

## Report of the Assistant Director

**NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY****1 Purpose of report**

To seek a decision from members to adopt the North Northamptonshire, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2019-2024)

**2 Executive summary**

The council is required under the Homelessness Act 2002 to publish a review of homelessness every five years and a strategy outlining the leading causes of homelessness in the district with a strategic action plan to tackle them.

Given the imminent move to a unitary authority in North Northamptonshire, it was necessary that all four councils produced a joint Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The joint five-year strategy also considers the requirements of the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

**3 Appendices**

Appendix 1 North Northamptonshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Appendix 2 Consultation Activity

Appendix 3 Draft strategy consultation outcomes

**4 Proposed action:****4.1 The committee is invited to RESOLVE the proposed Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is approved****5 Background**

5.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which came into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2018 is one of the most significant changes to housing and homeless legislation since 1977. Emphasis has shifted from dealing with homelessness from crisis intervention to preventing homelessness. There are also new enhanced duties introduced towards single people and couples with non-dependent children.

5.2 The MHCLG Rough Sleeping Strategy (August 2018) and its delivery plan (December 2018) requires housing authorities to have a clear focus on tackling

rough sleeping as well as support the government's commitment to half rough sleeping by 2022 and to end it by 2027. A duty has been placed on Housing Authorities to have a combined Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in place by winter 2019.

- 5.3 The Borough Council of Wellingborough carried out a comprehensive review of homelessness in the district which considered current and future levels of homelessness, what the main causes of homelessness were and the characteristics of people who are at risk of homelessness.
- 5.4 Supporting the homelessness review is data from the SHMA 2015 which sets out the level of housing need in the borough, using local data for household projections, housing costs and housing supply to identify housing requirements.
- 5.5 The challenges identified in the review are:
  - (a) Increase demand for supported housing and move on accommodation that meets the diverse needs of homeless people.
  - (b) The disparity between household income and access to housing that is affordable.
  - (c) A need for effective downstream homeless prevention projects, intervening at the earliest opportunity through collaborative working with partners and the voluntary sector.
  - (d) To ensure existing housing is used in the most efficient way to meet the needs of those who are homeless.
- 5.6 Main findings from all the four councils formed the basis of an over-arching Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for North Northamptonshire (Appendix 1). The Strategy summarises results of the homelessness review and sets out the Aims and Objectives of the Strategy (Section 7) to achieve the vision of 'Working collaboratively across North Northamptonshire to end homelessness'. Each council is required to deliver the strategy through a local action plan.
- 5.7 In July 2019, we consulted with partners and voluntary sector organisations on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and accompanying action plan. (See Appendix 2). Responses generally supported the broader principles; detailed responses were received from Greatwell Homes, Orbit Housing Association and Multi -agency Public Protection Arrangements. Following a review of the consultation responses, the Action Plan has been updated. (See Appendix 3).
- 5.8 The Action Plan sets out what we will do to meet the priorities identified within the strategy, it is intended to be delivered over the life of the strategy but will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains responsive to changing needs.

## **6 Discussion**

### **Relationship with other council strategies**

- 6.1 The North Northamptonshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will contribute to meeting the Key priorities of the Housing Plan 2018-2023.
- To increase the supply of affordable housing to meet housing need;
  - To reduce the number of people becoming homeless
  - Reduce rough sleeping and provide support for sustainable accommodation.
- 6.2 North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Policy 30 dovetails with the Homelessness and Rough sleeping strategy; detailing the mechanism by which the Council can work with developers and other partners to increase the supply of affordable housing in the borough.
- 6.3 Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which came into effect on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2018, the housing service has seen a 50% increase in the number of applicants approaching the services for housing assistance. The lack of affordable housing has created pressure on the Council's waiting list and in turn, lengthens the time households spend in temporary accommodation.
- 6.4 A review of the Allocation policy will support the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy's action plan to ensure those in temporary accommodation have a robust move-on pathway into longer -term housing.
- 6.5 In 2018/19 Wellingborough successfully bided for a grant under the MHCLG Rough Sleeping Initiative. The grant was for £153,355 used to develop a rapid rehousing project and tenancy sustainment service.
- 6.6 The grant also funded the employment of two tenancy sustainment officers and a rough sleeping outreach worker. The project is now mobilised and will begin to deliver outcomes to meet the Government's target to eliminate rough sleeping by 2027. The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan sets out how this is to be achieved.

## **7 Legal Implications**

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Code of Guidance requires local authorities to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in place by October 2019.

## **8 Financial and value for money implications**

There are none directly arising from this report, as activities to tackle homelessness will be funded within the existing budget which includes the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant. New Burden's funding provided to Local Authorities to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act, will end in 2020, and the government expectation is that delivering the Act would be cost-neutral.

## 9 Risk analysis

<b>Nature of risk</b>	<b>Consequences if realised</b>	<b>Likelihood of occurrence</b>	<b>Control measures</b>
Not having a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	Without a strategic action plan to tackle homelessness the number of households owed a housing duty will continue to rise, placing pressure on council's budgets.	High	To adopt North Northamptonshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

## 10 Implications for resources

No resource implications are arising directly from this report. However, additional resources may be required to implement aspects of the plan. To be considered by senior management and a report produced for committee approval.

## 11 Implications for equalities

There are no issues likely to arise for equalities however this will be assessed once the strategy has been implemented.

## 12 Author and contact officer

Theresa Chapman, Housing Manager

## 13 Consultees

Vicki Jessop, Assistant Director  
Martyn Swann, Principal Planning Manager

## 14 Background papers

None

# NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY 2019-2024

<b>Service Area</b>	Housing		
<b>Strategy Owner</b>			
<b>Introduced</b>	2019	<b>Last Reviewed</b>	n/a
<b>Version</b>	<u>ThreeOne</u>	<b>Review Date</b>	2024

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## 1 Foreword

## 2 Introduction

This Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy sets out how the district and borough councils of North Northamptonshire intend to meet the needs of our residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including rough sleeping. It reviews our performance, identifies challenges that we face to the delivery of our service, and describes how we will go about addressing homelessness and rough sleeping in North Northamptonshire.

This Strategy has been prepared and agreed jointly between Corby Borough Council (CBC), East Northamptonshire Council (ENC), Kettering Borough Council (KBC), and the Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW), **in co-ordination with services currently provided by Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) and local health services. Together the area covered by the four above-named district and borough councils (the Councils) is referred to as North Northamptonshire.**

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## 3 Strategic Background

### 3.1 Strategic Context

Across the country levels of homelessness are increasing and North Northamptonshire is no exception. Within the housing sector issues of housing supply and affordability, population growth, and economic circumstances including welfare reforms and provision of funding are all aspects we must take into account when considering our provision for **reducing and preventing** homelessness and rough sleeping.

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Using the vision from the government's Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018, in order to address these challenges North Northamptonshire's focus is on:

1. preventing homelessness and rough sleeping (Prevent);
2. early intervention for those at risk (Intervene); and
3. relief through appropriate accommodation and support services (Recover).

As well as having regard to national initiatives, this Strategy complements the Housing Plan or Strategy and Allocations Policy of each **current local authority** within North Northamptonshire. The districts and boroughs currently work closely together in relation to housing matters and benefit from shared good practice and collaboration on homeless issues.

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### 3.2 Local Government Reorganisation

North Northamptonshire is one of the two new unitary authorities which will be created in the restructuring of Northamptonshire County Council and the district and borough councils within the Northamptonshire area. **This will involve the abolition of the eight current Northamptonshire authorities (including the Councils and NCC) and the necessary transformation of the services provided by these authorities, such as housing and homelessness services.** As we prepare to become operational as a

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unitary authority on 01 April 2021, the Councils recognise the increased importance of collaborative working in order to achieve the vision, aims and objectives of this Strategy. **This applies equally to our work with partner agencies and the voluntary sector who are a vital part of tackling homelessness in North Northamptonshire.**

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#### 4 Legal Context

To be homeless has a wide meaning, beyond the most visible effect of rough sleeping. Various pieces of legislation and guidance, including the recent Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA), set out the full definitions and duties that we owe to those who are homeless, threatened with homelessness, or sleeping rough.

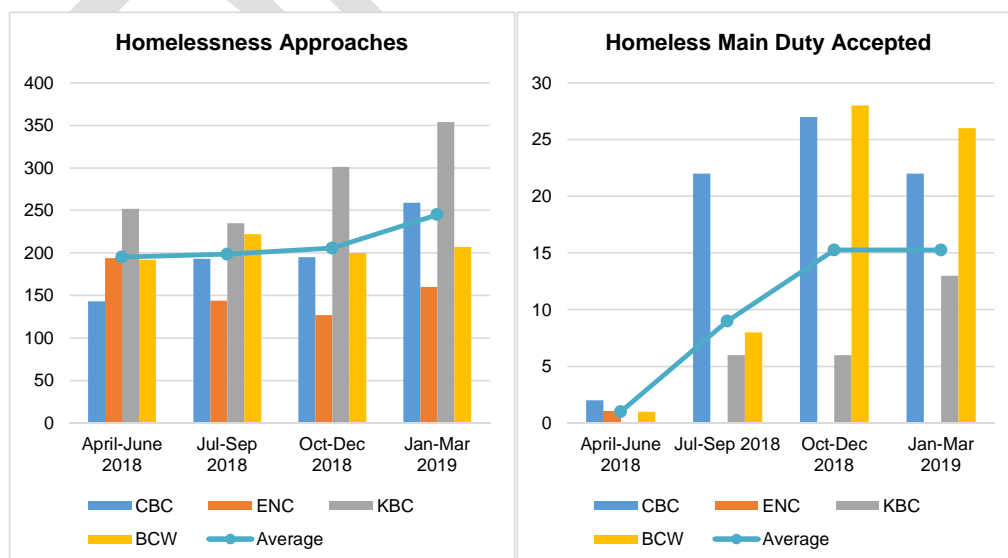
Measures implemented in April 2018 by the HRA place a greater duty on local authorities by legally obliging them to assess and provide assistance to all those who are eligible and homeless or threatened with homelessness, irrespective of their priority need status. This includes prevention and relief duties, which centre on helping service users to remain in their existing home or secure new accommodation, with a strengthened focus on single people who may be at greater risk of sleeping rough.

In conjunction with the HRA, the government has set out a plan of action to significantly reduce the number of people sleeping rough. This includes a number of commitments, support and funding as set out in the national Rough Sleeping Strategy introduced in August 2018.

#### 5 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

##### 5.1 Levels of homelessness

Homelessness approaches in general are increasing in North Northamptonshire, as are the overall waiting list numbers, reflecting a growing demand for affordable housing. Between 1 April 2018 and 1 April 2019 CBC and KBC had an approximate 23% increase in active application numbers. During the same period ENC and BCW





saw an increase of just under 4%, giving an average increase in active applications across North Northamptonshire of 13.4%.

Since the introduction of the HRA in April 2018 main duty acceptances increased for all Councils except for ENC, and the increase was significant for CBC and BCW. Although data from previous years (prior to HRA duties) is not directly comparable, homeless acceptances and decisions for 2017/18 had a similar pattern of increasing to Q2 / Q3 and falling slightly to the end of the year.

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## 5.2 Rough sleeping

Estimates of rough sleeper numbers are carried out periodically across North Northamptonshire and indicate the number of rough sleepers is generally increasing.

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Data from 2018/19 shows approximately 70% of rough sleepers are UK nationals, with EEA nationals a significant part of the remainder. The majority of rough sleepers are single males, with some females and couples. Rough sleeping is predominantly an issue in town areas as opposed to rural parts of North Northamptonshire. The main challenges identified amongst the Councils were engagement with this hard-to-reach group, sharing intelligence with partners, language barriers, and ineligibility.

The following figures evidence the importance of strengthening ties with partners in order to obtain the most accurate data regarding rough sleeping.

No. rough sleepers	2017	2018 spotlight count / estimate	Updated as at Jan-Feb 2019
<b>CBC</b>	4 (shelter open)	28 (shelter closed)	18 in SWEP 2019, 12 in April 2019, 19 rehoused during Nightlight close down period
<b>ENC</b>	6	7	2 in SWEP 2019
<b>KBC</b>	14	17	3 in SWEP 2019, 27 in Jan 2019
<b>BCW</b>	12	10	31 known, 20 identified in Q3 2018/19, 11 more in SWEP 2019

The Chief Housing Officers Group (CHOG) has made a proposal to the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board regarding how a case will be reviewed should a homeless person die whilst they are sleeping rough. The proposal from CHOG is set out in the attached letter at Appendix B.

## 5.3 Reasons for homelessness

There are a variety of factors that may cause homelessness, many of which can be inter-related, meaning homelessness is a complex issue to tackle. These may be economic reasons such as welfare policy or employment status, factors relating to housing like the supply and affordability of accommodation, interpersonal issues such as relationship breakdown or domestic abuse, and individual aspects like mental health conditions or substance abuse.

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The government published a report in March 2019 on the underlying risk factors for homelessness and rough sleeping which looks in depth at these causes:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/causes-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-feasibility-study>.

Across North Northamptonshire the primary reasons for homelessness reported by individuals who lost accommodation in 2018/19 (and the average numbers of homelessness assessments associated with each reason) were:

1. End of a private rented tenancy (637);
2. Family / friends no longer willing or able to accommodate (458);
3. Relationship with partner ended, including domestic abuse (290); and
4. Other (202).

KBC identified an increase over three years in family or friends no longer being willing or able to provide accommodation. As shown by the following table, BCW had slightly higher numbers of cases due to family / friends no longer willing or able to accommodate, in comparison to the end of a private rented tenancy which was ranked in second place. CBC had relatively low numbers of 'other' reasons for homelessness assessments, less than the end of social rented accommodation and eviction from supported housing.

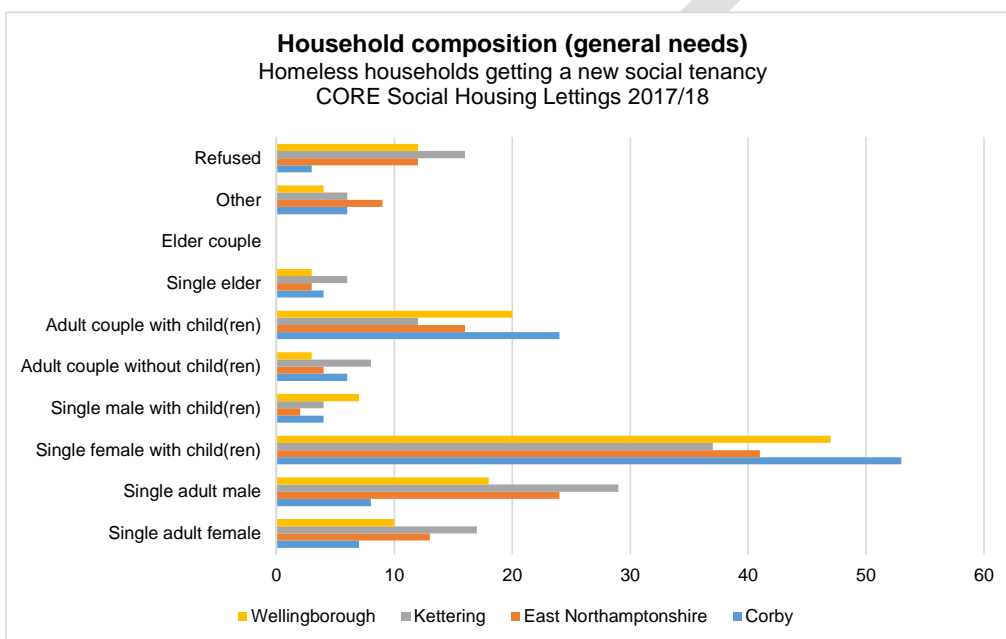
Reason for Homelessness Assessment	CBC	ENC	KBC	BCW
Relationship with partner ended (non-violent breakdown)	42	32	72	43
Domestic Abuse	11	10	41	39
End of social rented	20	15	44	31
End of private rented tenancy (AST)	153	88	155	150
End of private rented tenancy (non AST)	61	7	13	10
Eviction from supported housing	11	14	8	19
Family no longer willing/able to accommodate	89	55	98	141
Friends no longer willing/able to accommodate	21	8	18	28
Fire/flood/other emergency	1	0	3	1
Left HM Forces	2	0	0	1
Left institution with no accommodation available	6	4	20	16
Mortgage repossession	0	0	4	4
Non-racially motivated/other motivated violence or harassment	2	5	7	18
Racially motivated violence or harassment	0	0	1	3
Other	10	36	99	57
Property disrepair	1	0	5	2
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as Asylum Support	0	0	0	0
<b>Total for April - March (2018 / 19)</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>563</b>

#### 5.4 Characteristics

Although there is some variation in the data collected, all the Councils collate basic data on the characteristics of those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Data taken from KBC and BCW in 2017/18 shows the majority of service users are White British and aged between 26-40 years. KBC reported the most common priority need being a household with children, followed by physical or mental health / disability. They had an increase in homeless single person households (mostly male) to 2018 and found the majority of support needs were a history of mental health problems, followed by physical ill health / disability.

CORE Lettings data for 2017/18 (displayed in the chart below) shows the most common household composition across North Northamptonshire was 'single female with child / children' (36% of the total number of homeless households getting a new social tenancy), followed by 'single adult male' households (16%), then 'adult couple



with child / children' (14%).

The HRA states that local authorities' homelessness service must meet the needs of persons in the district or borough who have certain characteristics, including: care leavers, persons released from prison or hospital, those who have experienced domestic abuse, former members of the regular armed forces and persons suffering from a mental illness or impairment. Whilst other health and wellbeing factors such as substance misuse are not specifically listed in the legislation, the HRA also provides that services must meet the needs of any other group of people that the authority identifies as being at particular risk of homelessness. In order to meet these needs it is important that data on specific and locally relevant characteristics is both collated and used by the Councils to inform our service.

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## 5.5 Temporary accommodation

The use of temporary accommodation in North Northamptonshire fluctuates but overall has been increasing.

Both the total numbers in temporary accommodation (TA), and, out of that total, the number in bed & breakfast accommodation (B&B) in 2018/19 varies throughout the year and between authorities (as shown in the following chart). **The clearest trends can be seen in the total numbers in temporary accommodation, with KBC's increasing throughout the year and BCW's decreasing.** Out of the quarterly totals the proportion in B&B for KBC reduces in quarters three and four, and increases for BCW in quarters two to four. For CBC and ENC the total numbers in TA vary yet overall increase over the year. The numbers in B&B, as a proportion of the total number in TA, in BCW increased significantly in quarter two **and remained higher for the remainder of the year.**

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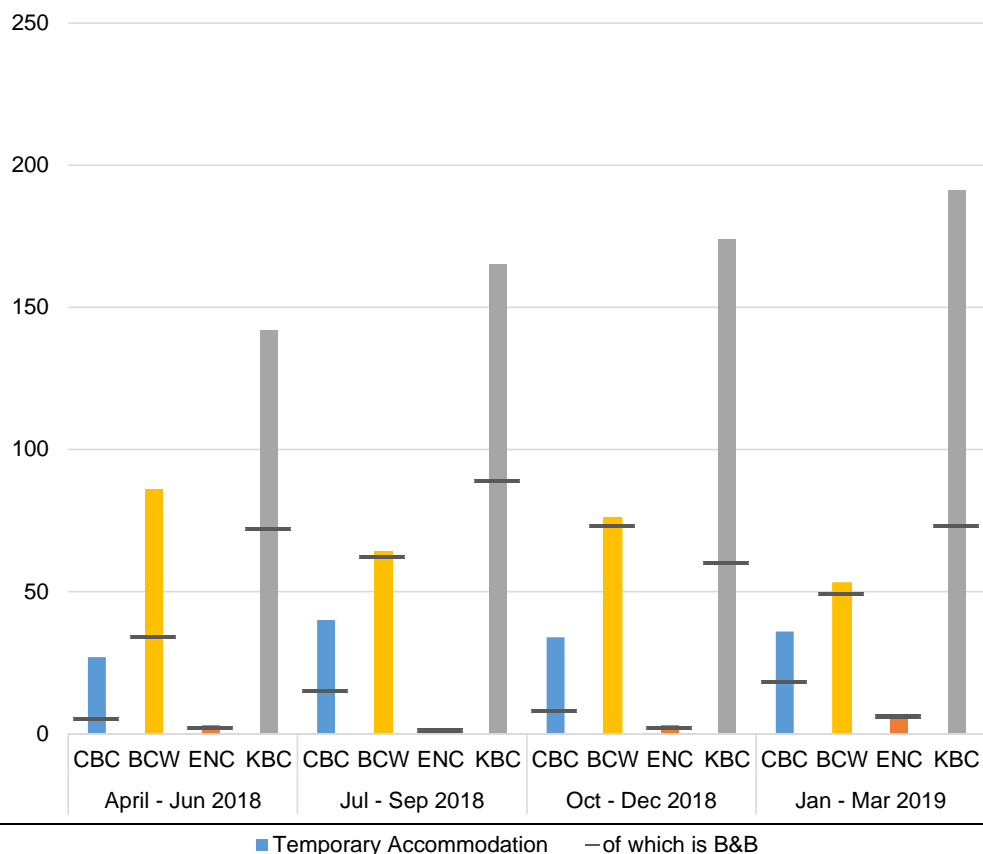
The average amount of time spent in temporary accommodation fluctuates from eight weeks (reported by CBC), to eight months for KBC, and between 6-9 months for BCW. Therefore it can be misleading to rely on averages to analyse the amount of time spent in temporary accommodation. For example within KBC's average of eight months, just under a 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of cases were **temporarily housed** for up to three months, and only three cases **spent three years or more in temporary accommodation.**

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All of the Councils are seeking to increase supply of suitable temporary

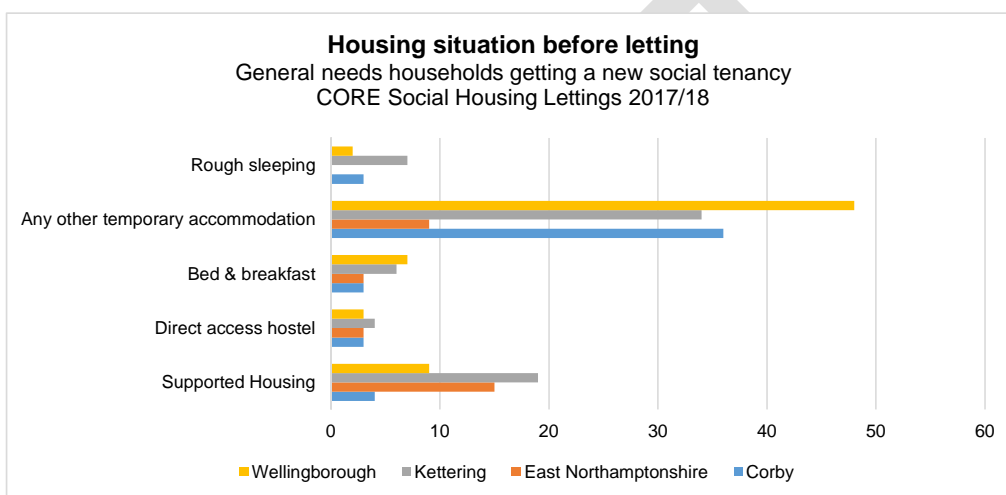
**Total no. in Temporary Accommodation and no. in Bed & Breakfast 2018-19**



accommodation according to demand. However, it is an aim of this Strategy to reverse that position **and prioritise more flexible accommodation** that can be used to address the fluidity of need.

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CORE Lettings data for 2017/18 shows the type of accommodation occupied by general needs households (including homeless households) immediately before they began a new social housing tenancy. This is summarised in the following chart. The highest number of households were housed in other temporary accommodation before their new social tenancy began (excepting ENC). There were slightly more households using B&B accommodation than hostels for KBC and BCW. For ENC the number of households rehoused from supported accommodation exceeded those moving from other TA, reflecting this authority's overall low numbers in TA in the



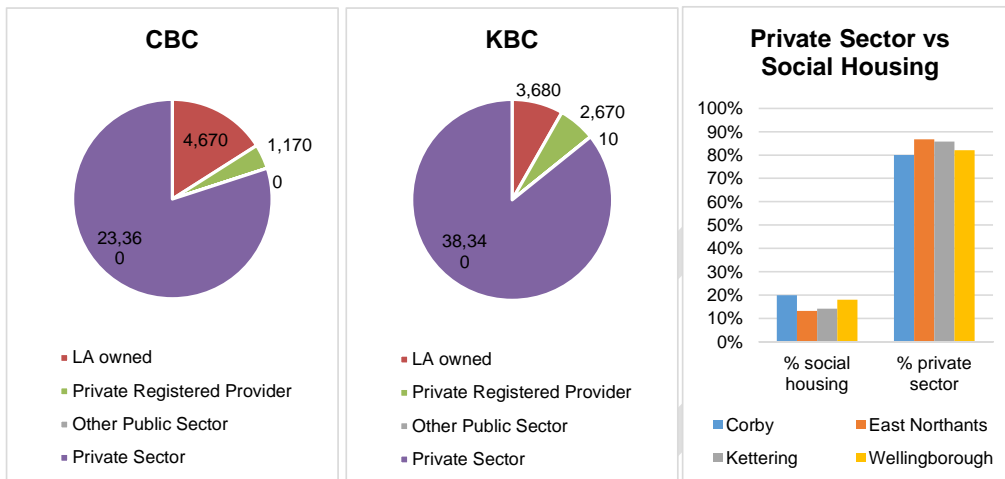
above chart for the year 2018/19.

## 5.6 Population

North Northamptonshire has a growing population. CBC, currently the smallest, aims to double its population by 2031 and KBC, currently the largest, predicts a 13% increase in population over the next 20 years and a 24% increase in the number of households by 2041. Both CBC and ENC expect a rise in the number of older persons particularly.

## 5.7 Housing supply

North Northamptonshire is facing a rising demand for affordable housing, as could be expected from the increasing population. An example of this is an over 33% increase in KBC's Keyways letting total in 2018/19. The highest demand overall is within the town areas, although ENC reports pressure on their affordable supply in rural areas, where prices are generally higher and supply lower.



The housing supply as at **1 April 2018 (taken from the MHCLG's live data table 100)** shows the tenure breakdown between the smallest and largest stock retaining Council areas. The third chart above illustrates the split between the private and social housing sectors across North Northamptonshire.

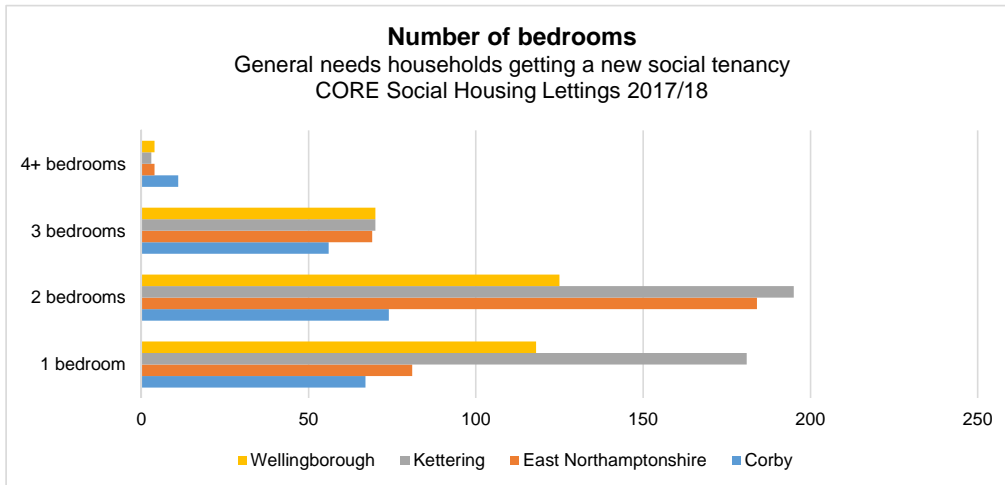
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The Councils report an increase in the size of the private rented sector, for example CBC from 6.3% in 2001 to 16.6% in 2011, KBC from 15% in 2011 to 20% in 2017 and ENC recorded 12% of households renting privately in 2011. This increase has been tempered by the changes in 'buy to let' law for landlords.

In order to meet demand each local authority area needs to target gaps in supply within their action plans. Below are some of the headline gaps for each area:

	Gaps in supply
<b>CBC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported housing, particularly for permanent support issues.</li> <li>No permanent homeless shelter.</li> </ul>
<b>ENC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smaller-sized properties.</li> <li>Potential shortage of specialist accommodation for older persons.</li> <li>Affordable accommodation in rural areas.</li> </ul>
<b>KBC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Larger family accommodation (particularly four or more beds).</li> <li>Disabled adapted accommodation.</li> <li>Recent loss of supported accommodation (for young people / teenage parents / mental health).</li> <li>Comparative decrease in new properties for social rent since the introduction of affordable rent.</li> <li>No permanent homeless shelter.</li> </ul>
<b>BCW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Largest demand is for two bed properties, then bedsits.</li> <li>No permanent homeless shelter.</li> </ul>

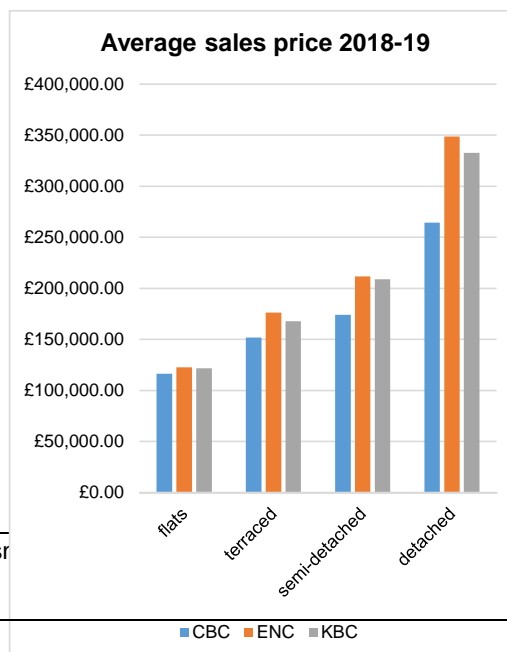
The numbers of social housing units newly let to general needs households in 2017/18 provides a representation of demand. The table below shows those lettings based on the number of bedrooms in the dwelling.



Development of new affordable housing varies between the Councils and is achieved through development programmes, s106 opportunities and close work with Registered Provider partners. For example BCW has a target of 90 units per annum (despite funding provision being prohibitive at times), CBC's development and regeneration programme has delivered 230 new social / affordable rented homes between 2010 and autumn 2018, and KBC completed 137 social / affordable rent units in 2017/18 and 63 in 2018/19.

The two authorities which retain stock, CBC and KBC, both encourage the release of properties to reduce homelessness by means of incentives to move, such as to downsize or to release a disabled adapted property.

In addition to their separate arrangements for temporary accommodation, CBC, ENC and KBC together provide the Turning Point Project. The Project's objective is to prevent homelessness of single people with complex needs, for example by providing support for the transition from institutions to independent living.



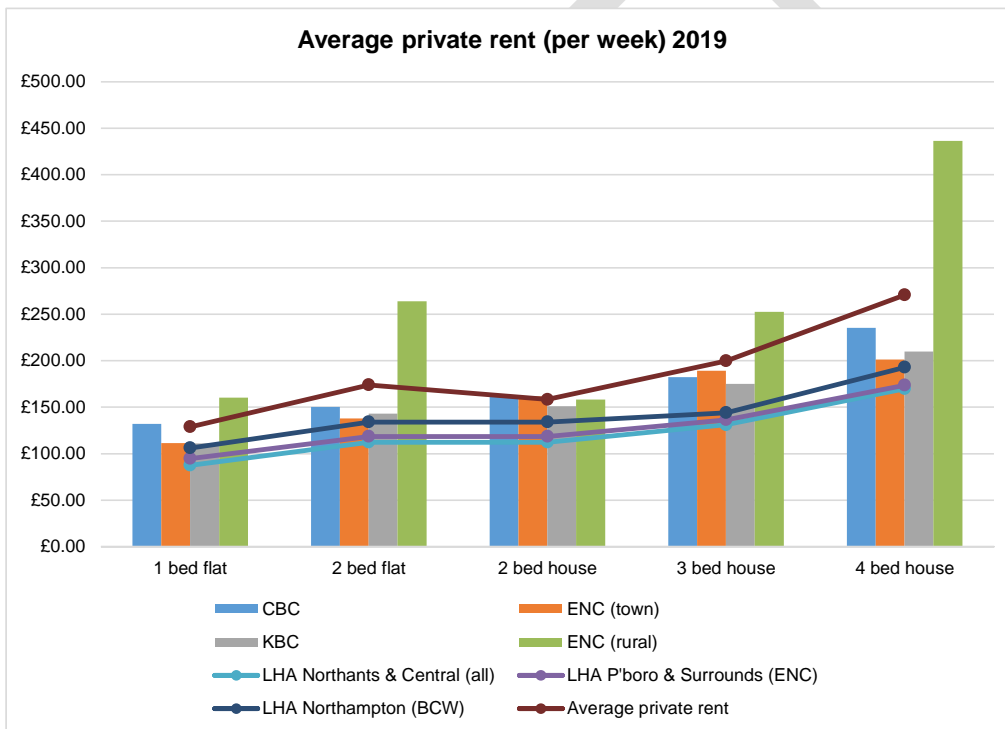
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## 5.8 Affordability

Various factors have contributed towards an increase in demand for affordable housing in North Northamptonshire.

Property prices have risen steadily throughout 2018, with a shortage of supply also affecting this increase.

The affordability of renting in the private sector is under pressure from a gap between private rents and the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), making private rentals inaccessible for those on lower incomes. This is a significant issue and compounds the demand for affordable housing as the private rented sector grows in size as a proportion of overall housing supply. The gap is seen throughout the country as the Chartered Institute of Housing reported in May 2019 that in 97% of England the LHA



barely covers a fifth of private rents.

Welfare reform poses a substantial challenge to housing affordability as Universal Credit continues to be rolled out in North Northamptonshire. The removal of direct housing payments has particularly affected those seeking accommodation in the private rented sector and escalates the inaccessibility of this sector experienced by lower income households.



All the Councils offer schemes to assist households with the affordability of rented accommodation. CBC and BCW also run deposit bond schemes.

## 5.9 Resources

North Northamptonshire has mixed success in securing grant funding towards homelessness and rough sleeper services. Where an application is unsuccessful the Councils seek feedback to inform future applications.

Budgets are necessarily robust and tightly managed. The key importance of an experienced and skilled Housing Options / Housing Advice function is acknowledged by all the authorities.

At the time of writing joint resources include:

- A sub-regional Keyways CBL scheme and IT system shared by CBC, KBC and BCW (ENC has similar policy headings and bandings in their CBL scheme); and
- The Turning Point Project which is provided across CBC, ENC and KBC's areas, following a joint bid to MHCLG's Help for Homeless fund which secured £181,300 in 2015/16.

## 6 Performance

The performance headlines for homelessness in North Northamptonshire are:

- levels of homelessness are increasing;
- numbers of rough sleepers are increasing;
- affordable housing supply is under pressure from rising costs (e.g. in the private rental sector, and a shift from social towards affordable rent levels);
- success in securing funding has been affected by tight submission timescales and previous uncertainty over local government reorganisation; and
- the high demand vs. capacity of for example social services, permanent support, mental health, alcohol and substance misuse, and money and debt advice services are particularly affecting more vulnerable households.

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A reduction in local government funding in recent years has had an impact across England on the availability of non-statutory social support services, which are vital in addressing some the risk factors for homelessness and rough sleeping. This has been further compounded in Northamptonshire by NCC's financial position requiring a rapid realignment of budgets to bring spend in line with the reduction in core funding.

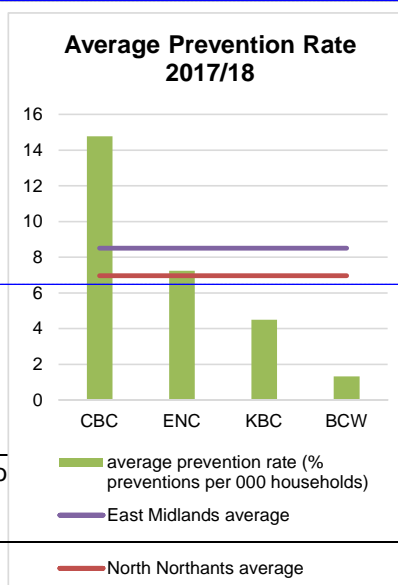
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Average prevention rates (the percentage of homelessness preventions per 000 households) during 2017/18 varied between the Councils and were (except for CBC) below the East Midlands average. During the process of North

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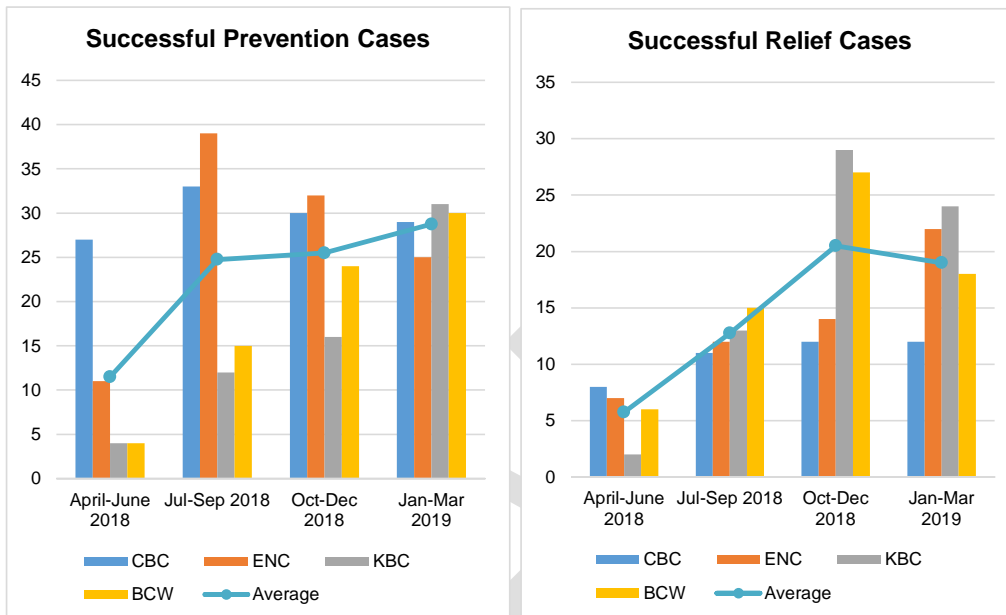
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Northamptonshire becoming a unitary authority, working collaboratively to improve our homelessness service is essential to achieve a higher average rate of prevention across the Councils as they currently operate.

In 2018/19 the numbers of successful prevention cases and relief cases in North Northamptonshire both increased on average. CBC and ENC's number of prevention cases share a similar trend, rising to a peak in quarter two before decreasing to the end of the year,

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whilst the number of prevention cases recorded by KBC and BCW increases steadily throughout the year. The numbers of relief cases in CBC and ENC remained well below the numbers of prevention cases during the year, in comparison to the numbers of relief cases in KBC and BCW, which exceeded the successful prevention cases for two quarters each.

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## 7 Strategic Vision, Aims, and Objectives

This Strategy's vision is:

*“Working collaboratively across North Northamptonshire to end homelessness.”*

### 7.1 Aims

The aims of this Strategy are to:

1. Take account of national and local housing priorities.
2. Reduce and prevent homelessness amongst all groups at risk.
3. Follow the commitment in the government's Rough Sleeping Initiative to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it altogether by 2027.

4. Ensure a sufficient supply of affordable housing is in place.
5. Address temporary accommodation housing needs, ensuring temporary accommodation is well located and of good quality, and seeking to eliminate the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.
6. Consider whether the services provided give good value for money.

## **7.2 Objectives**

The objectives of this Strategy are:

1. Common working practices between all North Northamptonshire councils and all of the Registered Provider (RP) partners.
2. Risk management of the delivery of this Strategy.
3. Increase access to and the supply of safe and decent housing.
4. Increase the supply of good value, self-contained temporary accommodation.
5. Make best use of temporary accommodation.
6. Monitor numbers, identify support needs and endeavour to engage with rough sleepers.
7. Understand the reasons for and the characteristics of homelessness to focus prevention and support work.
8. Work to mitigate the impact of welfare reform.
9. Align our approach with feedback from consultation.
10. Monitor and reflect this Strategy's objectives in annual service plans.
11. Reflect key actions and objectives for housing staff in their annual appraisals and regularly monitor via meetings / 1to1s, to ensure housing staff have sufficient skills and competencies.
12. Regularly report progress against action plan to SMT / members / multi-agency partners.
13. Promote the responsibilities of and provide information to external agencies and partners, and report back key outcomes and achievements to partners and the public appropriately.
14. Understand the risks to achieving action plans and put in place appropriate mitigation.
15. Use evidence of housing need and co-ordination of strategic approach to support bids for internal and external funding.

16. Seek feedback on any unsuccessful funding bids to ensure the reasons are understood.

17. Establish processes to monitor outputs and outcomes to help steer the future review of this Strategy.

### 7.3 Action Plans

The action plan related to this Strategy for each district or borough council is attached at Appendix A.

## 8 Partnerships

North Northamptonshire's homelessness service is provided in conjunction with a number of Registered Providers and other partner agencies, some of which are common between the Councils, including local health services and pre-unitary NCC services. Reviewing homelessness across North Northamptonshire in preparation for this Strategy highlights the importance of interagency working and of strengthening ties not only between the local and county authorities which will become the unitary authority of North Northamptonshire, but in general between all homelessness service providers within the area in order to achieve the aims and objectives of this Strategy.

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## 9 Related Strategies, Policies and Resources

Of each district or borough council including:

- Local Plan
- Housing Strategy
- Allocation Scheme
- Tenancy Strategy
- Rough Sleeper Policy
- Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

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Legislation and guidance includes:

- The Housing Act 1996
- The Homelessness Act 2002
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- The Homelessness Code of Guidance for local authorities (2018)
- The MHCLG Rough Sleeping Strategy (2018)

## 10 Review and Monitoring

This Strategy will be reviewed annually, unless legislative or regulatory changes require an earlier review. If staff become aware of any problems with effective operation of the Strategy or the associated action plans, they should report this to the Strategy Owner in the first instance, or the owner of the relevant Action Plan. This feedback will be incorporated into the review process.

Progress on the priorities in this Strategy will be monitored through the appropriate channels within each district or borough council making up North Northamptonshire.

DRAFT

**APPENDIX A: Action Plans**

Action plan to be inserted for each area; Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough.

DRAFT

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## Prevent and Relieve homelessness and rough sleeping in the Borough

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Actions</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Key Partners</u>	<u>Risk if not completed</u>	<u>Resources required</u>	<u>Target Date</u>
<u>Demonstrate a corporate commitment to homelessness prevention</u>	<u>Ensure Elected Members and Senior Managers are kept aware and engaged with local homelessness issues</u>	<u>Housing Manager Assistant Director</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Elected Members and Senior Management could be uninformed about local homelessness issues and solutions</u>	<u>Officers Time</u>	<u>Ongoing</u>
	<u>Review of staff resources and team structure to ensure they are fit for purpose in light of the HRA and local government reorganisation</u>	<u>Housing Manager Assistant Director</u>	<u>Human Resources Finance team</u>	<u>Team resources are inadequate to ensure compliance with HRA</u>	<u>Senior Management time</u>	<u>Ongoing</u>
<u>Recruit 2 Tenancy Sustainment Officers and 1 Outreach Worker using funding from MCLG</u>	<u>These roles will recruit Private Landlords to use our rent assistance and bond schemes. Undertake home visits to sustain tenancies. Engage with rough sleepers to offer advice and solutions to help</u>	<u>Housing Manager</u>	<u>Human Resources Finance team</u>	<u>Wellingborough will not meet the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy</u>	<u>Assistant Director Housing Manager</u>	<u>Recruitment has been successful June 2019</u>

	<a href="#">them back into accommodation</a>					
<a href="#">Prevent homelessness, whenever possible, through timely advice and information</a>	<a href="#">Ensure all staff are fully trained on the Homeless Reduction Act. Engaging with clients, landlords and partners to resolve housing issues</a>	<a href="#">Housing Team</a>	<a href="#">Social Services Registered Providers District Law</a>	<a href="#">Homelessness will increase in the Borough</a>	<a href="#">Officers time</a>	<a href="#">Current staff fully trained as at June 2019</a>  <a href="#">Further training will be available as new case law is published</a>
<a href="#">Pilot development of bespoke services for single homeless/rough sleepers within the Borough of Wellingborough</a>	<a href="#">New posts funded by MCLG will work with partners and voluntary agencies to develop services that meet needs such as short term lets to support clients with tenancy management skills</a>	<a href="#">Housing Team Housing Manager</a>	<a href="#">Social Services Registered Providers Voluntary Sector Private Landlords</a>	<a href="#">Homelessness will increase in the Borough</a>	<a href="#">Officers time</a>	<a href="#">Ongoing</a>
<a href="#">Review the Allocation Policy</a>	<a href="#">Ensure the policy supports our homelessness and rough sleeping strategy</a>	<a href="#">Assistant Director Housing Manager</a>	<a href="#">Members Social Services Registered Providers Voluntary Sector Private Landlords General Public</a>	<a href="#">The Allocations Policy needs to support the strategy</a>	<a href="#">Officers time</a>	<a href="#">September 2019</a>



## APPENDIX B: Letter to Chair of Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board



Municipal Offices  
Bowling Green Road  
Kettering NN15 7QX  
Tel: 01536 410333  
Fax : 01536 410795

Website: [www.kettering.gov.uk](http://www.kettering.gov.uk)

Tim Bishop,  
Independent Chair,  
Northamptonshire Safeguarding  
Adults Board,

Direct Line: 01536 534288  
Fax: 01536 410795  
E-mail: [johnconway@kettering.gov.uk](mailto:johnconway@kettering.gov.uk)  
Date: 1 April 2019

Dear Tim,

### DEATHS OF PEOPLE SLEEPING ON THE STREETS

Following the meetings of the Safeguarding Adults Board on 17 January and the SAR Sub-Group on 5 February, I am writing to advise you of discussions at the Chief Housing Officers Group (CHOG) on 28 February.

Our proposal is that when a homeless person dies whilst sleeping rough, the relevant local housing authority will initially undertake a light-touch review involving other relevant agencies before making a referral to the SAR Sub Group, for any further action.

CHOG will maintain an overview of street deaths and liaise with Northamptonshire Adults Safeguarding Board over any emerging trends or matters of concern.

Each local housing authority will nominate a lead officer for their cases. In addition, Emma Forbes from Northampton Borough Council and myself will act as liaison on street deaths with other agencies and the Police have undertaken to advise us of any deaths when they become aware.

I hope that this is a constructive way forward but if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Conway".

T CHAPMAN  
Housing Manager  
T: 01933 231838  
E: tchapman@wellingborough.gov.uk

Date: 01/07/2019

Your Ref:

Our Ref: TC

Dear Sir/Madam

**REF: Consultation on Borough Council of Wellingborough Homelessness and rough sleeper Strategy**

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all Housing authorities to have in place a homelessness strategy based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their District.

More recently, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has sharpened the focus on the prevention of homelessness and enhanced the duties upon local authorities including:

- Duty to provide advice and develop personal housing plans that are bespoke to individual circumstances
- Duty to prevent homelessness
- Duty to relieve homelessness
- Extension of period when people are threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days
- Duty to refer encouraging inter-agency working.

The Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy (August 2018) aims to half rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it by 2027. This document states that the Government will work with the Local Government Association and Local Authorities so that by winter 2019:

- All local authorities update their strategies and rebadge them as homelessness and rough sleeping strategies
- Strategies are made available online and submitted to MHCLG
- Local authorities report progress in delivering these strategies and publish annual action plans. Where local authorities do not follow these changes, government will take action.



Attached is a draft strategy that has been prepared and agreed jointly between Corby Borough Council East Northamptonshire Council Kettering Borough Council and the Borough Council of Wellingborough, I would welcome your comments. Please send your comments to me at the email address below.

Please note that the closing date for a response is Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

Yours faithfully

Theresa Chapman  
Housing Manager  
tchapman@wellingborough.gov.uk



15<sup>th</sup> July 2019

## **Response to consultation on BCW's Homelessness and Rough Sleeper's Strategy**

Thank you for inviting Greatwell Homes to respond to the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper's Strategy. We have taken the opportunity to review the strategy and action plan and our response is detailed below. If you would like any further information then please contact Chris Holloway, Head of Housing & Support Services at [chris.holloway@greatwellhomes.org.uk](mailto:chris.holloway@greatwellhomes.org.uk)

### **Overarching comments**

- As Northamptonshire is moving towards unitary authorities how are the councils working together and learning from each other? We would suggest a joint strategy with all councils signed up the same principles.
- The strategy needs to have more focus prevention. It would be beneficial to know why ENDC are doing a good job on prevention.
- We agree a common allocations policy across the councils should be considered.
- The aims and objectives are not very clear - what is the difference between them? They feel more operational than strategic.
- There should be a link between the action plans and strategy objectives. How do the actions deliver the objectives?
- Recommend one action plan rather than four separate actions plans.
- The action plan should include reference to partners assisting in delivery e.g Greatwell Homes, voluntary sector. This would help with the embedding of the strategy.
- Timescales for response to the consultation were very tight. It would have been good to have had a conversation/workshop to

consider how registered service provider, partners and other agencies can work together to support the delivery of the strategy.

## **Introduction**

We welcome the joint approach across the new North Northamptonshire area. However, it still refers to boroughs and district councils and consideration should be given to including something about this covering a period of transition as move to unitary authority.

Page 7 states all councils are looking to increase the supply of Temporary Accommodation (TA), when the focus should be increasing the supply of permanent affordable housing?

The figures for BCW on temporary accommodation of zero in last two quarters of 18-19 look wrong. We are often being told there are people in TA.

5.8 - It would be good to see charts for ENDC and BCW also. Gaps in supply table -BCW says second biggest demand is bedsits-no one should be looking to provide bedsits it should be one bed self-contained accommodation.

5.7 - Incentives to move-could these be provided by local authorities (LAs) in BCW and ENDC for tenants living in Housing Association stock?

Chart at top of pg. 12 - please could BCW figures be included

## **Levels of Homelessness**

The statistics are interesting as they show BCW as having very high level of acceptances of main duty in comparison to other LAs. Does this denote a different approach or different interpretation of statutory duty? How will LAs work together to agree a consistent and standard approach across the new unitary?

## **Reasons of Homelessness**

The main reasons for homelessness need to inform the strategy for prevention. Could the action plan make reference to this? And perhaps suggest bespoke pathways (for care leavers / prison leavers / survivors of domestic abuse ) for example?

## **Characteristics**

Could the authority capture more data to drill down? The HRA will no doubt increase the numbers of single men approaching (without mental health needs) Could the strategy aim to review characteristics in more detail? This would allow for more proactive responses to emerging need and trends could be identified over time.

## **Rough Sleeping**

Need to explain what SwEP is as this is known to professionals working in area but if this is a public document it won't mean anything.

## **Temporary Accommodation**

We agree with point about increasing permanent accommodation rather than focus on increasing supply of TA. Hopefully the strategy will cover how to reduce number of homeless people in B&B.

Is there some missing data from BCW? (Oct 18 - Mar 19)?

The strategy seems weak on how BCW will make use of TA and reliance on TA. There is no mention as how BCW will address the TA issue? This should be an objective. In addition, some of the timescales are very high across the county e.g six months where the code of practice says six weeks for a family.

## **Population**

What does this mean for potential future impact of population growth on demand for housing and homelessness?

## **Housing Supply**

Demand for bedsits - shouldn't this be 1 bed properties? Greatwell Homes would not develop bedsits of accommodation so unlikely we would meet this need.

What does this mean for future requirements as a unitary authority?

## **Resources**

We would be interested to know more about Turning Point project and plans to roll this out wider

## **Performance**

Interesting to see how higher levels of prevention work result in less acceptance of duty. it would be useful to see what performance measures the strategy will adopt to demonstrate progress - the PlE form and VfM metrics are recommended. There are significant VfM savings / measures for prevention casework.

## **Strategic Vision, Aims and Objectives**

Should number 5 (TA) mention a desire to reduce demand for TA?

### **Aims**

Some aims and objectives seem to duplicate and some objectives very operational, internally focused and should be in action plan so for example the mention of 1-1s. Also there doesn't seem to be anything about addressing root causes of homelessness-e.g. influencing better funding for mental health services, better joined up working etc.

What's the difference between aims and objectives - this isn't very clear? Perhaps have five key strategic objectives that pull together key aims/objectives.

### **Objectives**

5 - This should refer to reducing demand for TA by better use of prevention / relief pathways?

### **Action Plans**

It would be good to have a combined action plan across North Northamptonshire, therefore making better use of resources to deliver.

### **Partnerships**

There is no mention of how 3rd sector or voluntary sector could be used to support -especially in the prevention agenda.

Is this section more relevant in the context section as a statement?

### **Review and Monitoring**

This is a joint strategy but is being monitored individually by each borough or district council. What plans are there to bring together registered providers at a strategic level working across North Northants, rather than at individual district or borough level?

## **Appendix B**

Is this the right place for this - in a strategy?

### **Action Plan**

#### **Ensure Elected Members and Senior Managers are kept aware and engaged with local homelessness issues**

Overriding comment is if this a joint strategy then why not a joint action plan rather than four separate action plans which potentially are not joined up?

In terms of the BCW action plan the objectives listed in the action plan do not seem to relate to the objectives in the strategy - so not sure how these actions help to deliver the strategy? We would suggest 5 key strategic objectives with actions in action plan directly linked back to these.

#### **Recruit 2 Tenancy Sustainment Officers and 1 Outreach Worker using funding from MCLG**

This should be reworded to say 'increase rates of prevention and reduce rough sleeping through additional resources'.

**These roles will recruit Private Landlords to use our rent assistance and bond schemes. Undertake home visits to sustain tenancies. Engage with rough sleepers to offer advice and solutions to help them back into accommodation.**

This feels more like a task than an objective?

**New posts funded by MCLG will work with partners and voluntary agencies to develop services that meet needs such as short term lets to support clients with tenancy management skills**

As before what about considering bespoke pathways for care leavers, Domestic Violence survivors, mental health, prison leavers etc? they are all homeless, but each will have different support needs.



