



**Spelthorne Borough Council: Homelessness and
Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025**

April 2020

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Foreword | 3 |
| Introduction and overview of Spelthorne | 4 |
| How the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy links in with the Council's wider work..... | 6 |
| The relationship between the Housing Strategy and Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy..... | 7 |
| How the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was developed..... | 7 |
| Spelthorne Homelessness Strategy 2014-2019: Review of Action Plan ... | 9 |
| The national context and our current homelessness and preventing rough sleeping challenges | 18 |
| The national policy context..... | 18 |
| Welfare reform..... | 20 |
| Austerity | 23 |
| The Spelthorne context..... | 23 |
| Our strategic priorities for the next five years | 28 |
| End the use of private sector emergency accommodation..... | 28 |
| Reduce the length of stay in temporary accommodation..... | 30 |
| Nobody sleeps rough in Spelthorne | 31 |
| Increase use of the private rented sector for homelessness prevention and relief..... | 33 |
| Invest in staff training and development in order to improve the customer journey within the Housing Options service..... | 35 |
| Improve partnership working to prevent and relieve homelessness | 37 |
| Delivery and monitoring of the Strategy | 39 |
| Action Plan..... | 39 |
| Monitoring of the strategy | 56 |
| Operational monitoring..... | 56 |
| Strategic monitoring..... | 56 |
| Glossary | 58 |

Foreword

I am pleased to introduce you to Spelthorne Borough Council's new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2020-2025. It outlines in detail how we propose to prevent and tackle homelessness in Spelthorne using six key strategic priorities.

Homelessness is a key part of the Government's domestic agenda, pledging to end rough sleeping by 2025. We are committed partners in this effort and are committed to ensuring residents of Spelthorne have somewhere to call home that is both suitable and affordable. It is vital that our residents have access to effective, specialist support at the earliest opportunity to prevent them from becoming homeless.

This strategy offers exciting opportunities for collaborative working across the statutory and voluntary sector, to maximise the delivery of homelessness prevention and support services in Spelthorne. Its primary aims include:

- ending the use of bed and breakfast accommodation, keeping homeless families closer to their existing support and community networks;
- reducing the length of time which homeless households stay in temporary accommodation, to limit the disruption to accessing schools, GPs and employment;
- enhancing our outreach and intervention services to rough sleepers, whilst also supporting their recovery from living on the streets;
- maximising the use of private rented sector opportunities to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping, and
- investing in staff training and development so that those who need to access homelessness services receive the best available service.

We also plan to implement a new way of monitoring our service delivery. A new monitoring group, made up of not just councillors and council staff, but also of community partners and other statutory agencies, will be responsible for making sure this strategy is implemented, and highlighting areas for continued improvement.

I would like to extend my thanks to our residents, service users, partners and staff members who fed into this ambitious Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which sets the foundations for homelessness and rough sleeping prevention services over the next five years.

Councillor M. Attewell

Portfolio Holder for Community Wellbeing and Housing

Introduction and overview of Spelthorne

As outlined in our Housing Strategy, we believe Spelthorne is a successful borough that offers suitably accessible transport links, great employment

opportunities and plenty of green open spaces. The Housing Strategy recognises that access to a range of appropriate, affordable housing options is vitally important to ensure that we can build on Spelthorne's success. Furthermore, access to affordable housing options is one method of tackling homelessness and preventing rough sleeping in the borough.

Spelthorne is located on the south-west edge of London and in the north-west of Surrey, neighbouring the boroughs of Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead, Runnymede, Elmbridge, and the London Boroughs of Richmond upon Thames, Hounslow and Hillingdon. The north of the borough borders London Heathrow airport. Spelthorne is densely populated and has five main urban areas: Ashford, Shepperton, Staines-upon-Thames, Stanwell and Sunbury. Outside these urban areas:

- 65% is green belt,
- 30% of the total area is either flood plain or reservoir,
- 17% of the borough is water, and
- We have 12 miles of River Thames frontage.



Almost half of Surrey's 20 most deprived super output areas are in Spelthorne. Three are in the ward of Stanwell North, two in Ashford North and Stanwell South and one in each of Ashford East and Sunbury Common. Spelthorne has the highest number of lone parent families and the highest level of child poverty in Surrey; it also has the highest under-18 conception rate in the county. That said, residents are largely healthy, with life expectancy for both males and females slightly above the national average.

Whilst house prices remain well above the national average, most residents are owner-occupiers (73%), followed by private rented (13%) and social rented (12%).

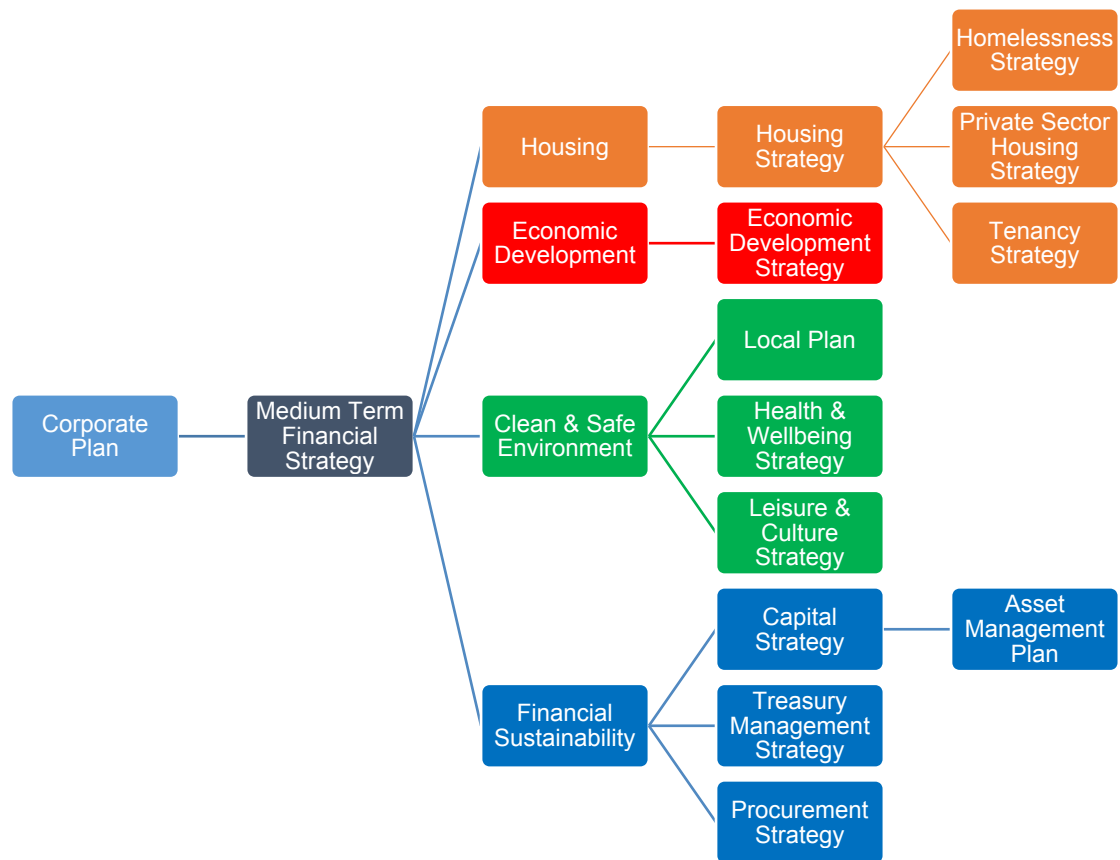
Spelthorne has a slightly lower population of under-30s (34%) compared to the rest of the country (37%), and a slightly higher population of 30-69 year olds (42%) compared with the UK average of (40%), The number of 70+ is 23%, which is broadly in line with the rest of the UK (24%).

Although the number of VAT and/or PAYE-registered business has fallen slightly over the past four years, Spelthorne has a low rate of unemployment: 1.4% of those economically active aged 16 to 64, compared to the South East (2.2%) and UK as a whole (3.5%). Heathrow Airport is a significant local employer, with 8.3% of Spelthorne's working population employed there. Significantly, 21.5% of those in work in Stanwell North are in low level employment compared to an average of 11.6% in Surrey. Average wages are slightly above regional averages at £630 per week for full-time employees.

How the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy links in with the Council's wider work

Housing is one of the Council's four corporate priorities within its Corporate Plan 2016-2019, and our Housing Strategy is the foundation for our approach to meeting our corporate aim:

"To strive towards meeting the housing needs of our residents, providing working families and others in housing need within the Borough with suitable accommodation."



**Note that links above between priorities / strategies do not accurately represent the relationships between the different documents as many strategies interlink with multiple areas of the Council's work.*

The relationship between the Housing Strategy and Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

There are several areas where both strategies crossover.

Our **Housing Strategy** considers the housing needs of all of our residents, and works to ensure that residents have an appropriate choice in the type and location of a home which meets their needs.

Our **Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy** focusses on supporting those residents who may be homeless now, or at risk of homelessness in the future. It provides the foundations for the delivery of the Council's homelessness and rough sleeping prevention services, and provides the 'toolkit' for our officers to support those residents needing to access our services.

How the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was developed

The Housing Strategy and Policy team at the Council carried out a Homelessness Review which looked extensively at data from the period 2014 to 2019, specifically:

- the levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness within Spelthorne;
- how Spelthorne works to:
 - prevent homelessness and rough sleeping;
 - secure appropriate accommodation for those who are or may become homeless; and
 - provide support for those who are homeless or who may become at risk of homelessness, including those who experience repeat homelessness;
- the resources available to officers for providing homelessness and rough sleeping prevention services.

A summary of the findings from the Homelessness Review were presented at two stakeholder events held at Spelthorne Borough Council which saw over 100 attendees across 40 organisations represented. These stakeholder events were held in a workshop-style, in order to provide an opportunity for other agencies to offer feedback on our services and suggestions on how we can work together in the future.

These initial suggestions were formed into a draft strategy framework which was made available for public consultation. This ran for 6 weeks through December 2019 to January 2020. The public consultation was made available online and hard copies were distributed to all local libraries and made available at the Council offices.

A working group of relevant officers and councillors considered the results of the Homelessness Review, stakeholder events and public consultation responses. This group then formulated a draft Action Plan, drawing together proposals from across the Council as well as from partner agencies and other statutory bodies.

Following on from our stakeholder events, we had follow up meetings with some of our key partners to consider the draft Action Plan, and fine-tune the strategic priorities. Furthermore, presentations were delivered to committees of elected members throughout the development of the strategy for comment and further amendments.

We have also cross referenced our Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy against:

- the Local Government Association's 'Making Homelessness Strategies Happen' guidance;
- the 'Local Housing Authority Checklist: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategies' created by Crisis;
- "Bleak Houses: Tackling the crisis of family homelessness in England" report from the Children's Commissioner, August 2019; and
- the Royal British Legion's "Supporting the Armed Forces Community with Housing in England: a Best Practice Guide".

We have used these resources to ensure that we have covered key areas of homelessness prevention and relief in our new strategy, and considered any new and innovative ways of working.

In formulating this strategy, we have considered our obligations under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), case law, best practice and the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (updated 15 April 2019).

Spelthorne Homelessness Strategy 2014-2019: Review of Action Plan

The previous Homelessness Strategy 2014-2019 contained eight strategic priorities. The progress that the Council has made on each of these priorities is outlined in the section below.

Strategic priority 1: Adopt a corporate and partnership commitment to preventing homelessness

| No. | What we said we would do | How we said we would do it | What progress we have made |
|-----|--|--|---|
| 1.1 | Adopt a homelessness strategy | Homelessness strategy presented to Council | The existing 2014-2019 strategy was commissioned at Cabinet on 15 July 2014, with the final version approved by Cabinet on 30 September 2014. |
| 1.2 | Establish a Spelthorne Borough Council Housing Forum | Agree terms of reference and membership. Partnership commitment confirmed at Forum. Commit to annual review of action plans associated with the Housing Strategy/ Private sector strategy and the Homelessness strategy. | To date, a Spelthorne Borough Council Housing Forum has not been set up, although for the past twelve months, Spelthorne Borough Council has joined Runnymede Borough Council's Homelessness Task Group meetings. Consideration is currently being had as to the merits of a combined cross-border group, versus a separate one for Spelthorne. |

Strategic priority 2: Develop and provide a comprehensive prevention housing options service

| No. | What we said we would do | How we said we would do it | What progress we have made |
|-----|--|---|--|
| 2.1 | Develop a 'triage system' to filter all presenting cases relating to housing options and homelessness prevention | Review current arrangements. Write new procedures that deal with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing options advice relating to general needs and prevention of homelessness • Housing options advice relating to special needs and prevention of homelessness. • Procedure for dealing with application under the Housing Act 1996 and the discharge of duty into the private rented sector. • Emergency and temporary accommodation. | The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has resulted in an entire new suite of processes and procedures, which now outdate the processes we said we would do when the strategy was implemented. All cases are offered an assessment, and where applicants are identified as threatened with homelessness, or actually homeless, they are offered a personal housing plan to either prevent or relieve their homelessness. |
| 2.2 | Identify the reasons for 'no fault' evictions and establish action plan to deal with aspects relating to Council or partner responsibilities | Review existing data. Review Housing benefit arrangements Establish action plan. | With the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, there was little resource available to progress this action. |
| 2.3 | With partners develop educational and pre-tenancy training courses | Prepare information pack and interactive materials for Spelthorne Borough Council website and for local schools and youth clubs. Prepare materials for use by the Housing options team when working with vulnerable applicants prior to taking up a tenancy. | With the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, there was little resource available to progress this action. We plan to carry this action forward to the next strategy. |

| | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|
| | | Through the Housing Forum consider development of pre-tenancy training with other agencies. | |
| 2.4 | Improve the life chances of households vulnerable to becoming homeless | <p>Through the Housing Forum identify the range of support available to vulnerable households as they relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare benefits advice • Access to training and employment • Debt counselling • Furniture and white goods • Food banks • Volunteering projects • Access to internet | With the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, there was little resource available to progress this action. We plan to carry this action forward to the next strategy. |

Strategic priority 3: End the use of bed and breakfast accommodation by families

| No. | What we said we would do | How we said we would do it | What progress we have made |
|-----|--|--|--|
| 3.1 | Ensure there are sufficient private rented sector units of a good standard available for homeless households | <p>Keep under active review all the households currently accommodated in B and B and develop a fast track plan to get them moved onto temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Support the establishment of the Spelthorne Borough Council Lettings agency (see below)</p> <p>Work with local lettings agencies and the Spelthorne Borough Council lettings agency to secure sufficient private rental sector homes for presenting clients.</p> | <p>Whilst we have not ended the use of B&B accommodation by families we have significantly reduced the number of out-of-borough placements and reduced the average length of time for B&B users over the last five years.</p> <p>Our Spelthorne Rent Assure scheme was established in December 2016 and has seen great success. This is explained in more detail under strategic priority 6.</p> |

Strategic priority 4: Facilitate the discharge of the homelessness duty into the private rented sector

| No. | What we said we would do | How we said we would do it | What progress we have made |
|-----|--|---|--|
| 4.1 | Prepare procedures for the processing of applications under the Housing Act 1996 | Review current approach and draft new procedures | New policy for the discharge into the private sector has been in place since 2014. Revised procedures were drawn up in early 2018 in light of the implementation of Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. These were subsequently updated in February 2019 following clarifications in the Code of Guidance, and experiences over the first year of the new legislation. |
| 4.2 | Prepare a communications campaign for the general public on the change of approach | Devise materials for use in the campaign including reasoning behind the decision; timescales for implementation; simple guides for those in housing need; information for the Spelthorne Borough Council website. | The Council's website was updated in 2018, following which greater functionality was possible. Since then, comprehensive information has been available to the general public regarding how the Council's housing options service operates. |
| 4.3 | Train all staff in the new approach | Prepare training materials and run in-house course for all Housing Options front line staff and managers | Training in this area has been ongoing, but issues with data quality have been raised by the Homelessness Review which will need addressing in the new strategy. There is a clear need for ongoing training and support for officers to make legally sound and robust decisions. |

Strategic priority 5: Through the Housing Forum develop housing pathways for vulnerable groups

| No. | What we said we would do | How we said we would do it | What progress we have made |
|-----|--|--|---|
| 5.1 | Identify all the vulnerable groups | <p>Through the Housing Forum review data and research relating to vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Identify all bespoke service providers and voluntary groups engaged with these client groups.</p> | <p>As per 1.2, a Housing Forum has not been set up.</p> <p>Since the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, we prepared statutory pathway plans required for the identified groups (see 5.2 below)</p> |
| 5.2 | Develop housing option pathways for each of the groups (starting with the largest / most at risk groups) | <p>Pathway template devised to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice • Practical support • Specialist housing available • Supported housing offer • Pre-tenancy training | <p>As a result of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Council is required to have pathway plans for a number of different client groups including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) persons released from prison or youth detention accommodation, b) care leavers, c) former members of the regular armed forces, d) victims of domestic abuse, e) persons leaving hospital, f) persons suffering from a mental illness or impairment, and g) Any other group that the authority identify as being at particular risk of homelessness in the authority's district. <p>These pathway plans have been created in partnership with the relevant partner agency, and are 'living documents' which can evolve in time.</p> |

Strategic priority 6: Develop a private sector offer through working with landlords and through a Spelthorne Borough Council lettings agency and the acquisition of Spelthorne Borough Council properties for use as temporary accommodation

| No. | What we said we would do | How we said we would do it | What progress we have made |
|-----|---|---|--|
| 6.1 | Establish a Spelthorne Borough Council lettings agency | Identify the Spelthorne Borough Council offer to landlords Consider the governance models for a letting agency (in-house; voluntary sector; housing company?) and prepare a business case. Launch the lettings agency and agree targets for year one. | The Rent Assure Scheme was set up in 2016 to offer competitive market rent to landlords who offer their properties to the Council for homeless families. This was in addition to the existing Bond Scheme which was set up in 2007. To January 2020, there are 70 landlords signed up to the rent assure scheme, across 91 properties. In addition to the 245 landlords signed up to the existing Bond Scheme, across 368 properties. |
| 6.2 | Acquire a portfolio of Spelthorne Borough Council properties | Prepare business case for Council approval for use of reserves to buy properties. Establish governance arrangements (see above). Procure management agent for day to day running of the portfolio. | Knowle Green Estates was set up in May 2016 following the purchase of Harper House in Ashford. Since then, the Assets team has significantly expanded its portfolio, and is currently working on a number of sites which will provide a steady supply of privately rented homes, a number of which will be available to the Council's housing department for nomination into. |
| 6.3 | Work with local lettings agencies to secure further private sector rental units | Ongoing liaison and marketing to the private rental sector. | Since the launch of our Rent Assure Scheme in December 2016 the Rent Assure team has liaised with lettings agencies and managed to secure a number of properties with 11 different local estate agents. |

Strategic priority 7: Adopt a ‘no second night out’ for emergency accommodation

| No. | What we said we would do | How we said we would do it | What progress we have made |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 7.1 | Improve the service offer to single homeless people | Secure additional funding through the ‘Single homeless fund’ for a specialist worker. Include single homeless people in the definition of vulnerable groups and develop a pathway. | Spelthorne Borough Council had a Single Person Complex Case Worker attached to the Family Support Team, funded by the ‘single homeless fund’ grant funding. This post was initially shared with Elmbridge Borough Council, but once the grant funding ended, this service was fully integrated into and funded by Spelthorne. |
| 7.2 | Ensure that there is adequate winter shelter | Work with local voluntary and faith groups to ensure a cold weather shelter is available | We worked with Runnymede Borough Council and Elmbridge Borough Council to provide a winter shelter at the Hersham Road hostel. This was successfully implemented for one year. Since then each borough has made their own arrangements. |

Strategic priority 8: In partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau prevent mortgage repossessions

| No. | What we said we would do | How we said we would do it | What progress we have made |
|------------|---|--|---|
| 8.1 | Ensure a co-ordinated approach to advising and supporting households vulnerable to mortgage repossessions | Through the Housing Forum identify agencies available to provide assistance. Council to consider developing a business case for a mortgage rescue project using Spelthorne Borough Council reserves as funding. | As per 1.2, a Spelthorne Borough Council Housing Forum has not been set up. The mortgage rescue protocol was introduced by national government so there is now earlier preventative work. This is reflected in our statistics which show we have a low number of homeless households from mortgage repossessions. |

The national context and our current homelessness and preventing rough sleeping challenges

Whilst homelessness is linked to one of our main corporate priorities (Housing), a number of factors influence our ability to deliver our housing and homelessness advice for Spelthorne. Many of these are as a result, both directly and indirectly, of national government policy and legislation.

The national policy context

Recent statistics from the Chartered Institute of Housing's UK Housing Review 2019 indicates that in the year of 2017/18, nationally 56,570 homeless households were recorded, with the South East region accounting for 7,730¹ of these. Whilst the numbers have fluctuated there has been a general increase of homelessness in the last five years. The review identifies the main reasons for homelessness which remains consistent over the last five years. The top three reasons for homelessness nationally are:

- Loss of private dwelling, including tied accommodation, which accounts for 35% of homelessness.
- Parents, relatives or friend no longer willing or able to accommodate, which accounts for 27% of homelessness
- Breakdown of relationship with partner (including where domestic violence is involved), which accounts for 17% of homelessness.

In a similar trend, Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) identifies an increase in the number of rough sleepers both nationally and regionally. MHCLG conduct an annual snapshot of people rough sleeping on a single night by using street or spot counts and evidence-based estimates. MHCLG's 2018 annual autumn snapshot of national rough sleeping recorded 4,677 people as sleeping rough on a single night. This figure is nearly double what it was in 2014 when it was 2,744².

In August 2018, the Government released its Rough Sleeping Strategy which set out how it would seek to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it by 2027. It makes 61 commitments, which focus on three key themes: prevention, intervention, and recovery. A Delivery Plan was published in December 2018 which provided more detail on how the target would be met. This includes the introduction and distribution of a Rough Sleeper Initiative fund to local authorities for immediate support.

¹ Chartered Institute of Housing. M. Stephens, J. Perry, P. Williams, and G. Young (2019). 2019 UK Housing Review. CIH: Coventry.

² Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (2018) 'Rough Sleeping Statistics Autumn 2018, England (Revised)'. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-in-england-autumn-2018>

Following the General Election in December 2019, the Conservative Government updated its commitment to ending rough sleeping by 2025 – two years earlier than planned.

Significant changes to the law on homelessness were implemented in April 2018 through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This legislation enhances the legal duties Spelthorne, as the local housing authority, has towards certain people who find themselves homeless or threatened with homelessness. Changes included:

- Extending the time in which a household is defined as ‘threatened with homelessness’ from 28 days to 56 days.
- Placing homelessness prevention on a statutory basis regardless of priority need or whether someone may be intentionally homeless.
- Requiring authorities to provide personalised assessments and housing plans in all eligible cases, which contain ‘reasonable steps’ for both the authority and the applicant to take to prevent or relieve homelessness.

A national review of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 is to be undertaken by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in 2019/20, which will assess the effectiveness of the changes in reducing homelessness overall. Spelthorne Borough Council recently participated in MHCLG’s public consultation which called for evidence on the impact of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017. The results from this review are due to be published by Summer 2020.

A range of measures to raise standards in the private rented sector:

- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act which gives tenants the right to take their landlord to court in cases where their rented property poses health risks. The Act applies to all tenancies created after 20 March 2019, with all existing tenancies being covered from 20 March 2020
- Extension of HMO licencing to include all properties which accommodate five or more people, from two or more separate households.
- Tenant Fees Act 2019 which bans certain landlord and lettings agent fees, and caps the level of tenancy deposits required. The aim is to reduce the costs that tenants can face in accessing and sustaining a tenancy. There have already been widespread reports that this has led to an increase in rents as landlords seek to recover their costs in other ways.
- Proposal to abolish ‘no fault’ evictions in the private rented sector. Section 21 notices currently allow a landlord to terminate a tenancy without a specific reason, outside of the initial fixed term. A consultation on this proposal ran from July to October 2019. The results of this consultation are due to be published sometime in 2020, although the Government has already announced, via the Queen’s Speech on 19

December 2019, they plan to move forward with the abolition of Section 21 'no fault' evictions through a Renters' Reform Bill.

Welfare reform

Welfare reform has been ongoing since 2009, introducing a wide package of measures to reduce expenditure on benefits, and to promote the concept of 'making work pay'. Such measures have included:

- The overall benefit cap which limits the amount of benefit a person can claim.
- Introduction of Universal Credit which was implemented on a phased basis and commenced in Spelthorne from November 2018.
- Removal of the spare room subsidy.
- Freeze on the Local Housing Allowance rates.

As outlined in the Housing Strategy, the government's ongoing roll-out of welfare reform policies through the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 is affecting the way in which the Council can respond to local housing and homelessness pressures.

Local Housing Allowance rate freeze

Local Housing Allowance was implemented in April 2007 and is the system for calculating housing benefit entitlement for tenancies in the private rented sector. The amount of LHA is calculated based on the 30th percentile of local rents in the local area. Since 2016, the levels of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) have been frozen, and will remain frozen until at least 2020.

This, coupled with the fact that in the years before the freeze was implemented, the increases in LHA did not keep pace with market levels, means that there are large shortfalls between market rents and the LHA. Spelthorne is mentioned specifically in research published by Shelter in 2017, as at that time it was an authority with one of the top ten biggest shortfalls between LHA and market rents for both families needing two bedrooms, and single people or couples needing just one bedroom³.

Using data from the Valuation Office Agency⁴ data from December 2018, lower quartile rents per month are higher than LHA levels by up to £139 per month, for all property sizes except for four bedroom properties.

³ Shelter: Analysis: Local Housing Allowance Freeze, March 2017. Retrieved from: https://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1349012/Final_LHA_analysis.pdf

⁴ Valuation Office Agency Private rental market summary statistics: October 2017 to September 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/private-rental-market-summary-statistics-october-2017-to-september-2018--2>

| | Lower Quartile rent, pcm | LHA level (December 2018) | Shortfall |
|------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Room only | £525 | £390 | -£135 |
| 1-bedroom | £875 | £774 | -£101 |
| 2-bedrooms | £1,100 | £961 | -£139 |
| 3-bedrooms | £1,200 | £1,199 | -£1 |
| 4-bedrooms | £1,550 | £1,658 | £108 |

Source: Valuation Office Agency Private rental market summary statistics and in-house monitoring

The enduring gap between LHA levels and market rents mean that access to affordable private rented accommodation to prevent or relieve homelessness is a significant challenge.

In order to encourage private landlords in Spelthorne to rent their property through the Council, we offer a rent guarantee scheme called Spelthorne Rent Assure. Benefits of the scheme for landlords include:

- one month's rent paid directly in advance
- a five-week repair bond
- arrangement of property viewings
- free tenancy agreements provided (including Right to Rent checks)
- a free inventory service provided by a professional company
- initial tenancy training at the start of the scheme
- ongoing tenancy sustainment support for both the landlord and tenant is available for the duration of the scheme
- a completely free service

To date, 70 landlords are signed up to the scheme, offering a total of 91 properties to households who found it difficult to access the private rented sector without assistance.

Benefit cap

The government now has an overall limit of how much any single household can receive in welfare. In 2019/20, this amount is set as £20,000 for couples and families with dependent children, and £13,400 for single person households.

As of February 2019, there were 102 households resident in Spelthorne who have been capped, with amounts of up to £200 per week deducted from their benefit allowances. 84% of these are single-parent households, and 64% of these have more than one child.⁵

⁵ DWP Benefit Cap Statistics: Households capped to February 2019 (2 May 2019)

The Housing Options team has a dedicated member of staff who specialises in supporting households affected by the Benefit Cap. Such support includes access to training and/or employment, assistance to claim other benefits which may result in an exemption from the cap, or short term awards of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP).

Universal credit

The replacement of a range of 'legacy' benefits into one monthly payment, with the claimant being responsible for paying their housing costs represents a massive culture shift from the previous welfare system. All of Spelthorne is covered by Staines Job Centre Plus, which started a rollout of Universal Credit to new claimants as from November 2018. As of February 2019, there were 805 households claiming Universal Credit, of which 61% were not in employment⁶. This number will continue to rise until the end of the managed migration of all welfare claimants onto Universal Credit, which is currently scheduled for 2024.

Research undertaken by the Residential Landlords Association (RLA) in October 2018 found that 61% of landlords had experienced a tenant on Universal Credit going into arrears in the previous twelve months, up from 27% in 2016, and 38% in 2017. The amount owed to landlords was £2,390 on average, with 77% of possession claims involving a tenant on Universal Credit being primarily as a result of rent arrears⁷.

Further research, published by the DWP in July 2018, suggested that Universal Credit was having a direct effect on claimants' ability to maintain rent payments:

“Slightly more than one third of claimants receiving UC payments towards their housing costs were in arrears in both surveys (36 per cent in Wave 1 and 35 per cent in Wave 2). Among those who were in arrears, two thirds (65 per cent) said they fell into debt after they made their claim for UC.”⁸

⁶ DWP Universal Credit statistics: claims, monthly starts and people on Universal Credit up to 14 March 2019, Table 3.2 People on Universal Credit by employment and Local Authority, February 2019 to March 2019

⁷ Simcock, T.J., (2018). Investigating the effect of Welfare Reform on Private Renting. Manchester: UK. Residential Landlords Association. Retrieved from: <https://research.rla.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/investigating-effect-welfare-reform-private-renting.pdf>

⁸ DWP Universal Credit Full Service Survey by IFF Research. Retrieved from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/714842/universal-credit-full-service-claimant-survey.pdf

Austerity

Austerity has meant that local government services have received significant funding cuts over the past five years, including to:

- Revenue Support Grant – the money granted to local authorities to fund local services.
- Housing related support services – such as supported accommodation and floating support services, and changes to the way services are commissioned.

In line with other local authorities across the country, financial austerity is affecting the delivery of many local services. As a lower tier authority, Spelthorne is particularly sensitive to the financial situation of Surrey County Council. As reported in our Capital Strategy recently, the cost of offsetting budgetary cuts at county level is approaching £500,000.

Brexit:

The UK voted to leave the EU in June 2016 and there is intense uncertainty over the long-term implications of Brexit on the economy. This makes it difficult to predict the impact of Brexit on the housing market and subsequently homelessness. In July 2018, Homeless Link and Crisis worked with WPI economics to consider the possible impacts of Brexit on homelessness. The three organisations raised questions as to whether the UK Shared Prosperity Fund would be utilised to support the homelessness agenda and questioned what rights future EU migrants may have. Overall they concluded that it is hard to predict the challenges Brexit may cause on homelessness but suggested if the risks posed are carefully considered then an opportunity may be created to improve or renew domestic policy agendas.⁹

The Spelthorne context

Spelthorne's overall level of homelessness and use of emergency accommodation is fuelled by:

- Affordability of the private rented sector for local residents
- Demand on the limited supply of social housing
- The limited number of active affordable housing providers actively developing in the borough, and lack of affordable housing supply through private developments
- Impact of welfare reform policies

In common with other areas across the country, homelessness has been a growing issue. Since 2009, the numbers of statutorily homeless households has increased significantly¹⁰, although the number has remained relatively stagnant over the past four years.

⁹ WPI Economics (2018) Homelessness and the Impact of Brexit: Tackling the Challenges and Grasping the Opportunities. A WPI Economics Report for Crisis and Homeless Link.

¹⁰ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Detailed local authority level homelessness figures. Section 1, Column e11g

| | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------------|
| Number of households accepted as unintentionally homeless, in priority need and owed the “Main Duty” | 123 | 120 | 115 | 116 | 61 ¹¹ |

Source: In-house monitoring

Over the same period, the average number of households in temporary accommodation per quarter has seen a correspondingly significant increase¹², meaning that the authority’s gross spend on temporary accommodation is now regularly over £1million per year.

| | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number of households in Temporary Accommodation (average per quarter) | 104 | 126 | 112 | 103 | 110 |
| Gross spend on temporary accommodation | £1.01m | £1.56m | £1.25m | £1.17m | £1.31m |

Source: In-house monitoring

Delivery of affordable housing has also been sluggish over the past four years, with only six affordable dwellings completed in the 2018/19 financial year.

| Year | Affordable dwelling completions (Gross) | Affordable dwellings lost (Gross) | Affordable dwellings completed (Net) | Rented (Gross) | % | Shared Ownership (Gross) | % |
|--------------|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|
| 2014-15 | 16 | 43 | -27 | 8 | 50% | 8 | 50% |
| 2015-16 | 138 | 14 | 124 | 82 | 59% | 56 | 41% |
| 2016-17 | 46 | 0 | 46 | 46 | 100% | 0 | 0% |
| 2017-18 | 9 | 0 | 9 | 5 | 55% | 4 | 45% |
| 2018-19 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 100% | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 215 | 57 | 158 | 147 | 73% | 68 | 27% |

Source: In-house monitoring

This performance pales in comparison to the need. The Council’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update Report, prepared for the

¹¹ The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 was implemented from April 2018 which introduced two new duties – to prevent homelessness and relieve homelessness. This figure represents the number of applicants who were owed the “main duty” under s193(2) Housing Act 1996 (as amended) following the end of the prevention and relief duties.

¹² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Detailed local authority level homelessness figures. Section 6, Column e69c

purposes of revising the Council's Local Plan, suggests an overall need of 459 additional homes per year to 2035 – the vast majority being affordable or social rented instead of affordable home ownership¹³.

The availability of existing social housing stock is severely limited. In 2017/18, there were eleven applicants for every social housing vacancy, on average¹⁴, over double the levels from four years prior.

| | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------------------|
| Number on Housing Register as at 1 April | 1,224 | 1,598 | 1,869 | 2,186 | 1,245 ¹⁵ |
| Number of lettings | 209 | 249 | 197 | 199 | 170 |
| Ratio applicants to vacancies | 6:1 | 6:1 | 9:1 | 11:1 | 7:1 |

Source: In-house monitoring

An additional pressure is that Spelthorne has a lack of diversity amongst Registered Providers. Over 90% of the social housing stock is with one provider, A2Dominion¹⁶, which results in us being overly-reliant on that provider's policies and activities. There is also a disproportionately high presence of large providers, with only one provider classified as 'small' (owning less than 1,000 units).

| PRP name | Size of organisation | General needs, self-contained social stock | % of overall stock in area |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|--|----------------------------|
| A2Dominion | Large | 4438 | 90.41% |
| Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing | Large | 250 | 5.09% |
| L&Q | Large | 95 | 1.94% |
| PA Housing | Large | 86 | 1.75% |
| Catalyst | Large | 34 | 0.69% |
| Ability | Small | 3 | 0.06% |
| Notting Hill Genesis | Large | 2 | 0.04% |
| Mount Green | Large | 1 | 0.02% |
| Total | | 4909 | |

¹³ SBC SHMA Update May 2019, prepared by GL Hearn

¹⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Live Table 600: numbers of households on local authorities' housing waiting lists, by district: England, and in-house recording

¹⁵ In 2018/19, a new Housing Allocations Policy was introduced which resulted in a full re-registration process. This figure represents the number of applicants who had successfully re-registered by 1 April 2019.

¹⁶ Regulator for Social Housing Statistical Data Release 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistical-data-return-2017-to-2018>

It's important to note that A2Dominion's stock in Spelthorne accounts for roughly 25% of its low cost rented accommodation stock across its entire portfolio, with more than twice as many properties in Spelthorne as the next highest stock holding area in the London Borough of Ealing¹⁷.

| Local Authority | No. of low rented homes |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Spelthorne | 4,435 |
| Ealing | 1,985 |
| Hounslow | 1,408 |
| Hillingdon | 1,238 |
| Bromley | 913 |

The Council's Housing Strategy 2020-25 sets out how the Council plans to engage with Registered Providers in a more proactive way, encouraging new providers to the area, reviewing the use of lettings policies and looking again at our Tenancy Strategy to ensure that Registered Providers offer tenures which meet local need. Additionally, in order to preserve the small amount of existing social housing, the Council will develop protocols with Registered Providers, so that where they seek to dispose of affordable housing locally, that the Council is offered first refusal on any sale.

¹⁷ Regulator for Social Housing Statistical Data Release 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistical-data-return-2017-to-2018>

Our strategic priorities for the next five years

Our strategic homelessness and rough sleeping prevention priorities over the next five years will focus on six key areas:

- End the use of private sector emergency accommodation (bed & breakfast)
- Reduce the length of stay in temporary accommodation
- Nobody sleeps rough in Spelthorne
- Increase use of private rented sector for homelessness prevention and relief
- Invest in staff training and development in order to improve the customer journey within the Housing Options service.
- Improve partnership working to prevent and relieve homelessness

End the use of private sector emergency accommodation (bed and breakfast)

We need to ensure that our residents who are facing or who are at risk of homelessness are assisted at the earliest opportunity.

Emergency accommodation, otherwise known as ‘bed and breakfast’, lacks security and can be disruptive to households; particularly to those with children as found by Children’s Commissioner¹⁸. Living in emergency accommodation can add to the pressures homeless families are already under. Sometimes we have no choice but to offer accommodation outside of Spelthorne, which can make it difficult to sustain existing support networks and access local services.

This type of accommodation is also extremely costly to the council to secure as we have to compete against nearby London boroughs for suitable establishments. Spelthorne Borough Council currently has a gross budget of £1.5m per year for emergency accommodation. This expenditure could be better used on innovative homelessness preventative methods and longer-term solutions.

Whilst we inspect every establishment which we use for emergency placements, we have very little control over the quality of accommodation on offer above the bare minimum standards.

We will work to end the use of costly private sector emergency accommodation, only using them in the most exceptional of circumstances. We plan to use the redeveloped Harper House as the main service provision for homeless families, and the new White House Hostel for single homeless people. Together with the temporary accommodation owned by A2Dominion, and any additional capacity created through Knowle Green Estates we believe this aim to be entirely achievable.

¹⁸ Children’s Commissioner (2019). Bleak Houses: Tackling the Crisis of Family Homelessness in England. <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/cco-bleak-houses-report-august-2019.pdf>

How we will achieve this

- In line with the Housing Strategy, deliver the redevelopment of Harper House throughout 2020/21, and put in place robust housing management and resident support arrangements to keep placement lengths to a minimum.
- Put in place a comprehensive plan to end the use of emergency accommodation where possible and suitable, starting with out-of-borough placements before moving onto ending in-borough placements also.
- As part of the Council's Housing Strategy, work to deliver a range of tenure options within the Borough, including temporary accommodation. To support this work, we will produce a requirements analysis which will detail the specific types of properties needed to meet the needs of local homeless households. This will include assessing the need for accessible units, sheltered, extra care and keyworker accommodation.
- Implement earlier preventative techniques which includes raising awareness and encouraging the use of the 'duty to refer' which was introduced by the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and encourage a 'commitment to refer' with local registered providers.
- Closely monitor the level of funding for the Council's homeless prevention fund, levering in resources from alternative funding streams where possible and as necessary.
- Review the way in which residents of emergency accommodation are supported to access settled accommodation at the earliest opportunity. With this, we will require all households in emergency accommodation who are on the Housing Register to register for auto-bidding for all suitable available properties. Suitability will be based on the contents of the applicant's personalised housing plan.

Reduce the length of stay in temporary accommodation

Whilst temporary accommodation is slightly more longer term than emergency accommodation, it is still only a temporary measure and can still be disruptive to homeless households.

Currently, the only temporary accommodation available for the Council to use is owned by A2Dominion. Our recent Homelessness Review identified that households in temporary accommodation were on average staying for over a year. Where possible, we want to see a significant reduction in the time homeless households spend in temporary accommodation and see an increase in the number of households we are moving on to more settled accommodation. This will support the reduction both in numbers of households and length of time they stay in emergency accommodation.

How we will achieve this

- Review and establish robust move-on plans for all residents of temporary accommodation. This will be in partnership with A2Dominion who own and manage the properties. Regular progress meetings will highlight those who have lived in temporary accommodation for longer than 6 months. This includes liaising and joint working with family support, voluntary organisations and our other partners to establish effective plans and maximise opportunities for identifying suitable alternative and more settled accommodation.
- Work with A2Dominion to develop the service offer for temporary accommodation. This will include rent levels, quality, fixtures and fittings, as well as move-on plans.
- Ensure referrals have been completed for all existing and future resident families in temporary accommodation to the Spelthorne Rent Assure Scheme. This is another opportunity to help residents in to privately rented accommodation which is more readily available to use.
- In line with our Housing Strategy, we will promote and increase the delivery of suitable affordable rented housing in the borough which will give homeless households greater options of moving onto settled accommodation.
- Assess the impact of affordability issues and limited access to white goods and furniture on our ability to assist clients move on from temporary accommodation. Work with voluntary organisations and identify alternative methods to help families in temporary accommodation access essential goods to prevent delays when moving on to settled accommodation.

Nobody sleeps rough in Spelthorne

The Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy aims to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it by 2025. We are committed to supporting this target. Nationally, rough sleeping has nearly doubled in the last 8 years. In Spelthorne, the number of rough sleepers has varied over the years but is an increasing trend which represents an extreme form of homelessness.

Nobody deserves to be sleeping rough in Spelthorne. We want to ensure our homelessness support and outreach service is maximised to ensure this doesn't happen in the first place, and if it does happen then we are able to target appropriate support to individuals to support them from the streets.

We will access a range of funding streams, including through joint bids with neighbouring councils, voluntary and statutory partners, to deliver rough sleeper services.

How we will achieve this

- Develop and keep updated a service support map for rough sleepers in Spelthorne to ensure we are maximising the use of nearby services. As part of this mapping exercise, we will identify gaps in service provision across the borough and work with voluntary and faith sectors to address these gaps.
- In partnership with other Surrey authorities, explore adopting a Surrey Adults Matter MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter) approach and the capability of appointing a 'navigator' for those who may need additional support in seeking accommodation. Allocating more dedicated time to these types of cases may encourage reengagement with the local authority and supporting services.
- Sustain our current Rough Sleeper Coordinator and Outreach service which ensures anyone who is reported as sleeping rough in Spelthorne is offered support and advice at the earliest opportunity. This will involve considering how this role will fit in with the White House Hostel to be developed in 2020/21.
- Encourage the public to use StreetLink to notify us of people sleeping rough in the area. This will enable us to reach and offer support to them sooner.
- Work with other agencies to deliver workshops to local schools and youth clubs to increase awareness of homelessness and housing options.
- Work with A2Dominion, Surrey County Council and other key partner agencies to deliver a Housing First style pilot. We will also identify and jointly work with local NHS primary care networks to facilitate this.
- In line with the Council's Housing Strategy, deliver the White House Hostel project in partnership with Homes England. With this, we will ensure the development of a psychologically informed environment by working with Surrey Adults Matter to deliver trauma informed care training sessions.

- Measure the impact and monitor the effectiveness of our family support team service delivery. The family support team provide additional assistance to families and single homeless people with multiple and complex needs.

Increase use of the private rented sector for homelessness prevention and relief

With the extremely limited availability of social housing, accessing privately rented accommodation is the primary method of preventing and relieving homelessness in Spelthorne.

Strengthening our use of the private rented sector offers us an opportunity to prevent and relieve homelessness at an earlier stage. We want to encourage as many local landlords, estate agents and property developers to work with us as possible.

We already have the Spelthorne Rent Assure scheme – we need to ensure that the service offer meets the needs of both landlords and future tenants of those landlords, as well as the Council as funder of the service.

We also have Knowle Green Estates with a pipeline supply of high quality, private rented accommodation within the Borough. We need to make sure that as much of that accommodation as possible is offered to those who are most in need.

How we will achieve this

- In line with our Councils Housing Strategy, ensure our offer to private sector landlords is competitive, robust, affordable, and suitable.
- Use appropriate marketing methods to encourage new landlords to work with us, and ensure that we have a sustainable pipeline of properties to use.
- In order to improve relations with local estate agents and landlords, we will organise a biennial landlord forum. Part of this will market our Spelthorne Rent Assure scheme and the incentives we offer landlords. In partnership with Jobcentre Plus, the event would include a Q&A stall on Universal Credit to provide reassurance and information to landlords.
- Work with Knowle Green Estates to expand affordable private rental sector tenure in accordance with our Housing Strategy aims.
- Assess the tenancy sustainment support methods we use to prevent homelessness to identify common causes of tenancy risk.
- Work with Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne social policy team to address and lobby on the broader causes of homelessness such as the challenges of welfare reform.
- In partnership with Jobcentre Plus and Spelthorne Borough Council's Economic Development team, design a workable process to effectively support residents who are affected by any welfare reform (particularly those affected by the benefit cap who are finding it difficult to secure work). The process will focus on skills including CV and interview advice and job searching tips.
- Evaluate how Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) are allocated to ensure effective targeting of households facing homelessness. This will

include making sure we know how we are targeting payments, and whether payments deliver longer term outcomes or not.

- Work with our Environmental Health team on HHSRS (Housing health and safety rating system) inspections to prevent homelessness from properties in poor conditions. This may include the introduction of a housing improvement grant to enable landlords to undertake necessary works, preventing the potential homelessness of the existing residents.
- Develop a pre-tenancy training pack to help prepare residents who are entering in to a tenancy agreement for the first time or who are considered vulnerable and need additional support.
- Explore our Spelthorne Rent Assure scheme service capabilities to ensure optimum efficiency.
- In line with our Housing Strategy, identify suitable incentives to help bring empty homes in the borough back in to use for the purposes of tackling homelessness, including exploring how Spelthorne Rent Assure can fit into this work.
- Carry out an in-depth study of the affordability of affordable rents in Spelthorne.

Invest in staff training and development in order to improve the customer journey within the Housing Options service.

Residents who seek our help because they are homeless or threatened with homelessness are going through a potentially stressful and chaotic point in their life. We want to ensure that those needing help and support receive it in a way in which is suitable for them from confident and knowledgeable staff who are supported to keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date through continued professional development.

This priority is not just about the staff delivering homelessness services, it also encompasses the systems and processes which support the staff to deliver those services. This includes looking at how we collect and use data in a more innovative way to target support services and implement new ways of working.

How we will achieve this

- We will continue working with other Surrey authorities to access shared training events.
- Where appropriate, open up training opportunities to partners to enable the delivery of joint services to meet our strategic priorities.
- Ensure all staff are given counter fraud training to equip staff with the skills for identifying fraudulent activity used to seek homelessness assistance and support. Where applicable, we will work with A2Dominion to identify any concerns of fraud we may identify when carrying out our investigations.
- Seek to implement relevant recommendations from the forthcoming Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) review of the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- Enhance the Housing section on Spelthorne Borough Council's website to ensure it is easily accessible and has a clear directory of services available in the local area for households threatened or experiencing homelessness.
- Agree annual training plans with members of the team. Open up more opportunities for our Housing Options staff to develop their skills and knowledge of housing and homelessness advice. We will offer staff relevant courses and qualifications and membership of the Chartered Institute of Housing.
- We will review the channels by which customers contact us with an intention of making it simpler and easier to get in touch with us.
- We will implement opportunities for us to collect customer feedback. This will allow us to make more timely reviews of service delivery, and help us to better inform policy development.
- Identify a member of the Housing Options team to complete regular data quality checks. This will ensure regular monitoring of our data on homelessness in the borough and identify staff training requirements where patterns of issues are identified. Improving data quality

monitoring will better inform our decision making on preventing homelessness, and feed into future policy and strategy development.

Improve partnership working to prevent and relieve homelessness

We can't deliver our homelessness and rough sleeper services without the assistance and support of our partners.

We have established strong links with our partners to jointly identify vulnerable groups at risk of homelessness. We want to continue to effectively work with our partners to ensure our society's most vulnerable groups are supported at the earliest opportunity to prevent homelessness. Furthermore, collaborative working enhances the service being delivered as it allows for other issues to be addressed simultaneously.

How will we achieve this

- Work with North Surrey Domestic Abuse Service (NSDAS) to ensure support is offered to victims at risk of, or who are fleeing, domestic abuse. This includes identifying suitable refuges to ensure provision for people fleeing to other areas of the country. Furthermore, we will continue to utilise the 'Sanctuary Scheme' where suitable to create safe havens in existing homes of domestic abuse survivors.
- We will work with offender management services (probation, prisons and youth offending services) to identify people leaving custody who may be at risk of homelessness in order to prevent it at the earliest opportunity. As part of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, the 'duty to refer' should help this information be communicated in a timely manner.
- Continue to effectively work with our Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) to ensure suitable assistance is offered to residents at risk of, or who are experiencing homelessness. We will actively contribute to our local NHS primary care network implementation group that has been implemented as part of the Surrey Heartlands mental health transformation.
- Continually develop links with child and adult social care services to identify care and support needs for our service users that have additional needs. This includes identifying potential care leavers that are at risk of homelessness and need further support resettling in to and sustaining their accommodation; detailed pathway plans will set out the needs of the young person. Early help services will enable us to improve early homelessness intervention methods.
- Sustain the delivery of supported accommodation and day service drop-in at Hershams Road with Transform, Runnymede Borough Council and Elmbridge Borough Council.
- Develop our work with 'Life Housing' which offers support and accommodation for young single parents, particularly those households with additional support needs. We will explore their growth strategy and identify opportunities for further schemes in the local area.
- Liaise with the NHS on a local hospital discharge protocol to prevent homelessness and to minimise discharge delays where

there is a patient with a housing need that is preventing them from leaving.

- Update our pathway plan for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople threatened with homelessness and enhance our understanding of their needs.
- Prevent and relieve migrant homelessness by broadening our understanding and by identifying and tackling cuckooing and modern day slavery in Spelthorne.
- Continue to liaise with DWP on the effective implementation of the national migration of Universal Credit which is expected to fully complete by 2024.
- Develop further links with armed forces charities to ensure currently serving members of the armed forces and veterans are offered suitable assistance to access and sustain settled accommodation.
- Contribute to the 'Surrey Homeless Health Needs Audit' as part of Surrey County Council's data collection exercise which aims to inform future commissioning of homelessness services.

Delivery and monitoring of the Strategy

Action Plan

Strategic Priority One: End the use of emergency accommodation

| No. | Action | Aims/Outcomes | Lead Officers | Partner Agencies | Timescale | Status / Comments |
|-----|--|--|---|----------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| 1.1 | Put in place a plan to end the use of emergency accommodation out-of-borough where suitable. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping homeless households in the borough will help sustain existing support networks and services and minimise disruption. Reduce the costs spent on emergency accommodation. | Housing Strategy & Policy Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council | Dec 2020 | |
| 1.2 | Deliver the redevelopment of Harper House through 2020/21 and put in place robust housing management and resident support arrangements to keep placement lengths to a minimum. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the quality of temporary accommodation units for families. Part of the plan to end the use of emergency accommodation out-of-borough where suitable. In turn, this will help homeless families sustain existing support networks and services in the borough. Reduce the costs spent on emergency accommodation. | Housing Strategy & Policy Manager, and Property and Development Asset Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council | Oct 2021 | |
| 1.3 | Carry out an analysis of the current and likely future need for specialist accommodation for homeless households. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and increase the delivery of affordable rented housing in the borough as outlined in our Housing Strategy. To detail the specific types of properties needed to meet local | Housing Strategy & Policy Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council | Jul 2020 | |

| | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|--|----------------------|--|
| | | need, including accessible units and keyworker accommodation. | | | | |
| 1.4 | Implement earlier preventative techniques by encouraging the use of the 'duty to refer' introduced by the homeless reduction act. and encourage a 'commitment to refer' with local Registered Providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of the 'duty to refer' by visiting partners, creating posters, posting on our social media and website. • Ensure our partners are informed of the referral process to keep referrals consistent. • Strengthen our partnerships with other public bodies. • Encouraging the use of the 'duty to refer' or 'commitment to refer' allows us more time to prevent a client from becoming homeless thus potentially reducing the need for emergency accommodation. • Repeat stakeholder event (annually) to update our partners on the progress of our Homelessness Strategy. | Team Manager Housing Options | Spelthorne Borough Council, Community Mental Health Team, NHS, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Jobcentre Plus and Probation. | Sep 2020 and ongoing | |
| 1.5 | Monitor the level of funding for the Council's homeless prevention fund | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a better understanding of how we utilise our prevention fund. • Maximise funding for homelessness prevention by leveraging in resources from alternative funding streams where possible and as necessary. • Making best use of our prevention fund may reduce the local need for emergency accommodation. | Housing Strategy & Policy Manager, and Team Manager Housing Options | Spelthorne Borough Council | Apr 2020 and ongoing | |

| | | | | | | |
|------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------|--|
| 1.6 | Review the way in which residents of emergency accommodation are supported to access settled accommodation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the resources available to us to assist homeless households in to accommodation. • Create a clear process map to ensure service consistency and highlight any areas for improvement. • Endeavour to fulfil the needs of our service users by offering different means of accessing support. | Housing Strategy and Policy Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council | Dec 2020 | |
| 1.7 | Require all households in emergency accommodation who are on the Housing Register to register for auto-bidding for all suitable available properties | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise opportunities for homeless households to secure settled accommodation by ensuring bids are placed on all suitable properties. • Reduce the move on time from emergency accommodation. | Team Manager Housing Options | Spelthorne Borough Council | Oct 2020 | |

Strategic Priority Two: Reduce the length of stay in temporary accommodation

| No. | Action | Aims/Outcomes | Lead Officers | Partner Agencies | Timescale | Status / Comments |
|-----|--|---|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------|-------------------|
| 2.1 | Work with A2Dominion to develop the service offer for temporary accommodation. This will include reviewing and establishing move on plans for residents, prioritising those who have been there for 6+ months. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with family support, voluntary organisations and our partners to help households seek alternative accommodation. • Reducing the length of stay for households that include children will help to reduce further disruption to childhood experiences and improve general well-being. • Improve our joint working relationship with A2Dominion. • Move on plans will record advice and support that has been given to help tenants move on. • Ensure the size, location and quality of temporary accommodation is suitable and the rent levels are appropriately valued. | Housing Strategy and Policy Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council and A2Dominion | Apr 2021 | |
| 2.2 | Ensure referrals have been done for all existing and future families at risk of homelessness to the Spelthorne Rent Assure Scheme to help assist them in to the private rented | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise opportunities for homeless households to secure settled accommodation by ensuring referrals have been made to our Spelthorne Rent Assure Team. • Improve move on times for temporary accommodation residents as privately rented accommodation is our primary offer. | Team Manager Housing Options | Spelthorne Borough Council | Aug 2020 and ongoing | |

| | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|----------|--|
| | sector which is more readily available. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our service offer is consistent by monitoring private rented sector offers to homeless households. • Provide an electronic referral form in our systems programme Locata for all housing officers to complete. | | | | |
| 2.3 | Review the current ways households with affordability issues are provided with essential goods and furniture when moving on from temporary accommodation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise any delay to a household moving on from temporary accommodation. • Ensure sufficient resources are identified as the result of a limited service offer now being provided by the Surrey Crisis fund due to high demand. | Housing Strategy and Policy Officer | Spelthorne Borough Council and voluntary organisations | Aug 2020 | |

Strategic Priority Three: Nobody sleeps rough in Spelthorne

| No. | Action | Aims/Outcomes | Lead Officers | Partner Agencies | Timescale | Status/Comments |
|-----|---|--|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 3.1 | Develop and keep updated a service support map for rough sleepers in Spelthorne | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise the use of local support services. • Identify gaps in service provision across the borough and work with voluntary and faith sectors to address these gaps. | Rough Sleeper Coordinator | Spelthorne Borough Council | July 2020 and ongoing | |
| 3.2 | Explore adopting a Surrey Adults Matter MEAM (making every adult matter) approach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the option of appointing a 'navigator' for those who may need additional support in seeking accommodation. Allocating more dedicated time to homelessness cases facing severe and multiple disadvantage may encourage them to re-engage with our local authority and supporting services. • Prevent people from experiencing crisis and support their recovery at the earliest opportunity. | Housing Strategy and Policy Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council and Surrey County Council (Surrey Adults Matter) | Dec 2020 | |
| 3.3 | Sustain our Rough Sleeper Coordinator and Outreach Service as part of our homelessness prevention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage our residents to make use of Streetlink to notify services earlier. • Ensure anyone who is reported as sleeping rough in the borough is offered advice and support as soon as possible. | Housing Strategy & Policy Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council, MHCLG | Mar 2020 and ongoing | |

| | | | | | | |
|------------|--|---|---|---|------------|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A designated outreach service will allow for more detailed assessments. • Improve partnership with Street Angels who are voluntarily working in the local area. • Facilitate the delivery of the White House Hostel service that is to be developed in 2020/21. | | | | |
| 3.4 | Deliver housing and homelessness awareness based workshops to local schools and youth clubs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of housing options to ensure our younger residents are well informed. • Empower young people to start thinking about their future and planning ahead. | Team Manager Housing Options and Housing Strategy and Policy Officer | Spelthorne Borough Council, Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne | Dec 2021 | |
| 3.5 | Deliver the White House Hostel project which will provide supported housing for single homeless people, including those with multiple and complex needs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer support to single homeless people with multiple and complex needs to help them move on independently to settled accommodation. • Reduce the current costs spent on nightly paid accommodation that does not offer the specialist support needed. • Develop a psychologically informed environment by working with Surrey Adults Matter to deliver trauma informed care training sessions for staff. | Housing Strategy and Policy Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council, Surrey County Council, Homes England, Rentstart | April 2021 | |

| | | | | | | |
|------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| 3.6 | Deliver a Housing First style pilot | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help homeless individuals with multiple and complex needs who have experienced repeat or entrenched homelessness. By providing them with a home to start rebuilding their lives from, they are then able to address other issues. • Be part of a global movement that aims to end homelessness through a housing first service. | Housing Strategy and Policy Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council, A2Dominion and Surrey County Council | May 2020 and ongoing | |
| 3.7 | Measure the impact and monitor the effectiveness of our family support team service delivery. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure families and single homeless people with multiple and complex needs have support measures in place that are both practical and flexible to meet varying needs. | Housing Strategy and Policy Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council | Apr 2021 | |

Strategic Priority Four: Increase use of the private rented sector for homelessness prevention and relief

| No. | Action | Aims/Outcomes | Lead Officers | Partner Agencies | Timescale | Status/Comments |
|-----|---|--|---|---|----------------------|-----------------|
| 4.1 | Organise a biennial landlord forum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market our schemes and incentives to increase landlord interest and improve relations with estate agents. Work with Job Centre Plus to provide a Universal Credit Q&A stall to provide reassurance and information to landlords. Ensure our offer to private sector landlords is competitive, robust, affordable and suitable. | Rent Assure Scheme Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council, Rentstart and Job Centre Plus | May 2021 and ongoing | |
| 4.2 | Work with Knowle Green Estates (KGE) to expand affordable private rented sector tenure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure a sustainable pipeline of properties. Continue to offer privately rented properties as our primary offer as it is more readily available. Establish a service offer. | Housing Strategy and Policy Manager, and Property and Development Asset Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council and Knowle Green Estates | Dec 2020 and ongoing | |
| 4.3 | Work with Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne social policy team to address and lobby broader causes of homelessness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support lobbying the underlying causes of homelessness as part of our homelessness prevention efforts. | Housing Strategy and Policy Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council and Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne | Jan 2022 and ongoing | |

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| 4.4 | Design a workable process to effectively support residents who are affected by welfare reform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help residents affected by welfare reform to secure employment by linking in with Jobcentre plus employment advisor events. These events focus on CV and interview advice and job searching tips. • This will particularly help residents affected by the benefit cap who need to secure work to lift the cap. | Team Manager Housing Options and Economic Development Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council, Job Centre Plus, and A2D DOSH scheme | Mar 2022 and ongoing | |
| 4.5 | Evaluate how discretionary housing payment's (DHP) are allocated to households facing homelessness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure effective targeting of DHP's to help prevent homelessness. • Understand how we target payments by improving data collection methods. | Housing Benefits Manager, Housing Strategy & Policy Officer | Spelthorne Borough Council | Nov 2020 and ongoing | |
| 4.6 | Work with our Environmental Health team on Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) inspections | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent homelessness from properties in poor condition. • Where there are affordability issues, explore the option of introducing housing improvement grants to enable landlords to undertake necessary works. | Housing Strategy and Policy Manager and Senior Environmental Health Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council | Dec 2021 and ongoing | |
| 4.7 | Develop a pre-tenancy training pack for residents entering the private rented sector for the first time. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of tenant responsibilities for residents who have little to no experience of managing a tenancy, or, who, need additional support because they are considered vulnerable. | Housing Strategy and Policy Officer | Spelthorne Borough Council, and Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne | Dec 2020 | |

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| 4.8 | Assess the tenancy sustainment support methods we use to prevent homelessness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify common causes of tenancy risk to ensure we are tailoring our homelessness prevention support accordingly. | Housing Strategy and Policy Officer | Spelthorne Borough Council | Dec 2020 | |
| 4.9 | Explore our Rent Assure Scheme service delivery capabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure our Spelthorne Rent Assure Scheme is efficient by building the process in to our electronic system, Civica. | Housing Strategy and Policy Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council | April 2021 | |
| 4.10 | Carry out an in-depth study of the affordability of Affordable Rents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better understand local affordability to inform future policy and strategy development, particularly with forthcoming properties to be managed by Knowle Green Estates. | Housing Strategy and Policy Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council | December 2020 | |

Strategic Priority Five: Invest in staff training and development in order to improve the customer journey within the Housing Options service

| No. | Action | Aims/Outcomes | Lead Officers | Partner Agencies | Timescale | Status/Comments |
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| 5.1 | Continue accessing shared training events with Surrey authorities and where appropriate, open these up to our partners. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet the training needs of our staff whilst also allowing local authorities to share their experiences with other boroughs. Partner training will strengthen the joint service we offer and show a commitment to our partners. | Team Manager Housing Options | Spelthorne Borough Council and Surrey Learn | Ongoing | |
| 5.2 | Ensure all staff undertake counter fraud training and work with A2D to identify cases whereby social housing has been wrongfully obtained. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equip staff with the necessary skills for recognising fraudulent activity. Investigate and where applicable prosecute those found to be unlawfully obtaining social housing which has deprived another in genuine need. Agree process and Service Level Agreement for fraud cases. | Team Manager Housing Options | Spelthorne Borough Council and A2Dominion | August 2020 | |
| 5.3 | Pending Government's HRA review, seek to implement relevant recommendations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to adapt our service offer as appropriate to compliment the Homeless Reduction Act (HRA). | Housing Strategy and Policy Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council and MHCLG | Apr 2021 | |
| 5.4 | Enhance the Housing Options | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure it is easily accessible and has a clear directory of services detailing the housing and | Housing Strategy and Policy Officer, | Spelthorne Borough Council | Apr 2021 | |

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| | section on our corporate website | homelessness support available in Spelthorne. | Communications Manager | | | |
| 5.5 | Agree annual training plans with members of the team. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open up more opportunities for our Housing Options staff to develop their skills and knowledge. • Offer staff relevant courses and qualifications and membership to the Chartered Institute of Housing. • Demonstrate to our staff that we value their future career plans. | Team Manager Housing Options | Spelthorne Borough Council and CIH | Ongoing | |
| 5.6 | Review the channels by which customers contact us e.g. phone, email etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make these types of communication simpler and easier. • Ensure a consistent service delivery across the team. | Housing Strategy and Policy Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council | Sep 2020 | |
| 5.7 | Implement opportunities to collect customer feedback. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow us to make timely reviews of service delivery, and help us to better inform policy development on housing and homelessness advice. | Housing Strategy and Policy Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council, and SCHO. | Apr 2021 | |
| 5.8 | Identify a member of the Housing Options team to complete a monthly data quality check. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure regular monitoring of our data on homelessness in the borough and identify staff training requirements where patterns of issues are identified. • Improving data quality monitoring will better inform our decision making on preventing homelessness. | Team Manager Housing Options | Spelthorne Borough Council | May 2020 | |

Strategic Priority six: Improve partnership working to prevent and relieve homelessness

| No. | Action | Aims/Outcomes | Lead Officers | Partner Agencies | Timescale | Status/Comments |
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| 6.1 | Ensure accessibility to suitable accommodation for victims of domestic abuse. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure support and assistance is available to victims of domestic abuse. Identify suitable refuges out of borough in order to provide suitable accommodation for people fleeing domestic abuse. Get updates on Surrey County Council procuring domestic abuse outreach and accommodation services. Where suitable, utilise the 'Sanctuary Scheme' to make safe havens in the homes of domestic abuse survivors. | Team Manager Housing Options | Spelthorne Borough Council and North Surrey Domestic Abuse Service (NSDAS) | Nov 2020 and ongoing | |
| 6.2 | Work with offender management services to identify people leaving custody who may be at risk of homelessness. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity by working with probation, prisons and youth offending services. Encourage use of the 'duty to refer'. | Team Manager Housing Options | Spelthorne Borough Council, Probation, HMP Bronzefield and youth offending services | Jan 2021 and ongoing | |
| 6.3 | Actively contribute to our local Primary Care Network implementation group as part of the Surrey Heartlands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to future plans on mental health practitioners and community care connector plans in Spelthorne. | Team Manager Housing Options | Spelthorne Borough Council, Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) | Jan 2021 and ongoing | |

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| | Mental Health Transformation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen partnerships with local GPs to ensure support is available for residents with mental health issues who are threatened with or experiencing homelessness. | | and NHS Surrey Heartlands Bordership and Partners. | | |
| 6.4 | Improve early homelessness intervention for families that require or receive additional support from child and adult social care services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure transparent communication with child and adult social care services, particularly early help services. Identify the number of potential care leavers that may be at risk of homelessness and encourage use of the 'duty to refer' to prevent youth homelessness. | Team Manager Housing Options and Family Support Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council, adult and child social care services. | July 2021 and ongoing | |
| 6.5 | Sustain the delivery of Hersham Road supported accommodation and day service drop-in | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a project group with Transform, Runnymede Borough Council and Elmbridge Borough Council to monitor, sustain and improve the existing supported accommodation and service offered. | Team Manager Housing Options | Spelthorne, Runnymede, and Elmbridge Borough Council's, and Transform Housing | Dec 2020 and ongoing | |
| 6.6 | Meet with 'Life Housing' to understand their growth strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure supported accommodation is available for young single parents, particularly those households with additional support needs. Identify the opportunity for further schemes in the local area. | Team Manager Housing Options, and Housing Strategy & Policy Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council and Life Housing | July 2020 and ongoing | |
| 6.7 | Liaise with the NHS on a local hospital discharge protocol | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity | Housing Strategy and Policy | Spelthorne Borough Council and NHS | Aug 2021 | |

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| | that takes into consideration housing and homelessness services offered | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise discharge delays where there is a housing need preventing the patient from leaving the hospital. | Manager, Team Manager Housing Options and Independent Living Senior Team Manager | | | |
| 6.8 | Update pathway plans for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople threatened with homelessness in light of the recent Gypsy and Traveller Site Accommodation Need Assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broaden our understanding of Gypsy and Traveller needs who are threatened with, or facing homelessness. Ensure our pathway plan is up to date and retains its suitability. | Team Manager Housing Options | Spelthorne Borough Council | Apr 2021 | |
| 6.9 | Prevent and relieve migrant homelessness including tackling modern day slavery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance our understanding of migrant homelessness including how to identify and tackle cuckooing and modern day slavery in Spelthorne. | Team Manager Housing Options | Spelthorne Borough Council and Surrey Police | Apr 2021 and ongoing | |
| 6.10 | Continue to liaise with DWP on the effective implementation of the national | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exchange regular updates with DWP on the Universal Credit migration process. Communicate and tackle common issues with our local Jobcentre Plus to feedback to the service centre. | Housing Benefits Manager | Spelthorne Borough Council, DWP and Jobcentre Plus | Apr 2024 | |

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| | migration of Universal Credit. | | | | | |
| 6.11 | Develop further links with armed forces charities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure currently serving members of the armed forces, veterans and their families are offered appropriate support to access and sustain settled accommodation. • Promote the 'Directory of Housing and Support Service for Veterans'. • Support STOLL's 'No Homeless Veterans' campaign. • All staff will be offered Armed Forces Covenant training (the e-learning module will be mandatory for staff). • Ensure all staff are utilising the Royal British Legion toolkit for local authorities containing information and guidance on housing Veterans. | Team Manager Housing Options, and Armed Forces Champion Officer | Spelthorne Borough Council, Armed Forces Covenant, STOLL and the Royal British Legion | Dec 2020 | |
| 6.12 | Contribute to the 'Surrey Homeless Health Needs Audit' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide data about the service we provide to people in Spelthorne who are currently experiencing homelessness and highlight any gaps in the system. • Data obtained from this audit will be used to inform future commissioning of homelessness services. | Team Manager Housing Options | Spelthorne Borough Council, 'Healthy Surrey' at Surrey County Council, and Homeless Link | Feb - Apr 2020 | |

Monitoring of the strategy

Operational monitoring

The Action Plan attached to this strategy is a 'living' document which will adapt and develop over time. A new group will be formed, with responsibility for operationally monitoring the implementation of this strategy and its Action Plan.

The composition of this new group will include, as a minimum:

- Officers from relevant sections of the Council
- Portfolio Holder for Housing
- Any partner organisation which has any actions within the Action Plan
- Any other interested party where their involvement will support the effective delivery of the agreed strategy

The frequency and duration of meetings is to be agreed, but it is anticipated that formal reviews of the Action Plan will be at least quarterly.

Strategic monitoring

The strategic responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this strategy and its action plan, in particular the resources available to deliver the strategy, is delegated to the Council's Strategic Housing Group (SHG).

SHG exists to ensure that Spelthorne Borough Council has a focussed strategic approach on housing matters, and to ensure that Spelthorne's housing needs are identified and met.

The objectives of SHG are:

- To decide priorities and focus of the group for the coming year.
- Develop strategies for dealing with issues (which may translate into projects to be reviewed).
- To ensure all housing strategies dove tail with other relevant strategies e.g. Asset Management Plan, Capital Strategy, etc.
- Develop and monitor the progress of both the Housing Strategy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plans.
- Monitor key areas of concern (such as emergency accommodation and shortage of affordable housing) and make strategic decisions on approaches to mitigate the impact.
- To make decisions on operational matters which impact the delivery of strategic priorities.
- To share information on housing and housing-related issues (including changes to legislation).
- To identify and allocate resources to help meet the priorities identified.
- To ensure key politicians and partners are effectively communicated with.
- To receive updates on Knowle Green Estates developments.

- To consider and agree corporate responses to government consultations which directly or indirectly affect housing.

Membership of SHG includes:

- Deputy Chief Executive(s) (Chair)
- Joint Group Heads Community Wellbeing (Vice-Chair)
- Portfolio Holder – Housing
- Group Head Regeneration and Growth
- Head of Corporate Governance
- Deputy Group Head Community Wellbeing
- Housing Strategy & Policy Manager
- Team Manager Housing Options
- Housing Benefits Manager
- Senior Environmental Health Manager
- Accountant (Housing)

SHG meets approximately once per month, and will commit to reviewing the strategy Action Plan at least every quarter, making recommendations and decisions as necessary to ensure the delivery of the strategy.

Glossary

Bed and Breakfast (B&B) – Accommodation which the Council sources for homeless households to live in whilst longer term solutions are found. The Council usually pays for these placements on a nightly basis, and it cannot reclaim all of the cost of the placement from either the homeless household or the Government. As a result, it costs the Council a significant amount of money per year to pay for these placements.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) – Monetary grants for property adaptations to meet the needs of a person with a disability which prevents them from otherwise living comfortably day-to-day.

Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) – A payment that may be made at the discretion of the Council to help assist a resident with their housing costs.

Duty to Refer – Was introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Certain authorities are imposed to refer persons who are threatened with homelessness or who may already be homeless to local authorities. (Note: 'Commitment to Refer' has been adopted by other bodies that are not imposed to refer persons at threat of homelessness but do so voluntarily).

Extra Care - Specialist housing that offers care and support services on-site, generally for those aged 55+. Care levels are usually higher than sheltered accommodation.

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 – Legislation introduced to amend the legal duties placed on local authorities with an emphasis on earlier targeted homelessness prevention.

Housing First – Is a housing and support approach that offers settled accommodation to homeless persons with complex needs and a history of repeat homelessness in which they then subsequently address other support need issues.

Keyworker Accommodation - Accommodation let to essential service public sector employees, usually at a discount of 10-20% off market rates.

Knowle Green Estates - A company wholly owned by Spelthorne Borough Council, set up to manage residential accommodation within the borough.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) – These rates are used to calculate a tenant's entitlement for Housing Benefit or Universal Credit housing element. These levels are set by the Government and should be based upon the 30th percentile rents in the local area.

Pathway Plans – A detailed support plan developed for persons deemed vulnerable (as outlined in 5.2 of the Housing Strategy 2014-2019 action plan review).

Registered Provider (RP) – Provider of social housing. For example, A2Dominion is a Registered Provider and owns the majority of social housing stock in Spelthorne.

Sanctuary Scheme – Where suitable, the scheme aims to create a ‘secure sanctuary’ for victims of domestic abuse by enabling property adaptations to existing accommodation.

Sheltered - Accommodation which usually comprises of self-contained units with some shared communal spaces. Schemes are generally designed for those aged 55+.

Spelthorne Rent Assure Scheme – A two year rent guarantee scheme for private sector landlords.

Supported Housing – Accommodation that offers additional support. This type of accommodation is not usually age restricted, but specific schemes may be designed for residents with specific needs (i.e. alcohol, mental health).

Surrey Adults Matter (Adopted from Making Every Adult Matter) – Focuses on delivering coordinated services and improving the lives of adults facing severe multiple disadvantage.

SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol) – Aims to prevent rough sleeping during extreme cold weather.

Temporary Accommodation – Accommodation offered to homeless households who are subject to some form of duty under homelessness legislation. In Spelthorne, this is likely to be a 6 month tenancy of one of A2Dominion’s properties.

Universal Credit – Assists with living costs and replaces six benefits by merging them in to one monthly payment. Universal Credit replaces Child and Working Tax Credits, Housing Benefit, Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, and Employment Support Allowance.