

**20th April, 2021**

**KEY DECISION? NO**

**DRAFT ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2021/22**

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Homelessness Act 2002 placed a range of duties on local housing authorities. Those duties included the duty to undertake periodic reviews of homelessness, and to develop strategies for preventing and tackling homelessness based on the outcomes of those reviews.

The Council is committed to preventing and relieving all forms of homelessness and the new draft Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021 to 2022, reflects this commitment.

Cabinet is asked to approve the draft Rushmoor Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-2022, and associated delivery plan.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Council's Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2017-22 already sets out how its prevention and early intervention approach is intended to help people resolve their housing problems, providing assistance and helping vulnerable people to access the right support services.
- 1.2 The draft Rough Sleeper Strategy (strategy) will complement the Housing and Homelessness Strategy addressing the needs of those at risk of rough sleeping or actual rough sleeping. The vision for this strategy, is to provide exceptional leadership within the community and develop a better, more effective multi-agency approach.
- 1.3 The strategy has been developed in consultation with professionals and using demand analysis of current and previous data and with reference to best practice in tackling rough sleeping.
- 1.4 To deliver its vision, Rushmoor commits to:

- Carry out a comprehensive homelessness review of services and how they are delivering, the outcomes and gaps.
- Continue to put prevention at the heart of its service, working with partners to identify those at risk of homelessness and to support the most vulnerable from becoming homeless in the first place.
- Offer person centred support, by understanding individuals' needs and offering housing choices wherever possible.
- Work to the principles of no 'first night out' and help people new to the street into accommodation quickly.
- Seek to improve engagement with faith groups, the voluntary sector and the public who all have valuable contributions to make alongside statutory services.
- Ensure that those with support needs can access the specialist help they need to increase the success rates of homelessness interventions.

1.5 The Delivery Plan provides a detailed roadmap setting out how the Council will work with partners to deliver its aims.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 Since the Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2017-2022) was developed, there has been significant changes in national policy including changes to primary legislation and guidance.

2.2 The Government aims to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. It launched its new Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018, which requires all Councils to produce a Rough Sleeping Strategy of their own.

2.3 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) builds on the Housing Act 1996 which placed a statutory duty on local authorities to prevent and assist those who are threatened with homelessness or who are homeless. The HRA came into force in April 2018 and has set prevention strategies at the heart of the local authorities' responses to homelessness introducing three additional duties which local authorities are now measured against as;

1. *Support for those who are 'threatened with homelessness'* can now begin 56 days before they may become homeless instead of 28 days as before
2. *A new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants* threatened with homelessness, even if they are not in priority need
3. *A new 'duty to refer'* - public services such as hospitals and job centres will need to let local authorities know if they meet someone, they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

### **3. CONSULTATION**

- 3.1. The strategy was placed before the Strategic Housing and Local Plan Group, the Group commented that it would be beneficial to understand more about the impact of ethnicity on rough sleeping. In line with national statistics in Rushmoor, most people sleeping rough are white British.

### **4. ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS/RISKS**

- 4.1. There is a potential for economic factors to lead to an increased demand on the Housing Service, especially in-light of Covid 19, this could affect the ability to deliver against priorities.

### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. The Council has a range of statutory duties relating to homelessness. The proposed strategy meets all legal requirements as set out in the Homelessness Act 2002, and furthermore, it will assist the Council in meeting all duties enshrined in the (now substantially amended) Housing Act 1996, Part 7.

### **6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Two new posts have been grant funded by central government under the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding, for one year, this has helped to start some activity in the delivery plan along with existing resources within the housing options team. It is likely that this funding will be extended for a further year.
- 6.2 During Covid 19 all local authorities were instructed to provide rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping with accommodation, to date Rushmoor has made 50 placements in B&B under the 'Everyone In' instruction. In total this year, 160 placements were made into B&B impacting on the existing budget.
- 6.3 The service will continue to make use of central government funding opportunities as they may arise in order to deliver robust local services that meet identified need. Following Covid 19 there are additional opportunities for funding this cohort.

### **7. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 7.1. The strategy will impact positively on significant numbers of individuals in housing need by preventing and relieving homelessness and rough sleeping, and through its contribution to creating sustainable and diverse communities.

### **8. OTHER**

- 8.1. Community Safety – the draft strategy will directly contribute to social cohesion and sustainability. It also includes actions that will ensure rough

sleeping and homelessness are minimised, which will have a positive impact in terms of the local environment namely the town centres.

## **9. CONCLUSIONS**

- 9.1 The strategy is a key document that details the Council's priorities for enabling vulnerable residents to remain in their homes and to supporting people to prevent and relieve all forms of homelessness.
- 9.2 It is important to support former rough sleepers and prevent them from returning to the street when they are in crisis. To minimise the long-term harm caused by living on the street, it is crucial to prevent it happening in the first place; therefore, the strategy has set the priorities to:
- firstly, prevent people from becoming homeless,
  - to intervene when they do, and
  - to help them to recover quickly afterwards.
- 9.3 The strategy builds on existing preventative action to reduce, and ultimately end rough sleeping in Rushmoor alongside a commitment to respond rapidly to provide accommodation and support, engaging with people to get them off the street quickly.

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

Rushmoor's draft Rough Sleeping Strategy and Delivery Plan 2021-2022

## **CONTACT DETAILS:**

Report Author – Suzannah Hellicar, Service Manager Housing,  
Suzannah.hellicar@rushmoor.gov.uk

Head of Service James Duggin, Head of Operations,  
James.Duggin@rushmoor.gov.uk

**Rushmoor Draft Rough Sleeping Strategy  
2021-2022**

## Contents:

1	Introduction	Page 3
2	National Context	Page3
3	The Homelessness Reduction Act 2018	Pages 3-4
4	The Local Context	Pages 4-6
5	The Vision	Pages 6-7
6	Strategic Aims	Pages 8-13
7	Conclusion	Page 13
8	Delivery Plan	Pages 14-25

## **1) Introduction:**

The aim of the Rough Sleeper Strategy is to end rough sleeping in Rushmoor. This strategy provides an overview of the local context and existing services before setting out the council's vision and approach to ending rough sleeping in the borough by 2027. By adopting an approach that prevents rough sleeping in the first place and intervenes rapidly for those who are new to the street a pathway to recovery is created.

The strategy reflects the priorities of prevention, intervention and recovery as set out in the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018. And covers the one-year period 2021-22, after which the council's strategic approach to rough sleeping will be reviewed, updated and incorporated into the wider Rushmoor Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

## **2) National context:**

The Government aims to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. It launched its new Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018 which requires all councils to produce a Rough Sleeping Strategy. Ending rough sleeping nationally requires a joined up, common sense approach between central and local government and the business, faith and voluntary communities as well as involvement from local communities and the general public.

## **3) The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017:**

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) builds on the Housing Act 1996 which placed a statutory duty on local authorities to prevent and assist those who are threatened with homelessness or who are homeless. The HRA came into force in April 2018 and has set prevention strategies at the heart of the local authorities' responses to homelessness introducing three additional duties which local authorities are now measured against as:

1. *Support for those who are 'threatened with homelessness'* can now begin 56 days before they may become homeless instead of 28 days as before

2. *A new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants* threatened with homelessness, even if they are not in priority need
3. *A new 'duty to refer'* - public services such as hospitals and job centres will need to let local authorities know if they meet someone, they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless

The Act has also provided a tool to review how homelessness prevention services are delivered in Rushmoor.

#### 4) Local Context:

Rushmoor has very few rough sleepers, however some are deeply entrenched and difficult to engage with while others only need limited interventions to help them to secure accommodation. Rushmoor's most recent rough sleeper count was carried out in November 2020 and identified seven men rough sleeping. During the Covid crisis the housing options team managed to reduce this to just two men, both of whom chose not to take up the offer of housing and support being offered. The team are determined to take forward the learning and approaches adopted during the Covid crisis to continue to keep people off the streets going forward.

In general, the rough sleeper cohort tends to be white British males ranging in age from 26-60 years old. Many have an offending background and have substance misuse and underlying mental health issues.

#### Rough sleeper numbers year-on-year and percentage increase/decrease since 2010

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Rushmoor</b>	0	3	4	7	11	15	9	5	8	5
<b>% increase</b>	-	-	+33%	+75%	+57%	+36%	-40%	-44%	+60%	-37.5%
<b>National</b>	1768	2181	2309	2414	2744	3569	4139	4751	4677	n/a
<b>% increase</b>	-	+23%	+6%	+5	+14%	+30%	+16%	+15%	+2%	-



### How Rushmoor compares to near neighbours:

Year	2016	2017	2018
Rushmoor	9	5	8
Hart	0	1	0
Surrey Heath	12	5	6
Guildford	13	13	16
Waverly	4	1	2
Basingstoke	26	15	8

*Data for 2019 currently not available*

Rushmoor's vision and commitment to end rough sleeping by 2027 is critical to the safety and well-being of some of the most vulnerable residents. National and local data shows that those who end up sleeping rough over a long period of time are more likely to die younger than the general population; die of injury, poisoning and suicide or be victims of abuse, violence and theft. This has happened to people sleeping rough on Rushmoor's streets and it is why rough sleeping must end.

Certain groups of people are more predisposed to becoming homeless than others. Factors such as; ethnicity, education, adverse childhood and family relationships, gender and employment are all contributing factors to homelessness. It is not possible to change any of these factors or peoples past life experiences. The vision is therefore focussed on improved early prevention and intervention with the aim of transforming people's futures.

Rushmoor is one of the Trailblazer authorities which enabled it to put in place some different ways of working in a proactive and more holistic, person centric way. The initiatives implemented between 2017-19 mean the council is already delivering services along the prevention, intervention recovery model. The successful initiatives delivered are:

<b>North Lane Lodge</b> A 9-bedroom hostel for street homeless people managed by Society of St. James.
<b>Out-reach</b> The council is funding two outreach workers to support people who are rough sleeping to come off the street.
<b>Housing Support</b> A support officer and one navigator has been employed to work with vulnerable people alongside the outreach workers.
<b>Prison Visits</b> The outreach workers support prison leavers at risk of homelessness engaging with them during their sentences and helping them to secure housing in time for their release.
<b>No Second Night Out</b> A 'no second night out' approach identifies those who are street homeless, so they spend as little time on the street as possible.
<b>Street-link</b> The housing options team provides a swift response to reports of rough sleepers from the public, made through the street link website.

## 5) The Vision:

The council's Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2017-22 already sets out how the prevention and early intervention approach is intended to help people resolve their housing problems, providing assistance and helping vulnerable people to access the right

support services. The vision for this Rough Sleeper Strategy, is to provide exceptional leadership within the community and develop a better, more effective multi-agency approach that really does work.

To deliver its vision, Rushmoor commits to:

- Carry out a comprehensive homelessness review in 2021/22 of services and how they are delivering, the outcomes and gaps.
- Continue to put prevention at the heart of the service, working with partners to identify those at risk of homelessness and to support the most vulnerable from becoming homeless in the first place.
- Offer person centred support, by understanding individuals needs and offering housing choices wherever possible.
- Work to the principles of no 'first night out' and help people new to the street into accommodation quickly.
- Seek to improve engagement with faith groups, the voluntary sector and the public who all have valuable contributions to make alongside statutory services.
- Ensure that those with support needs can access the specialist help they need to increase the success rates of homelessness interventions.

## 6) Strategic Aims:

The council set some strategic priorities to inform its workflows and performance monitoring framework.

Aims	Activities	What would success look like?
<b>Reduce and Prevent Rough Sleeping</b>	Promote the use of Street link and referral tools such as Duty to Refer to ensure that the community and statutory and voluntary agencies know how to refer those at risk of homelessness or street homeless.	<p>The number of referrals made through the streetlink website and other referral tools are increased.</p> <p>The number of different agencies using the referral tools are increased.</p>
	Provide daily outreach and support services to the homeless using the principles of 'no second night out'.	<p>The street homeless people are known to the council.</p> <p>Everyone who is willing to engage with support is receiving it.</p>

		<p>Those people who are street homeless spend less time on the street.</p> <p>The time spent on the street is reduced and therefore entrenched rough sleeping is reduced.</p>
	<p>Roll-out the 'no first night' approach to those at risk of street homelessness by September 2021.</p>	<p>Reduction in the number of people losing their accommodation.</p> <p>Reduction in the number of people rough sleeping.</p>
	<p>Focussed engagement with prisoners prior to discharge to secure accommodation.</p>	<p>The number of prison leavers on the street is reduced.</p> <p>Street attached behaviour is reduced.</p>
	<p>Help those in supported accommodation to maintain their accommodation and when it is no longer suitable, provide alternative accommodation.</p> <p>Maintain regular liaison meetings between the housing options team and supported housing providers to identify</p>	<p>Reduction in the number of people evicted from supported accommodation.</p> <p>Reduction in the number of people who experience repeat homelessness from supported accommodation.</p>

	<p>those at risk of losing their accommodation.</p>	
	<p>The Navigator officer will work with a cohort of 8 – 10 of the most vulnerable single people with a history of rough sleeping to prevent them from becoming homeless. They will also offer additional support to those rough sleeping.</p>	<p>8 – 10 vulnerable people will receive intensive a package of support to maintain their accommodation or come off the street.</p> <p>Reduction in street homelessness.</p>
	<p>The council has a network of peers with lived experience which will help it understand the routes into street homelessness and missed opportunities for engagement to prevent homelessness.</p>	<p>Reduction in the number of single vulnerable people who become street homeless.</p>
	<p>People with street attached behaviours will be offered support to access appropriate services to help them transition from the street.</p> <p>Those who continue to engage in anti-social and illegal behaviour will be dealt</p>	<p>Begging and anti-social behaviour in the town centres will reduce.</p>

	with through enforcement and prosecution.	
	Create a forum for partners to support people facing multiple disadvantages.	Reduction in repeat homelessness for vulnerable people with complex needs.
<b>Provide Suitable Accommodation for Single Vulnerable People with complex needs</b>	Implement the Temporary Accommodation strategy to address the current and future needs of homeless households.	<p>An increase in the number of stage one and two supported housing units.</p> <p>A reduction in repeat street homelessness.</p> <p>A reduction in the number of evictions from unsuitable accommodation.</p>
	Work with and support private sector landlords to build better relationships.	<p>The number of evictions from private sector accommodation will reduce.</p> <p>There will be an increase in supply of private sector accommodation for vulnerable people.</p> <p>Reduction in the use and cost of B&amp;B.</p>
	The council will review the financial offer to private sector landlords willing to house people with complex needs.	More private sector accommodation will be available for vulnerable people.

	Explore with partners how to increase housing choice for vulnerable people recognising that one-size does not fit all.	Reduction in street and repeat homelessness.
<b>Tenancy Sustainment</b>	Identify and support vulnerable adults, at the start of their tenancy, to help them to sustain their tenancies.	The number of evictions from all tenancy types is reduced.
	Put in place a method to identify people with complex needs who have been nominated through the housing allocation scheme to ensure that no vulnerable people slip through the net.	The exploitation and cuckooing of vulnerable tenants are reduced.  Reduction in evictions of vulnerable people from all tenancy types.
	Provide support which can be stepped up or down depending on the tenants and the landlord's needs. This would be delivered by the Navigator and Supported Letting role.	Reduction in evictions from all tenancy types.



	Ensure that private sector landlords know how to refer tenants at risk of homelessness to tenancy support.	Reduction in private sector evictions. Reduction in repeat homelessness.
	Consider the whole person when looking at sustainable tenancies by linking in with employment, training, volunteering or hobby opportunities.	Reduction in repeat homelessness. Social isolation and street activity are reduced when tenants are engaged with their community.
	Work with charities and partner agencies to find furniture and other essential items to set up successful tenancies.	Sustainable tenancies. Less exploitation of vulnerable tenants who could be identified by their homes appearing different from inside and outside.

## 7) Conclusion

It is important to support those living on the street and, once housed, prevent them from returning when they are in crisis. The council wants to minimise the long-term harm caused by living on the street, the most important thing it can do is to prevent it happening in the first place; this is why the strategy has set the council's priorities to firstly prevent people from becoming homeless, to intervene when they do, and to help them to recover quickly afterwards. Its focus builds on existing preventative action to reduce, and ultimately end rough sleeping in Rushmoor alongside a commitment to respond rapidly to provide accommodation and support, engaging with people to get them off the street quickly.

The council understands that it cannot deliver this vision alone; extending partnership working to the public, faith groups and the charitable sector needs to be more focussed if there is to be a chance of success. It will look to best practice and learn from others

to enable people to make the transition from the street more easily and ensure council officers are supported to give the best service possible.

## **8) Homelessness Delivery Plan:**

### **Priority one - Reduce and prevent rough sleeping**

#### **Why this is a priority?**

The Government is committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. According to the latest national figures collected in the autumn of 2018 and published in January 2019, 4,677 people were estimated to be sleeping rough on any one night. Although there was a decrease of 2% from 2017 to 2018 rough sleeping has increased by 165% since 2010.

While, the number of rough sleepers in Rushmoor remains low at five people in November 2019 the figures have been higher in the past. These five people have spent a considerable length of time sleeping rough and are harder to work with; the longer people sleep rough, the more difficult it is to engage them with services to help them off the street. They often find it more difficult to transition into housing when they are housed.

Identifying those more at risk of rough sleeping is important in the prevention of homelessness and to respond quickly to those who have just become homeless. In Rushmoor the rough sleeping community are predominately:

- White male, although an increasing number of women have found themselves rough sleeping in the last 2 years
- 26- 60 years old
- With substance misuse
- Mental health
- Physical disabilities
- Trauma
- Offending history

## **Working with Statutory bodies - Duty to Refer**

The Homelessness Reduction Act named certain public bodies that have a duty to refer users of their service who they have reason to believe are homeless or threatened with becoming homeless, to a local authority of the service users' choice. Prisons fall under this duty and have been proactive in providing referrals. Not all public bodies have been so responsive, so the council will be working with them over the next 6 months to address this.

## **Commitment to refer**

Several charities and organisations, who provide support to people on the cusp of homelessness, have been identified as referral partners. The aim will be to make the best use of this resource by seeking a 'commitment to refer' protocol, enabling these organisations, to quickly refer people to the housing options team for early intervention to prevent homelessness.

The council recognises the role that landlords play in identifying people at risk of homelessness, so it will encourage all Rushmoor's landlords to sign up to the 'commitment to refer' with the intention of all of them signing up by the end of 2021.

## **Working with the public- Street Link and referral tools**

Recognising the wider community's interest in responding to rough sleepers; it is important to continue to communicate the most appropriate channels to help them to do this. The council will promote the use of the online reporting service provided by Street Link [www.streetlink.org.uk](http://www.streetlink.org.uk).

## **Outreach and Support**

There have been unprecedented cuts to the Social Inclusion Services across Hampshire which has reduced the housing support to single vulnerable people. To mitigate the risks of increasing homelessness the council has employed specialist outreach. Their role is to engage with people living on the street to help them into existing local support services. Their work provides a valuable link between the rough sleepers and housing services.

## **Prison leavers**

Prison leavers are a high-risk group for rough sleeping when released from prison without a home to go to, so the council has put in place a program of prison visits to engage with prisoners due to be released. Support workers build rapport and trust with them prior to release, helping them into accommodation on their release and ensuring they receive the right sort of tenancy support. Prison visits will continue to be high priority within the Rushmoor Rough Sleeping Strategy.

### **Supported Accommodation**

Many rough sleepers experience a revolving door of homelessness which can continue even when they are housed in supported accommodation. Working with local supported accommodation providers, those at risk of homelessness will be supported to remain where they are. If this is not appropriate, alternative accommodation will be sourced. This process will be reflected in a Supported Accommodation Protocol which the council commits to producing in partnership with Supported Accommodation providers by December 2021; this protocol forms an integral part of Rushmoor's Rough Sleeping Strategy.

### **Housing First**

Housing First is a model that offers permanent affordable housing as quickly as possible for individuals experiencing homelessness and provides supportive services. It does not require an individual to access the traditional route of supported accommodation, nor does the model require a commitment to engage with services. Evidence shows that no single model of housing is suitable for all homeless people with complex needs. Working with Hampshire County Council, Society of St James and Vivid Housing Association the council will trial a small number of units for Housing First in 2021. These tenancies will be targeted at those rough sleeping or with a history of rough sleeping and will be evaluated after 6 months, 12 months and 24 months.

### **Navigator Role**

The council has successfully bid for funding for a navigator and appointed a qualified psychologist. This role works with the most vulnerable and entrenched people on the street as well as those at risk of losing their accommodation. They are assigned to rough sleepers who would benefit from tailored support. This support is suited to those with higher and more complex needs, which include health-related support, and those who have been sleeping rough for a longer period.

### **Supported Letting Role**

In addition, to the navigator role the council has also secured one year's funding for a supported lettings role which started in April 2020, to support vulnerable people to maintain their accommodation. They also provide a vital link with landlords supporting them too.

This approach not only offers support to find a housing solution, but also encourages the individual in their recovery to improve their health and wellbeing, find employment, undertake training, develop budgeting skills and cultivate positive social circles. This comprehensive approach should mean the individual is better equipped to maintain their accommodation and independence and avoid returning to the street in the longer term.

### **Review of support**

There is strong evidence that increasing numbers of people moving from supported housing into mainstream housing require significant support to successfully resettle and sustain their tenancies in the longer term. In part this is related to accessing the right welfare benefits and complexities of the digital Universal Credit claim process. There are several organisations providing a broad range of support services, sometimes tenants are not aware of the support on offer or how to self-refer. As part of the council's commitment to delivering exceptional leadership to prevent homelessness, it needs to ensure that residents can engage with these services more easily. During 2021 the council will review the tenancy support provision available to be clear on who delivers what and how those services can be resourced, promoted and accessed quickly.

### **Lived experience**

Understanding the lived experience of rough sleepers is critical to be able to identify and understand the routes into rough sleeping as well as opportunities missed to prevent them becoming homeless in the first place. In the next year the council will commit to working with former rough sleepers to identify gaps in provision. It will also establish a peer mentoring scheme with those who are no longer homeless mentoring and encouraging those who are at risk of or who are currently homeless.

### **Street attachment**

Despite being provided with accommodation, certain former rough sleepers choose to return to the street. It can be difficult to adjust to a life within four walls and some people feel more equipped to deal with street living than managing a home and feel very isolated in their new home. These are some of the reasons that people return to reconnect with friends in the street community

which gives the impression that there are more people rough sleeping than there are. The council is committed to ensuring that housing support workers, navigators and other support providers help those new into their homes make appropriate adjustments to enable them to manage and sustain their tenancies.

It is also important to listen to the concerns of the wider community and communicate to them about the support available to rough sleepers and what enforcement is being taken to address anti-social behaviour, street drinking and begging. The council is committed to communicating more regularly with the wider community on what it is doing to resolve rough sleeping and will continue to work with the Community Safety Team; Rushmoor's Legal Team and the Police to take enforcement action and prosecute when street behaviours are anti-social or illegal.

### **MEAM approach – Making Every Adult Matter**

The MEAM Approach helps local areas design and deliver better coordinated services for people experiencing multiple disadvantages. It is currently being used by partnerships of statutory and voluntary agencies in 27 local areas across England. The MEAM approach considers seven principles, which is adapted to local need and circumstances.

The principles are:

- Partnership, coproduction and vision
- Consistency in selecting a caseload
- Coordination for clients and services
- Flexible responses from services
- Service improvement and workforce development
- Measurement of success
- Sustainability and systems change

Rushmoor is keen to learn from MEAM areas and adopt an approach based on these principles.

## **Priority two - Provide suitable accommodation for single vulnerable people**

## **Why is this a priority?**

There has been a significant increase in the number of single, chaotic and vulnerable people applying for mainstream homelessness services since the Homelessness Reduction Act. They struggle to find and maintain accommodation without significant help.

The number of people requiring supported accommodation is rising and recent cuts to Hampshire County Council's Social Inclusion budget has resulted in a reduction of supported accommodation which has increased the council's reliance on the use of B&B and other temporary accommodation. This approach is costly in more than just a financial sense, as rough sleepers are both isolated and unsupported; increasing their vulnerability; sadly, those with addictions and mental health problems are more vulnerable to overdose or harm in this context.

Demand for supported accommodation continues to outstrip supply and residents who are ready to move on from supported accommodation have limited options available to them. Although, Rushmoor has a healthy private rental sector which includes houses in multiple occupation, the Local Housing Allowance has not kept up with rent increases which means that a decreasing pool of properties are available to people in receipt of welfare benefits, so the council must find alternative solutions.

## **Hostel Accommodation**

In 2017 the council sourced a nine-bed hostel, North Lane Lodge, which is managed by the Society of St. James. This building is only available on a temporary basis and was due to close in December 2019. A lease extension has been agreed until December 2021.

The council is in discussions with a support provider to increase the support going into an existing 45-unit homeless hostel. This is in response to the increase in demand, and the reduction in local specialist, supported accommodation due to Hampshire County Council, social inclusion budget cuts.

## **Housing First**

Working with partners the council will increase the short and long-term housing options for rough sleepers including a Housing First model as previously mentioned.

## **Private Rented Sector Accommodation**

Rushmoor's private sector landlords provide an invaluable housing resource. As part of the Rough Sleeping Strategy the council want to build better relationships with them and show them how accessing support for tenants with complex needs can be achieved. It is also committed to providing a single point of contact for landlords to refer tenants who are experiencing any form of crisis that requires intervention to prevent them from becoming homeless.

## **Bed and Breakfast and Hotel Accommodation**

By its very nature B&B and hotel accommodation is not suitable for vulnerable people who often find the isolation and lack of support difficult to cope with. The aim is to only use this type of accommodation in emergencies and ensure that, going forward support is made available in all cases.

## **Rushmoor's Temporary Accommodation Strategy**

Rushmoor has a Temporary Accommodation Strategy in place to secure a suitable supply of temporary accommodation in the future. The council is working on a number of deliverables including securing appropriate numbers of temporary accommodation units in its development pipeline.

## **Priority Three-Tenancy Sustainment**

### **Why this is important**

It is not enough to provide affordable accommodation for people with complex needs and experience shows that even those in supported accommodation can struggle to keep their tenancies. It is even more difficult for those in main-stream accommodation.

The difficulties include:

- navigating the welfare benefits system,
- having a home for the first time after years of rough sleeping or sofa surfing
- setting up payments for utilities and rent



- furnishing a home
- managing visitors
- knowing what to do about repairs

### **Identification of vulnerable adults**

The housing options team can help to sustain a tenancy and stop a return to the street by identifying vulnerable people before their tenancy start. Sometimes those with complex needs are exploited by others putting them at risk of losing their tenancy, for example by getting into debt or breaching their tenancy agreement. By identifying vulnerabilities, the team can work with other agencies to reduce the risk of exploitation and increase the chance of a successful tenancy.

### **Right Start**

Tenancies that are set up well from the start have a better chance of enduring. By helping tenants to set up their utilities and rent payments they are unlikely to get into arrears. Furnishing a home is also important as is providing window covering for privacy and safety. This prevents people putting newspaper or other items at their windows which can mark them as a target for exploitation. By working with local charities, household basics can be provided at low or even nil cost to the tenant.

### **The Whole Person**

Social isolation can draw people back to the street and into lifestyles they had left behind so it is important that when people are ready, they are helped to access their new community by means of volunteering, training and work opportunities, if that is what they want to do.

### **Step up and down support**

By maintaining contact with complex tenants, tenancy support can be increased or decreased as needed. The council has successfully bid for Ministry Housing Communities and Local Government rough sleeping initiative funding for a navigator and a supported lettings role which enables us to trial different models of delivering support to former street homeless people.

### **Training**

The housing options team has undertaken extensive specialist training prior to the introduction of HRA 2017. There is a continued commitment to ensure that officers are supported in their roles by building on existing training and expertise to identify and respond to the intricacies of complex clients.

There is also recognition that working with people facing multiple disadvantages can affect the resilience of officers. During the last year officers have been involved in cross county discussion forums and training to support them within their roles. This will continue into next year.