

Harlow Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019- 2024



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Foreword

Welcome to Harlow Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Harlow faces significant housing challenges and tackling them is an essential priority for the Council. This strategy sets out the Council's vision for tackling homelessness and how it will work in partnership to prevent homelessness and eliminate rough sleeping.

Homelessness and poor housing conditions blight lives, damage health and reduce opportunities. They negatively impact communities in profound ways. That is why preventing homelessness is a priority for this Council. We are committed to ongoing investment that delivers tangible benefits to the people we serve.

This strategy comes at a crucial period in time. The state of the economy is putting increased pressure on homelessness services, whilst at the same time, welfare reform and the reductions in Housing Benefit introduced by the government are increasing pressure upon household's ability to manage their finances. Major reductions in public spending have increased pressure on both statutory and voluntary sector agencies. It is therefore no surprise that nationally and locally there are strong predictions that the numbers of households presenting as homeless will rise over the coming years.

We are proud of our achievements to date. We only use bed and breakfast accommodation where absolutely necessary, and we rarely place homeless households into temporary accommodation outside of the area. We have been successful in bidding for government funding to tackle rough sleeping and we have seen numbers reduce as a result of innovation within the housing service. We re-focussed services on prevention and early intervention in response to the new legislation contained within the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

We are fortunate to work with local stakeholders who share our commitment to preventing homelessness and rough sleeping. We thank each of these colleagues, as we could not achieve the successes we have already, without them.

This is an exciting time to introduce a new strategy for preventing homelessness and rough sleeping in Harlow. I am very pleased to endorse this strategy; knowing it will deliver continuous improvement and impact positively on people's lives.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Wilkinson'.

Councillor Mark Wilkinson
Portfolio Holder for Housing

Introduction

The purpose of the Strategy

Local Housing Authorities are required by law to carry out a review of homelessness and publish a strategy setting out what it intends to do to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping.

With the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act and increased focus on tackling rough sleeping, this is a perfect time for us to review the work we do on homelessness and set fresh priorities and objectives.

The focus of the strategy is to increase homelessness prevention work and to eliminate rough sleeping.

Strategy design

This strategy has been developed at a time where there is much work being done locally, supported financially by central government – and sets out a commitment to end rough sleeping and alleviate homelessness in Harlow.

It is intended that this strategy is a short, sharply focussed tool to guide the work of the council and its partners, ensuring shared objectives and desired outcomes are clear. The strategy centres around a robust action plan which will be closely monitored by the Harlow Homelessness Partnership.

Reviewing and updating

The strategy has been developed with the input of partners, staff teams and Members and was sent out for consultation between December 2018 and July 2019. Progress against priorities will be monitored by the Harlow Homelessness Partnership. The action plan will be updated quarterly.

Our actions

Actions included in this strategy have been drawn from a number of sources: our own review of homelessness; discussions with colleagues; stakeholder workshops; member's workshop; best practice. There is a separate detailed action plan which serves as the council's tool for work on preventing homelessness and eliminating rough sleeping. The action plan is available on our website and a copy is available [here](#).

About Harlow

For most of its existence the village of Harlow was little more than a charming stopping point on the road between Cambridge and London. The original village was expanded after the Second World War to provide modern, secure housing for the thousands of Londoners displaced by the 'Blitz'. The older parts of the town were left in situ, linked by the new housing estates and a series of small shopping centres.

The new town was designed to compliment the rural Essex countryside, with generous swathes of green areas and parkland dissecting the housing estates. Many of the town's new buildings were designed in a contemporary, even futuristic style (for the pre 1970s).

Today Harlow continues to grow and its numerous facilities and proximity to London, Cambridge and Stansted International Airport, make it attractive to businesses, shoppers and commuters alike. There are plans to develop Harlow further with ambitious regeneration projects already underway, which include further investments in housing, business and recreation facilities, whilst preserving the town's green spaces.

Harlow has a population of around 86,200 an increase of 7,000 since 2007. 51.3% are female and 48.6% are male. The towns 65 and over population is projected to rise by 19% from 2018 to 2028.

There are 37,141 homes in Harlow and the average housing price in August 2018 £289,560. Around 40% of households in Harlow own their properties or with an outstanding mortgage. 26% of households rent privately and 34% live in social rented properties. There are significantly more social renters and less owner occupiers compared to national and regional averages.



Council Priorities

The council's Corporate Plan identifies five priorities, the top priority being: **More and better housing**

The council's goals for the next three years:

- Invest in the housing stock
- More housing available in Harlow, with a wider choice of housing types of all tenures which include affordable, social rented and council housing
- Work towards improving choices for those in housing need
- Increase the range and type of supported housing
- Tackle homelessness by implementing the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy
- Encourage and facilitate effective tenant and leaseholder engagement

Council Values

The council strives to be an organisation where people make things happen and promote excellence, good customer service and continuous improvement. We want to ensure that all staff are consistently aware of how their role contributes to the achievement of corporate priorities and principles, are clear about what is expected and share the council's values. The council is committed to promoting equality, challenging discrimination and developing community cohesion.

The council's goals for the next three years:

Integrity Clear, meaningful and honest two way communication with staff, customers and partners.

Value People Treating everyone fairly, equally and with mutual respect. Investing in staff, recognising individual and team contributions to achieve success.

Inspirational Support and encourage accountability, creativity and innovation amongst our staff, key stakeholders and partners.

We will achieve our goals by:

- Providing and maintaining high quality housing stock, with all council homes in the town meeting Modern Homes Standards. Publish an annual Housing Investment Programme (HIP) and invest in improvements to housing conditions
- Dealing with the outcomes of the council's preferred options for housing growth in the Local Plan
- Commencing a long term programme of house building of all types that are genuinely affordable
- Updating the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan through the Harlow Homelessness Partnership

Homelessness and its causes

What do we mean by homelessness?

A home is not simply a building. Although most people associate homelessness with rough sleeping, that is far from the whole story. The following are all examples of situations where it is considered people to be either homeless or threatened with homelessness:

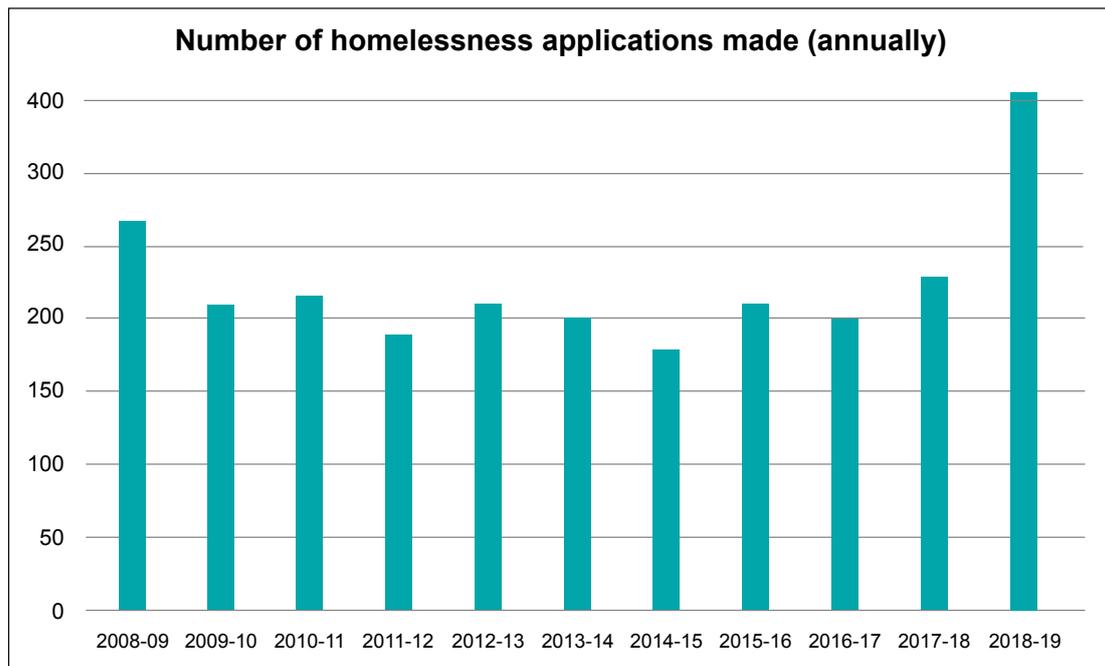
- **The household has no legal right to be in the property. This may include people staying with family or friends who want them to leave**
- **The household is being evicted from a tenancy or their house is being repossessed**
- **Members of the household are the subject of violence, threats of violence or abuse in their home**
- **The property is unsafe, or its condition is affecting the health of the occupants and there is no practical remedy**
- **People who are 'sofa surfing', moving between various friends and or family members**
- **The household is staying in a hostel, night shelter or bed and breakfast establishment. Temporary accommodation is not a home.**

Homelessness in Harlow

The law changed in 2018, and the full statistics are not yet available so we have looked back on our past data to understand the local homelessness picture. This gives the most robust picture of homelessness in Harlow.

Homelessness applications and decisions

The total number of decisions on homelessness applications made annually in Harlow over the last ten years is shown in the chart below.



It shows that since 2008/09, when applications were at their highest, the level of applications has remained fairly consistent over the last ten years, fluctuating around an average of 212 applications per year. The figures for the last 4 years, suggest a steady upward trend in the number of applications,

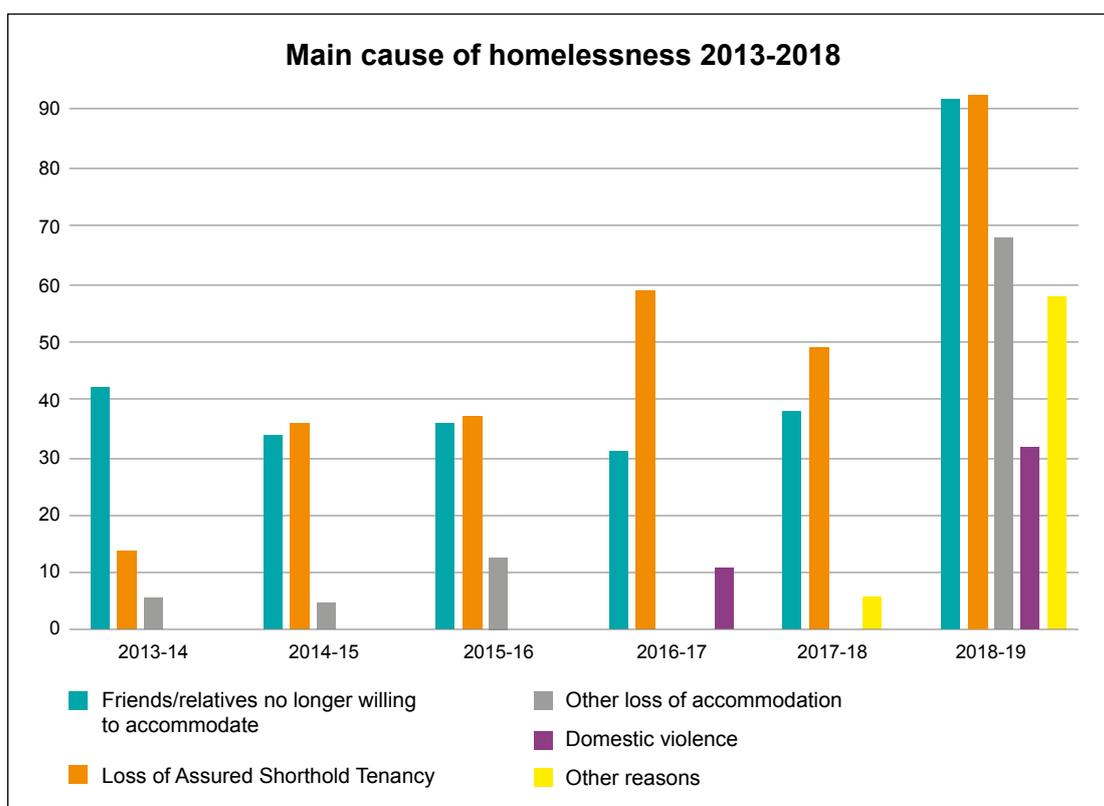
Homelessness acceptances

Whilst there is a level of fluctuation in the figures that makes it difficult to identify a clear trend, the figures point to a slow but steady increase in homelessness acceptances over the last 18 months; the latest figure of 41 acceptances is close to the highest quarterly figure recorded over the last four years.

Reasons for homelessness

The following chart sets out the main reasons for homelessness among households accepted as being homeless and in priority need over the last five years. Throughout the period, the figures point to two primary causes of homelessness: (i) loss of accommodation in the private rented sector (loss of an assured shorthold tenancy) and (ii) eviction from the home of relatives and friends. Domestic violence, loss of other rented accommodation and other reasons such as arrears account for much smaller numbers of households becoming homeless.

The main trend over the period is the rapid increase in homelessness caused by loss of accommodation in the private rented sector. This suggests that the main focus for Harlow in preventing homelessness is to look at ways of assisting households at risk of losing private rented accommodation.

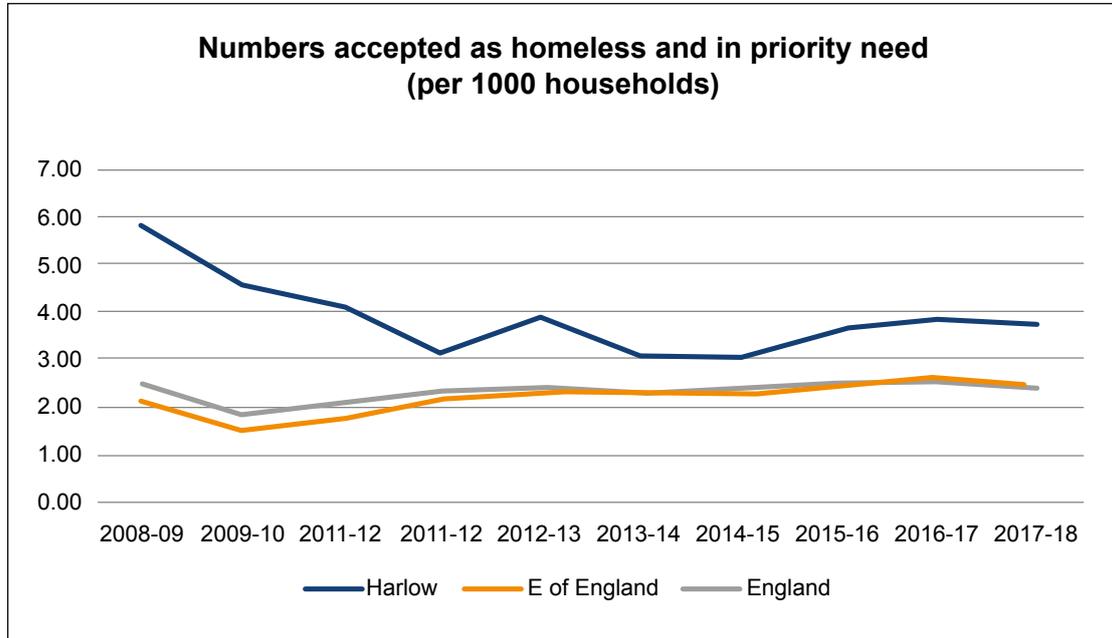


People become homeless for a variety of reasons. The most common categories are shown in the box above. Nationally, the proportion of homelessness caused by the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy (AST) has seen significant growth. Overwhelmingly ASTs are the main type of tenancy used in the private rented sector.

All the data suggests that the end of a private rented tenancy is one of the main causes of homelessness and yet better use of the private rented sector by Local Authorities is expected to be the main solution to homelessness. There are reforms being made to the private rented sector and we welcome these. We will continue to configure our services so that we can make the best use of all available housing in Harlow, including homes in the private rented sector.

Local homelessness trends compared to national trends

The following chart compares rates of homelessness acceptances in Harlow with the regional figures for East of England and national figures for England. This is achieved by looking at the number of homelessness acceptances per 1000 households of the population for each area.



Homelessness acceptances per population in Harlow are consistently higher than for the east of England and England over the last ten years.

Over time, continuing high levels of homelessness acceptances is likely to have an impact on the use and availability of temporary accommodation.

The Homelessness Reduction Act

This new legislation came into force in April 2018, and gave the council new duties to prevent and relieve homelessness. Essentially it increased the duties owed to people facing homelessness; it represented the biggest overhaul to the homelessness legislation since 1977.

The initial data shows the following activity throughout the first year:

2018/19	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Prevention duty	75	62	48	44	229
Relief duty	25	33	35	62	155
Total owed a duty	100	95	83	106	384
Not threatened with homelessness	5	7	3	9	24
Total initial assessments	105	102	86	115	408

We will continue to monitor the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act, and review the all-new associated personalised housing plans and legal letters, to ensure they remain user friendly and reflect best practice.

The challenges we face in tackling homelessness

During the council's review of homelessness during 2018/19, officers spent some considerable time talking with stakeholders and service users about the biggest challenges faced in tackling homelessness.

The top seven key challenges identified:



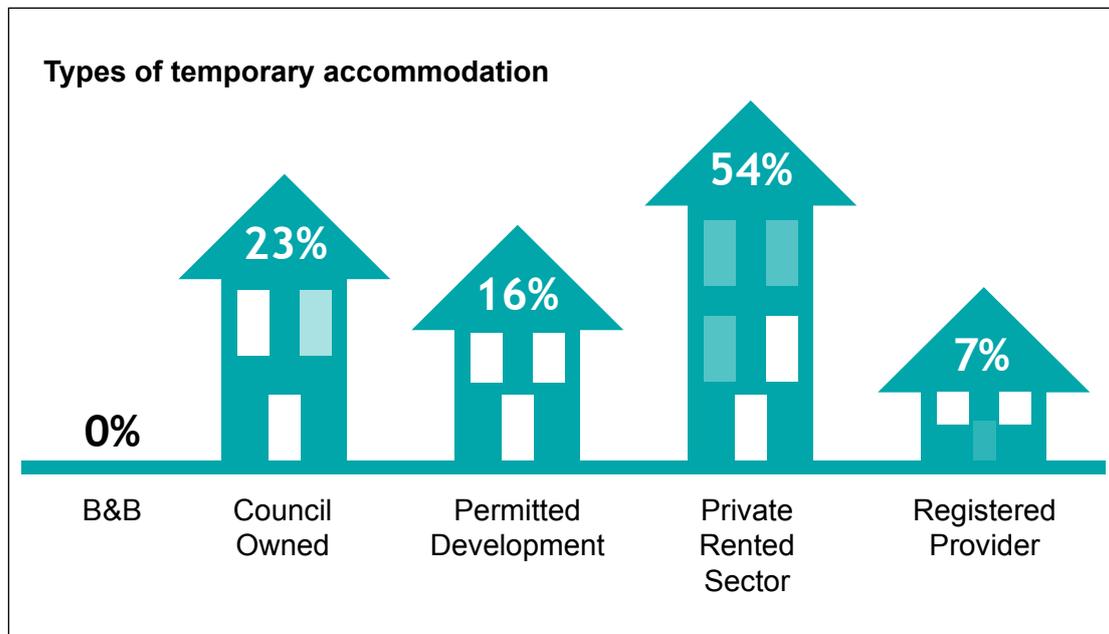
Temporary accommodation

In developing a strategy to tackle homelessness, the council has to make judgments on how to achieve best value for money in allocating its limited resources in order to fulfill its duties. The use of bed and breakfast and other temporary accommodation is by far the most expensive and least satisfactory response for those in need.

Harlow Council use temporary accommodation whilst assessments are being carried out and where the council has a duty to provide housing for a homeless household, but is not able to provide a permanent home at that point. At any one time the council have in the region of 250 to 280 households living in temporary accommodation.

This is a mix of housing association properties, council owned properties and properties secured in the private rented market and buildings with permitted development rights. The council will continue to review the provision of resources to prevent homelessness and provide settled accommodation against meeting the costs of short term temporary accommodation provision.

The council want to reduce this number and have set aside a budget to make better use of private sector homes, which can either be sought by our clients, or by the council. This gives much more flexibility over the type and location of properties we can offer. From 2019/20 onwards the council will establish a package of support and incentives to help bring forward more properties in the Harlow area.

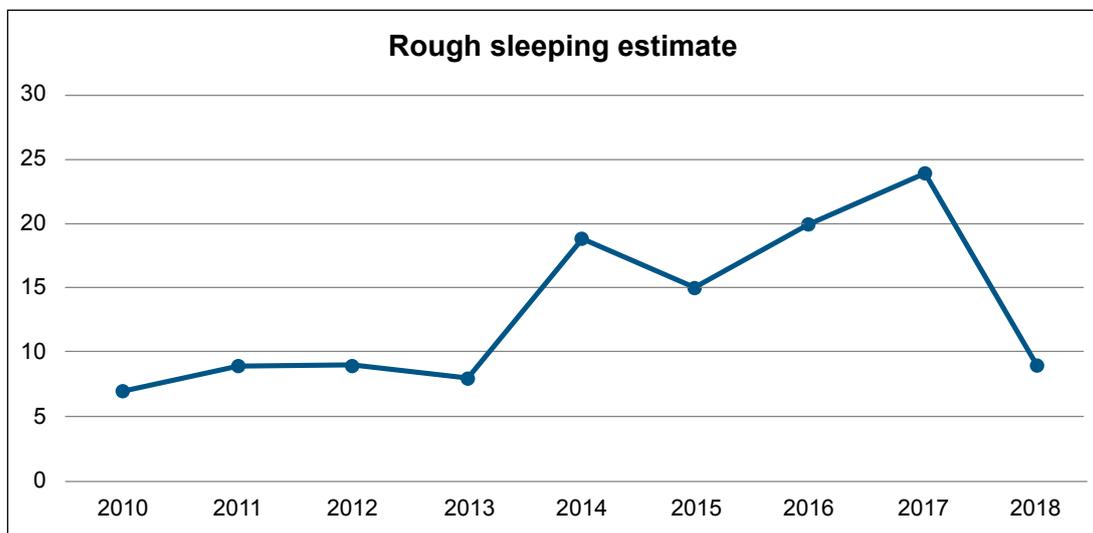


Rough sleeping

The Government introduced a new Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018 and committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027. 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 in new ways.

Estimates and counts of rough sleeping are carried out annually in all local authority areas across the country. The figures for Harlow show a fluctuation in the number of people sleeping rough in Harlow since 2010.

As a result of a successful bid for government funding under the Rough Sleeping Initiative, the council and its partners have carried out significant work to tackle rough sleeping. In 2018 there was a reduction in the figures to just 9.



The table below shows the rough sleeping figures for Harlow, east of England and England.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Harlow	7	9	9	8	19	15	20	24	9
East of England	206	242	276	296	302	418	604	615	484
England	1,768	2,181	2,309	2,414	2,744	3,569	4,134	4,751	4,677

The level of rough sleeping grew 342% between 2010 and 2017. The profile of rough sleepers shows they are mostly male, mostly over 25 and mostly from the UK.

Local people are understandably concerned when they come across people sleeping rough and we receive quite regular reports from local communities, agencies and the Police. Streets2homes Outreach Team will always follow up these reports and ensure work begins to prevent the need for continued rough sleeping.

The causes of rough sleeping vary from individual to individual but in Harlow, rough sleepers have the following principle issues:

- The person is dealing with issues relating to mental health, drugs or alcohol (or a combination of these)
- The person is not succeeding in making and sustaining long-term relationships
- The person is not able to sustain a tenancy
- The person's behaviour is often erratic and unpredictable
- In many cases, the issues the person is dealing with are very longstanding and entrenched

Our actions

Through partnership working, we will:

- Work with local agencies and organisations, including through task and finish groups, focussed on each individual known to be rough sleeping
- Make sure that we co-ordinate with other groups to raise awareness and build effective partnerships
- Provide an outreach service
- Provide in-reach support at Bromley Cottages
- Provide a Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator
- Enhance and continue to implement severe weather emergency protocols



Our work to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping

Harlow Council are pleased with the work in tackling homelessness and rough sleeping, some of the key successes include:

- Successful and seamless implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act
- Development of a range of protocols aimed at cementing robust partnership working arrangements with agencies such as NHS (Princess Alexandra Hospital) and services for 16/17 year olds
- Development of an enhanced Severe Weather Emergency Protocol – extended nights
- Opening of Bromley Cottages, providing up to 9 bed spaces to keep rough sleepers from the street

The council aim to talk to people as early as possible about their housing options. Council officers will give advice to help people understand what their housing options are to enable them to make informed decisions. Where there is a threat of homelessness, officer's work hard to prevent it from happening. This will include:

- Home visits
- Negotiation with landlords
- Use of Discretionary Housing Payments
- Signposting to support services
- Warm handovers to partner agencies for specialist casework
- Refer to debt counselling and money advice

Where the council cannot prevent homelessness, we work to find a suitable housing alternative. This can include:

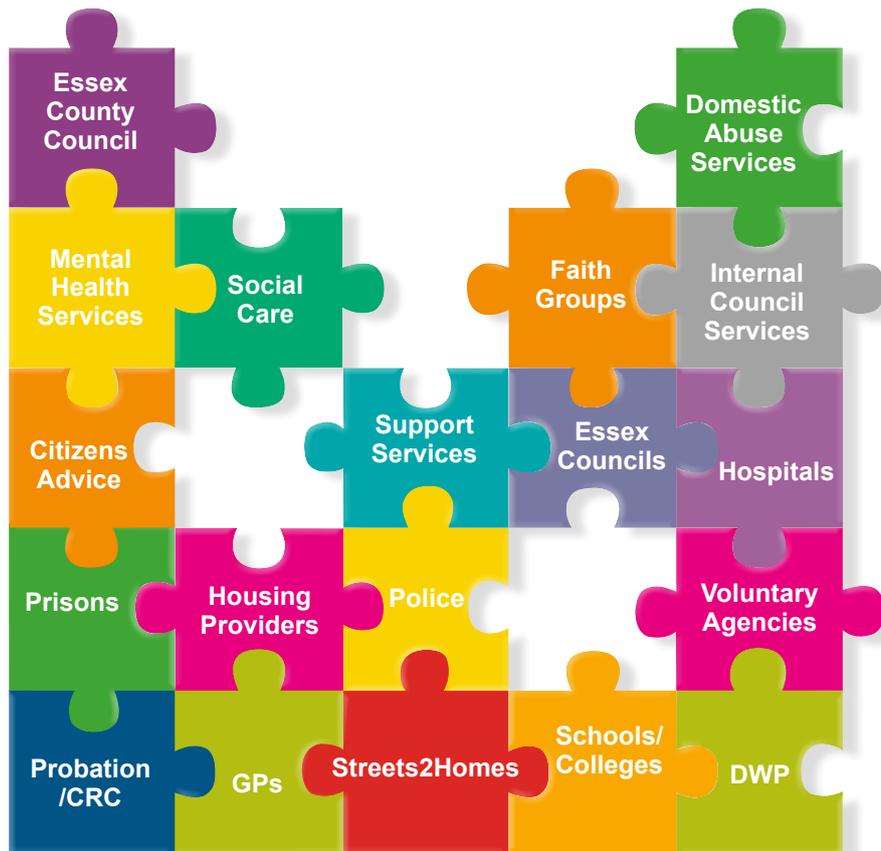
- Discussions with applicant about moving in with other family and friends
- Finding accommodation in the private rented sector
- Provision of temporary accommodation

Personalised housing plans

The council have always worked with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to plan the steps they need to take to secure housing. Under the Homelessness Reduction Act, local authorities have a legal duty to work with all applicants to produce a Personal Housing Plan (PHP) and to assess if they have support needs, which need to be addressed if they are able to sustain suitable accommodation. The plans must be available in writing, including steps the applicant is expected to take and the steps the council will undertake. The new plans are a powerful tool in ensuring a robust approach to prevention is taken.

Building a network of support

Homelessness will only ever be prevented through partnership working, and in Harlow we are lucky to have forged strong links with voluntary and statutory agencies. We meet with these partners through our Harlow Homelessness Partnership and in a number of instances where there is focussed work or funding, on a one to one basis. This strategy is a result of a number of workshops exploring key issues and working on priorities for action. We thank these colleagues for all their time and energy in working with us to develop local services that deliver better outcomes for people in Harlow.



We will work with stakeholders to:

- Make sure that we are all using the opportunities they have to identify people who may be at risk of homelessness
- Make sure that the formal process for agencies to refer people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness is fully understood and easy to use
- Involve other organisations in the identification and provision of opportunities to help people facing housing issues
- Explore and generate ideas for potential projects and monitor potential sources of funding such as community funds and government initiatives
- Maintain housing options for households in housing need
- Work with private sector landlords to secure private rented accommodation for households in housing need

Improving access to the private rented sector

Harlow Council have already identified that we need to do more work to increase the number of people we help to access the private rented sector, and for 2019/20 a budget has been set aside to enable the council to achieve this.

This will be through a mixture of loans to applicants to help with advanced payments, bonds and guarantees to landlords and with targeted use of resources such as Discretionary Housing Payments (administered by the Revenues and Benefits Team) and payments that may be available to Universal Credit claimants.

The council aim to increase the number of people we help, year on year throughout the life of this strategy.

We will:

- Form a dedicated team to focus on private rented sector access
- Provide support to landlords who accept placements by us
- Provide tenancy sustainment support to people we place
- Stimulate supply of private sector properties
- Increase the use of the private rented sector for both homelessness prevention and homelessness relief



The role of Harlow Council's Housing Allocations Scheme (Allocations policy)

The council's Housing Allocations Scheme and the Tenancy Strategy are closely aligned to this strategy due to the focus on rebuilding lives and tenancy sustainment.

Over the last 18 months the council made a number of minor amendments to the Housing Allocations Scheme to facilitate the rehousing of homeless households from temporary accommodation into permanent homes, including the ability to move clients who have lived in temporary accommodation long term and who have debt but are following an agreed repayment plan.

Harlow Council want to strengthen links between the Housing Allocations Scheme and relieving homelessness over the life of this strategy, and this will include work to:

- Examine the current local connections policy, with a view to strengthening it, to give greater protection to local people
- Ensuring those facing homelessness are given due priority (reasonable preference)
- Victims of domestic abuse and their families who have escaped abuse are given due priority (reasonable preference)



Creating sustainable places to live

Facing homelessness is really hard for families; whilst the council work hard to prevent it, as the data shows, in many cases we cannot and the council have to provide some form of temporary accommodation, pending a more permanent home being secured. This will either be a home in the private rented sector, or a social housing tenancy with the council or one of our partner housing associations.

The Council Housing Allocations Scheme (Allocations policy) provides a framework as to how we allocate a scarce resource of properties and priority is awarded based on an households housing need.

Between April 2018 and March 2019 the council housed a total of 434 households:

199 applicants were homeseekers

157 were transfers

78 were homeless

Type of accommodation provided:

296 were placed in general needs properties

55 in supported housing

83 in housing association properties

Recognising the need to build sustainable communities that new tenants can be a part of the council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy works, in conjunction with the council's tenancy strategy. The Tenancy Strategy has therefore been included as an appendix to this strategy.

Harlow Council believes that a social housing tenancy should be for as long as the tenant wishes to live in their home and will offer lifetime tenancies for its own stock. The council also believe that it wishes to offer security for its tenants to be able to build their lives and play a positive role in the local community then this is essential.

The council strongly encourages Registered Providers to adopt long-term tenancies and would expect them to be granted for at least a minimum of five years. Full details about the types of tenancy and tenure are set out in the council's Tenancy Strategy.

Harlow Council will complete regular reviews of its policies and strategies to ensure it meets local needs, national policy and improving the services that it provides.

Access to the council's Tenancy Strategy can be found on the council's website at www.harlow.gov.uk

What will we be doing in the future – our priorities?

The Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy published in August 2018, suggests there are three pillars to framing an approach to eliminate rough sleeping – prevention, intervention and recovery. The council believe these themes provide a sound framework for creating its own Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The council has also added a fourth - partnerships

The overarching objective of the Harlow Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is to eliminate rough sleeping and to provide a service that focuses on the prevention of homelessness.

Prevention - support to prevent homelessness happening

We will:

- Commit to joint working at an earlier stage on casework, so that prevention opportunities are increased. This links to the new requirements in the Homelessness Reduction Act, where there is a new duty on authorities to prevent homelessness, and a new duty to refer
- Review information sharing protocols
- Ensure people facing homelessness know where to go
- Ensure those who require family or friends to leave, approach for advice and information at the earliest opportunity
- Review and develop our personalised housing plans
- Fund outreach work, from government Rough Sleeping Initiative fund
- Review the structure of the team, to ensure it is adequately resourced to support the provision of an early intervention and focussed approach

Intervention - helping those in crisis with swift targeted support

We will:

- Develop a robust private landlord offer to enable the council to increase access to private rented accommodation as an effective homelessness intervention
- Improve the quality and supply of temporary accommodation, with an eye on cost effectiveness
- Ensure we publicise information on what to do if you see a rough sleeper / channel human interest effectively
- Carry out targeted outreach work
- Work to provide bed spaces for single homeless clients
- Explore how we can assist clients with no recourse to public funds through reconnection work

Recovery - rebuilding lives

We will:

- Provide information for new tenants to help ensure / support tenancy sustainability (including information on maximising benefits and income)
- Refer clients to suitable support services
- Refer clients to specialist service providers where extra support is required
- Work with Essex County Council to influence support provision in Harlow
- Review the “housing first” pilots to see what learning there is for Harlow
- Work with Steeets2Homes to make projects self-sufficient – legacy planning for the withdrawal of rough sleeping funding if and when it happens
- Explore opportunities for volunteering and the role of people with “lived experience” within the homelessness service offering in Harlow

Partnerships - collective force

We will:

- Review applications forms to eliminate duplication of work between partners and ensure helpful GDPR compliance
- Work to reduce stigma associated with homelessness
- Undertake joint training
- Ensure colleagues across all agencies are skilled to play a role in homelessness prevention
- Work to capture the voices of those with lived experience
- Review performance under ‘duty to refer’ and refresh our approach
- Develop a commitment to refer for agencies not captured by the “duty to refer”
- Relaunch the Harlow Homelessness Partnership



Our assumptions about resources

Specific Government Grants for Homelessness

New Burdens Funding

The government has recognised that the Homelessness Reduction Act places additional burdens on Local Authorities. In particular:

- Through the “prevention” and “relief” stages of the process, councils will be working with more people, such as single people and couples than we were required to under previous legislation
- With effect from October 2018, the “duty to refer” came into force, where it is expected that the number of people we will be dealing with will increase
- The requirement for a Personal Housing Plan for everyone who is homeless or threatened with homelessness is time consuming, particularly if it is to be meaningful in its recommendation and requirements, with updates made through the applicant’s journey
- Potentially we will be working with applicants for a longer period than under previous legislation before we issue a main homelessness duty decision

Flexible Homelessness Support Grant

Since 2017/18 the council have been allocated a Flexible Support Grant to assist in the prevention of homelessness, following the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act. The Flexible Support Grant was a new funding model of the funding previously awarded to source and manage temporary accommodation for homeless individuals and their families. The aim of this grant was to provide Local Authorities with the flexibility to use the grant in their work to prevent and alleviate homelessness.

IT Funding

We have invested in the implementation of a new IT system that helps us to manage the new workload, process and journey of our applicants. The new system automatically uploads data to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). We received a one-off payment to cover this cost in 2018/19.

Our Planned Expenditure

The council’s base budget is drawn from a mixture of Government Grants and council income. Resources are allocated to the Housing Options Service to cover the costs associated with our Allocation, Homelessness and Housing Options functions.

With the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act, our experience suggested that we required additional staff to deal with the volume of approaches being received and to deal with the early assessments of individual's needs.

We have already commenced the process of enlarging the team with the use of the additional grant funding received, however these grants are due to cease with effect from March 2020, at this stage we have no confirmation that further government grants will be allocated.

Expected income and expenditure

The base budget for the entire homelessness and rough sleeping prevention operation across Harlow is shown in Table 1.

Expenditure item	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Staff within establishment	£257,276	£262,422	£267,670	£273,023	£278,483
Additional staffing resources	£146,121	£149,043	£0	£0	£0
Grant funding to partners	£186,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000
IT systems	£10,150	£10,150	£10,150	£10,150	£10,150
Temporary Accommodation costs	£1,643,994	£1,726,193	£1,726,193	£1,726,193	£1,726,193
Number of Temporary Accommodation units	267-332	332-350	350	350	350

We will continue to review our expenditure on temporary accommodation and on securing access to private sector housing. We will identify and report on any significant changes to the budget. The additional staffing resources outlined in table 1, have been funded through the grant allocation, which the council have staggered over a 2 year period, ending in March 2021.

Table 2 shows the income we have to help run the current service:

Income source	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	24/25
Flexible homelessness support grant	£457,351	£0	£0	£0	£0
Homelessness Prevention Grant	£166,750	£124,750	£124,750	£124,750	£124,750
New burdens funding	£48,289	£0	£0	£0	£0
RSI Grant (bidding round)	£231,000	£231,000	£0	£0	£0

Consultation

This strategy has been developed through a process of joint working with partners, and then has been subject to consultation before finalising and adoption. This has included:

- Early discussions at the Harlow Homelessness Partnership
- Meetings with colleagues from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- Early discussions and shared learnings at the local Rough Sleeping Initiative meetings
- A dedicated, independently facilitated workshop for all partners in December 2018
- A workshop with front line colleagues who deal with homeless clients daily in December 2018
- Formal 12 week consultation using an online questionnaire for professionals - 25 March 2019 to 16 June 2019
- Formal 12 week consultation using an online tool for service users - 25 March 2019 to 16 June 2019
- A workshop with Members on 25 July 2019



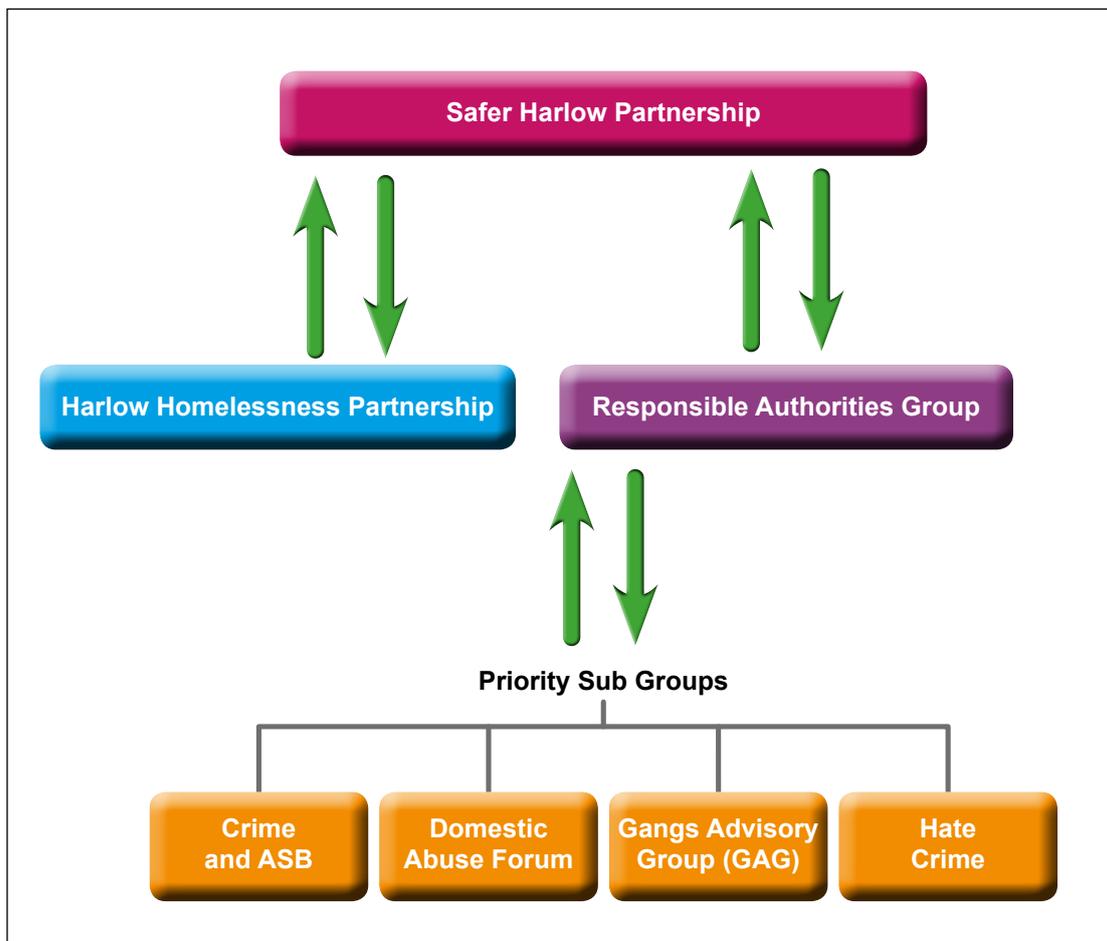
Delivery Plan and Governance

The most important part of this strategy is our delivery plan which sets out, task by task, how we intend to achieve the overall objectives of the strategy.

We recognise the need to ensure our priorities are effectively delivered, and that we monitor outcomes. During 2019 we reviewed the governance arrangements for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and have given responsibility for delivery to the Harlow Homelessness Partnership.

The Delivery Plan has been developed throughout the consultation process, and will be monitored by the Harlow Homelessness Partnership, in order to track progress. The Harlow Homelessness Partnership reports to the Safer Harlow Partnership, providing a robust governance framework.

Regular updates of the Delivery Plan will be available on the council's website.



Achievements

The council and its partners of the Harlow Homelessness Partnership achieved and delivered the actions from the previous Homelessness Strategy 2015 to 2020 as detailed below:

- Reviewed and updated the council's prevention activity/toolkit
- Updated the council's website to offer up to date housing advice and links to partner websites - computers are available in Contact Harlow for customers to access
- Essex County Council completed a review access to floating support in Harlow – Trailblazer offering handheld support for households that are at risk of homelessness following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act
- West Housing Links group set up to improve joint working with Family Solutions and other support services, sharing best practice and developing links
- Feasibility study completed into the provision of a night shelter – outcome supported accommodation specific to those that are at risk of or rough sleeping - known as Bromley Cottages
- Increased use of the private rented sector to review financial incentives on offer - completed with a new revised scheme available in February 2020
- Explored prevention activity to target at a much younger age – Doorways Project is in place by Essex County Council
- Protocols developed with Princess Alexandra Hospital and Social Services
- Directory of Homelessness Services developed for all partners and agencies
- Joint working with partners Job Centre Plus – Multi Agency Centres (MACS) set up and continue
- Single homeless people (non-priority) financial support to assist securing accommodation in the private rented sector.
- Essex-wide with Social Services protocol to assist those aged 16/17 reviewed and implemented
- Temporary accommodation portfolio reviewed to improve quality and supply of accommodation
- Outreach workers recruited to support people sleeping on the streets
- Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator recruited
- Enhanced the Severe Weather Emergency Protocols to provide a flexible offer to those rough sleeping