

**Royal Borough Windsor & Maidenhead  
Homelessness Strategy**

**2018-2023**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This document sets out a collaborative approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead over the next five years working closely with partners from the statutory and voluntary sectors.
- 1.2 The Council believes the most effective way to deal with homelessness and rough sleeping is to prevent it from happening and it places great emphasis on this approach through the provision of specialist housing advice and assistance to those in housing difficulty in the Borough.
- 1.3 An early help approach has been shown to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping but also to achieve wider outcomes such as improved health and wellbeing and better job opportunities. There is a big opportunity for all partners in the area to deliver services in different, co-ordinated ways so that a 'no wrong door' approach delivers outcomes that meet customer needs.
- 1.4 The Council will also work with partners to tackle the root causes of homelessness and rough sleeping by working with people to improve their life opportunities to prevent them from becoming homeless again in the future.

## **2. PURPOSE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY**

- 2.1 This strategy guides the Council's approach to the provision of homelessness and rough sleeping services in the Borough over the next five years working with its partners.
- 2.2 An action plan, see Appendix A, sets out how the priorities in this strategy will be achieved and this will be refreshed and updated with new actions each year.
- 2.3 This strategy has been developed through:
  - Homelessness review, trends and issues, both quantitative and qualitative.
  - Consideration of national and local policy, current and proposed.
  - Analysis of best practice from across the country.
  - Engagement and discussion with partners including voluntary organisations such as Brett Foundation and the Windsor Homeless Project, housing providers such as Radian and Housing Solutions, health service providers and Thames Valley Police.

### 3. LEGISLATIVE AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 imposes a duty on local housing authorities to carry out a homelessness review in their area and formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on its results every five years.

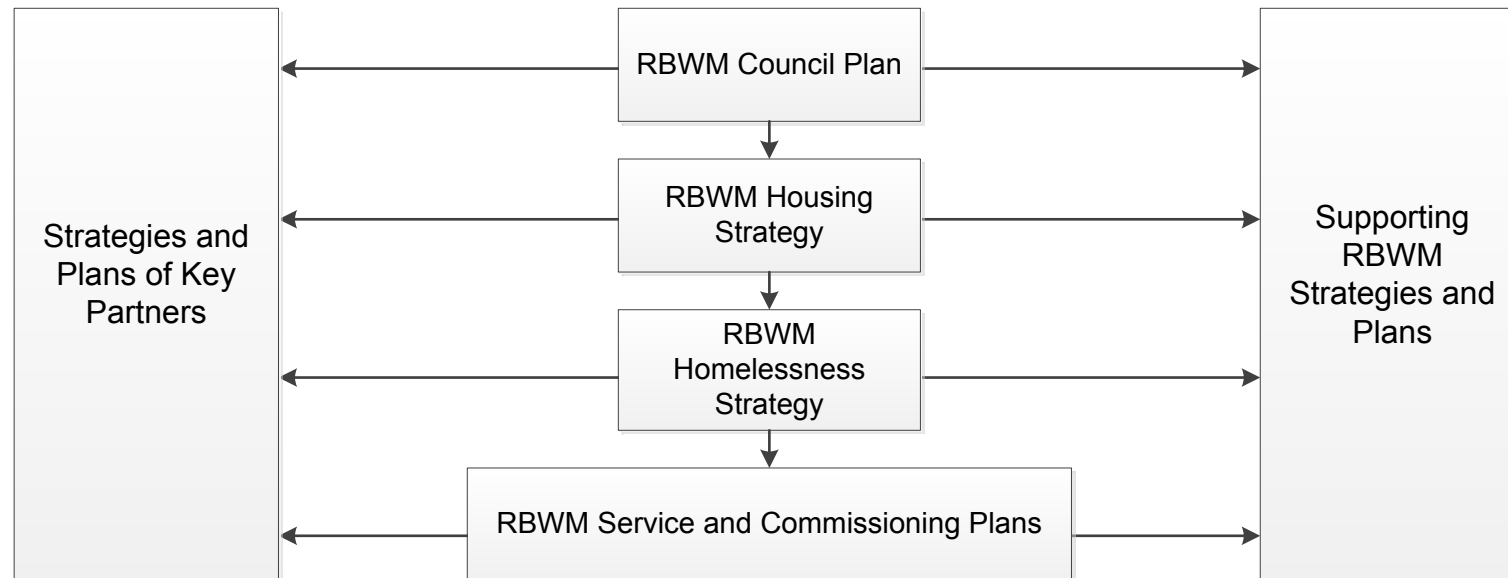
3.2 A homelessness strategy is defined in Homelessness Act 2002 s3(1) as one formulated in order to:

a) prevent homelessness in an authority's area

b) secure accommodation that is and will be available in that area for people who are or may become homeless; and

c) provide support for such people or those who have been homeless and need support to prevent it recurring.

3.3 The strategic context for this strategy is set out in the diagram below:



## **4 LOCAL CONTEXT**

### **Homelessness applications, prevention and early help**

- 4.1 Homeless applications and acceptances have increased in recent years and there has been a reliance on high levels of temporary accommodation. This strategy aims to address the causes and effects of homelessness, offering appropriate support and solutions to prevent and reduce homelessness through an early help approach while minimising reliance on temporary accommodation.

### **Rough sleeping**

- 4.2 The Council carries out an annual rough sleeper count and takes action to help those identified back into secure and sustainable housing. The Council recognises that Windsor currently has specific challenges with rough sleeping. The Council is committed to preventing rough sleeping and will dedicate significant resources, working with partner organisations, to preventing rough sleeping, as well as providing support to anyone who finds themselves on the street. This includes the employment of a specialist Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) coordinator to provide intensive support and assistance to rough sleepers, the funding of supported accommodation, reconnection to home areas, and provision of support and advice through our community wardens and housing options services.

### **Temporary accommodation**

- 4.3 The Council has previously had a high number of households in temporary accommodation. As services have improved recently this number has reduced significantly. In future the Council aims to have a small pool of good quality temporary accommodation for those who need emergency accommodation.

### **Private rented sector**

- 4.4 There are opportunities for the private sector to play an even more important role in delivering new supply but there are serious concerns over access and affordability. This strategy aims to work with the sector, supporting landlords to deliver supply that meets required standards of management and maintenance and is accessible to people on a range of incomes in a market that is well regulated and offers appropriate protection to tenants and landlords.

## **Partnership working**

- 4.5 There are many areas of overlap between the priorities and the successful provision of these services requires collaborative working with local public, private and voluntary services. To support this, the Council will actively engage with its partners in the development and delivery of services and encourage collaborative working wherever possible.

## **Allocations policy**

- 4.6 The current allocations policy runs until 2018 and an updated allocations policy is being brought forward alongside this homelessness strategy. The allocations policy sets out in detail who is eligible for housing and the priority they will receive for social housing the Council has nominations right to.

## **5 WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?**

- 5.1 This vision for this homelessness strategy is that:

*'The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is a place where agencies work effectively together to support those who are or may become homeless guided by a focus on prevention and early help.'*

- 4.2 The Council will do this by working collaboratively with our partners focusing on five key priorities:

1. Reducing the numbers of people becoming homeless.
2. Reducing the numbers of households in temporary accommodation and improving the quality of that accommodation.
3. Supporting people into good quality, affordable and sustainable accommodation options.
4. Reducing rough sleeping and supporting those who find themselves on the street.
5. Improving the customer service provided to people approaching housing services.

## 6 HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

6.1 The Council working with our partners will carry out the following actions to achieve our priorities:

<b>Priority 1: Reducing the numbers of people becoming homeless.</b>	<b>Priority 2: Reducing the numbers of households in temporary accommodation and improving the quality of that accommodation.</b>	<b>Priority 3: Supporting people into good quality, affordable and sustainable accommodation options.</b>	<b>Priority 4: Reducing rough sleeping and supporting those who find themselves on the street.</b>	<b>Priority 5: Improving the customer service provided to people approaching housing services.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Establish a homeless prevention and relief fund, utilising the homelessness grant, that can be used creatively to prevent people from losing their accommodation and obtain alternative accommodation.</li> <li>✓ Implement a new structure for the Council's housing options service which will increase the resource and the quality of homelessness prevention and housing options advice</li> <li>✓ Carry out a review to determine the potential for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Increase partnership working with local landlords through a forum and exploring an accreditation scheme.</li> <li>✓ Develop a smaller dedicated pool of temporary accommodation providers.</li> <li>✓ Continue the cyclical programme of temporary accommodation inspection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Review the potential for a private sector leasing scheme to give people more private rented options</li> <li>✓ Work with environmental health to ensure the correct advice to people in accommodation with disrepair issues.</li> <li>✓ Explore the potential for a social lettings agency with third sector partners.</li> <li>✓ Review the potential for new partnership arrangements to address housing issues for intentionally homeless families and break the chain of causation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Establish a multi agency forum to jointly review cases and develop integrated individual plans</li> <li>✓ Explore models from elsewhere that include holistic approaches involving accommodation, learning and employment.</li> <li>✓ Carry out a feasibility study for the potential for future hostel accommodation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Improve the quality of information available to housing option clients on housing options and service arrangements through multiple channels</li> <li>✓ Improve the quality of information available to housing option clients on housing options and service arrangements through multiple channels</li> <li>✓ Improve quality assurance processes within case management</li> </ul>

<p>implementing a meditation service to assist with helping to maintain people in their existing accommodation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Increase enforcement activity with landlords who maintain private rented properties in poor coordination or do not follow proper tenancy processes.</li> <li>✓ Conduct a gap analysis of homelessness prevention education delivered through schools, colleges and youth organisations and refine the approach accordingly.</li> <li>✓ Develop a joint hospital discharge policy to prevent homelessness and bed blocking.</li> <li>✓ Ensure the new allocations policy prioritises preventing and reducing homelessness.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Improve pathways for young people leaving care to ensure sustainable accommodation and that tenancies are maintained.</li> </ul>		
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## **7 HOW WILL WE KNOW?**

7.1 The Council will monitor delivery of the key actions and the impact on key performance measures including:

- Number of homeless preventions per quarter.
- Numbers of young people presenting as homeless.
- Number of people placed into temporary accommodation.
- Average cost of temporary accommodation.
- All temporary accommodation passing requirements.
- Numbers of people accommodated in private rented accommodation.
- Number of approaches from people threatened with homelessness.
- Numbers of people sleeping rough.
- Waiting times for housing advice.

7.2 The strategy and action plan will be reviewed, refreshed and updated on an annual basis both to measure performance and also to ensure that the actions continue to be the right ones to meet the five key priorities of the strategy.

7.3 Where identified, new key areas of action to meet priorities will be introduced as part of the review which will be carried out with partners and key stakeholders.

## APPENDIX 1: ACTION PLAN

	Priorities	Key actions	Target date	Key performance measure	Officer Lead	Key partners involved
1	<b>Reduce the numbers of people becoming homeless</b>	<p>1.1 Establish a homeless prevention and relief fund, utilising the homelessness grant, that can be used creatively to prevent people from losing their accommodation and obtain alternative accommodation.</p> <p>1.2 Implement the new structure for housing options which will increase the resource and the quality of homelessness prevention and housing options advice to customers threatened with homelessness.</p> <p>1.3 Review options for meditation services to assist with helping to maintain people in their existing accommodation.</p> <p>1.4 Increased enforcement activity with landlords who maintain private rented properties in poor coordination or do not follow proper tenancy processes.</p> <p>1.5 Conduct a gap analysis of homelessness prevention</p>	<p>November 2018</p> <p>January 2019</p> <p>December 2019</p> <p>Ongoing throughout strategy</p> <p>Sept 2019</p>	<p>Number of homeless preventions per quarter</p> <p>Number of homeless preventions per quarter</p> <p>Number of homeless preventions per quarter</p> <p>To be developed</p> <p>Numbers of young people presenting as homeless</p>	<p>Head of Housing</p> <p>Head of Housing</p> <p>Head of Housing</p> <p>Residential Services Team Leader</p> <p>Head of Housing</p>	<p>BF, WHP, TVP.</p> <p>BF, WHP.</p> <p>LL</p> <p>AFC</p>

Priorities	Key actions	Target date	Key performance measure	Officer Lead	Key partners involved
	<p>education delivered through schools, colleges and youth organisations and refine accordingly.</p> <p>1.6 Work with partners to improve pathways for young people leaving care to ensure sustainable accommodation and that tenancies are maintained.</p> <p>1.7 Develop and agree with partners a joint hospital discharge policy.</p> <p>1.8 Ensure new allocations policy priorities preventing and reducing homelessness</p>	<p>November 2019</p> <p>January 2020</p> <p>November 2018</p>	<p>Reduced numbers of young people presenting as homeless</p> <p>Number of homeless preventions per quarter</p> <p>Number of homeless preventions per quarter</p>	<p>Head of Housing</p> <p>Head of Housing</p> <p>Head of Housing</p>	<p>AFC.</p> <p>NHS</p> <p>RPs</p>
<p><b>2. Reduce the numbers of households in temporary accommodation and improve the quality of that accommodation</b></p>	<p>2.1 Increase partnership working with local landlords through a forum and exploring an accreditation scheme.</p> <p>2.2 Develop a smaller dedicated pool of temporary accommodation providers.</p> <p>2.3 Continue the cyclical programme of temporary accommodation inspection.</p>	<p>October 2019</p> <p>March 2019</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Number of people placed into temporary accommodation</p> <p>Average cost of temporary accommodation</p> <p>All accommodation passing requirements</p>	<p>Head of Housing</p> <p>Head of Housing</p> <p>Head of Housing</p>	<p>LL</p> <p>LL</p>

Priorities	Key actions	Target date	Key performance measure	Officer Lead	Key partners involved
	2.4 Continue to ensure effective safeguarding for those in temporary accommodation	Ongoing	Any concerns appropriately investigated and addressed	Head of Housing	AFC, OP, WHP, BF, TVP.
3. <b>Support people into good quality affordable and sustainable accommodation options</b>	<p>3.1 Review the potential for a private sector leasing scheme to give people more private rented options</p> <p>3.2 Work with environmental health to ensure the correct advice to people in accommodation with disrepair issues.</p> <p>3.3 Explore the potential for a social lettings agency with third sector partners.</p> <p>3.4 Review the potential for new partnership arrangements to address housing issues for intentionally homeless families and break the chain of causation.</p>	<p>August 2019</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>June 2019</p>	<p>Numbers of people accommodation in private rented accommodation</p> <p>Reduced number of approaches from people threatened with homelessness</p> <p>Number of homeless preventions per quarter</p> <p>Number of approaches from people threatened with homelessness</p>	<p>Head of Housing</p> <p>Head of Housing</p> <p>Head of Housing</p> <p>Head of Housing</p>	<p>WHP, BF, LL.</p> <p>WHP, BF, LL.</p> <p>WHP, BF, LL, TVP.</p> <p>AFC, WHP, BF.</p>

Priorities	Key actions	Target date	Key performance measure	Officer Lead	Key partners involved	
4.	<b>Reduce rough sleeping and support those who find themselves on the street</b>	4.1 Establish a multi agency forum to jointly review cases and develop integrated individual plans  4.2 Explore models from elsewhere that include holistic approaches involving accommodation, learning and employment.  4.3 Carry out a feasibility study for the potential for future hostel accommodation.	June 2019  December 2019  March 2020	Numbers of people sleeping rough  Numbers of people sleeping rough  Numbers of people sleeping rough	MEAM Coordinator  Head of Housing  Head of Housing	WHP, BF, TVP, NHS.  WHP, BF, TVP, NHS.  WHP, BF, TVP, NHS.
5.	<b>Improve the customer service provided to people approaching housing services</b>	5.1 Improve the quality of information available to housing option clients on housing options and service arrangements through multiple channels  5.2 Improve quality assurance processes within case management  5.3 Review and refine the drop in service to reduce wait times	November 2018  November 2018  December 2018	To be developed  Number of reviews upheld  Waiting time	Head of Housing  Head of Housing  Head of Housing	

*Key partners: BF: Brett Foundation, WHP: Windsor Homeless Project, TVP: Thames Valley Police, AFC: Achieving For Children, Op: Optalis , RPs: registered providers, LL: local landlords.*