


Agenda Item No:	9	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	24.02.25	
Report Title:	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and action plan	

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 To consider approval of a Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy and action plan 2024-2029

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 It is a requirement from Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to publish a homelessness and rough sleeper strategy and action plan.
- 2.2 The council has responded positively to the needs of the community and successfully bid for central government funding to provide services and initiatives to help tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in Fenland.
- 2.3 The strategy set out in Appendix A and Action Plan at Appendix B has been co-produced under the leadership of the portfolio holder with a large number of partners in the public, private and community and voluntary sector who recognise that homelessness is everyone's business and homelessness is an unacceptable outcome.
- 2.4 The council has undertaken two consultation exercises including the community and those with lived experience to help shape the documents. The council received 24 responses to the consultation in total. The consultation feedback and the council's response is set out in Appendix C & D and the changes in response to the consultation are highlighted in yellow in the action plan. As part of the consultation the strategy and action plan was sent to our advisors at the Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government for comment, no comment or feedback was received.
- 2.5 Once approved, the documents will be published on the website

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan 2024/2029.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	
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Background Papers	MHCLG Homelessness Code of Guidance For Local Authorities

1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- 1.1 The Council is required by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & local Government (MHCLG) to produce a strategy outlining how it will tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.
- 1.2 The strategy at Appendix A outlines the positive impact achieved to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping, thanks to the extensive and effective partnership across both statutory and voluntary partners. It also sets out the needs and trends for homelessness within Fenland to enable the council to respond positively and proactively with partners which include broader statutory public services and third sector organisations to maximise positive outcomes for our clients. This is detailed into an action at Appendix B
- 1.3 Whilst demand for services relating to general needs homelessness is increasing in line with the national picture (8 % in 2024) , largely due to the cost of living crisis, the number of rough sleepers has reduced from 10 to 7 (based on the annual rough sleeper count independently verified in November 2023 & 2024). However, the strategy sets out steps to manage demand and provide a range of options for anyone who contacts our services.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The strategy action plan (informed by the consultation responses) sets out 9 key areas with specific actions to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in Fenland over the next 5 years.
- 2.2 The action plan will be reviewed regularly to ensure progress is made and issues remain current . This will be done through the annual service planning cycle linked to the business plan of the council.

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The strategy set out in Appendix A and Action plan at Appendix B has been co-produced under the leadership of the Portfolio Holder with a large number of partners in the public, private and community and voluntary sector who recognise that homelessness is everyone's business and homelessness is the unacceptable outcome.
- 3.2 The consultation process was undertaken from July 2024 for 10 weeks. There were 15 responses from Fenland residents, people working in Fenland and those in public sector organisations at Appendix D. The council also undertook a separate consultation exercise with those people with lived experience. There were 9 responses undertaken via face to face or telephone interview with 4 key questions. An Interpreter was used where English was not the first or understood language. This was a valuable insight to those clients who had been or who are currently homeless or rough sleeping. The results can be seen at Appendix C with the actions added to the action plan and highlighted yellow.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The Council is obliged to produce a Strategy and has followed all of the appropriate procedural steps to bring this before Cabinet for consideration. The only other alternatives are to not produce a strategy at all which would be contrary to requirements or to produce a different strategy however, the content of the strategy recommended for approval has been arrived at following detailed preparation.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Legal Implications

The Council is obliged to produce a strategy. The recommendations set out in this Report are designed to ensure that the Council meets its obligations in relation to the Strategy and is presented following fulfilment of the required procedural steps such as stakeholder input and wider consultation.

5.2 Financial Implications

Not Applicable

5.3 Equality Implications

An Equality Customer Impact Assessment (ECIA) has been completed and can be seen at Appendix E

6 SCHEDULES

Appendix A - Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy

Appendix B - Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan

Appendix C - Consultation responses – lived experience client group

Appendix D- Consultation responses – general consultation community, partners, etc

Appendix E - Equality Customer Impact Assessment

Fenland District Council

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-29

Draft Version

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Introduction

In Fenland our partnership strives to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping, it's in our core values. We are proud of the achievements we have made together for our clients who are at the heart of all that we do.

The case study below sets the scene for our strategy 2024-2029, one of ambition and creativity despite very significant nationwide challenges.

Our strategy sets out the current picture in Fenland, what we have achieved and how together we plan to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next 5 years.

We are very proud of our partnership of ambitious and committed professionals who help to bring about great outcomes for our clients.

This case study celebrates our collaboration with Ferry Project and Places For People, Homes England and Department for Levelling up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) and the council to enable 6 Modular Homes (Jubilee Place) under the Next Steps Accommodation Programme for which we are extremely grateful. Secondly, and most importantly it became home for M who has kindly agreed to share his story.

Case Study

M was being supported by CGL Outreach Team whilst sleeping rough locally. This was a result of his alcohol addiction and subsequent loss of work. M's alcohol dependency resulted in regular hospital visits, and he also suffers with anxiety and depression. M had full settled status; however, he had no passport or benefits in place. He was also not seeking any support for his alcohol use or mental wellbeing. M only speaks his native language of Polish therefore it was difficult for him to access services.

M was identified as a potential client for Jubilee Place and his progress was discussed regularly at the weekly Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) meetings. The decision was made to accommodate M into one of Ferry Project Emergency Accommodation units (Bunker Bed) which gave the bilingual team of RSI workers time to work with M to keep him safe, address his initial basic needs and work on breaking down the barriers linked to his homelessness. This was valuable time decompressing from living on the streets.

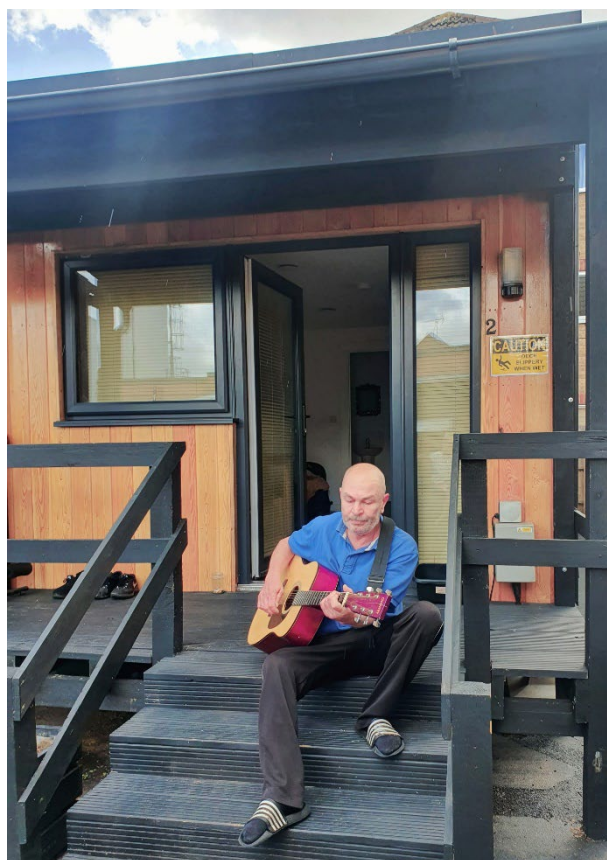
M was supported with: Food, Clothes; GP appointments to gain medication for his anxiety and depression; obtaining his passport to help with possible work opportunities in the future; applied for Universal Credit; accessed English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Courses to help with the language barrier.

A bespoke support plan was also put in place in preparation for his move to Jubilee Place including a budgeting plan, setting up direct debits for service charges, TV licence and council tax, as well as food shopping. M was also referred to CGL drug and alcohol team, for support with his alcohol addiction.

During support sessions and conversations M spoke about his mental wellbeing, M spoke about how he learned to play a guitar at an early age in Poland and used music and singing to cope with his depression. Staff managed to obtain an acoustic guitar for M, that was donated to the Ferry donation hub.

M has expressed keen interest to get back into employment in the future. M is also medicated for his depression and anxiety, he regularly plays his guitar for the other tenants at Jubilee Place in the evenings and weekend barbeques, M is also happy to play for staff and visitors.

M advised his support team that he feels his journey is going well because he is really well supported. He is working on his alcohol dependency, engaging with CGL, mental health support and his GP. M is attending his appointments and has become really engaged. M tells us that he is 'really happy'.



Life changing and life saving

This image not only celebrates all of the hard work that our valuable partners provide in all that they do but offers hope going forward that we can help to prevent homelessness, end rough sleeping and this is the inspiration that this photo of M represents.

Foreword

I am very pleased to introduce the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Review and Action from Fenland District Council.

Over the last few years, we have lived through exceptional circumstances with the pandemic, and I am proud to have given my support to the teams to deliver significant opportunities to our clients during this time. I am incredibly grateful for everyone's efforts and the results of effective collaborative working to prevent homelessness at the earliest possible opportunity and to work towards an end to rough sleeping in Fenland has been truly inspirational.

Our heartfelt thanks to our Housing Options Team and RSI team – namely, FDC, CGL & Ferry Project for their enduring enthusiasm, drive and determination, you have all made a huge difference to people's lives. I would also like to thank all our other partners in the wider homeless system - for example Clarion through enabling the Council to lease 15 properties for temporary accommodation, funding 10 additional homes for rough sleepers through the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme, and their enthusiasm and commitment to embrace the highly successful Housing First partnership in Fenland, CHS group and Longhurst for their housing related support service for young people, Amicus and YMCA for move on accommodation to name just a few.

Whilst we have made significant headway to reaching our goal of zero rough sleepers in Fenland, we face significant challenges in homelessness moving forward, with the cost of living crisis and those rough sleepers without recourse to public funds or those who are not yet ready to engage.

We are determined to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in Fenland through energy and vision in partnership with our teams.



Councillor Sam Hoy
Portfolio Holder for Housing

Purpose and summary of the strategy

The council has worked together with partners to develop this strategy and action plan.

Homelessness doesn't just mean not having somewhere to live, but a range of issues that contribute to it such as health and mental health, support needs, relationships and life choices, families, looking for a better life within Fenland from abroad and more recently individual circumstances linked employment and affordability of the cost of living.

The council works with the following partners to tackle rough sleeping and homelessness: Amicus Housing Trust, Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Police, Citizens Advice Rural Cambridgeshire, CGL, Clarion Housing, Ferry Project, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust, P3, Probation Service, Rosmini Centre, Salvation Army, YMCA Trinity, Cornerstone, Longhurst Group, CHS Group and My Space.

“Homelessness is everyone’s responsibility”

Our aim is to prevent homelessness wherever possible. We can only achieve this by working collaboratively and successfully accessing central government funding to provide resources to provide a range of options for our clients.

Our strategy is broken down into 6 segments:

1. Vision, definition of homelessness and values
2. Homelessness and rough sleeping governance. This includes an overview of the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) partnership
3. Strategic review and current context
4. Key challenges arising from the review
5. Core aims and commitments within the strategy
6. Delivery and monitoring

Vision, definition of homelessness and values

Our Vision

Our vision as a partnership is to prevent homelessness and eliminate rough sleeping as soon as possible.

Everyone has a right to a home and that is what we are striving to achieve together.

Definition of homelessness

The council and its partners are committed to working together to end rough sleeping in Fenland. We summarise our definition of homelessness as where someone:

- Has no accommodation available to them in the UK or abroad
- Has no legal right to occupy the accommodation
- Lives in a split household due to availability of accommodation for whole households
- Is where it is unreasonable to continue to occupy accommodation
- Is experiencing violence from any person
- Is unable to secure entry to their home
- Lives in a moveable structure but has no place to put it

It is the aim and ambition of this strategy to:

- Ensure no one sleeps rough or lives in places which are not designed as a home, including tents, vehicles, squats or non-residential buildings.
- Anyone staying in temporary accommodation has a Personalised Housing Plan (PHP) identifying next steps, this also includes detail about support.
- Everyone who is threatened with homelessness (56 days or sooner) is provided with the advice, assistance and support needed to prevent homelessness where possible.
- For those leaving prison and survivors of domestic abuse, care leavers and Armed Forces Veterans to work together with partners to ensure a smooth transition and avoid homelessness wherever possible

Our Values

Our rough Sleeping partnership agreed the following values;

- **Partnership** – we work better together and achieve better outcomes for our clients with our unique and specialist skills, preventing homelessness where possible. A “one team” culture
- **Energy** – We bring our energy to get things done and motivate each other
- **Ambition** - We are forward thinking and creative to find solutions
- **Commitment** – we are bound by our partnership to work towards ending homelessness together and putting our clients at the centre of what we do

Homelessness and rough sleeping governance and an overview of the RSI (Rough Sleeping Initiative) partnership

About the RSI partnership

The RSI partnership was formed in 2019 following investment from central government to help alleviate rough sleeping. The partnership has since broadened and includes links to multiple charities and statutory organisations including the council's Housing Options team. This was particularly important in 2020 with the pandemic, we already had the partnership infrastructure to respond proactively and so successfully for our clients.

Members of the RSI include:

- Amicus Trust
- Clarion Housing
- Cambridgeshire Constabulary
- Cambridgeshire County Council - Housing First
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Foundation Trust (CPFT)
- Change Grow Live (CLG) Outreach and Tenancy Sustainment & CGL Drug and Alcohol Services
- Ferry Project
- Fenland District Council - Housing Options Team, Private Sector Housing team, Accountancy team
- Housing First (Cambridgeshire County Council)
- Housing Options team (FDC)
- Rosmini Centre
- Salvation Army

Sub Regional Homelessness Strategy Group

Reporting to the Cambridgeshire Regional Housing Board, this partnership across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and West Suffolk meet monthly to work collaboratively on cross border issues. Their aims and objectives are to:

- Share good practice
- Explore opportunities for joint working across the sub-region. Developing opportunities for improving existing services and providing
- Jointly engage with other services to improve working practices affecting homelessness and the prevention of homelessness
- Monitor and provide input into linked groups and action plans i.e. the sub-regional housing priorities

The group also links with other statutory partners joint working protocols, including Criminal Justice and Housing protocol, Care leavers protocol, 16 & 17 year olds protocol, Mental Health, Housing and Substance Misuse protocol.

Cambridgeshire Homelessness Operational Group

The Cambridgeshire Homelessness Operational Group are responsible for taking forward operational tasks across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The group meets quarterly to ensure cohesive approach to recording data and improving effective ways of working to benefit our customers. There are links here to Home-Link, the county wide procured Choice Based lettings Scheme.

The Housing Board – Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Suffolk

The Housing Board is a senior officer group of local authorities, housing providers and partner agencies working collaboratively strategically and operationally. Since 2002 the Housing Board has worked collaboratively with partners to identify issues, gather data, explore solutions and implement change, sharing learning and experience across our housing market area around the Board's priorities.

Priorities for the board

Housing is key to everyone's health, well being and employment opportunities. Good quality housing is also vital for a thriving local economy. Across Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire, Peterborough, South Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk, the Housing Board works with partners to share learning and experience to:

- Deliver new homes and communities to support economic success
- Ensure homes and services support better health and well being
- Improve standards in existing homes and encourage best use of all homes
- Identify and meet housing need, extend housing choice and tackle homelessness
- Understand housing costs and the cost of living crisis in our area, and tackle the impact of both
- Support housing with a low impact on the environment, which is energy efficient and which limits our carbon footprint.

From 2022, these are the Housing Board's six priorities, all of which will only be achieved by working closely with our partners. Many issues are very local and are best addressed by district councils, housing partners and communities themselves – but some are shared across a wider area and this is where collaboration can really help. Some partners have a role and a business plan which covers a broad area and cuts across district boundaries.

More information on the board is available at: [Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Insight – Housing & Planning – Housing priorities \(cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk\)](https://www.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk)

Fenland Supported Housing Forum

The Fenland Supported Housing Forum was established by Cambridge Housing Society (CHS Group) to pull together the organisations in Fenland who are providing housing support for people who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness, with the aim of working together to provide a more comprehensive, collaborate service. The terms of reference will identify the aims of the Fenland provider forum and record the basis on which the organisations will work together.

Membership

The organisations represented in the forum are:

- Fenland District Council
- CHS Group
- Longhurst Group
- Ferry Project
- YMCA
- Amicus Trust
- My Space Housing Solutions

Purpose

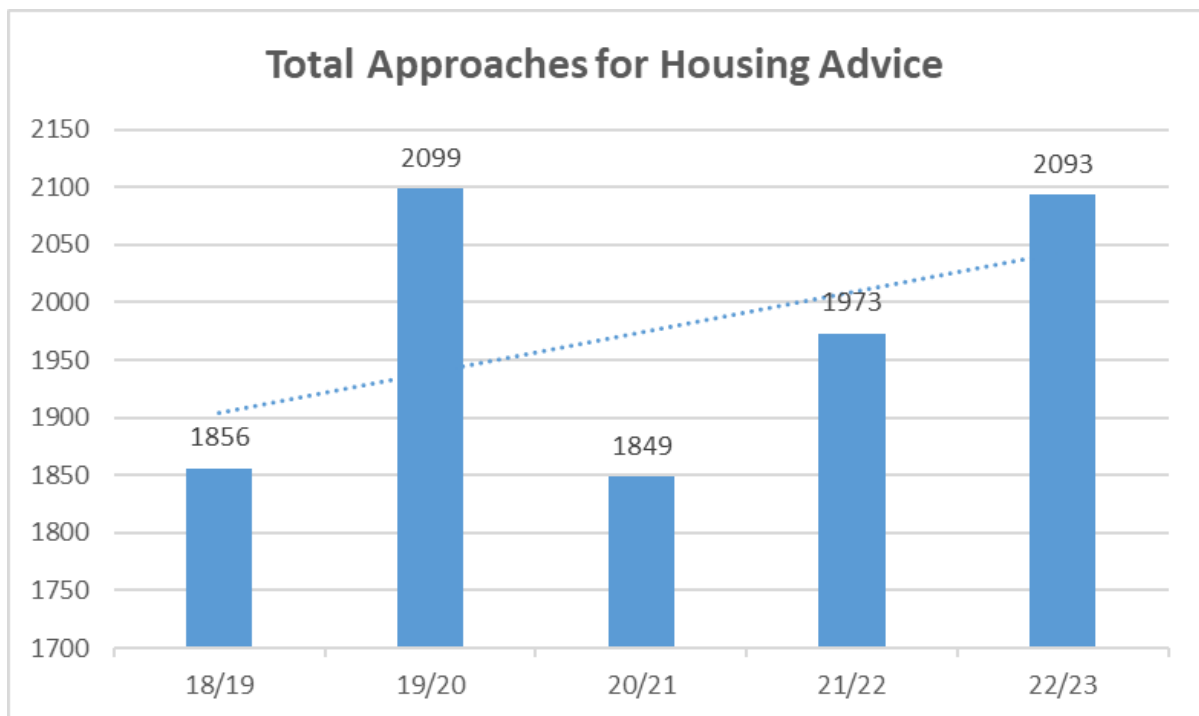
- Increase communication between members and other organisations to ensure service is delivered in the best interest of those using it
- Develop/ improve pathways both internal and external to ensure a better transition to those using the services
- Identify and work with other organisations (local authorities, health and voluntary organisations) to improve the resources / support available
- Work in partnership to support pathways for individuals maintaining accommodation to reduce the cycle of homelessness
- Identify any potential risk or issues that could impact the current services
- Identify any gaps in provision and work together to explore ways of addressing these
- Develop / Share best practice and resources to ensure a more cohesive approach
- Support a whole system approach to tackling homelessness

Strategic review and current context

Our homelessness and rough sleeper service has adapted to significant change over the past few years following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the pandemic and welfare reforms.

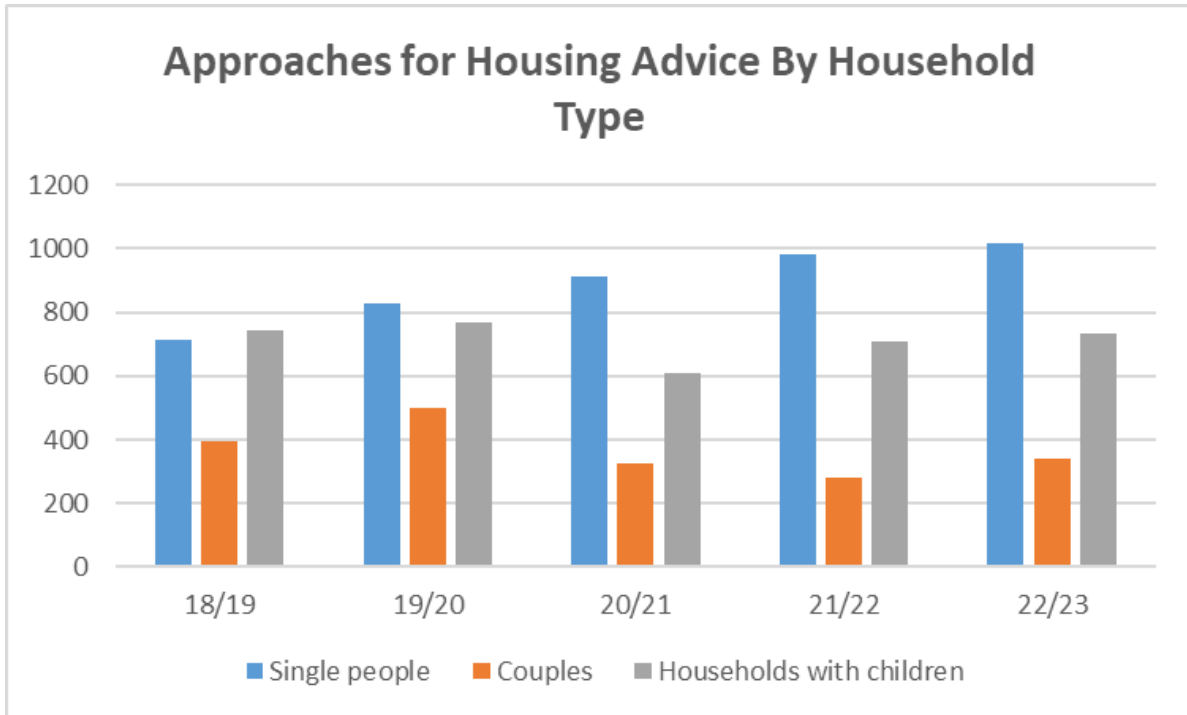
The number of approaches for housing advice has increased significantly since 2021/22 to 2022/23 as shown in the charts below.

The Local Context

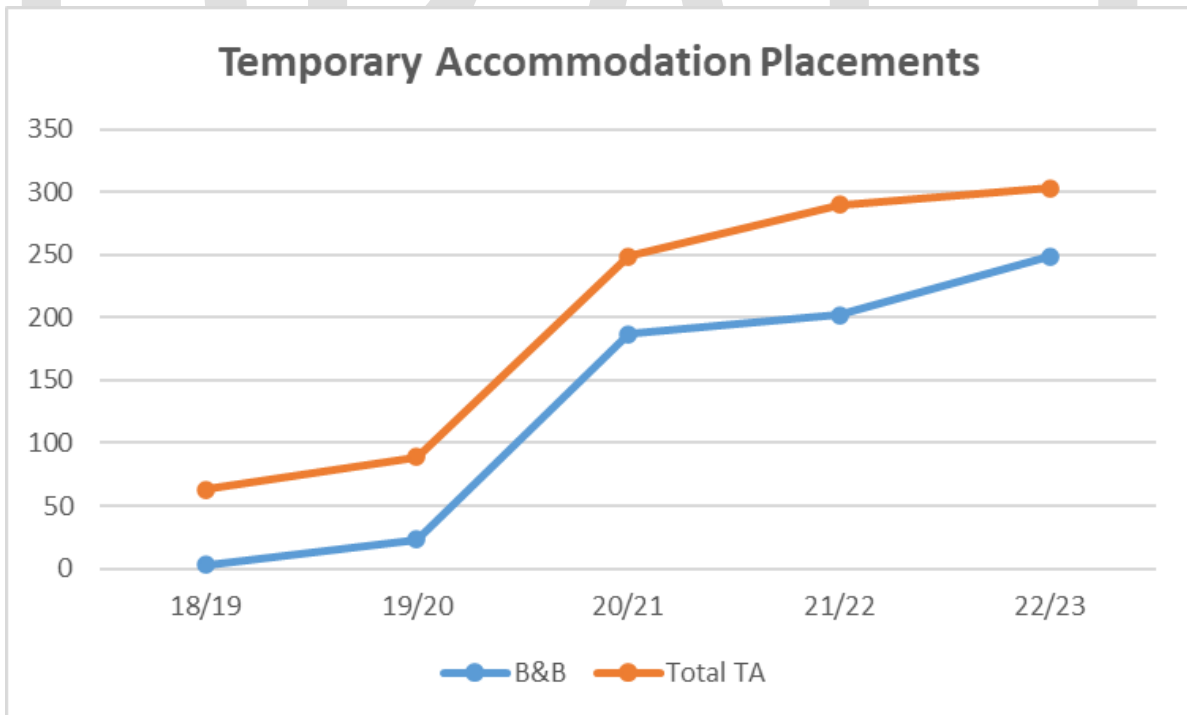


The graph above shows total number of approaches for housing advice have increased significantly by 12.77% since 2018 and particularly since the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic there has been an increase in approaches for housing advice from households with a family commitment by 20.49%.

This has had a significant impact on demand for emergency interim accommodation leading to more households not only requiring B&B as emergency interim accommodation but staying there longer than we would like before moving into other types of interim accommodation or permanent rehousing.



Data shown in chart: TBC



Data shown in Temporary Accommodation Placements chart: TBC

Main reasons for loss of settled accommodation

The reasons for homelessness are largely similar to recent years, however, increased in volume of presentations. In particular, most approaches coming from family no longer willing to accommodate up from 360 cases in 21/22 to 371 in 22/23.

All other areas are increased, including relationships ending (non-violent), ending of private rented accommodation up from 253 in 21/22 to 322 in 22/23 possibly due to landlords leaving the market, and a worrying increase in domestic abuse up from 106 in 21/22 to 148 in 22/23.

The only area to decrease slightly was ending of private rented tenancies (not assured shorthold tenancies). A possible reason for this was the legacy of restrictions on ending tenancies during Covid.

Table depicting main reasons for loss of settled accommodation

Reason	Year 2022/23	Year 2021/22	Year 2020/21
Family no longer willing to accommodate	371	360	350
Relationship with partner ended (non-violent)	281	275	234
End of private rented tenancy – assured shorthold tenancy	322	253	145
Domestic abuse – victim	148	106	132
End of private rented tenancy - not assured shorthold tenancy	136	148	75

Homeless prevention

The Council's Housing Options Team successfully prevented 275 households from becoming homeless in 22/23.

We successfully rehoused 98 households into the private rented sector in 22/23. The Council offers financial incentives to private sector landlords by way of deposits, enhanced deposits or rent in advance. In an ever-competitive market, it is important to adapt our services to meet the ever-changing climate.

The council provide funding to Cambridgeshire Rural CAB to provide advice and guidance to all residents of Fenland. Their expertise in debt advice and financial matters has made a very positive impact on individuals circumstances enabling them to maximise their income by carefully working through financial statements and negotiations with lenders.

The council is engaging in an Early Help Hub pilot. The council is receiving funding from the North Place Partnership Board to provide the triage administrative function for an Early Help Hub across the public sector system and Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS). The aspiration is to receive early up stream notifications of households and individuals in need who are either out of work or off work sick. Experience from a similar approach in South Norfolk shows how with a much broader range of partners across the public and VCS system, housing insecurity issues will become known to the Council earlier for example, a sofa surfer engaging with the GP, to enable support to be provided before that person loses accommodation and rough sleeps.

The Council's Private Sector Housing Team assist by ensuring properties are safe for clients to occupy before deposits or rent incentives are paid. The team also offer support and guidance to landlords and agents who require it and conduct a mandatory licencing scheme for house of multiple occupation (HMO).

Houses of Multiple Occupation

A House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) is a property rented out by at least 3 people who are not from 1 'household' (e.g a family) but share facilities like the bathroom and kitchen.

Anyone who owns or manages a HMO (including landlords and letting agents) in the Fenland district **must** have a licence from us if their property is occupied by 5 or more people, occupants form 2 or more households (a household are members of the same family living together) and occupants share 'basic amenities' (e.g kitchen, bathroom)

There is significant demand for well-managed, well maintained and safe HMO's in Fenland, particularly for those under 35 years of age where the Local Housing Allowance will often only cover the rent of a room in a shared house (HMO) as opposed to a one bedroom flat.

The council work closely in partnership with Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) who manage the Housing Benefit System on the Council's behalf. ARP also manage a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) fund, that has provided deposits, paid rent arrears, the total DHP spend in 2022/23 was £106,032.

Domestic abuse

The Housing Options team have seen an increase in cases over the past two years, (148 cases in 22/23). We work closely with the IDVAS (Independent domestic abuse advisors) via Cambridgeshire County Council along with specialist support organisations.

The Council is currently undertaking a Domestic Abuse Housing Accreditation (DAHA). This involves evidencing all of our work across the council relating to our response to domestic abuse and being externally assessed that we adequately meet the criteria. We have engaged with survivors with lived experience to help shape our procedures to benefit the needs of future clients through this process. We expect the assessment to be undertaken during 2025.

Case Study

B approached the Housing Options team for help. She was receiving assistance from Social Care who were involved with her young son following concerns about safety in the home.

B was being abused both physically and emotionally by her ex-husband, the abuse also involved stalking and being tracked by him.

B Had a tenancy outside of Fenland, it was in her name, the advice from the social worker was for B to move to another area.

The Housing Options team worked closely with B's Social Worker, a temporary move was arranged via extended family who could also provide support. the extended family were the temporary legal guardian of B's son.

The Housing Options team worked collaboratively with both B and her social worker, IDVA (independent Domestic Violence Advisor) and extended family to find a safe alternative property for B to live with her son independently.

Via the Homelessness route, B successfully bid for a new home via Home-Link and has settled safely with her son.

The Housing register: people waiting for rehousing

Year	People waiting for rehousing
2019/20	1066
2020/21	1359
2021/22	1435
2022/23	1744

For Clarion lets, in 2021/22 the number of people waiting was 315. In 2022/23 it was 247.

It is clear from the statistics that there is growing demand for social housing in Fenland.

The number of relets have decreased between 21/22 and 22/23. This has been due to an increase in checks and balances with Registered Providers (RP) tenants in response to the tragic circumstances around the death of Awaab Ishaks due to damp and mould impacts. This led in one RP circumstances an increase of repairs by one third from the previous year. Prioritising action in this area led to demands on maintenance teams and the ability to quickly do work on voids to make them available to relet. This caused a significant reduction in relets (by 115 from the previous year). This reduction has resulted in a silting up of temporary accommodation.

Void work timescales are now being addressed which will help assist moving homeless families into settled accommodation alongside an increase in new provision. In March 2024 there was an identified pipeline of circa 900 new affordable rented homes an additional 400 affordable ownership products and a further 536 affordable homes in negotiations. This pipeline is seen as essential in speeding the flow of presentation for homelessness.

Homes for Ukraine

The council has been operating a Homes for Ukraine Scheme since February 2022. Currently there are around 100 guests living with hosts in Fenland. The council has

worked hard to protect and support both hosts and guests through safety checks, welfare checks and administration of the scheme as a whole.

The focus of Phase 2 was to undertake a survey to ascertain the move on requirements of the current guests and support them with partners into alternative settled homes where this is requested. Our aim is to prevent homelessness wherever possible.

As of March 2024, 9 families have become homeless due to being asked to leave by hosts, or families (under the Family scheme).

The costs of the scheme including temporary accommodation and funding for deposits is funded via Central Government. The same services are offered to all clients across our service.

Dispersal Accommodation for Asylum Seekers

As part of a national scheme, the Home Office are procuring temporary accommodation for asylum seekers whilst they wait for the outcome of their claims to remain in the UK. All council areas are part of the scheme and to enable the smooth running of the scheme within Fenland and to help maintain cohesion, the council has requested that areas such as Wisbech and the surrounding villages are not selected for this initiative.

Reducing the use of B&B and emergency accommodation

The council has a portfolio of temporary accommodation to provide emergency homes to our homeless clients.

We have a mix of accommodation from a hostel to a number of self-contained leased properties from our partners at Clarion Housing.

Demand for our service and therefore accommodation is increasing. The council accommodates individuals and families initially in bed and breakfast accommodation. We realise that this is both short term emergency accommodation and not suitable for families over a prolonged period, we took the decision to lease additional properties from Clarion Housing and to also look for additional units, taking a total to 56 by August 31st 2024.

To help get to 56 the council has successfully bid to central government under the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF). 33 properties have been purchased on the open market, 8 to provide temporary homes to rehouse Ukraine families, 5 for Afghan families and 20 for general needs. Once clients have moved on and there is no more demand for Ukrainian and Afghan families, these properties will revert to general needs use, and therefore significantly reducing bed and breakfast accommodation use.

Feasibility to provide better and more cost-effective solutions for single households and couples needing emergency interim accommodation is underway.

Health and wellbeing

Homelessness and rough sleeping can seriously impact on your health and wellbeing. According to the charity Crisis, the average life expectancy of a man is 47 and 43 years for women. This is compared to an average of 77 years in the general population with men living to around 74 years and women to 80 years. Life is cut short by almost 50%.

Historical rough sleeping

Many of our rough sleepers both currently and historically are migrants, mostly from Lithuania. Fenland has attracted migrant workers to the district since 2003/04, often coming to Fenland to take up agricultural work in the fields and also food processing in factories. The majority of Fenland's rough sleepers are male and aged between 25 and 65, a significant number being foreign nationals from Eastern Europe, Lithuania, Latvia and Bulgaria.

Frequently, accommodation (HMO's) is provided with work and when work dries up or workers are no longer needed this can result in homelessness and rough sleeping.

The council along with the Police established Operation Pheasant in 2012, a project to tackle human trafficking and exploitation and modern-day slavery, linked to the private rented sector in the town of Wisbech. The council's Private Sector Housing Team link in with Rough Sleeping and Housing Options Team, this approach ensures sharing of relevant intelligence and protects our clients.

The partnership has been cited nationally as best practice and has won three national awards.

Operation Luscombe

The Police in partnership with the council, launched Operation Luscombe in September 2022. The purpose of the initiative is to target street drinkers and people begging in Wisbech. There is cross over with the council's RSI project and the infrastructure we have created accommodated this new initiative.

The project involves a partnership response to street drinking and begging, with a suite of actions, but most importantly, linking individuals into the Hub and providing an opportunity to tackle some of the broader issues including housing, health, mental health and drug and alcohol advice. There are consequences for non-engagement including fines and Community Orders.

The persons referred are predominantly those engaged in anti-social street drinking and/or begging. They include a mixture of homeless persons and those that have their own accommodation.

The different stages are:

- Green – An informal warning and an invitation to attend the safeguarding hub

- Amber – A community protection warning (With suggested conditions) with an invitation to the safeguarding hub
- Red – A community protection notice (With enforceable conditions) with an invitation to the safeguarding hub
- Blue – Prosecution for breaching the CPN and an invitation to the hub

There are 65 persons on the Operation Luscombe cohort, the table below shows the breakdown as of 05.02.24:

Stage	Current Number	Total Number of hub appointments	Attended Hub	% Attended Hub
Blue	4	4	3	75%
Red	1	5	3	60%
Amber	7	12	4	33%
Green	53	65	9	14%
Totals	65	86	19	22%

The Hub

The Hub meets every second Monday at the Ferry Project. It is attended by the following partners:

- Ferry Project
- Housing first
- Fenland District Council (Homeless Outreach / community safety team)
- CPFT Mental health nurses (FALT team)
- CGL – Eastern European Outreach
- CGL – Drug and Alcohol misuse specialists
- Department of Work and Pensions enhanced support team.
- Counting Every Adult Team

Hub attendance by those who are referred sits at 22.89%. However, where safeguarding issues have been identified, the partnership will look to take action whether or not the referred individual attends – for example: home visits, appointments being made.

Enforcement

The Police have prosecuted four persons under the Luscombe process. A summary:

- One female persistent beggar was prosecuted for breaching a 'Red Ticket'. She was fined and issued with a Criminal Behaviour Order to curtail her begging (This female was unknown to services locally, she was given support and we also uncovered domestic abuse concerns that were dealt with.)

- One male persistent beggar was prosecuted for breaching a 'Red Ticket', he was fined and we also supported the Local Authority with evidence gather to secure a ASB injunction
- One female persistent beggar was prosecuted for breaching a 'Red Ticket', she was fined (£1000), we applied for a Criminal Behaviour Order but before this was issued she was imprisoned for three years for an unrelated matter
- One male drinker was fined after breaching the PSPO and becoming aggressive towards police when challenged. He has not been found drinking since and has been engaging with CGL

Successes

There are many individual success stories where we have worked together to prevent offending. A male on the cohort has been supported out of a shed in the town centre where he had lived for over a year. He engaged with services and is no longer sleeping rough.

Another recent proactive effort includes a homeless male with mental health concerns. He is very untrusting of services, and we have worked together to build his trust. The Ferry project have provided a wash kit and mental health have opened up their offices to allow the male to wash there. We are slowly making progress and he is starting to engage – hopefully in an effort to prevent future offending.

Rough Sleeper Initiative 5 (RSI5)

The Council has always been proactive in seeking additional resources to enable specialist services to be established in Fenland.

In 2022, the council was successful in a £1.186m fund from Department for Levelling up, Housing & Communities over 3 years called Rough Sleeper Initiative 5. In partnership with Change Grow Live (CGL) and Ferry Project, the fund provides support workers, tenancy sustainment officers, a Hub, outreach workers and a coordinator to provide a holistic service to anyone at risk of rough sleeping or actually rough sleeping.

The Council formed and led a multi-agency group who meet weekly to carry out professional case reviews and next steps through individual pathways. The Council has supported key partners to increase supported pathways for our clients. This has included:

- 6 new units of modular accommodation at Jubilee Place
- 9 new units of emergency accommodation at Destiny Haven,
- 10 new purchase and repair units of affordable accommodation through Clarion investment which is match funded with the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP funding from DLUHC) with tenancy and support by the Ferry Project.
- 8 units providing homes for 63 individuals with supported units have been delivered by Amicus Trust, shared accommodation with support as part of the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP funding from DLUHC).

We have a partnership with YMCA and Cornerstone who have repurposed a 9-bedroom hostel owned by the council for homeless people requiring accommodation with low level support needs.

Ending rough sleeping and a housing-led approach

The council has a duty to conduct an annual rough sleeping count (usually in November). The count process is overseen by Homeless-Link and includes a verifier and an independent volunteer to ensure that the process and outcomes of the count are accurate.

The table below shows the Rough Sleeper official street count by year.

Year	Number of Rough Sleepers
2016	7
2017	9
2018	23
2019	11
2020	8
2021	9
2022	14
2023	10
2024	7

No recourse to public funds (Restricted Eligibility)

To date, the Council currently has 8 rough sleepers (as at 12.01.24). Historically and within the past year there has been up to 5 clients who have no recourse to public funds, meaning that they are not entitled to claim benefits to assist with their housing options without achieving Settled Status. These clients are effectively caught in a situation of rough sleeping being their only option. Currently (April 2024) there are no rough sleepers without recourse to public funds. This is due to effective joint working with our outreach team and partnership with Home Office.

The Council has sought support from Home Office for these clients and has also promoted the Home Office voluntary returns scheme (repatriation). For those clients wishing to return home who have Pre-Settled Status (and not eligible for the Home Office scheme) the council has introduced its own scheme and 2 individuals have successfully returned to their home land.

From 2022-2023 we supported 17 clients who had Restricted Eligibility (formerly known as no recourse to public funds):

- 12 were supported with either;
 - Reconnections to family or friends in the UK,
 - found private rented accommodation or supported in to work and accommodation.
 - 5 have become eligible and moved on via supported living routes or to alternative outcomes.

- As at January 2024 our rough sleeper cohort are all eligible for public funds which demonstrates a shift in the demographics among our rough sleeper population.

As of March 2024 we have no clients with Restricted eligibility.

FDC Voluntary Returns Scheme

Our experience is that there is a reluctance of many rough sleeping migrants to return home without money to enable their reintegration, in their words 'shameful' to return home without showing their time in the UK has been successful.

The scheme is designed for those who are rough sleeping and with pre or settled status (no status cases are progressed via Home Office).

The initiative effectively facilitates a sustainable return home. The cost of 3k is funded via the RSI 5 funding bid, and from that amount, costs for transport, passport replacement, bed and breakfast for a few days, other essentials is deducted. The remaining amount is sent to the client via money card once they have landed in their home country.

The scheme has been successful so far with two returns home, as shown by case studies in the next section.

Case Study: FDC's Enhanced Voluntary Repatriation Scheme

RS is a 30-year-old male from Lithuania. He became a client in March 2022. RS has been found sleeping rough in various places around town centre. He became homeless due to relationship breakdown with people who he was living with in an HMO in Wisbech. RS was placed in a hotel under Protect and Vaccinate during the pandemic.

RS had no Recourse to Public Funds; he had not applied for Settled Status. His passport has been held by Police while investigation and court proceedings were being carried out. All these factors had a huge impact on ways he could be supported out of homelessness.

RS was assessed and support plan was created. We informed the client that once he has his passport back our next step would be to apply for Settled Status and then either Universal Credit application would be completed, or he would be supported with job search. RS engaged well with support and kept CGL updated on his court case. RS shared homeless support details with his attorney who then updated the support worker. In one of the support sessions RS expressed willingness to go back to Lithuania.

RS met all criteria for repatriation under the Enhanced Voluntary Repatriation Scheme. When RS's court case was over and he received his passport back, CGL contacted the Probation Officer to confirm that RS can travel. CGL met with RS and we went through his travel options.

RS travelled back to Lithuania on 13th July 2022 where he was greeted by his parents. RS contacted CGL when landed to confirm that he is safe. The rest of money were transferred and CGL received a text message from RS:

“Hi I just wanna say something. I see cash on my bankcard and thank you so much for all help this time. I wish the best for you in all life 😊 Thank you again. Have a good weekend. R”

Responding to rough sleepers

We undertook an exercise with DLUHC to establish our response times, from first hearing intelligence about a rough sleeper to making face to face contact with them.

We established data between April 2022 to February 2023, our Outreach team attend within a maximum period of 48 hours. Most sites however are attended on the day of or the following day of the report depending on the time it comes in. This approach has been integral in early engagement and successful outcomes. If clients are present at the sleep site during the time of the visit, they are booked in for an assessment either the same day or the following day.

Observing the information over these timescales with time frames in mind, the breakdown is as follows:

We worked with 22 Clients between 1-100 days.

We worked with 17 Clients between 100-325 days.

This is our core group of rough sleepers where outcomes have been limited for them. As of Feb 23 we were working with 8 rough sleepers, some of whom have been ongoing throughout this timeframe.

Long term rough sleeper clients

Some of the reasons include:

- restricted eligibility which prevented their move on
- managing their alcohol use which prevented work outcomes.
- clients who have been previously evicted from accommodation or were non engaging due to drug/alcohol misuse.

DLUHC were interested to see that we had:

- “A relatively low number of new rough sleepers in the year”
- “A fairly even split between those who were supported relatively promptly into accommodation and those who have endured on the street.”
- “The main ‘gap’ being the length of time between verification and true engagement.”

This is difficult for the council to overcome as everyone will have their own challenges and some individuals take longer than others to want help.

Case Study: CGL

D is a 30 years old Polish male who was supported out of homelessness by CGL.

CGL received a report of a rough sleeper in December 2022. The report came from the Neighbourhood Policing Team as a part of an ongoing project Op Luscombe.

D was verified and assessed by CGL. During the assessment D disclosed that he does not have valid ID which made it impossible for him to access work. D had been invited to attend Op Luscombe where CGL were waiting for him with a mobile phone however D did not attend.

During this time, CGL adopted a multi- organisation approach, conducting numerous outreaches with colleagues from mental health team, DWP team and Neighbourhood Policing Team. D did not engage with any of these agencies. Despite this outreach continually visited his site to offer support.

A breakthrough in his engagement happened when D was met by CGL at the Salvation Army for food. CGL and D had a long and open conversation around support that is available and discussed his housing options. Following this D finally agreed to accept support.

He was provided with a mobile as well as support with booking an appointment with the Polish embassy for a new passport.

D was also supported with a Universal Credit application. DWP Enhanced Support service supported this application and made sure that the lack of ID would not be a barrier. D provided all documents, and the benefit application was successful. Following this intense period of support, CGL were able to complete and submit a referral to Amicus. D successfully moved in to Amicus 29.09.23 where he has settled well and is looking forward to the future.

RSI figures (April 2023 – January 2024)

The council worked with 75 clients in total. Of those 12 were placed in temporary accommodation and 15 were placed in off the street accommodation at the Ferry Project.

Of the 75 clients supported, 38 moved on successfully, 20 clients continue to be supported with their homelessness whilst the remaining 17 clients had an alternative outcome such as prison, hospital, or lost contact with support services.

This information is explained further in the tables below.

	EU	UK	Non-EU
Positive move on	24	14	0
Outcome ongoing	8	12	0
Other outcome	6	11	0

	EU	UK	Non-EU
Supported living	11	8	0
Modular home	1	0	0
Private rented	1	0	0
Family or friends	7	2	0
Reconnected	2	1	0
Work and accommodation	1	0	0
RSAP	1	0	0
Housing First	0	3	0

Of the total number of EU Nationals/Non-EU (38), the breakdown of eligibility is:

- 28 EU Nationals eligible
- 14 EU Nationals with restricted eligibility
- 1 unknown eligibility

[insert charts]

Rehousing options for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping

The Council and partners including Amicus, Clarion, Ferry Project, Places for People applied for funding to provide accommodation options. This included:

- 39 rooms across 7 sites with Amicus Trust under next Steps Accommodation Programme.
- 6 Modular Homes via Rough Sleeper Accommodation programme with Ferry Project and Places for people.
- 10 dispersed units of accommodation and support via Clarion Housing & Ferry project – Next Steps Accommodation programme
- 7 units via Housing First in partnership with Clarion and Longhurst

Ferry Project have replaced the night shelter provision with 9 units of self-contained accommodation.



Case Study: Ferry Project emergency accommodation – Destiny Haven

F is a male in his forties and became known to services via reports from the Public of a rough sleeper in the Fenland area.

Fenland District Council's Housing options team sent out an outreach team to urgently investigate and verify the report. The outreach team quickly located this gentleman and were able to gather an understanding of his circumstances.

F had become homeless following on from a relationship breakdown. Initially he had been able to stay in a garage adjoining his ex -mother in laws house. However, this arrangement had come to an end rendering him street homeless. F had worked in skilled positions prior to the breakup and had enjoyed success.

The impact of the separation had weighed heavily on him emotionally and had caused feelings of worthlessness leading to suicidal intent. During the periods of low mood, F had visited Beachy Head and been on railway tracks contemplating ending his life.

Through a quick analysis and appraisal, the Council's Housing Options team were able to arrange a same day assessment at The Ferry Project's Housing hub.

F was assessed by the Ferry Project team, who liaised with FDC to provide immediate accommodation for that evening and strategized longer-term outcomes around a bespoke plan tailored to F's needs.

F met with the RSI funded clinical health nurse to meet his most immediate emotional health needs. The plan put together to support F included his own assessment of need and gave him assurance of what support services would be able to provide.

F was then brought into Destiny Haven accommodation at the Ferry project in order that the delivery package from the plan could kick in.

F was supported with transferring his GP locally to Wisbech and the onsite clinic made available. Access to medication and therapeutic interventions were able to follow hand in hand. To underpin his emotional wellbeing, regular access to the Rough Sleeper team was maintained and weekly appointments set up for F's attendance scheduled in.

F also enrolled on to a wellbeing course available to residents at the Ferry Project. At a time of his choosing, F started to help with voluntary projects around the Ferry site through the internal volunteering programme which he identified as giving him purpose and an ability to use his time meaningfully. F recognised that he wanted to 'give back', as a way of repaying the help that he was receiving and was pivotal towards building up confidence and self-esteem.

F was supported with access to benefits, and claims. The portfolio of services enabled F to gain self-confidence, clarity and certainty about his future and the possibilities and opportunities that could hold.

Over a period of time through contacts, observations and key works it became evident that both staff and F were noticing a positive change, and he became ready for the next step of his journey. F was then successfully placed into semi-independent accommodation closer to his children allowing him to rebuild their relationship.

By his own recognition F was lost and struggling to know what to do prior to the wrap round support that he was now able to access through FDC and other partner agencies. The interventions prevented potential hospital admissions, Police call outs in addition to a worst-case scenario of end of life.

F continues to live currently in Semi Independent accommodation and relies less on support as he continues his journey into total independence and a home of his own. He states he is looking forward to a fulfilling life and returning to paid employment, in addition to meeting other goals and aspirations that he is setting himself.

Housing First

Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), successfully bid for funding from DLUHC under RSI 5 for Housing First provision in Fenland along with Housing Related Support funding from Cambridgeshire County Council. Housing First is intensive 1 on 1 support with clients who have very high support needs. To date there are 7 units under this highly successful programme, working in conjunction with Clarion and CCC Housing First team. Often Housing First clients are either rough sleepers or those at risk of losing their home and sleeping rough and have multiple disadvantages, meaning that traditional housing options are not suitable to enable clients to thrive.

Case Study: Housing First

CC has a long history of poor mental health, having been sectioned several times under section 3 of the Mental Health Act. CC has a diagnosis of schizo-affective disorder with depression and has been taking prescribed medication for a long time to help her to cope with this. Following a relationship breakdown CC mental health deteriorated and became unwell and set fire to her property. Following this she had a period of sleeping in her car before being placed in temporary accommodation.

A referral to Housing First was made and support was given to CC at this stage whilst in temporary accommodation. CC was supported to engage with Fenland District Council Housing Options Team and work towards making a homeless application and eventually being offered move on accommodation. Housing First Navigators were building a relationship and support included taking her out for coffee, food shopping, and supporting her to plan ahead; think about where she would like to live. Housing First also supported the work being done by the Fenland Adult Locality Team around confidence and self-esteem.

Clarion Housing Association accepted CC as a potential tenant, despite her having a historical arson offence. Housing First were able to work with CC to explain that this incident was related to her worsening mental health and with the support in place, this should no longer be a concern. After a period in temporary accommodation, CC was offered a tenancy in a sheltered scheme. Housing First supported CC by purchasing the basics required in a home such as Carpets, fridge, freezer, lounge furniture, a vacuum cleaner and microwave, as well as other smaller items. Support was given to set up direct debits for household bills and changes to her benefit claims to Universal Credit, enabling her to access financial support for her rent. Support continues with phone or face to face contact at least twice a week.

CC has successfully moved into her own tenancy and is managing well. CC mental health has been relatively stable, with the FALT team also reporting positive changes. CC is in a settled environment that she enjoys. CC has started to think about possible charity work locally as well as interest in art therapy with the FALT team. CC has recently received new reading glasses and is also considering joining the library.

Changing Futures

At the end of 2020, the government invited expressions of interest from areas who wanted to take a new approach to tackling multiple disadvantage.

Multiple disadvantage is where people experience at least 3 of the following 5 situations are said to be multiply disadvantaged:

- Homelessness
- Substance misuse
- Mental health
- Domestic Abuse
- Criminal justice

A Cambridgeshire and Peterborough multi agency collaboration applied and were one of 21 areas shortlisted. We submitted a full bid focused on extending and enhancing the approach taken by Counting Every Adult across more organisations in our area, so we can work together more effectively as a system to help people make their way out of multiple disadvantage.

It seemed that different organisations might easily conflict, not take account of the effect of the person having more than one “issue” and might not be adequately trauma informed. In other words, each organisation aims to help people; but by taking issues “one at a time” often end up not tailoring the actions to that individual person. Like fitting a square peg into a round hole. It’s not surprising that some people fall through the gaps, or give up, and end up encountering more disadvantage than they started with.

Our bid focused on learning from the past and building on that learning in the future; evolving our systems to improve outcomes for people, and reducing the number of people who fall into multiple disadvantage in the first place. A key feature of this work is to co-produce better systems by people with lived experience being involved in every aspect of the work, at all levels.

We submitted our bid but unfortunately were not successful. However with support from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Public Service Board (CPSB) local partners have continued without government funding. Based on the evidence, energy and enthusiasm, leaders agreed to fund a “scaled back” Changing Futures Cambridgeshire & Peterborough programme.

There are four visions for the work:

- Embed the Trusted Person Model.
- Embed a trauma informed approach to support.
- Establish mechanisms to support shared learning and address identified barriers.
- Embed co-production and co design across the system.

We have engaged with individuals with lived experience and will continue to do so to enable services and processes to be designed to meet future clients’ needs. One of the first successful cases was a Fenland case. The case study below highlights the value of collaborative working to achieve a safe and positive outcome for the client under Changing Futures approach.

Case Study: Changing Futures

The team involved were:

- Trusted person: Probation Officer
- Fenland’s Rough Sleeper team
- Care-coordinator at Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust (CPFT)

- Changing Futures trusted person co-ordinators
- Mental Health social worker
- Fenland's dual diagnosis street team

Leon was rough sleeping in a public toilet in Whittlesey, which the council needed to close due to maintenance issues. Leon was not keen to move out but had no alternative accommodation.

Leon did not trust many people and avoided many appointments and interviews. He had a trusted person in his Probation Officer. This relationship helped access other support including arranging an interview with the GP in the toilet where Leon felt safe.

A mental health social worker became involved after requests were made to assist. This was a vital element of the success.

Missing an appointment led to a breach of Probation and then arrest. Arrest was planned out of Leon's familiar area, so likely to be more traumatic. He would not usually have a Trusted Person present. There was the risk that the location of police station used might not help link with relevant local services.

Police enabled his trusted person to be with Leon when he was arrested so it is less traumatic, ensuring he was taken to a local police station so he could be seen by the local Liaison and Diversion (LaDS) service. Police prioritised his arrest so he was somewhere safe and could start to get the support and help he needed.

During Christmas and a cold snap Leon agreed to engaged with Ferry Project for accommodation and support. Information relating to his support needs were shared quickly between the partnership. A mental health assessment was undertaken with his trusted person (Probation Officer) present.

Whilst assessments were undertaken to source suitable accommodation, the Council accommodated Leon in temporary accommodation. Despite this being offered numerous times, this time he accepted.

Due to Leon's anxiety, the first visit to specialist supported accommodation did not go well and he refused it. Temporary accommodation was extended by the council whilst alternative solutions were explored by the partnership.

Leon viewed the placement and described it as a posh hotel! He was very happy with it and happy to move into his new home.

Comments from partners involved include:

"Just to update you that Leon has moved to the placement as planned. He appeared cheerful and excited. Thank you all for the support you have provided to Leon over the months." Changing Futures Trusted Person Coordinator.

"Such fabulous news." Care Coordinator at the Mental Health Trust (CPFT)

“This is brilliant news! Glad he has somewhere to call home and wish him lots of luck.” Fenland Rough Sleeper Team.

“Oh fantastic news, has he got everything he needs? Thank you for all of your hard work, you have been amazing.” Probation Officer.

“Leon just popped to the probation office to see me of his own accord which was good of him. He seemed really well, is happy with the move and he was off to ASDA to buy some pots and a bit of food. We agreed to keep in contact weekly while he gets settled in. All seems to be well.” Probation Officer.

“Can I just thank everyone for the massive collaborative effort in pulling this person back from the brink and into suitable stable accommodation where they now have a fantastic opportunity to rebuild a life. Testament to the power of partnership working. An officer mentioned to me that Leon was the best that they had seen him yesterday. Well done all.” Fenland District Council.

Impact of the Covid Pandemic

The council were in a fortunate position that we were (with our partners), delivering Rough sleeper Initiative 4 (RSI 4). In effect, we already had an infrastructure in place with which to respond to the pandemic and our rough sleeper cohort. Our approach did however require new delivery methods and broader partnership work with Clinical Commissioning Group, Public Health and various government departments who monitored our vaccination take up and number of rough sleepers brought in under an initiative called Everyone In.

Initially 57 rough sleepers were housed, this included the Ferry Project Night Shelter clients, most of the clients were accommodated in two locations within Fenland. Clients were provided with weekly food parcels, mobile phones, very regular contact from rough sleeper outreach who adapted their service to suit the new circumstances.

To encourage vaccination take up a partnership including Environmental Health Team, RSI 4 team, NHS and the Terence Higgins Trust, was developed including an event to screen for sexual health. Alongside this NHS vaccination staff were on hand to talk through vaccination hesitancy with our clients and offer the vaccination at that time if they wished to take it up. We offered £10 shopping vouchers for this purpose which was very successful.

In total, between 2020 – 2022, the RSI team rehoused 134 rough sleepers.

Key challenges arising from the strategy review

Current and future challenges

As an organisation we have been able to increase interim temporary accommodation that is not B&B. Not only do we have the usual mix of households approaching; with Homes for Ukraine sponsorship funding ceasing, we anticipate an increase in approaches from these households. The discontinuation of hotel accommodation for Afghan households is further demand identified. We are therefore currently investing in the purchase of 33 properties via two tranches of Local Authority Housing Fund, 20 for general needs homeless properties, 8 for Ukrainian households, 5 for Afghan households. The properties are spread across the whole of Fenland, with only a small number of general needs in the town of Wisbech where historically we have had the most provision. Once Ukrainian and Afghan cohorts are moved into permanent accommodation these units will become general needs.

Even with the Local Housing Allowance rate increasing from April 24 it is not keeping pace with market rates which is leading to more households facing affordability issues.

There is also an increase in landlords disposing of their portfolios as a result of economic challenges and increased regulation coming in the form of the Renters Reform Bill. This is decreasing the pool of private sector properties available which leads to further price inflation as competitiveness increases.

Agents and landlords are also able to be more selective over prospective tenants.

Key challenges

- Demand for service increasing – more people are contacting us for housing advice in the past 18 months (post covid).
- More clients with complex needs are contacting us for help, resulting in the need for the provision of homes with high support provision e.g. specialist drug and alcohol.
- A significant increase in cases of domestic abuse.
- Larger families - larger properties are needed to be built to prevent families spending longer time in temporary accommodation whilst waiting for a large enough property.
- Engaging with private rented sector (PRS)– to offer solution for customers, landlords selling up resulting in greater reliance on social tenancies.
- Reduction in social housing tenancies available – resulting to families/individuals spending longer in temporary accommodation.
- Reduce HB subsidy implications for the council to support the medium financial strategy.
- Cost of living crisis continue to have a HOT service that can respond to further pressures arising from the cost of living.

Core aims and commitments in the strategy

Links to Corporate Business Plan

The Council's Business Plan outlines our focus around communities 'we will use our housing powers to prevent homelessness, reduce rough sleeping, meet housing needs, improve housing conditions and keep homes safe and accessible'.

Homelessness prevention

The ambition and focus for the council are to prevent homelessness wherever possible. This involves our teams being creative, flexible, and working together with partners to achieve this. The benefits to prevention are multiple, including the impacts on health and wellbeing, education and employment and mental health.

Reducing / stopping the cycle of homelessness and sustaining futures

We have invested part of our RSI5 funding into tenancy sustainment. These services are delivered by CGL and Ferry Project. We work hard together to find suitable pathways for our clients. This has been hugely successful thanks to NSAP & RSAP funding from DLUHC, working with Amicus & Ferry Project & Clarion to increase the number of supported placements within Fenland.

The transition from street to emergency accommodation can be daunting and very challenging for some clients. We have invested together with the Ferry Project for a temporary arrangement with Bunkabins (a temporary portable structure delivering a self-contained living unit with facilities to live independently). They enable the time for 'decompression', a safe place to be and transition from the street to a safe and supported space.

When moving on from Ferry Project's emergency accommodation (now known as Destiny Haven – 9 self-contained units) it's imperative that tenancy sustainment forms part of the move-on process. This has been integral to our RSI 5 work and has achieved 43 successful results since the start of the project. (June 2023 - March 2024).

Working together

We are incredibly fortunate to work collaboratively with ambitious and experienced partners who are an integral part of our quest to eliminate rough sleeping and homelessness in Fenland.

People who are homeless don't just lack a home, there are often many other contributing factors such as their health and wellbeing, finances, substance misuse, life choices and relationships. Homelessness impacts on virtually every element of our lives, our health, education, work and our ability to find work, personal safety etc.

Working together effectively as one team is the only way we can tackle these issues together in Fenland.

Delivery and monitoring

Action plan overview

The aims and commitments contained in the strategy have been captured in our action plan and forms part of the entire strategy document. The actions are clear and there is accountability for each one. Results from the consultation will be included.

Monitoring and review

We will review the plan regularly with partners to ensure that the actions stay on track, are progressed and remain current and relevant. We will do this through a review of the action plan each year as part of the Councils service planning process.

DRAFT

APPENDIX B - FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL – HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2024/29

Intervention	Task	Intended Outcome	Resources & Timescale	Progress	Lead
Objective 1. Prevention of homelessness and housing options					
1.0 Develop protocols, work force development and case work to prevent early signs of homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the following protocols and implement: • Hospital Discharge with Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Kings Lynn, Peterborough City Hospital, Hinchingbrook Hospital Huntingdon & Addenbrooks Hospital Cambridge <p>Workforce development with partners e.g. registered providers</p> <p>Link in with Transfer of Care Hub (TOCH) for Peterborough Hospitals and Queen Elizabeth Hospital</p>	Customers prevented from becoming homeless	Existing resources		<p>Housing & Communities Manager</p> <p>Housing Options Team Leader</p> <p>Sub regional Homelessness strategy group</p>

Intervention	Task	Intended Outcome	Resources & Timescale	Progress	Lead
1.2 Carry out a review of prevention techniques and options	Review undertaken and changes made to respond to the needs of our clients	Prevention service that meets the needs of Fenland's customers	Existing resources and DLUHC grant funding Citizens Advice Rural Cambs		Housing & Communities Manager & Housing Options Team Leader Private Sector Housing Officer
1.3 Addressing housing options for complex needs cases	Membership of the Changing Futures programme to work together to find housing solutions for clients in complex needs	Better outcomes for vulnerable clients	Changing Futures funding		Assistant Director Housing & Communities Manager Housing Options Team Leader Rough Sleeper Co Ordinator
1.4 Provision of specialist accommodation units for those with high dependency on substances	Carry out a feasibility into the provision of specialist units for clients who are homeless and have drug and or alcohol dependency	Better outcomes for those with drug and or alcohol dependency	To be sought		Assistant Director Housing & Communities Manager
1.5 Tackle rogue landlord activity in Fenland	Link in with Operation Pheasant to gather intelligence via Private Sector Housing team linking with Housing Options Continue to serve enforcement notices on poor quality properties	Improved management and condition of the private rented sector	Existing resources Serious & Organised Crime (SOC) - Fusion		Housing & Communities Manager Housing Options Team Leader Private Sector Housing Officers

Intervention	Task	Intended Outcome	Resources & Timescale	Progress	Lead
					<p>Operation Pheasant partnership</p> <p>Community Safety Partnership</p>
1.6 Housing sub-region - Housing Allocations Review	Review the policy to update following Homelessness Reduction Act and to ensure clarity in where policy sits in relation to local lettings policies (Registered Providers)	Making affordable housing as accessible as possible to our customers	Existing resources When required		<p>Assistant Director Housing & Communities Manager</p> <p>Housing Options</p> <p>Team Leader Housing Options Team Leader</p> <p>Senior Community Support Officer</p>
1.7 Work in partnership with Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) to promote the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme to prevent homelessness	Ensure links to ARP are taken up together with partners	Homelessness prevented	Government Grant		<p>Housing & Communities Manager</p> <p>Housing Options Team Leader</p>

Intervention	Task	Intended Outcome	Resources & Timescale	Progress	Lead
1.8 Prevention of homelessness for large families 4 bedrooms +	<p>Work with development partners to acquire affordable homes with 4+ bedrooms</p> <p>Increase capacity to managed extra demand for Housing Options teams services through management of temporary accommodation through Community Support Team, implementation of new technology e.g. Docusign and transformation review of service</p>	Reduction in temporary accommodation for larger families	<p>Central Government Grant</p> <p>Existing resources</p>		<p>Assistant Director</p> <p>Housing & Communities Manager</p> <p>Senior Community Support Officer</p> <p>Housing Options Team Leader</p> <p>Transformation team</p>
1.9 Formation of an Early Help Hub	Establishment of a triage administrative function across triage administrative function for an Early Help Hub across the public sector system and Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) .	More upstream early notification s of those threatened with homelessness to enable prevention	North Place Partnership Board		Assistant Director

Objective 2 – Eliminate rough sleeping in Fenland

Intervention	Task	Intended outcome	Resources & Timescale	Progress	Lead
2.0 Continue to reduce the numbers of rough sleepers each year	<p>Deliver the Rough Sleeping Initiative (5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health nurse • Continue delivery of the Day Hub – deliver housing solutions for all rough sleepers to meet their needs • Outreach Service x 3 workers • Night shelter support provision (2.5 FTE) • Bespoke intervention funds for CGL outreach and Ferry Project Hub • Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator • Conduct bi monthly rough sleeper counts • Submit monthly monitoring under DELTA system <p>Establish an operational monitoring group and a strategic group to monitor and maximise outcomes for our clients</p>	Reduced numbers of rough sleepers	<p>Successful DLUHC Bid £1.186m</p> <p>April 2022-25</p>		<p>Housing & Communities Manager</p> <p>CGL & Ferry Project Rough Sleeper Co Ordinator</p>
		Monitoring the impact of funding	<p>Bi Monthly May, July, Sept, Nov (main count below), Jan & March</p> <p>Monthly</p>		<p>Outreach Team & FDC</p>
		Monitoring the impact of funding	<p>Fortnightly</p>		<p>Housing & Communities Manager</p> <p>CGL & Ferry Project Rough Sleeper Coordinator</p>

	Conduct annual rough sleeper count (verified)		November Existing resources plus CGL		FDC CGL – Homeless Link
2.1 Carry out review of Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP)	Review of procedures undertaken to ensure procedure meets the legislative requirements of SWEP and awareness to partners and teams and website	Fulfil statutory duties to rough sleepers during severe weather conditions efficiently and effectively	Homeless prevention grant September		Housing Options Team Leader Rough sleeper Co ordinator Ferry Project
2.2 Enable development of Housing First	Deliver additional units of Housing First accommodation model	Meet the need of vulnerable homeless people requiring support	Exiting Resources CCC RSI Bid Partner resources		Housing & Communities Manager Cambridgeshire County Council Ferry Project Support providers

2.3 Reduce the number of rough sleepers	Monitor the Next Steps Accommodation programme	Rough sleepers rehoused with support	<p>Successful DLUHC Bid £820,650 + £579,880 match funding from Clarion</p> <p>£55k Amicus set up costs £123,530 Ferry support to Clarion 10 £444,120 10 properties with Clarion plus £579,880 match funding £216k deposits £176,440 B&B for NRPF</p>		<p>Assistant Director</p> <p>Housing & Communities Manager</p> <p>Amicus Trust</p> <p>Clarion Housing</p> <p>Ferry Project</p>
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Objective 3. Temporary Accommodation, supported homes and supply of private rented homes

3.0 Undertake review and provision of temporary accommodation	Enable partners to and directly provide additional supported accommodation, emergency interim accommodation and temporary accommodation within Fenland	Homeless customers facilitated to remain in temporary	Existing resources, Grant funding, Capital funding and loans		Assistant Director Housing & Communities Manager and
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	including provision across the whole area.	accommodation during case decision making process and minimise the use of B&B			Housing Options Team Leader
3.1 Enable additional provision of supported accommodation	Work together with key partners to expand provision of supported accommodation	Meet the needs of our vulnerable customers and prevent homelessness	Existing resources		Housing & Communities Manager Housing Options Team Leader
3.2 Provision of supported accommodation for care leavers	Deliver additional units of accommodation for care leavers Subject to identified need to be confirmed	Meet the need of care leavers	TBC		Assistant Director Break Charity
3.3 Work with Landlords to maintain existing stock	Supporting compliant Landlords with early intervention with potential tenant issues such as rent arrears to prevent homelessness via the Landlord Rent Solutions Service	Meeting the needs of our customers	Existing resources		Housing & Communities Manager Housing Options Team Leader Private Sector Housing Team
3.4 Bring empty properties back into use	Continue to work with ARP & community to increase the number of empty homes coming back into use	Provide additional homes for rent	Existing resources		FDC Empty Homes Officer

Objective 4. Resources and training

4.0 Establish private Sector Landlord engagement	<p>Contacts established in Fenland with Private Sector landlords</p> <p>Facilitate landlord and agent events in Fenland</p> <p>Include partners to assist with support and advice for landlords and agents</p>	Increase in quality of private sector accommodation to meet the needs of customers	Homeless Prevention grant		Private Sector Housing team
4.1 Ensure specialist homelessness and linked training is identified for staff as part of the Council's appraisal programme (springboard).	Yearly review of training and development needs for all staff	Staff enabled to perform more effectively to meet the demands of the service in a customer focussed and efficient way.	Homeless prevention grant		<p>Housing & Communities Manager</p> <p>& Housing Options Team Leader</p>
4.2 Respond to external funding opportunities to	Seek funding opportunities to assist in the delivery of support and	Improved opportunities and outcomes for our customers			<p>Housing & Communities Manager</p> <p>Partners</p>

assist in delivery of the strategy	provision of services in Fenland Establish opportunities for joint bids with other relevant partners				
4.3 Increase knowledge and awareness of our services with others	Undertake shared training opportunities with statutory and voluntary organisations	Improved knowledge of staff and working relationships to benefit our customers	Existing resources		Housing Options Team Leader
4.4 Achieve external accreditation for delivering of domestic abuse services to our customers	Achieve Domestic Abuse Housing alliance (DAHA) accreditation	Improved service to domestic abuse survivors	Existing resources		Housing & Communities Manager Housing Options Team Leader Housing Options Officer (DAHA Operational Lead)

Objective 5. Reaching our customers

<p>5.0 Ensure access and information about our service is up to date and broadly accessible to our customers and partners</p>	<p>Housing Options information is reviewed with our customers</p> <p>Produce a fact sheet to be shared at triage stage including information required, estimated time scales, temporary accommodation etc</p> <p>My Fenland Team trained</p> <p>Continue to use language Line translation service for our non English speaking customers</p> <p>Street Link service publicised</p>	<p>Clear accessible information for our customers about our services</p>	<p>Exiting resources</p> <p>Quarterly updates</p> <p>Existing resources</p> <p>Existing resources</p>		<p>Housing Options Team Leader</p> <p>Link with social Prescriber post</p> <p>Housing Options Team leader Comms Team</p>
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	<p>Comms Team action plan to highlight progress with the strategy and action plan with the community</p> <p>Communications via community social media sites (including EU languages and sites) to encourage engagement in rough sleeper prevention services at an early stage</p>		Existing resources		Ferry Project & FDC
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Objective 6. Accessibility and standards

6.0 Ensure compliance with Customer Service Excellence	Corporate Customer Service Excellence achieved	Increased standard of customer service	Existing resources		Housing Options Team Leader
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					Private Sector Housing
6.1 Achieve the Silver Standard of service for Veterans across the council	Undertake evidence based assessment of services to meet the criteria	Increased standard of customer service for Veterans	Existing resources		Senior Community Support Officer Head of HR
6.2 Good practice Safeguarding policy	Undertake the implementation plan as approved by cabinet for Adults Children and adults at risk of harm policy	Compliance with relevant legislation on safeguarding	Existing resources		Housing & Communities Manager

Objective 7. Diversity & Cohesion

7.0 Ensure that the Housing Options Team contribute to maintaining the Council's responsibility towards equality and diversity	Responsibilities met within Equality Act 2010	A service accessible to all in Fenland who needs it.	Existing resources		Housing Options Team Leader
7.1 Ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are up to date	Review EIA's annually	Service is accessible to our customers	Existing resources Annually April		Housing Options Team Leader
7.2 Ensure homelessness advice services are fit for purpose in relation to	Monitor the impact of non English speaking customers – feed in to the Council's Diverse Communities	Advice services are fit for purpose	Existing resources		Housing Options Team Leader

non English speaking customers	Forum and tension monitoring groups – all communities				
7.3 Manage the Homes for Ukraine project	<p>Deliver services to Ukraine refugees</p> <p>Ensure smooth transition into move on temporary accommodation and permanent homes</p> <p>Provide effective housing advice to non priority need clients</p>	Enable rehousing options (both statutory and non statutory) for clients under HFU scheme	existing resources CCC grant from central government		<p>Housing & Communities Manager</p> <p>Housing Options Team Leader</p> <p>Homes For Ukraine Co ordinator</p> <p>Community Support Officer</p>
7.4 Manage the homelessness process for refugees who arrive in the Fenland area	Deliver the Homes for Ukraine and Afghan Resettlement programme relating to Fenland	Implement the homelessness process linked to Ukrainian and Afghan refugees	<p>Ukraine Funding</p> <p>Afghan Resettlement funding</p> <p>LAHF funding</p> <p>Existing resources</p>		<p>Assistant Director</p> <p>Housing & Communities Manager</p> <p>Housing Options Team Leader</p> <p>Senior Community Support Officer</p> <p>Community Support Officer</p>
7.5 Manage the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF)	Conclude the purchase of 33 properties on the open market to increase provision of temporary accommodation instead of using Bed and breakfast accommodation	Discharge our duty into self contained accommodation	Government grant scheme LAHF scheme		Assistant Director Housing & Communities Manager Assets and Projects team

Objective 8. Partnership working

<p>8.0 Ensure that Fenland remains a partner in the Cambridge sub Regional Homelessness Strategy Group & Cambridgeshire Operational group</p>	<p>Full contribution to Homelessness county wide group including reviews of Sub Regional Lettings Policy</p> <p>Opportunities for sub regional projects to impact positively on fenland homeless applicants</p>	<p>Establish good practice and where possible opportunities for sub-regional projects</p>	<p>DLUHC grant funding</p>		<p>Housing & Communities Manager</p> <p>Housing Options Team Leader</p>
<p>8.1 Work in partnership with registered providers and local 3rd sector organisations operating in Fenland to help prevent homelessness</p>	<p>Work in partnership with registered providers and third sector to prevent homelessness by joint visits & initiatives etc.</p> <p>Support third sector to access external funding to tackle homelessness</p>	<p>Improved partnership working with Registered Providers and 3rd Sector in tackling homelessness</p>	<p>Existing resources</p> <p>Ongoing</p>		<p>Housing & Communities Manager & Housing Options Team Leader</p>

8.2 Development of the Fenland Supported Housing Forum	Assist in the development of the scheme to ensuring the most impactful allocation of supported accommodation for our clients	Co ordinated approach to allocating supported accommodation in Fenland			Cambridge Housing Society (CHS) Assistant Director Housing & Communities Manager Housing Options Team Leader
8.3 Enabling new affordable housing with registered provider partners	Engage with registered providers to develop new affordable homes	Affordable homes provided to our customers	Registered Providers Central Government Grant		Assistant Director Housing Strategy & Enabling Officer
8.4 Ensure that supported housing in Fenland meets with government standards	Supported Housing Act 2023 implementation	Develop systems and processes for meeting the requirements of the new act including licensing and standards of support and strategic supported housing plans including relevant actions from the	TBC		TBC

		Supported Housing Act			
8.5 Ensure Fenland teams remain an integral partner in Operation Pheasant and associated operations	<p>Take a proactive approach to tackling poor housing conditions and treatment of tenants (including migrant population – exploitation and modern slavery) within the private rented sector.</p> <p>Establish co ordinated approach around Child Sexual exploitation including training</p> <p>Publicise our success</p> <p>Link with serious and Organised Crime (SOC) Fusion county wide work</p> <p>Consider the implementation of an Additional Licensing Scheme for Wisbech to tackle poorly managed HMO's</p>	<p>Reducing migrant exploitation within the housing sector including planning, Private Sector Housing & Housing Options</p>	<p>Existing resources</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>existing resources</p> <p>Serious & organised Crime (SOC) Fusion</p>		<p>Housing & Communities Manager</p> <p>Housing Options Team Leader</p> <p>Housing Compliance Manager</p>
8.6 Tackling rogue landlords	<p>Take a proactive approach to tackling rogue landlords including action to prosecution where appropriate.</p> <p>Areas of work include prosecution where appropriate</p>	<p>Private sector housing market in Fenland free from exploitation, decent standard, well managed and safe homes</p>	<p>Existing resources paid for by fine income</p>		<p>Housing & Communities Manager</p> <p>Private Sector Housing Officers</p> <p>Housing Options Team Leader</p> <p>Operation Pheasant</p>

					Anglia Revenues Partnership – Fraud Team
8.7 Co ordinate partners to share intelligence around rough sleepers to tackle the issue (See 2.0)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share intelligence between FDC Housing Options Team and partners (Police, Social Care, Ferry Project, Rosmini, Inclusion etc) • Joint partnership outreach work with Migrant Outreach Worker and CGL drug and alcohol services • Support for night shelter development via Rough Sleeper Co ordiantor post • Map all reports of rough sleepers as part of RSI bid return • Promote Street-Link with members and the community • Explore the concept of a whole community response to homelessness and rough sleeping 	A co ordinated and effective approach to tackling rough sleepers	DLUHC prevention grant		Housing & Communities Manager Housing Options Team Leader Rough Sleeper Co ordinator Ferry Project CGL Statutory & third sector partners Op Luscombe
8.8 Develop protocols with partners to develop improved	Develop the following protocols across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough:	Timely response to housing and support	Existing resources		Housing & Communities Manager

<p>services for our customers (See 1.0)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital Discharge and Housing • Substance misuse protocol • Criminal justice and housing – explore ways in which 3rd sector can assist with rehousing pathways 	<p>solutions for our customers</p>			<p>Housing Options Team Leader Statutory Partners</p>
<p>8.9 Build continued awareness of Early Help and Adult Early Help and safeguarding services</p>	<p>Continue with training and awareness of safeguarding</p>	<p>Appropriate multi agency approach to customers needs</p>	<p>Cambridgeshire County Council</p>		<p>All Staff Safeguarding leads Members Contractors Volunteers</p>
<p>8.10 Deliver Changing Future programme Including</p>	<p>Training of frontline staff in understanding new systems and processes linked to a much quicker and better response in complex cases through the Changing Future programme</p> <p>learning co production trusted person model Trauma Informed practice</p> <p>Increase the involvement of people with lived experience in shaping processes and procedures for our future clients</p>	<p>Increased confidence of Front Line staff to make the best case for appropriate Mental Health treatment</p>	<p>Existing resources</p>		<p>Assistant Director H&CM HO TL RS Co ordinator</p>

8.11 Develop a clear process for supporting residents in supported housing in higher costs accommodation with transition into work, in a way that does not build up housing debts	No financial barriers to getting work when living in supported housing	Improved service to our customers	Anglia Revenues Partnership		ARP HOTL Clarion Housing

Objective 9. Consultation

9.0 Provide comprehensive accessible consultation opportunities to customers and key stakeholders regarding policies and procedures and accessibility of our services	<p>Capture feedback of Housing Options service on regular basis</p> <p>Review comments compliments and complaints received – both informal or formal</p> <p>Include opportunities to engage with people with lived experience to shape our services</p>	Apply Customer Service Excellence approach to consultation	Existing resources		Housing Options Team Leader
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<p>9.1</p> <p>Ensure that Private Sector Landlords are kept informed of changes in legislation and best practice</p>	<p>Work with Private Sector Landlords to ensure they are up to date with changes in legislation and best practice</p> <p>e.g. Damp and mould</p> <p>Develop website and press coverage to showcase advice to landlords</p> <p>Engagement with private sector landlords to continue a good supply of well managed and maintained safe private rented homes to meet out housing objectives</p>	<p>Improved service to customers and quality of private rented accommodation increased</p>	<p>Existing resources</p>		<p>Housing Compliance Manager</p>
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APPENDIX C

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY CONSULTATION – LIVED EXPERIENCE

Thank you so much for agreeing to speak with me, I'm Sarah Gove and I work for the council. I've written a document about how we help people who are homeless/rough sleeping and want to get your views as you have experienced local services and are best placed to give me your opinion and ideas

I've got 4 questions, if there's anything you don't understand or don't wish to answer, that's fine but I'm grateful for anything you do tell me and I will not share your identity in this process. Your comments will be fed into the final consultation ending on 15 September and considered as part of the final 5 year plan

Question No.	Question	Answer	Response
1	Looking back, when you were homeless, what would have made the biggest different to you (and your family) when you approached the council / Ferry project/ local services? Why do you say that?	<p>1 – 4.9.24 If you are homeless and not engaging with any services, sometimes it is difficult to engage with support as they felt 'freedom' when on their own. (Q What made you engage?) Outreach said let's go to Ferry Project (FP) will help you to understand, support to getting benefits, sort my life out, hygiene, food, somewhere to stay, fresh clothes and shower. Not able to work, pleased did engage. Very happy and thankful for FP and R</p> <p>2 – 4.9.24 Engaged with CEEHP and Ferry Project, very helpful with engagement, know</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment – ADD TO ACTION PLAN SECTION 5.0 Highlight support available to rough sleepers (and those at risk of) via Ferry Project - communication - what is on offer</p> <p>Thank you for your comment</p>

		<p>where to go and to get help, Pre Covid was homeless in the White Lion, I got help</p> <p>3 -4.9.24 Very grateful and happy to be offered a place to live (Q anything that could be done to make it easier to engage?) Quickly received help, girlfriend had help and I followed</p> <p>4 – 4.9.24 It was all my fault – alcohol that is why I was homeless for 2 months. Had to stop work due to illness. Went to QMC, benefits advice, Ferry Project accommodation at Bunkabin 3-4 days (Q Anything that could better the process?) All was very good when approached Ferry Project, perfect</p> <p>5 -4.9.24 Support with documents, benefits, passport and GP appointments and provided accommodation. (Q – anything that could be better in that process) It’s more about the individual if they know they need help and accept it. I got support in a very good way. Some will decline help (Q Why?) Emotional, ashamed about situation, ashamed to</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment</p> <p>Word of mouth</p> <p>Thank you for your comment</p> <p>ADD TO ACTION PLAN AT SECTION 5.0</p> <p>Thank you for your comment Comms approach via FDC and Ferry Project</p>
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		<p>6 -5.9.24 There were lots of unknowns going into the service - I have a large family and couldn't access the private rented sector as I am a student . At the start, It would have been helpful to understand the whole process , B&B, temporary accommodation and waiting times, lots of unknowns especially where we could end up with such a large family.</p> <p>7-5.9.24 Sheila approachable, did not judge. Happy with process - Temporary accommodation in Fenland not Peterborough would have made the biggest difference</p>	<p>ADD TO ACTION PLAN AT SECTION 5.0 Thank you for your comment Whilst it is difficult to estimate the timescales involved as everyone's situation and circumstances will be unique, your comments are helpful in that we can produce a fact sheet based on the areas you mention to accompany our triage stage</p> <p>Thank you for your comment Placing out of Fenland is the exception, this is only normally due to specific types of accommodation that are not available locally at that time. The council has taken on additional properties to assist with this issue and have drastically reduce the use of bed and breakfast for families as a result</p>
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		<p>8-5.9.24 First point of contact was excellent, Sheila has been brilliant can't fault it. – TA in Hunts was not great, got moved back to March and much happier</p> <p>9-6.9.24 More social housing properties are needed – I had to access the private rented sector</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment Placing out of Fenland is the exception, this is only normally due to specific types of accommodation that are not available locally at that time. The council has taken on additional properties to assist with this issue and have drastically reduce the use of bed and breakfast for families as a result</p> <p>Thank you for your comment The council recognises that demand for accommodation nationally outweighs supply, We have however since 2006 we have delivered with partners around 1000 new affordable properties and forecast to deliver more in 25/26</p>
2	Looking forward, what can the council and partners do to help people who are about to be homeless or actually homeless in the future and why?	<p>1-4.9.24 Not everyone will engage, it's difficult, some have dependencies, some people don't understand support and decline it, If a person doesn't realise they need support they won't engage. They need to be ready for support and accept help. I would tell them, stop drinking, and get volunteering and engage, your own flat, I</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment</p>

		<p>have been sober for 4 months. Took time to accept support, hospital, seizures and listened to advice</p> <p>2-4.9.24 Contact earlier – tell people about Ferry Project, I did not know what to do, I was a binge drinker. My mind was not straight and I lost my home, I did not know the consequences</p> <p>3-4.9.24 Understanding and knowing to approach before homeless. Go to Ferry for information and advice – use social media Facebook Lithuanians in Wisbech – Polish in Wisbech, Facebook Wisbech discussion Facebook, adverts, support in different languages – word of mouth</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment The council and partners work to engage early with anyone at risk of rough sleeping and those who are sleeping rough. We also undertake tenancy sustainment work to ensure we prevent homelessness where possible.</p> <p>ADD TO ACTION PLAN AT SECTION 5.0</p> <p>Thank you for your comment We will link the council and Ferry Project's Communications Teams as you suggest thank you</p>
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		<p>4-4.9.24 Didn't know about Ferry Project, adverts needed , got sent to Ferry Project by Access, language support</p> <p>5-4.9.24 Word of mouth, my friend had no money, language barrier and divorced, felt shame about situation, hairdresser knew many people, I told her to go to Ferry Project - use Facebook, adverts, leaflets in the town</p> <p>6-5.9.24 No idea of timescales , frustrating - have B&B's in Fenland not KL, singles and families together is not great</p>	<p>ADD TO ACTION PLAN AT SECTION 5.0 Thank you for your comment We will link the council and Ferry Project's Communications Teams as you suggest thank you</p> <p>ADD TO ACTION PLAN AT SECTION 5.0 Thank you for your comment We will link the council and Ferry Project's Communications Teams as you suggest thank you</p> <p>ADD TO ACTION PLAN AT SECTION 5.0 Thank you for your comment Whilst it is difficult to estimate the timescales involved as everyone's situation and circumstances will be unique, your comments are helpful in that we can produce a fact sheet based on the areas you mention to accompany our triage stage . The council is committed to reducing the amount of bed and breakfast</p>
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		<p>7-5.9.24 Rent increases in Private Rented is becoming unaffordable, what can the council do? It means more homeless people</p> <p>8-5.9.24 Accommodation in Hunts B&B was not good – should not mix families and singles – drinking etc No communal space, no garden just a car park</p>	<p>placements and has secured properties within the district to assist with this. We are currently planning additional units for single people as emergency temporary accommodation</p> <p>Thank you for your comment - the council engages with private sector landlords both around property conditions and quality of service via our landlords forum and ongoing support from our Private Sector Housing Team- Unfortunately we have no legislation to enforce around costs of rents in the private sector</p> <p>Thank you for your comment – We have reduced the amount of families drastically in bed and breakfast and following your comment have stopped using the location your mention for families</p>
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3	<p>If you could give one piece of advice to people who are about to be homeless, what would it be and why?</p>	<p>9-6.9.24 Need more info out there that we can help with a deposit, can't thank you enough for helping me, needed help to physically find it. People need to know about support and how to access it – never been homeless before, very scared , high house prices, needed a guarantor when I had a good job to rent</p> <p>1-4.9.24 Look at me, look where I am now, I was in a worse place , no home, you can do this, everyone can do it</p> <p>2- 4.9.24 To approach support services like Ferry Project like I did, and engage early, don't become homeless</p> <p>3 – 4.9.24 Come and see Renata</p> <p>4-4.9.24 Go to Ferry Project, I don't know of any other ways to get help, always suggesting to friends to go to Ferry Project for help</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment We have recently updated our website and included the information you have suggested</p> <p>Thank you for your comment</p> <p>Thank you for your comment</p> <p>Thank you for your comment</p> <p>Thank you for your help</p>
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		<p>5-4.9.24 Don't be afraid to approach services, go forward and ask Don't feel ashamed You need mental and emotional help CGL (drug and alcohol) there are language barriers in group sessions, 1-1 is good but group session is not good</p> <p>6-5.9.24 Go with the flow and manage expectations Don't expect quick action, there is a process others have been waiting for some time , it will not happen tomorrow</p> <p>7- 5.9.24 Don't worry, the council have got your back Look at the Fenland website Approach FDC</p>	<p>ACTION Thank you for your comment We have passed on your comment to CGL</p> <p>Thank you for your comment Whilst it is difficult to estimate the timescales involved as everyone's situation and circumstances will be unique, your comments are helpful in that we can produce a fact sheet based on the areas you mention to accompany our triage stage .</p> <p>Thank you for your comment</p>
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		<p>8-5.9.24 Get all of the applications done urgently, Home-Link, have your documents ready, you need to prepare for temporary accommodation</p> <p>9-6.9.24 The council need to be honest with how long it will take. You need to manage expectations around timescales. Have a plan, local knowledge of the process. Need to explain what happens at the triage stage Ask questions, get informed about what will happen Try and help yourself, you just need knowledge</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment</p> <p>Thank you for your comment Whilst it is difficult to estimate the timescales involved as everyone's situation and circumstances will be unique, your comments are helpful in that we can produce a fact sheet based on the areas you mention to accompany our triage stage .</p>
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4	Do you have any other thoughts or comments on what the council and partners can do to prevent homelessness?	1 -4.9.24 Can't think of anything else to add to what support I had, food, housing benefit, safety, shower . to anyone on the streets, they need adverts, leaflets about support, I did not know about support, posters, adverts to help Ferry Project are fantastic	ADD TO ACTION PLAN AT SECTION 5.0 Thank you for your comment We will link the council and Ferry Project's Communications Teams as you suggest thank you

		<p>2-4.9.24</p> <p>Support organisations all work well Do not drink and think what you are doing, Ferry Project does engagement right</p> <p>3-4.9.24</p> <p>If you are missing ½ a day in work, you are easily sacked or struggling to pay rent. Zero hours contracts do not help, ‘you get told there is no work’ if you can’t work for a day or 2</p> <p>4-4.9.24</p> <p>Ferry Project does everything! If I have a problem, I go to Ferry Project for help, John, Steve and Renata</p> <p>5-4.9.24</p> <p>More outreach people, one to one chats and start approaching about support</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment</p> <p>Thank you for your comment. We would encourage anyone in that situation to contact the Council at the earliest opportunity to see what we can do to support the accommodation issues.</p> <p>Thank you for your comment</p> <p>ACTION Thank you we will pass your comments onto CGL</p>
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		<p>Drug and alcohol services need to be more accessible, and approachable for EU speaking people</p> <p>6-5.9.24 Problems with landlords and agents, landlords look at regular income rather than pay packet -- demand outstrips the supply</p> <p>7-5.9.24 Be proactive</p> <p>8-5.9.24 The process is long winded to get up and running, lots of information is needed There is no affordable private rented homes I am at University, private landlords won't take me on as I am a full time student There needs to be a scheme in place to make private rented accessible for working people. Housing benefit doesn't cover all of the rent</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment We agree with your comments, unfortunately, as you say, supply outstrips demand. The council is always available to assist with incentives for landlords and agents to assist</p> <p>Thank you for your comment</p> <p>ADDED TO ACTION PLAN AT SECTION 5.0</p> <p>Thank you for your comment Whilst it is difficult to estimate the timescales involved as everyone's situation and circumstances will be unique, your comments are helpful in that we can produce a fact sheet based on the areas you mention to accompany our triage stage . unfortunately, demand for private rented accommodation is very high (nationally including Fenland) the council does offer incentives to landlords to assist with accessing private rented but</p>
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		<p>9-6.9.24</p> <p>Take the social housing back Build more homes – they do not seem to build homes Landlords want their homes back, not the fault of tenants More information needed at triage stage, how long will this take so I could self help All good with Caroline, great comms fast deposit Suggest a pack at triage stage, spell out the process, manage expectations and help to self help</p>	<p>we recognise that demand far outweighs supply and work to encourage new affordable housing in the district.</p> <p>Thank you for your comment The council transferred it's housing stock in 2007, since then circa 1000 affordable housing properties have been built in Fenland.</p> <p>We recognise that demand for private rented accommodation far outweighs supply.</p> <p>Whilst it is difficult to estimate the timescales involved as everyone's situation and circumstances will be unique, your comments are helpful in that we can produce a fact sheet based on the areas you mention to accompany our triage stage .</p>
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CONSULTATION FEEDBACK TABLE

DATE RECEIVED	COMMENT	BY WHOM RESIDENT, PARTNER-OTHER	RESPONSE
24 .05.24	Preventing care leavers from homelessness	DLUHC & DFE	<p>ADDED TO ACTION PLAN SECTION 3.2</p> <p>Reference to the approach amended in strategy action plan</p>
10.09.24	<p>There is good in the report and action plan. Very nice to read the case studies which outline the success of a Housing First approach</p> <p>However, the action plan does not appear to contain any specific dated targets. For example, the word develop is used numerous times. By when and specifically by who? In places it reads, consequently, as a wish list.</p>	Unknown	<p>Thank you for your comment</p> <p>The strategy action plan is a 5 year plan, many of the actions are dependant upon government funding. The council has been successful in bidding for external funding for several years, however, without this, many projects will not able to progress. This has been noted in the resources and timescale section along with project leads are noted in the action plan. The action plan also interfaces with our service plan which is reviewed each year.</p>

	<p>It is not clear as to whether the White Lion will continue to be used. I cannot see it mentioned at all in the report or action plan.</p> <p>Do the 33 properties that are being purchased on the open market replace this?</p> <p>What monitoring systems are in place for the service provided in the White Lion?</p>		<p>The council has a statutory duty to provide emergency temporary accommodation to qualifying customers depending on their circumstances. The council recently undertook a procurement exercise, a number of premises are used for this purpose. Our aim is to minimise the use of B&B for Emergency Interim Accommodation over the next 2 years through alternative provision of properties.</p> <p>The new properties purchased by the council has reduced significantly the need to use Bed & Breakfast accommodation as emergency temporary accommodation for families. Our commitment is to dramatically reduce the use of emergency temporary accommodation and only use it during out of office hours where possible.</p> <p>As per the tender process, all providers of emergency temporary accommodation are required to meet a set criteria including an inspection to ensure all meet Housing Health and Safety Rating Standards. We welcome feedback from our customers, some recent feedback has been included in the Lived Experience consultation results.</p>
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	<p>What support do individuals get there. The client group there seems to have a make up of people "just off the streets" and people who have been evicted</p> <p>If the xx hotel is to be continued to be used there has to be a clear and transparent plan for how it integrates in the overall strategy and plan. This is not a criticism of anyone working in the system but, unless things are happening I don't know about, I believe the systems is flawed and underfunded. If the xx hotel is no-longer going to be used then say it explicitly. If it is going to be used then i`s use is key to helping tackle the issue of homelessness and rough sleeping.</p>		<p>If clients require support, this is sought from individual support providers e.g. P3. If the clients were rough sleepers appropriate support would be given by a local provider e.g. Ferry Project . The aim through the development of alternative emergency interim accommodation is to provide a funded support and management service. From late January 2025 we will be increasing support for residents in B&B</p> <p>The council has a statutory duty to provide emergency temporary accommodation to clients who fit the criteria as set by government.</p> <p>The council is currently working on alternative provision for emergency temporary accommodation as part of its housing enabling role with a move away from Bed & Breakfast provision</p>
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	<p>What happens to individuals who are too high needs (so have been evicted sometimes numerous times)? The report isn't clear. My perception is that there is a funding issue with this. Currently, there appears to be an influx of "homeless from other areas". This does not appear to be mentioned in the action plan. And by "from outside the area" I do not just mean people from outside the UK.</p> <p>It appears to be that people from other council areas are coming to Fenland. This needs to be openly discussed and considered.</p>		<p>The council works in partnership with the Ferry Project and has enable inward investment from central government over the years to provide specialist support and accommodation for people with medium to high support needs. Case studies are included in the strategy to explain the services and outcomes</p> <p>The council is also part of Changing Futures (referenced in the strategy) which pulls together professionals from multiple agencies where clients have multiple disadvantage to find solutions. Alongside this the Council working with Cambridgeshire County Council have 7 number of Housing First properties where a homeless person with complex needs is provided a home with a multi agency support plan put in place to understand and address the root cause to the reason for being homeless</p> <p>Any council can legally place clients into temporary accommodation in other areas, there is a statutory reporting mechanism for this. . This is monitored, as are clients the council places out of area when all accommodation is full in Fenland and moved back when a placement is available .</p>
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05.09.24	<p>Citizens Advice is under-funded and under-resourced. Too high timescales for them to get back to people.</p> <p>The criteria for Discretionary Housing Payments appears to have tightened. This could be a key safety net but could also assist with those wishing to progress (and as they cannot progress they bed block).</p> <p>There is no mention specifically of the support provided once someone is reported as homeless. What support do they get? Do they get clothing and bedding until housed?</p>		<p>The council provides core funding for Cambs Rural CAB . monitoring feedback shows 5610 issues in Quarter 1 of 2024/25</p> <p>The criteria is set by Department for Work and Pensions. The fund does assist many clients (117 in 2024)</p> <p>Ferry Project are a support provider for rough sleepers and homeless single people - Cambridgeshire County Council provide a contract for Floating support, currently undertaken by P3. Support is provided by a range of providers in Fenland under Housing Related Support, a Cambridgeshire County Council function. This could be young people , support provision at Foyer, adults, Ferry Project CLG drug and alcohol support etc.</p>
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<p>3.9.24</p>	<p>CGL do a great job. But are they resourced for the need in Fenland? I don't think they are.</p> <p>The "key challenges" section is quite worrying -- and it's not clear how the provisions of the strategy are going to keep pace with increasing demand. It would be nice to see more about supporting rough sleepers while they're on the streets and awaiting a placement in a hostel</p>		<p>This is good to hear. CGL are funded by Cambridgeshire County Council to provide a drug and alcohol treatment service</p> <p>Thank you for your comments. The challenges are significant in Fenland however our plan is detailed in the action plan. The council has been successful for several years in bidding for government funding to help tackle rough sleeping and supporting partners to provide specialist accommodation/services. Subject to funding, this work will continue as it relies on bidding for funding from central government. The section on Rough Sleeper Initiative 5 explains the service provided in the document</p>
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30.08.24	Understanding of what homeless people need, when you're in that situation you are in survival mode only you can't think about anything else		Thank you for your comment. We have had some valuable feedback through some additional consultation we have undertaken with people with lived experience. We are fortunate to have specialist providers and services in Fenland who work via a trauma informed person centred approach including employees with lived experience to help shape policies and procedures which have been well received and successfully implemented to help our clients
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28.08.24	<p>I think sterling work is being done. It can only be a good thing that EU nationals are helped to return home if they desire it. There are more than enough empty properties in Wisbech to ensure that *nobody* is homeless. Troughton way for example where dozens of empty, unused units sit there boarded up and have done for years. Owned, I believe, by FDC.</p>		<p>Thank you for your comments. The council has an Empty Homes Officer who's role is to identify empty homes and get them back into use.</p> <p>I believe that you are referring to Roman Court which is Clarion owned and was a supported living facility for the elderly. The properties were no longer fit for purpose and required too much work at too high a cost for them to be refurbished. Clarion are exploring what to do with the empty properties.</p>
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30.07.24	I think there is an opportunity to partner with local health services more here and offer physical health checks as well as mental health e.g. replicate the mobile van Light Project Peterborough in Fenland		Thank you for your comments. Ferry Project have a weekly GP visit the scheme, etc All clients are registered with a GP as [part of the support service. As part of our Rough Sleeper Initiative bid we have a Dual Diagnosis Community Psychiatric Nurse who works directly with our clients.
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29.07.24

It would be helpful to include more around the increasing complexity of needs and the pressure this is placing on existing services. It would also be useful to understand who/which partners fund the various interventions e.g. TA, supported accommodation etc

This will help give a better sense of the wider partnership and inter relationships between funders and service deliverers

Thank you for your comments.
This issue is detailed in the Purpose and Summary section and Rough Sleeper Initiative sections of the strategy document. Increasing demands on services are documented in the Local Context section and Key challenges.

Funding comes from a variety of sources, temporary accommodation via Housing Benefits, support functions under Housing Related Support, Cambs County Council contracts, Rough Sleeper Initiative funding via central Government Grant and Housing Prevention grant from central government allocated to all local authorities and Fenland District Council's core budget.

05.09.24	Having lived on the streets of Wisbech myself I think what would have helped me would have been a halfway house where I could get meals a shower a bed and support throughout the day from people that understand		Thank you for your comments. We work closely with Ferry Project who offer a range of accommodation pathways from those who have been rough sleeping and require initial intensive support, moving through to light touch support before moving not settled homes The Hub operates a service for people at the start of engagement and does offer a range of lighter touch support including fresh clothes, shower, food, advice and support
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11.07.24

The draft documents need to be more reader friendly. [Not exactly easy on the eye.]

I am sorry to hear that you could not easily read the documents. It is compliant with plain English format, the council offer a range of formats should you require assistance.

11.07.24

The numbers needing help appear to be increasing more than available accommodation

Thank you for your comment. Yes, sadly due to many factors including the cost of living issues, homelessness and rough sleeping is increasing nationally including in Fenland. However we have a programme to increase the number of new affordable homes and temporary accommodation to help meet that demand.

10.07.24	The report states that there are currently 8 rough sleepers. I do not believe that this is true		<p>At the time of writing the document 8 was the correct number. The council has just completed it's External verification for 2024 via Homeless-Link which included an independent volunteer and independent verifier from Homeless-Link, our annual count figure is 7 (November 2024)</p> <p>However, if you have any concerns about anyone, please report via the following link https://thestreetlink.org.uk/ or call 01354 654321</p>
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<p>10.09.24</p>	<p>Areas the Ferry Project would like to feedback on:</p> <p>1. Thank you to everyone involved in preparing the strategy. I can see the work that has gone into the draft and we appreciate the clear concept of partnership working and feel the case studies help bring out the various issues and solutions</p> <p>2. We would like to suggest that the strategy would be a good place to explore and develop a whole community response to homelessness. This could be based on the ITAC (It takes a city) model in Cambridge or the Andy Burham model in Manchester. In both cases the community came together to agree that it is the whole community's responsibility to help prevent and if needed support homeless people. The current draft effectively takes this responsibility onto the district council and partners and does not encourage others to get involved in a structured way.</p> <p>Examples could be that Homelessness organisation could work with school to teach children about what to do if there are housing problems, where to go for help etc. Businesses are very generous and we could work together to</p>	<p>Partner</p>	<p>Many thanks for your comments and for your positive feedback</p> <p>ADDED TO ACTION PLAN SECTION 8.7 Thank you, this is something that we will consider as the strategy action plan develops</p>
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join us any support that is available, any community groups wanting to help could come into the group and learn about the issue in depth and then contribute in a joined up way. There is much more but I hope this gives an idea.

3. Women's services – I think the strategy could include a review of current services to ensure that there is no indirect discrimination due to the way services are operated, or the accommodation is supplied. In our discussion I gave an example of the way people are verified as rough sleepers and the fact that research done in Islington found that most street homeless women slept during the day and walked around at night as a way of keeping safe. So the current way of counting people as rough sleepers would not count these individuals and as a result they could not receive RSI services. There is much more that could be done. This check would ensure that everyone was getting a service appropriate to their needs.

Thank you for your comments and ideas

As discussed, the counting of rough sleepers is undertaken by the council and partners, including the annual count by external verification and independent volunteer following statutory guidance issued by Homeless-Link. However we acknowledge that currently we are working with a number of clients and we encourage the community to report any potential rough sleeper sighting via [tps://thestreetlink.org.uk/](https://thestreetlink.org.uk/)
Or call 01354 654321

We have not heard of any evidence locally of the issues in Islington but of course we would look to investigate if we get such reports. Currently the broader partnership includes non housing links, e.g. Police (Op Luscombe) Community Safety partnership (and team) other accommodation initiatives such as Rough Sleeper Accommodation programme and Next Steps accommodation programme, both of which have facilitated housing pathways for those at risk of rough sleeping as well as rough sleepers.

09.09.24

4.
Criminal Justice system referrals – I am unsure if this needs a specific mention or just working in our partnerships we should discuss this. But I think we should ensure that the pathways for people coming out of prison in Fenland are clear and well understood by everyone. I hope this is helpful. The overall aim is to develop a highly effective partnership further and to be clearly a leader in preventing and helping homeless people. The items above would make clear to everyone that we are looking as a partnership to develop further.
Keith Smith Joint CEO of The Ferry Project

ADD TO ACTION PLAN SECTION 8.8

Thanks for your comment – The council is part of a county wide criminal Justice and Housing Protocol ,(this is mentioned on Page 13) however this is via the statutory Duty to Refer route between Criminal justice and local authorities – we will explore further how this can be developed to find housing solutions for clients

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010 APPENDIX E

INTRODUCTION

The Equality Act 2010 reminded all public authorities of their duty to have ‘due regard’ to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The protected groups (previously known as equality strands) are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnerships (eliminate unlawful discrimination only)

Other legislation and practice has determined that we extend this to cover:

- Human Rights
- Socio Economic factors

The duty reminds us of the need to analyse the effect of existing and new policies and practices on equality.

The equality analysis should be proportionate and relevant – not just a tick box exercise. In some cases the written record will be a quick set of bullet points or notes under each heading. Others will need a more detailed explanation.

However, legal case law makes it clear that we must carry out the analysis **before making the relevant policy decision**.

A meaningful equality analysis will help the Council make the best decisions or formulate a policy which best meets our customers needs.

Once a Customer Impact Assessment (replacing our existing Equality Impact Assessment) has been completed there is no need to automatically carry out a new assessment each year. A review assessment has been put in place, and can be completed if there has been no change to the original policy, the way it’s implemented and its customer impact.

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO ASSESSING EQUALITY

What is Customer Impact Assessment (CIA)?

- CIA is the act of systematically assessing the likely (or actual) effects of policies or services on people based on the following:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Gender
 - Sexual orientation
 - Marriage and civil partnerships
 - Human Rights
 - Socio Economic factors

This means considering the above, as set out in the table below, in relation to a policy, practice or service, before a decision is made.

PLEASE SEE EXPLANATIONS BELOW

	Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Advancing equality of opportunity between different groups	Fostering good relations between different groups
Disability			
Age			
Pregnancy/ maternity/ paternity			
Race			
Religion or belief			
Sex/ Gender			
Gender reassignment/ Transgender			
Sexual orientation			
Human Rights			
Socio Economic Factors			

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

Marriage and civil partnerships			
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- You are looking for opportunities to promote equality, and good relations between all groups as well as removing or mitigating negative or adverse impacts.
- Remember it might not be possible to remove all barriers to service or your policy or practice may have a negative impact on certain groups ... please note anything of this nature

Why is it important?

- Assessing equality issues helps us understand the needs of our customers, ensures our decisions meet those needs, and are also cost effective, and demonstratable.
- As a public authority we also have a **legal** duty to show “*due regard*” for equality in decision making and the way services are provided
- To be able us to show “*due regard*”, we need to show that consideration of [possible impact to the groups mentioned have taken place **prior** to a decision being made; that equality issues were considered, and that this consideration was rigorous, open minded, and involved thinking about the three arms of the Equality Act as part of this process, and that potential adverse impacts were either removed or reduced, and that all our decisions can be defended if challenged.
- Documenting our equality analysis enables the Council show it has had “*due regard*” for equality if decisions are challenged. If “*due regard*” for equality can not be shown, decisions may be overturned at judicial review. This could result in lost time, money and negative publicity.
- The sooner equality is considered in a process; the more efficiently that process can be carried out.

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

How can equality be assessed?

1. Gather information This can be consulting with relevant groups, using a previous EqIA as a starting point, consultations carried out by other services, details of the service 'hard to reach groups', customer satisfaction surveys, MOASIC data, consider relevance to equality



2. Assess impact Could different groups be affected differently? Is this difference positive or negative? Consider the three arms of the Equality Act in relation to all the protected groups as per the table. NOTE: The quality of the assessment will depend on the quality of the information gathered



3. Take action This could be to reduce negative or increase positive impact. Produce an action plan where appropriate; make actions SMART. Unlawful discrimination MUST be actioned immediately



4. Summarise your findings on the EqIA form. Where it is clear from initial information gathering that a policy will not have any effect on equality, this may simply be a sentence recording this; the greater the relevance to equality, the greater the level of detail required. Publish your findings



5. Monitor the on-going effects of the policy on equality. This is usually in the form of the annual review carried out in October of each year, to fit in with the service planning cycle. The Equality Act is a **continuing** duty!

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

Customer Impact Assessment

Name and brief description of policy being analysed

Briefly summarise the policy including any key information such as aims, context etc; note timescales and milestones for new policies; use plain language – NO JARGON; refer to other documents if required

The Homelessness and rough Sleeping strategy and action plan is a 5 year plan of how the council, along with partners will respond to need within the district of both homelessness and rough sleeping. it is a statutory function and will be monitored by DLUHC

Information used for customer analysis

Note relevant consultation; who took part and key findings; refer to, or attach other documents if needed; include dates where possible

The strategy and action plan have consulted on for the statutory 10 weeks consultation process – the responses have been captured in a table and relevant feedback has been captured and incorporated within the strategy and action plan.

Potential cultural barriers have been addressed e.g. Modern slavery under the Cambridgeshire County Council's statutory duty

	Could particularly benefit	Neutral	May adversely impact	Explanations	Is action possible or required?	Details of actions or explanations if actions are not possible Please note details of any actions to be placed in your Service Plan
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	Women are more likely to suffer domestic abuse than men. The strategy and action plan are particularly concerned with safeguarding vulnerable adults whose definition includes those	N	
Sex	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

				who are victims of domestic abuse	
Gender reassignment/ Transgender	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N
Disability- physical	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N
Age 60+		X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N
Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)		X			N
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N
Pregnancy, maternity and paternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N
Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

Human Rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	
Socio Economic	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	
Multiple/ Cross Cutting	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	

<p>Outcome(s) of customer analysis</p> <p>a) Will the policy/ procedure impact on the whole population of Fenland and/ or identified groups within the population; negative <input type="checkbox"/> neutral <input type="checkbox"/> positive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No major change needed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adjust the policy <input type="checkbox"/> Adverse impact but continue <input type="checkbox"/> Stop and remove / reconsider policy <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Arrangements for future monitoring: Note when analysis will be reviewed; include any equality indicators and performance against those indicators 2029</p>	
<p>Details of any data/ Research used (both FDC & Partners):</p> <p>The strategy and action plan have both been consulted on, partners, member, the wider public</p> <p>The statistical information comes from data submitted to central government via the DELTA system</p>	
<p>Completed by:</p> <p>Name: Sarah Gove</p> <p>Position: Housing & Communities Manager</p>	
<p>Approved by (manager signature):</p>	<p>Date published: This should be the date the analysis was published on the intranet</p>
<p>Details of any Committee approved by (if applicable):</p>	<p>Date endorsed by Members if applicable:</p>