

Service Delivery Plan 2024-27

Service	Housing Services	Head of Service	Jason Hagland & Deborah Allen
Service Purpose and Core Functions			
<p>Housing Services is a statutory service responsible for Residential Environmental Health, Housing Operations and Housing Strategy.</p> <p>Residential Environmental Health deal with noise and light pollution, housing condition enforcement and houses of multiple occupation.</p> <p>Housing Operations –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of housing advice to the public • Prevention and relief of homelessness including issuing of decisions on homelessness applications and responsibility for the Council’s Homelessness Prevention Forum • Maintain the Council’s Housing Register and provide nominations to Housing Association partners. • Management of temporary accommodation. • Support of vulnerable customers engaging with the Council’s Housing Service. <p>Housing Strategy –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for long term strategy and policy within Housing Services. • Work with partners to deliver affordable housing development. • Management of the Council’s Private Rental Scheme, including the sourcing of additional PRS properties. • Support of refugees housed within the district. <p>Housing Services has 3 Designated Safeguarding Leads who are Level 2 trained and form part of the safeguarding team for Three Rivers District Council. Trained staff provide support to other Council staff who raise concerns and are responsible for making referrals to the relevant professionals, depending on the concern raised. The Corporate Lead for Safeguarding is currently the Head of Strategy and Partnerships.</p>			

Link to Corporate Framework¹	Key Action/ Deliverable for 2023-26	Lead Officer	Milestone (Specific and measurable)	Milestone date (Month/Year)	Internal/External Partners	Additional Capital or Revenue cost and/or saving
Housing Strategy						
RRLL SC	Develop an updated Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028	Strategic Housing Manager	Five-year strategy adopted.	January 2024	Multiple including HCC, New Hope Trust, WCH, Thrive, Police, Probation, Community Partnerships etc	Within existing resource
RRLL SC	Annual Review of Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028	Strategic Housing Manager	Annual review of first year of strategy completed.	January 2025	Nil	Within existing resource
RRLL SC	Review of the Council's Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme	Strategic Housing Manager / Private Housing Coordinator	Launch an improved scheme, leading to the procurement of more properties.	December 2024	External private landlords. HM Government.	£20,000 from the HMG Homelessness Prevention Grant, already secured.
RRLL SC	Review of the Council's Housing Allocations Policy	Strategic Housing Manager / Housing Development Officer	Review of the Policy completed.	December 2025	Nil	Within existing resource.

¹ RRLL= Responsive Responsible and Local Leadership = , SC = Sustainable Communities, GPB = A Good Place for Business, NZCR= Net Zero and Climate Resilient

RRLL SC	Review of the Council's Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy	Strategic Housing Manager / Housing Development Officer	Review of the Policy completed.	December 2024	Nil	Within existing resource.
RRLL SC	Review of the Council's Private Rented Sector Placement Policy	Strategic Housing Manager / Housing Development Officer	Review of the Policy completed.	March 2024	Nil	Within existing resource.
Residential Environment Health						
RRLL SC	Commission a private sector housing stock condition survey	Strategic Housing Manager	Provide the Council a better understanding of conditions in the private sector in the district.	August 2026	Property owners, PRS landlords, tenants, NRLA	Subject to OBC approval.
RRLL SC	Develop and implement an action plan following the private sector housing stock survey	Strategic Housing Manager	Improved standards in the private rented sector	January 2027	Property owners, PRS landlords, tenants, NRLA	Within existing resource.
RRLL SC	Establish a protocol with our Registered Providers for dealing with complaints of housing disrepair	Strategic Housing Manager	Housing disrepair issues rectified swiftly without the need for the use of formal enforcement powers on partners.	January 2026	Registered Providers	Within existing resource.
RRLL SC	Housing Assistance Policy	Strategic Housing Manager	Policy delivered on schedule	April 2024	Hertfordshire Building Control, Hertfordshire County Council Adult and Child Services.	Within existing resource.
RRLL	Housing Enforcement Policy	Strategic Housing Manager	Policy delivered on schedule	September 2024	Residents, Social and Private	Within existing resource.

					Landlords in the district.	
Housing Options						
RRLL SC	Implement a cost-of-living homelessness prevention project.	Housing Operations Manager/Housing Solutions Manager	Prevention project launched in partnership with RP's and PRS landlords.	December 2024	Registered Providers, PRS Landlords, New Hope, CA, Herts Help.	Within existing resource. Funded by HMG Homelessness Prevention Grant, already secured.
RRLL SC GPB	Devise an early identification and intervention protocol with all Registered Provider's for those at risk of homelessness.	Housing Operations Manager	Protocol agreed with Registered Providers and adhered to on a consistent basis.	August 2024	Registered Providers.	Within existing resource.
RRLL SC	Promotion of the Council's homelessness services	Housing Operations Manager/Housing Solutions Manager	Publicise and promote the Council's homelessness prevention services and encourage customers to contact us early.	July 2024	Nil.	Within existing resource.

Targets – Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Targets*	Target 2022/23	Projected 2022/2023 outturn	Target 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Target 2025-26	Rationale for setting of target / changes to target
HN01	Maximum number of households living in temporary accommodation	75		75	75	75	We anticipate a rise in homelessness applications received by the Council,

	on the last day of the quarter (snapshot)		To be confirmed as part of year end outturn report				therefore we have not targeted an improvement in this overall figure.
HN03	Maximum number of households in temporary accommodation throughout the year	160	To be confirmed as part of year end outturn report	170	170	175	Numbers projected to steadily increase due to projected rise in interest rates, resulting in possible defaults in mortgages causing homelessness, coupled with rise in cost-of-living expenses and impact from homelessness approaches from Afghan Refugees, Homes for Ukraine scheme and asylum dispersal.
HN10	Number of households prevented or relieved from homelessness	190		190	200	200	Replaced with HN11.
HN06	Promote access to private sector lettings in order to prevent and relieve homelessness	24		To be confirmed as part of year end outturn report	20	20	20
NEW HN11 (to replace HN10)	Percentage of households prevented or relieved from homelessness (excluding withdrawn applications)			30%	30%	35%	Figures predicted to remain at 30% level due to external pressures created by the cost of living crises, however, increases in 25/26 due to future projects and predicted ease of cost of living.

Service Volumes

Activity / Process	Projected annual volume for 2022/2023	Estimated annual volume for 2023/24	Notes / explanation for estimated change	Impact (both service and corporate level)
No. Homeless Applications received	445	490	Predicted increase in applications is due to the cost-of-living crisis and based on current applications received as of 31 December 2023.	
Throughput of TA	143	245	An average 51% of applications have resulted in TA placements so far in 23/24, therefore future predictions based on an ongoing trend. An increase in applications will increase in the throughput of TA.	
No. joined the Housing Register	702	800	Average of 66 applications being made per month from 1 April 2023 to 31 December 2023, therefore, predicted annual volume for 2023/24 is based on this figure. This includes applications that are not eligible.	

Key Risks to Service Plan delivery

1 = not likely/low Impact 4 = will definitely happen/major service changing impact

No	Description of Risk	With no Mitigation			Mitigation	With Mitigation		
		Likelihood (1-4)	Impact (1-4)	Risk Score		Likelihood (1-4)	Impact (1-4)	Risk Score
1	Insufficient Staff	3	3	9	Agency staff, secondments, offer of overtime	2	2	4
2	Total failure of ICT systems	3	3	9	Battle box utilised by the Service, mobile phones for customers if required. Housing system is web based, therefore, not reliant on Council systems.	2	2	4
3	Fraudulent Activity	3	2	6	Approval processes in place for staff related activity; Audit function available on software	2	2	4

					system; Use of systems such as Land Registry, Experian, and Facebook to check applicants' information; Prosecution of public if fraud detected. Ensure staff training up to date.			
4	Loss of accommodation	2	2	4	Understanding with Watford Borough Council on use of their offices; Regular testing of safety measures within the building. All staff have laptops and Unified Comms so can work from home; Priority services are identified in the Service Continuity Plan. All staff can use 8x8/MS Teams to speak to customers on the phone or virtually.	2	1	2
5	Loss or insufficient of Temporary Accommodation	3	2	6	Use of designated temporary accommodation; Spot purchase of temporary accommodation from variety of providers (if required); Three new sites built offering temporary accommodation.	2	2	4
6	Failure to provide an out of hours emergency provision	2	2	4	Service level agreement with Hertsmere Council to provide the service on behalf of the Council; Service continuity and business continuity plans for Hertsmere Council; Deal with any operational issues with Hertsmere Council. Ensure Police are aware of processes.	2	2	4

7	Legal challenge to contracting out of homeless reviews	2	2	4	Providers procured from a Framework agreement from Watford Council. Decisions are reviewed with the provider before issuing to customer.	2	1	2
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Climate Resilience Risks to Service Plan delivery

1 = not likely/low Impact 4 = will definitely happen/major service changing impact

No	Description of Risk	With no Mitigation			Mitigation	With Mitigation		
		Likelihood (1-4)	Impact (1-4)	Risk Score		Likelihood (1-4)	Impact (1-4)	Risk Score
1	CC has meant that we can now expect regular episodes of extreme temperatures and weather. This would result in the council having to activate SWEP more regularly resulting in the Council needing to accommodate those who are sleeping rough who would not normally be eligible for accommodation. No Government funding is provided for this provision, therefore, this may impact the Council's temporary accommodation budget.	3	3	9	Accommodation provided when SWEP has been activated is currently council owned temporary accommodation or sourced via known nightly let providers. Although it is required at times throughout winter, activation of SWEP during warmer months is very rare.	3	1	3

Impact Assessments Required or Reviews Due

Equalities & Diversity	Sustainability & Climate Change
Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028	
Housing Allocations Policy 2020 Updated August 2022	
Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy	

Private Rented Sector Offer Policy	
Fit and Proper Person Assessment Policy	
Fit and Proper Fees Policy	
Housing Assistance Policy	
Housing Enforcement Policy	