicated housing worker. The Home Office should extend the 28 day move on period for newly recognised refugees to at least 56 days to ensure that local authorities have sufficient time to work with a household to prevent them from becoming homeless.
- The Home Office should require the police to ask every victim of domestic abuse whether they need help and support with housing. If the person consents, then the police should make a referral to the local housing authority.
- The Department for Education should ensure that evidence-based housing-led solutions, such as Critical Time Interventions, are part of the housing and support options available for young people leaving care.

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

A new Domestic Abuse Act came into force in 2021 which places new duties on local authorities. The measures in the Act include:

- A statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse. As part of this definition, children will be explicitly recognised as victims if they see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of abuse.
- Extending the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse.
- A duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation.
- All eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance.
- When local authorities rehouse victims of domestic abuse, they do not lose a secure lifetime or assured tenancy.
- A new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order, which will prevent perpetrators from contacting their victims, as well as force them to take positive steps to change their behaviour.

Leaving the European Union

The United Kingdom left the European Union on 31 December 2020. The ramifications for housing-related areas (such as the housing market, the labour market, forecasted and actual population growth, the economy, financing programmes and procurement rules) are as yet unknown.

Covid-19 Pandemic and the impact on Housing Services

The impact of the Pandemic has been far reaching for both the service and our users. The Pandemic led to rapid changes to the way the Housing Services was delivered. Prior to the Pandemic all our clients were seen face to face, with a Housing Option interview. From March 2020 the Housing Services staff had to move to telephone-based interview and communication, with the electronic upload of documentation through the Homechoice website. This has worked well, with many households preferring the convenience of a telephone appointment. A hybrid arrangement is likely to operate in the future, with the opportunity for everyone to have face to face interviews.

Following the UK Covid-19 Lockdown in March 2020, the then Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government wrote to all local authorities in England requesting that they all should provide emergency accommodation to protect rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping during the Covid-19 pandemic. This was referred to as "Everyone-In".

This coincided with the closure of most hotels and guest houses across the UK, and the Council had to enter into complex negotiations with providers to procure self-contained accommodation for single homeless people as well as for people and families who were COVID-19 positive.

Under Everyone-In Epsom & Ewell Borough Council accommodated over 60 single people who were either rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping and this has led to a rapid increase in the numbers of single people accommodated in emergency accommodation. Many of those accommodated had multiple and complex needs, requiring higher levels of support and management.

The Council staff also undertook weekly welfare calls for the duration of all Lockdowns and were instrumental in helping roll out the vaccine programme to homeless households.

In September 2020, the Council successfully bid for £157, 000 funding under the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) to support our work to find housing solutions for those assisted off the street during the Pandemic. This funding meant that we were able to employ a Single Person Homeless Support officer on a 12-month fixed term contract to support and assist those accommodated under Everyone-In to find either supported or private rented accommodation and financially help them with rent in advance and deposits. The funding also contributed to the costs of providing emergency accommodation during the pandemic.

Whilst the numbers of single people being accommodated significantly increased, the numbers of families approaching the Council declined. This was mainly due to the Emergency Covid-19 legislation temporary ban on most forms of evictions. These restrictions were removed in October 2021 and cases are now starting to progress their way through the County Court system. It is anticipated that in 2022/23 a significantly higher

number of people will approach the Council as homeless/threatened with homelessness from the private rented sector, many of whom would not have previously needed to use the service before.

The Pandemic has also seen improved collaborative partnership working with Surrey County Council Public Health and several health initiatives have been developed for homeless households.

6.2 Local Context

Epsom and Ewell is a small borough in Surrey, home to approximately 80,000 people. Situated on Surrey's northern border, its nearest neighbours are the London Boroughs of Kingston and Sutton, and the two Surrey districts of Mole Valley and Reigate & Banstead. The borough is extremely well connected, due, in part, to its prime location. It has excellent road and rail links. The M25 and A3 trunk roads are easily accessible, plus central London is less than 30 minutes by train. Both London Heathrow and Gatwick airports are located close by.

Epsom and Ewell is an affluent area where people benefit from an excellent quality of life. Residents enjoy good health, long life expectancy, first class education, and positive levels of employment.

However, this picture does mask pockets of deprivation across the borough, for example, Court Ward is the 4th most deprived ward in Surrey. The borough experiences other challenges as well. The borough is the most densely populated in Surrey. Just over 1,200 children are living in poverty. Despite housing expansion, housing pressures remain due to high prices and low affordability. Rates of homelessness are an on-going concern.

Population & Household Composition: The latest population estimate (mid-2017) for the borough is 79,451 (51% female; 49% male).

Epsom and Ewell is the most densely populated borough in Surrey. Comprising an area just over 3,400 hectares (the smallest in Surrey) it has 23.32 persons per hectare. In comparison, Mole Valley, the least densely populated borough, comprises just 3.37 persons per hectare.

The percentage breakdown across three broad age groups closely reflects the county's position: 20.4% are children aged 0-15 years (Surrey 19.6%); 61.4% are aged 16-64 years (Surrey 61.6%); and 18.2% are older people aged 65+ years (Surrey 18.7%). 25.5% of Epsom and Ewell households comprise people aged 65+ only. This is slightly higher than the Surrey average of 24.4% and higher than the national average of 23.7%.

The percentage of people from an ethnic minority group is approximately 14%. Epsom and Ewell ethnic breakdown shows that the two largest ethnic groups are White (86%) and Asian/Asian British (8.6%). Other representation includes 1.5% Black/African/ Caribbean/Black British.

The borough's population is projected to grow by 16.2%. This is the second biggest percentage increase in Surrey, being closely behind Reigate and Banstead at 16.3%. Surrey's population is projected to grow by 10.9%. In line with the national picture, the borough's population is predicted to age. Whereas the number of under 50s will increase by 4.8%, the number of over 50s will increase by 34.2%. Notable changes include a 76.2% increase in the number of people aged 85+ years. The number of under 10s will increase by 3.9%, but will decrease across Surrey as a whole by 3.8%.

Social Mobility & Deprivation: Epsom and Ewell is ranked 18th out of 324 local authorities on the Social Mobility Index, the highest of all the Surrey districts.

Epsom and Ewell is one of the 10% least deprived areas in England. Out of 326 areas in the UK, Epsom and Ewell is ranked 310, where 1 is the most deprived. The three most deprived wards in Epsom and Ewell are Court, Ruxley and Town. Out of 193 wards in Surrey, Court is ranked 4th, Ruxley 22nd and Town 52nd.

Between 2014 and 2016 life expectancy at birth for men was 81.6 years and 85.3 years for women. This is slightly higher than the figures for Surrey of 81.4 years and 84.6 years respectively.

The inequalities gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived is 7 years for men and 2.9 years for women. In Surrey the difference is 5.7 years and 4.4 years respectively. The national inequality range is 9.3 years for men and 7.3 years for women.

There are 1,280 children living in poverty in Epsom and Ewell. Some areas of Court and Ruxley wards have the highest number of children in out-of-work families benefiting from tax credits or child benefits. 7.5% (2,336) of

households are estimated to experience fuel poverty. This is less than the Surrey and national average of 14% and 11% respectively.

For Citizens' Advice Epsom and Ewell, the four biggest areas of work in 2017/18 comprised welfare benefits; money advice and debt; housing; and employment.

Employment: 83.2% of the borough's population aged 16 - 64 years were economically active between July 2017 and June 2018. This is slightly higher than the equivalent percentage for Surrey at 80.4% and the South East at 81.1%. 86.1% and 80.4% of all males and females respectively aged 16 to 64 years were economically active. Between July 2017 and June 2018, 80.0% of the population aged 16 - 64 years were in employment. This is higher than the equivalent for Surrey at 78.3%. • 3% of the population aged 16 to 64 years were unemployed.

Out of Work Benefits: In October 2018 the percentage of claimants aged 16+ was 0.8%. The equivalent for Surrey was 0.7% and 1.4% for the South East.

Housing: There are approximately 32,240 dwellings in Epsom and Ewell. 91.9% are private sector owned, 8.1% private registered provided (2600) and 0.1% are local authority owned (includes those owned by other local authorities).

The percentage of private sector properties owned in the borough is higher than the equivalent average for Surrey (88.4%) and nationally (82.6%). The percentage of social housing (or private registered provider) at 8.07%, which is significantly lower than other areas in Surrey, such as Guilford which is 14.1%.

For the year ending December 2017, the median property price for a home in Epsom and Ewell was £470,000. This is £15,000 more than the previous year and £40,000 higher than the median property price in Surrey. Epsom and Ewell ranks the third most expensive borough in Surrey, with median house prices in Elmbridge being the highest at £570,000, and then Mole Valley at £500,000.

For those who work in Epsom and Ewell it is the least affordable place in Surrey to afford property. In 2017 local people could expect to pay 17.8 times their annual workplace-based earnings on purchasing a home. Those who work out of borough but live in Epsom and Ewell could expect to pay 13.07 times their annual salary to afford property. This affordability ratio is higher than the Surrey average of 11.86 and significantly higher when compared to the English (National) average 7.91.

Further information on the Borough Profile can be found - <https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/documents/s13315/Future40%20Annex%201.pdf>

7. Strategic fit

Within the Council there are a number of policies and strategies that link with the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy and it is important that this strategy feeds into the Council's overarching Four Year Plan.

- Four Year Plan
- Local plan & Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- Health & Wellbeing Strategy
- Service Delivery plans
- Housing Allocation Policy

8. The Homelessness Review - Understanding homelessness in Epsom & Ewell

In developing this strategy a detailed review of homelessness in Epsom & Ewell has been undertaken. The purpose of the Homelessness Review is to establish the extent of homelessness in the area, identify future trends and any gaps in the service currently being provided. The review has considered a range of information including:

- Number of homeless approaches
- Reasons for homelessness
- Homeless Prevention and Relief cases and outcomes
- Support needs of homeless households
- The type of individuals and households becoming homeless

- Households in nightly paid accommodation & in-borough temporary accommodation
- Supply and Demand of Affordable housing - Housing Needs Register and social housing applications
- Private rented housing & the Rent Deposit Scheme
- Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness
- The current Housing Options Service & existing homelessness prevention measures

The data within the Homelessness Review will be updated, evaluated and monitored on a regular basis so we are able to predict future trends of homelessness, identify households at risk of homelessness and inform new service improvements.

The Homelessness Review provides comprehensive information to develop the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 to 2027. The key findings of the review are presented in the summary below and influence the direction of the Strategy. Full details of the review are provided within the main Homelessness Review document which should be read in conjunction with this strategy.

What the Homelessness Review is telling us - Key findings, local trends, and challenges

Key Findings

- Homeless approaches to the Housing Options Service have significantly increased since the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act and forecasting predictions show that this increase is likely to continue.
- Despite the rising demand, the Housing Options Team continues to successfully prevent and relieve homelessness, with a total 1089 cases since 2018.
- The majority of people who approach the Housing Options Service for assistance do so either before they are threatened with homelessness (at the triage stage) or within 56 days before becoming homeless (the prevention stage). However, this is not the case for single people who are more likely to approach the Council when they are actually homeless (at the relief stage).
- The 3 main causes of homelessness are:
 - Asked to leave by family and friends
 - Termination of Assured Shorthold tenancies
 - Domestic Abuse
- 75% of homeless applicants said they had additional support needs. The most prevailing support need for all clients was with their mental health. Amongst the single homeless population the most prevailing support needs were; mental health; a history of rough sleeping; physical ill health/disability; offending; and drug & alcohol dependency. For the other households, including those with children, this was debt/budgeting; physical ill health/disability; and domestic abuse.
- The ethnic origin of homeless households appears to largely reflect the demography of the borough.
- In December 2021 there were a total of 235 homeless households accommodated by the Council in either in-borough temporary accommodation (155) or nightly paid accommodation (80). Of these, 161 households had dependent children, with a total of 302 children.
- The average time a homeless household with children spends in temporary accommodation is 225 weeks or 4.3 years before being offered permanent/settled social housing.
- There are approximately 2600 social housing properties in Epsom and Ewell. The percentage of social housing is at 8.07% and this is significantly lower than other areas in Surrey, such as Guildford which is 14.1%.
- In February 2022 there were 1159 housing applicants on the Council's Housing Needs Register.

- 51% of all applicants on the Housing Needs register have been assessed as having an ongoing housing need.
- The 2019 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) estimated that the overall net annual need for affordable housing is 349 units per annum.
- Less than 90 Housing Association social rented properties become available a year. Over 50 % of these vacancies are 1-bedroom and sheltered properties.
- Since 2018, 145 homeless prevention tenancies have been set up via Rent Deposit Scheme.
- Private rented sector landlords and letting agencies remain reluctant to let to households in receipt of benefits. The median market rent for a 2-bedroom property was £1350 pcm, 20 per cent higher than the Local Housing Allowance rate of £1100 (equating to a shortfall of over £2,880 per year). However, the average rent for a 2-bedroom property is actually £2069 pcm. This leaves the sector largely inaccessible to households on low incomes or in receipt of benefits.
- Consistently over the last 4 years single homeless people have accounted for over 50% of the Council's homeless approaches.
- In 2020/21 of the 316 homeless approaches 176 were single people, of which 31 were identified as having a history of rough sleeping as a support need.
- Under Everyone-In Epsom & Ewell Borough Council accommodated over 60 single people who were either rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.
- A history of rough sleeping was the 2nd most identified support need for single homeless people. Many of those sleeping rough or with a history of rough sleeping have multiple and complex needs with the predominant factors being poor mental health and substance misuse. Other characteristics are offending, low self-esteem, unemployment, chaotic behaviour, and some are difficult to engage.
- Within the borough there is a limited supply of low-level supported accommodation and there is a significant lack of medium-high level supported accommodation for rough sleepers/single homeless people with multiple and complex needs.

9. The Key Objectives for the next five years

In this strategy we have identified the six key objectives for the next 5 years we aim to achieve when addressing homelessness within the borough. These are outlined in detail below:

These six key objectives are: -

1. The early identification, intervention & prevention of homelessness
2. Reduce Rough Sleeping
3. Increase accommodation options
 - Social Rented Housing
 - Private Rented Accommodation
 - Supported and move-on Accommodation
 - In-borough Temporary Accommodation
4. Improve the Health & Wellbeing of homeless people
5. Ensuring sufficient support is available for homeless people
6. Partnership working

Key Objective 1 - The early identification, intervention & prevention of homelessness

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has put a legal duty on councils to offer more support to a wider range of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and to intervene earlier to prevent and relieve homelessness.

Successfully preventing and relieving homelessness has always been and remains the main aim of the Council's Housing Options Service.

Prevention actions include any activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless. This would involve activities to enable an applicant to remain in their current home or find alternative accommodation to prevent them from becoming homeless. Relief duties are owed to households who become homeless or are already homeless and require help to secure alternative accommodation.

The Homelessness Reduction Act provides opportunities to build on our preventative and relief work with partner organisations and to identify those at risk of homelessness at a much earlier stage, which will enable us to intervene earlier to prevent homelessness.

Early identification

Key to the success of this preventative focus is early identification of homelessness. By identifying the specific triggers, risk factors and causes of homelessness at different points in people's lives we will be able to develop a range of interventions specifically targeted at addressing these.

This approach recognises the wider impact of homelessness, particularly in relation to health and wellbeing and will empower individuals and build resilience.

The Council will work with core partners to understand and address the root causes of homelessness within the borough and encourage these organisations to actively seek to identify people at risk of homelessness and to refer people for help at an early stage when support could prevent homelessness.

Early intervention & Prevention

Preventing homelessness in the first place is a crucial element of this strategy and the Council recognises the importance of early intervention. It is widely accepted that models of homeless service delivery that prioritise prevention are most cost effective and can help more people avoid homelessness in the first place. Early intervention means recognising people at risk of homelessness and taking steps to prevent a setback turning into homelessness.

Early intervention can take the form of advice and information, mediation services; proactive interventions, such as negotiating with landlords to enable people to retain their tenancies; assistance with debt; and targeted services at known risk points, such as those leaving care, hospital, prison or the armed forces.

We want to proactively make residents, communities and organisations aware of the help and support available, rather than just waiting for people to approach us. Increase partnership working and making "Homelessness Everybody's Business", raise awareness of the impact homelessness can have on households and ensure that all agencies know how to appropriately refer households into the Housing Options Service. At the same time it is essential that we look at ways to reduce barriers for people seeking to engage so that it becomes as easy as possible for them to receive the support.

Addressing homelessness from the private rented sector is also critical and we will work with private sector landlords and lettings agents to understand how best to engage with them and to build an early alert system so they contact us if their tenants are at risk of homelessness.

We also want to manage our residents' expectations so that they understand when they approach our services that we are not able to offer many people a social home but can offer a wide range of other services to help them into a stable home. We also want to communicate the message that addressing homelessness requires the person or household affected and the Council to work together to find a solution.

In addition to providing high-quality advice and assistance we will ensure that there is a wide range of prevention measures, initiatives, and interventions available to tackle homelessness.

Early identification of problems, early targeted interventions and the provision of high-quality advice and assistance will ensure people have the best chance of staying in their home or obtaining alternative accommodation.

What we will do:

- Review, evaluate and monitor data to predict future trends of Homelessness, identify risks and the risk of homelessness and to inform new service improvements.
- We will identify the specific triggers, risk factors and causes of homelessness at different points in people's lives. Building on that, we will develop a range of interventions specifically targeted at addressing these.
- Research customer journeys into homelessness to identify early opportunities to prevent their homelessness and any barriers to doing so.
- Housing Services will deliver briefings to colleagues, professionals and elected members to provide up to date information about housing and homelessness to ensure that correct information is disseminated to residents.
- Further develop partnership working with the DWP and local Job Centre plus to strengthen referrals and manage the impact of universal credit
- Encourage early identification and interventions from public sector partners, community and voluntary sector organisations who are able to effectively inform those at risk of homelessness to seek advice from EEBC.
- Review and update housing options information & pathway plans ensuring the customer has access to accurate, useful and comprehensive information about housing options.
- Review & simplify the tasks for PHP's and accompanying advice literature.
- Publicise and promote the Council's prevention services more effectively in an accessible format, and encourage residents to contact us early and before a crisis, ensuring customers know how and where to approach and what to expect from the service.
- Review use of social media and how we communicate our services to the wider general public for example Facebook, twitter, chat pages.
- Devise an early identification & intervention protocol with all Registered Providers to address factors such as arrears, anti-social behaviour and tenancy sustainment.
- Work with Private Sector Landlords and Lettings Agents to develop early signposting protocols for tenants with arrears or other tenancy concerns, to the Housing Options Service, to prevent homelessness.
- Explore a motivational interviewing and resilience approach to the delivery of homelessness services.
- Review the referrals received through Duty to Refer to establish where further work needs to be completed in terms of links and training.
- Identify training needs and delivery training to meet any skill gaps and updates on new legislation and case law.
- Ensure the flexible use of the Council's homelessness prevention fund.

Key Objective 2 - Reduce Rough Sleeping

The Council's vision to end rough sleeping in the borough adopts the four core principles of the Governments Rough Sleeping Strategy; Prevention (understanding the issues that lead to rough sleeping and providing timely support for those at risk), Intervention (helping those already sleeping rough with swift support tailored to their individual circumstances), Recovery (supporting people in finding a new home and rebuilding their lives) and Systems Support to embed change and monitor progress.

Our approach includes identifying people earlier and intervening quickly to offer everyone a route off the streets. Improving the support we offer and enhancing the existing eSOS outreach support for new and entrenched rough sleepers. We will work with partners to further develop and increase the range of short and long term supported housing solutions available for rough sleepers, including exploring the Housing First model. The Housing First model is about providing a stable home for a rough sleeper and from this point, any other support needs they might have – such as alcohol and drug dependency, physical and/or mental health problems are addressed through coordinated and intensive support.

We will adopt a more flexible approach to working with rough sleepers and will explore the full range of appropriate options. We will continue to work closely with DLUH expert advisers to gain insight into models of good practice and to secure available government funding.

There is a clear link between homelessness and health and wellbeing. The national strategy highlights the importance of the role of health services in tackling rough sleeping because of the high proportion of rough sleepers who suffer from mental ill-health, physical ill-health, addiction issues and the challenges rough

sleepers face in accessing mainstream health services. We will also plan to promote the importance of health interventions in tackling rough sleeping and helping a person's recovery.

What we will do:

- Further develop the Ending Rough Sleeping Delivery plan
- Continue to work with eSOS partners to maintain the provision of effective Outreach Services.
- Deliver SWEP provision annually to prevent rough sleeping during severe weather.
- Provide eSOS assessment beds
- Explore a 'Housing First' model for the most vulnerable homeless applicants.
- Conduct a promotional campaign to the residents of the borough to provide information and awareness on rough sleeping and promote good practice amongst the general public to prevent people becoming entrenched into street life.
- Review accommodation and health support needs of single people with complex needs or challenging behaviours who experience recurring homelessness.
- Develop a No Second Night Out approach to prevent all rough sleeping
- Apply for Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding to create a new post of Single Person Homeless Support Officer to work solely with Rough Sleepers and single homeless people at risk of rough sleeping
- With our East Surrey Partners apply for Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding to enhance the ESOS Outreach Service
- Look to implement corporate "sponsorship" of up to 5 people with more complex and longer-term patterns of rough sleeping at requested by DLUHC.

Key Objective 3 - Increase accommodation options

The inability of households to access affordable housing is recognised in this strategy as one of the main causal factors for homelessness in the borough. The Homelessness Reduction Act alone cannot succeed in tackling homelessness when the underlying causes are mostly concerned with limited supply and affordability. The limited supply of both affordable housing and supported accommodation has not only significantly increased the number of households living in temporary accommodation but also the length of time they spend there before a settled housing solution can be found.

The biggest increase in demand for temporary accommodation is from single adults, often with multiple and complex needs. The majority of single adult households are placed in nightly paid accommodation outside of the borough. This demonstrates a need for the Council to secure more supported and move-on accommodation provision.

Consequently, increasing the range and availability of affordable accommodation options across all sectors is a key priority for the strategy.

The aim is to increase the availability of suitable and affordable housing in both the social rented and the private rented sector and to develop supported and move-on accommodation options for those with multiple and complex needs.

Alongside this we need to ensure the provision of good quality temporary accommodation within the borough so that households are able to maintain their support and social networks and reduce any disruption with getting to their place of employment and their children to school.

What we will do:

Social Rented Housing

- Address the housing needs of the borough, including affordable housing needs, through the development of our Local Plan
- Review of planning policies to be addressed through Local Plan to deliver more social/affordable, supported and temporary accommodation
- Work with Homes England to identify opportunities for the use of the Affordable Homes Programme 2021 to 2026 to fund Council developments of new affordable housing

- Identify opportunities for the development of social/affordable, supported and temporary accommodation on Council owned sites. List of sites being prepared.
- Purchase residential street properties to provide social/affordable, supported and temporary accommodation
- Explore opportunities for joint working with housing providers to create additional social/affordable, supported and temporary accommodation
- Develop a programme for the dispersal of s106 affordable housing funding to provide additional, social/affordable, supported and temporary accommodation
- Review nomination agreements
- Investigate ways to assist and/or incentivise social housing tenants under occupying larger family homes to downsize

Private Rented Accommodation

- Review and update Rent Deposit Scheme policy, procedures and scheme documents.
- Introduce rent in advance as a loan
- Set up e-learning pre-tenancy training and life skills to those threatened with homelessness or in temporary accommodation
- Review the current private rented sector (PRS) offer and explore/trial landlord incentives with a view to increasing local PRS opportunities.
- Provide enhanced information and support to customers on how to search for PRS properties to enable them to undertake future searches independently.
- Arrange and co-ordinate an annual Private Sector Landlords forum
- Work across the housing market to maximise opportunities to increase the range of accommodation options for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- Support and advise private sector landlords to understand the implications of Universal Credit and develop appropriate strategies to encourage PRS landlords to accept customers in receipt of welfare benefits
- Encourage landlords to increase the length of tenancies to provide stability and security to tenants.
- Encourage landlords to offer more affordable rents - closer to LHA rates.
- Facilitate the use of empty properties
- Investigate the feasibility of rent guarantee/ insurance schemes for tenants and landlords

Supported and move-on Accommodation

- We will review our current provision of supported accommodation and explore the need for specialist supported accommodation for clients that have multiple and complex needs
- Look to increase supported accommodation in partnership with other boroughs/districts, public bodies and Housing Associations.
- Work with local social landlords to investigate developing a trial of a Housing First style approach
- Work with Transform Housing & Support to deliver 4 units of supported move- on accommodation for Rough Sleepers, funded through Rough Sleeper Accommodation Program (RSAP) and the Homes England Move-On Fund.

In-borough Temporary Accommodation

- Review the supply of temporary accommodation and identify future local temporary accommodation needs and how these can be best met.
- Review and update the temporary accommodation procurement plan
- Review and update the temporary accommodation placement policy.
- Increase the number of private sector leasing scheme properties
- Work with Sanctuary Housing to develop up to 14 units of in-borough temporary accommodation at Defoe Court.

Key Objective 4 - Improve the Health & Wellbeing of homeless people

In 2019, the Council agreed the Borough's Health & Wellbeing strategy. The strategy identified a number of health and wellbeing inequalities for the borough, with a focus on the health and wellbeing inequalities experienced by those groups who are more vulnerable due to their life circumstance. The strategy highlighted that poor health and wellbeing outcomes can be the direct result of the wider determinants of health (such as social and economic status or living environment). An individual who is homeless is significantly more likely to experience poor physical and mental health, as a direct result of having in-secure housing, or no address. This is both situational in respect of not being able to register at the necessary health services, and circumstantial in respect of a significant shift in prioritisation; trying to secure the finances to survive, as opposed to being able to engage in behaviours that help them thrive.

It is widely understood that those experiencing homelessness are also 80% more likely to have mental health problems, and that this is may be further compounded by other factors such substance misuse, poverty/debt, domestic abuse, learning difficulties, employment prospects, and poor physical health. In recognition that these factors persist upon the prevention or resolution of homelessness, the Council will seek to work with statutory and voluntary services to ensure that the opportunities afforded to those at risk of homelessness are met. In the absence of such, determinants such as poverty/debt will continue to adversely impact on an individual's ability to engage in positive health behaviours. Supporting our homeless population remains a key priority for the Council and we will promote the importance of health interventions in helping a homeless person's recovery.

What we will do:

- Develop a make every contact matter ethos across the service and with partners.
- Work with applicants to build on their own skills and strengths to develop their resilience and self-sufficiency.
- Work closely with the SCC Public Health and Health Services to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable homeless people, especially those with multiple & complex needs through the work of the Surrey Homeless Multi-Agency Group (MAG).
- Work in partnership with Surrey Adults Matters (SAM) to focus on delivering better coordinated services to improve the lives of adults facing Severe Multiple Disadvantage
- Work closely with SCC Public Health/SAM to pilot the "Bridge the Gap" trauma informed Outreach Support Service.

Key Objective 5 - Ensuring sufficient support is available for homeless people

Epsom & Ewell recognises that for some households homelessness cannot be tackled, or prevented, solely through the provision of accommodation. Some households will require a range of support services to help them sustain their accommodation as well as personal support relating to factors such as relationship breakdown, domestic abuse, mental health problems, drug and alcohol addiction, offending, poverty, debt and unemployment.

One of the key areas of focus in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 is that the support needs of applicants are assessed and personalised housing plans are made to meet any support needs identified. The Act also requires that the housing advice given is tailored to the needs of specific vulnerable groups. Groups specifically mentioned are: those leaving prison or youth detention; care leavers; former members of the armed forces; people leaving hospital; people experiencing domestic abuse; and those suffering from mental illness.

The Council wants to work with our partners to improve the support available to households who are homeless or could be at risk of becoming homeless in the future. Providing the right support is important in helping homeless households recover from the effects of homelessness and will help build resilience.

What we will do:

- Ensure there is a clear documented housing pathway for groups who need specialist support, including each of the specified groups.
- Review the internal and external support services provided and explore opportunities to provide a more targeted and efficient service, particularly to those with complex needs to intervene early to prevent recurring homelessness.

- Continue to fund and work with our East Surrey partners and Thames Reach to provide specialist outreach support services for rough sleepers.
- Continue to support those households to access employment, education and training through continuing to fund ETHOS and through working with the Employment Hub.
- Ensure that homeless households have the skills required to maintain a tenancy.
- Continue to work with tenancy sustainment and floating support services to ensure that those households placed in temporary accommodation are receiving appropriate support and assistance.
- Review our current provision of supported accommodation and explore the need for specialist supported accommodation for clients that have multiple and complex needs.
- Proactively work with households in temporary accommodation to identify and secure suitable alternative accommodation and ensure that each household has a move on plan.
- For some homeless households there are issues that prevent move on from temporary accommodation. There are a variety of reasons for this which include; the benefit cap, history of rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, offending, complex health issues and other risk issues that make both social and private landlords reluctant to accept them as tenants. We will identify these issues and put in place measures to try to address them.
- Continue to support homeless household to find and secure private rented accommodation through the Council's Rent Deposit Scheme.
- Offer tenancy support and sustainment to households who are assisted to access private rented accommodation via the Council's Rent Deposit Scheme.
- Continue to support individuals and families that experience domestic abuse.
- Continue to fund the Sanctuary Scheme to help victims of domestic abuse to safely remain in their homes.
- Identify support needs at an early stage and refer to appropriate services (drug/alcohol, mental health, young persons, domestic abuse, ex-offenders, money advice, employment support, floating support, foodbank, CAB).
- Promote resilience and support to those who are or used to be homeless, to improve their resilience and reduce the risk of them from becoming homeless again.
- Work with Children's Services and the Family Support team to identify families who need some additional help beyond accommodation needs and ensure arrangements are in place to refer households with children to Early Help/Family Support as early as possible
- Work with partners to identify tenants at risk of "cuckooing" and ensure rapid interventions are in place to support them.
- Work with partners to support Surrey Adult Matters (MEAM) and the "Bridge the Gap" trauma informed Outreach Support Service for homeless people
- Make referrals to furniture projects to ensure that homeless households have a furniture offer when moving into new accommodation.

Key Objective 6 - Partnership working - Preventing homelessness is everybody's business

It is widely recognised that no single organisation can prevent or relieve homelessness. All partners have a role to play in preventing homelessness and addressing the underlying issues that are the root causes of homelessness such as poverty, unemployment, poor physical and mental health, and family breakdown. "Preventing homelessness is everybody's business".

Addressing the underlying causes of homelessness and working closely with relevant partners is pivotal to the success of this strategy. The Housing Options Service has well established partner relationships with core agencies within the borough however it is a priority for this strategy that these relationships continue to develop and strengthen in order to ensure the borough is best equipped to deal with the changing pressures of homelessness.

Our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out how we will work with our partners across all sectors to develop an integrated approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping. This will include both statutory and non-statutory stakeholders and include the private sector and those with lived experience of homelessness.

Only by working together can we effectively tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. By working together we can improve services and interventions that support people when they are most in need and achieve better outcomes for them.

What we will do:

- Increase partnership working and make “homelessness everybody’s business”, raise awareness of the impact homelessness can have on households and ensure that all agencies know how to appropriately refer households into the Housing Options Service.
- Host an annual Homelessness forum with partner agencies.
- Host an annual Registered Provider Forum with a focus upon support for tenants at risk of homelessness.
- Host an annual Private Landlord’s Forum to increase the availability of private rented accommodation in the borough and to encourage good practice. We will address the gap between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and private sector rents by building relationships with landlords to increase the supply of affordable rented accommodation in the borough
- Work in partnership to ensure appropriate multi-agency joint working and referral arrangements are in place for Housing Options Service and to explore how preventative services can be developed and improved.
- Promote more joined up working with, health, prison and probation services to prevent homelessness on discharge or release from an institution.
- Work closely with SCC Public Health and the Health Service to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable homeless people, especially those with multiple & complex needs through the work of the Surrey Homeless Multi-Agency Group (MAG).
- Further develop partnership working with the DWP and local Jobcentre plus to ensure the Housing Options Service has access to information and receive regular updates, including training on UC and other benefits.
- Maximise funding opportunities through partnership working to identify and bid for new initiatives, building upon recent successes (e.g. MEAM, Housing First, RSI, Next Steps and RSAP).
- Work with partners to identify how those with lived experience of homelessness can be included in the design and delivery of services.
- Campaign and raise awareness of issues of homelessness that are linked to affordability and to LHA rates and the Benefit Cap.
- Work with our Surrey partners in implementing the Domestic Abuse Act
- Work with our Surrey partners and Children Services in reviewing and implementing the Joint Housing Protocol for 16 & 17 year olds & the Care Leavers Protocol
- Work closely with our Surrey partners and Health Services to review and implement the Mental Health Protocol and the Hospital Discharge Protocol.

10. Consultation

In drafting the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy we will undertake consultation with our staff and residents; service users; local support services; the voluntary sector and housing providers. The consultation will be in the form of focus groups and on-line questionnaires.

11. Resourcing the Strategy

Many of the actions within the Action plan are administrative and procedural and will involve officer time. These will be prioritised and spread over the 5-year life span of the strategy.

Currently the Council receives Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) (formally MHCLG) annual Homelessness Prevention Grant. This grant has been confirmed for 2022/23. This grant is used to pay for the temporary accommodation management fee with our RSL temporary accommodations providers, some staffing costs and some homeless prevention measures such as the Rent Deposit scheme.

We will develop a programme for the dispersal of s106 affordable housing funding to provide additional social/affordable, supported and temporary accommodation.

We will ensure that we apply for any further funding bids the Government launch that are appropriate to meeting the needs of our borough. We will also explore other funding streams with partners where appropriate.

12. Monitoring and Review

The multi-agency Homelessness Forum will meet annually to review the Action Plan, monitor progress towards meeting the aims of the new strategy and to develop ideas for future action.

Responsibility for driving through this strategy and ensuring that it delivers key objectives lies with the Council's Strategic Housing Manager.

13. The Action Plan

Delivery of the Strategy will be supported by an action plan, which sets out the individual actions and activities to be undertaken and details how the Council will achieve the aims and objectives of the strategy. This Action Plan is set out in appendix 2.

14. Equality Impact Assessment

(To be completed following consultation)

15. Publication

A copy of this Strategy is available on the Council's website and is available on request at the Council's offices. A paper copy can also be provided upon request.

A copy can be made available in a different language, large print and braille on request.

16. Appendices

Appendix 2 - Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan – Consultation Draft

Appendix 3 - Homelessness Review 2022– Consultation Draft

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan 2022-27
Consultation draft

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan 2022-27 – Consultation draft

Within the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy six key objectives have been identified to meet the needs of our residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness over the next 5 years.

These six key objectives are: -

1. The early identification, intervention & prevention of homelessness
2. Reduce Rough Sleeping
3. Increase accommodation options: -
 - Social Rented housing
 - Private Rented Accommodation
 - Supported and move-on Accommodation
 - In-borough Temporary Accommodation
4. Improve the Health & Wellbeing of homeless people
5. Ensuring sufficient support is available for homeless people
6. Partnership working

Delivery of the strategy will be supported by this Action Plan, which sets out the individual actions and activities to be undertaken and details how the Council will achieve the aims and objectives of the strategy. The strategy and Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis through a multi-agency Homelessness Forum.

Key Objective 1 – The early identification, intervention & prevention of homelessness				
No.	Action: What we will do?	Lead <i>To be agreed post consultation</i>	Target Date <i>Timeline to be agreed post consultation</i>	Status
1.1	Review, evaluate and monitor data to predict future trends of Homelessness, identify households at risk of homelessness and to inform new service improvements.			
1.2	Identify the specific triggers, risk factors and causes of homelessness at different points in people’s lives. Building on that, we will develop a range of interventions specifically targeted at addressing these			
1.3	Research customer journeys into homelessness to identify early opportunities to prevent their homelessness and any barriers to doing			
1.4	Housing Services to deliver briefings to colleagues, professionals and elected members to provide up to date information about			

	housing and homelessness to ensure that correct information is disseminated to residents			
1.5	Further develop partnership working with the DWP and local jobcentre plus to strengthen referrals and manage the impact of universal credit.			
1.6	Encourage early identification and interventions from public sector partners, community and voluntary sector organisations who are able to effectively inform those at risk of homelessness to seek advice from EEBC.			
1.7	Review and update housing options information & pathway plans ensuring the customer has access to accurate, useful and comprehensive information about housing options.			
1.8	Review & simplify the tasks for PHPs and accompanying advice literature.			
1.9	Publicise and promote the Council's prevention services more effectively in an accessible format and encourage residents to contact us early and before a crisis, ensuring customers know how and where to approach and what to expect from the service.			
1.10	Review use of social media and how we communicate our services to the wider general public for example Facebook, twitter, chat pages.			
1.11	Devise an early identification & intervention protocol with all Registered Providers to address factors such as arrears, anti-social behaviour and tenancy sustainment.			
1.12	Work with Private Sector Landlords and Lettings Agents to develop early signposting protocols for tenants with arrears or other tenancy concerns, to the Housing Options Service, to prevent homelessness.			
1.13	Review the referrals received through Duty to Refer to establish where further work needs to be completed in terms of links and training.			
1.14	Explore a motivational interviewing and resilience approach to the delivery of homelessness services.			
1.15	Identify training needs and delivery training to meet any skill gaps and updates on new legislation and case law.			
1.16	Ensure flexible use of the Council's Homelessness Prevention fund			

Key Objective 2 - Reduce Rough Sleeping				
No.	Action: What we will do?	Lead <i>To be agreed post consultation</i>	Target Date <i>Timeline to be agreed post consultation</i>	Status
2.1	Further develop the Ending Rough Sleeping Delivery Plan			
2.2	Continue to work with eSOS partners to maintain the provision of effective Outreach Services.			
2.3	Deliver SWEP provision annually to prevent rough sleeping during severe weather.			
2.4	Provide eSOS assessment beds			
2.5	Explore a 'Housing First' model for the most vulnerable homeless applicants			
2.6	Conduct a promotional campaign to the residents of EEBC to provide information and awareness on rough sleeping and promote good practice amongst the general public to prevent people becoming entrenched into street life.			
2.7	Review accommodation and health support needs of single people with complex needs or challenging behaviours who experience			

	recurring homelessness.			
2.8	Develop a No Second Night Out approach to prevent all rough sleeping			
2.9	Apply for Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding to create a new post of Single Person Homeless Support Officer to work solely with Rough Sleepers and single homeless people at risk of rough sleeping		Feb 2022	
2.10	With our East Surrey Partners apply for Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding to enhance the ESOS Outreach Service.		Feb 2022	
2.11	Look to implement corporate "sponsorship" of up to 5 people with more complex and longer-term patterns of rough sleeping at requested by DLUHC.			

Key Objective 3 - Increase accommodation options; Social Rented Housing; Private Rented Accommodation; Supported and move on Accommodation; In-borough Temporary Accommodation

No.	Acton: What we will do?	Lead <i>To be agreed post consultation</i>	Target Date <i>Timeline to be agreed post consultation</i>	Status
Social Rented Housing				
3.1	Address the housing needs of the borough, including affordable housing needs, through the development of our Local Plan			
3.2	Review of planning policies to be addressed through Local Plan to deliver more social/affordable, supported & temporary accommodation			
3.4	Work with Homes England to identify opportunities for the use of the Affordable Homes Programme 2021 to 2026 to fund Council developments of new affordable housing			
3.5	Identify opportunities for the development of social/ affordable/temporary accommodation on Council owned sites. List of sites being prepared.			
3.6	Purchase residential street properties to provide social/affordable, supported & temporary accommodation			
3.7	Explore opportunities for joint working with housing providers to create additional social/affordable, supported & temporary accommodation			
3.8	Develop a programme for the dispersal of s106 affordable housing funding to provide additional, social/affordable, supported and temporary accommodation			
3.9	Review nomination agreements			
3.10	Investigate ways to assist and / or incentivise social housing tenants under occupying larger family homes to downsize			
Private Rented Accommodation				
3.11	Review and update Rent Deposit Scheme policy, procedures and scheme documents.			
3.12	Introduce rent in advance as a loan			
3.13	Set up e-learning pre-tenancy training and life skills to those threatened with homelessness or in temporary accommodation.			
3.14	Review the current private rented sector (PRS) offer and explore/trial landlord incentives with a view to increasing local PRS opportunities.			

3.15	Provide enhanced information and support to customers on how to search for PRS properties to enable them to undertake future searches independently.			
3.16	Arrange and co-ordinate an annual Private Sector Landlords forum			
3.17	Work across the housing market to maximise opportunities to increase the range of accommodation options for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.			
3.18	Support and advise private sector landlords to understand the implications of Universal Credit and develop appropriate strategies to encourage landlords to accept customers in receipt of welfare benefits			
3.19	Encourage landlords to increase the length of tenancies to provide stability and security to tenants.			
3.20	Encourage landlords to offer more affordable rents - closer to LHA rates.			
3.21	Facilitate the use of empty properties			
3.22	Investigate the feasibility of rent guarantee/ insurance schemes for tenants and landlords			
Supported and move-on Accommodation				
3.21	We will review our current provision of supported accommodation and explore the need for specialist supported accommodation for clients that have multiple and complex needs.			
3.22	Look to increase supported accommodation in partnership with other boroughs/districts, public bodies and Housing Associations.			
3.23	Work with local social landlords to investigate developing a trial of a Housing First style approach			
3.24	Work with Transform Housing & Support to deliver 4 units of supported move- on accommodation for Rough Sleepers, funded through Rough Sleeper Accommodation Program (RSAP) and the Homes England Move-On Fund.			
In-borough Temporary Accommodation				
3.25	Review the supply of temporary accommodation and identify future local temporary accommodation needs and how these can be best met.			
3.26	Review and update temporary accommodation procurement plan			
3.27	Review and update the temporary accommodation placement policy.			
3.28	Increase the number of private sector leasing scheme properties			
3.29	Work with Sanctuary Housing to develop up to 14 units of in-borough temporary accommodation at Defoe Court.			

Key Objective 4 - Improve the Health & Wellbeing of homeless people				
No.	Action: What we will do?	Lead <i>To be agreed post consultation</i>	Target Date <i>Timeline to be agreed post consultation</i>	Status
4.1	Develop a make every contact matter ethos across the service and with partners.			
4.2	Work with applicants to build on their own skills and strengths to develop their resilience and self-sufficiency.			
4.3	Work closely with the SCC Public Health and Health Services to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable homeless people, especially those with multiple & complex needs through the work of the Surrey Homeless Multi-agency Group (MAG).			
4.4	Work in partnership with Surrey Adults Matters (SAM) to focus on delivering better coordinated services to improve the lives of adults facing Severe Multiple Disadvantage			

4.5	Work with SCC Public Health/SAM to pilot the “Bridge the Gap” trauma informed Outreach Support Service for homeless people			
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Key Objective 5 - Ensuring sufficient support is available for homeless people

No.	Action: What we will do?	Lead <i>To be agreed post consultation</i>	Target Date <i>Timeline to be agreed post consultation</i>	Status
5.1	Ensure there is a clear documented housing pathway for groups who need specialist support, including each of the specified groups.			
5.2	Review the internal and external support services provided and explore opportunities to provide a more targeted and efficient service, particularly to those with complex needs to intervene early to prevent recurring homelessness.			
5.3	Continue to fund and work with our East Surrey partners and Thames Reach to provide a specialist outreach support services for rough sleepers.			
5.4	Continue to support those households to access employment, education and training through continuing to fund ETHOS and through working with the Employment Hub.			
5.5	Ensure that homeless households have the skills required to maintain a tenancy.			
5.6	Continue to work with tenancy sustainment and floating support services to ensure that those households placed in temporary accommodation are receiving appropriate support and assistance.			
5.7	Work with SCC to review our current provision of Housing Related Support provision.			
5.8	Proactively work with households in temporary accommodation to identify and secure suitable alternative accommodation and ensure that each household has a move on plan.			
5.9	For some homeless households there are issues that prevent move on from temporary accommodation. There are a variety of reasons for this which include; the benefit cap, history of rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, offending, complex health issues and other risk issues that make both social and private landlords reluctant to accept them as tenants. We will identify these issues and put in place measures to try to address them.			
5.10	Continue to support homeless household to find and secure private rented accommodation through the Council’s Rent Deposit Scheme.			
5.11	Offer tenancy support and sustainment to households who are assisted to access private rented accommodation via the Council’s Rent Deposit Scheme.			
5.12	Continue to support individuals and families that experience domestic abuse.			
5.13	Continue to fund the Sanctuary Scheme to help victims of domestic abuse safely to remain in their homes.			
5.14	Identify support needs at an early stage and refer to appropriate services (drug/alcohol, mental health, young persons, domestic abuse, ex-offenders, money advice, employment support, floating support, foodbank, CAB).			
5.15	Promote resilience and support to those who are or used to be homeless, to improve their resilience and reduce the risk of them from becoming homeless again.			
5.16	Work with Children’s Services and the Family Support team to identify families who need some additional help beyond accommodation needs and ensure arrangements are in place to refer households with children to Early Help/Family Support as early			

	as possible.			
5.17	Work with partners to identify tenants at risk of “cuckooing” and ensure rapid interventions are in place to support them.			
5.18	Work in partnership with Surrey Adults Matters (SAM) to focus on delivering better coordinated services to improve the lives of adults facing Severe Multiple Disadvantage			
5.19	Make referrals to furniture projects to ensure that homeless households have a furniture offer when moving into new accommodation			

Key Objective 6 - Partnership working

No.	Action: What we will do?	Lead <i>To be agreed post consultation</i>	Target Date <i>Timeline to be agreed post consultation</i>	Status
6.1	Increase partnership working and make “homelessness Everybody’s Business”, raise awareness of the impact homelessness can have on households and ensure that all agencies know how to appropriately refer households into the Housing Options Service.			
6.2	Host an annual Homelessness forum with partner agencies.			
6.3	Host an annual Registered Provider Forum with a focus upon support for tenants at risk of homelessness.			
6.4	Host an annual Private Landlord’s Forum to increase the availability of private rented accommodation in the borough and to encourage good practice. We will address the gap between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and private sector rents by building relationships with landlords to increase the supply of affordable rented accommodation in the borough.			
6.5	Work in partnership to ensure appropriate multi-agency joint working and referral arrangements are in place for Housing Options Service and to explore how preventative services can be developed and improved.			
6.6	Promote more joined up working with, health, prison and probation services to prevent homelessness on discharge or release from an institution			
6.7	Work closely with the SCC Public Health and Health Services to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable homeless people.			
6.8	Further develop partnership working with the DWP and local Jobcentre plus to ensure the Housing Options Service has access to information and receive regular updates, including training on UC and other benefits.			
6.9	Maximise funding opportunities through partnership working to identify and bid for new initiatives, building upon recent successes (e.g. MEAM, Housing First, RSI, Next Steps and RSAP).			
6.10	Work with partners to identify how those with lived experience of homelessness can be included in the design and delivery of services.			
6.11	Campaign and raise awareness of issues of homelessness that are linked to affordability and to LHA rates and Benefit Cap.			
6.12	Work with our Surrey partners in implementing the Domestic Abuse Act			
6.13	Work with our Surrey partners and Children Services in reviewing and implementing the Joint Housing Protocol for 16 & 17 year olds & the Care Leavers Protocol			
6.14	Work closely with our Surrey partners and Health Services to review and implement the Mental Health Protocol and the Hospital Discharge Protocol			

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**Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy
2022-2027**

The Homelessness Review 2022

Consultation draft

1. The Homelessness Review 2022 - Understanding homelessness in Epsom & Ewell

In developing the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 to 2027 a detailed review of homelessness in Epsom & Ewell has been undertaken.

The purpose of the Homelessness Review is to establish the extent of homelessness in the area, identifying future trends and any gaps in the service currently being provided. The review has considered a range of information including:

- Number of homeless approaches
- Reasons for homelessness
- Homeless Prevention and Relief cases and outcomes
- Support needs of homeless households
- The type of individuals and households becoming homeless
- Households in nightly paid accommodation & in-borough temporary accommodation
- Supply and Demand of Affordable housing - Housing Needs Register and social housing lettings
- Private rented housing & the Rent Deposit Scheme
- Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness
- The current Housing Options Service & existing homelessness prevention measures

The data within the Homelessness Review will be updated, evaluated and monitored on a regular basis so we are able to predict future trends of homelessness, identify households at risk of homelessness and to inform new service improvements.

The Homelessness Review provides comprehensive information to develop the Council’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 to 2027 and the Homelessness Review document should be read in conjunction with that strategy. A summary of the key findings of the Homelessness Review can be found in section 11.

The data set used to undertake this review was from information extracted from the Council’s Abritas Housing System for the period 2018/19 up to quarter 3, 2021/22 and is based on Homelessness Case Level Collection data (H-CLIC).

The number of households approaching the Council’s Housing Options Service for homeless assistance

The number of households approaching the Council for homeless assistance continues to increase. The complexity of problems presented by these people has also increased, (for example people with multiple and complex needs - mental health issues; physical health; substance misuse issues) as has the difficulty in finding ways to help them.

As shown in the table below, between April 2018 and December 2021 the Housing Option Service dealt with 1385 approaches for advice and assistance regarding homelessness.

Homeless Approaches & Outcomes	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 Q1-3
Total number of homeless approaches	320	435	316	314
Early Advice given to resolve housing problem/ case closed (triage)	68	289	218	212
Number of homeless applications where homelessness was successfully prevented	20	49	64	33
Number of homeless applications where homelessness was successfully relieved	17	34	49	36
Number of homeless applications where the Council accepted a full homeless duty	6	54	30	52
Number of homeless applications where the Council did not have a full duty - not eligible/no local connection/ intentionally homeless	7	11	6	4
Number presenting at prevention stage	80	132	82	79
Number presenting at relief stage	84	153	144	101

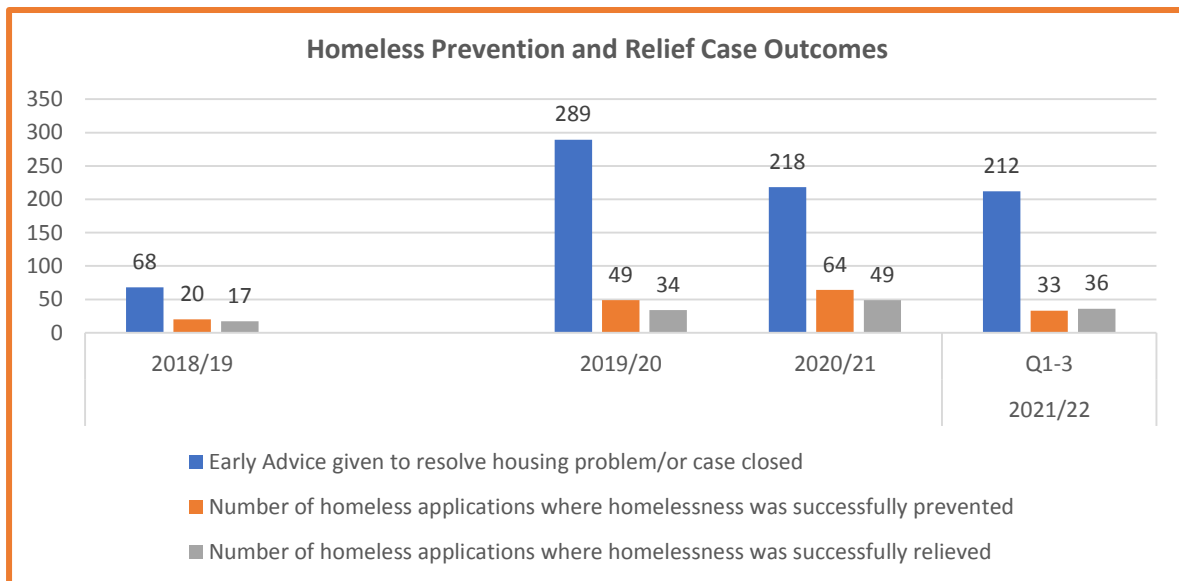
2. Homeless Prevention and Relief cases

Despite the rising demand, the Housing Options Team continues to successfully prevent and relieve homelessness. The number of cases where the Council has successfully prevented or relieved homelessness is outlined in the chart below.

The Homelessness Reduction Act requires local housing authorities to focus upon preventing or relieving homelessness.

Prevention duties include any activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless. This would involve activities to enable an applicant to remain in their current home or find alternative accommodation to prevent them from becoming homeless. Relief duties are owed to households that are already homeless and require help to secure alternative accommodation.

The Council is focused upon preventing or relieving homelessness at the earliest opportunity and in 2020 created a new Housing Options Preventions officer post. The success of this role can be seen in the number of cases that were resolved at the triage early advice stage since 2020.



Analysis of the approaches being made has shown that the majority of people who approach the Housing Options Service for assistance do so either before they are threatened with homelessness (at the triage stage) or within 56 days before becoming homeless (the prevention stage).

It is important to maintain this as the earlier people approach us for assistance, the more opportunity there is for us to prevent any homelessness occurring.

The statistics from this Homelessness Review indicate that single people are more likely to approach the Council when they are actually homeless (at the relief stage). This makes the task of resolving their housing difficulty harder and may mean that the Council has a duty to provide interim accommodation. A challenge for the Council therefore is to ensure that our services are targeted to ensure that all demographics/groups approach us for assistance at an earlier stage in their housing situation.

Early identification of problems, early targeted interventions and the provision of high-quality advice and assistance will ensure people have the best chance of staying in their home or obtaining alternative accommodation.

3. Reasons for Homelessness

People become homeless for many different reasons. There are social causes of homelessness, such as lack of affordable housing or private rented accommodation, as well as wider economic and social factors such as poverty & unemployment and life events that cause individuals to become homeless. For many, life events like a relationship breaking down, losing a job, mental or physical health problems, or substance misuse, can be

the trigger. Being homeless can in turn make many of these problems even harder to resolve without adequate or available support.

Changes of circumstances and removal of support systems can also lead to homelessness, such as release from prison, discharge from the armed forces, or coming out of the local authority care system.

In Epsom & Ewell and nationally the 3 main causes of homelessness are:

- Asked to leave by family and friends
- Termination of Assured Shorthold tenancies
- Domestic Abuse

The chart below indicates all the reasons for homeless approaches to the Council over the last 4 years since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2018.

For 2020/21 & 2021/22 because of the Emergency Covid-19 legislation there was a ban on most forms of evictions, so for this period these figures are not representative. These restrictions were removed in October 2021 and cases are now starting to progress their way through the County Court system. It is anticipated that into 2022/23 a significantly higher number of people will approach the Council as homeless/threatened with homelessness from the private rented sector, many of whom would not have previously needed to use the service before.

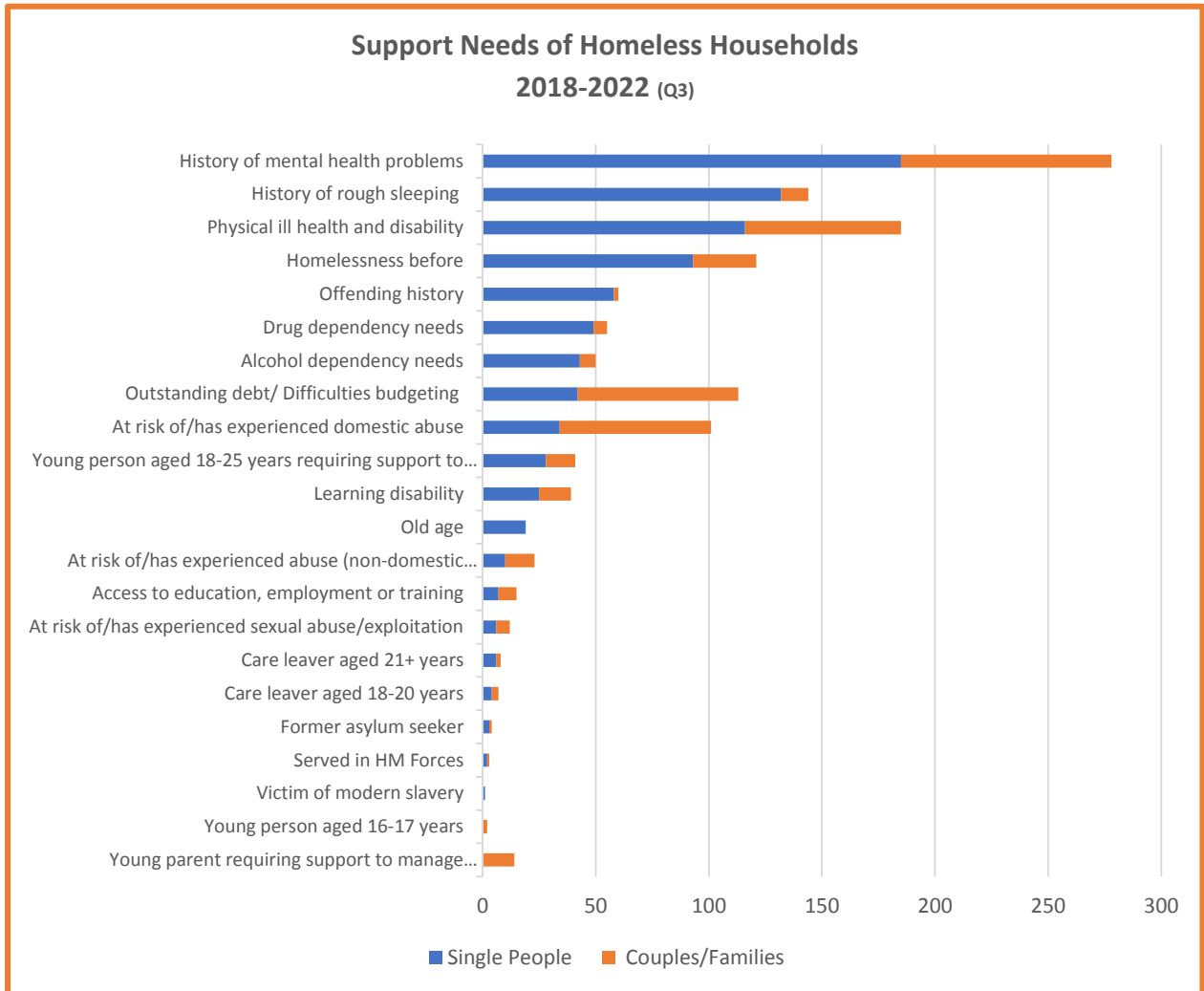
Reasons for Homelessness	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 Q1-3
Family no longer willing or able to accommodate	64	79	83	48
Friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	19	13	8	11
End of private rented tenancy - assured shorthold tenancy	52	83	29	41
Domestic Abuse	31	26	21	18
Relationship with partner ended (non-violent breakdown)	5	21	22	6
Non-racially motivated / other motivated violence or harassment	5	4	5	8
End of private rented tenancy - not assured shorthold tenancy	5	3	2	5
End of social rented tenancy	5	3	4	2
Eviction from supported housing	2	4	2	1
Fire or flood /other emergency	1	2	1	4
Left institution with no accommodation available	2	1	1	1
Left HM Forces		1	1	3
Mortgage repossession	3	2		
Property disrepair	2	2	1	
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support		2	1	1
Domestic abuse - alleged perpetrator excluded from property				1
Racially motivated violence or harassment		1		
Other	41	71	55	36
Early Advice given to resolve case/or case closed	83	117	79	128

4. Support needs of homeless applicants

Data, collected as part of the new Homeless Reduction Act requirements have given a much more detailed picture of the support needs of clients. The data for Epsom & Ewell shows that the most prevailing support need for all clients was with their mental health. Amongst the single homeless population the most prevailing support needs were; mental health; a history of rough sleeping; physical ill health/disability; offending; and

drug & alcohol dependency. For the other households, including those with children, was physical ill health/disability; and domestic abuse.

The information collected in the charts below has been separated out into the support needs of the single homeless population and then other households including those with children.



5. Demographics of homeless households

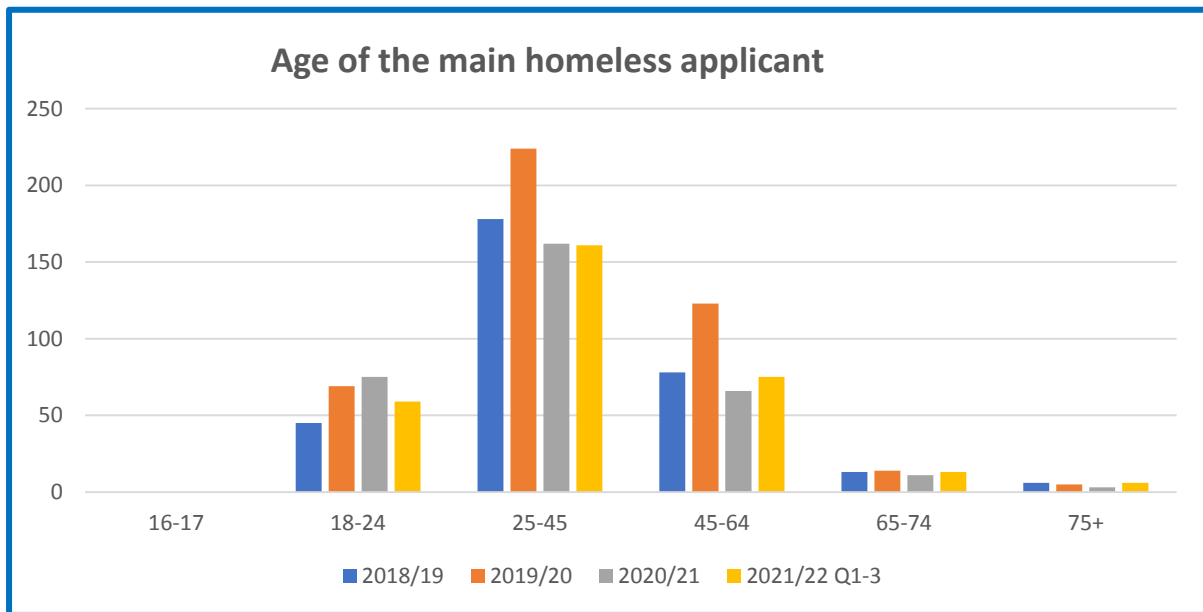
The following charts provide indicative figures demonstrating the demography of households approaching the Council. They do not cover a complete data set for the Housing Service and only include data for ethnicity, age and household composition.

Household composition

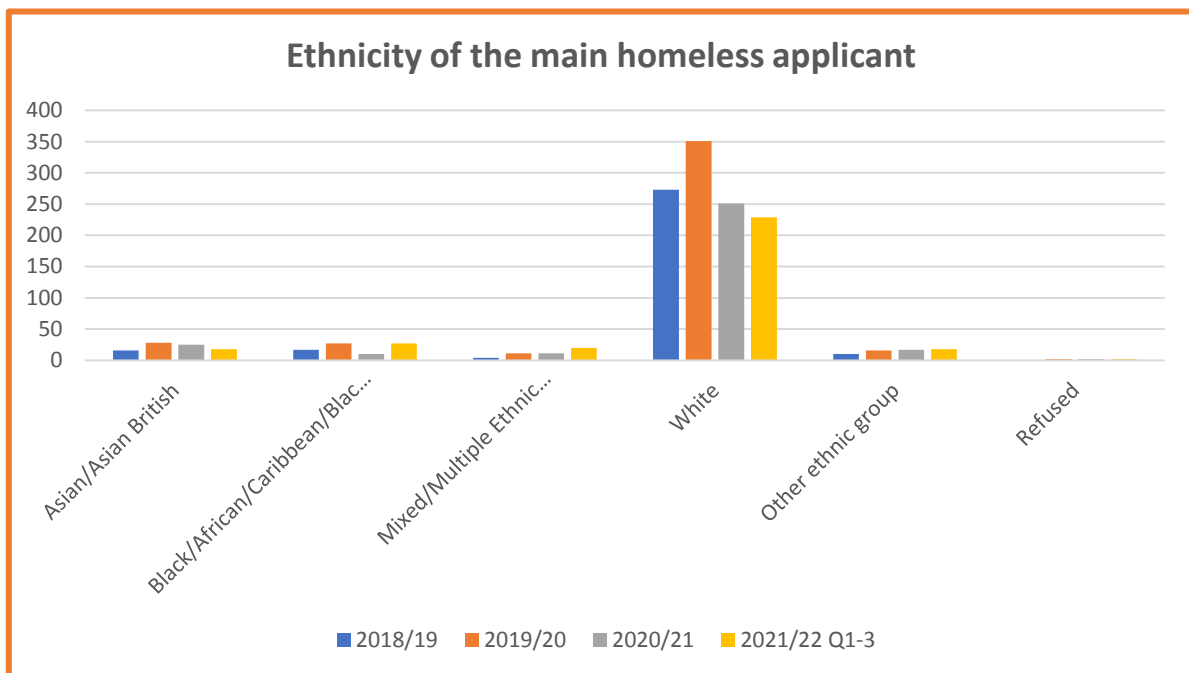
The chart below provides a breakdown by household composition and shows that consistently over the last 4 years single homeless people have account for over 50% of the Council’s homeless approaches. 39.6% are from families with dependent children or who are pregnant.

Household Composition	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 Q1-3
Single Person households	132	231	176	162
Households with dependent children/ or pregnant	146	166	119	118
Couples/Households with non-dependant adult children / other	42	38	22	34

The chart below demonstrates the age range in terms of people approaching for advice and assistance over the past 4 financial years.



The table below demonstrates the ethnic origin of the main homeless applicant approaching the Housing Options Service over the past 4 years. The ethnic origin of homeless households appears to largely reflect the demography of the borough.



6. Homeless households in temporary accommodation and nightly paid interim/temporary accommodation

The duty to provide interim/temporary accommodation is triggered when there is a reason to believe a household may be eligible for assistance, homeless and in priority need. As at December 2021 there were a total of 235 households accommodated by the Council in either in-borough temporary accommodation (155) or nightly paid accommodation (80). Of these, 161 households had dependent children, with a total of 302 children.

Nightly paid interim/temporary accommodation

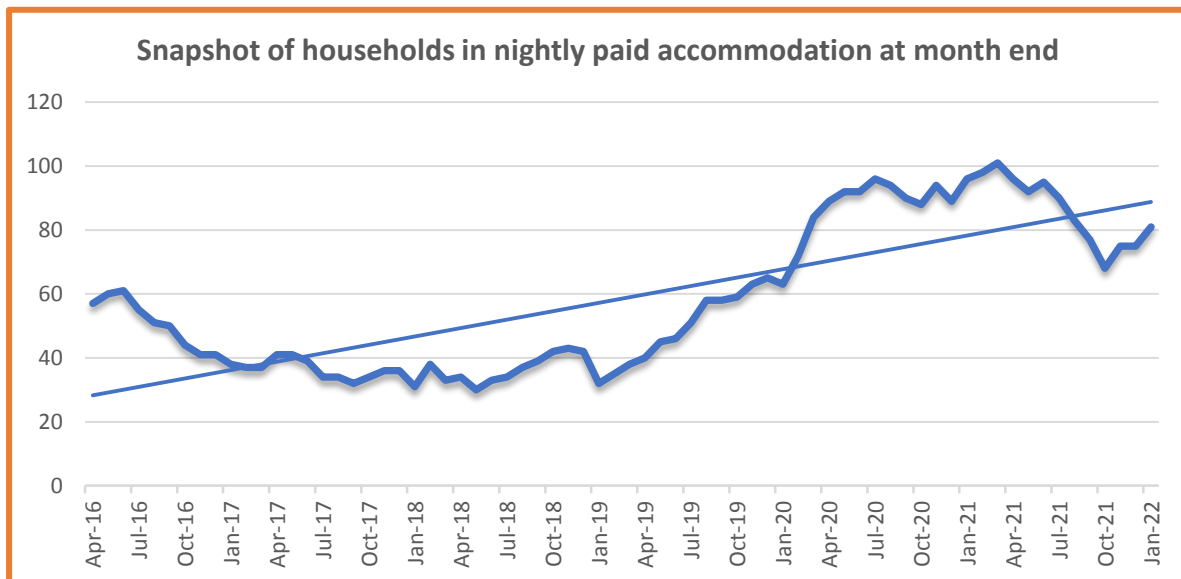
Nightly paid accommodation is only used in an emergency and then when there is no other interim or temporary accommodation available.

Due to the lack of availability of temporary accommodation within the borough interim/temporary accommodation is most likely to be privately-owned nightly paid accommodation located out of borough in areas such as Thornton Heath, Croydon, Wandsworth or Horley. Nightly paid accommodation could be a room in a hotel, a room in shared accommodation or a self-contained unit/property.

Self-contained properties are generally used for families with children & pregnant women. Nightly paid accommodation with shared use of bathroom and or cooking facilities may be used for single people, however most single people would also be offered a self-contained bedsit with cooking facilities and en-suite bathroom.

The use of this type of accommodation and where it is located out of borough may result in households experiencing difficulties in getting to their place of employment, their support networks, including GP and other health providers and getting their children to school.

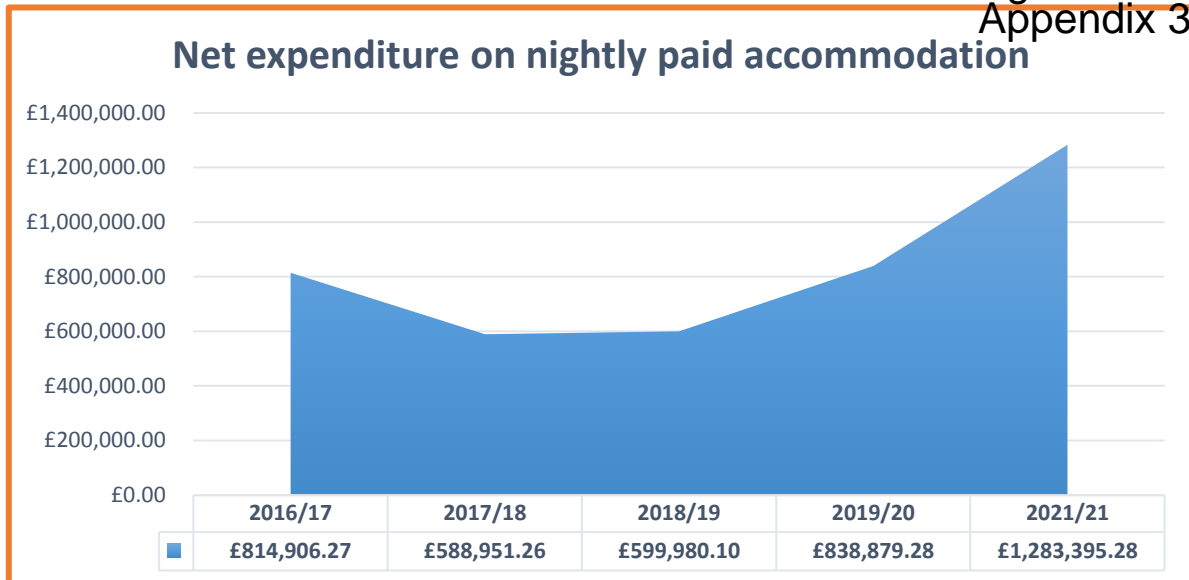
The chart below shows a snapshot of the number of households in nightly paid accommodation at month end since 2016. As this is a snapshot within any given month there will also be a number of households being placed in and moved out of nightly paid accommodation.



The biggest increase in demand for temporary accommodation is from single adults with multiple and complex needs. Often it is very difficult to find a housing solution for these households as Housing Association and private landlords are reluctant to accept them without adequate support. The majority of single adult households in temporary accommodation are placed in privately owned nightly paid accommodation outside of the borough. This demonstrates a need for the Council to secure more supported accommodation provision for this client group.

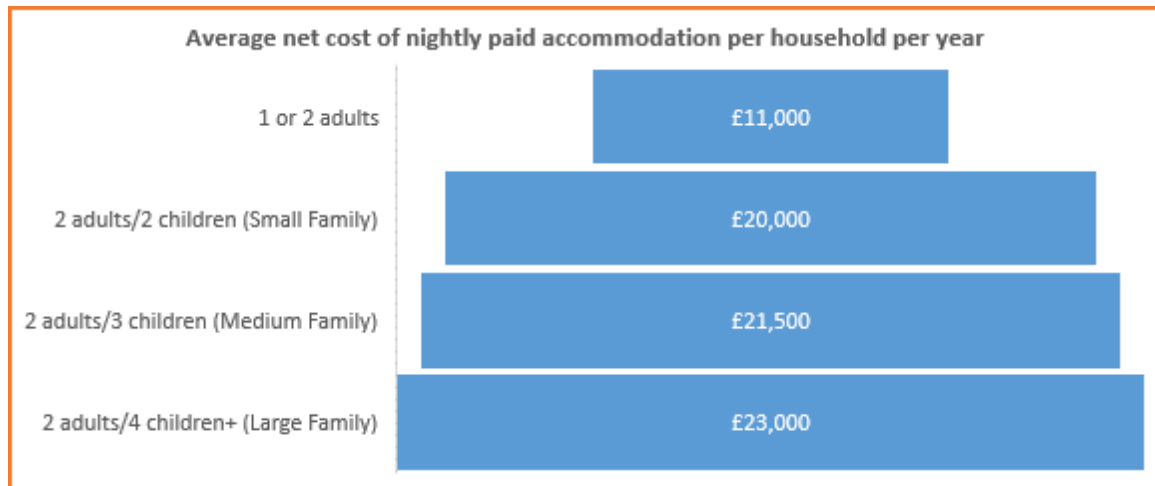
Costs of temporary accommodation

The use of this nightly paid accommodation is expensive and the Council’s net spending on providing nightly paid temporary accommodation has increased over the past 5 years as a result in the increase in homelessness.



This is also the case nationally. Figures released by the then Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (now DLUHC) show there were 96,060 households in temporary accommodation at the end of September 2021. This was a 1.5% increase on the number a year previously and is part of a long-term increase. Analysis of expenditure by local authorities over 2020/21 reportedly showed Councils spent at least £1.4 billion on temporary accommodation

The chart below shows the average net cost to the Council of nightly paid accommodation per year broken down into different size households.

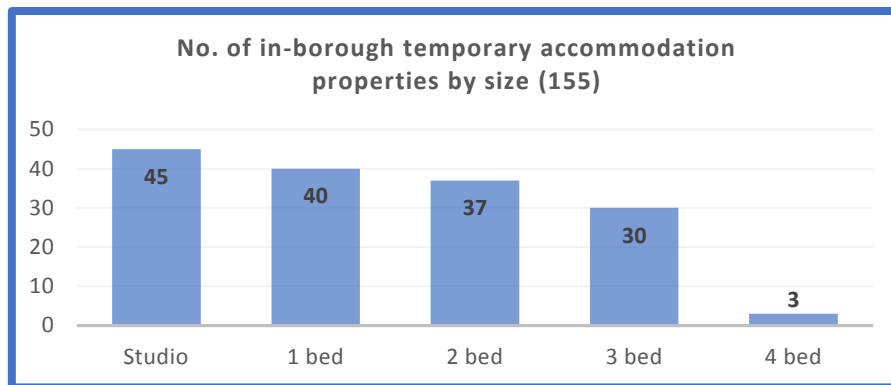


Temporary Accommodation costs have traditionally been paid from local government budgets. Housing Benefit assistance has remained capped at 90% of the January 2011 Local Housing Allowance Rate. On 1 April 2017, the removal of the Temporary Accommodation Management Fee Subsidy from the Housing Benefit subsidy saw an additional financial burden transferred from central government to local government budgets. To assist with this, from 2017, the loss of this subsidy was replaced by the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (now called Homeless Prevention Grant (HPG)). However, there is no guarantee that this annual grant will be continued indefinitely and DLUHC now also expect it to be used to deliver homelessness prevention options.

As the majority of in-borough temporary accommodation is managed or owned by our Housing Association partners the Council is required to compensate them for the loss of the Temporary Accommodation Management Fee. In 2020/21 this spending was £306,276.92.

In-borough temporary accommodation

In addition to nightly paid accommodation the Council has access to a portfolio of 155 temporary accommodation properties in the borough. The majority of these properties are owned &/or managed by our Housing Association partners; Rosebery Housing Association; Mount Green; PA and Transform Housing & Support. In addition, the Council owns 5 properties, leasing a further 11 properties and has Defoe Court with 14 units.



Supply of temporary accommodation within the borough

Whilst the number of in-borough temporary accommodation properties available to the Council is 155, vacancies occur infrequently as there are limited options for homeless households to be moved on into either social housing or the private rented sector. In addition, the vacancies that do occur tend to be smaller studio or 1-bedroom properties and the Council is limited on the size of households who can occupy this type of temporary accommodation. These would tend to be used for single people/couples or small families with 1 child.

The table below shows the number and size of in-borough temporary accommodation vacancies since 2018/19.

Supply of Temporary Accommodation within the borough	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 Q1-3
Studio property	15	16	11	18
1-bedroom property	10	5	10	5
2-bedroom property	5	4	9	9
3-bedroom property	6	6	3	6
4-bedroom property	0	0	0	1
Total Temporary Accommodation vacancies per year	36	31	34	39

Property acquisition

To reduce the need to place households in expensive nightly paid temporary accommodation outside of the borough the Council has acquired 5 properties on the open market to use as temporary accommodation and has set up a Private Sector Leasing Scheme that currently manages 11 properties. In addition, the Council has worked with Sanctuary Housing to lease Defoe Court, which offers 14 units of emergency accommodation. In 2021 the Council was also successful in bidding for MHCLG funding to work with Transform Housing & Support to purchase 2 units of Housing First style supported accommodation for rough sleepers.

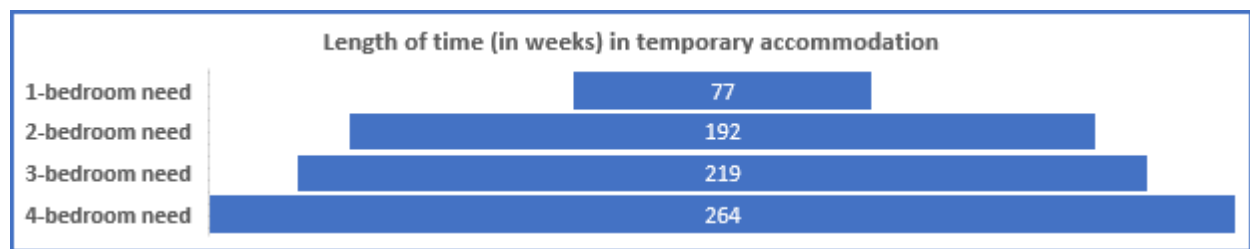
This all increases the provision of good quality temporary accommodation within the borough so that households are able to maintain their support and social networks and reduce any disruption with getting to their place of employment and their children to school.

Length of time in temporary accommodation

It is recognised that it can take a long time for some households to move on from temporary accommodation. This is especially the case for households with dependent children. The average time a homeless household with children spends in temporary accommodation is 225 weeks or 4.3 years. It should be noted that whilst homeless households are in accommodation that is assessed as suitable many are often in accommodation that has a bedroom less than their assessed need.

The table below shows the average length of time (in weeks) a homeless household is likely to be in temporary accommodation before being offered permanent/settled social housing.

1-bedroom need	2-bedroom need	3-bedroom need	4-bedroom need
77 weeks	192 weeks	219 weeks	264 weeks



This figure is increasing, and the time spent by a household in temporary accommodation is affected by the following:

- The limited supply of affordable social housing to move on to so the Council can end/ discharge its homeless duty.
- Limited availability of affordable private rented accommodation
- The increased duty to provide temporary accommodation for some households for 56 days under the new Relief Duty introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- The time taken to investigate the homeless application and the decision on any housing duty that may or may not arise
- any rent arrears or housing related debt or history of antisocial behaviour delaying the household's further rehousing

The length of time households spend in in-borough temporary accommodation will significantly impact on other households placed in nightly paid accommodation and the costs associated with this. Due to the lack of larger sized temporary accommodation, larger families who need 3-bedroom plus properties are likely to spend a significant time in-nightly paid accommodation unless private rent accommodation can be found.

7. Supply and Demand of Affordable housing

Demand - The Housing Needs Register

The Council is no longer a stock holding local authority, following the voluntary transfer of its housing to Rosebery Housing Association in 1994. Social housing is provided by a number of different housing associations and the Council will have nomination rights to a percentage of these housing association's vacancies.

There are approximately 2600 social housing properties in Epsom and Ewell. The percentage of social housing is at 8.07% and this is significantly lower than other areas in Surrey, such as Guildford which is 14.1%.

The Council maintains a register of households in need of social housing, with their priority assessed using a banding system as set out in the Council's Housing Allocation Policy. The Council is legally required to give certain categories of Housing Needs Register applications a reasonable preference, and homeless households are one of these categories.

A banding scheme ranks together applicants with different but equal housing need. Applicants are placed in one of five bands ranging from A (urgent need) to E (lowest), which reflects their assessed housing need as set out in the Council’s Housing Allocation Policy.

The Housing Allocation Policy must balance a number of competing demands for housing. The Housing Needs Register is composed of Waiting list, Transfer and Homeless households and of different household groups including single people, couples, elderly persons, and families with children. Households are registered for accommodation in accordance with the Councils ‘Bedroom Standard’ based on their household size and type.

The Council operates a choice-based lettings (CBL) system where vacant housing association properties are advertised in a weekly cycle on Epsom & Ewell Home Choice website and registered applicants can ‘bid’ or show an interest in those that are suitable for their housing need. From a shortlist of those who have indicated an interest, the applicant in greatest assessed housing need in accordance with the Council’s Housing Allocation policy is then nominated to the housing association as a prospective tenant.

The vast majority of social housing properties available in the borough are now let on Affordable Rents and fixed term tenancies, rather than Social Rents. Affordable Rent properties have their rents set at a level of up to 80% of the market rent. These will be at a similar level to most private sector housing rents or the LHA rate. Households that are benefit capped will struggle to afford social housing that is let on Affordable Rent and this may rule out some homeless households being considered for these properties.

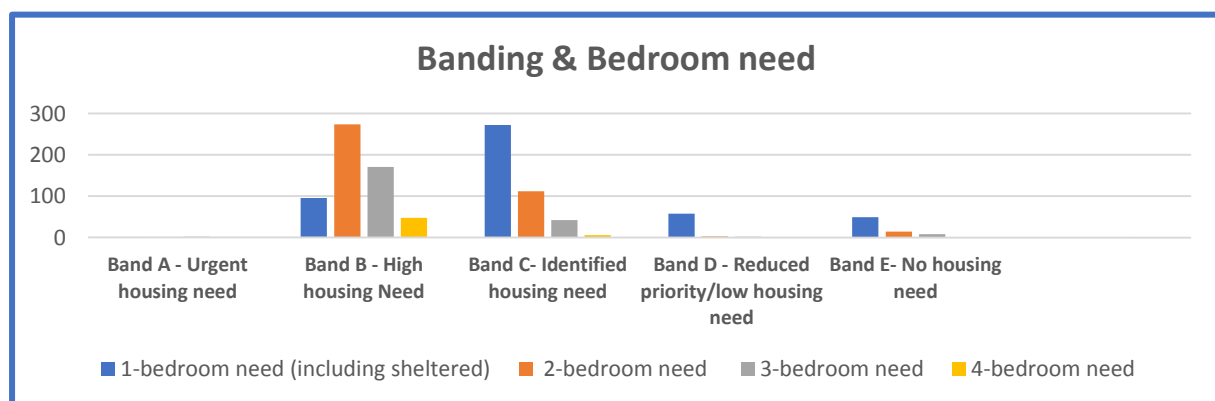
Social landlords are increasingly requesting prospective tenants to pay rent in advance and are carrying out affordable assessments before they will accept new tenants. This can sometimes mean that non-working households, or those in receipt of a low wage, may not meet the affordability criteria set by some landlords. This is particularly the case for those that are affected by the benefit cap.

The Housing Needs Register provides a good reflection of the current housing need within the borough. As at February 2022 there were 1159 housing applicants on the Council’s Housing Needs Register and they were placed in the following Bands A - E of housing need and identified as requiring the following sized accommodation.

The table & chart below shows a breakdown of all registered applicants on the Housing Needs Register and the corresponding registered bedroom size and assessed banding:

Size of property required	1-bedroom need (including sheltered)	2-bedroom need	3-bedroom need	4-bedroom need	Total
Banding Need					
Band A - Urgent housing need	0	0	2	1	3
Band B - High housing Need	96	274	171	48	589
Band C - Identified housing need	272	112	42	6	432
Band D - Reduced priority/low housing need	58	3	2	0	63
Band E - No housing need	49	14	8	1	72
Total	475	403	225	56*	1159

*Of which 11 need a 5-7 bedroom property



Single people and couples requiring 1 bedroom accommodation account for 40% of those on the Housing Needs Register, and families requiring 2 bedrooms make up 34.7%. However, households requiring 3 or 4+ bedroom accommodation will have the longest wait due to the very limited supply of this size accommodation. 51% of all applicants on the Housing Needs register have been assessed as having an Urgent or High housing need.

Making the best use of existing housing stock is an important element of meeting housing need. To encourage households, downsizers are placed in Band B, our main priority band, freeing up family sized homes for others.

The need for support housing for single homeless households is discussed section 10.

Housing Allocations & Supply

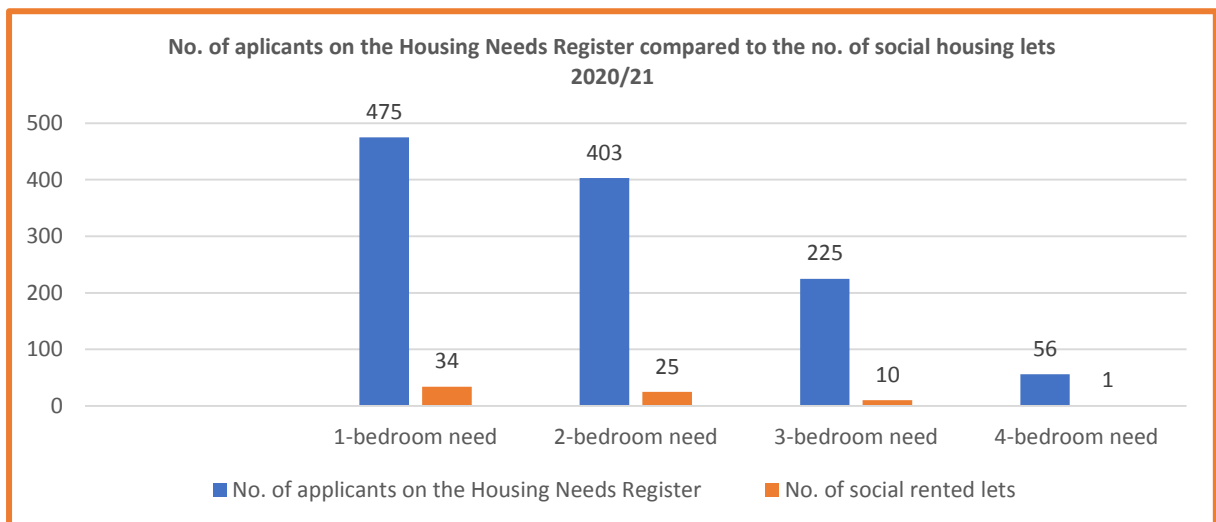
The high demand for and the very low supply of social rented housing is a major contributing factor of homelessness in the borough, especially for family sized accommodation. This is compounded as there are lower levels of social housing in the borough (8.07%), low numbers of properties becoming available for letting and a limited number of new build social rented properties being developed.

The table below gives information regarding the number and size of general needs social rent housing vacancies allocated over the last 7 years. A large proportion of these properties will be flats rather houses.

Property Size/Year	1-Bedroom	2-Bedroom	3-Bedroom	4-Bedroom	Sheltered	Total
2015/16	16	34	10	1	18	79
2016/17	30	31	25	5	23	114
2017/18	18	21	11	1	27	78
2018/19	35	39	21	8	24	127
2019/20	34	22	14	1	10	81
2020/21	29	23	10	1	26	89
2021/22 Q1-Q3	28	25	10	1	6	70

The 2019 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) estimated that the overall net annual need for affordable housing is 349 units per annum. In terms of size, the largest categories of net need are for two-bedroomed units (45% of net need), and three-bedroomed units (29% of net need). The need for units with four or more bedrooms is lower (20%) but much higher than the proportion of all affordable stock of this size, therefore the wait is significantly longer.

However, in each of the last 3 years the actual number of social rented properties that became available was less than 90 pa. Over 50 % of the vacancies were 1-bedroom and sheltered properties, not family sized accommodation. The chart below gives a comparison of the number of applicants on the Housing Needs Register compared to the number of social housing lets for 2020/21.



This impacts both on homeless households but also other applicants on the Housing Needs Register in Epsom. 51% of whom have been assessed as having an Urgent or High housing need.

For homeless households it means there are more households living in temporary accommodation and they will spend significantly longer in that temporary accommodation before they will be made an offer of social housing. The length of time homeless households spend in in-borough temporary accommodation will significantly impact on other households placed in nightly paid accommodation, how long they will be placed out of borough and the costs to the Council associated with this.

It is very clear that the demand for social housing completely outweighs the supply and this housing option can no longer be relied upon by homeless households, however it can be equally difficult for these households to access private rented accommodation.

8. Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector plays a vital role in the Council’s strategy to prevent and relieve homelessness; from preventing homelessness from this tenure by mediation, and negotiations with landlords and tenants, through to rehoming households into the sector.

However, many of our clients are reluctant to consider this as a housing option, seeing it as having less security of tenure and unaffordable.

In addition, a buoyant rental market, high rent levels against restricted Housing Benefit/Universal Credit Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates means that securing private rented accommodation within borough and across Surrey is increasingly difficult and unaffordable for households on low incomes or benefits.

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate is the maximum amount of assistance that households may receive towards their rent whilst in receipt of Housing Benefit /Universal Credit. This could be reduced for households affected by the Household Benefit Cap of £500 per week for out of work claimants. Households that are benefit capped struggle to find any form of housing within the borough that is affordable, ruling out private rental and even in some cases, social housing let on Affordable Rent.

The table below shows rental market data per calendar month (pcm) for Epsom in February 2022 and demonstrates the disparity between median market rents and LHA levels in the borough.

Property size	Median Market Rent (pcm)	Local Housing Allowance Rate (pcm)	Shortfall between the Median Market Rent & LHA (pcm)
1-room in a shared property	£725	£450	£275
1-bedroom – Epsom	£1110	£875	£235
2-bedroom – Epsom	£1350	£1100	£240
3-bedroom – Epsom	£1600	£1375	£225
4-bedroom – Epsom	£2550	£1735	£815

The median market rental price for a 2-bedroom property in the area is £1350 per calendar month, this is £240 pcm above the 2-bedroom Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate for the area. For 4-bedroom properties this shortfall rises to £815 pcm. Any shortfall between the market rent and LHA would need to be met from an applicant’s existing benefits. Any accommodation the Council arranges or provides to meet its homeless duties must be considered affordable.

In addition to the issue of market rents there is also the issue of low supply and high demand especially from working professionals. An online search for rental properties in Epsom & Ewell generated a list of only 22 2-bedroom properties and only 6, 3-bedroom properties available on the market to rent. The average rent of the 2-bedroom properties was £2069 pcm and for the 3-bedroom it was £2180 pcm. Only 1 property was within

the LHA rate. This snapshot undertaken in February 2022 highlights how extremely difficult it is to find affordable private rented housing for those in need.

Many landlords are very reluctant to accept households in receipt of benefits as tenants. Landlords require high initial upfront payments for rent in advance, deposit and fees but the largest barrier to accessing housing is when a landlord requires a guarantor. Most guarantors are expected to earn at least 30 x the monthly rent per year or be a homeowner. Recently Agents have also started to request sealed bids for private rented properties. The situation is further exacerbated for households with debts or a history of rent arrears.

Although the Council operates a Rent Deposit Scheme to support low-income households with deposit or bonds and rent in advance, with these type of market conditions a cycle of generational homelessness within families will continue for those households who do not have parents or other family members to assist them into rented accommodation.

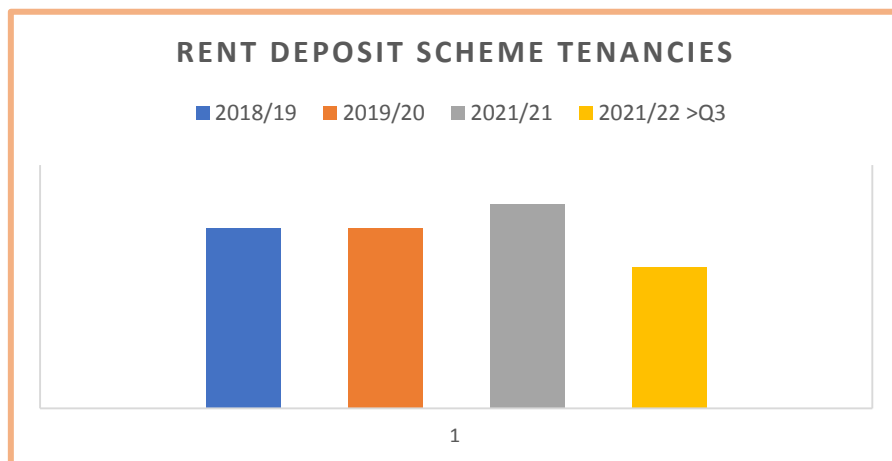
It should also be noted that the ending of a private rented assured shorthold tenancy has consistently been one of the highest reasons for homelessness within the borough and we are therefore aware that we need to target tenancy sustainment to reduce the number of households becoming homeless, although sustaining tenancies is becoming more complicated.

Although accessing and sustaining accommodation within the private rented sector is a challenge, in the absence of social housing, it is the main option we have in preventing or resolving a housing situation.

Rent Deposit Scheme

One of the Council’s main prevention measures is the Rent Deposit scheme. The Rent Deposit Scheme is where the Council assists people threatened with homelessness with a deposit, bond or rent in advance loan to help them rent a property in the private rented sector. The Rent Deposit Officer will liaise with private landlords or agents, assist with setting up the tenancy, organise the bond or deposit and will provide on-going tenancy sustainment to the landlord and tenant.

The chart below shows the number of homeless prevention tenancies set up through the Rent Deposit Scheme for both families and single people since 2018.



9. Rough Sleeping and single homelessness

Rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness.

Rough sleeping includes people sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). It also includes those in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, derelict boats, stations etc)

There are also homeless people who are not rough sleeping but do not have a permanent address.

These households are described as hidden homeless and are sometimes referred to as “sofa surfers”. Hidden homelessness includes those who are sofa-surfing, staying with relatives or friends on a very short-term basis or who need to move because they are living in insecure or overcrowded circumstances.

This “hidden homelessness” is significantly more prevalent than rough sleeping, but due to its nature is difficult to quantify and there is no reliable data on people who live this way however, numbers are thought to have increased significantly. Covid-19 “Everyone-In” exposed the issue of hidden single homelessness within the borough and we accommodated over 60 non-priority need people who were either rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.

The Council has experienced an increase in rough sleeping and single homelessness over the last few years. In November each year, the Council, along with the other Surrey districts and boroughs, undertakes an annual rough sleeper street count and the table below shows the reported figures since 2018. In addition, during the Pandemic the Council has been required to provide the DLUHC with a monthly Rough Sleeper survey and in January 2022 6 rough sleepers were reported.

DLUHC Annual Rough Sleeper Count	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	6	5	3	4

Where these counts give a snapshot of rough sleeping in the borough on a given night this does not represent a true reflection for the rest of the year. In addition, from March 2020, these figures should read in the context of the Everyone-In initiative.

During 2019/20 of the 424 homeless approaches, 231 were from single people, of which 45 had a history of rough sleeping as an identified support need. In 2020/21 of the 316 homeless approaches, 176 were single people, of which 31 were identified as having a history of rough sleeping as a support need.

Consistently over the last 4 years single homeless people have accounted for over 50% of the Council’s homeless approaches. Whilst the Council would have a duty to provide advice and assistance to help resolve their housing difficulty, for most of these people the Council would not have a duty to provide any emergency accommodation.

Having a history of rough sleeping was the 2nd most identified support need for single homeless people. Our experience is many of those sleeping rough or with a history of rough sleeping have multiple and complex needs with the predominant factors being poor mental health and substance misuse. Other characteristics are offending, low self-esteem, unemployment, chaotic behaviour, and some are difficult to engage.

Statistical Information on single homelessness and rough sleeping in Epsom & Ewell								
Year	Homelessness approaches	Of which single person	Of which were found not to be in priority need	Identified Support Need				
				Former/current rough sleeper	Mental Health	History of Offending	Drug Dependency Issues	Alcohol Dependency issues
2019/20	434	231	217	45	64	16	17	16
2020/21	316	176	159	31	33	17	13	8
2021/22 >Qtr 3	314	162	124	18	37	8	5	2

Rough sleeping and the cost to the public purse is significant. Research (by the DCLG in 2015) suggested that each rough sleeper costs between £16,000 to £21,000 per annum compared to the average cost of an adult at £4,600 per annum.

Housing options for rough sleepers and single homeless people with support needs

Within the borough there is a limited supply of low-level supported accommodation with a total of 44 bed spaces. Vacancies occur infrequently and the Council does not have exclusive nomination rights to all these units. These providers are unable to take clients with more complex needs and there is a significant lack of

medium-high level supported accommodation for rough sleepers/single homeless people with multiple and complex needs.

There is a reluctance for general needs housing providers to accept nominations for rough sleepers/single homeless who have multiple and complex needs without the required support package or a proven history of maintaining a tenancy. Therefore, whilst in 2020/21 the Council received 29, 1- bedroom general needs housing association vacancies most of these would not have been suitable for this client group. This is often the same for temporary accommodation within the borough as the needs are considered too high.

There are also significant barriers for single people being able to access private rented accommodation, this includes landlords unwilling to take tenants in receipt of welfare benefits, under 35 single room LHA rate, shortfall between market rents levels and the LHA rate and the requirement for rent guarantors.

Therefore, this cohort remains in interim/emergency accommodation, often out of area, while work is undertaken to try to find appropriate supported accommodation. There is no specialist Mental Health provision for rough sleepers and Adult Social Care thresholds for medium/higher needs rough sleepers/single homeless are too high and they are not considered eligible for care & support. Consequently, Housing Services officers are left to manage people with multiple and complex needs without the support of other statutory agencies and often these placements will breakdown due to ASB or lack of appropriate support

Support for Rough Sleepers

East Surrey Outreach Support (eSOS)

In order to support rough sleepers and single homeless people the Council commissions and funds the East Surrey Outreach Service (eSOS).

(eSOS) is an assertive outreach service for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping operated by Thames Reach and covers Reigate & Banstead, Mole Valley, Tandridge and Epsom & Ewell. As both an outreach and preventative service, eSOS helps people to escape the streets and provides support to people in at risk of losing their home, or those who are living in precarious situations such as sofa surfing, helping them to find more secure accommodation. eSOS offers: one-to-one assessments and support; individual resettlement or support plans; referrals to hostels and supported housing; support to help rough sleepers engage with services such as health, mental health, drug/alcohol or probation services and work with homeless people with complex needs to break the cycle of rough sleeping.

Through the RSI funded eSOS Navigator role we are also able to provide assessment beds so eSOS are able to undertake assessments and work with rough sleepers.

Streetlink

The public can alert the Council and eSOS to the presence of a rough sleeper through the www.streetlink.org.uk. An outreach worker will aim to meet with the rough sleeper as soon as they are able.

Rent Deposit Scheme for single homeless people

The Council's Rent Deposit Scheme can assist some single homeless people to find and secure private rented accommodation. However, we are only able to facilitate access to the private rented sector for clients if we are satisfied that they are able to sustain a tenancy.

The Parashoot East Surrey Floating Support Service provides support for people who are at immediate risk of losing their home, who are homeless or need help settling into a new home. The service is funded by Surrey County Council Housing Related Support.

SWEP

Although there is no statutory duty to do so, Local authorities are encouraged to offer Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) services to provide protection for people who are sleeping rough during particularly cold or inclement weather. The Council follows the guidance provided by Homeless Link and all

rough sleepers can access accommodation when feels like temperatures drop below freezing temperatures on some nights.

Cold Weather Fund

Winter 2020/21 the Council also implemented the Cold Weather Fund (MHCLG funding) which enabled rough sleepers to be accommodated during the winter months beyond the provisions of SWEP to enable services to work with rough sleepers to provide support and assistance to them to move on to more settled accommodation.

Begging

The borough has also seen an increase in begging in Epsom town centre over the last few years although this has been sporadic and not continuous. Much of this begging is organised and not always related to homeless people. A joint approach by the Council and the police was undertaken to stop begging that was considered opportunist and organised. Attempts to engage with those individuals who truly needed assistance with their housing have continued.

New Initiatives

As part of the “Everyone-In” Next steps (NSAP) funding we employed a dedicated Single Person Homeless Support Officer on a one-year fixed term contract. This contract ended in February 2022, however the Council has applied for Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding to extend this post for a further 3 years. We are currently waiting on the outcome of this bid.

The Council received Government funding under the Homes England ‘Move-On’ fund in 2020/21 to enable two units of self-contained accommodation to be purchased to increase the availability of self-contained units. Working in conjunction with our Partner Transform Housing, the completion of these units is due in March 2022 and are being made available to provide move-on accommodation for single homeless people with a history of rough sleeping.

In September 2021 the Council bid for and was awarded Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP) funding and we are working with Transform Housing & Support to purchase 2 properties which will provide support accommodation on the Housing First model for rough sleepers with more complex needs.

The Housing Options team has recently started work with the charity Hope into Action who have purchased a 4-bedroom property in Epsom for vulnerable adults/single homeless people who need low level supported housing

Surrey Homeless MAG

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on homeless people in Surrey, the Homeless Multi-Agency Group (MAG) was established to support the work happening in districts and boroughs in the county. This includes representation from housing, health, primary care, mental health, substance misuse, public health and criminal justice. While its initial focus has been the safe response to housing those who were homeless at the time of the outbreak, it is now established longer-term to work with local districts/boroughs to improve the multi-agency approach for homeless people in Surrey.

10. The Current Housing Options Service, existing homelessness prevention measures

Successfully preventing and relieving homelessness has always been and remains the main aim and focus of the Council’s Housing Options Service.

Prevention actions include any activities aimed at preventing a household threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless. This would involve activities to enable an applicant to remain in their current home or find alternative accommodation to prevent them from becoming homeless. Relief duties are owed to households that are already homeless and require help to secure alternative accommodation.

This can take the form of advice and information, mediation services; proactive interventions, such as negotiating with landlords to enable people to retain their tenancies; assistance with debt; and targeted services at known risk points, such as those leaving care, hospital, prison or the armed forces.

The Council's provision of a high-quality Housing Options Service ensures there are a wide range of prevention measures, initiatives, and interventions available to tackle homelessness.

In order to map out existing services for the review, outlined below are some of the measures the Housing Options Service use to prevent and relieve homelessness: -

- All applicants will have a personalised Housing Options Interview. The Housing Options interviews will explore a full range of options with a person, carry out an assessment with the person to look into the circumstances that caused them to become homeless or threatened with homelessness and to establish their housing and support needs. A Personalised Housing Plan will then be agreed which will set out the actions (or 'reasonable steps') to be taken by the Council and the person to help them remain in their current accommodation or to find alternative accommodation.
- Case work interventions such as negotiations with landlords or parents to resolve behavioural or arrears problems to retain their accommodation.
- Pathway referrals to other housing providers, such as Transform Housing & Support; domestic abuse refuges; Forward Trust.
- Pathway referrals to appropriate support services (drug/alcohol, mental health, young persons, domestic abuse, ex-offenders, money advice, employment support, floating support, foodbank, CAB).
- The Rent Deposit Scheme assists homeless households to find and secure private rented accommodation and can help financially with deposits, bonds or rent in advance loans. The Rent Deposit Officer will liaise with private landlords or agents, assist with setting up the tenancy, organise the bond or cash deposit and will provide on-going tenancy sustainment to the landlord and tenant.
- Parashoot East Surrey Floating Support Service provides support for people who are at immediate risk of losing their home, who are homeless or need help settling into a new home.
- In order to support rough sleepers and single homeless people the Council commissions and funds the East Surrey Outreach Service (eSOS). (eSOS) is an assertive outreach service for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping operated by Thames Reach. Further information on this service can be found in section 9.
- Council commissions and funds the Employment, Training and Housing Options Service (ETHOS). The project is provided by Surrey Life Long Learning Partnership and it provides employment advice, CV writing, job clubs and basic numeracy, literacy, and digital skills. This is an important service to help people improve their incomes and pay their housing costs.
- Homelessness Prevention Fund - The Council adopts a 'spend to save' policy and the homelessness prevention fund is a part of this. This is funding available to assist clients with ad hoc situations that arise, which may be resolved through some small financial input. Where possible any monies spent from the fund are recouped through a repayment scheme with the client.
- Housing Options Officers will attend MARAC, MAPPa and CHARM monthly meetings.
- Domestic Abuse Sanctuary Scheme - Through a joint-working arrangement with the North Surrey Domestic Outreach Service, the Crime Reduction Officer and Rosebery Housing Association the Council facilitates a Sanctuary Scheme for survivors of domestic abuse so they are able to stay safely in their homes.
- Surrey Mobility Scheme – The Council has joint working arrangements with the other local authorities in Surrey under the Surrey Mobility Scheme, to assist survivors of domestic abuse to move within the county through reciprocal arrangements.

11. What the Homelessness Review is telling us - Key findings, local trends, and challenges

Key Findings

- Homeless approaches to the Housing Options Service have significantly increased since the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act and forecasting predictions show that this increase is likely to continue.
- Despite the rising demand, the Housing Options Team continues to successfully prevent and relieve homelessness, with a total 1089 cases since 2018.

- The majority of people who approach the Housing Options Service for assistance do so because they are threatened with homelessness (at the triage stage) or within 56 days before becoming homeless (the prevention stage). However, this is not the case for single people who are more likely to approach the Council when they are actually homeless (at the relief stage).
- The 3 main causes of homelessness are:
 - Asked to leave by family and friends
 - Termination of Assured Shorthold tenancies
 - Domestic Abuse
- 75% of homeless applicants said they had additional support needs. The most prevailing support need for all clients was with their mental health. Amongst the single homeless population the most prevailing support needs were; mental health; a history of rough sleeping; physical ill health/disability; offending; and drug & alcohol dependency. For the other households, including those with children, this was debt/budgeting; physical ill health/disability; and domestic abuse.
- The ethnic origin of homeless households appears to largely reflect the demography of the borough.
- In December 2021 there were a total of 235 homeless households accommodated by the Council in either in-borough temporary accommodation (155) or nightly paid accommodation (80). Of these, 161 households had dependent children, with a total of 302 children.
- The average time a homeless household with children spends in temporary accommodation is 225 weeks or 4.3 years before being offered permanent/settled social housing.
- There are approximately 2600 social housing properties in Epsom and Ewell. The percentage of social housing is at 8.07% and this is significantly lower than other areas in Surrey, such as Guildford which is 14.1%.
- In February 2022 there were 1159 housing applicants on the Council's Housing Needs Register.
- 51% of all applicants on the Housing Needs register have been assessed as having an Urgent or High housing need.
- The 2019 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) estimated that the overall net annual need for affordable housing is 349 units per annum.
- Less than 90 Housing Association social rented properties become available a year. Over 50 % of these vacancies are 1-bedroom and sheltered properties.
- Since 2018, 145 homeless prevention tenancies have been set up via Rent Deposit Scheme.
- Private rented sector landlords and letting agencies remain reluctant to let to households in receipt of benefits. The median market rent for a 2-bedroom property was £1350 pcm, 20 per cent higher than the Local Housing Allowance rate of £1100 (equating to a shortfall of over £2,880 per year). However, the average rent for a 2-bedroom property is actually £2069 pcm. This leaves the sector largely inaccessible to households on low incomes or in receipt of benefits.
- Consistently over the last 4 years single homeless people have accounted for over 50% of the Council's homeless approaches.
- In 2020/21 of the 316 homeless approaches 176 were single people, of which 31 were identified as having a history of rough sleeping as a support need.
- Under Everyone-In Epsom & Ewell Borough Council accommodated over 60 single people who were either rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.

- A history of rough sleeping was the 2nd most identified support need for single homeless people. Many of those sleeping rough or with a history of rough sleeping have multiple and complex needs with the predominant factors being poor mental health and substance misuse. Other characteristics are offending, low self-esteem, unemployment, chaotic behaviour, and some are difficult to engage.
- Within the borough there is a limited supply of low-level supported accommodation and there is a significant lack of medium-high level supported accommodation for rough sleepers/single homeless people with multiple and complex needs.

TENNIS IN THE BOROUGH

Head of Service:	Ian Dyer, Head of Operational Services
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Appendices (attached):	None

Summary

To present a non-repayable grant funding opportunity from the Lawn Tennis Association to refurbish and upgrade all tennis courts in the borough.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Grant permission for officers to apply for a non-repayable grant from the Lawn Tennis Association to refurbish and upgrade all tennis courts in the borough as set out in section four.
- (2) Agree to a request to Strategy and Resources Committee to release of £10,330 from capital reserves for a 10% match funding contribution from S106 funds.
- (3) Agree to the principle of charging for usage of tennis courts to fund the ongoing maintenance, as required by the Lawn Tennis Association.
- (4) Note that a further report will be presented to the June 2022 meeting of the Committee to set out proposals for the future management of the tennis courts.

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 This is a time critical opportunity to bid for a non-repayable grant to refurbish and upgrade all twelve tennis courts in the borough.
- 1.2 The grant funding opportunity offers a sustainable way to maintain good quality tennis provision in the borough, mitigating budget pressures for Epsom & Ewell Borough Council in the future.

2 Background

- 2.1 Officers have been liaising with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and other tennis providers to explore opportunities for tennis and the fast-growing sport of Padel Tennis.
- 2.2 Whilst there is still a desire to explore opportunities for Padel Tennis in the borough, this report focuses on a time critical funding capital investment opportunity from the LTA. The main points of the funding are as follows:
- Part of a LTA £30 million capital investment project to refurbish 4500 public tennis courts in the UK to boost British Tennis.
 - Full support of an LTA consultant to inspect the sites, scope the work and prepare the bid.
 - 100% non-repayable funding option, although a contribution towards funding will be looked upon more favourably by the funding committee.
 - Assistance from the LTA to work with the local authority to determine the most sustainable and beneficial operating model which could be an in-house management solution or an arrangement with an LTA approved tennis provider who will manage and maintain the courts on the Council's behalf and contribute towards a sinking fund to ensure there is adequate provision to keep the courts and gate access technology well maintained in the future.
 - Provision of an online booking system and installation of secure code entry gates on all courts to manage access.
- 2.3 The LTA have advised that their funding committee meets on a fortnightly basis to review applications and as this opportunity is open to all Local Authorities, on a first come, first served basis, the LTA consultant is encouraging Epsom & Ewell Borough Council to put in an application before the fund is depleted.

3 Current Position

- 3.1 There are 12 tennis courts available across the borough for anyone to go to and play tennis for free. These are located at:
- Alexandra Recreation Ground, Alexandra Road (three courts)
 - Court Recreation Ground, off Pound Lane (three courts)
 - Poole Road Recreation Ground, Poole Road (two courts)
 - Gibraltar Recreation Ground, West Street (two courts)
 - Auriol Park, Salisbury Road (two courts)

- 3.2 If customers wish to guarantee their playing time, they can choose to book and pay for courts by telephoning our Customer Services team.
- 3.3 As most people choose to just turn up and play, the tennis courts currently provide very little income. The council is reliant on its limited revenue budgets to maintain the courts on an annual basis and larger refurbishment projects can only be achieved by using the council's capital investment to maintain and sustain the playing facilities.

4 Proposal

- 4.1 This report seeks permission from the Community and Wellbeing Committee to pursue a non-repayable grant funding opportunity with the LTA to bid for funds to refurbish all twelve tennis courts and explore sustainable options for managing the courts in the future, if the application is successful.
- 4.2 Some initial work has been carried out by the LTA consultant to assess the condition of the 12 courts and an estimate of costs has been provided:

Estimated court/fencing renovations for five sites/12 tennis courts	£84,000
Estimated Gate Access system for five sites	£18,500
Total estimated project cost	£103,300

- 4.3 To increase the council's chances of being awarded a grant it is proposed to offer a 10% match funding contribution of £10,330, which can be funded from S106 funds from within Parks and Open Spaces subject to the approval of the Strategy and Resources Committee.
- 4.4 If the Community and Wellbeing Committee agree to support the grant application and a further request to Strategy and Resources Committee for the 10% match funding, officers will work with the LTA to submit the bid. If the bid is approved, there will be a further site visit by a technical specialist from the LTA who will ratify the estimated project costs.
- 4.5 If the bid is successful, officers with the assistance of the LTA, will then progress to a detailed analysis of potential operating models and present a further report to this committee in June 2022 to discuss and agree the preferred option.
- 4.6 Early exploration of operating models suggest that the income derived from either an in-house model or from partnering with an external tennis provider will be sufficient to ensure the facilities remain sustainable for at least 10 years post renovation.

- 4.7 To achieve this level of sustainability, one of the main conditions of LTA Parks Fund is the requirement for an annual sinking fund to be set up which states that £16,500 pa from any income derived (based on the grant application of £103,300) from the hire of our twelve courts is set aside to provide for renovation works in the future and to pay for annual maintenance of the gate access system and use of the online booking system (ClubSpark).
- 4.8 The installation of gate access systems coupled with the LTA's online court booking system (ClubSpark) creates the opportunity to provide a highly customised, flexible, and wide-ranging tennis offering within the borough. This could include a tailored pricing structure based on area and/or timeslots, free play sessions where people can turn up and play for free, coaching sessions and competitive sessions.
- 4.9 As this stage of the grant application does not require us to specify which operating model the council will adopt, there is time to fully assess and risk rate management options as there are risks and benefits to both managing the facility in-house or partnering with an external Tennis Provider who is responsible for managing and maintaining the entire operation.
- 4.10 It is therefore proposed that a detailed analysis of both operating models is completed if the bid application is successful. This analysis will then be presented to the June meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee for a final decision to be made.

5 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

5.1 Impact Assessment

- 5.1.1 It is important to ensure that our tennis facilities cater for all members of the community, and this will be addressed when formulating our future operating model.

5.2 Crime & Disorder

- 5.2.1 Engaging people, especially young people, in physical activity and organised sports is an effective tool to help reduce boredom, improve mental health, and create a diversion from anti-social behaviour, violence, crime and drug use.
- 5.2.2 Well-maintained and well-used sporting facilities promotes a vibrancy in our parks and outdoor spaces which helps to reduce the fear of crime and disorder.

5.3 Safeguarding

- 5.3.1 None for the purposes of this report.

5.4 Dependencies

5.4.1 Progress of this item is dependent on approval from Strategy and Resources Committee to release the 10% match funding required from Capital reserves and a successful application to the LTA Parks Investment Team.

5.5 Other

5.5.1 There is a risk that if we don't pursue this opportunity as soon as possible, the LTA Parks Renovation Fund will be depleted and we will miss the opportunity to refurbish our courts, install gate entry technology and generate income which can be used to sustain the courts in the future.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 A 10% (£10,330) match funding contribution is required to support this grant application. It is proposed to draw these funds from the S106 balance within Parks and Open Spaces.

6.2 Charging would need to be introduced for all courts to generate sufficient income to meet the sinking fund requirement detailed in paragraph 4.7. If the cost to improve the courts exceeds the estimated £103.3k, then the sum expected to be ringfenced may exceed the £16.5k currently assumed.

6.3 The income received for tennis court hire in the financial years 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2029/20 was £341, £189 and £429 respectively, as to date, users only pay if they wish to guarantee the time of their court.

6.4 The current charges for 2022/23 for adults, as agreed by Community & Wellbeing Committee in January 2022, are £10.20 per hour for one court, or £15.50 if floodlights are required. The charge for 2022/23 for juniors is £5.30.

6.5 Other local tennis courts linked to the Lawn Tennis Association charge £8 per hour. Should we adopt this charge, and assuming all courts were used equally, each court would need to make in the region of £1.4k per annum to achieve the income required for the sinking fund. This would equate to 175 hours per court per year.

6.6 Should Members agree to submit a funding bid to the LTA, a further report in June would provide detail of expected usage and income levels. This will include free play session proposals, as mentioned in Paragraph 4.8.

6.7 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** The current available balance of the S106 balances within Parks and Open Spaces is £15,987.

- 6.8 Consideration will need to be given to the sinking fund requirement, as should income levels not exceed the annual sum expected, this could result in an unbudgeted revenue cost to the Council, which would need to be funded from elsewhere within the Committee budget.
- 6.9 The full revenue costs of the proposal will need to be understood before entering into any agreement. This includes the conditions surrounding the sinking fund and costs related to having the courts externally managed and maintained.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 At this stage of the funding application process there are no legal implications to consider as the Council is not committed to accepting any funds awarded.
- 7.2 If the application is successful, legal assistance will be required to assess the terms and conditions of the funding agreement and provide the advice necessary to proceed.
- 7.3 Legal advice will also be required at a later stage in the process if the Council chooses to enter into an agreement with an external Tennis provider to manage and maintain the renovated courts on our behalf.
- 7.4 **Legal Officer's comments:** none arising from the content of this report

8 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 8.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
- Safe and Well
 - Opportunity and Prosperity
 - Smart and Connected
 - Effective Council
- 8.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 8.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** none for the purpose of this report
- 8.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** none for the purpose of this report
- 8.5 **Partnerships:** This proposal builds a partnership with the LTA to secure a long term vision for tennis in the borough.

9 Background papers

9.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- None

Other papers:

- The LTA Park Renovation Fund presentation
- The LTA Park Renovation Stage 1 Application Form

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ALLOTMENTS REVIEW

Head of Service:	Ian Dyer, Head of Operational Services
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	n/a
Appendices (attached):	None

Summary

This report presents a review of all allotments in the borough and sets out recommendations for the future of council managed and self-managed sites.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) **Note the status of all allotment sites in the borough**
- (2) **Note that the current agreements for the three self-managed allotments sites are due to expire in December 2022 and agree to issue new agreements for the next five years from date of expiry as set out in section three of this report.**
- (3) **Agree to a formal consultation with all council-managed plot holders to gauge interest in the remaining council-managed sites becoming self-managed as set out in section 4 of this report.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 Allotments perform a vital role in the health and wellbeing of our residents. The demand for allotments remains high and officers are working to ensure that an efficient system for managing our allotments sites is in place following the recent restructure of departments.
- 1.2 There are three self-managed allotment sites in borough. These sites are well-managed and popular with residents. This recommendation sets out a proposal to retain the current arrangements by offering the three self-managed sites the ability to renew their leases when they expire their current term.

- 1.3 There has been an expression of interest from one of the existing council managed sites to become self-managed. Due to the reasons set out in section four of this report, officers recommend that a formal consultation of all plot holders on council managed sites is undertaken to gauge interest in self-management. The results of this consultation will be brought to the autumn meeting of the Environment and Safe Communities Committee for further discussion (in line with the new committee terms of reference where allotments will be transferred to Environment and Safe Communities Committee).

2 Background

- 2.1 Allotments in the borough continue to be a popular pastime and provide residents with a range of positive mental and physical health benefits.
- 2.2 Recent organisational changes and the effects of the pandemic temporarily disrupted the Council's ability to manage the waiting lists, deal with enquiries, carry out non-cultivation inspections and allocate plots.
- 2.3 Fortunately, we are now in recovery and there is a clear path forward. Officers have now set out the following timetable with the aim of reducing waiting lists and allocating plots.

March 2022	Water to all sites turned back on
April 2022	Non-cultivation inspections
April 2022	Resurrection of twice yearly Allotment Forum meetings
April 2022	Resurrection of plot allocations

- 2.4 The waiting list for allotments currently stands at 391 people and whilst the waiting list varies from site to site, the average length on the list is 18 – 24 months.
- 2.5 Although the waiting lists are currently higher than usual, this will dramatically reduce in spring due to the non-cultivation inspections and the resurrection of plot allocations being undertaken.
- 2.6 A review of all our administration procedures is underway which will result in a more efficient way to deal with all aspects of allotment management.

3 Self-Managed Allotments

- 3.1 Following a decision of the former Leisure Committee in 2011, there are three self-managed allotment sites in the borough. These are Kingston Road, Hessele Grove and Park Avenue West.

- 3.2 Following a report to the Community and Wellbeing Committee on the 9 October 2017 it was agreed to offer the three self-managed sites new leases to continue under a self-managed arrangement, on the condition that the societies accepted updated terms which were set out in the report.
- 3.3 The three allotment societies agreed to these conditions and new leases were issued by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council. The current leases run for a five-year term from 1 January 2018 – 31 December 2022.
- 3.4 The self-managed leases contained a clause which allowed a two-year extension to the term if this was indicated by 31 January 2022.
- 3.5 Towards the end of 2021, all three of the allotment societies approached officers to indicate that they wished to take up the option to extend the term by two years.
- 3.6 After discussion with the Legal team, the advice was that the Council should not rely on the provision to extend the lease.
- 3.7 The mechanism to extend the lease would be through a renewal lease by reference or a reversionary lease by reference, neither which is straight forward.
- 3.8 In the interest of both parties, the current legal advice is to enter a new 5-year lease when the current term expires.

4 New Requests for Self-Management

- 4.1 Officers have recently received a request from Epsom Common Allotments, which is one of the largest council-managed allotment sites, to become self-managed.
- 4.2 Epsom Common Allotment society first requested the possibility of becoming self-managed in 2013, and a vote was conducted amongst their plot-holders to progress this.
- 4.3 Under the criteria for self-management set out by the Leisure Committee in 2011, sites wishing to join the Self-Managed scheme must be able to demonstrate the following.
 - At least 75% of the current plot holders support the application to join the Scheme, which will be based on the agreements with the existing three sites. It is recognised that the division of responsibility for maintenance will differ slightly from site to site as conditions dictate, but will be used as a guideline for those sites wishing to join the scheme
 - The site forms a properly constituted Management Committee consisting of Chair, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and at least 3 other plot holders.

- The Management Committee meets at least 3 times a year and holds an AGM to which all Plot holders are invited and have voting rights.
 - Any agreement will be based on the present lease agreements with the Self-Managed sites except that the initial lease would have to be co-terminus with the dates for the existing sites, so the first term may be shorter.
 - To maintain and manage a waiting list of interested parties wishing to take up allotments on the site. To ensure that there are no selection criteria applied to the waiting list, other than those of order of application, and a timely response to any invitation to take up any vacant plot.
- 4.4 Unfortunately, Epsom Common Allotment Society did not manage to achieve the 75% in favour of the transfer to self-managed and the process halted at this point.
- 4.5 Epsom Common Allotment Society were disappointed by this result as many plot holders did not respond to the call to vote and the non-responders were counted as 'against' voters.
- 4.6 In the report to the Community and Wellbeing Committee of 9 October 2017, when the new terms and conditions for self-managed allotment sites were discussed and agreed, there was also a motion to prevent any further sites becoming self-managed due to the loss of income this would incur to the Council which would impact on the Council's financial ability to manage the remaining sites.
- 4.7 The 2017 report stated:
- “The Council managed allotments are as follows, Alexandra, Epsom Common, West Ewell, Barn Elms, Elmstead and Lane End. In 2017-18 the budget target income for these sites is a total of £29,000. It is proposed that due to the scale of economies needed for running these sites (both administration and operational staff) that the Council does not offer self-managed agreements for any of these sites in the future.”
- 4.8 Whilst the above is still true today, officers are aware that the self-managed model is popular amongst well established allotment societies and can be highly successful.
- 4.9 It is recommended that to fully explore a sustainable approach to self-management, that a formal consultation exercise is carried out amongst all council-managed allotment plot holders to gather their opinions of how allotments sites should be run in the future.
- 4.10 The results of this survey will provide the basis for a recommendation on the future of self-managed sites which will be presented to members at the autumn meeting of the Environment and Safe Communities Committee.

4.11 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

4.12 Impact Assessment

4.12.1 - none for the purpose of this report

4.13 Crime & Disorder

4.13.1 - none for the purpose of this report

4.14 Safeguarding

4.14.1 - none for the purpose of this report

4.15 Dependencies

4.15.1 - none for the purpose of this report

4.16 Other

4.16.1 - none for the purpose of this report

5 Financial Implications

5.1 The budgets for the gross expenditure of the allotments service for 2022/23 is £49,788, and for the gross income is £35,135. This represents a subsidy of the service by the Council of £14,653.

5.1 Of the gross expenditure costs, £35,343 relates to an apportionment of fixed overheads that would not be saved should all Council allotments become self-managed. Therefore, the financial impact of all allotments becoming self-managed would be an annual net cost to the Council of £20,690.

5.2 In addition to the revenue impact, there is likely to be a capital requirement to address works which may be required ahead of handing the sites over for self-management. The funding of these costs would need to be quantified and identified. There would also be a cost of consultation, for which a budget has not been identified.

5.3 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** Any decision to agree to allotment sites becoming self-managed will require a detailed analysis of the capital and revenue costs to the Council and budgets identified to cover any net cost as a result of the proposal.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 As set out in section three of this report and if members wish to renew the self-managed leases the Council will need to enter into new leases which should be from the date of expiry of the current lease agreements for a new 5-year term.
- 6.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** as set out in 6.1 above and in section three of the report.

7 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 7.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
- Green and Vibrant
 - Safe and Well
 - Effective Council
- 7.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** Well-managed allotment sites have a positive impact on the environment.
- 7.3 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None for the purpose of this report.
- 7.4 **Partnerships:** This report builds on the strong partnership in place with allotment societies across the borough.

8 Background papers

- 8.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- Update on Allotment Services and Future Options – Leisure Committee 28 March 2011
- Self-Managed Allotments – Community and Wellbeing Committee 19 October 2017

Other papers:

- None