



Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

2022-2027

Consultation Draft September 2021

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Foreword from Portfolio for Housing and Support

To follow.

1. The National Strategic Context

A range of national priorities and policies, alongside legislation have influenced and shaped the Council's strategy and direction. The ending of rough sleeping and reduction in homelessness is a national priority and is linked to other national strategies and initiatives around reducing drug use, reducing delayed hospital discharges, supporting care leavers and those in the criminal justice system. These include the:

- Criminal Justice Act 2003
- National Services Act 2006 and Delayed Discharges Directions 2013
- HM Government Care Leavers Strategy 2013 updated 2014
- Localism Act 2011
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- The Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018
- Next Step Accommodation Programme 2020
- Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme 2021
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

These strategies and the legislation are set in the wider context of welfare reform which has implemented significant changes to the welfare benefit system, housing costs, benefit caps and sanctions. In more recent times emergency COVID legislation made temporary but significant changes to private renting notice periods and closed courts preventing eviction proceedings including bailiff warrants.

2. Local Strategic Context

At a countywide level the main strategies and programmes that support tackling homelessness and delivering the right accommodation and services are:

- Community Vision for Surrey 2030
- Surrey Against Domestic Abuse Strategy 2018-2023
- Every Adult Matters agenda
- Surrey Health and Well Being Strategy

Heads of Housing Services across Surrey together with Registered Providers, Surrey County Council representatives and Homes England attend the regular meeting the Surrey Chief Housing Officer Association. This group champions stronger working relationships across organisations, the development and maintenance of strategic relationships and projects with Surrey County Council, health authorities as well as joint bids to Homes England and government funded programmes.

The Surrey Housing Needs Managers group meets regularly with a focus on homelessness agendas including housing waiting lists. It undertakes joint work responding to consultations, new national and local initiatives, to benchmark performance and indicators, develop joint protocols and joint working practices with other agencies and jointly bid for homelessness funding programmes.

At a local level the Reigate & Banstead 2025: Five Year Plan sets out the Council's vision and priorities for the borough. Within it, the housing objective is 'Secure the delivery of homes that can be afforded by local people and which provide a wider choice of tenure, type and size'. Our five year plan highlights the housing challenges facing the borough around affordability, numbers on the Housing Register, in temporary accommodation and delivery of new affordable housing.

In addition, the Council has published and begun implementing the priorities in the Housing Delivery Strategy. With a focus on delivering homes, it is supported by significant financial investment. Several of the projects being delivered through it will support the Homelessness Strategy and are explored in more detail in this document.

3. Introduction

The past five years the social housing sector have been characterised by change, new ways of working and the need for even more innovation. New homelessness legislation introduced in 2018 has widened the Council's homelessness responsibilities and duties whilst also placing responsibilities on households themselves to undertake prevention activities.

Our Housing Service had already shifted its focus to the prevention of homelessness prior to the Homelessness Reduction Act. We recognise the importance of assisting household to avoid homelessness and the many impacts it has on relationships, employment, support networks and schooling. This approach has led to many positive housing outcomes for

households over the years and placed us in a strong position to manage the unforeseen challenges of a Pandemic.

We remain committed to delivering positive results with and for our clients. Partnership work is embedded in our approach. Our close work with statutory agencies such as Probation, Surrey and Borders Partnership, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Surrey Police, primary care networks, and others is key to securing effective outcomes for our clients. Our many social housing providers which include Raven Housing Trust, our main local stockholder and a range of low support housing providers like Transform Housing and Support help us secure homes and stability for clients. Finally, the many charities we work with such as Furnistore, Stripey Stork and our local food banks provide our clients with items to turn a property into a home as well as delivering essential supplies to those in financial crisis.

Our five year priorities are driven by our on-going commitment to preventing homelessness at the earliest opportunity whenever possible. The borough is a high housing cost area, and this influences the availability of affordable housing options. Securing the supply of affordable social and affordable rent homes is essential alongside sourcing private rented tenancies. For many households, tenancies are one aspect of the housing journey, it is the support and advice, money advice, financial help, tenancy support and practical help that completes the process. This is built into our approach to tackling homelessness.

4. Priority One: Prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA), enacted April 2018, placed new legislative requirements on local authorities and extended many of the duties and requirements on local authorities set out in the Housing Act 1996 and Homeless Act 2002.

The legislative changes, which built upon the homelessness prevention approach already adopted by the team are embedded into the Housing Service. New software was installed to better support our strong casework approach and enable the team to manage the additional administration burden of the HRA. The team implemented new practices, changed its structure, and expanded to manage the new prevention duties and administration. A revised team structure is in place with a Prevention Team managing all initial housing enquiries, advice and homelessness prevention duties. The Relief Team provides overlap with the Prevention Team and in addition handles all homelessness relief and main duty cases.

4.1 Our Housing Options Team and new ways of working

The Housing Options Team expanded in 2018 in response to impacts of the HRA. Since 2018 four Prevention Officers, a Customer Support & Admin Officer and an additional Relief Officer post was created. The Housing Service receives the Government funded Homelessness Prevention Grant to support our activities and increased staffing.

To manage the impacts of additional and longer duties to households, as well as investment in ICT and staff, we have changed the appointment and duty phone systems. This has built in the additional time needed to undertake full and detailed assessments and comprehensive homelessness prevention activities. A daily Duty Officer from each of the Prevention and Relief Teams is available by telephone for advice, booking document check appointments and for emergency assistance.

The introduction of 'document check' appointments with a dedicated staff member, for every client at risk of homelessness means all relevant information regarding their case is collected in preparation for a detailed casework appointment and development of a personal housing plan (PHP). The Duty system also provides capacity for all staff to undertake intensive casework with individual clients.

Supporting the work of our four Prevention Officers and four Relief Officers is a Housing Support Coordinator. In place since 2018, this role provides more intensive support and practical assistance to individual homeless clients with medium to high support needs. The Housing Service also funds a post in the Fraud and Error Team. This Intelligence Officer assesses homelessness and housing register applications to ensure no fraud is occurring and that social housing and financial support is given appropriately. In 2020/21 344 Prevention and Relief cases were assessed and of these 8 cases being found to be potentially fraudulent. According to the Cabinet Office methodology for calculating financial saving through fraud prevention, the cases saved £25,920 in public expenditure.

Up to the start of the Pandemic, our clients were seen face to face. The Pandemic led to rapid changes to the way the team operated. With immediate effect from March 2020 the team moved to 100% telephone-based communication and electronic provision of documentation. This worked successfully. Many households have preferred the convenience of a telephone appointment, particularly working households and those with young children. A hybrid arrangement is likely to operate in the future, with the opportunity for everyone to have face to face interviews if preferred.

4.2 Supporting those at risk at the earliest opportunity

Early intervention is the best way to help people avoid homelessness.

Since the introduction of the HRA in April 2018, the number of households approaching us for housing options assistance remained fairly consistent at just over 1,000 a year. Many of those approaches are offered advice and are signposted without further detailed casework.

During 2018/19 -21 a Prevention Duty was accepted to 1,220 households and a Relief Duty accepted to 489 households. Working closely with clients, the team achieved 947 positive outcomes with clients owed either duty during the same period, representing an average homelessness prevention rate of 60%. Numbers of households owed the main duty where homelessness could not be prevented was 178 over the three years.

In the borough, the most common causes of risk of homelessness are threat of or loss of a private sector tenancy, and family or friend no longer willing to accommodate. Other reasons include relationship breakdown, eviction from a supported housing placement, domestic abuse, or other violence or harassment and eviction from a social housing tenancy. Many households seeking housing advice also have other issues and pressures. Money concerns are common, as are mental ill-health, physical health problems, support needs and for some substance misuse needs.

The Prevention Team works to support households at risk of homelessness at the earliest opportunity with constructive advice, support and assistance. Close liaison and negotiation with clients, landlords, agents, and families and friends is crucial to finding solutions for clients to remain in their current accommodation or to agree timeframes to enable planned moves to avoid periods of homelessness.

We use a raft of tools and services to help people remain in their homes. They include financial and money advice; affordability assessments, on-going liaison and negotiation with all parties to agree next steps; advice and support to domestic abuse survivors, assistance with benefit applications; use of discretionary housing payments and interest free loans. Our team refers to and works closely with other services, agencies, and partners to provide a wide range of more specialist services and support.

The use of Personal housing plans (PHPs) have proved to be an important prevention tool. PHPs provide a practical framework and checklist for applicants and staff to understand their responsibilities, what action each party needs to take and when. Their availability on-line makes them easy to access, see what actions need to be completed and to update them.

Our performance on homelessness prevention is good. The rate of positive housing outcomes achieved has increased from 272 in 2018/19 to 336 in 2020/21, a most challenging year. The Pandemic led to a change in the household type approaching the Council and a much higher number of single people. In comparison to 2019/20 the Council accommodated almost 100% more single people as a result of the Government 'Everyone In' initiative with a high proportion of this single person group having support needs.

Over the Pandemic, the numbers of families facing eviction declined mainly due to the temporary restrictions placed on landlords of all tenures regarding the service of notices and the closure of Court Services and then subsequent adjournment of many cases when they re-opened. We expect evictions to increase in 2021/22 as courts fully open with the potential of higher numbers of families placed in emergency and temporary accommodation over the coming few years. There are also indications that more landlords are planning to sell their properties, possible due to the financial impacts of the Pandemic on them.

4.3 Directing households to money advice services

Effective money advice is crucial to preventing some households becoming homeless. Many households seeking housing advice are experiencing money problems. The Prevention and Relief Team make referrals to specialist debt advisors and our internal Money Support Team. Clients with complex debt problems are referred to Community Debt Advice, a local charity, the Citizen's Advice Bureau or other national agencies.

Set up in 2018, in response to the impacts of universal credit and an identified gap in money services, our in-house Money Support team now has three Money Support Advisors. It takes referrals from Council teams only and to date over 605 referrals have been received. The team's aims are to support residents to maximise income and develop confidence with budgeting to help prevent future debt. Developing independence and resilience is important to enable clients to thrive and get back into work or change jobs, improve their quality of life and manage money effectively.

All clients receive a full assessment within two weeks of referral and any urgent actions are completed. The service has a waiting list, which has remained consistently at 30-40 clients. Working with a caseload of 10 clients for up to 12 around weeks per client, each Advisor helps with budgeting, setting up bank accounts, managing bills online, document / money organisation, digital support, benefit entitlement, reducing debt and maximising income. Unfortunately, the Pandemic has impacted on the complexity of cases and case times extended to 15 weeks.

Of the 605 referrals, the team has successfully closed 305 cases in addition to many 'quick win' emergency interventions for clients. Looking at the 305 closed cases, the team completed 116 additional benefit claims, helped clients clear £30,600 rent arrears, cleared £8,200 Council Tax arrears and £25,100 of other debts. The team has also enabled clients to claim benefit underpayments of £21,600.

Sustaining budgeting is important, 53% of clients complete budgeting plans and only 1% of clients have returned for support.

Clients with complex debt problems need specialist debt support services. Money Support undertakes preparation work with clients ready for intensive debt management support, and referred 47 cases to specialist services such as the local charity Community Debt Advice, after initial casework. Money Support also refers clients to the local Foodbank and around 60% of open cases have been referred or are currently using one.

The Pandemic has impacted many of those on the Money Support waiting list and during July - December 2020, the Money Support team had a 100% increase in referrals compared to the same time in 2019. Research in October 2020 showed that 20,300 borough residents were furloughed equating to 28% of employed residents. It could take months and years for many households to recover financially from the effects of the Pandemic and we expect this to impact on future housing.

Looking to the future, the team is considering options to expand referral routes to external partner agencies. It is also working on resourcing more 'quick win' emergency interventions to prevent tenancy loss and actions to support quicker access to a tenancy offers such as on-the-spot budgeting, UC applications, and completing Council Tax Reduction forms.

4.4 Preventing the loss of a private rented tenancy

We estimate that around 9,600 households in the borough privately rent (Census 2011 uplifted by 26% in accordance with English Household Survey data). This equates to approximately 18% of households in the borough and indicates a 10% increase compared to 2011. Private rentals are an option for the many households who are waiting for the offer of a social housing tenancy and provide an option to households at risk of homelessness.

The number of households approaching the team seeking housing advice due to risk of homelessness has remained over 1,000 since 2018/19. A risk of or ending of a private rented tenancy together with family or friend eviction are the most frequent causes.

High local housing costs, affordability and rent arrears are more common reasons for a threat or loss of a private tenancy, although the sale of properties and relationship breakdown also occur frequently. Effective negotiation with landlords and clients underpins our strategy to prevent homelessness. Wherever possible, we negotiate agreements to sustain tenancies and / or repay arrears.

We undertake detailed casework with each client taking a holistic approach to assessing the household. We consider individual circumstances, support needs, vulnerabilities, disabilities, safeguarding and financial circumstances which inform a realistic and achievable PHP for every client. As circumstances change, PHPs are updated by us and our clients to ensure they remain relevant and helpful.

During our casework with clients we complete financial assessments, give benefit and budgeting advice as well as basic debt advice. Where appropriate clients are referred to the Money Support Team and complex debt cases are referred to the local charities Community Debt Advice and the Citizen's Advice Bureau. Clients are also signposted to other organisations and websites and given our in-house money advice and debt fact sheets, all of which are available on the Council's website.

We support clients to access Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) as appropriate to bridge temporary affordability gaps. DHPs are also an important tool in assisting with rent in advance and deposits.

Our Homelessness Prevention Loan Scheme (HPLS) is also used to assist eligible households with financial difficulties who are at risk of or homeless. The scheme offers interest free loans to help prevent homelessness. Loans can assist with rent deposits, rent in advance, one off payments towards rent or mortgage arrears and other solutions. Funding for this discretionary scheme is dependent on the repayment of loans by those assisted. Applicants are subject to full assessment and not all applicants are suitable for the scheme. Between 2018/19 and 2020/21 132 loans have been made with the highest number at 62 agreed in 2019/20 pre-Pandemic. Most have accessed funding towards rent in advance. We do provide rent deposits but we aim to directly register the funds in a Government approved rent deposit scheme so the funds are returned and can be recycled.

Our success rate with preventing the loss of a private tenancy is good. In some situations, a tenancy ends, and we work with clients directly and through NextStep to support clients to secure a new private rental.

Family or friend evictions are now overtaking private rental evictions in the borough. This number increased through the pandemic, particularly for single people. Our teams negotiate with the parties involved providing advice and support to help people remain in place or for as long as possible or for long enough to make a planned move to other accommodation. However, we recognise that staying put is not always an option in some situations.

4.5 Accessing private rented accommodation

Private rented accommodation is a good option for many households at risk of or homeless. This housing option has significant role in the Council's approach to preventing and relieving homelessness. We provide advice factsheets on our website to help households search, understand landlord and tenant responsibilities and consider affordability.

To maximise opportunities to access the private sector, we fund and work in partnership with NextStep YMCA East Surrey. NextStep work with households with a priority need referred by

the Council, assesses affordability, suitability and sources properties. NextStep has excellent working relationships with several local landlords and letting agents. As well as sourcing properties, landlords and matching clients to properties, the NextStep team provides on-going tenancy support to clients for at least six months. They assist clients with settling in, benefit applications, budgeting and managing their tenancies. This on-going support and close working relationship with the Prevention and Relief Teams has resulted in 1,279 households being referred to NextStep and the securing of 537 tenancies over the last five years averaging at 107 per year. They have also intervened when their clients have started to struggle with managing their tenancies and prevented evictions or helped households find alternative accommodation.

Welfare reform has impacted on the private rental option. Universal Credit (UC) continues to provide challenges in securing private rented tenancies and interest from landlords. More landlords are concerned about the inability of agencies to liaise with the DWP about housing costs, consequently more landlords are requiring additional security including up to six months' rent in advance or guarantors. Whilst Local Housing Allowance and UC rates rose temporarily in response to the Pandemic, the benefit cap has not changed, and this has further eroded affordability for this group.

Private renting is not an option for almost all benefit capped households, excepting a very specific household type within a specific borough area. With a total family income capped at £1,667 a month equating to £20,000 a year and the cost of a 2 bed private rented flat starting upwards of £950 a month, the affordability gap is too wide. The cap introduces significant affordability problems for any household already privately renting. In the short-term, discretionary housing payments can assist these households, but are not a long-term solution.

Our Housing Options Team works closely with clients, landlords and letting agents to help clients assess private rented homes. They provide advice to all parties and support clients to access financial support. The Council will provide interest free loans to qualifying households for rent in advance and deposits and assists households to apply for discretionary housing payments towards these costs. On occasion, the Council will act as guarantor subject to limited liability, to eligible clients to secure accommodation.

Over recent years, an increasing number of private landlords and letting agents have raised the financial requirements placed on potential tenants. This trend has seen a prerequisite for households to have at least 30 times monthly rent income levels or a guarantor who is a homeowner. Some letting agents require guarantors to be homeowners and to have more than 30 times rent level incomes. The earnings threshold for many households requiring private rentals has increased significantly.

Private rented options for single people on low incomes or benefits are also limited by affordability. The cost of a room in House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) in the borough is over £500 per month, more typically £600 or more. This cost cannot be met by single people non Care Leavers under 35 years, because their entitlement to housing costs is limited to the single room rate which set below £500 a month nationally. More good quality and affordable HMO accommodation in the borough would provide a settled accommodation option to single people.

4.6 Tenancy sustainment

For some households, securing a tenancy is the just the first step to having a home. Some households need short term or on-going support to maintain their emergency accommodation placement, private rented tenancy or social housing tenancies and avoid future homelessness.

Our in-house Housing Support Coordinator (HSC) works with single clients with medium to high support needs to help them settle into emergency housing, to access supported accommodation or self-contained private housing as appropriate. Working closely with the Options Team and statutory agencies, the HSC supports a caseload of around 10 clients with accessing basic services and necessities such as ID, bank accounts, benefits, GP registration and mobile phones. The HSC also has a critical role in helping clients to access, navigate and attend appointments with a variety of statutory and support services. In addition, the HSC makes funding applications for benefits, financial support and grants for clients with disabilities or health conditions. Many more clients now engage with and continue to work with the HSC through to placement in move on accommodation and secure better housing outcomes. This role works closely our Accommodation (AC) Officer post. The AC officer manages emergency accommodation and supports households placed in the Council's emergency and temporary housing and households placed in nightly paid emergency housing.

A successful bid to the government Next Step Accommodation Programme with Transform Housing & Support, led to the appointment of a Tenancy Sustainment Officer for an initial period of 12 months. The primary focus of this role is to provide intensive tenancy support to former rough sleepers and those at risk of it who have moved into settled accommodation or are due to take up accommodation.

We also make referrals to Parashoot, a support service based at Raven Housing Trust, for people at risk of losing their home, or have been homeless and need help settling into their new homes. We refer clients we have assisted into settled accommodation who need support to set up their tenancy initially and to manage their responsibilities bridging the gap between services. Parashoot helps referred clients get off to the best start which improves the tenancy

success rate. They also work with Raven tenants who have struggling to maintain their tenancies and are at risk of losing it without more support.

Tenancy sustainment extends to housing association tenants. We continue to work closely with all local housing associations in the borough to prevent evictions of tenants wherever possible and receive referrals from social landlords of tenants at risk of eviction. Households at risk are contacted by the Housing Options Team. We work to engage tenants and prevent eviction. Our activities include joint work with the Money Advice team, negotiation, benefit applications, letters of support to Courts as well as agreeing responsibilities and actions.

For some households, basic necessities such as furniture, beds, mattresses and essential household items is completely unaffordable. We have an excellent working relationship with Furnistore, a local furniture charity. They have assisted many clients with beds, mattresses, sofas, storage furniture, white goods, and other items to turn a property into a home. We are also supported by the local charity Stripey Stork. They provide excellent quality clothing for babies through to teenagers, toys, books, baby equipment, personal hygiene and care items to households referred by our Council teams and other statutory agencies. We also assist clients to make applications to the Surrey Crisis Fund, a discretionary fund provided by Surrey County Council to assist with essential items where no other options are available.

4.7 Impacts of the Pandemic

The impact of the Pandemic has been far reaching for both the service and our users. The *Everyone In* Government initiative which began in March 2020 led to increased numbers of single people accommodated in emergency accommodation. The numbers accommodated peaked in the first months of the 2020 lockdown with an average of 44 households accommodated in emergency accommodation during the first quarter. Over half were accommodated due to COVID-19 duties.

To manage the numbers of single people needing accommodation we secured access to a local hotel facility we had not worked with previously alongside other block bookings with other providers locally and out of area. We also arranged placement of 8 self-contained cabins on the Redhill leisure centre carpark to accommodate single homeless people and individuals with COVID or symptoms.

The cabins were retained beyond the initial period of crisis to provide capacity to cope with infection peaks and the loss of the winter night shelter, the local hotel block booking ended after 15 months. During the peak of the Pandemic we also took the decision to reduce occupancy levels at our shared facility homeless accommodation so occupiers could access a private bathroom to reduce the risk of COVID transmission. It will slowly open further during 2021/22.

Whilst the numbers of single people being accommodated rose, the numbers of families approaching the Council declined. The cessation of evictions as courts closed generally and changes to private rental notice periods led to a reduction in approaches for advice from families. The opening of courts in May 2021 and re-start of Bailiffs activity has led to an increase in approaches from family households. Our proactive prevention approach and early intervention is expected to limit impacts.

ACTIONS:

- Secure the long-term funding of the Prevention and Relief Officer post currently funded by Government grants through the Council's Service and Financial Planning mechanism
- Offer more choice to applicants about how and where homelessness assessment meetings take place including face to face, telephone, on-line meetings, and monitor choices to inform service delivery
- Continue funding the Council's Money Advice service and monitor outcomes on the prevention of homelessness
- Continue to provide interest free loans to eligible households to secure accommodation, subject to the availability of funds
- Continue to provide annual financial support, to NextStep to secure access to and prevent the loss of to an average of 90 private tenancies annually
- Explore opportunities to encourage the provision of good quality affordable HMOs in the borough
- Apply for future Government homelessness and rough sleeping funding streams to secure revenue funding for tenancy support posts to help high support needs clients avoid homelessness

5. Priority Two: Respond to support needs

Many of the households approaching for housing advice and assistance have support needs, these range from having one low support short-term need to having complex multiple support needs requiring intensive long-term support. The proportion of households owed a homelessness duty with one or more support needs ranged from 65% in 2018/19 to 75% in 2019-21. Looking in more detail at these applicants, over half have 2 or more support needs suggesting an increase in the complexity of support needs. The total number of support needs recorded was 1,001 in 2018/19, 1,085 in 2019/20 and 1,183 in 2020/21 demonstrating a year on year increase in total support needs.

Looking at the three most common of the 20 support needs recorded since the implementation of the HRA in 2018, the most common support need is a history of mental

health problems accounting for 651 identified needs. This is followed by physical health and disability at 371 and by being at risk of or having experienced domestic abuse at 350. Within the ten most common supported needs recorded are history of repeat homelessness, an offending history, rough sleeping history, learning disability, and substance dependency. We know many of our clients experience multiple support needs, and with these needs come interrelated challenges which increase the risk of homelessness.

Our team provides comprehensive advice to clients with support needs, making multiple referrals to support providers in and out of the borough and to statutory agencies as appropriate. Wherever possible we place single people with support needs in local emergency accommodation, but sometimes clients are placed out of borough due to lack of availability. Out of borough placements negatively impact on client access to a range of services such as the Community Mental Health Recovery Services (CMHRS), support from I-Access (substance misuse agency) or Probation. Our HSC works proactively with many of these clients to maintain engagement and access to services and to source supported accommodation options.

Much of the supported housing in the borough is for people with low support needs. A proportion of our clients have needs too high for this accommodation but not high enough to secure individual Adult Social Care funding. The gap in options for complex needs clients has been an on-going issue. During the Pandemic it became more widely recognised by all agencies and has led to more joint working to develop, change, improve access to support services.

5.1 Partnership approaches to supporting vulnerable people

We sit on the steering group for Surrey Adults Matter (SAM) which, through the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) approach, aims to design and deliver better coordinated services for people facing multiple disadvantages.

The SAM approach has been a catalyst to Surrey County Council leading a successful bid in partnership with public and voluntary sector partners under the national Changing Futures programme. This programme aims to support those who face a combination of homelessness, substance misuse, poor mental health, domestic abuse or contact with the criminal justice system. The award of £3 million will be used to develop the Bridge the Gap person centred specialist trauma informed outreach service in conjunction with vulnerable people, homelessness organisations and experts in mental health, substance misuse and domestic abuse. As part of this work, staff and volunteers at Surrey's homelessness charities and organisations will be trained to assist those who have experienced and/or are living with trauma.

Our expectation is the funding will support a more coordinated local approach to this group who are at greater risk of homelessness, ill-health and increased contact with the criminal justice system. This in turn can lead to greater pressure on services that respond to crises such as A&E, homelessness services and policing. Within the borough, Renewed Hope Trust, eSOS and East Surrey Domestic Abuse Service are joining the Bridge the Gap alliance with Transform Housing also starting training on trauma.

5.1 Mental Health

Between 2018/19 and 2020/21 the most commonly identified support need for households owed a homelessness duty was a history of mental health problems accounting for 20% of identified support needs.

The Housing Options available for single clients experiencing mental ill-health depend on how stable their health is at the point they need housing help and their willingness to engage. The Borough benefits from a number of low support units of supported accommodation for clients with mental ill-health, although many also accommodate people with other support needs, many are shared facilities. Some clients are assisted into supported accommodation outside of the borough due to lack of local availability. However, clients do retain their local connection on the Housing Register.

The complexity and challenges around mental ill-health mean different clients need different solutions. Some prefer self-contained housing. We support clients assessed as able to sustain a tenancy into self-contained and with partners such as the Forward Trust to source private self-contained housing. Unfortunately, the private sector options available to under 35s who were not care leavers are affected by UC restrictions which limit the housing element of their claim to the shared room rate.

Much of the supported accommodation in the borough is for clients with lower support needs. A number of organisations provide homes in our borough for a mix of client groups which is invaluable. Our current providers are Transform Housing & Support, Sanctuary, YMCA East Surrey and Wayside Community. Unfortunately, some clients with significant mental ill-health or multiple needs, are deemed too high need for most providers. In some cases, these clients are also deemed below the threshold for specialist mental health Adult Social Care funded beds. These households are often placed in general needs emergency or temporary accommodation with referrals to mental health outreach services.

Surrey has a Mental Health and Housing Protocol to be followed where a client is in hospital. This means housing officers visit wards, meet clients, attend ward round meetings and are involved in hospital discharge meetings and Care Plan Approaches. This process continued through the Pandemic. This joint multi-agency approach has led to some successful planned

discharges for clients who were at risk of homelessness. We are aware that not all health staff and ward nurses are aware of the protocol and further training is needed. Within East Surrey, Mole Valley District Council's Housing Needs Manager provides this training offer on our behalf.

The Pandemic has facilitated opportunities for closer working and engagement with Surrey and Borders Partnership, Adult Social Care, and County Public Health to identify gaps in service provision, understand resourcing issues and opportunities for joined up working around mental health. The successful cross organisation bid for funding from the Changing Futures programme is a good example of this joined up approach. This momentum will be exploited over the coming months and years with the aim of being able to refer our clients to mental health services at the earliest point, and for them to receive timely support to support tenancy success.

5.2 Domestic abuse

Of the households owed a homelessness duty, the third most commonly identified support need was being at risk of or having experienced domestic abuse. It accounts for around 11% of all the support needs identified 2018-2021.

Due to higher numbers of domestic abuse cases in the borough, the regularity of Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences increased in the borough from monthly to 2 weekly in 2020/21. MARAC is well attended and includes the Housing Team and Raven Housing Trust with attendees working together to support those experiencing domestic abuse through a range of measures including support to move.

Within the team, staff are trained on recognising and responding to households experiencing domestic abuse. A staff member has a specialism in working with victims, gaining trust and sourcing suitable emergency accommodation placements. The Council has close working relationships with Reigate & Banstead Women's Aid and East Surrey Domestic Abuse Service who offer emotional support, practical support alongside a range of services from supporting survivors at court hearings, home security measures, counselling and support for children.

Enrolled by Surrey County Council in 2020/21, the Housing Service is benefiting from becoming Affiliated Members of the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA). The Council received £34,000 funding from central Government to assist with implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and took part in project in which the DAHA standards of practice were shared, and our own practices were health checked. This supports our preparation for the full implementation of the Act 2021.

5.3 Prison Leavers and Ex-offenders

In more recent years the Housing Options team has worked with a rising number of prison leavers and ex-offender clients. The group are identified as the fifth most common support need for households owed a homelessness duty by the Council accounting for 8% of all support needs. However, this is part of the picture, this group frequently has complex needs and can be hard to engage. Some are repeat offenders which is linked to repeat homelessness applications due to their unsettled status. Over the period 2018-20, having an offending history was identified as a support need by 135 households. Given the very high numbers of households owed a homelessness duty who identified having more than one support need and our experience of working with this group, we know many ex-offenders have multiple needs.

In 2019/20 the Housing Service participated in a Prison Leaver Working Group led by the Cabinet Office and Ministry of Justice. The project purpose was to identify opportunities to improve social inclusion, implement change and work in collaboration. We undertook case studies of several repeat offender clients to understand their journey prior to prison release through to presentation to the Council, placement and outcome. It was clear that many had issues around substance misuse, mental ill-health, estrangement from family and a lack of support networks. A number of clients were known to the team, having presented as homeless repeatedly after failing to sustain their emergency accommodation or social housing tenancy or after re-call to prison. Although the project ended prematurely due to the Pandemic it showed a strong link between offending, mental ill-health and substance misuse and the need for greater service collaboration.

For 2020/21, the Council secured Government Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI 4) funding to enable the appointment of a Prison Resettlement Worker. Early interventions through timely Duty to Refers will enable support to start prior to release. The Worker will work closely with the Prison Service, Probation Team, Ministry of Justice and other relevant agencies to support single person prison leavers being released with no fixed address. Clients will be assisted to apply for benefits, register with GPs, set up a bank account, engage with specialist support providers such as I-Access as appropriate and to access suitable housing options such as supported housing or private rented housing.

This post will complement the work underway at the National Probation Service to procure properties in Kent, Surrey and Sussex to be made available to prison leavers homeless on release or leaving other prison managed premises and homeless for a period of up to 12 weeks. A joined up approach across agencies, use of Duty to Refer, and Prison Resettlement Officer post aim to assist prisoner leavers following a 12 week placement by Probation. Funding secured through a Surrey-wide bid to the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Scheme

and by the Council from the RSI, will support the creation and sustainment of private rented tenancies to eligible households.

5.4 Looked After Children, 16/17 year olds and Care Leavers

Over the period 2018-20, 222 or 21% of applicants owned a prevention or relief housing duty were aged 18-24 years olds. If we look at the combined total of all young person applicants owed a duty with a support need which comprise 18-24 year olds, care leavers aged 21+, care leavers aged 18-20 and young people agreed 16-17 they account for just over 4% of support needs. Since 2018 numbers have remained steady.

We rarely place 16/17 year olds in emergency accommodation. This has been largely due to the joint working arrangements in place between Surrey Districts and Boroughs; Children's Services and the Homeless Prevention Support Service (HPSS). The HPSS worked with 16/17 year olds at risk to ensure homelessness was prevented or placements found. HPSS also ensured that appropriate assessments were made under the Children Act.

A protocol between the Districts and Boroughs and Children's Services underpins the process. It also includes the working arrangements between all parties in relation to Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Following the HRA, a re-structure of Children's Services in 2019 and the HPSS being brought in-house to Surrey, a review of the protocol is underway, although it has been delayed by the pandemic. Mole Valley District Council's Housing Need Manager is the local authority lead for this workstream.

The Council has amended the local connection rules applicable to care leavers wishing to join the housing register. The change makes an exemption to the local connection rules for care leavers who are subject to a Surrey County Council corporate parenting duty. Care leavers are also prioritised on the Register.

We attend quarterly meetings with the Looked After Children Team and Care Leavers Team to identify young people who may need social housing in the future. Together, we aim to ensure a smooth transition for many in this client group, from care into their own private rent tenancies, supported or social housing tenancies. The meetings have identified that many of the young people were not joining the register and the meetings have helped to highlight to personal advisors and social workers that is an essential action to help ensure a housing pathway. Joined up work is underway with the Corporate Parenting Team to understand future housing provision for Care Leavers in the Borough and across Surrey.

Borough provision for young people and care leavers is good. We work closely with YMCA East Surrey who deliver Hillbrook House, a 44 room scheme for young people mainly aged 18-30 with placements also of 16/17 year olds, unaccompanied asylum seekers and

emergency care beds on behalf of Surrey County Council. We have also worked closely with the YMCA and provided capital funding towards deliver three move-on schemes for young people in the borough providing a total of 25 rooms. The most recent scheme in Horley delivered in 2021/22 received £600,000 capital funding from the MHCLG / Homes England 'Move-On' Fund and £450,000 Council capital funding enabling the provision of 12 rooms for young people with low support needs.

5.5 Substance misuse

Substance misuse accounts for 10% of all support needs of applicants owed a homelessness duty. Since 2018 the numbers of applicants owed a housing duty with drug dependency needs has risen from 49 in 2018/19 to 75 in 2020/21. There is supported accommodation available in the borough for ex-drug users and a limited number of spaces available for clients on prescription alternative drugs. For drug users owed a homelessness duty unwilling to engage or those on prescriptions unable to access supported accommodation for other reasons or simply due to lack of availability, the only option is placement in unsupported accommodation emergency accommodation. Our Tenancy Support Coordinator works to engage these clients, encourage, and support them to attend regular appointments with I-Access and other drug support services.

The numbers of homeless households with alcohol dependency have been rising each year from 46 to 69 during over the 2018/19 – 2020/21 period. These cases can be very difficult to engage and many have chaotic lives, sometimes linked to an offending history and mental ill-health. Some supported housing schemes will accept these clients but usually this is based on a commitment not to drink or complete abstinence. There remains an on-going need for accommodation options for those still drinking. Many of them need some form of settled accommodation to provide space and time to moderate their drinking or to give them a stable environment and the support they need to engage with cessation services. There are no 'wet hostels' in the Borough for those still drinking which means these clients experience repeat street homelessness and rough sleeping.

This means most are placed in unsupported emergency accommodation whilst our Housing Support Coordinator works with the client to source suitable supported accommodation, usually out of Borough.

Our Housing Support Coordinator and Relief Officers have developed good networks with a variety of supported housing providers who specialise in accommodating those with challenging needs and behaviour. All clients with medium to high support needs are referred to multiple providers in and out of the borough. We support clients with all aspects of this process to achieve as many positive outcomes for clients as possible.

Joint work with Surrey County Council Public Health and Adult Social Care colleagues together with mental health teams will deliver new ways of working over the coming years. A combination of joined up approaches which streamline service delivery, and additional resources will enable the provision of more support to the most vulnerable to enable them to engage full and sustain their accommodation.

5.6 Duty to Refer and discharges from public sector facilities

Each year a number of people are discharged from hospital or prisons often with unknown support needs and no settled accommodation to return to. These individuals are at high risk of homelessness.

The HRA placed a Duty to Refer on specific agencies to identify individuals with a housing need and refer them early to a local authority housing team so early intervention work can begin. Since the Duty commenced the Council has received a total of 107 referrals (2018/19 – 2020), of which 7 referrals from the Prison Service, 25 from Probation, 22 from Hospital A&Es, a number are also received from mental health wards. During 2020/21 the team received 87 Duty to Refers these came from a wide range of agencies, organisations working with prison leavers referred 48 accounting for 55 percent of all referrals. The next highest referral route was NHS Trusts at 17% of referrals. The overall increase in referrals, from Probation and NHS services is linked to greater awareness raising by the Ministry of Justice, MHCLG and working groups in Surrey such as Surrey Adults Matter and Surrey-wide protocols around hospital discharges.

Duty to Refer can provide an effective mechanism for non-housing agencies to secure housing advice and assistance for individuals under their care. It has taken time for all agencies to recognise the need to make early referrals and to provide the most meaningful information to support engagement with the Housing Team. The referral process has been streamlined with clear information on Surrey County Council's website and individual Council websites. We will continue to analyse referrals and outcomes.

With a 1,000 bed prison in our borough, we are working with it to better manage the Duty to Refer process including the timing of the referral to allow time for earlier engagement and the sourcing of appropriate accommodation. We are taking the lead in Surrey on Duty to Refer for prison leavers including out of area prisons. The combined referrals from Prisons and Probation accounted for the majority 2018-20. To better support ex-offenders, the Council successfully applied to the Rough Sleeping Initiative 2020/21 to fund a dedicated Prison Resettlement Worker for one year.

ACTIONS:

- Fulfil our duties in relation to the Domestic Abuse Act and increasing support and options for all survivors of domestic abuse so they receive safe, effective and timely responses reflecting their needs
- Monitor the success and positive outcomes delivered by the Prison Resettlement Worker and identify longer term funding streams and accommodation options to assist this group
- Implement the 16/17year old, Looked After Children and Care Leavers Surrey wide Protocol and monitor outcomes
- Continue to work with the Ministry of Housing HAST team and Surrey County Council to achieve and maintain a consistent service for 16/17year old, Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
- Work with alcohol support agencies to identify clients unwilling to engage with alcohol reduction programmes and agree alternative support mechanisms to which will provide the foundation for these clients to access accommodation.
- Monitor the number and quality of Duty to Refer referrals and the number of cases where this was not completed to inform further training and information sharing with other agencies.

6. Priority Three: Tackle Rough Sleeping

The Borough has experienced an increase in rough sleeping over the last few years. Whilst the annual street count snapshot that takes place across Surrey, shows under 5 in the borough the reality for the rest of the year is very different. During 2019/20 of the 140 Relief Duty acceptances 91 were from single people of which 39 had a history of rough sleeping as an identified support need. In 2020/21 of the 236 Relief Duty acceptances, 156 were single people of which 61 were identified as having a history of rough sleeping as a support need.

Of applicants owed a homelessness duty with a support need, a history of rough sleeping support need was the fifth most identified support need accounting for 7% of support needs. Our experience is many of those sleeping rough or with a history of rough sleeping has multiple support needs often including mental health and substance misuse.

East Surrey Outreach Support (eSOS) recorded 143 Streetlink referrals and 103 referrals from the Council and other agencies during 2020/21 for the borough, of these around 44% had two or more support needs. Working in partnership with East Surrey Councils we have made successful bids to the various national Rough Sleeper Initiative funding programmes and have also secured funding for borough schemes. In Summer 2021 we submitted an Ending Rough Sleeping Plan to MHCLG setting out our plans over the next 12 months to move towards the goal of ending rough sleeping.

6.1 Complex need supported housing scheme

Accommodation for homeless single people with complex needs is identified as a priority in the Council's Housing Delivery Strategy. The data on the support needs of households owed a duty demonstrate the need for supported housing for people with complex needs typically including mental ill-health substance misuse and a history of rough sleeping.

Options to deliver a shared facility scheme are being explored with partners. We are aware of the gap in accommodation options for people continuing to drink and use drugs and the shortage of accommodation for people with higher need mental health problems. Liaison with Surrey County Council has also highlighted the gap in provision and services for these groups.

However, the cost of providing support services is high and external funding opportunities for support services are extremely limited. The on-going revenue funding change is significant. We continue to assess options around securing a single scheme for up to 12 clients and are also exploring options for a series of smaller schemes.

6.2 East Surrey Outreach Service eSOS

The Borough jointly funds the East Surrey Outreach Service (eSOS) which provides an outreach service for rough sleepers and those at risk of it in Mole Valley, Tandridge and Epsom. In 2019 the contract holder changed to Thames Reach. eSOS has a manager and two outreach workers and a complex needs navigator. The Housing Options Team has a close working relationship with eSOS whereby the Options Team refers clients to accommodation providers and focuses on housing options. eSOS offers practical and in-person support by accompanying clients to a variety of appointments including GPs, substance misuse agencies, applying for UC and other benefits.

eSOS clients can access emergency assessment beds for a period of up to six weeks which enables intensive support to take place whilst an individual is safely accommodated. The two beds, available to East Surrey housing teams, are located within Leatherhead Start. The Council also accesses emergency beds from specific providers as necessary. Emergency beds are an important resource to providing an immediate placement for rough sleepers with chaotic lifestyles and who frequently experience substance misuse, mental ill-health or have offender backgrounds.

In January 2020 and May 2021, Mole Valley Council led an East Surrey bid under the Rough Sleepers Initiative Year 3 monies (RSI3). The successful bid secured £131,000 in year 1 and £146,000 in year 2. The bid comprised three elements:

- Further assessment beds per authority bringing these to 4 beds for the Council
- A one-year funding extension to the complex needs Navigator role within eSOS
- Additional funds for personalised budgets for the Navigator's complex clients. Up to £1,000 per client can be used to facilitate their housing pathway. Examples include paying arrears which prevent access to the Housing Register, purchasing extra support hours to enable access to a supported housing related support provider.

6.3 Tenancy Support

Moving into settled accommodation can be a significant challenge for our clients with a history of rough sleeping. Following a successful bid to the Government led Next Steps Accommodation Programme which is focused on Rough Sleepers, a one year Tenancy Sustainment Officer post was created to provide support to single people about to be or placed in settled accommodation. This Officer works with a small caseload at a time to provide intensive support for 10-14 weeks on average, but usually until a client is settled, can manage, and has other support in place to assist them.

Clients are helped with tenancy sign ups, applying for benefits, setting up rent payments, sourcing furniture, ensuring linkages with statutory agencies are maintained and new linkages are made with non-statutory organisations. The Sustainment Officer will also mediate in any neighbour and landlord disputes to bring a resolution. This post is linked up with the Prison Resettlement Worker role and our own in-house Tenancy Support Coordinator role. We also access support from Parashoot a local tenancy support service which can assist with lower level short-term needs.

6.4 Winter Night Shelter

Every year the Winter Night Shelter has provided overnight accommodation for rough sleepers and those at risk during December to March. Operated by Renewed Hope in partnership with local churches, the scheme offers individuals a warm bed, access to showers, clean clothes, a hot meal, breakfast, a packed lunch, and a listening ear. Overnights stays are rotated between churches in the Borough. Clients are referred by the Options Team and during their stay the team continues to work with clients to support them with more secure accommodation.

One of the many impacts of the Pandemic was a cessation of Shelter in 2020/21 and 2021/22. Using a combination of Government funding from the Rough Sleepers Initiative Programme, Cold Weather Funding, Protect Plus funding, the cabins and accommodation in a local hotel were secured. It is hoped that provision of a winter night shelter by Renewed Hope, most likely in a different format, will return in 2022.

6.5 Everyone In

In March 2020, the Government launched the *Everyone In* initiative to encourage all rough sleepers to come into accommodation during the Pandemic. The closure of many hotel and guest house facilities used to provide emergency housing and the need to provide accommodation for individuals with COVID-19 symptoms led the need for new ways of working. Working with a local hotel, closed due to the Pandemic, the Team arranged access to 13 rooms. The Team received funding from the Rough Sleeper Initiative 4 (RSI4) programme following a successful bid to support this. Clients were given access to kitchen facilities and regular food bank parcels were provided. Night Marshalls provided overnight safety and security to clients for a number of months.

In addition, the Team sourced and set up 8 self-contained cabins for single people in a leisure centre carpark. The cabins provided a resource for any individuals experiencing COVID symptoms, enabling them to self-isolate safely. Hot meals and food parcels were provided at the point of full lockdown in March 2020. Cabin occupants were provided with microwaves, mini fridges, TVs, crockery, cleaning materials, toiletries, bedding and towels. A partnership with Surrey County Council enabled 3 cabins to be made available for their clients. The cabins were part funded by government Cold Weather Funding £6,400 for rough sleepers and Protect Plus Funding of £5,000.

Our Housing Options Team, eSOS and Renewed Hope worked closely with clients placed, providing them with welfare support, access to foodbanks, assistance with benefit applications, accessing GPs and other services and identifying housing pathways.

In summer 2020, the Council successfully bid for additional Next Steps Accommodation Programme Funding to support our work to find housing solutions for those assisted off the street during the Pandemic. Over £180,000 was awarded to enable the Housing Service to secure accommodation for those at risk of or rough sleeping up to March 2021, for a night accommodation security service, a scheme to offer landlord incentives, financial assistance to help clients to source furniture and a tenancy sustainment worker post.

6.6 Move on Scheme and Housing First pilot

A scheme to deliver four self-contained single person bungalows is being delivered directly by the Council. The homes will be offered to single people rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping for a period of up to two years. A bid has been made to the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme for capital and revenue grant funding towards the scheme. The scheme is under construction and due to complete summer 2022.

Clients will be offered accommodation for up to two years. Support will be provided by the Housing Support Coordinator and Accommodation Officer. Clients will be supported with all aspects of managing their tenancies and the development of life skills. Our support workers will engage with statutory agencies as appropriate, support clients with basics such as setting up bank accounts, applying for benefits, managing budgets, arranging appointments with services statutory and non-statutory agencies, taking part in volunteering opportunities and getting into employment. All clients will agree a housing pathway so they can transition to more independent living.

We recognise that the Housing First model has become increasingly successful at assisting single people with support needs sustain long-term tenancies. It is based on a model of tenancy first with support brought to the client. The perceived risk of non-engagement from clients and potential tenancy sustainment issues has led to a reluctance from local housing providers have been reluctant to embrace this without strong assurances of support provision. The revenue cost of providing the intensive support has been a barrier to delivery of Housing First in the borough. However, we recognise the benefits of the model for many clients and will explore support funding options and will engage local social housing providers with the aim of trialling this model.

ACTIONS:

- Work up options to deliver accommodation scheme(s) for clients with complex needs with partners
- Maximise MHCLG funding opportunities to enable the continued funding of eSOS
- Continue to work with and support Renewed Hope with the annual winter night shelter provision
- Explore options with statutory agencies, charities and specialist providers to make provision for a 'wet' hostel for single people at risk of or currently rough sleeping
- Continue to apply to Government funding initiatives targeted at reducing rough sleeping and work up projects in partnership with support providers and statutory agencies to support local people into settled accommodation
- Work with local social landlords to investigate developing a trial of a Housing First style approach
- Monitor and review the outcomes of clients placed in the Council's Housing First style scheme with a view to delivering additional projects

7. Priority Four: Improve access to and the range of accommodation options

Continuing to deliver additional homes across a range of tenures to meet many different needs is a significant challenge in the borough. The primary focus of our Strategy is the prevention of homelessness by saving tenancies wherever possible. Assisting households into alternative housing is our option when tenancies cannot be saved or when clients require a specific type of housing such as specialist supported accommodation.

7.1 Housing Register & Choice Based Lettings

Joining our Housing Register is an option for many local households on lower incomes. Following implementation of the HRA, we reviewed the Allocation Policy and made small changes to reflect the new requirements. Changes included additions and amendments to bands to reflect the varying duties owned by the HRA. We have also invested in a new software system which provides a much improved customer portal, back office functions and reporting tools for staff.

The number of homes let each year over the last five years has remained fairly stable although there was an uplift in numbers in 2019/20 and a downward trend in 2020/21 as a result of the impact of the Pandemic. The downward trend resulted in a 12 percent overall reduction in available properties, this was particularly marked for larger family bedroom homes.

The reduction in lettings during 2020/21 is linked to the slowing down of moves generally due to COVID restrictions, and fewer vacancies arising from evictions as Courts and Bailiffs ceased working. There were concerns regarding the economic impacts of the Pandemic on tenants, but much positive work has also been taking place, with tenancy sustainment activities by social landlords and the Council's teams to help households manage the challenges.

Overall number of households joining the Register increased by 28 percent in 2020/21 compared to 2020/21 rising from 884 to 1,133. During 2020/21 a total of 1,390 applications were made to the housing register, a significant increase, although many do not meet our policy requirements. The increases in number of applications and numbers accepted into the Register is linked to the impacts of the Pandemic on employment and concerns about future financial security.

As the number of households on the Register increased the waiting times have increased across all bands and size of home, this has been exacerbated by the reduction in vacant family sized homes over the same period. The wait for 1 bedroom homes was relatively

short, averaging 6 month - 1 years for bands B, C and H, this has now increased to 1 – 2 years. The wait for 2 bedroom homes has remained fairly consistent at around 1 year for band B and 2.5 years for band C and H. However, waiting times have increased more rapidly for households with a three bedroom need; in the last two years the average waiting time in band C increased from 2.5 years to 4.5 years. Similar waiting times are found for households with a four bedroom or more need, typically band C applicants wait up to 4 years.

Making the best use of existing housing stock is an important element of meeting housing need. To encourage households, downsizers are placed in band B, our second highest priority band. Raven, our largest provider, also works to encourage households to downsize and in 2019 delivered new build social rent scheme in Redhill comprising 1 and two bedroom flats and 2 bedroom houses aimed at downsizers. Several homes were taken up by downsizers, freeing up family sized homes for others. Raven also offers other incentives to encourage downsizing.

In addition, Raven has reviewed its policy on the use of fixed term tenancies will no longer grant fixed term tenancies to studio, 1 and 2 bedroom homes. Given the high demand for larger family sized and need to make best use of this resource, fixed term tenancies will continue to be granted to residents of 3 plus bedroom properties. Tenants will be supported to apply to transfer to smaller accommodation as appropriate or seek alternative accommodation before the end of the fixed term to enable under occupied homes to be used by larger households.

7.2 Delivering new affordable homes

Through policies in the Council's Local Plan we aim to secure 30% affordable housing on all development sites delivering 11 units or more. On larger allocated sustainable urban extension sites the threshold is 35% affordable housing. The annual planning delivery target for affordable new build homes is 100 a year, equating to 1,500 over the 15-year plan period.

Our most up to date assessment of housing need shows the balance of need in favour of social rented homes and our target is that of the on-site affordable housing 62% is delivered as rented homes and 38% as affordable home ownership. We have set targets in the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2020, on the size of homes delivered to meet local needs, with the greatest need being two-bedroom four person homes followed by three-bedroom homes to rent. The Council is broadly meeting the Core Strategy target to deliver 100 affordable homes per year through planning policies.

Our housing association partners continue to deliver homes on their own sites. During 2020/21 Rosebery Housing Association delivered a 21 unit affordable rent scheme in Horley, a mix of studios, one and two bedroom flats on an office to residential site. Raven Housing

Trust, our largest social landlord continues to deliver a development programme in the borough. They are currently progressing a scheme of 23 social rent homes, providing a mix of 1 and 2 bedroom flats and 3 bedroom houses on the site of a former sheltered housing scheme in Tadworth.

Over the coming years larger sustainable urban extension sites will come forward and they will deliver a higher proportion of rented homes than was delivered under our previous planning policies.

7.3 Council led housing schemes

The Council's commitment to securing the delivery of homes that can be afforded by local people and which provides a wider choice of tenure, type and size is an objective in the Reigate & Banstead 2025: Five Year Plan. This objective recognises the financial challenge of securing a home by local people in a high cost area and sets out actions to support progress on meeting it. The Council has a commitment to deliver a minimum of 30% affordable housing on Council-owned land.

In 2020 the Council published a Housing Delivery Strategy to support meeting the Reigate & Banstead 2025 housing objective. Amongst the Housing Delivery Strategy priorities being progressed are new Council lead housing schemes to improve access to a range of accommodation options.

In June 2021 the Council completed a development of 25 new homes in Camelia Close Tadworth. This was the site of a former industrial unit, and delivered 14 shared ownership houses, securing 56% of the site as affordable housing.

Our Cromwell Road, Redhill development will complete in autumn 2021. This scheme pre-dated Reigate & Banstead 2025 and was intended as market sale only. However, a review of its tenure in the context of the Five-Year Plan and borough housing need led to tenure switch. Owned by the Council's housing company, this scheme now provides 32 one and two bedroom market rent flats. A proportion of the homes, a mix of one and two bedroom properties, will be let at below market rents intended to assist lower income households. Initial tenancies will be offered for periods of up to three years to provide household with stability. These homes support our commitment to supporting households at risk of homelessness, those on our register in housing need or in unstable housing access the lower cost homes where appropriate.

The scheme of four bungalows in Horley for single homeless people makes use of a small, underused piece of land as affordable housing, more sites like this will be considered.

A scheme to redevelop an underused carpark in Horley town centre is also being progressed. The proposed scheme will deliver at least 40 new flats on an allocated site, alongside space for community use and retail. As a minimum the scheme will provide 30% affordable housing for local people. The timeframe for completion is 2023/24.

7.4 Funding our partners to deliver housing

Partnership work is vital to support delivery of a range of housing options. Working closely with supported housing providers such as Transform Housing & Support and YMCA East Surrey, the Council has supported the delivery of additional homes. Council capital funding from developer contributions will assist Transform to delivery of a block of eight flats in Redhill using modern methods of construction. Due to complete in 2021/22, four of the eight flats will accommodate single young parents facing homelessness. Transform Housing will provide support to help these households adjust and prepare for a move into a longer-term housing option.

Funding from the Council to YMCA East Surrey, has enabled them to deliver three shared accommodation move-on schemes for young people aged 18-30 years. The most recent one, funded through a combination of government 'Move-on' funding and Council capital funding will deliver 12 low support places for young people, three of which will be self-contained.

We continue to liaise with supported providers and housing association partners to support them to maximise the numbers of affordable homes delivered in the borough.

ACTIONS:

- Investigate ways to assist and / or incentivise social housing tenants under occupying larger family homes to downsize
- To deliver an average of 100 new build affordable homes per year
- Deliver 30% affordable housing on council owned sites to meet local identified needs
- Assess opportunities to access national funding programmes aimed at delivering additional accommodation for homeless households
- Provide grant funding to registered provider partners to enable delivery of local supported housing, social and affordable homes

8. Funding and resourcing the Strategy

Most of the actions in the Strategy will be delivered within existing budgets. Our staff are our greatest asset and options will be explored to bring existing grant funded posts within the

Council's annual budget. We do have access to a range of government grants which contribute to costs of many projects both across East Surrey and within our borough.

The Homelessness Prevention Grant, received directly from Government, has been used flexibly on a variety of initiatives and staffing to prevent homelessness. We recycle the grant wherever possible, including through interest free loans to our clients.

We have applied to the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding rounds with some success, whilst we very much welcomed this, funding is short term, typically a year. We will continue to apply to future funding programmes, both capital and revenue offered by MHCLG and Homes England with our East Surrey Partners, Surrey County Council and other partners as appropriate to support our initiatives. In addition, we will continue the progress made during the Pandemic on strengthening joint working with statutory partners and agencies to secure new and long-term resources for households with high support needs.