

Appendix 4: Southwark Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2018-22

All actions will be led by Project & Change Management team in Housing solutions.

Priority One: Homelessness prevention.

We will deliver a leading prevention service through the early adopter trailblazer project in preparation of meeting the aims and intentions of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Reference	Description of issue	Action	Timeframe
1.1	Meet all the aims set out in the trailblazer prevention delivery plan.	Follow the latest version of the detailed Southwark Prevention Trailblazer delivery plan and meet all of the specific targets.	Overall timeframe of November 2018. Dates set for each item on the project.
1.2	Eliminate usage of shared B&Bs for homeless families and under 18s.	Achieve the NPSS gold challenge	October 2019.
1.3	Ensuring our service is assessed with transparency, by being reviewed by an independent advocacy body.	Shelter to continue annual review of our homelessness service.	Annual review with quarterly updates published online.
1.4	Ensure the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant is used effectively to reduce the number of households living in temporary accommodation.	Produce and deliver a report on how effectively the FHSP funding has been utilised.	April 2019.
1.5	Contribute to the national approach of homelessness reduction by evaluating the impact of the prevention trailblazer in Southwark.	Sharing our findings with DCLG, our peers and partners at events, forums and meetings.	Ongoing through to end of 2018.

1.6	Develop improved understanding of why some BME communities are disproportionately represented within homelessness services together with the development of appropriate early intervention and prevention measures to address this over representation.	<p>Improve our customer insight through focus group involvement and improved data collection.</p> <p>Develop appropriate early intervention and prevention measures to address this over representation.</p>	Focus groups held beginning in early 2018 and new prevention measures assessed and implemented by March 2019.
1.7	Ensure we are compliant with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 when it comes in to force in April 2018.	<p>Review the final version of the Code of Guidance and update our working practices and strategy where necessary.</p> <p>Staff to continue to attend training on the HRA17 when the opportunities arise.</p>	<p>As soon as the final version of the guidance is released, a group will be established to review the revisions and put in place steps to ensure compliance.</p> <p>The strategy will be updated where necessary upon this outcome as soon as practicably possible.</p>
1.8	Social services and homelessness working together in partnership to provide an increasingly effective service.	Longer term the council is developing plans to co-locate homelessness and social services at a new central site in the borough. These plans will build on the good foundations that the services have developed together and reflect a one-council mind set where all services are working closely together to produce the best outcomes.	Anticipated new site will be occupied by services by late 2019, early 2020.
1.9	Homeless prevention pathways and advice for all cohorts.	Develop homelessness LGBT online advice and review advice and accessibility for physical disability cohort.	LGBT and physical disability online advice published by November 2018.
1.10	Ensure the council works cohesively to resolve and prevent homelessness.	Expanding on the work initiated from the TA Board, continue to hold frequent strategic cross-departmental meetings.	Meetings to be held on a monthly basis.

		Multi-agency workshops to address anti-social behaviour by improving understanding of emerging issues and finding solutions to address these.	Workshops to commence from April 2018.
1.11	Tackle youth homelessness	Co-ordination of related programmes under the over-arching 16+ project. In particular, the 16+ Programme, the Care Leavers Partnership Programme and the 16+ Housing Strategy.	Ongoing cross-departmental monthly meetings have commenced and are ongoing.
1.12	Managers to demonstrate leadership and represent the <i>Southwark Ways of Working</i> to provide an excellent customer-centred approach to tackling homelessness.	Aiming for all Housing Solutions management to complete training for a recognised leadership qualification. Officers will also be encouraged to complete the training. The homelessness service will generally encourage staff to take relevant developmental and skills training at every opportunity.	All leaders and managers in Housing Solutions to have commenced a qualification by September 2019.

Priority Two: Tackle rough sleeping.

We will use the Rough Sleeping Prevention Trailblazer funding to continue to make even more progress at tackling rough sleeping in Southwark.

Reference	Description of issue	Action	Timeframe
2.1	Aim to eliminate rough sleeping in the borough in collaboration with partner agencies St Mungo's and No Second Night Out.	Introduce Housing First and No First Night Out models.	By 2020.
2.2	Aim to eliminate rough sleeping in the borough.	Work with our partner St Mungo's to help those from outside the UK to access available services, accommodation and legal advice or supported reconnection to	Ongoing basis.

		their country of origin.	
2.3	Meet all the aims set out in the trailblazer rough sleeper action plan	Follow the latest version of the detailed Rough sleeping prevention trailblazer pilot action plan and meet all of the specific targets.	By December 2019.
2.4	Improve our signposting, information and advice for rough sleepers.	Invite partner organisations to provide presentations on their work at the Southwark Homelessness Forum and task and finish groups to facilitate signposting.	Ongoing basis.
2.5	Continue to support the rough sleeping prevention and outreach work of agencies and partners.	Through the commissioning process provide best value to the borough.	Ongoing basis.
2.6	Act as a leading good practice borough on eliminating rough sleeping.	Monitor progress of the Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel, look for opportunities to contribute to national policy and implement good practice following advice from the panel.	During the duration of the Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel.
2.7	Improve the knowledge of the latest homelessness legislation for partnership agencies to assist tackling and preventing rough sleeping.	Expand access to the Housing and Social Care Partnership Board to include Public Health. Identify gaps in services that require more training on the new homelessness legislation and deliver the training to key personnel for dissemination.	Achieve by December 2018. Achieve by February 2019.
2.8	Meet all the aims of the Rough Sleeping Initiative Grant bid	Develop a project plan for the Rough Sleeping Initiative Grant bid and meet all of the specific targets.	Project plan in place by October 2018
2.9	Feedback during the public engagement period from the Drug and	Arrange initial meeting with DAAT and Housing Solutions.	Arrange initial meeting by February 2019. Completed October 2018.

	<p>Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) suggested that given the complexity of the issue about people with mental health and substance use issues sleeping rough, it would be beneficial for DAAT to meet with Housing Solutions to explore if there is more that can be done to ensure this cohort are getting their needs met.</p>	<p>Identify service and information gaps and develop action plan to deliver possible improvements.</p>	<p>Confirm new arrangements by June 2019. Duty to refer contact sent to DAAT.</p> <p>CGL + HYP (healthy young people) - to attend Housing Solutions service meeting on 28th of November.</p> <p>Meetings to promote joint working to be held on a 3 weekly basis; invited will be DAAT, housing solutions, mental health. Specific cases will be discussed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Also will ensure each service is held to account - Jane Williamson to be contacted initially for the mental health service.
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Priority Three: Vulnerability and Health.

We will ensure our services remain accessible to the most vulnerable households and can support those who need it most, such as those affected by domestic abuse.

We aim to increase the resilience of households and communities, equip them with the necessary skills to prevent crises, such as homelessness, before they occur.

We will end the use of nightly rate (bed and breakfast style) temporary accommodation with shared facilities for homeless families.

Reference	Description of issue	Action	Timeframe
3.1	We aim to improve our digital platforms so that most households choose this out of preference for their convenience which also assists us with managing a	Develop digital platforms for housing solutions, improved information on web pages, further integration for homelessness applications, online Personal Housing Plans	March 2020.

	growing demand.	and exploring other digital possibilities.	
3.2	Ensure digital inclusion requirements of customers continue to be taken into account.	We will continue to provide a full range of ways to approach and access the services.	Ongoing.
3.3	Target mental health as a priority area for homelessness prevention.	<p>Housing Solutions will work cross-departmentally by formalising and extending multi-agency meetings with increased regularity.</p> <p>Housing Solutions will work with Public Health and Adult Social Services to provide resilience and wellbeing training for staff and partners.</p> <p>We will develop champions to further embed mental health, wellbeing and resilience into the culture of our homelessness services.</p>	By March 2018 and periodically thereafter.
3.4	Ensure pathways for people to move out of supported housing are identified.	Work with supported housing providers, private and social landlords.	Ongoing.
3.5	Assess the impact of the policies upon people threatened by or actually homeless.	Refresh the housing allocations scheme and review regularly.	Every two years with refreshed scheme published in 2018.
3.6	Ensure the Hospital Discharge Protocol meets the needs of the individual and agencies as it is working across all	Review the Hospital Discharge Protocol	By February 2019.

	hospital areas.		
3.7	<p>Target of zero homeless families in shared nightly rate temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Reduce the usage of self-contained nightly rate accommodation.</p>	<p>Developing other supplies of temporary and permanent accommodation.</p> <p>Work with a micro focus to avoid nightly rate placements and end them quickly when they occur.</p>	From September 2018 onwards.
3.8	Address areas for service improvement.	Continue to monitor customer satisfaction and equalities data and collect feedback.	Annual review of equalities and satisfaction data.
3.9	Ensure services are in place to assist prisoners as soon as they have said they have no fixed abode (NFA) to prevent homelessness when released.	We will review our Service Level Agreements and partnership working to assess any areas of weakness and look to address this.	By March 2019.
3.10	Raise awareness about the housing options and the reality and risks of homelessness.	Assess current outreach work by partners in the borough. Develop and confirm Southwark's involvement with the aim to raise awareness within secondary schools, sixth forms and colleges on the realities of homelessness.	<p>Assessments to be completed by June 2020.</p> <p>Decision and approach confirmed August 2020.</p> <p>Active involvement with outreach work to commence late 2020.</p>
3.11	Provide a sensitive and high quality service to domestic abuse survivors.	Review the findings from the domestic abuse mystery shopping exercise from 2017 and produce an action plan to provide the best possible service in one of our most sensitive areas of work. We also plan to conduct a further mystery shopping exercise to reassess our performance.	<p>Review findings and produce an action plan by December 2018.</p> <p>Conduct follow up exercise in late 2018 or early 2019 in conjunction with partner's timetables.</p>
3.12	Sensitively resolve and assist with domestic abuse cases with specialist	Develop a domestic abuse specialist based in the Integrated Homelessness Team with	September 2018.

	knowledge and liaise between council services.	an understanding of mental health, social services and homelessness.	
3.13	Reducing the impacts on victims of domestic abuse. Increase the numbers of domestic abuse survivors able to stay in their own home, where safe to do so.	Raise awareness and identify training opportunities across the Council, in particular with Housing Case Workers and Resident Services Officers. To identify signs of domestic abuse, carry out risk assessments and available options for potential victims including sanctuary schemes and legal remedies such as how to obtain injunctions and Non Molestation Orders.	Identify appropriate channels to convey options - September 2018. Training or information provided from December 2018.
3.14	The Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) clients go through expensive residential substance use treatment options often do not have suitable housing to return to. These would be small numbers annually, but it represents a gap in service provision that could be better provided for.	Set up meeting between Housing Solutions and the DAAT to clarify and develop, if necessary, joined up working agreements. Tie in item with 2.9.	Arrange initial meeting by February 2019. Confirm new arrangements by June 2019.

Priority Four: Responding to the local housing market.

We will respond to the challenging local housing market conditions by working collaboratively with, and offering advice and support to, households and landlords to develop suitable private rented sector offers for all client groups.

Reference	Description of issue	Action	Timeframe
4.1	Ensure our policies remain relevant to ongoing homelessness and housing context.	Review procurement and placements policies.	Annual review with an ongoing commitment to update as necessary.

4.2	Assisting households to secure settled accommodation.	<p>Explore the best options for utilising the Private Rented Sector with the incentives of longer term tenancies.</p> <p>Promote the private rented sector as a viable housing option.</p>	Ongoing.
4.3	Identify solutions for reducing usage of temporary accommodation, in particular nightly rate and hostel.	<p>Consider adopting powers under the Localism Act for implementing a policy and procedure for discharging duty into the private rented sector where appropriate.</p> <p>Explore the possibility of developing new accommodation supply through investment funding and setting up joint ventures.</p>	<p>November 2018 to develop a report for senior management and political consideration.</p> <p>January 2019 to develop a report and scope out recommendations and next steps.</p>
4.4	Ensure the new resettlement service is functioning effectively and supporting households in the private rented sector.	Review the resettlement service and seek feedback from households placed outside of Southwark as a last resort where no accommodation could be secured in borough.	March 2019, once resettlement service has been established and outcomes can be assessed.
4.5	Ensure we have a clear and transparent process for prioritising households for temporary and permanent accommodation acquired by the Procurement team.	Procurement team to develop and agree with all referring teams on a prioritisation process.	Process in place by December 2018.
4.6	Identify efficiency savings in accommodation procurement.	<p>Work together to maximise the market power of councils to procure accommodation at a reasonable price.</p> <p>Working with London Ventures to develop a</p>	Ongoing, timetable led by London Ventures.

		property listing platform solution.	
4.7	Identify ways of maintaining tenancies.	Begin monitor tenancy sustainment where we have placed households into the private rented sector and use the data to revise our policies accordingly.	September 2018 – conduct research, develop report and identify issues. Follow up plan developed, as required. Repeat annually.
4.8	Maximise the number of empty homes brought back into usage to provide more accommodation supply in the borough.	Refresh the Empty Homes Policy with the aim of improving the packages on offer to encourage more landlords to bring empty properties back into use. Work to identify and make best use of empty homes where possible, such as using empty homes for temporary accommodation.	Policy to be produced in 2018. Ongoing.
4.9	Increase the profile of the Private Rented Sector Procurement Team to attract new business.	Expand how we access the landlord market by attending local property auctions, investment shows and developing online and media content.	In 2018 – aim to begin attending external events. Summer 2019 – Online media content commenced.
4.10	Look to improve the quality and value for money of the temporary accommodation provided for no recourse to public funds (NRPF) households.	Get a clearer picture of the cost and type of accommodation used for housing NRPF households and agree moves to better quality and better value for money temporary accommodation.	Complete reconciliation of data by March 2019. Identify and prioritise cases for moves by May 2019.
4.11	Addressing the regional chronic housing shortage with a joined up approach.	Work in partnership with London Ventures to explore and develop initiatives for London-wide procurement of temporary accommodation and private sector rental accommodation.	2018 onwards.

		Develop accessible online platforms, specifically for homeless households to assist self-serve property finding, empowering households to resolve their own homelessness and improving service efficiency.	
4.12	Overcome obstacles preventing households from resolving the threat of homelessness where they are unable to afford a deposit to secure a private rental property.	Work in partnership with London Ventures to develop a transition insurance product. Transition Insurance is being considered as an alternative to a rent deposit for some households. The challenge is to develop a product that appeals to landlords, tenants and local authorities assisting in homelessness prevention.	Finalise by October 2018 and introduce into our service by November 2018.

Priority Five: Responding to the Welfare Reforms.

We will work closely in partnership with support agencies and local services to offer solutions that ensure households are able to maintain tenancies and their homes sustainably.

Reference	Description of issue	Action	Timeframe
5.1	Support proposals which could alleviate homelessness and oppose those that may have unintended consequences which may increase the risk of homelessness.	Contribute to consultations on national policy relating to homelessness, including collaborating with partners and regional bodies. Disseminate trailblazer findings.	Ongoing.
5.2	Assisting households affected by the	Continue to hold Welfare Reform Events. We will identify households who are likely to	Bi-annual events.

	Welfare Reforms.	become affected by, or are already affected by, Welfare Reform and conduct outreach work to find the best solutions for each case.	
5.3	Help tenants cope with housing costs.	Ensure 100% of DHP is spent and managed throughout the year. This is achieved by having a fair and clear policy on how the fund is spent.	Monthly monitoring of spend.
5.4	Disseminate information from the council to landlords and share good practice.	Continue to hold the Landlords Forum.	Bi-annual events.
5.5	Keep landlords engaged with the benefits of working in partnership with the council and improving the conditions of their tenancies and properties.	Send regular e-bulletins to landlords and agents on our circulation list.	Twice yearly in tandem with bi-annual landlord events.
5.6	Identify households affected by welfare reform and provide targeted support and advice.	Work with agencies, such as the Job Centre Plus, to help with budgeting and finding alternative solutions to housing needs (for example, providing a deposit so that households can move into a more affordable property, finding employment, downsizing through Smart Move or Mutual Exchange schemes).	Ongoing.
5.7	Help homeless people to raise their aspirations and help them to access employment, education and training.	Ensure that homeless services work with agencies such as Southwark Works to actively engage with homeless people.	Ongoing.
5.8	Minimise the number of avoidable rent arrears evictions in the borough.	Manage the Rent Arrears Fund, which provides a maximum payment of £500 to stop landlords evicting tenants because of rent arrears.	Ongoing.

5.9	Develop partnerships to help support the work of Housing Solutions.	Develop a comprehensive record of current agencies and support services locally and identify agencies to develop working arrangements with.	Comprehensive record produced by December 2018 and new arrangements agreed by June 2019.
5.10	Agree priority assistance with our partners for homeless households, including those threatened with homelessness.	Assess current Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and develop new ones with our partners.	New arrangements in place by Winter 2019.
5.11	Ensure an effective process is in place for the new 'duty to refer' set out in the Homelessness Reduction Act.	Engage with public bodies and local agencies to develop local protocols and referral arrangements.	New process in place by April 2018 (the commencement of the Act). Review and complete any refinements by October 2018.