Adur & Worthing Councils Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030

1. Foreword

Adur & Worthing Councils are committed to addressing the homelessness needs of residents and the growing problems of homelessness and rough sleeping in the community, as detailed in this strategy. Adur & Worthing Councils firmly believe that housing is a basic human right. Consequently, one of our most vital responsibilities is to ensure the provision of safe, secure, and genuinely affordable, high-quality homes for all. This guiding principle underpins all our efforts in delivering public services. Our focus is on upholding dignity, promoting good physical and mental health, and empowering residents to actively participate in thriving and inclusive communities.

The last five years have presented unprecedented challenges, marked by some of the most severe cost-of-living conditions on record. This period has seen a significant increase in homelessness and rough sleeping, both locally and nationally. Private rents have surged, while Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates and the benefit cap have remained frozen, creating a substantial affordability gap for many households. The increasing cost of essential goods and rising housing expenses are creating financial strain on both households and the councils. The financial pressures on the councils to address housing needs and provide temporary accommodation are substantial, escalating, and currently unsustainable.

This Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2025-2030 is a core commitment for both Adur & Worthing Councils. It's built on the belief that everyone deserves a safe, secure, and affordable home, aligning with the councils' overall vision in 'Our Plan'. This makes the strategy more than just a legal requirement; it's a moral and strategic priority. It's essential for making sure the councils can keep putting resources into tackling homelessness, especially with the tough financial challenges and external pressures being faced. This strategy aims to shift our approach from crisis management to early intervention, acknowledging the significant challenges ahead. By doing so, we seek to reduce the number of residents experiencing homelessness and substantially decrease expenditure as the crisis is expected to persist.

Addressing the challenge and complex reasons for homelessness demands a unified approach. Adur & Worthing Councils are dedicated to cultivating a collaborative environment, working together with an extensive network of organisations, partners, and local communities throughout Adur and Worthing.This strategy serves as a comprehensive roadmap to achieve a clear vision: that homelessness will be prevented, made brief when it occurs, and non-recurring for those who experience it. The plan builds on past experiences, reflects on what has changed, and identifies areas for improvement to ensure services are effective for all individuals and families facing homelessness or rough sleeping.

Adur and Worthing Councils have a **statutory duty** to prevent and relieve homelessness, as mandated by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This means they must intervene early and take reasonable steps to help eligible residents who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. However, the councils can't solve the crisis alone; a wider partnership is essential.

The responsibility for housing and support is a collaborative effort involving various organisations. Housing associations, also known as registered providers, play a key role in building and providing new social and affordable homes, which is crucial given the severe shortage of genuinely affordable housing in the area. Meanwhile, other partners like mental health services, adult social care, children's services, and public health as well as the voluntary and charitable sector are vital for providing the support and housing that enables people to maintain tenancies and access housing when the council does not have a statutory duty to do so. The Adur & Worthing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2025-2030 is built on this understanding, aiming to cultivate a collaborative environment and shift from a reactive crisis management approach to a unified, multi-agency response.

This Strategy is being developed during a period of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), with Adur and Worthing Councils being part of a 'fast-track' government programme to transition both councils into a new unitary council footprint as part of Sussex Devolution. This is not expected to be confirmed until Spring 2026. This transition will transform the councils' homelessness and rough sleeping services, as well as the related partnership work, bringing both new opportunities and challenges.

Moreover, there are significant opportunities to be gained by working more closely with Social Care, Children Services and Public Health teams to strengthen prevention and embed all the priorities in this Strategy. This will allow us to create the strongest possible opportunities to deliver the core ambitions of this Strategy both during and after this reform.

2. Introduction

This document outlines Adur and Worthing Councils' strategic response to homelessness and rough sleeping for the period 2025-2030. It builds upon previous efforts, integrates lessons learned, and directly addresses the pressing challenges currently faced by our communities.

The national context is dominated by a significant housing crisis, acutely felt across both Adur and Worthing. This crisis is primarily driven by a severe shortage of genuinely affordable housing, leading to escalating housing costs and a notable increase in homelessness. The financial strain on the councils is profound, with the costs associated with providing temporary and emergency accommodation being substantial, growing, and unsustainable.This situation is further compounded by the increasing complexity of support needs among residents, requiring more nuanced and integrated interventions.

This strategy is designed as a key delivery vehicle for the recently adopted Adur and Worthing Housing Strategy 2025-2030. It aligns fully with the overarching principles and six priorities of the Housing Strategy. Specifically, it directly supports Housing Strategy Priority 4, which is dedicated to "Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping". The strategy also reinforces the councils' corporate plan, 'Our Plan', and their shared commitment to being 'Fair, Green and Local' in all their endeavours.

The development of this strategy is mandated by legislative requirements. The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all councils to review and produce a new homelessness strategy at least every five years. Furthermore, the central government's Rough Sleeping Strategy includes a specific requirement for all councils to adopt a Rough Sleeping Strategy. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has significantly altered legal duties, placing a greater emphasis on earlier intervention and prevention. This strategy also acknowledges and prepares for the influence of emerging legislation, including the Renters' Rights Bill and the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act, which are expected to bring further changes to housing rights and standards.

This strategy is fundamentally underpinned by the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) within the Equality Act 2010. Adur and Worthing Councils are committed to actively eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations across all protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation) in the delivery of this strategy. Furthermore, we recognise and address the specific vulnerabilities of other groups not explicitly covered by the PSED, such as care leavers, ex-offenders, and veterans, whose experiences of homelessness are often compounded by multiple disadvantages.

The evidence points to a profound interconnectedness of crises, where the housing crisis is not an isolated phenomenon but is deeply intertwined with the prevailing cost-of-living crisis and increased vulnerabilities stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. Economic difficulties worsen individual weaknesses, which in turn cause housing instability and homelessness.Therefore, a purely housing-centric approach would be insufficient; the strategy therefore has sight, where possible, to adopted a holistic view, recognising that

effective housing solutions are inextricably linked with broader economic stability, public health initiatives, and comprehensive social support systems. This understanding underscores the necessity of addressing these wider socio-economic determinants to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Moreover, the context of economic and governance uncertainties, including the forthcoming Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy update and the ongoing discussions around English Devolution and LGR (as outlined above), necessitates strategic agility. The Housing Strategy's 18-month delivery plan and the extension of current homelessness strategies until March 2026 explicitly acknowledge this dynamic policy landscape. This indicates that the strategy is designed not as a static document but as a "live plan" capable of continuous adaptation and regular review. Such agility is a critical factor for ensuring the strategy's long-term relevance and effectiveness in a constantly evolving environment.

3. Our Vision

Adur and Worthing councils' vision for addressing homelessness is deeply rooted in the principle that housing is a basic human right. This strategy articulates a clear and ambitious vision for the future of homelessness in Adur and Worthing, aiming for a situation where homelessness is:

- **Prevented (Made Rare):** This aspect of the vision emphasises a proactive approach, prioritising early intervention and preventative measures to stop homelessness from occurring in the first place. The aim is to identify and address the root causes and risk factors before individuals and families reach a crisis point.
- **Brief:** When homelessness does occur, the vision dictates that individuals and families are connected quickly and efficiently to appropriate housing and support services. This minimises the duration of homelessness, reducing its detrimental impact on individuals' lives and wellbeing.
- **Non-Recurring:** A critical component of the vision is to implement long-term, sustainable solutions that prevent repeated experiences of homelessness. This involves providing ongoing support, fostering independence, and addressing underlying issues that could lead to future housing instability.

This three-part vision represents a fundamental shift in philosophy, moving beyond merely managing homelessness reactively to actively preventing it, minimising its duration, and breaking cycles of re-occurrence. This holistic approach reflects lessons learned from national good practice, such as the findings of the Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, which highlight that there is no single answer to ending homelessness but rather a series of actions covering prevention, early response, and new provision. This strategic shift also implicitly addresses the unsustainability of current reactive temporary accommodation costs, which place a significant financial burden on the councils. By focusing on prevention and sustainable solutions, the strategy aims to achieve systemic change rather than incremental service improvements.

This vision is designed to contribute directly to promoting dignity, supporting good health and wellbeing, and empowering people to participate fully in thriving and inclusive communities,

as set out in the overarching Housing Strategy. This ambition for stable, needs-met housing within supportive communities underscores the comprehensive nature of this strategy.

4. Guiding Principles

The development and implementation of this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy are underpinned by a set of core guiding principles, adopted and adapted from the "Delivering Our Housing Priorities" principles of the overarching Housing Strategy. These principles serve as foundational values, directing all actions and decisions within the strategy:

- **Collaboration and Partnership:** This principle emphasises working closely with residents, communities, and a wide range of partners to drive fair, inclusive, and sustainable change across the housing and homelessness landscape.
- **Evidence-Based and High-Quality Services:** The commitment is to deliver high-quality housing services that are informed by robust evidence, incorporate lived experience, utilise appropriate tools, and are supported by investment in the right skills for staff.
- **Prevention and Early Intervention:** A key priority is to implement proactive solutions, intervening early to prevent housing issues from escalating into full-blown homelessness crises. Where people find themselves homeless and in any kind of supported homelessness accommodation, such as temporary accommodation, we will act to support and enable residents to move on into suitable sustainable accommodation solutions.
- **Innovation and Continuous Improvement:** The strategy embraces change and innovation in service delivery while maintaining a strong foundation of essential services, ensuring adaptability and ongoing enhancement.
- **Person-Centred and Trauma-Informed Approach:** Services are designed to meet residents' needs, particularly those facing the greatest challenges, by ensuring approaches are person-centred and sensitive to past traumatic experiences. This approach acknowledges that standard housing options may not work for all, necessitating flexible and tailored solutions.
- **Resident Empowerment:** This involves actively supporting and enabling residents to directly contribute to the improvement of housing services, fostering a sense of ownership and ensuring services are truly responsive to their needs.
- **Fairness and Inclusion:** The commitment is to ensure that all services are accessible, fair, and inclusive for everyone, regardless of their background or circumstances. This includes careful consideration of the diverse needs, for example, of both single people and families within all our provisions.
- **Respect and Dignity:** All residents are to be treated with dignity, respect, and empathy throughout their engagement with housing services.
- **Climate Responsibility:** Solutions developed under this strategy will consider sustainability where feasible, contributing to broader environmental goals.
- **Resource Stewardship:** This principle mandates effective budget management and the optimal use of all available resources to maximise the impact of interventions.

In addition to these core principles, the strategy is committed to being:

- **Legally Compliant:** Full adherence to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Homelessness Code of Guidance, emerging legislation, and forthcoming MHCLG homeless strategy guidance is paramount.
- **Co-Produced:** The strategy's development and delivery will be a genuine partnership with people with lived experience, statutory partners, and the Third Sector, reflecting the authorities' commitments to be participative and councils for the community.
- **Outcomes-Focused:** The strategy will feature clear, measurable objectives supported by a robust performance management framework to track progress and demonstrate impact.
- **Resource-Informed but Ambitious:** While realistic about existing constraints, the strategy maintains ambitious aims, leveraging a "spend to save" approach recommended by MHCLG.

The strategy prioritises both resource efficiency and ambitious targets, emphasising a "spend to save" model. This is crucial given the rising and unsustainable cost of temporary housing that strains council budgets. This approach provides a strong financial rationale for investing early in prevention and intervention. It demonstrates to stakeholders that the strategy delivers not only social benefits but also represents prudent, long-term financial planning.

The strategy is built upon the interconnected principles of a person-centred approach, trauma-informed care, and resident empowerment. Careful consideration of these principles are fundamental to both the strategy's development and its ultimate delivery. The strategy is about more than just an improvement in service delivery; it represents a significant shift in the councils' overall approach. By actively valuing and integrating lived experience into the co-production of this strategy, we aim to identify and dismantle systemic barriers that may not be immediately obvious to service providers. We believe this collaborative approach will lead to solutions that are not only highly effective in addressing needs but are also more sustainable. A trauma-informed approach, which acknowledges the profound impact of past experiences on individuals, ensures that services are better designed to facilitate healing and foster empowerment, thereby preventing inadvertent re-traumatisation. This approach is critically important for disrupting cycles of homelessness and cultivating long-term stability and wellbeing for individuals.

5. Understanding Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in Adur and Worthing

This section provides a comprehensive assessment of homelessness and rough sleeping in Adur and Worthing, drawing extensively from the 2021 Census, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Assessment (Nov 2023) that includes lived experience, data from the councils' Housing Needs service and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA 2020 and the draft SHMA for 2025/6). This evidence base is crucial for understanding the challenges and informing the strategic priorities.

Context and Challenges

Impact of Cost of Living and Benefits

The rising cost of living is a significant driver of housing insecurity and homelessness in Adur and Worthing. Benefit payments, particularly Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, have consistently failed to keep pace with the rapid increases in private rents, rendering accommodation unaffordable for many residents on lower incomes. This disparity forces tenants receiving housing benefits to cover the difference from their own limited incomes, exacerbating financial insecurity.

The severe impact on Universal Credit claimants is evident: national research from 2024 revealed that 12% of claimants were forced to use a food bank in a recent month, and over half (55%) ran out of food. Furthermore, 22% were unable to cook hot food due to unaffordable utility costs, 52% struggled to keep up with bills, 26% missed essential appointments due to transport costs, 42% skipped meals to cover other expenses, and 43% could not keep their homes warm in winter.[1] These compounding pressures directly translate into increased housing vulnerability, overcrowding, rising rent arrears, evictions, and a greater number of homelessness presentations to the councils. Both Adur and Worthing Councils are actively lobbying the central government on the inadequacy and unfairness of the current benefit systems, seeking policy changes that better reflect the true cost of living.

Housing Demand and Supply Dynamics

Adur and Worthing face an acute shortage of housing, particularly genuinely affordable options, which has driven up both rental and purchase costs.

- **Housing Tenure:** Home ownership rates in Adur (72%) and Worthing (68%) are relatively high compared to the South East (66%) and England (61%) averages. The majority of housing stock in both areas is privately owned.
    - **Adur Specific:** Adur District Council directly manages its own housing stock through 'Adur Homes'. This position allows Adur to manage homelessness pressures and associated temporary accommodation costs more effectively.
    - **Worthing Specific:** Worthing Borough Council does not own any local authority housing, relying entirely on the private rented sector or registered housing providers. This impacts the council's ability to support its most vulnerable residents, as some registered providers, for example, have policies such as lifetime bans after eviction which limit housing options and increase temporary accommodation costs. Registered providers can also apply stricter affordability assessments which means some people nominated to a social housing property do not qualify as they do not have sufficient income; this is particularly the case for younger people.
- **Overcrowding:** In 2021, 3% of households in both Adur (835 households) and Worthing (1,645 households) were classified as overcrowded, mirroring the national rate. Conversely, over two-thirds (70%) of households in both areas were under-occupied. As of July 2025, 14% of Adur and 15% of Worthing households on

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[1] Trussell Trust, February 2024
https://malg.org.uk/new-trussell-trust-research-reveals-that-over-half-of-people-receiving-universal-credit-are-unable-to-afford-enough-food/

the housing register were lacking one or more bedrooms, indicating a significant mismatch between household size and available housing. The rate of overcrowded households (based on the bedroom standard) increased significantly between 2011 and 2021: by 94% (779 households) in Adur and by 120% (3,600 households) in Worthing.

- **Affordability:** The discrepancy between local wages and house prices has dramatically widened. In 2003, house prices were approximately 7 times earnings in both areas; by 2022, this had increased to 13.95 times in Adur and 11.26 times in Worthing, making market housing increasingly unaffordable. As of September 2024,median house prices were £365,000 in Adur and £355,000 in Worthing, with entry-level prices 11.3 times lower quartile earnings in Adur and 9.32 times in Worthing. Median affordability ratios stood at 10.06 in Adur and 9.70 in Worthing.
- **Impact on Young People:** Young people are disproportionately affected by this decrease in affordability. A significant issue is the phenomenon of young people becoming "stuck" in supported accommodation due to a lack of suitable and affordable move-on options, which in turn creates longer waiting lists for those who currently require supported housing.
- **Social Housing Register:** As of March 2025, over 1,000 households in Adur and 2,000 in Worthing were on the social housing register, having been assessed as having a housing need. This represents a substantial increase from approximately 1,970 households registered in September 2019 across both authorities.
  - The average waiting time for a household in Band C requiring a three-bedroom property in either area is 8-9 years or more.
  - For single-person households in Band C, the average wait is 12 months in Adur and over 5 years in Worthing for a one-bedroom property, which is the greatest area of need.

Table 5.1: Housing Registers
(Adur and Worthing, March 2021 to March 2025)

Housing Registers	March 2021	March 2022	March 2023	March 2024	March 2025
Adur	737	829	936	980	1033
Worthing	1442	1551	1789	1925	2106
Adur and Worthing	2179	2380	2725	2905	3139

This table visually demonstrates the escalating demand for social housing over time. The continuous year-on-year increase highlights the growing unmet need and the immense pressure on the social housing system. This trend underscores the urgency for strategies

aimed at increasing affordable housing supply and improving move-on pathways, as the current rate of demand is clearly outstripping the available supply.

The table below illustrates the problem of supply not meeting the demand for social housing: in 2024-25, 9% of social housing applicants were re-housed (16% in Adur, 6% in Worthing).

Table 5.2: Number of Social Housing Lettings
(Adur and Worthing, Apr 2021 to Mar 2025)

Social Housing Lettings	April 2021 Mar 2022	Apr 2022 Mar 2023	Apr 2023 Mar 2024	Apr 2024 Mar 2025
Adur	88	71	119	167
Worthing	157	148	256	122
Adur and Worthing	245	219	375	289

- **Older People and Disabled Needs:** Adur and Worthing are home to a significant and growing number of older people. Based on the 2021 Census, there were approximately 23,000 people over 55 in Adur and over 39,000 in Worthing. The increasing number of older persons and disabled individuals drives a specific need for new homes that meet particular accessibility and support requirements. For instance, as of March 2025, Worthing's housing register recorded 272 households with a mobility need, including those requiring level access or fully wheelchair-accessible properties.

  Similarly, Adur had 154 households with mobility needs. Analysis indicates a need for hundreds of units of housing with support and care in both districts by 2036, alongside additional care home bedspaces. The population aged 65+ is projected to increase by 28% in Adur and 29% in Worthing between 2024-2042, accounting for over 100% of all population growth. There is a need for around 590 additional housing units with support in Adur and 520 in Worthing (mainly affordable sector), and around 500 additional housing units with care in Adur and 570 in Worthing (majority market sector). A need for around 700 dwellings (260 in Adur, 440 in Worthing) to be for wheelchair users (meeting technical standard M4(3)) by 2042 has also been identified.

Table 5.3: Age Groups % Increase (Adur and Worthing, 2011-2021 Census)

Age Groups	ADUR % increase	WORTHING % increase
55 - 64	7.6	17.9
65 - 74	13.4	25.4
75+	13.4	7.3

This table highlights the significant demographic shift towards an older population in Adur and Worthing. This trend directly impacts housing needs, driving demand for specialist housing provision, accessible homes, and care home capacity. Understanding this demographic change is crucial for long-term strategic planning of housing supply and supported accommodation.

- **Housing Supply Constraints:** The geographical location of Adur and Worthing, nestled between the sea and the South Downs National Park, severely restricts the availability of suitable land for housing development. This constraint means that housing supply struggles to keep pace with the changing and growing needs of the communities. Consequently, both the Adur and Worthing Local Plans have a shortfall in meeting local housing needs when compared against nationally set targets. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2025 indicates a need for 245 additional affordable housing units per annum in Adur and 338 in Worthing for those unable to afford market rents. The current Standard Method figures for overall housing need are 547 dwellings per annum (dpa) for Adur and 849 dpa for Worthing, which are unlikely to be met due to supply constraints. A capacity-led scenario estimates delivery of 150 dpa in Adur and 230 dpa in Worthing. The prevalence of short-term lets, such as Air BnBs, further exacerbates the housing supply crisis by diverting properties away from meeting local housing needs.

The data reveals a deeply connected web of vulnerabilities, demonstrating that insecure housing is a systemic problem. A key driver of homelessness in the private rented sector is the gap between Local Housing Allowance and market rents, subsequently increasing temporary accommodation use and its associated costs. Affordability challenges and limited housing supply initiate a sequence of interconnected problems, extending beyond individual cases. Consequently, the strategy must address these systemic connections instead of just the immediate effects. Addressing only temporary accommodation costs, without resolving the core issues of insufficient Local Housing Allowance and housing shortages, will inevitably perpetuate problems and hinder long-term solutions. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the council and local partners have limited control and influence over national decisions that significantly impact homelessness locally.

The Private Rented Sector Landscape

The private rented sector (PRS) has grown significantly over the last 15 years, now accommodating approximately 20% of households in the UK. Locally, 26% of Worthing's private housing stock is rented, compared to 10% in Adur. The PRS is increasingly serving a

diverse range of households, including many families with children, who historically might have accessed social housing.

- **Rental Costs:** Rent inflation continues to impact private renters in both Adur and Worthing. As of March 2025, median rental values averaged £1,328 per calendar month (PCM) in Adur and £1,271 PCM in Worthing. Both areas show lower rates than the South East (£1,368) and England (£1,386). Rental values have shown strong growth across all property sizes, particularly 4-bedroom properties in Adur. (check this)
- **LHA Disparity:** The increasing gap between market rents and the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) renders private rented accommodation largely unaffordable for individuals receiving benefits. Furthermore, strict referencing criteria imposed by letting agents, often requiring a guarantor earning 35 times the monthly rent, create significant barriers for low-income individuals. In Worthing, a privately renting household on low income or benefits would need to pay an additional £107.10 per month for a one-bedroom property, £205.60 for a two-bedroom, and £452.02 for a four-bedroom property, based on December 2024 average rents.
- **Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs):** There are approximately 202 licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) across Adur (23) and Worthing (179), potentially housing 146 and 1379 people respectively. It is also estimated that there are many more unlicensed HMOs in the area, approximately 1,200 in Worthing and 320 in Adur, which highlights the level of housing vulnerability in our districts**.**
  - **Adur Specific Challenge:** Adur has a significantly smaller number of licensed HMOs (23), which may indicate fewer diverse housing options for single individuals or those with lower incomes compared to Worthing.
  - **Worthing Specific Challenge:** The high number of licensed HMOs in Worthing (179) reflects the borough's housing stock, particularly large Victorian properties suitable for conversion into smaller units. Many of these HMOs serve as lower-cost accommodation for single people on low incomes. This disproportionate concentration of supported accommodation, often commissioned into specific wards, creates pressures on local services and community relations, posing challenges for locating new supported accommodation.
- **Landlord Issues:** A concerning trend is the departure of many reputable private landlords from the sector due to regulatory and tax changes, coupled with rising interest rates. This exodus contributes to both rising rental costs and increased homelessness. A minority of landlords, however, exploit the market constraints by providing substandard accommodation that can be detrimental to occupants' health. In 2024/25, the councils conducted 8 formal Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) inspections and issued seven enforcement notices in Worthing and two in Adur.
- **Impact of Renters Rights Bill and Supported Housing Act:** Preparatory work is underway to respond to the Renters' Rights Bill and the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act. The Renters' Rights Bill aims to improve property standards and empower tenants, but it carries the paradoxical risk of further reducing supply if more landlords exit the market due to increased regulation and costs. The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act requires local authorities to license

and oversee supported housing providers, potentially leading to increased demand for council services and higher costs for some suppliers.

Whilst the above legislative change aims to improve tenant protections, it paradoxically risks further reducing housing supply if landlords and providers continue to exit the market. This creates a complex regulatory dilemma: how to effectively improve housing standards and tenant rights without inadvertently shrinking the available housing pool. The strategy must navigate this challenge by exploring incentives for landlords to remain in the sector and let properties at Local Housing Allowance rates, as proposed in the strategic priorities, to mitigate these unintended consequences.

Homelessness Trends and Temporary Accommodation Pressures

An analysis of the reasons for homelessness presentations to the councils between January and December 2024 reveals that the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy (private sector tenancy) was the main cause, accounting for 29% in Adur and 30% in Worthing. The majority of these cases were due to landlords wishing to sell (54% in Adur, 45% in Worthing) or re-let (8% in Adur, 13% in Worthing) their properties. Rent arrears also constituted a significant factor (25% in both Adur and Worthing), often linked to changes in personal circumstances, rent increases, reduced employment income, or budgeting difficulties.

Table 5.4: Main Reasons for Homeless Presentations (Adur and Worthing, Jan-Dec 2024)

Main reasons for homeless presentations	Adur (no. of households)	Worthing (no. of households)
End of AST (private rented)	59	136
Family/friends eviction	57	68
Domestic abuse - victim	19	63
Supported housing eviction	18	39
Relationship ending (not DA)	17	39
Total households	170	345

This table directly identifies the primary drivers of homelessness in Adur and Worthing. By understanding why people are becoming homeless, the strategy can develop highly targeted prevention and intervention programmes. For example, the high percentage of Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) endings due to landlords selling or re-letting properties points to a clear need for enhanced landlord engagement and incentivisation programmes to retain private rented sector housing.

- **Rising Temporary Accommodation Numbers:** There is substantial unmet affordable housing need, with an estimated 619 households in Adur and 1,298 in Worthing living in unsuitable housing and unable to afford market options without assistance. This leads to many households living in precarious or unstable housing, such as with family and friends, where the risk of arrangements breaking down is high. At the end of March 2025, over 600 households (approximately 145 in Adur and 500 in Worthing) were in temporary accommodation (TA) awaiting permanent housing, including over 240 households with children (approximately 60 in Adur and 180 in Worthing). Demand for TA has surged dramatically, increasing by 284% across Adur and Worthing over a five-year period.

Table 5.5: All Household Types in Temporary Accommodation (Adur and Worthing, Mar 2021 - Mar 2025, including annual percentage increase)

Number of households in TA	March 21	March 22	March 23	March 24	March 25
Adur	50 (9%)	82 (64%)	91 (11%)	124 (36%)	145 (17%)
Worthing	217 (60%)	263 (21%)	349 (33%)	378 (8%)	504 (33%)
Adur and Worthing	267 (47%)	345 (29%)	440 (28%)	502 (14%)	649 (29%)

This table is critical for illustrating the dramatic rise in temporary accommodation usage, which directly correlates with the unsustainable financial costs highlighted elsewhere. The substantial increases over five years are alarming and provide a powerful visual argument for the necessity of robust prevention and rapid rehousing strategies to reduce reliance on costly temporary accommodation.

- **Financial Burden of TA:** The financial implications of temporary accommodation are very significant. The two councils spent a combined £7,282,212 on TA in 2023/24, with Worthing accounting for £5,488,651 and Adur for £1,793,561. The estimated final cost for 2024/25 is approximately £9,300,000. The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate, which the Government provides for TA reimbursement, remains fixed at 90% of the 2011 LHA rate for a self-contained property, meaning local authorities bear significant unfunded costs. For example, a two-bedroom property in Worthing costs the council approximately £295 per week after LHA reimbursement, and £270 per week in Adur.

  The financial pressures are stark, with a projected net overspend (July 2025) within Housing Needs of £3.6 million for 2025/26, directly impacting the general fund.

- **Out-of-Area Placements:** Due to limited local supply, out-of-area placements are used. This not only creates additional financial pressures but also disrupts clients' local support networks, leading to disengagement with local services and further hardship.

Table 5.6: Households in Temporary Accommodation (Adur and Worthing, 30/6/25)

Households in TA	Adur	Worthing	Adur and Worthing
All households living in TA	139	499	638
Placed out of area	106	227	333
Households with children living in TA	61	190	251
Adult only households in TA	76	309	385

This table provides information on the current scale of the temporary accommodation challenge, including the significant extent of out-of-area placements. High numbers of out-of-area placements are not only costly but also detrimental to clients' support networks, negatively affecting wellbeing, education and employment opportunities.The number of households with children living in temporary accommodation is a particularly sensitive indicator of the human impact of the housing crisis. This data directly informs the urgent need for objectives related to improving local temporary accommodation supply and reducing out-of-area placements, thereby mitigating both financial and social costs.

The currently unsustainable costs of temporary accommodation are a direct consequence of insufficient prevention and affordable housing supply. This substantial financial burden represents not only a drain on council budgets but also a significant opportunity cost. Every pound spent on reactive temporary accommodation is a pound that cannot be invested in proactive, more cost-effective measures that prevent household disruption and the negative impacts of homelessness on our residents. This reinforces the "spend to save" principle, suggesting that investing in early intervention, tenancy sustainment, and increasing the supply of affordable housing offers a long-term financial return by avoiding future, higher crisis costs.

Vulnerable Groups and Complex Needs

In the 2022-23 financial year, the most common household type owed a homelessness prevention duty in Adur was single female parents with dependent children (41%), while in Worthing it was single adult males (30%). For households already homeless and owed a relief duty, over half were single adult males in both Adur (41%) and Worthing (30%).

Priority groups identified through research include: single adult men, people aged under 35, older people, individuals experiencing hidden homelessness, and asylum seekers and refugees. Common support needs identified across these groups include mental health challenges and physical disability or ill health, followed by financial challenges, substance and alcohol abuse, and domestic abuse. There is an increasing trend of homeless individuals presenting with complex and multiple needs, requiring integrated and comprehensive support. Notably, single people with priority needs, often due to complex challenges, require a focused intervention within this strategy.

The data reveals that homelessness disproportionately affects different groups, with single female parents being the primary group in Adur and single adult males in Worthing. This key finding suggests that targeted interventions are essential over a one-size-fits-all approach. In Adur, prevention strategies could focus on family mediation and support for women fleeing domestic abuse. Conversely, Worthing needs more specialised support for single men with complex issues. Understanding and addressing these distinct needs is crucial for allocating resources effectively and maximising the impact of interventions.

Temporary accommodation profoundly impacts children, particularly teenagers, negatively affecting their development and life course. This underscores the critical need for effective prevention and rapid re-housing strategies to mitigate these adverse childhood experiences.

Gaps in Support and Service Delivery

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Assessment identified several critical gaps in support provision: limited temporary, transitional, and step-down housing models; insufficient assistance for those with complex and multiple needs; and a lack of preventative early intervention initiatives. Pathways to access housing support, including self-referral, duty to refer, and outreach services, were found to be complex and difficult for service users to navigate. Key barriers to access include strained capacity across housing teams and partner agencies, inflexible service delivery models that exclude certain groups, complex online forms, uncoordinated systems that fail to provide holistic assistance, restrictive eligibility thresholds, and generic pathways that do not adequately address diverse needs.

A significant challenge identified is the lack of an integrated, multi-agency response to homelessness, with many services operating in silos. Furthermore, social care providers have faced significant disinvestment, leading to increased eligibility criteria for services. This results in some vulnerable individuals with low-level needs being excluded from crucial preventative services, increasing their risk of escalating to crisis situations such as homelessness.

Stakeholder recommendations for enhancing service responses and improving outcomes include: providing wrap-around, holistic support; increasing the focus on prevention; supplying housing with the right support; introducing specific pathways for different groups; co-locating services; and implementing system-wide learning events and training days.

Council Led Services - Systemic and Organisational Challenges

A recent review visit by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in March 2025 highlighted several systemic and organisational challenges impacting homelessness services in Adur and Worthing, particularly in Worthing. These findings are crucial for understanding the underlying issues contributing to the current situation:

- **Under-resourcing and policy gaps:** The homelessness prevention service has been identified as being significantly under-resourced, leading to high staff caseloads and a lack of capacity to prevent homelessness effectively. There is also a need for clearer prevention policies.
- **Outdated strategy:** The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy itself was found to be out of date.
- **TA management and costs:** While the cost per temporary accommodation (TA) placement is favourable, the sheer volume of placements is unsustainable, leading to significant subsidy losses. There's a lack of sufficient staffing and legal support to manage TA placements effectively, including ending duties and evictions.
- **Lack of move-on support:** There is a critical gap in proactive resettlement and move-on support for individuals in TA, leading to people getting "stuck" due to a lack of clear pathways and tenancy readiness.
- **Spend-to-Save Opportunity:** MHCLG highlighted a significant "spend to save" opportunity, indicating that investing more in prevention and increasing housing officer capacity could lead to substantial financial savings by reducing costly TA placements.

These findings underscore the need for increased resources, strategic restructuring, and a renewed focus on prevention and sustainable move-on pathways to address the escalating homelessness crisis effectively.

LGR provides an important context for this strategy. As Adur and Worthing Councils transition into a new, single unitary council, it will be essential to ensure that the councils' homelessness and rough sleeping services and partnerships can adapt safely and effectively. The goal is to represent the needs of local communities in Adur and Worthing throughout this process.

Furthermore, working more closely with Social Care and Public Health offers significant opportunities to strengthen prevention efforts and embed the strategy's priorities. This collaboration is vital for creating effective and lasting solutions.

6. Strategic Priorities

This section details the strategic priorities of the Adur and Worthing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, outlining their key objectives and the specific actions to be taken. These priorities are explicitly linked to the challenges identified in the preceding section and are informed by the recommendations from the proposal document.

Table 6.0: Summary of Strategic Priorities and Key Objectives

Strategic Priority	Focus	Key Objectives (Summary)
1. Prevention – Making Homelessness Everyone's Business	Deliver improved, person-centred, trauma-informed prevention services with robust staffing and clear policies.	Enhance early intervention, triage, and staffing; develop clear prevention policies; implement targeted prevention & tenancy sustainment for specific vulnerable groups identified in the EIA (e.g., women and women-headed households in Adur, single men with complex needs in Worthing); redesign rough sleeping services; improve facilities & branding; use neighbourhood model; enhance financial inclusion; ensure information is accessible in multiple formats.
2. Accommodation – Improving Supply, Suitability and Support in Temporary Accommodation	Strategically manage and reduce TA numbers, improve quality, ensure cost-effectiveness, and develop needs-based supply.	Improve TA procurement, needs analysis, and supply, with a specific focus on increasing accessible units (e.g., M4(3) standard for wheelchair users) and culturally appropriate accommodation; ensure effective TA management, staffing, and placement reduction, explicitly considering suitability for diverse groups (e.g., pregnant households, individuals with disabilities, or trans people); improve supported accommodation pathways and alternatives, including gender-segregated or women-only options where appropriate to enhance safety.

3. Working in Partnership – A Coordinated Community Response	Strengthen corporate leadership, develop multi-agency response, build collaboration, and use collective resources effectively.	Strengthen corporate leadership and strategic focus; strengthen multi-agency structures (e.g., the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Partnership) with mandated attendance from statutory partners (Social Care, Health, Police, Probation, Education) and Third Sector organisations, ensuring representation of groups with protected characteristics; foster data-driven collaboration & co-production, specifically improving data collection on sexuality, religion, and specific disabilities; ensure effective Duty to Refer & institutional protocols; work with national government & utilise grants.
4. Helping People Move Forward and Sustain Independence	Provide proactive, person-centred, trauma-informed support for move-on, address pathway gaps, and sustain long-term independence.	Implement proactive resettlement & move-on support, including tailored step-down accommodation for young people and those with complex needs (e.g., trauma-informed approaches for prison leavers, veterans, individuals with mental health challenges); address pathway gaps & inappropriate referrals; enhance Private Rented Sector (PRS) engagement with incentives for landlords to offer LHA rates for vulnerable households; ensure accessible & inclusive service delivery with personalised support, specifically reviewing and improving services for ethnic minorities and neuro-divergent individuals, and ensuring digital inclusion for those with low literacy or who are digitally excluded.

5. Transition and Adaptation as Part of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)	Effectively engaging and planning with our local government and other partners to ensure that the priorities of this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy are well represented. The goal is to influence and secure the best possible outcomes for the Adur and Worthing communities during this period of reform.	**Collaboration to Improve, Transform, and Strengthen:** Collaborate to improve, transform, and strengthen each of the four strategic priorities outlined in this document. **Harnessing Opportunities:** Ensure all opportunities to strengthen this work are taken by working alongside Commissioning, Social Care and Public Health.

6.1 Strategic Priority 1: Prevention – Making Homelessness Everyone's Business

The focus of this priority is to deliver an improved, adequately resourced, and legally compliant homelessness prevention service that is person-centred, trauma-informed, with clear policies, effective triage, and robust staffing. This aligns directly with the Housing Strategy's emphasis on proactive homelessness prevention and tenancy sustainment.

Key Objectives:

- **1.1 Enhanced Early Intervention, Triage and Staffing:**
  - Increase resources for staff and services to meet the rising demand for homelessness prevention.
  - Develop, fund, and implement a dedicated and resourced triage function to manage initial approaches, provide immediate advice, and effectively signpost individuals to appropriate support, thereby reducing pressure on case officers. To achieve this, there is a recognised need for quicker and more responsive services across all touchpoints.
  - Review and deliver an improved homelessness prevention service explicitly focused on early prevention, ensuring it is person-centred and trauma-informed. As part of this, implement a proactive "At-Risk Identification System" leveraging data analytics to identify households at heightened risk of homelessness before crisis points are reached, enabling targeted early intervention.

- Develop a comprehensive "housing front door" (digital and in-person access points) to enable residents to self-help, seek assistance from services and partners, improve prevention and early help, and enhance overall coordination and accessibility of support. This will include ensuring information is available in multiple accessible formats (e.g., Easy Read, large print, translated languages) and through diverse channels to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, low literacy, or who speak English as a second language.

1.2 Clear Prevention Policy and Resource Allocation:

- Develop clear, documented prevention policies and procedures for the flexible use of prevention funds, such as Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG).
- Ensure these funds are meticulously recorded to demonstrate value for money and the tangible impact of prevention efforts.

- **1.3 Targeted Prevention Programmes and Tenancy Sustainment:**
  - Heighten focus on primary drivers of homelessness, notably the ending of Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs) and rent arrears.
  - Provide tailored support for vulnerable groups identified in the Housing Strategy Equality Impact Assessment, utilising both data and lived experience to inform interventions. In general terms a focus on single homeless people with complex needs and families are key areas of priority.
  - In Adur the evidence suggests there should include a particular focus on women and women-headed households, addressing specific drivers like domestic abuse, and in Worthing single men with complex needs, reviewing prevention with specific reference to relationship breakdown, substance misuse, and leaving an institution (prison, care, hospital).
  - To enhance support for this group, a Pathways and Support Coordinator is to be recruited to specifically develop a Single Persons Pathway. Additional work needs to be undertaken to understand the over representation of some groups linked to sexuality and ethnicity.
  - Ensure consistent, fair, and effective tenancy sustainment work, with further investment in and development of the tenancy support team.
  - In Worthing, collaborate with social housing providers to influence and ensure robust tenancy sustainment practices.
  - In Adur, review and update the tenant handbook and tenancy agreement to better support residents in maintaining tenancies and meeting Tenant Standards.
  - Develop a comprehensive "Tenancy Sustainment Toolkit" for all new social housing tenants (Adur Homes and partner Registered Providers), providing clear, accessible information on tenancy rights and responsibilities, rent payment options, and available support services, including easy-read and multi-lingual formats. This will be complemented by a structured "Introductory Tenancy Support Programme" with proactive welfare checks and early

intervention for emerging issues (e.g., rent arrears, anti-social behaviour) during the probationary period.

- **1.4 Rough Sleeping Prevention and Service Redesign:**
  - Review the design of the Rough Sleeping Team, specifically using the impacts focus of the Rough Sleeping Prevention and Recovery Grant (RSAPRG).
  - Redesign the team and associated services to ensure integration with single homelessness prevention, emphasising upstream prevention and rapid response. This may involve considering the reinstatement of a single homelessness team approach.

- **1.5 Improved Facilities and Service Branding:**
  - Undertake an urgent review of facilities to ensure Wi-Fi and phone access in interview spaces, thereby supporting client access and engagement.
  - Rebrand the service to reflect a more empowering and supportive approach, aiming to reduce stigma associated with seeking help.

- **1.6 Neighbourhood Model and Place-Based Approaches:**
  - Utilise the councils' new 'neighbourhood model/approach' and Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) to develop more place-based approaches. Explore the possibility of a spoke and hub model of delivery.
  - Improve access to services by fostering collaboration with partners in local hubs, bringing support closer to communities.

- **1.7 Utilising Funding:**
  - Utilise a data-driven strategy to better leverage external grant funding, including Discretionary Housing Payments, to effectively target and prevent homelessness.

The objectives under this priority indicate a shift in approach from the councils from merely responding to the homelessness crises to embedding prevention at every operational level. The emphasis on improved early intervention, triage, and staffing and clear prevention policy and changes to resource allocation indicate a transition from ad-hoc crisis management to a structured, proactive system. This evolution is critical given that the current system is overwhelmed and financially unsustainable. By investing in a robust housing front door and comprehensive triage, the councils aim to intercept problems before they escalate, thereby reducing the escalating need for costly temporary accommodation.

In seeking to make homelessness everyone's business and the objective to bring together community, voluntary and statutory stakeholders reflect a recognition that homelessness is

not solely an issue for housing departments. It demands a "whole system" approach, requiring the active involvement of public health, children's services, social care, employment services, and the third sector. This implies a need for cross-departmental and cross-agency training, shared data, and joint accountability, ensuring that all council functions and partner organisations understand and embrace their role in preventing homelessness, thereby aligning with the councils' participation principle.

6.2 Strategic Priority 2: Accommodation – Improving Supply, Suitability and Support in Temporary Accommodation

This priority focuses on strategically managing and significantly reducing the number of households in Temporary Accommodation (TA), improving the quality of support within it, ensuring cost-effectiveness through better procurement and management, and developing a clear needs-based approach to TA supply. This directly addresses the unsustainable costs and rising numbers of households in TA.

Key Objectives and Outline Content:

- **2.1 Strategic TA Procurement, Needs Analysis and Supply:**
    - Improve needs analysis to inform TA procurement and supply strategies, ensuring accommodation supply genuinely meets actual demand. This will include detailed consideration of specific requirements for different protected characteristics, such as accessible units for individuals with physical disabilities (e.g., M4(3) standard for wheelchair users) and culturally appropriate accommodation for diverse ethnic and religious groups.
    - Reduce the overall number of TA placements, with a particular focus on non-statutory placements.
    - Increase the councils' own or long-lease TA stock, prioritising properties that are local, offer the best value and meet local needs.
    - Improve TA provision to better meet local needs while ensuring cost-effectiveness and value for money, reducing reliance on expensive out-of-area placements, ad-hoc spot bookings, and short-term provision.
    - Consider establishing a "Local Housing Supply Enhancement Fund" to accelerate the acquisition and development of council-owned or long-lease properties specifically for temporary and move-on accommodation, reducing reliance on costly private sector and out-of-area placements.
    - The impending Renters Reform Bill and the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act are significant. While aimed at improving standards, some exempt supported accommodation providers may exit the market as these come into force. The councils, with their partners, will explore the potential for these properties to be taken over and improved to retain provision.

- **2.2 Effective TA Management, Staffing and Placement Reduction:**
    - Increase resourcing to ensure sufficient support and oversight of vulnerable households in temporary accommodation, potentially combining this with a resettlement approach.

- Undertake an audit of existing TA placements to clearly differentiate between households statutorily owed a duty and those accommodated under a power, implementing robust gatekeeping mechanisms.
- Consider implementing a "traffic light system" for non-statutory placements for single households to rapidly reduce placements and associated costs.
- Ensure TA facilities are well-integrated, well-managed, and safe. This includes considering provisions where appropriate to enhance safety and comfort, particularly for women with experiences of trauma or domestic abuse. We will seek to ensure safe and appropriate provision for trans and non binary people as part of this commitment.
- Enhance collaboration with Public Health, Local Community Networks, and NHS partners to better understand and meet the health and wellbeing needs of TA residents, including those placed out-of-area. This will include specific attention to mental health challenges and compound needs among TA residents.
- Ensure families with children in TA are placed appropriately, with access to necessary support, education, and safe spaces. This will prioritise placements that maintain children's access to existing schools and support networks, reducing the detrimental impact of out-of-area placements on their welfare and development.
- Work alongside WSCC to deliver on their strategic aim to support households in temporary accommodation.
- We will continue to meet our commitment of not placing children into B&B style accommodation with shared facilities.
- We will develop information packs and work with partners to develop support for those placed into temporary accommodation with particular focus on those placed out of the area to connect them to local services.
- We will notify the host authority when making an out of area placement.
- Ensure arrangements meet the needs of residents with varying religions or beliefs linked to, for example, the storage and preparation of food.
- Review and increase legal coverage to support the TA service in ending duties and managing evictions from TA when required.

- **2.4 Improving Supported Accommodation Pathways and Alternatives:**
  - Improve the provision of step-down, semi-supported accommodation for individuals not yet ready for independent living, including young people, to prevent them from becoming 'trapped' in unsuitable settings. This will particularly focus on young people under 25, including care leavers, by ensuring supported accommodation options are equipped to manage challenging behaviours and provide appropriate move-on support to reduce trauma and instability.
  - Many individuals in supported accommodation may not be able to transition to the private sector or general needs social housing, often due to complex health or well-being issues that are not at a full care need level. We will seek to work with these people to achieve the best possible solutions for their needs.

- Collaborate with West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and NHS commissioning partners and providers to understand, shape, and influence the provision of exempt supported accommodation, ensuring it better meets local needs, integrates into the Single Person Pathway and reduces any net importing of need. This work will include consideration for individuals requiring long-term supported settings, potentially for life, into Housing, Rough Sleeping and Support (HRS) commissioning discussions.
- Ensure compliance with the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act, leading to improved standards in hostels and supported living complexes.
- Review and actively use the allocations policy to support the prevention or relief of homelessness.
- Consider the Housing First model and how to expand provision to meet needs.

A fundamental change in the approach to temporary accommodation is proposed in this section, moving towards strategic procurement, needs assessment, supply management, and effective oversight. Currently a major financial burden, the aim is to transform temporary accommodation from a reactive cost into a strategically managed asset through robust gatekeeping, comprehensive placement audits, and increasing council-owned or long-lease properties. This should lessen the dependency on costly spot bookings and placements outside the area, alleviating the unsustainable financial pressure on council budgets.

Young people and other vulnerable individuals can become trapped in supported housing due to a shortage of appropriate move-on options. The aim to enhance the availability of step-down, semi-supported accommodation directly tackles this key obstacle in the housing process. This underscores a vital point: providing initial supported housing alone is not enough; a well-defined, progressive route to independent living is necessary to create space within the system and prevent recurring homelessness. Without these pathways, the system becomes overloaded, lengthening waiting lists, increasing overall expenses, and keeping residents in housing arrangements that hinder their progress.

6.3 Strategic Priority 3: Working in Partnership – A Coordinated Community Response

This priority aims to strengthen corporate leadership, develop a multi-agency response to homelessness, build stronger collaboration, and use collective resources more effectively to improve outcomes, ensuring clear roles, responsibilities, and joint problem-solving. This aligns with the Housing Strategy's emphasis on working more effectively with partners.

Key Objectives and Outline Content:

- **3.1 Strengthened Corporate Leadership and Strategic Focus:**
  - Increase leadership capacity at senior management level within the councils.
  - The implementation of an additional tier of management in the councils' statutory homelessness service, to bolster team support and decision-making

processes. This resource also enhance programme management support to drive strategic change effectively.

- **3.2 Effective Multi-Agency Homelessness Structures and Protocols:**
    - Maintain active participation in the West Sussex Multiple Compound Needs Board and working group, fostering stronger collaboration across the county.
    - Further support and develop the Adur and Worthing Homelessness Partnership with regular, mandated attendance from key statutory partners (e.g., Social Care, Health, Police, Probation, Education) and leading Third Sector organisations, to facilitate joint strategic planning, shared data analysis, and coordinated case management for individuals with complex needs. Further develop membership and ensure representation from and engagement with organisations supporting specific protected characteristics and vulnerable groups (e.g., LGBTQ+ networks like MindOut and LGBT Switchboard, disability advocacy groups, BAME community associations, care leaver services, and veterans' organisations) to ensure their voices and lived experiences inform strategic planning and service delivery.
    - Integrate the Changing Futures Team to support our Target Priority Group and those with multiple compound needs to overcome barriers to housing.
    - Deliver the new Skywaves provision of 21 flats specifically for individuals with Multiple Compound Needs (MCN) providing not only homes but a hub for multiagency working to support this group.
    - Work collaboratively with local partners to ensure that the sector has resources and knowledge on all services available; and to reduce as many barriers to homelessness prevention as possible.
    - As part of this, improved partnership connections with the Third Sector to enhance access to early support, including advice, employment and skills development, mental health support, and financial inclusion services.
    - Identify where we can share training, improve the use of data, and increase information-sharing amongst partners for better outcomes for those we work with.
    - Roll-out staff training on trauma-informed approaches and embed the 2024 Centre for Homelessness Impact work on our workforce's wellbeing, recognising that this is the bedrock of compassionate, honest, and trauma-informed communication and practice. This training will also include cultural competency and neurodiversity awareness to address potential systemic biases and ensure inclusive service delivery for all communities.
    - Strengthen collaboration with West Sussex County Council Social Care departments and health colleagues to better understand and respond to the housing and support needs of those in urgent need, developing truly joined-up approaches.
    - Work with the national government to influence national homelessness policy, co-ordinating with key partners on a strategy to campaign and lobby together on key issues.

- **3.3 Data-Driven Collaboration and Co-production:**
  - Develop and implement robust systems for collecting, analysing, and sharing homelessness data across partnerships. This includes a comprehensive tenant data improvement project for Adur Homes and across housing services, specifically focusing on improving the collection and analysis of equality data for protected characteristics where data gaps have been identified (e.g., sexuality, religion, specific disabilities), ensuring "prefer not to say" is genuinely the customer's choice and not a default due to lack of inquiry.
  - Use this data to inform joint needs assessments, commissioning decisions, and performance management, ensuring evidence-based interventions.
  - Involve people with lived experience in the design, delivery, monitoring, and review of services, ensuring solutions are genuinely responsive to their needs.
  - Develop a "Joint Commissioning Framework for Complex Needs" across housing, health, and social care, underpinned by shared outcome metrics and pooled budgets where appropriate, to ensure seamless, integrated support for individuals with multiple and complex needs

- **3.4 Effective Duty to Refer and Institutional Protocols:**
  - Ensure the robust operation of the Duty to Refer, with clear pathways and feedback loops to prevent individuals from falling through systemic gaps.
  - Improve transition support for those leaving institutions such as prison, care, or hospital to prevent immediate homelessness upon release. This will include reviewing arrangements with WSCC and partners to ensure suitable discharge planning and accommodation for prison leavers, and trauma-informed approaches for care leavers to help sustain tenancies and reduce evictions from supported housing.

- **3.5 Working with National Government and Grant Utilisation:**
  - Actively work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to advocate for increased Homelessness Prevention Grant levels, seeking more sustainable national funding.
  - Strategically utilise the Homelessness Prevention Grant uplift to deliver required changes and demonstrate measurable value.

The emphasis on effective multi-agency homelessness structures and protocols and data-driven collaboration supports a progression beyond mere 'working together' to building genuinely integrated systems with shared accountability. The evidence pack explicitly states that "many services operate in silos". This priority aims to dismantle these silos by establishing clear roles, joint problem-solving mechanisms, and shared data, ensuring that the collective impact on homelessness is greater than the sum of individual efforts. This integration is essential for addressing the complex, multi-faceted needs of homeless individuals effectively.

The objective to work with national government and grant utilisation to increase Homeless Prevention Grant levels is a critical recognition that local efforts, while vital, are insufficient to fully address the crisis without adequate national funding. The disparity between Local Housing Allowance and market rents, coupled with the escalating costs of temporary accommodation, are largely a consequence of national policy decisions. Therefore, strategic lobbying becomes a core component of the local strategy, implying that the councils must act as advocates for their communities on a national stage to secure the necessary resources and policy changes that enable sustainable solutions.

6.4 Strategic Priority 4: Helping People Move Forward and Sustain Independence

This priority focuses on providing proactive, person-centred, trauma-informed support for individuals and families, particularly vulnerable groups, to facilitate their move from homelessness or temporary accommodation, address gaps in pathways, and sustain their independence long-term. This aligns with the Housing Strategy's commitment to developing proactive homelessness prevention and tenancy sustainment programmes.

Key Objectives and Outline Content:

- **4.1 Proactive Resettlement and Move-On Support:**
    - Develop a comprehensive resettlement approach to provide both support within temporary accommodation and active assistance to move individuals on, thereby reducing their time in temporary placements.
    - Establish or enhance a dedicated resettlement service to provide active support for households in temporary accommodation, ensuring a smooth transition to permanent housing.

- **4.2 Addressing Pathway Gaps and Inappropriate Referrals:**
    - Review arrangements with supported housing partners to ensure clarity in referral and move-on protocols, preventing individuals from becoming "stuck" in unsuitable accommodation due to a lack of onward options.
    - Collaborate with partners to define clear referral criteria and ensure tenancy readiness, matching individuals to appropriate long-term housing solutions.

- **4.3 Private Rented Sector (PRS) Engagement and Open Doors Review:**
    - Continue investment in and support for the "Opening Doors" initiative, with further review and expansion of landlord engagement initiatives.
    - Maximise opportunities presented by the Rent Guarantee offer, as part of the Renters' Rights Bill, to reinvigorate landlord engagement and build a new offer, thereby increasing access to the PRS for vulnerable households.This will expand access to more residents and help them to retain tenancies in the PRS.
    - Implement a "Private Rented Sector (PRS) Incentive and Accreditation Scheme" to actively recruit and retain landlords willing to offer properties at

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, coupled with a robust accreditation process that ensures property standards and tenancy support. This will include dedicated landlord liaison officers and a risk-sharing mechanism (e.g., a landlord guarantee fund) to mitigate concerns.

- Give specific attention to the needs of homeless and insecurely housed women who are experiencing, at risk of, or traumatised by abuse, domestic violence, trafficking, and other vulnerabilities. This should be a specific priority for services in Adur. A critical area of work will be to support people who have experienced Domestic Violence in the transfer of their previous secure tenancies to a new, safe location, as returning is not an option. Adur and Worthing Councils (AWC) will work with the West Sussex County Council on delivery of (WSCC) Domestic Abuse Strategy and continue to work with WORTH IDVAs who colocate with the Housing Needs team.
- Provide specialised support for single men with complex issues. This should be a specific priority for services in Worthing.
- In addition, target services at other vulnerable groups identified in the Housing Strategy, including those with mental/physical health issues, substance misuse, care leavers, veterans, prison leavers, people under 35, older people, asylum seekers, trans and non binary people, LGB+ people and refugees. This includes establishing clear pathways for trans survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence, and addressing the specific needs of older and disabled trans people in supported accommodation settings.

- **4.4 Accessible and Inclusive Service Delivery and Personalised Support:**
  - Review and improve service provision, focusing on enhancing engagement and communication to ensure services are accessible and suitable for people with differing needs, such as ethnic minorities (including refugees and asylum seekers and Gypsy, Romany and Traveller Communities), different faith communities and neuro-divergent individuals.
  - Linked to the 'Basis redesign project', continue to ensure services are accessible for those with low literacy or who are digitally excluded.
  - Provide resources and support for family mediation for young people who are homeless, as family breakdown is a key cause of homelessness.
  - Collaborate with the County Council and other partners to improve access to skills development and supported employment opportunities, fostering long-term independence.
  - Develop "Specialised Support Pathways for Vulnerable Cohorts," including dedicated navigators or key workers for single female parents (Adur), single adult males with complex needs (Worthing), and other identified priority groups, ensuring tailored, trauma-informed support from initial presentation through to long-term tenancy sustainment. This will include developing culturally competent support that addresses systemic barriers for ethnic minorities, people of different faiths and neurodivergent people, ensuring services are flexible and responsive to clients' backgrounds and needs. For veterans, this means improved coordinated support between veteran service

organisations, NHS services, and housing providers, with awareness of PTSD impacts.

This priority extends beyond simply providing housing to ensuring individuals can sustain independence long-term. The objective to develop a resettlement approach and establish or enhance a dedicated resettlement service is critical. This indicates that providing a roof over someone's head is merely the initial step; sustained support, including addressing underlying issues such as mental health, employment, and skills development, is essential to prevent re-entry into the homelessness system.

Given that the end of an assured shorthold tenancies is the main cause of homelessness and that landlords are leaving the private rented sector, the objective to reinvigorate landlord engagement and build a new offer using the Rent Guarantee offer is a strategic imperative. This acknowledges that the private rented sector, despite its current challenges, must be an integral part of the solution. The approach is not just about finding homes but actively working to make the PRS a viable and stable option for vulnerable households. This diversification of housing pathways is crucial for reducing pressure on social housing and temporary accommodation, ultimately contributing to a more resilient housing system.

6.5 Strategic Priority 5: Transition and Adaptation as Part of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

This priority states our commitment to effectively engage in the processes and planning with our local government and other partners to ensure that the priorities of this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy are well represented. The goal is to influence and secure the best possible outcomes for the Adur and Worthing communities during this period of reform.

Key Objectives and Outline Content:

- **5.1** Collaborate to improve, transform, and strengthen each of the four strategic priorities outlined in this document
  - Ensure Adur and Worthing Councils are represented at meetings and forums in preparation for LGR.
  - Ensure all opportunities to strengthen this work are taken by working alongside Commissioning, Social Care and Public Health.

7. Foundational Pillars for Success (Enabling Delivery)

The successful delivery of all strategic priorities hinges on several cross-cutting themes, which serve as foundational pillars and incorporate MHCLG recommendations.

Leadership, Governance and Resourcing:

Effective leadership and robust governance are paramount. This involves increasing leadership capacity at senior management levels within the councils and enhancing programme management support to drive the necessary changes. This includes the implementation of an additional tier of management to bolster team support and decision-making processes. A critical element is to increase the number of officers delivering

the statutory homelessness service and to adequately resource a strong triage offer, which was identified as a key area for improvement.

Optimal use of the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) is essential, coupled with strategic investment in prevention activities to maximise impact. A core financial objective is to deliver savings by reducing the use of non-statutory temporary accommodation placements that are not covered by Rough Sleeping Prevention and Recovery Grant (RSPARG) funding, and by reducing placements where the homelessness duty has ended. Furthermore, ensuring adequate legal capacity is vital for effectively ending temporary accommodation duties, managing evictions from temporary accommodation where appropriate, and supporting robust decision-making processes. Finally, clearer lines of accountability for strategy delivery and performance will be established to ensure transparency and effectiveness.

The commitment to increased leadership capacity, additional tier of management, and an increase in the number of officers is a direct response to the insufficient internal resourcing identified as a significant challenge in the review of the previous strategy. Moreover, the emphasis on adequate legal capacity for ending TA duties, managing evictions and supporting robust decision-making highlights a crucial operational bottleneck. This is not solely about increasing staffing numbers; it is about ensuring the presence of the right skills and authority to navigate complex legal duties and financial pressures effectively. This capability is essential for the councils to manage responsibilities efficiently and to reduce the unsustainable costs associated with temporary accommodation.

Data, Intelligence and Performance Management:

A comprehensive performance framework with clear metrics, including those outlined in the Housing Strategy, will be developed. It is crucial to ensure that Homeless Case Level Information Collection (HCLIC) data is accurately collected and reported to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC), and crucially, that this data is actively used locally to drive performance improvements. The strategy mandates the utilisation of diverse data sources, including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Assessment (HRSA), the LIFT platform, and local performance data. This data will be leveraged for continuous improvement, informed service planning, strategic commissioning, and effective targeting of prevention efforts.

This strategy demonstrates a commitment to becoming a data-driven organisation. By using data insights, the councils will inform how resources are allocated, identify new trends, and make flexible changes to the strategy. This evidence-based approach shifts from reacting to situations to proactively intervening, ensuring resources are used most effectively.

Service Culture and Workforce Development:

Fostering a service culture rooted in compassion, empowerment, collaboration, and accountability across all services is a key objective. This will be supported by providing ongoing training and development opportunities for staff and service providers. Training will cover essential areas such as trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing techniques,

relevant legislation, and data analysis skills, equipping the workforce with the necessary tools to deliver high-quality, empathetic, and effective services.

8. Implementing and Monitoring the Strategy

The successful implementation and ongoing effectiveness of this strategy will be ensured through a governance structure and a commitment to continuous monitoring and adaptation.

Governance Structure:

A comprehensive governance structure will provide clear oversight and accountability for the strategy's delivery. All Adur and Worthing Councils' directorates are committed to the delivery of this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, mirroring the cross-council commitment seen in other successful strategies. The multi-agency steering group, which played a crucial role in the strategy's development, will continue to meet regularly to monitor and evaluate the plan's progress. Internally, the yearly action plan will be brought before the council's Corporate Leadership Board and theJoint Strategic Committee for review, ensuring senior leadership oversight and strategic alignment.

Mechanisms for Ongoing Feedback and Review:

Clear mechanisms will be established for ongoing feedback from service users and partners. This ensures that the strategy remains responsive to lived experience and continually incorporates valuable insights from those directly affected by homelessness and those working within the sector. Annual progress reports on the delivery of the strategy will be presented to the Joint Strategic Committee, demonstrating accountability and providing a forum for ongoing scrutiny and strategic adjustments.

The detailed governance structure, encompassing the multi-agency steering group, Corporate Leadership Board, and Joint Strategic Committee reviews, establishes a robust framework for accountability. This framework is not merely for reporting; it is designed to embed a culture of continuous learning and improvement across the organisation and its partnerships. By regularly monitoring Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), gathering feedback from service users, and reviewing progress at senior levels, the councils can systematically identify effective interventions, pinpoint areas requiring adjustment, and make necessary modifications. This ensures that the strategy's ambitious goals are translated into tangible and sustained outcomes for the community.

9. Delivery Plan

A high-level delivery plan will accompany this strategy, serving as the operational blueprint for its delivery. This plan will be developed according to SMART principles: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

The action plan will specifically strengthen the delivery of commitments made in Priority 4 of the overarching Housing Strategy, which focuses on preventing homelessness and rough sleeping. It will also directly address and facilitate the delivery of each "Key Action" identified in the recent MHCLG review, ensuring alignment with national recommendations.

For each specified action, the plan will clearly identify the lead officers or agencies responsible for its completion, outline the required resources, set realistic timelines for delivery, and establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These KPIs will include measures derived from the Housing Strategy as well as any new metrics necessary to track progress against MHCLG recommendations. The development of this action plan will be a co-produced effort, involving key stakeholders, crucially including individuals with lived experience of homelessness, to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

The action plan, the operational blueprint turning strategic vision into deliverable activities, adheres to SMART principles, identifies leads, resources, and KPIs, ensuring the strategy is implementable, not just aspirational.This level of detail is crucial for effective project management, efficient resource allocation, and performance tracking, effectively bridging the gap from 'what' needs to be done to 'how' it will be achieved.

The requirement to specify lead officers/agencies and timelines for each action creates clear lines of accountability within the complex multi-agency environment. This specificity is vital for ensuring that actions are not only assigned but also delivered within expected parameters. In a landscape where efforts can easily become fragmented, clear ownership is critical to prevent duplication of effort and ensure that the ambitious goals of the strategy are systematically pursued and achieved. This detailed approach fosters a culture of responsibility and drives progress towards the overarching objectives.

The strategy's delivery plan will be an agile document, subject to regular adaptation and review. The commitment to a live plan that will be adapted and reviewed regularly is a crucial operational approach, moving beyond static, five-year strategies. Given the economic and governance uncertainties and the evolving national policy landscape, particularly concerning English Devolution and LGR, this adaptive management approach is essential. It provides the councils with the agility to respond effectively to unforeseen challenges, such as future cost-of-living shocks, and to leverage new opportunities as they arise, ensuring the strategy remains pertinent and impactful throughout its intended duration, rather than becoming outdated.

10. Glossary of Terms

To ensure clarity and common understanding for all readers, this glossary provides definitions for key terms used throughout this document.

- **Affordable housing:** Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market, including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership.
- **Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST):** The most common type of tenancy in the private rented sector in England, typically for a fixed term.

- **Community Wealth Building:** A people-centred approach to local economic development that redirects wealth back into the local economy, placing control and benefits into the hands of local people.
- **Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP):** Extra payments from the council to help with housing costs if Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit does not cover the full rent.
- **Hidden Homelessness:** Individuals who experience homelessness but are not visible in statistics or services, often staying with family and friends, sofa surfing, or living in unsuitable housing.
- **Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG):** Funding provided by the government to local authorities to support homelessness prevention and relief efforts.
- **Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017:** Legislation that places duties on housing authorities to intervene earlier to prevent homelessness and to take reasonable steps to relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants.
- **Housing First:** An approach to ending homelessness by prioritising immediate access to permanent housing with tailored, open-ended, wraparound support for the resident, emphasising choice and control.
- **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO):** A property rented out by at least three people who are not from one household but share facilities like a bathroom or kitchen.
- **Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs):** Collaborative models bringing together NHS, local authorities, and community partners to deliver integrated health and wellbeing services at a neighbourhood level.
- **Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping:** An independent commission established to examine lessons from the emergency response to rough sleeping during the Covid-19 pandemic and drive changes to end rough sleeping.
- **Local Housing Allowance (LHA):** Used to calculate how much Housing Benefit can be paid for private tenants to rent their homes; often does not fully cover market rents.
- **Rough Sleeping Prevention and Recovery Grant (RSAPRG):** Government funding specifically aimed at reducing rough sleeping.
- **Target Priority Group (TPG):** people that experience long-term and cyclical rough sleeping
- **Temporary accommodation (TA):** Somewhere to live while waiting for longer-term housing.
- **Trauma-informed approach:** An approach grounded in the understanding that trauma exposure can impact an individual's neurological, biological, psychological, and social development, influencing their ability to feel safe or build trusting relationships with services.