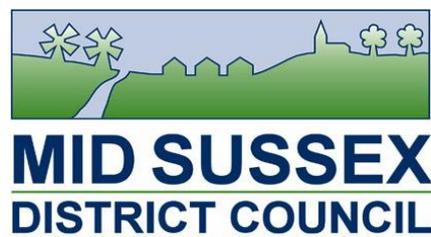




COUNCIL

24 JUNE 2020



16 June 2020

Unless a majority of the Council resolve to extend the meeting before 10.00 pm it will automatically end at 10.00 pm in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17.2.

New regulations came into effect on 4 April 2020 to allow Councils to hold meetings remotely via electronic means. As such, Council and Committee meetings will occur with appropriate Councillors participating via a remote video link, and public access via a live stream video through the [Mid Sussex District Council's YouTube channel](#).

To all Members of the Council,

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL** to be held **VIA REMOTE VIDEO LINK** on **WEDNESDAY, 24TH JUNE, 2020 at 6.00 pm** to transact the following business:

Yours sincerely,

KATHRYN HALL
Chief Executive

Pages

1. Roll Call and Virtual Meeting Explanation
2. Opening Prayer
3. To receive Questions from Members of the Public Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 9.
4. To confirm Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 4 March 2020. **5 - 12**
5. To receive Declarations of Interest from Members in respect of any matter on the Agenda.
6. To consider any items that the Chairman of the Council agrees to take as urgent business.
7. Chairman's Announcements

Working together for a better Mid Sussex



8.	Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2020-2025.	13 - 62
9.	Temporary Accommodation Review and the Consideration of Additional Resources.	63 - 68
10.	Making of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan.	69 - 74
11.	Recruitment of Independent Persons to Standards Matters.	75 - 78
12.	Recommendations from Cabinet held on 1 June 2020.	79 - 80
13.	To receive the Leader's Report	
14.	Report of Cabinet Members, including questions pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 10.1	
15.	Questions from Members pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 10.2	

To: **Members of Council:** Councillors C Trumble (Chairman), M Belsey (Vice-Chair), G Allen, J Ash-Edwards, R Bates, J Belsey, A Bennett, L Bennett, A Boutrup, P Bradbury, P Brown, H Brunsdon, R Cartwright, P Chapman, R Clarke, E Coe-Gunnell White, P Coote, M Cornish, R Cromie, J Dabell, R de Mierre, B Dempsey, S Ellis, R Eggleston, A Eves, L Gibbs, I Gibson, S Hatton, J Henwood, S Hicks, S Hillier, T Hussain, R Jackson, J Knight, C Laband, Andrew Lea, Anthea Lea, J Llewellyn-Burke, A MacNaughton, G Marsh, J Mockford, A Peacock, C Phillips, M Pulfer, R Salisbury, S Smith, A Sparasci, L Stockwell, D Sweatman, N Walker, R Webb, N Webster and R Whittaker

**Minutes of a meeting of Council
held on Wednesday, 4th March, 2020
from 7.00 pm - 8.27 pm**

Present:

M Belsey (Vice-Chair)

G Allen	R de Mierre	J Llewellyn-Burke
J Ash-Edwards	B Dempsey	A MacNaughton
R Bates	S Ellis	J Mockford
J Belsey	R Eggleston	A Peacock
A Bennett	L Gibbs	C Phillips
L Bennett	I Gibson	M Pulfer
P Bradbury	S Hatton	R Salisbury
P Brown	J Henwood	S Smith
R Cartwright	S Hicks	A Sparasci
P Chapman	S Hillier	L Stockwell
R Clarke	T Hussain	D Sweatman
E Coe-	R Jackson	N Walker
Gunnell White	J Knight	R Webb
P Coote	C Laband	N Webster
M Cornish	Andrew Lea	R Whittaker
R Cromie	Anthea Lea	
J Dabell		

Absent: Councillors C Trumble, A Boutrup, H Brunsdon, A Eves and G Marsh

Councillor Margaret Belsey acted as Chairman for this meeting and with the agreement of the Council appointed Councillor Anthea Lea as Vice Chairman.

1. OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was read by the Vice-Chairman.

2. TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 9.

A question was received from David Hayes:

Re: Land east of High Beech Lane - Land Stability Condition 14.

Despite Portsmouth Wood Close and Drive residents making representations and comments to MSDC about land stability issues, dating from 2006 and certainly from 2014, residents are extremely alarmed to find these roads have been excluded from the crucial land stability Condition. Why were we given assurances from Jonathan Ash-Edwards and your drainage engineer, Scott Wakely that this Condition covered the entire site? MSDC must surely have known that the previous builder of Portsmouth Wood Close went into liquidation due to land stability problems?

Response from Cllr. Andrew MacNaughton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning:

Following representations from residents the Council included a condition on land stability. The Condition 14 refers to those roads which the Council considered would have the potential to be impacted by land stability issues.

I can confirm that Cllr Ash-Edwards did not make assurances that the condition covered the whole site and in fact in an email from him to residents he confirms that this condition cannot be amended retrospectively.

I also have an email from Scott Wakely to a resident where he confirms that the land stability condition does not cover the entire site.

A supplementary question was asked by David Hayes to clarify if the land stability condition will cover both sites; the access and the area for building. The Cabinet Member stated that it would cover only this particular site.

A question was received from Mary Samuel:

Are MSDC failing in their responsibility by not following government regulations (March 2014) regarding land stability, that require an assessment of ground instability and I quote, 'before a detailed planning application is prepared'? Surely all nearby householders must not be excluded from the land stability Condition? Otherwise residents could face subsidence or land slippage problems and could ultimately seek redress in the Courts.

Response from Cllr. Andrew MacNaughton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning:

Planning policy and guidance both state that where a site is affected by land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer / landowner.

The condition attached to the permission requires that "no development shall commence until details have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority regarding slope stability issues" and the development should only be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

We are waiting for a Slope Stability Report and Intrusive Ground Investigation works in relation to condition 14.

A supplementary question was asked by Mary Samuel as to why the developer had been allowed to proceed with intrusive work on site before the condition had been agreed. The Cabinet Member confirmed that a stop notice was issued as soon as the Council became aware that work had started prior to the condition being fulfilled.

A question was received from Hilary May:

Is MSDC going to allow the 'Temporary Stop Notice' on this site to expire in a few days' time? If so, please explain how the developers will be able to continue their huge land excavations into this geologically unstable hillside with its shifting subterranean springs, without any reference to the land stability Condition? Bearing in mind, these excavations are right beside a busy road and very near to Portsmouth Wood residents' houses.

Response from Cllr. Andrew MacNaughton, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning:

If Croudace carry out works beyond the parameters currently allowed for without discharging the necessary pre-commencement conditions, the Council can serve another Temporary Stop Notice.

The only works on site have been to deliver the access. The current Stop Notice has been effective because it has prevented work carrying on so that the Council can discharge the necessary conditions relating to the access works.

A supplementary question was asked by Hilary May to clarify if the temporary stop notice will expire in a few days' time. The Cabinet Member confirmed that the notice was valid for 28 days and will then cease. If further work commences before the conditions have been fulfilled, then a new stop notice can be issued.

3. TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2020.

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 29 January 2020 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

4. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY MATTER ON THE AGENDA.

In relation to item 8, Councillors Andrew Lea, Liz Bennett and Pete Bradbury declared an interest as they are West Sussex County Councillors.

5. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT BUSINESS.

None.

6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Chairman noted that recent engagements of both the Chairman and Vice Chairman are available to view online. She also encouraged Members to support the fundraising Marsden March taking place on 29 March in aid of the Chairman's chosen charity.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2020.

The Chairman moved the item and took Members to the recommendations which were agreed.

RESOLVED

Council approved:

- (i) that £82,000 be transferred from General Reserve to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 20 of the Cabinet report;

- (ii) that £4,702 grant income relating to Local Authority Data Sharing Programme Grant be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 21 of the Cabinet report;
- (iii) that £1,779 grant income relating to External Wall System Data collection exercise be transferred to Specific Reserve as detailed in paragraph 22 of the Cabinet report;
- (iv) that the commuted sum of £29,925 is released from General Reserve as detailed in paragraph 23 of the Cabinet report;
- (v) the variations to the Capital Programme contained in paragraph 37 of the Cabinet report in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure rule B3.

8. CORPORATE PLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2020/21.

The Leader moved the item, noting that it was the first Budget and Corporate Plan for the new administration. He thanked the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Finance and Performance for their scrutiny of the budget on 15 January. He noted that there have been significant changes to Council finances over the last decade and the Council has responded effectively to set a bold and ambitious agenda. This has included investing in assets to generate new income to support services, ensuring the Council is financially independent, using technology to modernise services and ensuring that work is carefully prioritised on behalf of Mid Sussex residents. The administration has also been bold in bringing investment and resources into the District both from Government and the private sector, exercising significant leadership and influence with regional and national partners on behalf of Mid Sussex.

The Leader drew Members attention to some further key areas contained within the plan:

- 1) Sustainable Economic Growth – Through measures such as continuing the grants programme to support microbusinesses, the preparation of a marketing strategy for the District, the delivery of a new Parking Strategy and consideration of the deliverability of a Business Improvement District. Also through developing better infrastructure with better digital connectivity and the Burgess Hill Growth Programme.
- 2) Environment – Continuing the work outlined in the Sustainability Strategy including the roll out of the first food waste recycling project in West Sussex and a network of electrical vehicle charging points across the District.

The Leader acknowledged the two amendments on environment and sustainability matters put forward by the Liberal Democrats and on behalf of the Conservative group he confirmed that these were accepted and to be included in the overall recommendations to be voted on.

- 3) Planning for the future of our communities – In the next year the Council will begin the 5 year review of the District Plan. Work will also continue to explore options to expand the provision of temporary accommodation for homeless households in the District, and on the regeneration of the Orchards Shopping Centre to ensure it is fit for purpose going forward.

Discussion was held on the work the Council has carried out to address environmental issues and climate change, and the projects proposed going forward. Members were supportive of the cross-party approach to incorporate the amendment into the recommendations. It was noted by some that the Scrutiny Committees are the platform to raise such proposals, and that the current amendment reinforces work

that is already taking place. Two Members agreed that the Council should proceed with work to combat climate change from a position of leverage, to ensure that the Council's actions encourage others to follow and that the Council needs to remain proactive in public relations on the various initiative taking place. A Member requested further action to ensure new homes are built to incorporate renewable energy, and for work to progress on promoting walking and cycling within the District. Clarification was provided on the photovoltaic panels installed on the Council's roof, and the energy they produce.

A number of Members commended Officers and the Scrutiny Committee for the work in preparing a strong and balanced Corporate Plan and Budget and for the cross party working to come to an agreement on the recommendations.

Discussion was held regarding economic growth and sustainability and the importance of including villages in this development work. The Cabinet Member confirmed that villages were included in the call for employment sites as part of the site allocations DPD work, with limited response. Villages will be included in the fresh call for sites for the next District Plan review. A Member welcomed the continuation of the grants for microbusiness and shop fronts as a way to encourage local businesses and highlighted that sustainability would be the main focus of the next Open for Business event.

It was noted that there is no budget for the Council priority projects and this should be reviewed regularly throughout the year by the relevant Scrutiny Committee.

A Member noted the importance of continuous investment in technology to continue, and for investment in open spaces which are key areas for the wellbeing of the community.

Discussion was held on the initiatives underway with the Mid Sussex Partnership and local schools to combat anti-social behaviour within the District. The Cabinet Member noted that £50,000 is allocated to continue such projects as well as budget provision for a new Anti-Social Behaviour Officer.

A Member sought clarification on scenario planning in the light of current uncertainties facing the Country. The Leader noted that the Council has demonstrated the ability to be agile in responding to external influences and continues to engage with all partnerships for contingency planning. Regarding Covid-19 concerns, the Council is following advice from Public Health England, and has well established business continuity plans should it be necessary.

A discussion was held on the number of trees managed within the District. It was noted that according to a recent Sussex Biodiversity report 29% of Mid Sussex is covered by trees, which is above the national average of 13%. The Council uses software to map trees. A Member attended the recent meeting of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and agreed to share the minutes of this meeting as it pertained to tree planting and other biodiverse measures in place.

In response to a Member's question regarding the approved West Sussex County Council Budget and potential risk to Mid Sussex, the Leader acknowledged the challenges faced by the County Council and confirmed that there have been improvements in partnership working to ensure this Council is included in early discussion on issues that may have a direct impact to the District.

Councillor Knight seconded the item, noting that it has been robustly debated at the Scrutiny meeting. He noted that the Budget and Corporate Plan is ambitious and has a net benefit to all parts of the District. The Council continues to support residents, maintain financial independence and provide value for money, with services delivered to target.

The Chairman took Members to a recorded vote in accordance with the budget regulations:

	For	Against	Abstained
Councillor G Allen	✓		
Councillor Ash-Edwards	✓		
Councillor R Bates	✓		
Councillor J Belsey	✓		
Councillor M Belsey	✓		
Councillor A Bennett	✓		
Councillor L Bennett	✓		
Councillor P Bradbury	✓		
Councillor P Brown	✓		
Councillor R Cartwright	✓		
Councillor P Chapman	✓		
Councillor R Clarke	✓		
Councillor E Coe-Gunnell White	✓		
Councillor P Coote	✓		
Councillor M Cornish	✓		
Councillor R Cromie	✓		
Councillor J Dabell	✓		
Councillor R De Mierre	✓		
Councillor B Dempsey	✓		
Councillor R Eggleston	✓		
Councillor S Ellis	✓		
Councillor L Gibbs	✓		
Councillor I Gibson	✓		
Councillor S Hatton	✓		
Councillor J Henwood	✓		
Councillor S Hicks	✓		
Councillor S Hillier	✓		
Councillor T Hussain	✓		
Councillor R Jackson	✓		
Councillor J Knight	✓		
Councillor C Laband	✓		
Councillor Andrew Lea	✓		
Councillor Anthea Lea	✓		
Councillor J Lewellyn-Burke	✓		
Councillor A MacNaughton	✓		
Councillor J Mockford	✓		
Councillor A Peacock	✓		
Councillor C Phillips	✓		
Councillor M Pulfer	✓		
Councillor R Salisbury	✓		
Councillor S Smith	✓		
Councillor A Sparasci	✓		
Councillor L Stockwell	✓		

Councillor D Sweatman	✓		
Councillor N Walker	✓		
Councillor R Webb	✓		
Councillor N Webster	✓		
Councillor R Whittaker	✓		

The 48 Members present voted in support.

RESOLVED

Council resolved to approve the Corporate Plan and Budget for 2020/21 as set out in the report.

The meeting finished at 8.27 pm

Chairman

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HOMELESSNESS and ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2020 - 2025

REPORT OF: Judy Holmes, Assistant Chief Executive
Contact Officer: Emma Shuttleworth, Business Unit Leader for Housing Services
Email: Emma.Shuttleworth@midsussex.gov.uk Tel: 01444 477431
Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: No
Report to: Council
24th June 2020

Purpose of Report

1. To recommend that the Council adopts the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25 following consideration by the Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning and Economic Growth at its meeting on 22nd January 2020.

Recommendation

2. **Council is recommended to adopt the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 at Appendix 1.**
-

Background

3. The Homelessness Act, 2002, requires all local authorities to conduct a review of homelessness in their district and use this to inform a strategy for tackling homelessness which they must publish at intervals of no longer than five years.
4. The current Homelessness Strategy expires in 2021 but it has become necessary to carry a review in order to respond to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the requirement to focus on rough sleeping.
5. In its Rough Sleeping Strategy August 2018, the Government committed to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) has pledged to increase scrutiny of local housing authorities' homelessness strategies. In August 2019, the Government advised all local housing authorities to submit a homelessness strategy for their consideration.
6. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out how services will be delivered in the future to tackle homelessness and the Review sets out the available resources in place to prevent and relieve homelessness.
7. In developing the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, a comprehensive review of homelessness in the District and an assessment of future trends was carried out. The review assessed the nature and extent of homelessness in the District, together with its causes and an analysis of those groups most affected. The review also considers the use of temporary accommodation by the Council, the availability of social housing, access to the private rented sector and the affordability of market housing. The review can be found at:

<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/4955/homelessness-review-2019-v2.pdf>
8. The Council consulted on the strategy between 9th August to 4th October 2019. The key issues identified by the review and the responses to the consultation have been

used to inform and develop the new Strategy. Of the 45 responses, 93% agreed that the proposed priorities for the new strategy are appropriate. A summary of the outcome of the consultation can be found at:

<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/4620/homelessness-strategy-2019-short-summary-consultation-response-report.pdf>

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025

9. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is attached at Appendix 1 and sets out five strategic objectives and actions for their achievement in preventing and dealing with homelessness in the District. The overall aim of the strategy is to deliver an accessible service to prevent homelessness and assist homeless households in finding long term affordable and sustainable housing.
10. The strategic objectives identified in the Strategy are:
 - **Preventing and relieving homelessness**
 - **Minimise the use of and improve temporary accommodation**
 - **Prevent recurring homelessness**
 - **Tackle rough sleeping and homelessness amongst vulnerable groups**
 - **Enable access to suitable and affordable accommodation**
11. The Strategy includes an Action Plan detailing how the strategic objectives will be achieved. The lockdown has increased strain and pressures within households causing family breakdown, including an increase in domestic violence.

Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic

12. The strategy was proposed for adoption to Council on 1st April 2020, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic this meeting was cancelled.

As reported to Cabinet on the 1st June and the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Finance and Performance on the 17th June 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic has clearly had a significant impact on the Council and in particular on the demand for assistance from those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
13. As a result of this the Council has reviewed the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy. After careful consideration, a fundamental review of the Strategy is not required at this stage because the objectives and the action plan remain and are more appropriate and applicable. However, as indicated, the effect of Covid-19 is expected to cause more homelessness in both the short and medium term. It is considered appropriate at this stage to highlight the impacts of Covid-19, and to review the Strategy and its Action Plan more comprehensively from April 2021 when the overall impact of Covid-19 will be better understood.
14. The Covid-19 pandemic has increased pressures on temporary accommodation. The numbers in temporary accommodation have increased from 85 at the end of February to 103 at the end of May. The numbers in nightly paid guest house

accommodation increased over the same period from 48 to 59. This is partially due to the Government's requirement on the 26th of March for Councils to "bring everyone in" to safeguard rough sleepers and those at risk of sleeping rough. These are people to whom the council would not usually have a legal duty to accommodate under the Homelessness Reduction Act. The Government have instructed councils to work with this cohort to support them to move onto settled accommodation and not return to rough sleeping.

15. The pandemic has also created pent up demand. Covid-19 has halted activity across all tenures in the housing market including the delivery of new affordable homes which has had a negative impact on the service's capacity to move people on from temporary accommodation. The market is starting to resume activity but at a slow pace. Possession actions have been suspended until the end of August but the loss of employment and incomes will mean many people may be unable to meet their housing costs and will be faced with homelessness later in 2020/21.
16. The Strategy was considered by the Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning and Economic Growth on 22nd January 2020 and was unanimously supported.

Policy Context

17. The delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will make a significant contribution to the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan, and to the Council's aim to be an effective council delivering value for money services and helping to create a strong economy, environment and community.

Other Options Considered

18. The report provides a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy which sets out how the Council will meet its homelessness duties. No other practicable options were identified.

Financial Implications

19. The actions set out in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy can be met from existing resources. If additional resources are required this will be considered by Cabinet.

Risk Management Implications

20. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will enable the Council to demonstrate how it is meeting its duties under the Homelessness Act 2002 that require Local Authorities to have such strategies and will avoid the risks associated with non-compliance.

Equalities and customer service implications

21. An impact assessment has been completed for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Those assisted by the Council to prevent them becoming homeless include some of the most vulnerable residents of Mid Sussex.

Other material implications

22. None.

Background Papers

1. Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Equality Impact Assessment
<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/4621/homelessness-strategy-impact-assessment-2019.pdf>
2. Consultation Outcomes
<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/4620/homelessness-strategy-2019-short-summary-consultation-response-report.pdf>
3. Review
<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/4955/homelessness-review-2019-v2.pdf>

Mid Sussex District Council Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

2020 - 2025 (draft)



Ending
homelessness
together



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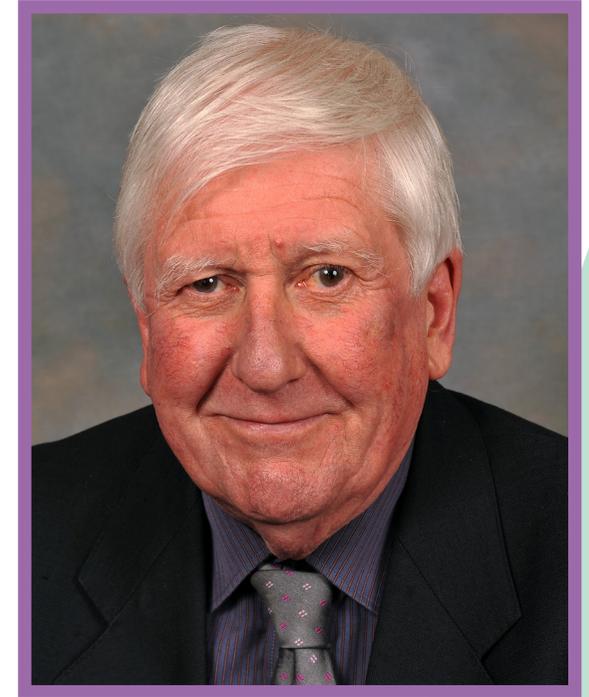
Foreword by Councillor Andrew MacNaughton, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning

Mid Sussex District Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2020-2025 has been developed at a time of significant change in the legislation governing homelessness and against a background of acute housing shortages, particularly affordable housing shortages, across the county with affordability ratios a significant issue for Mid Sussex.

The strategy was developed before the COVID-19 pandemic which had the immediate impact of increasing the demands on the housing service and the pressures to provide and meet the costs of temporary accommodation including for rough sleepers. It is anticipated that the repercussions from Covid-19 will increase the risk of many more people losing their homes across all tenures in Mid Sussex during 2020/21 and 2021/22. Additionally, the personal pressures and stresses within families brought by the pandemic may lead to family breakdowns and more homelessness. The housing service will use all their efforts and resources to support and assist those at risk and prevent homelessness wherever they can.

Mid Sussex District Council has always made the provision of housing a priority as we understand the fundamental role secure housing makes in contributing to lifetime opportunities. Homelessness, in all its forms, can have a significant detrimental impact on many areas of life, including undermining educational achievement and acting as a barrier for those seeking and keeping employment. It also puts extra demand on health services.

Nationally homelessness is on the increase. There is growing evidence that shortages in the supply of affordable housing is putting additional pressure on households to find and sustain suitable affordable homes and this will result in increase in demand for our Housing Services in the coming years. We do not underestimate the challenge that the current housing market and the impact of welfare reform presents for some, but we believe we are well placed and determined to provide our residents with the best possible solutions to prevent homelessness wherever possible.



This Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out the Council's proactive approach to the prevention of homelessness. Our objectives are to target resources earlier to those most at risk of homelessness; to minimise the use of temporary accommodation; work towards the end of rough sleeping; prevent recurring homelessness and enable access to suitable and affordable accommodation.

These objectives remain as appropriate and relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as it remains the Council's aim that we need to prevent homelessness.

I look forward to working with our partners over the coming five years to realise this aim.



Councillor Andrew MacNaughton

1. Introduction

This Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out the Council's priorities for addressing homelessness in the District over the next five years and how it intends to endeavour to meet the Government's pledge to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it altogether by 2027 in Mid Sussex.

We want fewer people in Mid Sussex to experience the trauma of homelessness and ensure that those who do can find a settled home as quickly as possible. Tackling homelessness involves strong partnerships with other local authorities, housing associations, positive engagement with the private rented sector and other agencies in both the statutory and voluntary sectors. There is much to build upon, and in particular we want to build on our successful proactive housing options approach, as strengthened by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which has helped to prevent homelessness and limit the use of temporary accommodation in the past.

The Council has a duty under the Homelessness Act 2002 to conduct a review of the nature and extent of homelessness in its District every five years and use this review to develop a strategy setting out how services will be delivered in the future to tackle homelessness and the available resources to prevent and relieve homelessness. In 2018 the Government published their national rough sleeping strategy which obligated local authorities to include a special focus on Rough Sleeping and this is Mid Sussex's first Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

In developing the new Strategy, a comprehensive review of homelessness in the district was undertaken. Identifying and understanding the impact of the challenges in Mid Sussex will be crucial to the delivery of this revised strategy and the future delivery of services. In conducting the review and formulating the strategy, the Council has taken into account the new duties introduced through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This Strategy sits alongside Mid Sussex District Council's District Plan, the Tenancy Strategy and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Council's latest review to this Strategy and the key issues identified in this review as well as the responses to the consultation with residents, service users, partner and stake holders have been used to inform and develop the strategic objectives. The consultation was undertaken via a consultation event and an online survey available to the public on our website and over 244 individuals and partner organisations were sent the survey direct and invited to contribute their views and perceptions of homelessness within the district.

Key Findings of the Review



PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR - Landlords and letting agencies remain reluctant to let to households in receipt of benefits. Universal credit is compounding this issue due to concerns about tenant arrears. Upfront costs can equate to over £2,500 and rents are on average £1,255pcm, 27% higher than the Local Housing Allowance. This leaves the sector largely inaccessible to households on low incomes or in receipt of benefits.



HOUSING MARKET - In Mid Sussex the average asking price for a property increased by approximately 49% in the last 10 years to approximately £370k in September 2018. On average residents can expect to pay around 11 times their annual household earnings to purchase an average priced property in Mid Sussex, making home ownership largely unattainable to households on low incomes.



SUPPLY OF HOUSING - The supply of housing is unable to meet the demand. Approximately 386 social homes become available each year, but there are over 1424 households on the housing register (this includes existing social tenants seeking to transfer to an alternative property). From 2014/15 to 2018/19 3914 new homes were built in the district of which 709 were affordable housing, approximately 140 per annum.



HOMELESSNESS - Over 930 households approach the Council annually for advice and assistance regarding housing and homelessness. The most common reason for people becoming homeless in 2018/19 was parents/relatives/friends being unable to accommodate them (31%), followed by loss of privately rented accommodation (28%). These remain the predominant causes of homelessness in Mid Sussex.

ROUGH SLEEPING - There is a local and national trend in the rising number of people sleeping rough. This is not believed to be attributable to one specific issue, but a variety of complex factors, such as the impact of welfare reforms, rising housing costs, mental health issues, substance addictions, and a lack of affordable and supported housing. In the last 5 years (2014 – 2018) the numbers reported in Mid Sussex for the annual winter count have fluctuated between 7 and 11, the number for 2018 was 10. 2019 was 8.



FUTURE FUNDING OF HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT SERVICES - Pressure on budgets at West Sussex County Council is placing supported accommodation and services for vulnerable people at risk, requiring new models of service delivery or alternative funding streams to continue to provide services for this group.

As a result of the Homelessness Review, the Council has indentified the following 5 priorities for addressing homelessness within Mid Sussex:

- ➔ Preventing and relieving homelessness
- ➔ Minimise the use of and improve temporary accommodation
- ➔ Prevent recurring homelessness
- ➔ Tackling rough sleeping and homelessness amongst vulnerable groups
- ➔ Enable access to suitable and affordable accommodation

The Action Plan explains in more detail how the Council plans to address these priorities.

Vision

Mid Sussex District Council's main purpose is to be an effective Council delivering value for money services and helping to create a strong economy, environment and community.

The Council remains committed to preventing and reducing homelessness, tackling the main causes of homelessness and supporting those in need. The overall aim for this Strategy is to deliver an accessible service to prevent homelessness and assist homeless households in finding long term affordable and sustainable housing.

The following sections explain in more detail the specific commitments that will deliver our vision for Mid Sussex. Those sections include a detailed view of the outcomes we aim to deliver along with the key actions and measures of success. They also include details about the key partners we will be working with.

3. Strategic Framework

The work of local authorities is carried out against an evolving back drop of legislation, guidance, and wider market influences. It is led nationally by central Government, but applied locally through policies and procedures that allow authorities to tailor their services to meet the needs of their residents.

National Context

The Government's White Paper on housing, 'Fixing our broken housing market', in March 2018 acknowledged the scale of the problem in providing a range of housing that meets a cross-section of need. Without a cure to the imbalance in the market, the result has been a national increase in all forms of housing need, exhibiting itself in the most acute forms of housing need – homelessness and rough sleeping. On 30 June 2018 the number of households in temporary accommodation was 82,310, up 5 per cent from 78,540 on 30 June 2017, and up 71 per cent on the low of 48,010 on 31 December 2010. According to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), from January to March 2019, 32,740 households were considered homeless, a rise of 11.2% from 29,430 in the quarter before. 84,740 households with 126,020 children were in temporary accommodation in March 2019.

Affordability and the issue of households on low incomes being able to resolve their housing need is particularly challenging in London and the South East. The ratio that demonstrates the cost of housing against earnings has increased in a negative way, to the point now that for residents in Mid Sussex the cost of housing within the open market is 11 times the earning capability.

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) has not kept pace with the market resulting in an increasingly unaffordable private rented market for households on low incomes who are dependent either wholly or in part for assistance with their housing costs. A direct correlation can be made between the increasing disparity between the LHA and the increase in the number of homelessness applications resulting from a loss of accommodation within that sector.

It has been acknowledged that there have been unintended consequences from the various measures introduced through welfare reform. In February 2019, the Minister for the Department of Works and Pensions conceded challenges with the initial rollout of universal credit and that the difficulty in accessing money was "one of the causes" of the rise of food-banks.

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Homeless households are provided with assistance under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 ('the HRA'), which came into force on 3rd April 2018. The HRA renewed the focus on preventing and relieving homelessness, placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages, and to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who were protected under existing legislation.

On 1st October 2018 the 'duty to refer' came into force, giving certain public bodies a legal duty to refer households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to a local authority for advice and assistance. Whilst registered providers do not have a duty to refer, a number have signed up to the 'Commitment to Refer', a voluntary commitment to making referrals where no statutory duty to do so exists. The Council encourages registered providers with housing stock in the district to adopt such practices as it provides earlier opportunities to intervene and potentially prevent homelessness.

Rough Sleeper Strategy

The Government published a Rough Sleeper Strategy in August 2018 that lays out their commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. Work to deliver these aims is built around three core pillars: Prevention (understanding the issues that lead to rough sleeping and providing timely support for those at risk), Intervention (helping those already sleeping rough with swift support tailored to their individual circumstances) and Recovery (supporting people in finding a new home and rebuilding their lives). The strategy acknowledges that ending rough sleeping will require central and local government, as well as business, communities, faith and voluntary groups and the general public to work together to tackle the problem.

Welfare Reform

Welfare reforms introduced since the previous Strategy present ongoing challenges to households in receipt of benefits and to the organisations and individuals that house and support them.

Most notably, since the introduction of Universal Credit, local authorities and social housing providers have reported its impact on claimants' ability to meet their household costs and there has been a reported increase in rent arrears as a result. On 15 July 2019 the National Federation of ALMOs published a survey into the impact of Universal Credit. The survey of 39 respondents managing over half a million social and affordable properties found that:

- ➔ 12% of households are on Universal Credit, increasing from 4% last year.
- ➔ 30% of all households have arrears, owing an average of 4 weeks rent (£320)
- ➔ 21% of households on HB have arrears, owing on average 3 weeks rent (£221)
- ➔ 67% of households on Universal Credit have arrears, owing 7 weeks rent (£564)

BENEFIT CAP – Benefits have been capped to limit the amount households can receive unless they are working for the required hours:

- £384.62 (£20,000 a year for 1 or 2 parent families)
- £257.69 per week (£13,400 a year for single people)

UNIVERSAL CREDIT – Universal Credit (UC) sees all working age benefits (excluding Personal Independence Payment and Carer's Allowance) rolled into one single monthly payment.

This payment includes the housing element and is paid direct to the tenant.

SINGLE ROOM RATE – Single people under the age of 35 are only able to claim the single room Local Housing Allowance Rate – the rate of a room in a shared house.

This makes it very difficult for those under 35 to secure a home in the private rented sector that they can afford.

LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE – In 2016 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates were frozen for four years until 2020.

SPARE ROOM SUBSIDY – Children of different sexes are expected to share a bedroom until aged 10 and of the same sex until aged 16.

Housing benefit is calculated on this basis and where families are 'under-occupying', tenants are required to meet any shortfall in rent.

PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT – Personal Independence Payment (PIP) has replaced Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people aged 16 to 64 making new claims.

This is based on how a person's condition affects them, not the condition they have.

Leaving the European Union

In the national referendum on 23 June 2016 the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. The ramifications for housing-related areas (such as the housing market, the labour market, forecasted and actual population growth, the economy, financing programmes and procurement rules) are as yet unknown.

Local Context

The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy sits within a framework of documents that guide the Council's approach to housing and homelessness (as shown below) underpinned by the Council's corporate priority and commitment to drive down homelessness in the District.



West Sussex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019 – 2024



District Plan 2014-2031



Strategic Housing Market Assessment



Tenancy Strategy



Allocations Scheme



Registered Providers Tenancy Policies

Local Plan

The Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, (as adopted in March 2018) sets the way forward for planning the future for Mid Sussex. The plan identified a total housing need of 16,390 homes for the period 2014-2031. The District Plan examination concluded that Mid Sussex has a housing need of 876 dwellings per annum until 2023/24.

Tenancy Strategy

A requirement of the Localism Act 2011 is that local authorities have a Tenancy Strategy in place which sets out their expectations of social housing providers operating within their district to ensure that housing is provided to meet local housing need. Social housing providers are to have regard to this Tenancy Strategy when adopting or reviewing their own tenancy policies and operating procedures. The Tenancy Strategy sets out the Councils expectations of registered providers operating in the District in relation to:



To meet housing need, including the needs of those who are homeless, those to whom we must give reasonable preference owing to the inadequacy of their housing, and those who are older or vulnerable for some other reason.



To create balanced and sustainable communities. This means giving people tenancies that help them put down roots. It also means achieving mixed-income communities. A mix of incomes can be achieved by including affordable housing within open market sites, and by including social and/or affordable rent alongside intermediate tenures, including shared ownership. Where appropriate, a mix of working and non-working households can be achieved through the use of local lettings policies.



To ensure that low income households can continue to be housed. Providers should consider and take into account the impact of different rent levels on different household types, and ensure that all household types in need of affordable housing can be catered for, including larger families requiring three or four bedroom accommodation. Providers need to take this into account in setting their rent policies for new build housing, and also in their approach to converting existing stock from target to affordable rents. Affordable housing is very over-subscribed in the District, and disposals of social or affordable rented homes should be the exception.



To make best use of stock and facilitate movement within the sector. This would include enabling under occupiers, including existing social tenants, to downsize by considering the terms of any alternative tenancy that would encourage them to move, as well as encouraging those in substantially adapted properties to move if they no longer need those adaptations.



To help people make informed choices through effective communication and information regarding rents and fixed term tenancies, especially for existing social housing tenants.



To prevent homelessness arising as a result of the ending of fixed term tenancies.

The Council also encourages registered providers with housing stock in the District to sign up to the “Commitment to Refer”, a voluntary commitment to making referrals where no statutory duty to do so exists. This encouragement will be included in the Council’s Tenancy Strategy when it is next reviewed. This is also reinforced in the Council’s Joint Protocol on Tenancy Sustainment and Homelessness Prevention. The Council encourages such practices as it provides earlier opportunities to intervene and potentially prevent homelessness.

Allocation Scheme

Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 requires local authorities to have a published Allocation Scheme for defining the procedure to be followed in the allocation of social housing. Mid Sussex District Council use a banding scheme to assess the relative priority of applicants on the housing register, and ensures that priority is given to those with a reasonable preference. Households who are homeless within the meaning of Part 7 of the Act have a reasonable preference, along with others as specified by the Scheme.

Social housing is a limited resource and the Allocation Scheme has to balance the needs of housing homeless households to whom a duty is owed (and whom might be living in temporary accommodation), with those who have had their priority assessed through an application to join the housing register and who are in housing need for one or more other reasons.

Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019 – 2024

The West Sussex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) encompasses a range of work, including detailed needs assessments and a range of briefings and ad hoc analyses. The JSNA 2018 details the evidence base for the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019 – 2024.

The West Sussex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019 - 2024 is a tool to enable the Health and Wellbeing Board to set out the plan for action by the Council County, Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS providers, district and borough councils, voluntary sector and other partners to inform their planning, commissioning and provision of services.

To achieve the vision and reduce health inequalities as set out in the strategy, work that sets the direction of travel for health and wellbeing across the county is divided into three themes;

- 1) Starting well (covering pregnancy to young adulthood)

- 2) Living and working well (covering adulthood)
- 3) Aging well (covering later life to end of life)

One of the four goals within the 'Living and Working Well' theme is that "People have access to good quality homes providing a secure place for families to thrive and promote good health, wellbeing and independent living". This is elaborated on as:

"Adequate housing, where people can live in security, peace and dignity, is a basic human right. The quality of housing plays a critical role in creating and maintaining good health, as well as helping individuals to recover from illness and remain independent. We will champion prevention and support targeted action towards those at risk of homelessness, including those in contact with mental health services."

One of the key initiatives through which it is envisioned this goal will be achieved is "Preventing homelessness – working with frontline staff to identify risk factors and intervene early". West Sussex County Council is the lead authority for the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2024.

4 UNDERSTANDING HOMELESSNESS

We know that at different points in people's lives there are specific triggers and risk factors that affect the likelihood of a person experiencing homelessness. However, homelessness and rough sleeping are not inevitable consequences of these drivers, as many people who experience them do not become homeless.

Understanding the events that may lead to or contribute towards homelessness assists the Council in highlighting who is most at risk of becoming homeless and therefore which organisations and services the Council need to work with to maximise opportunities for early intervention and the prevention of homelessness.

Housing is often part of a wider problem and symptomatic of deeper issues. Frequently these underlying causes are not being adequately addressed by the services the person has come into contact with. Often this is because the person does not meet relevant service thresholds where the right expertise may otherwise be available, or because we can sometimes – even when trying to operate collectively - work in isolation. Sometimes the person we need to help is viewed by agencies, including ourselves, through the lens of our own constraints. This strategy looks to challenge that approach and rethink how we work with people and support agencies to improve outcomes for our service users.

PRIORITY ONE: PREVENTING AND RELIEVING HOMELESSNESS

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced duties to ensure that local authorities focus on working with service users to try to prevent and/or relieve their homelessness. This Strategy reflects this approach.

Challenges

The Homelessness Review and consultation responses identified the following challenges to preventing and relieving homelessness in Mid Sussex:

-  **EXPECTATIONS** - Expectations of accessing social housing are not realistic relative to the actual supply and demand of social housing locally.
-  **THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR** - The costs and challenges associated with accessing the private rented sector limit our ability to prevent/relieve homelessness this way. The end of assured shorthold tenancies (within private rented accommodation) is also one of the two most common causes of homelessness in Mid Sussex.
-  **FAMILY EVICTION** - Eviction from the parental home is the other predominant cause of homelessness in Mid Sussex. Young people remaining in or returning to the parental home is often symptomatic of wider issues, such as an inability to afford accommodation locally. Involvement at the point of crisis can mean missed opportunities for early intervention and the prevention of homelessness.
-  **WELFARE REFORMS** - Single people under the age of 35 who are in receipt of benefits can only claim the shared accommodation rate of the Local Housing Allowance. This limits our options for preventing or relieving their homelessness. Those affected by the benefit cap are also adversely affected and in some cases are not even able to afford social housing social rents.
-  **HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS** - Identifying and tackling hidden homelessness (where households do not have a place to call home but are not reflected in official statistics as homeless, such as those who are sofa surfing with friends for example) remains a challenge, as the scale of the situation remains largely undetermined.



Action Taken

1. ALLOCATION SCHEME – The demand for social housing outweighs the supply. Through its published Allocations Scheme, the Council balances the competing demands of households to whom a housing duty is owed under homelessness legislation with those in housing need on the housing register (including those who under-occupy or are overcrowded in their existing accommodation).

Mid Sussex District Council reviews its Allocations Scheme as required by legislation. The Scheme seeks to balance conflicting priorities for housing. In doing this it provides vulnerable households to whom a Relief Duty is owed reasonable preference and on depending on the circumstances of the household, this may mean they are able to access social housing avoiding the need to be placed into temporary accommodation.

2. PREVENTING AND RELIEVING HOMELESSNESS – This Council's focus is on the prevention and relief of homelessness. Over the past five years we have worked with a variety of different services and agencies to achieve positive outcomes for households whilst minimising the impact on multiple services and the wider public purse. Projects have included:



Working with Revenues and Benefits department to:

Maximise the use of qualifying Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to prevent and relieve homelessness where there are financial difficulties that can be assisted with time limited payments through the Housing Benefit system to sustain current or access new accommodation

Secure funding from the Department of Work and Pensions for an Employment Support Co-Ordinator post to reduce the risk of homelessness by maximising a person's income



Working with Citizen's Advice to provide money advice and homelessness prevention service



Working with Turning Tides to provide support to those who are or are at risk of rough sleeping



Development of the Joint Protocol on Tenancy Sustainment and Homelessness Prevention and improving referral processes for those at risk of eviction with RSLs



Having Joint Protocols for agencies in West Sussex to improve outcomes for 16/17 year olds and Care Leavers



Working with the Accommodation Team and Adult Services within WSCC to prevent homelessness in partnership to achieve better outcomes for families and vulnerable adults



Working with Probation Services to help offenders to access accommodation and reduce re-offending



Working with the Youth Homelessness Prevention Team to secure positive outcomes for young people in West Sussex



Referring to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to protect the welfare of children and adults who we come into contact with



Working with Health Visitors and other health professionals to recognise housing difficulties when visiting people at home



Working with the Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help (IPEH) Team to ensure families are supported when experiencing difficulties



Intentionally Homeless Families Project with West Sussex County Council (WSCC)

3. RENT IN ADVANCE AND DEPOSIT GUARANTEE SCHEME – For those who are eligible, the Council provides Rent in Advance and/or a Deposit Bond to prevent and relieve homelessness by assisting households into the private rented sector. In order to access the service the household must have a connection to Mid Sussex and not have a housing related debt with the Council. **Over the last five years, we have assisted over 470 households into the private rented sector as at the end of March 2019.**

4. FINANCING THE HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION FUND – through the Governments Flexible Homelessness Support Grant the Council has set up a fund to prevent and relieve homelessness.

5. SUPPORT – Where the Council has provided assistance to help households secure private rented housing it will provide tenancy sustainment support to prevent homelessness from their privately rented home. The Council also provides support to prevent households from losing Temporary Accommodation. Mid Sussex District Council also funds a Homeless Prevention and Money Advice Service through Citizens Advice. The aim of this is to prevent homelessness where possible through the timely delivery of specialist debt and money advice for households at risk of losing their homes. **Since the service has been in operation from November 2018 to October 2019, over 140 households have been referred and assisted through this service.** This service has been extended from 3 days a week to 5 days from November 2019.

6. SERVICE DELIVERY - Since the Homelessness Reduction Act was introduced in April 2018, the way in which statutory homelessness services are delivered has changed. The Council has established 6 additional posts, including 2 Homelessness Prevention Officers, these officers work with households who are threatened with homelessness as soon as a risk is identified.

Over the last **5** years,
we have assisted over
470 households into
the private rented sector
as at the end of March 2019.



A new IT system enables the Council to implement and deliver the Homelessness Reduction Act and provide the quarterly statistical returns required by central government.

The Council have been developing digital solutions to facilitate easy and convenient contact for customers at an early stage.

7. DUTY TO REFER – In partnership with other Councils in West Sussex we have developed a generic countywide referral form and dedicated email address for all housing authorities to ensure all relevant agencies are able to make referrals quickly and easily for individuals and households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. **Between 1st October 2018 and 31st July 2019, the Council received 62 referrals.**

8. COMMITMENT TO REFER - Many Housing Associations, who do not have a duty to refer have committed to referring households who are at risk of homelessness to intervene earlier, and have signed up to the Commitment to Refer.

9. GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION – Mid Sussex District Council have raised and highlighted the affordability issues caused by the difference between the LHA rates and actual rental charges in Mid Sussex with central government at every opportunity.

Action Plan to Meet Priority One: Preventing and relieving homelessness

Action		Desired Outcomes	Lead	Partners	Target Timescale
1.1	Provide timely and accurate information, advice and assistance to enable people to resolve their housing difficulties without becoming homeless	Maximise the opportunities to prevent households at risk from becoming homeless.	Housing Needs Team Manager, (MSDC)		2020 - 2025
1.2	Maximise the use of Discretionary Housing Payment to prevent and relieve homelessness	Best use is made of DHP to prevent those affected by welfare reform and benefit issues from becoming homeless. Improved outcomes for households at risk of homelessness due to welfare reform and benefit issues	Senior Housing Needs Officer (MSDC),	Employment Co-Ordinator (MSDC), Housing Benefit Service (MSDC), JCP	2020 - 2025
1.3	Review the Housing Allocation Scheme to make sure it continues to make best use of available social housing stock	A Housing Allocation Scheme that continues to support homelessness prevention	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	RSL partners and Homemove Team	Review in response to relevant legislative and case law changes
1.4	Ensure that Flexible Homelessness Support Grant is used effectively to help prevent and relieve homelessness.	Increase in the number of successful prevention and relief cases.	Business Unit Leader for Housing Services (MSDC)		Review annually
1.5	Assess demand and evolve services to ensure it is structured to best meet the needs of our customers	Structure the service to ensure that it continues to effectively meet demand Increase in the number of successful homeless preventions.	Business Unit Leader for Housing Services (MSDC),		Review annually

1.6	Ensure the new CBL and HOPE software system meets the IT needs of the Homelessness Reduction Act and the Housing Register.	Ensure system provides a robust efficient system to manage HCLIC data requirements, provides effective and reliable functionality to deliver our Homelessness Reduction Act duties and manage the Housing Register and lettings of social housing in Mid Sussex.	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	Homemove Manager	2020 - 2025
1.7	Highlight the issues of affordability caused by the difference between the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates and actual rental charges in Mid Sussex with central government at every opportunity	Change to central government policy to bring LHA rates and private sector rents closer and more affordable	All relevant MSDC staff	All relevant agencies in Mid Sussex	In response to relevant government consultations
1.8	Explore revising the Council's Private Rented Sector Tenancy Start up Scheme (Rent in Advance and Deposit Bond) and Landlord Offer	Increase in the number of private rented properties available to households being assisted by the Council thereby maximising opportunities to prevent and relieve homelessness Fewer private sector evictions.	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	Private landlords Letting Agents	August 2020 and thereafter kept under review
1.9	Continue to work with Registered Social Landlords to improve joint working processes to reduce evictions. This includes working closely with RSL's to encourage them to sign-up to the Homelessness Prevention and Tenancy Sustainment Protocol and the Commitment to Refer	Increase in number of RSLs who have signed up to the Protocol. Protocol in place and implemented. Reduction in the number of avoidable rent arrears and other evictions.	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC),	RSLs	October 2020 and thereafter kept under review

1.10	Improve opportunities to identify those at risk of homelessness earlier by working in partnership with agencies.	<p>Timely and accurate information advice and assistance is provided to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>Services are more aware of homelessness, and able to identify earlier, households who might be at risk and what they can do to work together to prevent it.</p>	Housing Needs Team Manager, (MSDC)	MSDC Employment Co-ordinator CAB JCP RSLs MSDC Family Intervention Officer, WSCC (children & adult services) All willing statutory and voluntary agencies	Review annually and in response to relevant changes
1.11	Work jointly with Housing Benefit service to ensure funding for Employment Co-Ordinator continues.	<p>Funding for the Employment Co-ordinator post continues where available.</p> <p>Those affected by welfare benefit issues are provided with support and assistance to maximise their income and get them into employment.</p>			
1.12	Review the referrals received through the Duty to Refer to establish where further work needs to be undertaken in terms of links and training.	Increase in appropriate referrals are received and ensure that agencies are aware of their statutory responsibilities and provide training/information where required.	Senior Housing Needs Officer (MSDC)	West Sussex district and borough Councils, relevant public bodies subject to the duty to refer	Start project April 2020

1.13	Consider establishing a regular multi-agency homelessness forum to design and deliver homelessness prevention measures	Increase in effective joint working to prevent homelessness.	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	Statutory and Voluntary agencies	April 2021
1.14	Provide low income households with debt and budget management advice through the commissioned Citizens Advice Money Advice and Homelessness Prevention Service.	Fewer rent arrears amongst private and social housing sector tenants. Fewer evictions for rent arrears.	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	Citizens Advice	Review annually

PRIORITY TWO: MINIMISE THE USE OF & IMPROVE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

The Council recognises that being in temporary accommodation can be a very stressful and negative experience. For those households that need temporary accommodation, the Strategy prioritises the provision of more good quality temporary accommodation within the district and to enable those households to move through temporary accommodation into a settled home as soon as possible.

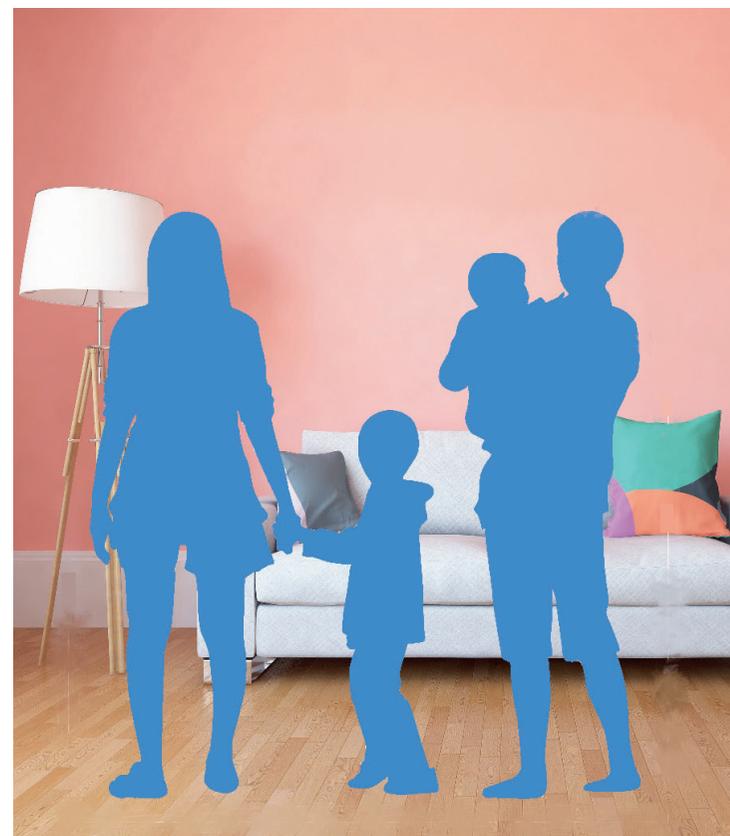
Challenges

The Homelessness Review and response from the consultation process identified the following challenges to minimising the use of and to improving temporary accommodation in Mid Sussex:

Lack of temporary accommodation within the district – The Council has access to 19 units of temporary accommodation within the District provided by Clarion Housing and up to 14 units with other supported housing providers. We also have 13 units provide by this Council but this is not sufficient to meet the need.

Lack of affordable housing in both the private and social rented sector – The costs and challenges associated with accessing the private rented sector limit our ability to move households out of temporary accommodation into a home in this sector. There is also insufficient social housing to meet the demand and this limits our ability to move households into a home with a Registered Social Landlord.

Personal issues preventing move on from temporary accommodation – In addition to the issues above, there are some households that find it more difficult to move from temporary accommodation than others. There are a variety of reasons which include a the benefit cap, history of rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, offending, complex health issues and other risk issues that make both social and private landlords reluctant to accept them as tenants.



Action Taken

ALLOCATION SCHEME ALLOCATION SCHEME – Mid Sussex District Council amended the Housing Allocation Scheme to award additional priority to those households to whom the Council owes an accommodation duty under the homelessness legislation. It also allows such households to place unlimited bids within each bidding cycle to maximise their chances of making a successful bid (however they are required to accept the first suitable offer). The Scheme has also been amended to allow direct allocations with the agreement of the Council and the RSL to be made in exceptional circumstances.

ACQUIRING and LEASING COUNCIL MANAGED TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION - During 2018/19, the Council set aside £4m, to acquire up to 20 units of temporary accommodation within the District, either through acquisition or lease. As at the end of August, the Council has acquired 13 properties, including one which is to be adapted for wheelchair users. In addition we are working to lease Private Sector properties. This will increase the provision of good quality temporary accommodation within the District. **In 2018/19 a duty to house 13 households whose priority need was due to physical disabilities was accepted compared to just 1 in 2014/15.**

CREATION OF ADDITIONAL POSTS - The Council has invested in the Housing Needs service to meet the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act, the demands of increased homelessness and to best achieve Homelessness Prevention.

Temporary Accommodation Support and Homelessness Prevention Officer post has been created support households in temporary accommodation. The primary objective of this role is to ensure that households move out of temporary accommodation into more settled accommodation as soon as possible. This includes identifying any support needs and ensuring that appropriate support is put in place to address issues that may result in them being unable to move out of temporary accommodation expediently.

Two Homelessness Prevention Officer roles have been created to concentrate on preventing homelessness at the earliest opportunity. They work proactively with any households threatened with losing their accommodation and ensuring practical interventions are put in place wherever possible.

A Temporary Accommodation Management Officer has been recruited to manage Council owned temporary accommodation and provide intensive housing management support to assist the move into more settled accommodation as soon as possible.

Private Rented Sector Tenancy Negotiator and Sustainment Officer post has been created to increase access to the private rented sector to assist households in temporary accommodation into a suitable home in the private rented sector.

Action Plan to Meet Priority Two: Minimise the use of and improve temporary accommodation.

Action		Desired Outcomes	Lead	Partners	Target Timescale
2.1	Minimise the use of expensive nightly paid accommodation where better alternatives exist.	Use of expensive private guest house type of accommodation kept to a minimum. Temporary accommodation costs to the Council are contained.	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	TA providers	2020 - 2025
2.2	Expand the provision of temporary accommodation by acquiring Private Sector Leasing housing in the district.	Use of expensive guest house type accommodation kept to a minimum. Placements of households in temporary accommodation outside of the District is reduced. Provision of better quality temporary accommodation.	Business Unit Leader, Housing Services (MSDC) Housing Enabling Team Manager (MSDC)	Legal Services, Corporate Estates,	April 2021
2.3	Evaluate options to increase temporary accommodation in the district in line with known needs particularly for those with mental health and complex needs.	Temporary accommodation that is close to people's health care and support that can best enable resettlement and recovery	Business Unit Leader for Housing Services and Housing Needs team Manager (MSDC)	Mental Health Services, WSCC Adult Services and Housing Support providers	April 2021
2.4	Ensure that the range of temporary accommodation available to the Council remains flexible and diverse to meet changing needs.	Sufficient supply of suitable temporary accommodation available to meet the need e.g. wheelchair accessible	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	TA Providers	Review annually

2.5	Ensure that those households placed in temporary accommodation are receiving appropriate support and assistance with payment of charges and their efforts to secure longer term housing, so as to minimise the time they spend in such accommodation	Issues preventing households from moving through temporary accommodation are identified and measures put in place to address them	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	Private Landlords and Letting Agents	Review annually
2.6	Make greater use of assured shorthold tenancies in the private rented sector to discharge homelessness duty	Households in temporary accommodation are supported to access private rented accommodation. Reduced costs to the Council.	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	Private Landlords and Letting Agents	Review annually
2.7	Improve processes with temporary accommodation providers to ensure unnecessary delays are avoided	Placement of households in temporary accommodation is kept to a minimum. Reduce costs to the Council.	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	Clarion Housing	Review annually

PRIORITY THREE: PREVENTING RECURRING HOMELESSNESS

For some people, homelessness can be a revolving door of seeking assistance, accessing services, only to later become homeless again. The reasons for this vary from person to person but are often linked or attributable to the following:

Lack of the skills needed to maintain a tenancy, such as budgeting, managing debts, understanding utilities, savings and financial products.

Lack of support in place to help sustain the tenancy.

Poor life choices, (such as breaching the tenancy agreement, anti-social or criminal behaviour).

Alcohol and or substance misuse issues.

Complex health factors including mental health.

Challenges

The Homelessness Review and responses from the consultation process identified the following challenges to preventing repeat homelessness:

Tenancy sustainment - The ability to access tenancy sustainment/support, regardless of tenure. The availability of tenancy sustainment support services. The timing of tenancy sustainment/support (whether support is offered at the beginning of the tenancy or not until the point the tenancy has started to fail). The duration of tenancy sustainment/support (some people may need ongoing support, rather than it being limited to the first few weeks of the tenancy for example). The type of tenancy support available, as some people may have specific needs (if living independently for the first time for example).

Life choices - Neither statutory nor non-statutory services can prevent a tenant from making poor life choices or misusing substances. Support can only be put in place to minimise the likelihood of such events, but ultimately it is the individual's decision to act in a manner that will put their tenancy at risk.



Complex health factors – The ability to access appropriate support for those with complex health factors, particularly mental health needs which may result in behaviour which puts their tenancy at risk.

No fault evictions - The private rental sector is buoyant and a household may be subject to a no fault eviction from any point after the end of the fixed term. It is not possible to prevent or influence this as it is a consequence of wider market conditions.

Barriers – Landlords in the private and social housing sector are unwilling to let to those who have a history of rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, offending and other challenging behaviour. Welfare reform is another barrier as the benefit cap can make renting in both sectors unaffordable.

Action Taken

SUPPORT - When a household is placed into temporary accommodation with known support needs, where possible and with the agreement of the household, the Temporary Accommodation Support Officer works to ensure that appropriate support is provided either by the Council or an external agency. This includes support from the Homelessness Prevention and Money Management Service commissioned by the Council from Citizens Advice.

Where a household is assisted to access private rented accommodation via the Council's Rent in Advance and Deposit Guarantee Scheme, if there are known support needs they are offered support by the Private Sector Tenancy Negotiator and Sustainment Officer.

The Council's Employment Co-ordinator will ensure that households in need are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to and are provided with advice and assistance to enable them to find employment.

Action Plan to Meet Priority Three: Preventing Recurring Homelessness

Action	Desired Outcomes	Lead	Partners	Target Timescale
3.1 Review the internal and external support services provided and explore opportunities to provide a more targeted and efficient service, particularly to those with complex needs, to intervene early to prevent recurring homelessness	Provision of tailored support (such as tenancy sustainment and debt advice). Reduction in recurring homelessness amongst vulnerable households. Reduced temporary accommodation costs to the Council.	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	External providers of support	April 2021
3.2 Work with registered providers to encourage them to provide tenancy sustainment support when they move on to their own tenancies to ensure that they do not end up being homeless again.	Reduction in recurring homelessness by provision of appropriate support. Reduction in recurring homelessness by provision of appropriate support. Reduction in temporary accommodation costs to the Council.	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	RSLs & other external support providers	October 2021
3.3 Through the Homelessness Prevention and Tenancy Sustainment Protocol and the Tenancy Strategy, encourage registered providers to ensure that homelessness prevention is at the core of all tenancy policies and procedures	Reduction in recurring homelessness by provision of appropriate support. Reduction in temporary accommodation costs to the Council.	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	RSLs	Ongoing

<p>3.4</p>	<p>Pilot a Tenancy Training Programme targeted at those in Temporary Accommodation and assisted by the Council's Rent in Advance and Deposit Guarantee Scheme with the aim of breaking the cycle of homelessness and reducing the negative impact on those households.</p>	<p>Reduction in recurring homelessness. Reduction in temporary costs to the Council. Improved outcomes for households.</p>	<p>Private Sector Tenancy Officer</p>	<p>RSLs, external training resource</p>	<p>October 2021</p>
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PRIORITY FOUR: TACKLING ROUGH SLEEPING AND HOMELESSNESS AMONGST VULNERABLE GROUPS

a) Rough Sleepers

Rough sleepers are defined as people seen either sleeping, about to bed down or actually bedded down in the open air (such as streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, sheds, car parks and cars) are also included in this definition.

Many rough sleepers have complex needs that can affect their willingness to engage with service providers and receive support. Even with support in place, some do not feel ready or able to engage with the services that are available. The Strategy identifies how services will tackle rough sleeping and ensure everyone has the opportunity to access accommodation when they need it.

The Governments Rough Sleeping Strategy published in August 2018 sets out its aim to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end rough sleeping by 2027. Its vision to achieve this is through three core principles, prevention, intervention and recovery. These principles will be used as the drivers for our approach to tackling rough sleeping.

Challenges

The Homelessness review and responses from the consultation process identified the following challenges to tackling rough sleeping in Mid Sussex:

Welfare reforms - Single people under the age of 35 who are in receipt of benefits can only claim the shared room rate of the Local Housing Allowance, meaning the only housing option affordable to them in the private rented sector is a room in a shared house. A room in a shared house may not be an ideal environment for individuals who are vulnerable or have support needs and who may be liable to sleeping rough if they lose their accommodation. Furthermore, there is a shortage of this type of accommodation in Mid Sussex.



Access to non-statutory services - Whilst there is small amount of support available for rough sleepers in Mid Sussex, there is no specific supported accommodation service for this client group.

Funding – Funding for statutory and non-statutory services are under threat or are reducing nationally and locally. Across West Sussex the budget cuts that West Sussex County Council has made will have a significant impact on service provision.

Accessing health services - The ability to access mental health services and support as and when needed. Any delay in accessing services initially can result in an individual deciding not to engage in the future, potentially making them more susceptible to losing their accommodation, sleeping rough, or becoming resistant to support.

Reactive services - The majority of services that exist for single people with housing issues are reactive and respond at or after the point of crisis. The opportunity to prevent homelessness (and thereby minimise the risk of rough sleeping) having passed.

Action Taken

1. MULTI AGENCY WORKING – In partnership with WSCC and other West Sussex district and borough Councils we have jointly commissioned a service through Turning Tides (a community led homelessness organisation) to provide support to both entrenched rough sleepers and those new or at risk of rough sleeping. Turning Tides staff are co-located within the Housing Needs Team meaning that knowledge and expertise is shared to find suitable outcomes for individuals supported.

2. SHORE - Mid Sussex District Council formed part of the Single Homeless Outreach Reconnection and Engagement (SHORE) Service from 2013-2017. This Sussex partnership was recognised as one of the best rough sleeping and single homelessness partnerships in the country by DCLG and Homeless Link. Through SHORE, hundreds of vulnerable people were helped out of homelessness and supported in their accommodation. Much of the work was delivered by voluntary organisations. SHORE also brought people together from multiple services at various events to help tackle the multiple and complex needs of rough sleepers. Funding for this service came to an end in 2017.

3. BID FUNDING - Mid Sussex District Council was part of a successful Sussex wide Rough Sleeper bid to Government in 2016, receiving £470,000 to work with rough sleepers across East and West Sussex over two years. This coalition of partners included all District and Borough Councils across Sussex, East and West Sussex County Councils, Sussex Police, Clinical Commissioning Groups in Sussex, Fulfilling Lives, Community Safety Partnership and Safer West Sussex Partnership. The West Sussex target of 406 interventions for the duration of the project was met through an extension of the TAP Project through Crawley Open House for one year, an Arun Rough Sleeper Outreach worker for two years, Worthing Churches Outreach Worker for two years.

In the winter of 2018 Mid Sussex District Council was part of a successful West Sussex Countywide Rapid Rehousing Pathway Bid in partnership

with West Sussex County Council and all West Sussex District and Borough Council. The project is being delivered in partnership with Turning Tides, Crawley Open House and Stonepillow and has secured £355,000 to assist 160 – 180 individuals. Five Supported Lettings Officers across West Sussex will increase housing opportunities for those who have had a history of rough sleeping by encouraging landlords to come forward and can offer additional support to those placed in to accommodation. Four navigators will follow a rough sleeper from the street through to a range of accommodation services, being the constant and consistent connector between services and the individual.

The Council has also secured additional funding from the MHCLG Cold Weather Fund to provide more intensive support and accommodation for rough sleepers during the coldest months. **The first 2018/19 programme supported 6 individuals, 50% of whom did not return to rough sleeping and remain housed. The 2019/20 programme aims to provide an increased level of support and accommodation for a further 7 individuals most at risk.**

b) Other Vulnerable Groups

In the context of the homelessness legislation, a person may be considered vulnerable and in priority need due to physical disability, mental illness, age, having been in care, having served in the armed forces, having been in custody or on remand, or fleeing their home due to actual or threatened violence. People who are vulnerable may require or benefit from additional support when accessing Council services and where possible and appropriate, the Council will endeavour to put such support in place.

Challenges

The Homelessness Review and responses from the consultation process identified the following challenges to meeting the needs of vulnerable people:

 **Supply of supported housing** - There are limited opportunities for accessing supported accommodation locally. Whilst there is some provision locally, the Council do not have exclusive direct access or nomination rights to all of these. Across West Sussex the budget cuts that West Sussex County Council has made will have a significant impact on service provision going forward.

 **Access to health services** - Demand on health services (in particular mental health services) locally can result in people struggling to access assistance as and when needed. This can affect the individual's future willingness to engage. Historically there has been also a restriction of mental health services to those who have dual diagnosis and are not addressing their alcohol or substance misuse. This resulted in individuals not being able to access mental health services as and when needed.

 **Temporary accommodation** – Accessing suitable supported accommodation for people with medium to high support needs is challenging. There are a small number of temporary accommodation units for people with support needs in Mid Sussex but these are for those with low to

medium support needs and single people only. Finding both temporary and settled accommodation for people who have been in custody and who are on remand can be challenging, as accommodation providers are able to refuse nominations.

Tenancy sustainment – Whilst being young does not necessarily make individuals vulnerable, if they are living independently for the first time they may benefit from support to help them acclimatise to the responsibilities that come with having a tenancy (regardless of whether living in the private rented sector or in social housing).

Working in isolation - Most services work in relative isolation from one another and within their own legal parameters and financial restraints. This can limit the ability across departments/organisations to flexibly respond to situations, best meet the needs of customers and make best use of limited resources.

Action Taken

1. MULTI AGENCY WORKING - The Mid Sussex Partnership (MSP) is an overarching partnership of organisations working to improve the quality of residents' lives across the District. The MSP is led by Mid Sussex District Council and includes West Sussex County Council, Sussex Police, Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, NHS West Sussex, Horsham and Mid Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group, Clarion Housing and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action Watch. The MSP support for the Early Intervention project (linked to the Troubled Families initiative) and the Targeted Intervention project to support vulnerable families in Mid Sussex to access support services where they do not have the means to pay.

The Council participates in multi-agency meetings with agencies including the Police and probation services to identify the accommodation options available to ex-offenders and create positive pathways, and for high risk victims of domestic abuse to provide advice and assistance from a housing perspective to help reduce the risk to those victims.

2. ALLOCATIONS SCHEME - Mid Sussex District Council's Allocations Scheme has been amended to enable people who are in or have served in the armed forces to access social housing regardless of local connection. They are also given priority within their band above applicants who do not have an armed forces connection.

The Council's Allocations Scheme provides specific move-on arrangements for vulnerable households from supported housing and the resulting vacancy is used to prevent and/or relieve homelessness for other vulnerable households requiring the support being offered where possible.

3. CREATING PATHWAYS - Mid Sussex District Council has been engaging with local services to identify and provide housing pathways for vulnerable service users. This has been challenging given the pressures many statutory and non-statutory services are under, and is on-going work.

We continue to develop working relationship between agencies and local mental health services in order to better assist service users with mental health issues to achieve successful outcomes. A Hospital Discharge Worker employed by Southdown Housing through WSCC identifies housing pathways for people who are at risk of being discharged from hospital with no onward accommodation.

4. SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION PROVISION – The Council has supported housing provision for young people (including care leavers), young parents and those with mental health or other support needs through the Resettlement panel and the supported housing resettlement service. These services are funded by West Sussex County Council through its Housing Related Support budget. However this budget is subject to significant cuts.

An important local context for the Homelessness Strategy is West Sussex County Council's reduction in the Housing Related Support budget from £6.4 million to £2.3 million by April 2020. The services impacted include specialist accommodation based schemes for residents who are at risk of homelessness, as well as "floating support" to residents living in the community. Risks from the withdrawal of these services include increasing pressure on the homelessness services, rising costs of placing families and adults in temporary accommodation and increasing numbers of intentional homelessness. A West Sussex Supported Housing Task and Finish Group was established to mitigate the impact of these reductions, identifying other funding sources and longer term service redesign. The Group includes West Sussex County Council and District and Borough Councils; WSCC have retained responsibility albeit at a reduced level of resources for funding a number of the housing support services including those providing assistance to single homeless people through hostels and outreach services as well as for young people. Consultants were commissioned to assist with reviewing all the existing services and the levels and types of need across the county. The Task and Finish Group has established a new commissioning framework that will utilise the remaining WSCC funding as well as some match funding from the district and boroughs to provide a service for vulnerable households with support needs, many of whom will be owed legal duties under the homelessness legislation. The service for Mid Sussex will be jointly commissioned by MSDC and WSCC in accordance with a county wide specification, which is based on seven design principles as follows:

- To build on strengths
- To adopt a whole systems approach
- To design develop and deliver together
- To be focused, efficient and valued
- To be outcome based
- To be dynamic and resilient
- To be coherent, simple and accessible

A set of quarterly monitoring returns and meetings with the provider will be established through the commissioning process to ensure the service objectives and positive outcomes for service users are maintained.

5. WELFARE BENEFIT SUPPORT - With the introduction and roll-out of Universal Credit, the Council delivered budgeting support, debt advice and advice with benefit claims to households moving on to Universal Credit in partnership with Citizens Advice and the Job Centre Plus. Mid Sussex District Council set up a working group that continues to operate and is attended by relevant local partners to discuss best practice and provide updates on these issues.

6. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS - Mid Sussex District Council has been actively involved in a countywide project to streamline the Disabled Facility Grant process and to minimise the need for households to move if appropriate property adaptations can be made enabling them to remain in their homes as their needs change.

Action Plan to Meet Priority Four: Tackling Rough Sleeping & Homelessness amongst vulnerable groups

Action	Desired Outcomes	Lead	Partners	Target Timescale	
Rough Sleepers					
4.1	Work with partners to explore the possibility of establishing a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Forum	Better partnership working to assist rough sleepers off the street and into accommodation and or treatment pathways. Halve the number of rough sleepers in Mid Sussex from 10 in November 2018 to 5 or less in March 2022 in accordance with the Governments Rough Sleeper Strategy.	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	Turning Tides, Community Mental Health Team, CGL, Citizens Advice, Local Pastoral Groups, Sussex Police, Community Safety Teams, Other Partners to be identified	Forum to be set up by April 2021
4.2	Identify vulnerable households at risk of rough sleeping early and intervene to prevent this occurring wherever possible	Early identification to maximise potential to prevent rough sleeping	Senior Housing Needs Officer (MSDC)	Turning Tides, Community Mental Health Team, CGL, Citizens Advice, Sussex Police, Probation, Community Safety Teams	2020 - 2025

4.3	Deliver effective services, to include provision of an outreach service for those people who are sleeping rough or imminently at risk of doing so, to support rough sleepers into sustainable accommodation.	Targeted support for those who are sleeping rough or are in danger of doing. Ensure funding is acquired/ provided to provide ongoing support to rough sleepers.	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC) and Senior Housing Needs Officer (MSDC)	WSCC & District and Borough Councils, Turning Tides.	Bid for Rough Sleeping Initiative Funding for 2020 submitted by 6 December 2019
4.4	Examine feasibility of introducing Housing First Support Model for Rough Sleepers in Mid Sussex	Provision of accommodation for rough sleepers. Provision of ongoing support to those accommodated.	Business Unit Leader for Housing Services (MSDC) and Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	RSLs, Turning Tides,	To be set up by August 2021
4.5	Continue to bid for future Cold Weather Payment funding as and when available	Extended winter provision funding awarded to assist rough sleepers, including the provision of accommodation and support during the cold weather	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC) and Senior Housing Needs Officer (MSDC)	Turning Tides	Bid for winter 2019/20 submitted and approved.
Other Vulnerable Groups					
4.6	Increase the supply of suitable temporary accommodation in the district for people with mental health needs	Increase in supported temporary accommodation in the district enabling those with mental health needs to maintain their support networks including health	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	Temporary Accommodation Providers	October 2021

4.7	Continue to engage with hospital discharge teams to ensure an effective working protocol is in place	Enable managed moves from hospitals and prevent emergency discharge presentations	Housing Co-Ordinator – Mental Health (WSCC), Senior Housing Needs Officer (MSDC)	Hospital Discharge worker (Langley Green Hospital)	Agreed Protocol to be in place by October 2020
4.8	Continue to work with stakeholders and partners to identify and provide clear housing pathways for vulnerable groups.	Pathway Plans in the form of a Personal Housing Plan in place for vulnerable groups to prevent homelessness.	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC) and Senior Housing Needs Officer (MSDC)	Relevant partner agencies	August 2021
4.9	Work in partnership with West Sussex districts and boroughs and West Sussex county council to Review the Joint Protocols for 16/17 year olds and care leavers	16/17 year olds and Care Leavers facing homelessness receive the appropriate support and avoid placements into temporary accommodation. Homelessness prevented amongst young people.	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	WSCC and District and Borough Councils in West Sussex	Ongoing. Review of Protocols by April 2021.
4.10	Input into the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), which considers how individual domestic violence cases can be best managed, referring victims of domestic abuse to the relevant support services such as WORTH for immediate support and Safe in Sussex services which supplies longer term floating support	Fewer people fleeing domestic abuse at point of crisis. Increased resilience for individuals suffering domestic abuse. Increased homelessness prevention for victims of domestic abuse.	Senior Housing Needs Officer (MSDC)	WSCC, Worth, Safe in Sussex, Sussex Police and other partner agencies	2020 - 2025

4.11	Work closely with supported housing providers to ensure clear housing pathways are in place to facilitate planned move on	Homelessness prevented amongst vulnerable households	Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC) and WSCC	Peabody, Sussex Oakleaf, YMCA, Hope Into Action, RSLs, Resettlement Panel	2020 - 2025
4.12	Work in partnership with District and Boroughs and WSCC to reconfigure and recommission supported housing to meet the needs of those that require this type of support.	Homelessness prevented amongst vulnerable households. Enhanced partnership working.	Business Unit Leader for Housing Services (MSDC)	WSCC, District & Boroughs, Supported housing providers	Recommissioned service to be in place by October 2020
4.13	Input into the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and the Integrated Offender Management Scheme (IOM) to assist with the management of those who are a serious risk to the public and/or prolific offenders.	Reduction in re-offending rates amongst ex-offenders. Close working relationship with Probation, Police and support providers Engagement with services managing offenders to prevent homelessness.	Probation & Sussex Police	Housing Needs Team, CGL, WSCC	2020 - 2025
4.14	Continue to be actively involved in the countywide Disabled Facilities Grant project to ensure DFGs are used effectively to achieve homelessness prevention when applicable.	Minimise the need for households to move and enable them to remain in their homes as their needs change.	West Sussex County Adaptations Manager, Housing Standards Team Leader	Project Working group, Steering group, all West Sussex district and borough councils, WSCC, Public Health and NHS	Revised countywide common policy due to be implemented from January 2020 Review of policy impact and assessment of potential for single pooled budget August/September 2020

4.15	Create and share a directory of statutory, non-statutory, voluntary and charitable services to assist people affected by homelessness in Mid Sussex	Knowledge of services available locally easily assessable for the public and agencies	Senior Housing Needs Officer (MSDC)		April 2021
4.16	Provide Housing Staff with specific training in mental health issues.	Increase staff knowledge and confidence in dealing with priority need assessments and support requirements for this vulnerable group	Senior Housing Needs Officer (MSDC)	Community Mental Health Services, Training Providers	April 2021

PRIORITY FIVE: ENABLE ACCESS TO SUITABLE AND AFFORDABLE ACCOMMODATION

The housing market has seen considerable change and continues to evolve in response to local pressures and the wider economic climate. Nationally we have seen the private rental sector grow, partially in response to market conditions and partially due to the widening disparity between incomes and housing costs. As rates of home ownership decline the need to be able to access accommodation across multiple tenures to discharge the Councils duties under the homelessness legislation is significant.

Challenges

The Homelessness Review and responses from the consultation process identified the following challenges to accessing suitable and affordable housing in Mid Sussex:



Welfare reforms - The cumulative impact of welfare reforms on affordability and a households ability to access settled housing, combined with the gap between wages and/or benefits and housing costs. Finding affordable housing for single people, especially those under the age of 35 can be difficult, with housing options restricted to a room in a shared house.



The private rented sector - Mortgage lenders, letting agents and landlords continue to deny access to the private rented sector to households in receipt of benefits. Those that are able to access the sector face upfront costs (rent in advance, deposit, agency fees) of up to £2,500. In addition, some households on a low income or in receipt of benefits do not have a guarantor whose earnings could cover the rental commitment.



Supported accommodation - Accessing suitable settled accommodation for people with support needs can be difficult, their needs may be considered to be too high and there are also issues of affordability.



Funding – Funding for statutory and non-statutory services is under threat or being cut as budgets are reduced.



Social housing - Registered providers of social housing apply their own criteria for



assessing nominations into their social housing and this can result in nominations being refused if criteria is not met.

Temporary Accommodation - The Council have a small portfolio of temporary accommodation and limited access to self-contained temporary accommodation that is wheelchair accessible. Nightly paid guest house accommodation is expensive for the Council to use and only suitable in an emergency.

Action Taken

1. HOUSES OF MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMO) LICENCING - In October 2018 the law changed and any accommodation that is occupied by five or more people from two or more households with shared facilities requires a licence. The Council's Housing Standards Team have been working hard to ensure Landlords are aware of their new responsibilities and to meet HMO licence application demands.

2. STANDARDS IN THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR - The Council's Housing Standards Team have taken the opportunity of the change in legislation to work with a greater number of landlords to achieve compliance and raise the standard of shared accommodation in Mid Sussex's private rented sector. Our new Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy has introduced a number of measures to assist with dealing with unscrupulous landlords.

3. HOUSING DELIVERY - MSDC's affordable Housing Policy DP31 requires that all residential development over the threshold of 11 units or > 1,000 m² should provide 30 % affordable housing. In addition, in areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, (AONB) sites between 6 and 10 units (<1000m²) are required to provide the equivalent of 30% in the form of a commuted sum for off-site provision. The Housing Enabling Team aim to utilise every opportunity to meet the need for affordable housing through the application of our planning policies as well as working directly with housing associations and other affordable housing providers and maximising affordable housing on MSDC owned sites.

4. EMPTY HOMES – MSDC has worked in partnership with the YMCA to bring empty homes back into use which have been used to relieve homelessness.

Action Plan Meet Priority Five: Enable Access to Suitable and Affordable Accommodation

Action		Desired Outcomes	Lead	Partners	Target Timescale
Make best use of existing stock					
5.1	Maximise the number of empty homes brought back into usage to provide more accommodation supply in the district	Increased number of Empty Homes brought back into use to prevent homelessness.	Housing Enabling Team Manager (MSDC)	Revenues (MSDC)	2020 - 2025
5.2	Work in partnership with Registered Social Landlords to apply the Tenancy Sustainment and Homelessness Prevention Protocol making best use of stock and ensure nominations are not unfairly rejected.	Best use of social housing and homelessness prevented for more households	Housing Need Team Manager (MSDC)	RSL, Homemove Team	2020 - 2025
5.3	Review and update the Tenancy Strategy setting out the Council's expectations of social housing providers.	To ensure fair and equitable allocation in line with the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme, ensuring that it prioritises Homelessness Prevention, tenancy sustainment, affordability and security for tenants.	BUL Housing Needs and Enabling Team managers (MSDC)	RSL's	April 2021
5.4	Monitor void turnaround times of the main social housing providers in the district	Delays do not impact on capacity to meet housing need and the length of time households need to occupy temporary accommodation	Business Unit Leader for Housing with Housing Needs Team Manager (MSDC)	RSLs	2020 - 2025

Deliver more new affordable homes					
5.5	Work closely with development partners to maximise the development of affordable homes	Increase the supply of affordable homes to prevent homelessness. Ensure that the required proportion and relevant type of affordable homes are delivered	Housing Enabling Team Manager	Housing Providers, Developers, Planning (MSDC), Legal (MSDC)	Target 200 new affordable homes a year 2020 to 2025
5.6	Maximise affordable housing delivery on all MSDC owned sites brought forward for disposal.	Creation of affordable properties.	Business Unit Leader for Housing Services	Legal (MSDC), Planning (MSDC)	2020 - 2025
Improving standards in the private rented sector					
5.7	Identify accommodation that requires but have not yet applied for a HMO licence and work with landlords to meet their legal responsibilities and improve standards where needed.	Ensure that properties that require a HMO licence have one and improve standards of accommodation	Business Unit Leader Environmental Health & Building Control (MSDC)	Housing Needs (MSDC), Private landlords, letting agents	2020 - 2025
Meet the need for new gypsy and traveller pitches					
5.8	Support the work required by DP33 in the Mid Sussex District Plan	Ensure that a sufficient amount of culturally suitable housing for settled Gypsies and Travellers to meet the identified need.	Business Unit Leader for Housing Services (MSDC) & Housing Enabling Team Manager (MSDC)	Planning and Economic Development and Legal Services (MSDC)	23 additional pitches to be provided by 2031

DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

Consultation

Mid Sussex District Council carried out a consultation as part of the review into homelessness in the district. The Council consulted with residents, service users, partners and stake holders. The consultation was undertaken via a consultation event and an online survey in which over 244 individuals and partner organisations were invited to contribute their views and perceptions of homelessness within the district. The results of this consultation have been used to inform and develop the strategy and determine its priorities.

Working in Partnership

Whilst the provision of services to homeless households is a statutory duty of the Council, in practice the delivery of the service benefits from the support of many formal and informal partners including West Sussex County Council, registered providers, support organisations and agencies including the voluntary and charitable sectors. We will continue to work closely with these partners if we are to realise the ambitions of the strategy. Partnership working across the statutory and non-statutory sectors will become increasingly critical to efficiently utilise resources and deliver effective outcomes for customers. The Action Plan expands upon how we will work with partner agencies to deliver the actions identified in the Strategy between 2020 – 2025.

Monitoring and Review

The Strategy has been developed in consultation with partners and stakeholders, who will continue to be involved in the delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan. The progress against the targets and outcomes set out in the Action Plan will be reviewed annually.

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TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION REVIEW AND THE CONSIDERATION OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.

REPORT OF: Judy Holmes Assistant Chief Executive
Contact Officer: Emma Shuttleworth, Business Unit Leader for Housing Services
Email: emma.shuttleworth@midsussex.gov.uk Tel: 01444 477431
Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: No
Report to: Council
24th June 2020

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to recommend Council to agree to the provision of additional resources to provide temporary accommodation.

Recommendation

2. **Following a recommendation from Cabinet on 16th March 2020 Council is asked to agree to:**
 - (i) **provide additional resources of £4.2 m as a specific reserve to acquire temporary accommodation in order to meet the Council's statutory responsibilities under the Homelessness Legislation.**
 - (ii) **initially make £1.4m available to purchase 5 properties. The additional funds reserved to be accessed in stages as funds become available.**

Summary

3. In July 2018, Cabinet agreed to acquire a portfolio of up to 20 units and leases for up to 10 units to provide temporary accommodation for homeless households within the district using reserves of £4 million approved in May 2018.
4. Since then, the Council has acquired 15 properties. Action to secure leased properties is in progress with the aim of meeting the original target of 10 later in 2020.
5. These acquisitions enable the Council to provide high quality temporary accommodation while also reducing expenditure on guest house accommodation. It is estimated that the new accommodation will save approximately £240k each year. This is in line with the original business case with an estimated saving of £3.6 million over 15 years.
6. However, there is a continuing and increasing demand for the service. At 1 January 2019, there were 40 households in temporary accommodation in the district. On the same date in 2020, there were 72 – an 80% increase. At the 31st of January the number had increased to 81 with 41 in guesthouse. Responding to this demand is increasing expenditure on guesthouse accommodation.
7. The largest rise in demand for temporary accommodation is from single households and this has doubled since 2017. Many of these are vulnerable, having mental health and other complex needs.

8. Given this demand in March 2020, Cabinet were asked to recommend to Council that the project is extended in two ways through the creation of a specific reserve of £4.2m, as follows:

Purchase five additional properties to respond to the increasing demand for temporary accommodation and to offset the cost pressures arising. It is anticipated that this will deliver further savings of c£62k per year by avoiding guesthouse costs.

- Acquire accommodation units, whether by lease or purchase, which specifically meet the needs of single homeless people with complex health needs. The estimated cost of purchasing 10 units for this group is c £2.8m. The annual savings from this investment would be c£125k. There will be revenue implications in terms of providing intensive housing management support. It is proposed that this is funded through Government Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG).
9. Since the Scrutiny Committee's consideration of this proposal, the COVID-19 pandemic has clearly impacted on the Council, and in particular on demand for housing. The issues this has created are set out in the reports to Cabinet on the 1st June and to the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Finance and Performance on 17th June 2020.
 10. It is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic places an even greater emphasis on the need to provide a sustainable approach to the provision of temporary accommodation.

Background

11. The Council has a legal duty to provide temporary accommodation to comply with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Housing Act 1996. This requires that those who are homeless and in priority need are accommodated until decisions are reached on their homelessness application and they can be moved on once there is accommodation available.
12. The demand for temporary accommodation is proportionate to the demand for housing more generally and the lack of affordable housing. The impact of welfare reform and COVID-19 has created additional pressures. Temporary accommodation is one part of the tools available to respond to housing need. It is a short-term provision only for the time it takes to reach decisions on new homeless applications and to move people on into more settled accommodation.
13. Some of the accommodation used for these purposes is nightly paid guesthouse accommodation. This is expensive and of variable quality; most is outside the District.
14. In July 2018, Cabinet agreed to purchase up to 20 units and lease up to 10 units to provide temporary accommodation in the District using a reserve of £4 million previously approved in May 2018.
15. The Council's approach to acquiring temporary accommodation is based on an analysis by Appraisals Abound, a specialist advisor. The plan assumed that the acquisition of 20 properties would deliver savings of £5.7m over 15 years, and that leasing 10 properties would enable cost reductions of around £1.4m in the same period.

Assessment of success

16. In August 2019, Appraisals Abound reviewed progress on the aforementioned project, and considered this in relation to the demand for the service.
17. The outcome of this review was reported to the Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning and Economic Development.
 - Savings achieved to date are c £82k (when compared with the cost that would otherwise have been incurred using nightly paid accommodation)

In summary the project has been successful, and it is estimated that the accommodation acquired to date will save approximately £240k each year. This is in line with the original business case with an estimated saving of £3.6m over 15 years.

Current and future demand for temporary accommodation

Notwithstanding the impact of COVID-19 homelessness is increasing nationally, and the pressures in Mid Sussex mirror national pressures. Official figures released in December 2019 showed that nationally there has been an 11.4% increase in the number of households homeless over the past year and nationally the numbers in TA are the highest in over a decade (Shelter). The Local Government Association report in January 2020 showed council spending on guest houses rose by more than a fifth from £93m in 2017/18 to £114.9m in 2018/19, 69.3% of English councils were overspent on their homelessness budgets.

18. In Mid Sussex, there has been a 40% increase in households the Council has a duty to house between 2018/19 and 2019/20.
19. Headlines provide further evidence of the increased demand:
 - At 1 January 2019, there were 40 households in temporary accommodation in the district. On the same date in 2020, there were 72, an 80% increase.
 - The largest growth in demand for temporary accommodation is from single people: 58% of households in Temporary Accommodation in June 2019 were single people. This is a 230% increase since June 2017.
 - Many of these single homeless people are vulnerable, having mental health and other complex needs: 63% of single homeless people in TA have mental health needs.
20. The demands of homelessness and the consequent provision of temporary accommodation is likely to increase, and this will be further exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - The Council has seen an increase in demand for temporary accommodation. The Council had 873 approaches in 2018/19. This could increase to well over 900 in 2019/20 if current trends continue.
 - The increase in numbers in guesthouse accommodation created a budget pressure of £77k in 2020/21.

Options to address the increasing demand

21. Given the current and future pressure on the service, there is a need to consider options to expand the available provision of temporary accommodation, while also reducing the cost burden on the Council arising from reliance on guest house accommodation for homeless households.
22. Officers have estimated that a total of 30 TA properties could be managed within existing staffing resources.
23. On this basis, it is proposed that the Council purchase five further properties. The estimated cost of this is £1.4 million, while delivering further savings of c£80k per year. No further revenue investment would be required. It is expected that this work would be completed in 2020/21.
24. In the medium term, there is a need to consider further acquisitions to boost the Council's ability to respond to the specific demand of vulnerable single households and to meet increasing demand.

On the assumption that 10 units would be sufficient to address the current need, a budget of £2.8 million is proposed. Based simply on savings on guest house accommodation, this investment could deliver savings of £160k per year.

25. There will however be revenue implications as a result of this investment, in relation to additional staffing requirements to provide support. There is potential to expand the resources available to support and manage these households using Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG).
26. It is acknowledged that these proposals respond only partly to the projected increase in demand set out by Appraisals Abound. Officers will continue to keep the rising demand under review.

Policy Context

27. The report supports and contributes to the priorities in the Corporate Plan to provide effective and responsive services, to provide strong and resilient communities and to achieve financial independence. The provision of good quality temporary accommodation within the district for homeless households will assist with the well-being of these households who are amongst the most vulnerable in the community. The investment in these properties will provide long term assets for the Council and contribute to a reduction in the costs incurred to meet statutory obligations under the homelessness legislation.

Other Options Considered

28. An alternative option would be to not invest in the acquisition of more temporary accommodation. The projection of increased demands on the service indicate that it is likely that the costs incurred by the Council by providing temporary accommodation through nightly paid guest houses are likely to increase significantly.

Financial Implications

29. The recommendation is for a specific reserve of £4.2m be provided to be invested in the provision of temporary accommodation. By investing in the acquisition of additional properties the costs of meeting the Council's statutory obligations should be reduced as less nightly paid guesthouse will be required.

Risk Management Implications

30. The acquisition of 5 additional properties to add to the temporary accommodation stock is low risk because 14 units have already been successfully delivered.

The provision of an additional 10 properties to specifically meet the needs of single vulnerable people presents more of a risk. These households may have complex and challenging needs and the management of these properties will require a different approach. To mitigate the risk, it is intended that we provide an intensive housing management and support service to these households. The funding for this service can be provided from Flexible Homelessness Support Grant in the short to medium term.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

31. The Equality legislation requires the Council to have "due regard" for advancing equality involves removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics. and taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people. Homeless households can meet the protected characteristics criteria as set out in the Equality Act 2010. These can include age, both young and older people, disability, pregnancy and maternity. The provision of good quality temporary accommodation in the district, close to support networks and health care will assist with the health and well-being of such households and lessen the otherwise negative impact of experiencing homelessness.

Other Material Implications

None

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MAKING OF THE HASSOCKS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

REPORT OF: Judy Holmes, Assistant Chief Executive
Contact Officer: Sally Blomfield – Divisional Leader for Planning and Economy
Wards Affected: Hassocks
Key Decision: Yes
Report to: Council
Date of meeting: 24th June 2020

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to recommend that the District Council formally 'make' the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan (HNP). The Neighbourhood Plan will then sit alongside the District Plan as part of the Development Plan for Mid Sussex and be used in the determination of planning applications in Hassocks Parish.

Summary

2. The District Council supports communities who wish to prepare Neighbourhood Plans. To date 17 Neighbourhood Plans have been 'made' (adopted) in the District. Following the making of Hassocks NP, there are two remaining Neighbourhood Plan areas in the District without Neighbourhood plans (Cophorne and Horsted Keynes). These areas are in the process of preparing Plans.
3. The Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan has been through independent examination and received the backing of the community in a Referendum. Mid Sussex District Council is required to take a decision to formally 'make' the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan following a successful Referendum, unless to do so would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with any EU obligation or any of the Convention Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).

Recommendations

4. **It is recommended that Council:**
 - **Notes the outcome of the Hassocks Referendum; and**
 - **Agrees to formally 'make' the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for the Parish of Hassocks.**

Background

5. Hassocks Parish Council is the 'qualifying body' with responsibility for preparing the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan covers the plan period 2014 to 2031 and has been prepared for a designated neighbourhood area which follows the Hassocks Parish boundary.
6. The Parish Council first prepared their Pre-submission (Regulation 14) Neighbourhood Plan in 2016. The Submission (Regulation 16) Plan underwent public consultation in July/August 2016 but the plan did not proceed to Examination.
7. Hassocks Parish Council formally withdrew the previous Submission (Regulation 16) Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan on 4th January 2019. The Parish Council resolved to prepare a revised Neighbourhood Plan and carried out Pre-submission (Regulation

14) consultation from 7th January 2019 until 18th February 2019. The Hassocks Submission (Regulation 16) Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to the District Council on 28th June 2019.

8. The Plan sets out a vision for the Parish and, in line with paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework, it contains a series of policies to protect the environment and heritage, community facilities, the local economy and improve sustainability.
9. The Neighbourhood Plan was published by the District Council for Regulation 16 public consultation from 22nd July 2019 until Monday 16th September 2019.
10. In agreement with Hassocks Parish Council, Mid Sussex District Council appointed Mr Andrew Ashcroft MRTPI as Independent Examiner to examine the Neighbourhood Plan to assess whether it met the Basic Conditions, and to recommend whether it should proceed to Referendum. The Examiner concluded that, subject to some modifications to the Plan, it met the Basic Conditions and should go forward to Referendum. These modifications were approved by Cabinet on 13th January 2020.
11. The Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan Referendum was held on 5th March 2020. The result was 1635 (94.8%) persons in favour and 90 (5.2%) against. The overall turnout at the Referendum was 26.43%. The declaration of result is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Making of the Neighbourhood Plan

12. The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 provides that a Neighbourhood Plan automatically becomes part of the Development Plan following a successful Referendum, holding full weight in relation to the determination of planning applications. However, the Local Planning Authority (LPA) also has a statutory duty to 'make' a Neighbourhood Plan, following a successful Referendum, if more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the plan. This process is similar to the adoption of the District Council's own development plan documents. The LPA is not subject to this duty if (and only if) the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998).
13. The Examiner concluded that the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan, with modifications, met these legislative obligations. No information has subsequently arisen to suggest the making of the Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan would be in breach with or incompatible with the legislation.

Policy Context

14. The National Planning Policy Framework and the Localism Act 2011 support Neighbourhood Plans. The Mid Sussex District Plan was adopted in March 2018 and the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans is part of its overall development strategy.

Other Options Considered

15. There are no other options as the LPA has a statutory duty to 'make' a neighbourhood plan, following a successful Referendum, and it meets statutory requirements.

Financial Implications

16. The cost of the Examination was £9,000 and the Referendum cost £3,000. These costs will be met from Government grant now the Plan has achieved a successful Referendum.

Risk Management Implications

17. If the Neighbourhood Plan is not 'made' the Council could be at risk of legal challenge on the basis it has not met the legal requirements for Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

18. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out at the Submission (Regulation 16) Stage of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Parish Council also prepared a Consultation Statement demonstrating how they have consulted the local community and statutory consultees.

Other Material Implications

19. There are no other material considerations.

Appendices

1. The Declaration of Result of Poll

Background Papers

- The Hassocks Referendum Neighbourhood Plan can be viewed at:
<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/neighbourhood-plans>

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DECLARATION OF RESULT OF POLL

Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan Referendum

I Tom Clark, being the Counting Officer at the above referendum held on Thursday 5 March 2020, do hereby give notice that the question put to the electorate was as follows:

Do you want Mid Sussex District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority to use the neighbourhood plan for Hassocks to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?

And that the number of votes cast for each answer is as follows:

	Votes Recorded	Percentage
Yes	1635	94.8 %
No	90	5.2 %

The number of ballot papers rejected was as follows:	Number of ballot papers
A want of an official mark	0
B voting for more than one answer	1
C writing or mark by which voter could be identified	0
D being unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty	3
Total	4

Electorate: 6459 Ballot Papers Issued: 1729 Turnout: 26.43 %

And I do hereby declare that the majority of those voting in Hassocks have voted **in favour of** the Neighbourhood Plan.

Dated: Friday 6 March 2020

Tom Clark
Counting Officer

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RECRUITMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS FOR STANDARDS MATTERS

REPORT OF: SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL
Contact Officer: Lucinda Joyce, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Email: lucinda.joyce@midsussex.gov.uk Tel: 01444 477225
Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: N/A
Report to: Council
24 June 2020

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to appoint the Independent Persons for Standards Matters for a four year term from 24th July 2020.

Summary

2. Vacancies for the position of Independent Persons for Standard Matters have been advertised across the District and applicants have been interviewed by the Appointments Panel. The Council are asked to confirm the Appointment Panel's recommendations regarding the successful applicants.

Recommendations

3. **Council are recommended to:**
 - (i) **appoint three Independent Persons to the Standards Committee (Dr David Horne, Wendy Swinton Eagle and Paul Cummins) for a "four" year term from 24th July 2020 to 30 April 2024.**
-

Background

4. The Independent Persons for Standards Matters attend the Standards Committee, which meets about 3 times a year, and also advise the Monitoring Officer on complaints against members received and also throughout the investigation of such a Code of Conduct complaint.
5. Historically, the Council has two Independent Persons for Standards Matters. Tony Cox and Dr David Horne were appointed by Council on 23 March 2016 and their terms of office expired on 30 April 2020. Due to Covid restrictions on meetings it has been extended to 24th July 2020
6. It was agreed by Council that a fair and transparent recruitment process of new independent persons to these vacancies would take place in February/March 2020. This was reported to Council on 29 January 2020, along with a proposed Appointments Panel to conduct the interviews. The Panel's recommendations were to be presented at the Council meeting on 1 April 2020.
7. As a result of Government guidelines regarding social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council meeting of 1 April 2020 was postponed, affecting the proposed start date of the new candidates. In the interim, the two existing Independent Persons were asked to extend their term, until such time as new candidates could be appointed. It is now proposed that the new candidates 4 year term of office will run from 24th July 2020, expiring at the end of the Council year; 30 April 2024.

Recruitment Process

8. Two vacancies were advertised through local media, with town and parish Councils and on the Council's website and social media pages, with a deadline of 21 February 2020 to submit applications. The Appointments Panel (comprising Councillors Webster and Bradbury and Monitoring Officer Tom Clark) interviewed 4 candidates on 5th and 9th March 2020.
9. The Panel also considered the advice of the Committee on Standards in Public Life which suggests that there should be a minimum of 2 Independent Persons on Standards Matters, therefore raising the possibility that this could become a statutory requirement in the next year or so.
10. The Panel was impressed by the quality of the applicants and recommend appointing three candidates, to allow for the ability to maintain a minimum of two in attendance at each meeting. The recommended candidates are:

Name	Term ends	Committee or Panel
Dr David Horne	30 April 2024	Standards Committee
Wendy Swinton Eagle	30 April 2024	Standards Committee
Paul Cummins	30 April 2024	Standards Committee

11. Dr David Horne has served as an Independent Person on Standards Matters for Mid Sussex District Council for the past 4 years and an Independent Person for Brighton and Hove City Council for 8 years. He is a chartered public finance accountant and procurement specialist with an interest in professional standards and codes of conduct. He has been a member of his professional body's Standards Committee since 2015. After nearly 15 years working at director level in national and local policing organisations, he is now working part-time as a finance business partner alongside charity and non-executive roles. He lives in Heathfield.
12. Wendy Swinton Eagle has 12 years' experience serving as a Commissioned Officer in the Women's Royal Army Corps and was the Relocation Officer and Deputy Head of the Allowances Department of the BBC. She has experience of running her own business and has been part of several networking organisations. More recently she was the payroll administrator and bookkeeper at a Nursing Home. She lives in Lindfield.
13. Paul Cummins has experience working in Local Government for 18 years, most of which was as a Monitoring Officer in three District and Borough Councils as well as Head of the Legal Department. He was one of a lead group of Monitoring Officers to draft a Code of Conduct for Kent Authorities following the changes brought about by the Localism Act 2011. He is currently employed as Head of Adjudication Services at the General Pharmaceutical Council, overseeing hearings into Fitness to Practice and conduct issues. He also has experience working as a Parish Clerk. He lives in Tunbridge Wells.

Policy Context

14. The Council has decided to appoint three Independent Persons for Standards Matters in accordance with section 28 (7) of the Localism Act 2011.

Financial Implications

15. There were minimal costs incurred for the recruitment process and these were within budget. An allowance is paid to the Independent Persons. With the increase of a third candidate being appointed, this would be an additional cost of £750 per year in allowances.

Risk Management Implications

16. There are no risk management implications.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

17. The recruitment for new Independent Persons in 2020 was conducted in a fair and transparent way and was open to all members of the public.

Background Papers

None.

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RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET – 1 June 2020

FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2019-20

1. Cabinet considered the outturn position for the 2019/20 revenue and capital budgets.

Summary

2. Following closedown, the year-end position for 2019/20 showed a net underspend of £247,000 before allowing for transfers to Reserves outlined within the Cabinet report and those previously approved at Council on 25 September 2020, totalling £457,000. However, as these previously approved transfers to Reserves included £300,000 to top-up the JE/VR Reserve of which only £100,000 was required, transfers to Reserves totalling £257,000 have been actioned at year-end. The position after these transfers shows a year-end net overspend of £10,000 which is an increase of £21,000 since the last report to Cabinet 10th February 2020.
3. The main changes in the last quarter of the year relate to reduced income levels in some areas (car parking and outdoor facilities). These were starting to decline in March 2020 as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. In addition, investment property supplementary rents, tenant service charges, recycling credit income and revenues enforcement income were also reducing and there was increased expenditure for tree maintenance and outdoor facilities.
4. Interest income during the year, totalling £335,222, was £22,778 less than the original estimate of £358,000. This is mainly due to a lower than forecast average balance, due to timing differences between budgeted and actual capital receipts anticipated for the year. Of the total interest received for the year, £531 has been utilised (refer to paragraph 21 of the Cabinet report) leaving a balance of £334,691 to transfer to General Reserve.
5. Dividend income from investments in the Local Authorities Property Fund generated £256,962 in year, which exceeded the 2019/20 projection by £16,962. This overachievement of dividend income received will be transferred to General Reserve.
6. The capital outturn position shows a £3,501,000 increase in approved spending against the revised budget. This includes projects that came forward during the year totalling £4,566,000 which were unbudgeted at the start of the year but approved by Members during the year. An analysis of this is shown in Table 2 of the Cabinet report. The total net expenditure on the Specific Items financed from Specific Reserve and the General Reserve for 2019/20 is set out in Appendix C of the Cabinet report.

Recommendations

7. **Council is recommended to approve:**
 - (i) **that grant income as set out in paragraph 12 of the Cabinet report be transferred to General Reserve;**
 - (ii) **that grant income as set out in paragraph 13 to 18 of the Cabinet report be transferred to Specific Reserves;**
 - (iii) **that requests totalling £38,000 be transferred to Specific Reserves as set out in Table 1 of the Cabinet report;**

- (iv) that £50,000 be transferred to the Community Development Fund Specific Reserve from General Reserve as detailed in paragraph 20 of the Cabinet report;**
- (v) that balance of interest totalling £334,691 as set out in paragraph 21 of the Cabinet report is transferred to the General Reserve;**
- (vi) that Dividend income totalling £16,962 as set out in paragraph 24 of the Cabinet report is transferred to the General Reserve;**
- (vii) that the 2020/21 capital programme be increased by £1,291,000 as a result of slippage of some 2019/20 capital projects as detailed in Table 2 of the Cabinet report;**
- (viii) that the revenue overspend in 2020/21, totalling £10,000, be met from General Reserve.**