



Executive Committee

Date:	4th December 2019	a g e n d a
Time:	6.30 pm	
Venue:	Committee Room - Kettering Borough Council	
Committee Administrator:	 Anne Ireson 01536 534398  anneireson@kettering.gov.uk	
HEADLINE ITEM:		
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Members of the Executive Committee:-

Councillor Russell Roberts (Chair), Councillor Lesley Thurland (Deputy Chair), Councillor Lloyd Bunday, Councillor Mark Dearing, Councillor Scott Edwards, Councillor David Howes, Councillor Ian Jelley and Councillor Mark Rowley

Executive Committee Order of Business

Item	Item/ Report Title	Officer. Presenting. Report	Pages
1.	Apologies * MERGEFORMAT		
2.	Declarations of Interest * MERGEFORMAT <i>(Members are asked to make any declarations of financial or other interests they may have in relation to items on this agenda. Members are reminded to make a declaration at any stage throughout the meeting if it becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is considered.)</i> (a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (b) Personal Interests		
3.	Minutes of the previous meeting to be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair		
4.	Any matters of urgency the chair of the committee decides should be considered		
5.	The chair to ask members of the public present if they want to speak on any public items on the agenda		
6.	Issues referred from Scrutiny Committees None		
7.	Issues referred from Forums None		
8.	Issues referred from Council None		
9.	The Council's Draft Work Programme <i>This plan gives at least 28 days' notice of any key decisions to be made. It also contains information on any meeting, or part of a meeting, that is likely to be held in private at least 28 days before the meeting is due to take place.</i>		

10.	Kettering Town Centre - High Streets Heritage Action Zone Programme Design	Rochelle Mathieson	7 - 20
11.	North Northamptonshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2024	John Conway	21 - 52
12.	Acquisition of Wellington House	John Conway	53 - 56

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Government Act 1972. The reason for discussing the issue in private is indicated on the Order of Business and was advertised by way of a Public Notice in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

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Report Originator	Rochelle Mathieson – Head of Commercial & Economic Development	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> A19/018	
Wards Affected	ALL	4 th December 2019	
Title	KETTERING TOWN CENTRE – HIGH STREETS HERITAGE ACTION ZONE PROGRAMME DESIGN		

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Mark Dearing

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update members on the progress of the second stage application for Kettering High Streets Heritage Action Zone
- 1.2 To outline the anticipated funding for the four year programme
- 1.3 To confirm next steps and governance process required

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Kettering Town Centre, like many areas, is facing the challenge of a changing Town Centre environment. Although Town Centres are still important shopping places, they are also increasingly important places for people to live, work and enjoy leisure time. In recognition of these universal challenges, Historic England (HE) launched a £95 million fund in May 2019 named High Streets Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ).
- 2.2 The High Streets HAZ programme enables local authorities through a competitive process to bid for funding. The primary purpose of the fund is to support historic high streets and town centres in conservation areas through physical improvements, community engagement and cultural activities. Any funding awarded through HSHAZ must be match funded by the Council and would seek to leverage further investment from the private sector.
- 2.3 On 14th September, Historic England announced that Kettering was one of 69 towns nationally that had been successful and that the Council will, following the development and approval of a Stage 2 Programme Design, receive an indicative external funding amount of up to £1,985,000 over the next four years. This was an indicative allocation and further detail on specific schemes through the stage 2 programme design are to be agreed with HE.
- 2.4 The HSHAZ programme provides funding to support project delivery within high street conservation areas over a period of four years. The main objectives of the programme are:

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- To change perceptions of heritage and high streets
 - To support sustainable economic and cultural growth on and around high streets
 - To restore and enhance local historic character
- 2.5 A report was presented to the Executive Committee on 18th September 2019 which outlined the approach being taken for Kettering Town Centre, as well as the areas of focus which were set out within the Expression of Interest (EOI).
- 2.6 Stage 2 requires the Council to work closely with Historic England to develop and submit a Programme Design by 20th December 2019, with a view that delivery will commence from April 2020 and run for a maximum of four years.
- 2.7 It is important for the Executive to note that following the initial guidance issued by Historic England some elements of the original HSHAZ scheme design changed as HE developed the detail of HSHAZ funding criteria. This included separating the Cultural Programme (including the forming of a local consortium) from the HSHAZ scheme, funding for this element of the scheme will now also come from the Arts Council England and National Lottery Heritage. HE have confirmed that further plans will need to be submitted at a later date to access this funding.

3. STAGE 2 – PROGRAMME DESIGN

- 3.1 On 17th October 2019 Historic England and officers from the Council held an inception meeting which covered details set out within the programme design guidance notes, followed by a town centre assessment visit. Much of the information required by Historic England to form the submission of the bid is technical and policy based evidence.
- 3.2 Based on Historic England's guidance and subsequent support, the Kettering High Streets Heritage Action programme submission includes and requests support for the following;
- a. Kettering Heritage Action Zone - the area focuses on the commercial conservation area within the town centre and this defines the area that is eligible for inclusion within grant schemes over the four year programme. The final iteration has been agreed with Historic England (**Appendix A – Kettering Heritage Action Zone**)
 - b. Conservation Project Management – resource has been built into the programme for the four year period. This role will manage and lead the Kettering HSHAZ programme and will draw upon additional retained consultancy including specialist architectural resource to inform and support schemes. They will work closely with the Economic Development team and present regularly to the Kettering HSHAZ Programme Board (see *point c. below*) who will monitor the grant schemes.

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- c. Kettering HSHAZ Programme Board – it is suggested within the Programme Delivery that the board will consist of officers and members from the council and representatives from the Cultural Consortium, Community Engagement Panel and Historic England. The board will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating relevant HSHAZ grant schemes and ensuring continuity between the HSHAZ capital schemes and future cultural programme.
 - d. Community Engagement – An outline of the community engagement plan articulates the desire to build ongoing meaningful place-based engagement focused on a regenerative approach; Engagement, Participation, Partnership and Leadership, via a variety of activities including; stakeholder workshops, information & consultation events, community portal, community champions, engagement with key groups. The plan will be developed early 2020 in readiness for the commencement of the programme.
 - e. Shopfront / frontage improvement scheme – a grant scheme will be launched in year 1 of the programme (2020/21). There will be guidance made available aimed at property owners and the scheme will use a refreshed version of the current Kettering Shopfront Improvement Design Supplementary Planning Document.
 - f. Historic building improvement scheme – a grant scheme will be launched which will encourage investment requests for structural improvements from commercial properties owners within the HSHAZ area.
 - g. Historic building conversion scheme – a grant scheme will be launched which will encourage investment requests for capital spend towards upper floor residential conversion and/or alternative uses.
 - h. Public realm and Street Scene improvements – Public realm works can be funded from the HSHAZ scheme although there are significant limitations to the level of funding support eligible via this programme. However, Historic England have recognised that improvements are integral to the success of the Kettering HSHAZ scheme, and our current understanding is that HE may be willing to consider a match funding submission request for public realm in the region of £400,000 to £600,000. This funding will be for the continuation of the existing style of public realm, from the Market Place into the High Street, as well as other street scene improvements and decluttering throughout the HAZ area, to bring about a greater sense of consistency and improved aesthetics. Improvements are to be informed using Kettering Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document.
- 3.3 Shopfront improvement, building improvement and building conversion schemes will all be reliant on the property owners meeting specific eligibility criteria, which will include providing match funding towards their requested projects. Historic England and the Council will provide a combination of match funding, as well as support in-kind to ensure the success of the schemes.

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3.4 A summary of the indicative funding breakdown is set out in table 1, this is subject to further assessment and negotiation with Historic England, following the outcome of these negotiations a report will be taken to Full Council in January 2020 for approval.

Table 1. High Street HAZ -Project Summary (DRAFT)

Ref	Title	HE Funding	Match funding LA	Anticipated Private Sector Match	Indicative Total
Revenue Budget					
a - d	Enabling and Project Delivery	200,000	200,000	-	400,000
Indicative Revenue Budget		200,000	200,000	-	400,000
Capital Budget					
e	Shopfront Improvement Grants	300,000	300,000	180,000	780,000
f	Building Improvement Grants	100,000	100,000	40,000	240,000
g	Residential / Conversion Improvement Grants	250,000	250,000	250,000	750,000
h	Public Realm and Street Scene	600,000	1,554,000		2,154,000
Indicative Capital Budget		1,250,000	2,204,000	470,000	3,924,000
Indicative HAZ Submission		1,450,000	2,404,000	470,000	4,324,000

3.5 Table 1 reflects the indicative investment into the Kettering town centre of £4.3m. However, this investment is subject to securing funding from the private sector and Historic England. The proposed amount of funding from Historic England reflects an estimated amount based on recent conversations with Historic England, a formal assessment process is yet to be undertaken. The amount of funding required by the Council is around £1m more than HE funding for Public Realm as the council recognises that in order to bring a suitable scheme forward it will require additional funding.

3.6 Detailed conversations are still ongoing to determine the final allocation that is to be requested from Historic England, as well as the profiling of funding for individual schemes. This detail will be confirmed prior to the Stage 2 Submission on 20th

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December 2019. It is anticipated that the final allocation will be announced by Historic England in mid-January.

- 3.7 During the evidence preparation for the Stage 2 submission a condition appraisal of the HSHAZ area was conducted by our Development Services team. This condition appraisal, along with consultation with HE, has been used to inform the funding envelopes for the grant schemes ensuring they reflect a realistic expectation for delivery.
- 3.8 **It is important to note that although the figures in *Table 1* remain indicative at this stage, and are subject to securing the Historic England and the private sector match funding, the investment of around £2m from the Council could leverage a total of over £4m into improvements in Kettering Town Centre.**
- 3.9 Table 2 sets out the timetable for the Stage 2 – Programme Design submission process;

Table 2

6 th December 2019	Programme Design – Draft submission sent to Historic England for review and comments
20 th December 2019	Programme Design – Final submission sent to Historic England for assessment
13 th January 2020	Full Council – Kettering HSHAZ report detailing finalised funding profiling for approval
Mid-late January 2020	Programme confirmation – Historic England issue statement of investment and grant contract documentation
April 2020	1 st year delivery commences

4. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

- 4.1 The Design Programme aligns with the implementation of the Kettering Town Centre Delivery Plan 2018 - 2025. This plan was developed following feedback from the Kettering Town Centre Conference 2017. A future Kettering Town Centre Conference will be held in January 2020, HSHAZ will form part of the agenda and will gather vital stakeholder engagement.
- 4.2 The Committee will recall that the EOI evidenced a significant level of support from key stakeholders representing a range of private, public and community interests in the Town Centre. In preparation for the stage 2 submission a follow-up consultative letter has been sent to all stakeholders, providing an update on progress and seeking their views and continued support. It is important to recognise that whilst the deadline for the submission to Historic England is the 20th December 2019, consultation and stakeholder engagement does not end there.

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The programme will build in an ongoing engagement plan over the lifetime of the programme.

- 4.3 Stakeholder engagement sessions have been held and these discussions and findings will be articulated within the stage 2 submission and strengthen the case for change within our town centre
- 4.4 Public consultation sessions will be held on 5th and 7th December 2019 within the Town Centre. This will represent an initial phase of public consultation, further consultation will be picked up within the community engagement plan. However, this is an opportunity to update the public on the HSHAZ progress and its limitations, seek views on specific questions and understand how they would like to be engaged with in future. This will form a basis of understanding to build into the engagement plan and shape future consultation events.
- 4.5 Additional consultation will be conducted via a newly developed ***Historic High Street Hero Trail***, which will be tested with Kettering Town Centre Youth Partnership and children from St Mary's School. This trail aims to engage the younger generation and gather their views on how they want to shape the town centre. Feedback on the trail will help to shape and inform the finished product which will be launched as part of the community engagement plan. (***Appendix B – Historic High Street Hero Trail – DRAFT***)

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Kettering Town Centre Action Plan (AAP), adopted in July 2011, sets out aspirations for the town centre up to 2021. The vision for Kettering Town Centre is 'to create a vibrant heart for Kettering; a place that is characterful, distinctive and fun'.
- 5.2 The AAP sets out a vision to bring more residential and employment uses into the town centre in addition to enhancing the experiential qualities in the Town Centre including its heritage assets. This vision resonates with the objectives of the High Streets Heritage Action Zone programme.
- 5.3 The Kettering Town Centre Delivery Plan 2018 - 2025 sets out 19 projects based on the guiding principles of the AAP 'Clean and Refresh' and 'Art and Culture Revitalised' these directly relate to the Kettering HAZ Programme Design.

6. FINANCIAL RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Stage 2 - Programme Design is not a competitive process, Historic England have clear expectations on the production of high quality, detailed business cases.
- 6.2 The process for Stage 2 requires the Council to demonstrate how they can match fund the HSHAZ funding requested allocation and provide an indication of the

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spending profile. It is anticipated that the Council's match funding will be supported by the Economic Development Reserves and existing revenue budgets.

- 6.3 The stage 2 programme design which will include the Council's match funding and anticipated spend profile will be reported to Full Council for approval in January 2020.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The project will require a new post of Conservation Project Manager. This post is a requirement of Historic England and will be key in delivering the project. It is envisaged that this cost will be shared equally between the Council and Historic England.
- 7.2 Additional staffing to support the project will consist of time allocated from established posts.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Any works procured would need to be done in accordance with the Council's financial procedures and Standing Orders
- 8.2 Grant schemes will be developed in accordance with our existing terms and conditions

9. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Implications will be considered as part of any procurement process
- 9.2 Implications will be considered within the development of grant scheme terms and conditions and monitoring and will align with Historic England's statement on Climate Change in relation to Historic built environment which recognises the importance of climate change mitigation

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10. RECOMMENDATION

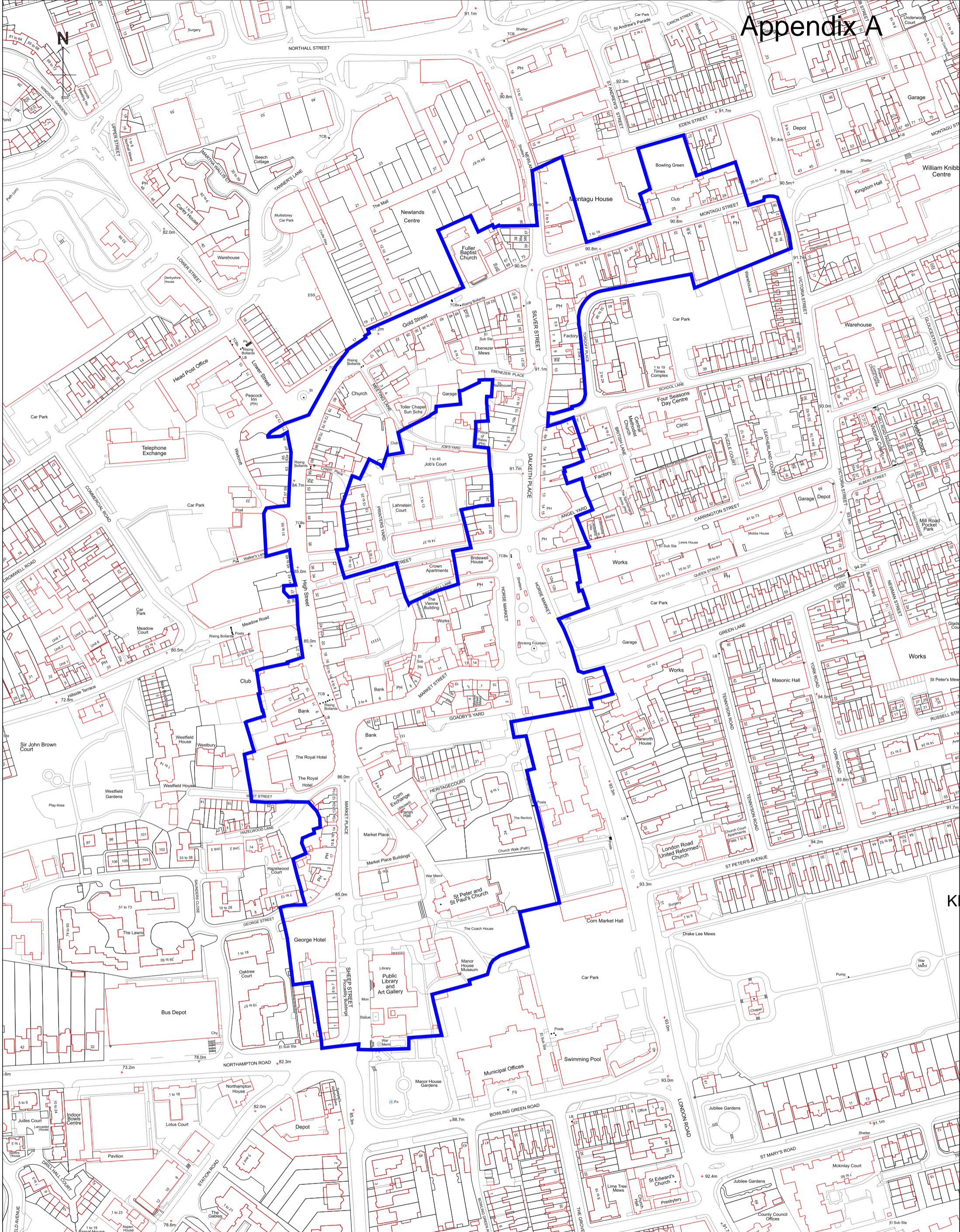
That the Executive;

- 10.1 Note the submission and governance approach for the submission of Stage 2 – Programme Design for Kettering Town Centre to the High Street Heritage Action Zone Fund
- 10.2 Endorses, the indicative funding for the HAZ stage 2 submission; and
- 10.3 Recommend, officers continue to work with HE on forming a stage 2 submission and submit capital and revenue budget proposals to Full Council for approval.

Contact Officer: Rochelle Mathieson (ext 4350)

Background papers

Executive Committee report (18 September 2019) – Kettering Heritage Action Zone	file:///C:/Users/rmath/Downloads/10. Addendum t o Maintaining a Durable Budget Report KETTERING_HERITAGE_ACTION_ZONE%20(1).pdf
Historic England High Street Heritage Action Zone information and guidance	https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/heritage-action-zones/regenerating-historic-high-streets/
Kettering Shopfront Design SPD	https://www.kettering.gov.uk/downloads/file/323/kettering_shopfronts_spd
Kettering Public Realm Strategy SPD	https://www.kettering.gov.uk/downloads/file/322/kettering_public_realm_strategy
Historic England's Climate Change statement	https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/statements/climate-change/



Title: Heritage Action Zone

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Become a Historic High Street Hero!

Kettering has the opportunity to become a Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) and secure funding to improve our historical town centre but we need your help!

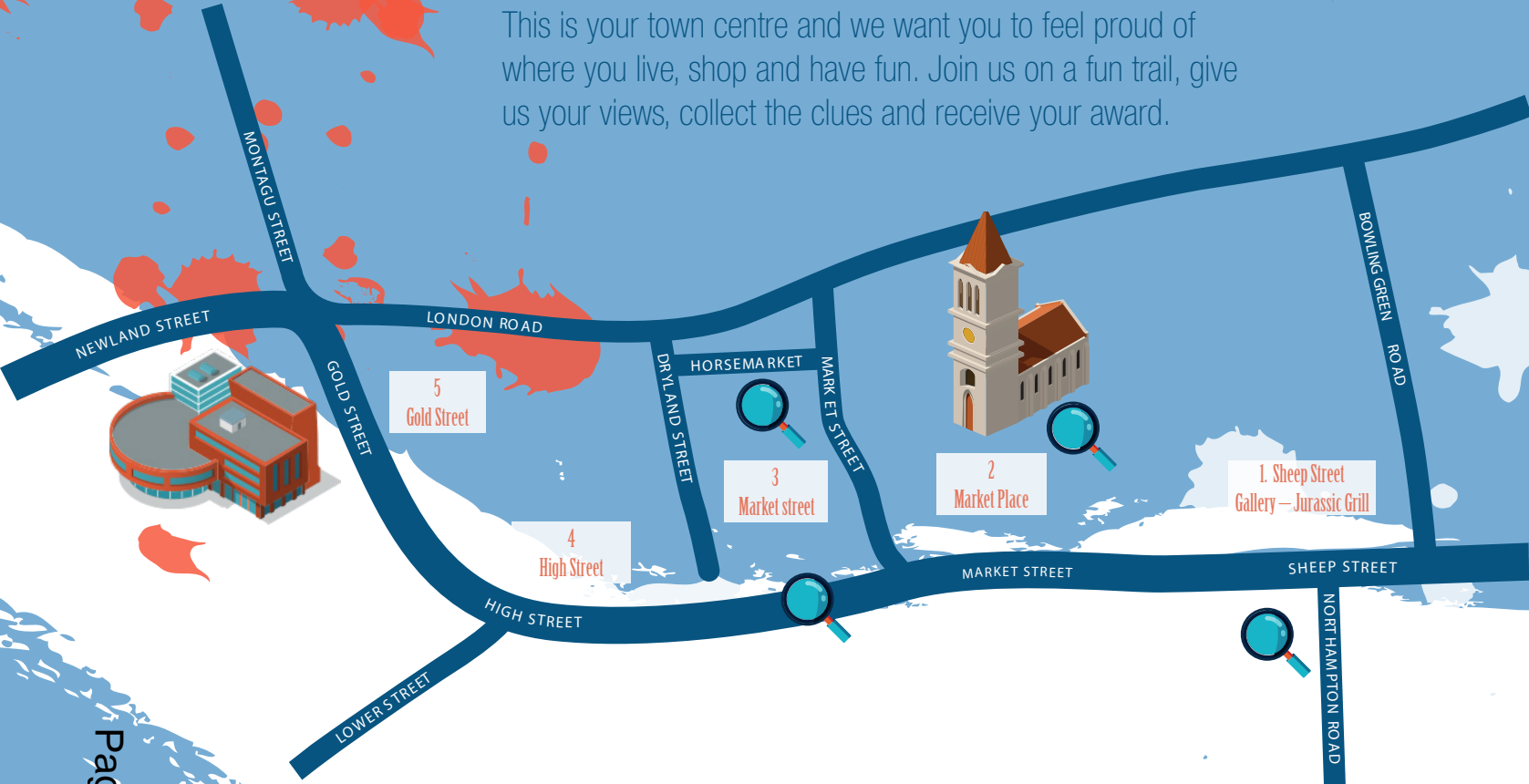
Being a Historic High Street Hero is a really important job, you can spot things that need fixing and let us know what you like.

Join us on a fun trail, give us your views, collect the clues and receive your award.



Kettering

This is your town centre and we want you to feel proud of where you live, shop and have fun. Join us on a fun trail, give us your views, collect the clues and receive your award.



FACT: In 1803 William Knibb was born in Market Street and became a famous missionary

Question 3: Look up high at the old buildings, they stand in a perfect curve, look closely and note what you see: Things to fix:

Things you like:



CLUE to spot: can you find the blue plaque – take a photo!



FACT: A local architect called J A Gotch designed a lot of buildings in Kettering including the HSBC building

Question 4: Look at where you walk and things around you . How can we make the area look more welcoming and smart?



CLUE to spot: Find the arch next to HSBC – look up at the ceiling – what colour/s is it?

QUESTION 4A: Which 3 buildings stand out as needing improvement?

FACT: The Alfred East Art Gallery, based in Sheep Street, opened in 1913

Question 1: What is your favourite building and why?



CLUE to spot: The row of buildings has a name, fill in the missing letters

□	□	C	C	□	□	□	L	L	□
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FACT: Kettering's Market Charter was granted by Henry III in 1227

Question 2: What do you enjoy doing in this space?



CLUE to spot: The Corn Exchange is now home to The Kino Lounge but years ago it was home to another fun activity - look to the side to find out.....

Answer:

FACT: Andrew Fuller helped found the Baptist Missionary Society and he is remembered in the Fuller Church

Question 5: Look at where you walk and things around you, how can we make the area look more welcoming and smart?

How would you like to be kept up to date on this project?



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Report Originator	John Conway Head of Housing	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> A19/019	
Wards Affected	All	4 December 2019	
Title	NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY 2019 – 2024		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the approval of the Executive Committee to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy for North Northamptonshire 2019-2024.

2. INFORMATION

2.1 Homelessness Review and Strategy

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to carry out, from time to time, a review of homelessness in their areas and to develop a homelessness strategy. The Act specifically requires that strategies must address three key issues:

- The prevention of homelessness
- The provision of accommodation for people who do become homeless
- The provision of support to those who have been homeless to ensure that they do not become homeless again.

- 2.2 Kettering Borough Council's current homelessness strategy 2016-2019 was approved by the Executive Committee in July 2016 and now requires updating. During this year, a review of homelessness has been undertaken jointly by Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough as a precursor to the production of a new homelessness and rough sleeper strategy for North Northamptonshire.

2.3 A More Challenging Environment

Councils across Northamptonshire and the rest of the country are operating in a much more challenging environment than when the current homelessness strategy was prepared. With levels of homelessness increasing, what was largely a hidden problem has become far more visible with many more people having to live on the streets.

- 2.4 The increase in the incidence of homelessness is a symptom of our broken housing market. This varies in nature from place to place but the main factors leading to higher levels of homelessness are:

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- **A growing population and changing demographics** – Northamptonshire’s population has grown by 30% over the past thirty years compared to an increase across the country of 16.8%. This has resulted in increasing demand for housing but the nature of that demand is changing with many more single and elderly people looking for a home.
- **Too few new homes are being built** – The Government estimates that between 250,000 and 300,000 new homes are required every year but in 2018/19 only 169,000 were actually built. The reasons for this are complex but key influences are the collapse in house construction following the 2008 financial crisis and reduced funding for new social housing. Locally, construction has picked up with 600 new homes now being built every year but there is still a pressing need for more affordable homes.
- **Home ownership is unaffordable for many people** – With the average house price in Kettering being £202,457, it is clear that home ownership is well out of reach for people on low incomes or even middle-income households.
- **Soaring private sector rents** – For people who are unable to buy, the alternative of renting privately is scarcely a better option with the average rent in Kettering being £607 per calendar month.
- **Welfare reform and increases in evictions by private landlords** – The Government has frozen Local Housing Allowance for a four-year period until 2020. At a time when private rents are soaring, lower income households are increasingly unable to pay the rents demanded by landlords. As a result, Section 21 evictions by private landlords are now the biggest reason for homelessness. In Kettering, for example, 168 households became homeless because they lost a private sector tenancy in 2018/19. This contrasts with a figure of 54 households in 2017/18.
- **Reductions in funding for housing-related supported housing** – The cessation of the Supporting People programme has resulted in the loss of many units of supported accommodation across the Borough. Inevitably, this has disproportionately affected the most vulnerable people in our community and has resulted in an increase in street homelessness.

2.5 In a broken housing market many of the housing solutions that are usually available are no longer a realistic option for a wide range of people. In those circumstances, increasing demand from homeless households and longer waiting lists for social housing are the inevitable outcome.

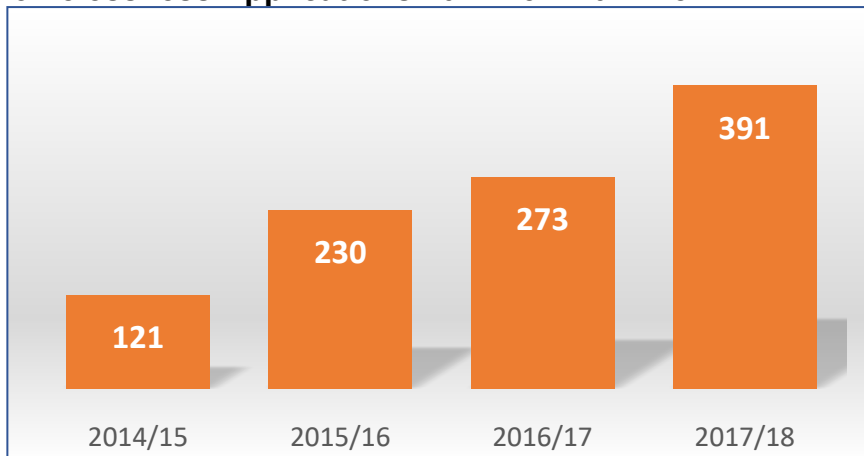
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2.6 Homeless in Kettering

Locally, levels of homelessness have increased significantly since 2015. Table 1, overleaf, shows that in 2014/15 there were 121 homelessness approaches to the Council. By 2017/18, this had increased by 223% to 391 applications per annum.

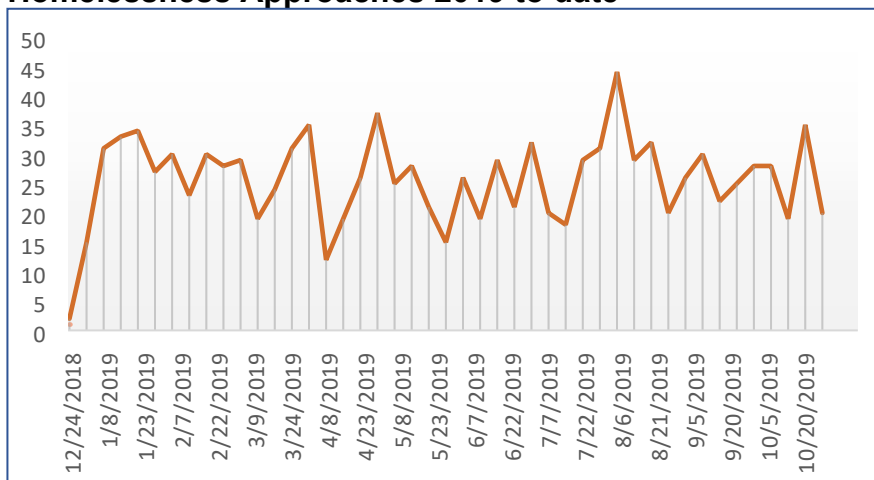
2.7 The main reasons for homelessness in Kettering are loss of private sector accommodation followed by friends or families no longer willing to accommodate.

**Table 1
Homelessness Applications 2014/15 – 2017/18**



2.8 During 2019, approaches by homeless households have continued at a high level with a peak of 34 households a week approaching the Council for help during the summer. Demand has dropped marginally since the beginning of September to an average of 20 approaches per week, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2
Homelessness Approaches 2019 to date**



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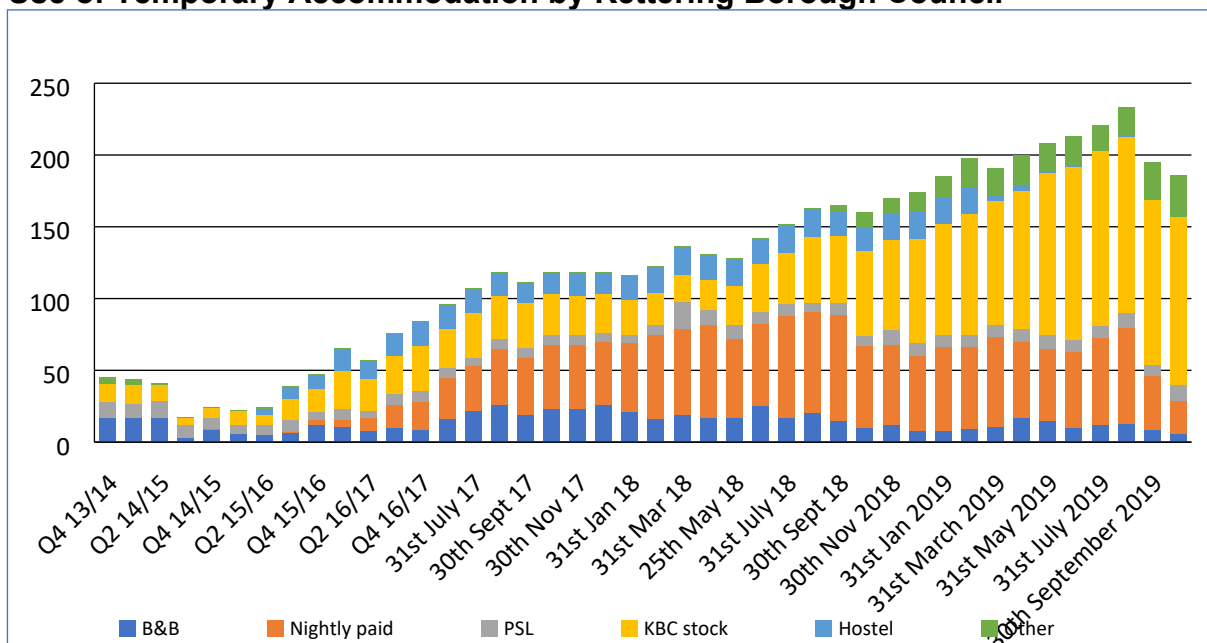
2.9 The starkest manifestation of the increase in homelessness is in the number of people who are sleeping rough. As mentioned previously, a key influence in the increase in rough sleeping is the reduction in supported housing for vulnerable people. Table 3, overleaf, shows the incidence in rough sleeping since 2013. It is pleasing to note that with the opening of the night shelter and the recent appointment of an outreach worker, the rough sleeper count on 14 November found only four people sleeping in the open. On the night of the count, the night shelter provided accommodation for 12 people.

Table 3
Street Homelessness 2013 – 2019

Year	Number of rough sleepers	Count/Estimate
2013	11	Estimate
2014	10	Estimate
2015	5	Count
2016	3	Estimate
2017	14	Estimate
2018	17	Estimate
2019	4	Count

2.10 With the increase in homelessness, there has been a corresponding increase in the use of temporary accommodation by the Council. The accommodation used by the Council for homeless households includes hostels, bed and breakfast hotels, properties rented from private landlords, nightly paid accommodation and local authority housing (both HRA stock and acquired properties). Table 4 shows the position at end of September 2019.

Table 4
Use of Temporary Accommodation by Kettering Borough Council



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2.11 Again, after a period of a significant growth in the number of households being placed in temporary accommodation, there has been an improvement in the situation since the summer. At the peak in August, there were 234 households living in temporary accommodation. This figure has been reduced to 182 households as at 18 November – a reduction of 52 households. The reduction can be attributed to a combination of factors including the resolution of several longstanding complex cases, a renewed focus on prevention activities, improved case management, a reduction in the number of void council properties and an increase in lettings by all social landlords.

2.12 Our Strategic Response

As well as responding to homelessness approaches from individual households, councils in North Northamptonshire are taking action on a number of fronts to improve their homelessness services and take a more preventative approach to homelessness. Accordingly, the focus of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy is threefold:

1. Preventing homelessness and rough sleeping (Prevent);
2. Early intervention for those at risk (Intervene); and
3. Relief through appropriate accommodation and support services (Recover).

2.13 The main elements of the strategy accord with Kettering Borough Council’s long-term strategic approach to homelessness. The main elements of this approach are:

- **Building new affordable homes** – The key reason for the ongoing housing crisis is an insufficient supply of affordable homes. The Council is therefore working with Homes England and housing associations to build new affordable rented and shared ownership housing. Over the last decade, 1,501 new affordable homes have been built across the Borough.
- **Working with private landlords** - Over the past twenty years the private rented sector has quadrupled in size and, despite the issues covered earlier in this report, represents a valuable housing resource. The Council is therefore exploring ways of working with landlords so that they are more ready to let properties to people on low incomes. Financial incentives for landlords and the provision of support services for vulnerable tenants in the private rented sector are two examples of the initiatives being developed.
- **Improving the quality of temporary accommodation** – The Council has worked to reduce the use of poorer quality, high cost accommodation such as bed and breakfast hotels and instead place households in self-contained accommodation within easy reach of family and support networks.

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- **Preventing homelessness through tenancy support** – With an increasing proportion of tenants who are vulnerable, it is essential that the Council provides practical support so that these tenants can make a success of their tenancies. Among the strategies that are employed are specialist tenancy support workers, a regime of intensive contact during introductory tenancies, welcome meetings prior to tenancies starting and life skills training. The proposal to acquire Wellington House, which is discussed elsewhere on this agenda, provides the Council with a great opportunity to enhance our work in this area.
- **Developing specialist housing with support for rough sleepers** – The Council is taking advantage of funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to develop a range of schemes to provide transitional housing and intensive support for people who are street homeless.
- **Preventing homelessness by providing specialist accommodation for vulnerable people with support needs** The Council is currently negotiating to purchase Wellington House so that it can be used as a homelessness hub and provide short to medium term accommodation with support for vulnerable people at risk of homelessness.

3. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

- 3.1 The draft strategy has been discussed with the Kettering Homelessness Action Partnership, a forum of statutory organisations, voluntary agencies and faith groups, at its meeting on 25 September 2019.

4. POLICY AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 General Fund expenditure on homelessness is a major commitment for the Council. In the current financial year, the revenue budget for homelessness is £807,420. However, this budget is under pressure due to the high level of homelessness being experienced and the outturn for the year is projected to be £150,000 above budget.

5. LEGAL AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Local housing authorities respond to homelessness within the statutory framework provided by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This act, which came into effect in April 2018, has transformed the way that councils provide help and support for households. There is now a greater emphasis on prevention at an early stage rather than dealing with homelessness at the point of crisis. Many people, including single person households, who were not entitled to help under the previous system are now able to receive practical help and advice.

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6. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no specific climate change implications arising from this report.

7. RECOMMENDATION

7.1 The Executive Committee is asked to approve the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy for North Northamptonshire 2019-2024.

Background Papers:
North Northamptonshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2024
December 2019
Contact Officer John Conway

Previous Minutes/Reports:
Ref:
Date:

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NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY 2019-2024

Service Area	Housing		
Strategy Owner			
Introduced	2019	Last Reviewed	n/a
Version	One	Review Date	2024

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1 Foreword

2 Introduction

This Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy sets out how the district and borough councils of North Northamptonshire intend to meet the needs of our residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including rough sleeping. It reviews our performance, identifies challenges that we face to the delivery of our service, and describes how we will go about addressing homelessness and rough sleeping in North Northamptonshire.

This Strategy has been prepared and agreed jointly between Corby Borough Council (CBC), East Northamptonshire Council (ENC), Kettering Borough Council (KBC), and the Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW), in co-ordination with services currently provided by Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) and local health services. Together the area covered by the four above-named district and borough councils (the Councils) is referred to as North Northamptonshire.

3 Strategic Background

3.1 Local Government Reorganisation

North Northamptonshire is one of the two new unitary authorities which will be created by the restructuring of Northamptonshire County Council and the district and borough councils within the Northamptonshire area. This will involve the abolition of the eight current authorities (including the Councils and NCC) and the necessary transformation of the services provided by these authorities, such as housing and homelessness services. As we prepare to become operational as a unitary authority on 1 April 2021, the Councils recognise the increased importance of collaborative working in order to achieve the vision, aims and objectives of this Strategy. This applies equally to our work with partner agencies and the voluntary sector who are a vital part of tackling homelessness in North Northamptonshire.

3.2 Strategic Housing Context

Across the country levels of homelessness are increasing: North Northamptonshire is no exception. Within the housing sector, issues of housing supply and affordability; population growth; and economic circumstances including welfare reforms and provision of funding are all aspects we must take into account when considering our provision for reducing and preventing homelessness and rough sleeping.

With levels of homelessness increasing, what has been largely a hidden problem has become far more visible with many more people living on the streets. The increase in incidences of homelessness can be seen as a symptom of a broken housing market. This varies in nature from place to place but the main factors leading to the breakdown of the housing market are:

- a) A growing population and changing demographics – Northamptonshire's population has grown by 30% over the past thirty years compared to an increase across the country of 16.8%. This has resulted in increasing demand for housing, and the nature of that demand is changing with many more single and elderly people looking for a home.
- b) Too few new homes are being built – the Government estimates that between 250,000 and 300,000 new homes are required every year across the country, but in 2017/18 only 160,000 were actually built. The reasons for this are complex, but key influences are the collapse in house construction following the 2008 financial crisis and cuts in Government grant support for new social housing.
- c) Home ownership is unaffordable for many people – the average house price in Northamptonshire is £290,209 - home ownership is well out of reach for people on low or even middle-incomes.
- d) Soaring private sector rents – for people who are unable to buy, the alternative of renting privately is scarcely a better option - the average rent in Northamptonshire is £762 per calendar month (pcm). At the bottom end of the market, the average monthly rent for a room in a shared house in Northamptonshire has increased from £378 pcm in January 2016 to £446 pcm in January 2019 - an 18% increase over three years.
- e) Welfare reform and increases in evictions by private landlords – the Government froze Local Housing Allowance for a four-year period before a minor increase in 2019. At a time when private rents are soaring, lower income households are increasingly unable to pay the rents demanded by landlords. Section 21 evictions by private landlords are now the biggest reason for homelessness in Northamptonshire. In Kettering, for example, 54 households became homeless because they lost a private sector tenancy in 2017/18. This contrasts with a figure of 13 households in 2014/15.
- f) Reductions in funding for local authority delivered supported housing – the cessation of the Supporting People programme has resulted in the loss of many units of supported accommodation and valuable 'floating support' programmes across the county. This has inevitably disproportionately affected the most vulnerable people in our community and has directly resulted in an increase in street homelessness.

In a broken housing market, many of the housing solutions that are usually available are no longer a realistic option for a wide range of people. In these circumstances, increasing demand from homeless households and longer waiting lists for social housing are the inevitable outcome.

Using the vision from the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018, in order to address these challenges North Northamptonshire's focus is on:

1. preventing homelessness and rough sleeping (Prevent);
2. early intervention for those at risk (Intervene); and
3. relief through appropriate accommodation and support services (Recover).

As well as having regard to national initiatives, this Strategy complements the Housing Plan or Strategy and Allocations Policy of each current local authority within North Northamptonshire. The districts and boroughs currently work closely together in relation to housing matters and benefit from shared good practice and collaboration on homeless issues.

4 Legal Context

To be homeless has a wide meaning, beyond the most visible effect of rough sleeping. Various pieces of legislation and guidance, including the recent Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA), set out the full definitions and duties that we owe to those who are homeless, threatened with homelessness, or sleeping rough.

Measures implemented in April 2018 by the HRA place a greater duty on local authorities and legally oblige them to assess and provide assistance to all those who are eligible and homeless, or threatened with homelessness, irrespective of their priority need status. This includes prevention and relief duties, which centre on helping service users to remain in their existing home or secure new accommodation, with a strengthened focus on single people who may be at greater risk of sleeping rough.

Another provision of the HRA to note is the Duty to Refer. This places a statutory duty on specified public authorities to refer a person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness to a local housing authority, with their consent. Specified public authorities include:

- Prisons (public and contracted out);
- Youth offender institutions and youth offending teams;
- Secure training centres (public and contracted out) and colleges;
- Probation services (community rehabilitation companies and national probation service);
- Jobcentre plus;
- Accident and emergency services provided in a hospital;
- Urgent treatment centres, and hospitals in their capacity of providing in-patient treatment;
- Social service authorities; and
- Ministry of Defence.

In conjunction with the HRA, the Government has set out a plan of action to significantly reduce the number of people sleeping rough. This includes a number of commitments, support and funding as set out in the national [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) introduced in August 2018.

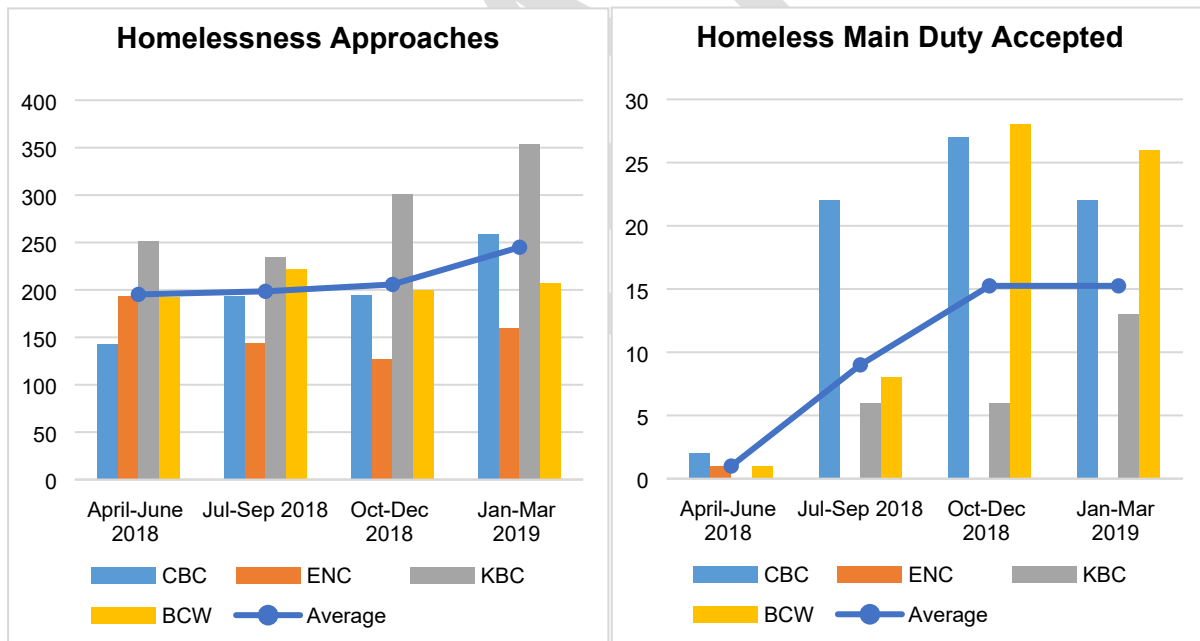
5 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

5.1 Levels of homelessness

In recent years the county of Northamptonshire has seen significant increases in homelessness (with the exception of ENC). From 547 in 2014/15, the number of homelessness acceptances across all local authority areas in the county increased to 1286 in 2017/18 – a rise of 135%.

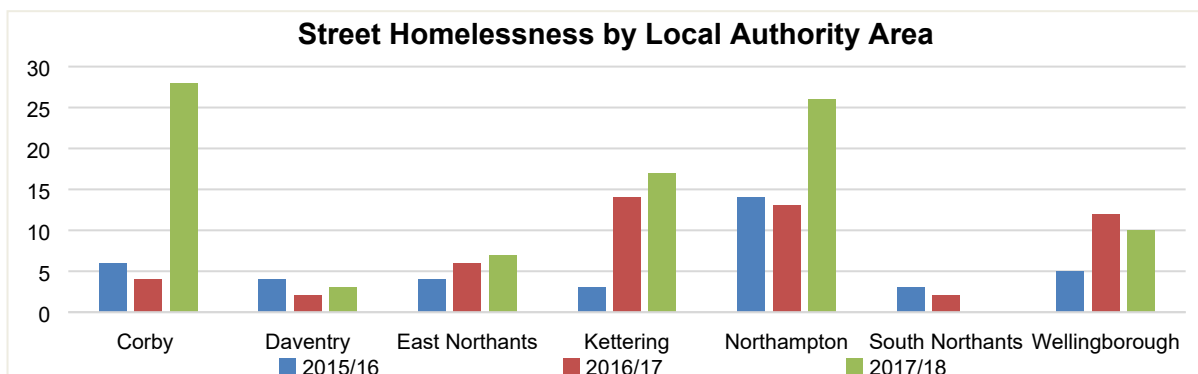
In North Northamptonshire, the increase in homelessness approaches and overall waiting list numbers reflects a growing demand for affordable housing. Between 1 April 2018 and 1 April 2019 CBC and KBC had an approximate 23% increase in active application numbers. During the same period ENC and BCW saw an increase of just under 4%, giving an average increase in active applications across North Northamptonshire of 13.4%.

Since the introduction of the HRA in April 2018 main duty acceptances increased for all Councils except for ENC, and the increase was significant for CBC and BCW over the first three quarters, before numbers decreased slightly in quarter four. The number of homelessness approaches also increased to the end of the year for CBC and KBC, whilst remaining largely consistent for BCW and falling overall for ENC.



5.2 Rough sleeping

Within Northamptonshire there was an increase in street homelessness of 135% over the three years to January 2019. As shown in the following table (taken from a report on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping to the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board in September 2019) CBC, KBC and BCW are particularly under pressure from increasing levels of rough sleeping between 2015/16 and 2017/18.



Across North Northamptonshire estimates of rough sleeper numbers are carried out periodically. Data from 2018/19 records that approximately 70% of rough sleepers are UK nationals, with EEA nationals a significant part of the remainder. The majority of rough sleepers are single males, with some females and couples. Geographically rough sleeping is primarily an issue in town areas as opposed to rural parts of North Northamptonshire. The main challenges identified amongst the Councils were engagement with this hard-to-reach group, sharing intelligence with partners, language barriers, and ineligibility.

The following figures evidence the importance of strengthening ties with partners in order to obtain the most accurate data regarding rough sleeping.

No. rough sleepers	2017	2018 spotlight count / estimate	Updated as at Jan-Feb 2019
CBC	4 (shelter open)	28 (shelter closed)	18 in SWEP 2019, 12 in April 2019, 19 rehoused during Nightlight close down period
ENC	6	7	2 in SWEP 2019
KBC	14	17	3 in SWEP 2019, 27 identified in Jan 2019
BCW	12	10	31 known, 20 identified during Q3 (winter) 2018/19, 11 more in SWEP 2019

SWEP refers to the Councils' Severe Weather Emergency Protocols. These are processes put in place by local authorities to protect those sleeping rough during severe weather, especially during the winter months, by providing emergency accommodation.

Sadly, there have been a few occasions in Northamptonshire when people have died whilst sleeping on the streets or in temporary accommodation. Over the past three years, one person died whilst rough sleeping and four have passed away whilst in temporary accommodation. The Chief Housing Officers Group and Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board have put arrangements in place for investigating such deaths, identifying trends and issues of concern, and agreeing action that can be taken by agencies to reduce the likelihood of any future fatalities.

5.3 Reasons for homelessness

There are a variety of factors that may cause homelessness, many of which can be inter-related, making it a complex issue to tackle. These may be economic reasons

such as welfare policy or employment status, factors relating to housing like the supply and affordability of accommodation, interpersonal issues such as relationship breakdown or domestic abuse, and individual aspects like mental health conditions or substance abuse.

The Government commissioned a [feasibility study](#), published in March 2019, which looks in depth at the underlying risk factors and causes of homelessness and rough sleeping.

Across North Northamptonshire the primary reasons for homelessness reported by individuals who lost accommodation in 2018/19 (and the average numbers of homelessness assessments associated with each reason) were:

1. End of a private rented tenancy (637);
2. Family / friends no longer willing or able to accommodate (458);
3. Relationship with partner ended, including domestic abuse (290); and
4. Other (202).

KBC identified an increase over three years in family or friends no longer being willing or able to provide accommodation. As shown by the following table, BCW had slightly higher numbers of cases due to family / friends no longer willing or able to accommodate, in comparison to the end of a private rented tenancy which was ranked in second place. CBC had relatively low numbers of 'other' reasons for homelessness assessments, less than the end of social rented accommodation and eviction from supported housing.

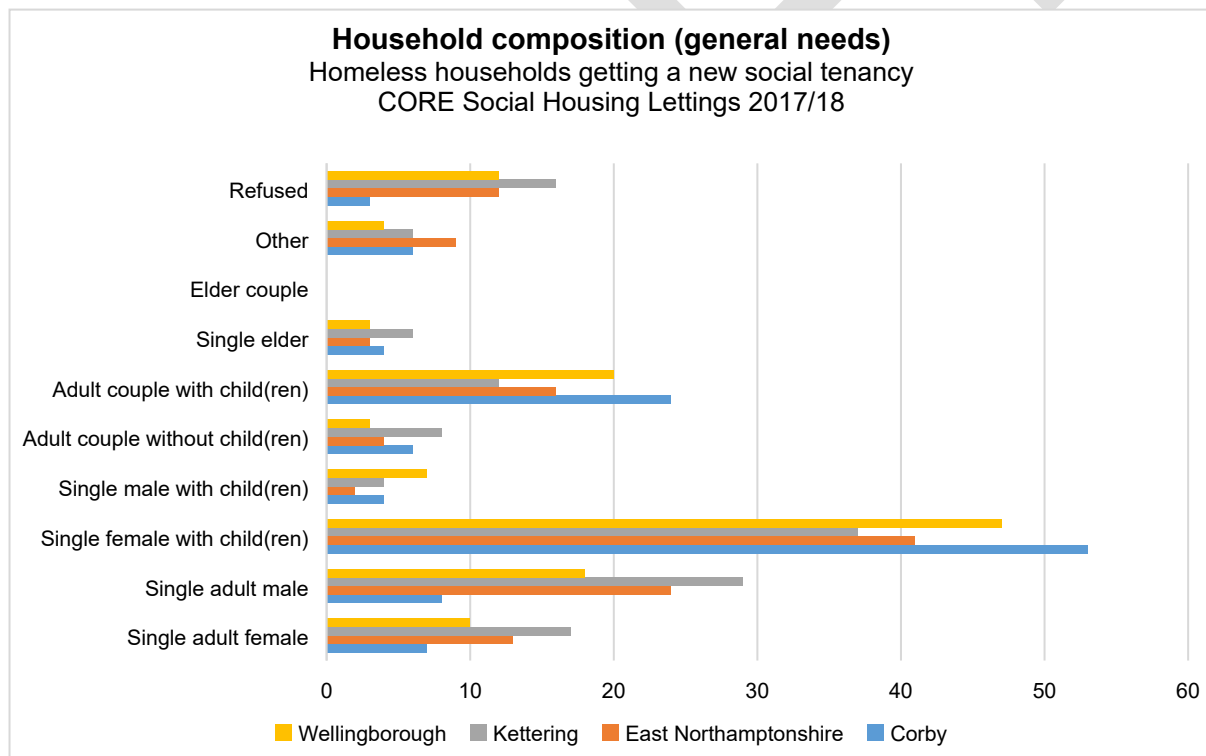
Reason for Homelessness Assessment	CBC	ENC	KBC	BCW
Relationship with partner ended (non-violent breakdown)	42	32	72	43
Domestic Abuse	11	10	41	39
End of social rented	20	15	44	31
End of private rented tenancy (AST)	153	88	155	150
End of private rented tenancy (non AST)	61	7	13	10
Eviction from supported housing	11	14	8	19
Family no longer willing/able to accommodate	89	55	98	141
Friends no longer willing/able to accommodate	21	8	18	28
Fire/flood/other emergency	1	0	3	1
Left HM Forces	2	0	0	1
Left institution with no accommodation available	6	4	20	16
Mortgage repossession	0	0	4	4
Non-racially motivated/other motivated violence or harassment	2	5	7	18
Racially motivated violence or harassment	0	0	1	3
Other	10	36	99	57
Property disrepair	1	0	5	2
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as Asylum Support	0	0	0	0
Total for April - March (2018 / 19)	430	274	588	563

5.4 Characteristics

Although there is some variation in the data collected, all the Councils collate basic data on the characteristics of those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Data taken from KBC and BCW in 2017/18 shows the majority of service users are White British and aged between 26-40 years. KBC reported the most common priority need being a household with children, followed by physical or mental health / disability. They had an increase in homeless single person households (mostly male) to 2018 and found the majority of support needs were a history of mental health problems, followed by physical ill health / disability.

CORE lettings data for 2017/18 (displayed in the chart below) shows the most common household composition across North Northamptonshire was 'single female with child / children' (36% of the total number of homeless households getting a new social tenancy), followed by 'single adult male' households (16%), then 'adult couple with child / children' (14%).

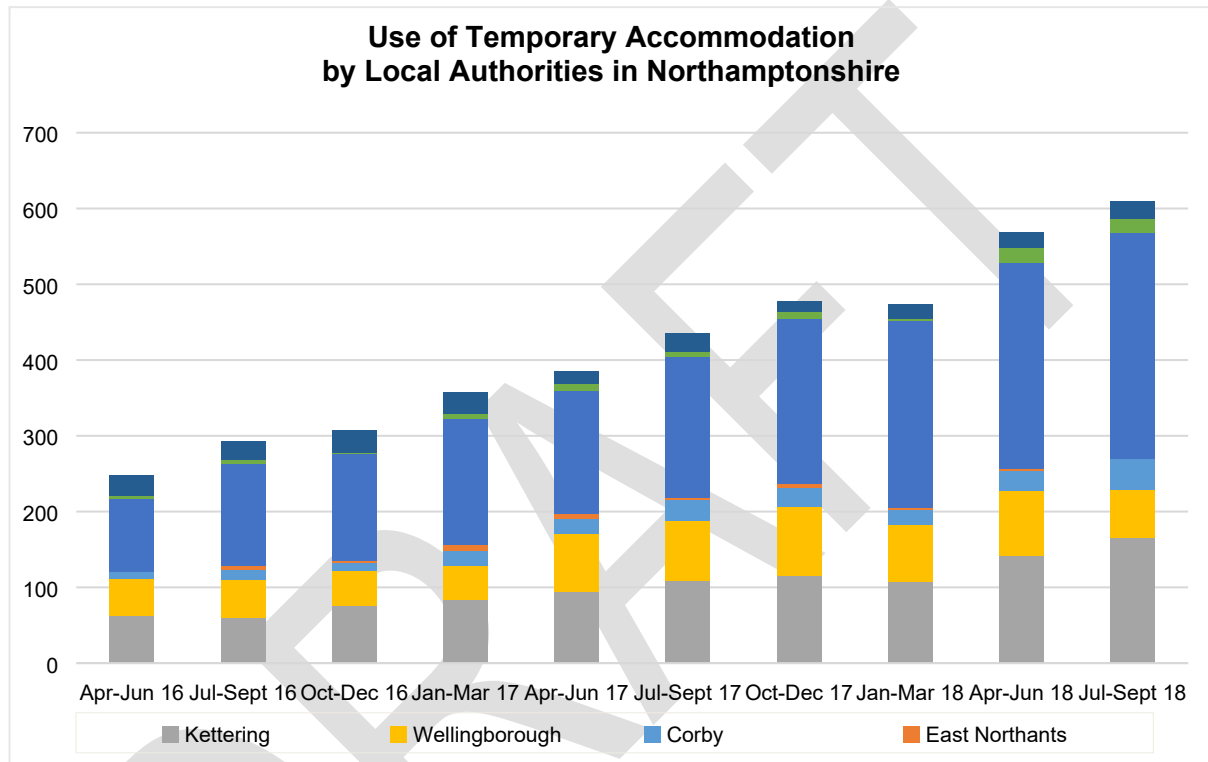


The HRA states that local authorities' homelessness service must meet the needs of persons in the district or borough who have certain characteristics, including: care leavers, persons released from prison or hospital, those who have experienced domestic abuse, former members of the regular armed forces and persons suffering from a mental illness or impairment. Whilst other health and wellbeing factors such as substance misuse are not specifically listed in the legislation, the HRA also provides that services must meet the needs of any other group of people that the authority identifies as being at particular risk of homelessness. In order to meet these needs it

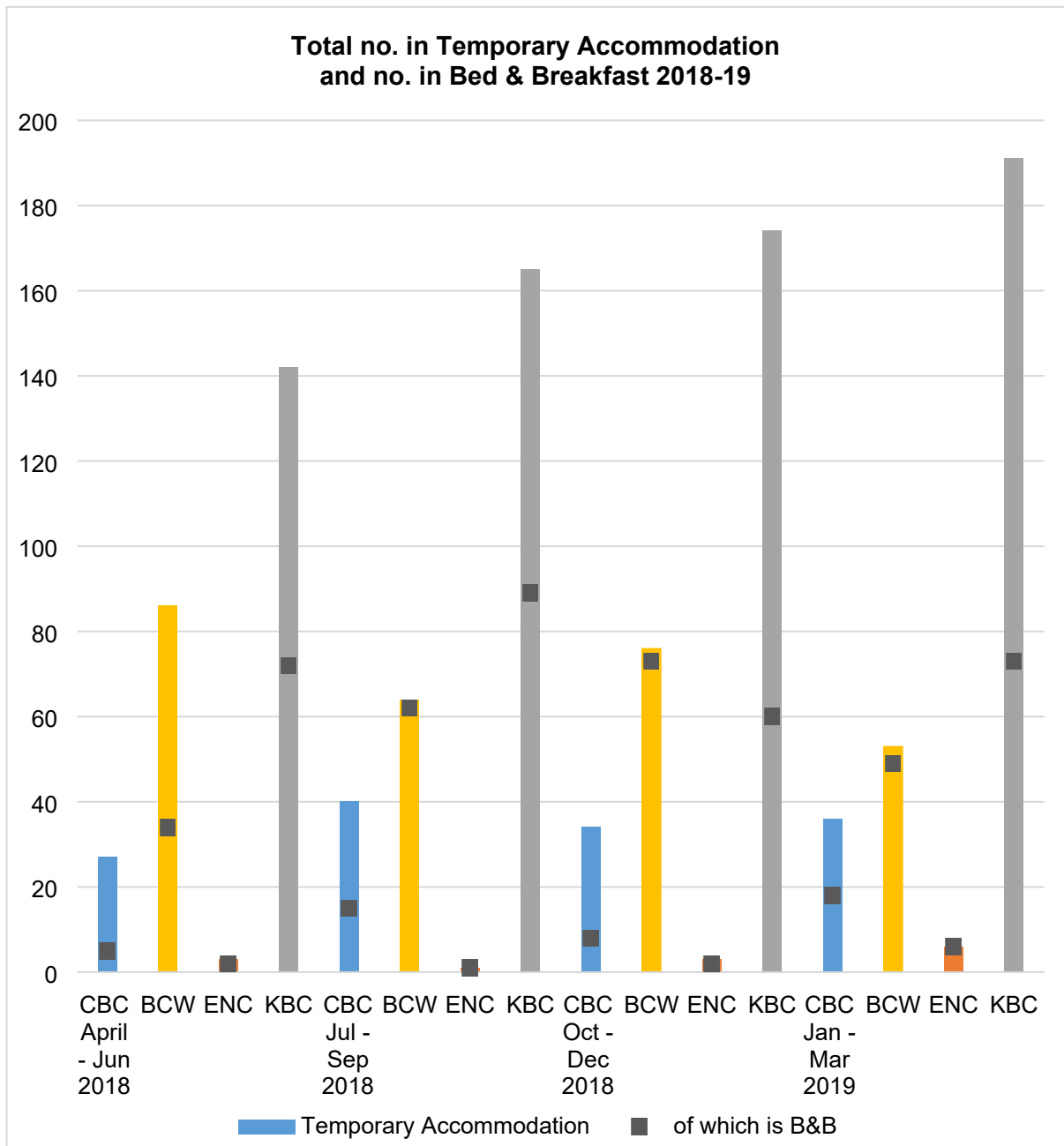
is important that data on specific and locally relevant characteristics is both collated and used by the Councils to inform services.

5.5 Temporary accommodation

Across Northamptonshire the number of households in temporary accommodation has more than doubled between the second quarters of 2016/17 and 2018/19 (table taken from a report on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping to the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board in September 2019).



In North Northamptonshire, both the total numbers in temporary accommodation (TA), and, out of that total, the number in bed & breakfast accommodation (B&B) in 2018/19 varies throughout the year and between authorities (as shown in the following chart). The clearest trends can be seen in the total numbers in TA, with KBC's increasing throughout the year and BCW's decreasing. Out of the quarterly totals the proportion in B&B for KBC reduces in quarters three and four, and increases for BCW in quarters two to four. For CBC and ENC the total numbers in TA vary, but overall increase during the year. The numbers in B&B, as a proportion of the total number in TA, in BCW increased significantly in quarter two and remained higher for the remainder of the year.



The average length of time spent in TA fluctuates from eight weeks (reported by CBC), to eight months for KBC, and between six and nine months for BCW. Therefore it can be misleading to rely on averages to analyse the length of time spent in TA. For example within KBC's average of eight months, just under a 1/3rd of cases were temporarily housed for up to three months, and only three cases spent three years or more in TA.

All local authorities across North Northamptonshire are seeking to increase the supply of TA in response to rising demand. However, ultimately, the Councils wish to reduce their reliance on TA and develop short term accommodation options which are more flexible, less costly and better meet the changing needs of homeless households.

5.6 Population

North Northamptonshire has a growing population. CBC, currently the smallest, aims to double its population by 2031 and has a projected increase in the number of households of 39% from 2014 to 2039. This would be the largest percentage increase in Northamptonshire during this time period: KBC has a projected 26% increase, ENC 24% and BCW 21%. To put this into context, the national projected increase is 23% (MHCLG's [2014-based household projections](#), live table 425).

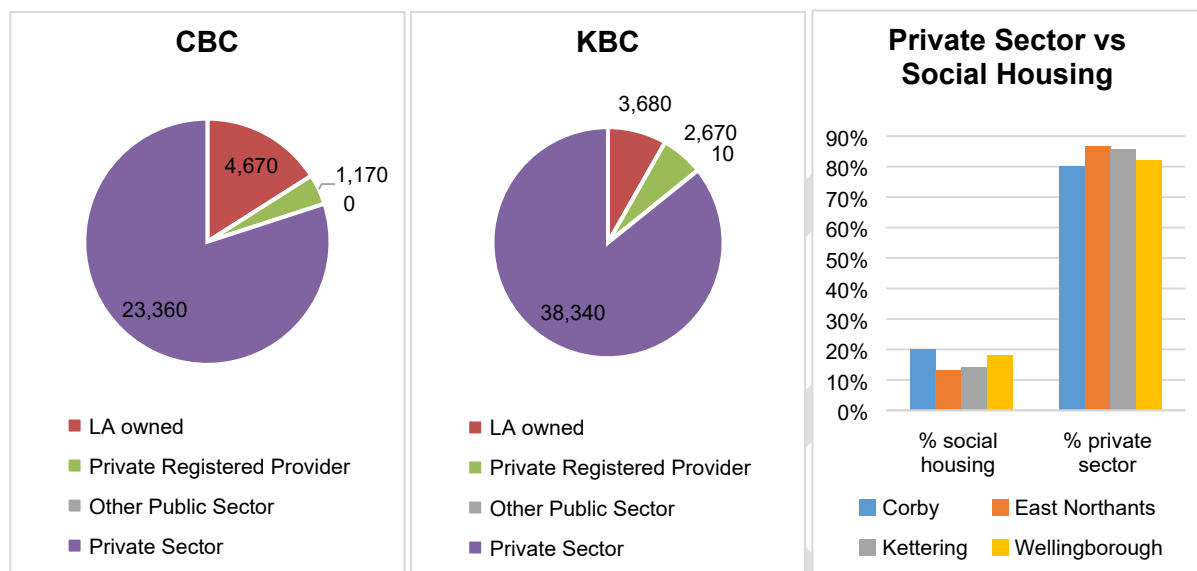
All the Councils have a projected increase in the number of households aged 75+ years above the national average (save for CBC in the 85+ age group). ENC particularly is projected to have a significant increase in households within these age groups. At the other end of the scale, CBC, KBC and BCW all have an increase in households under the age of 25 which is higher than the rest of England, especially so for CBC. The greatest divergence can be seen between the percentage changes in East Northamptonshire (where households aged 25-54 years are either predicted to decrease more, or increase less, than the rest of the country, to 2039) and Corby, reflecting the more rural nature of ENC's area.

No. households in 2014 (thousands)								
MHCLG's 2014-based household projections – live table 414								
Area	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
England	792	3,145	4,071	4,572	3,685	3,299	2,254	928
Northamptonshire	10	42	55	63	48	43	26	11
Corby	1	5	5	6	4	3	2	1
East Northamptonshire	1	4	6	8	6	6	4	1
Kettering	1	6	8	9	6	6	4	2
Wellingborough	1	4	6	7	5	5	3	1

Percentage change in no. households 2014-2039								
based on MHCLG's 2014-based household projections – live table 414								
Area	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75-84	85+
England	11.6%	-7.2%	5.7%	12.3%	19.6%	29.0%	70.1%	143.7%
Northamptonshire	21.1%	-2.9%	2.6%	11.8%	17.4%	34.3%	100.0%	184.8%
Corby	75.4%	8.7%	27.2%	29.0%	35.6%	52.0%	94.9%	142.3%
East Northamptonshire	6.8%	-15.1%	-13.5%	-0.9%	8.6%	38.6%	114.6%	234.2%
Kettering	31.4%	3.3%	-3.3%	15.5%	15.2%	30.7%	92.7%	168.7%
Wellingborough	19.2%	-7.5%	-3.8%	7.5%	12.3%	23.4%	89.6%	166.8%

5.7 Housing supply

North Northamptonshire is facing a rising demand for affordable housing, as could be expected from the increasing population. An example of this is an increase of over 33% in KBC's Keyways letting total in 2018/19. The highest demand overall is within the town areas, although ENC also reports pressure on their affordable supply in rural areas, where prices are generally higher and supply lower.



The housing supply as at 1 April 2018 (taken from the MHCLG's [live data table 100](#)) shows the tenure breakdown between the smallest and largest stock retaining Council areas. The third chart above illustrates the split between the private and social housing sectors across North Northamptonshire.

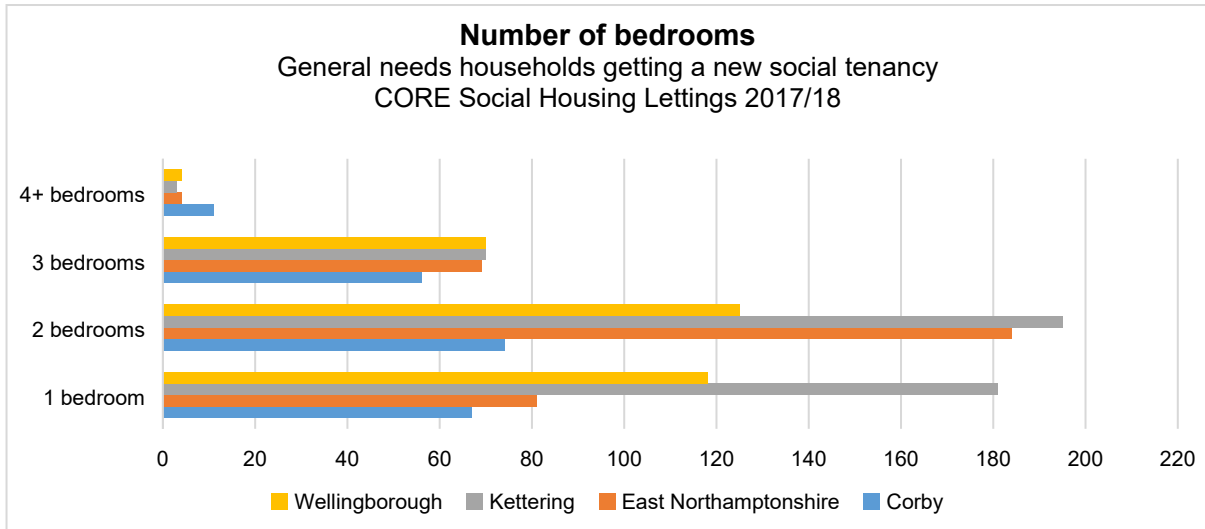
The Councils report an increase in the size of the private rented sector, for example CBC from 6.3% in 2001 to 16.6% in 2011, KBC from 15% in 2011 to 20% in 2017 and ENC recorded 12% of households renting privately in 2011. This increase has been tempered by the changes in 'buy to let' law for landlords.

In order to meet demand each local authority area needs to target gaps in supply within their action plans. Below are some of the headline gaps for each area:

LA	Gaps in supply
CBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported housing, particularly for permanent support issues. Short period without a permanent homeless shelter (new facility opening winter 2019).
ENC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller-sized properties, particularly in rural areas. Potential shortage of specialist accommodation for older persons. Affordable accommodation in rural areas.
KBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larger family accommodation (particularly four or more beds). Disabled adapted accommodation. Recent loss of supported accommodation (for young people / teenage parents / mental health). Comparative decrease in new properties for social rent since the introduction of affordable rent. No permanent homeless shelter.

LA	Gaps in supply
BCW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largest demand is for two bed properties, then one bed self-contained accommodation. • No permanent homeless shelter.

The numbers of social housing units newly let to general needs households in 2017/18 provides a representation of demand. The table below shows those lettings based on the number of bedrooms in the dwelling.



Development of new affordable housing varies between the Councils and is achieved through development programmes, s106 opportunities and close work with Registered Provider partners. For example BCW has a target of 90 units per annum (despite funding provision being prohibitive at times), CBC’s development and regeneration programme has delivered 230 new social / affordable rented homes between 2010 and autumn 2018, and KBC completed 137 social / affordable rent units in 2017/18 and 63 in 2018/19. Registered Providers in ENC’s area produced 101 new affordable homes in 2017/18 and 64 in 2018/19.

The two authorities which retain housing stock, CBC and KBC, both encourage the release of properties to reduce homelessness by means of incentives to move, such as to downsize or to release a disabled adapted property.

In addition to their separate arrangements for TA, CBC, ENC and KBC together provide the Turning Point Project. The Project’s objective is to prevent homelessness of single people with complex needs, for example by providing support for the transition from institutional to independent living.

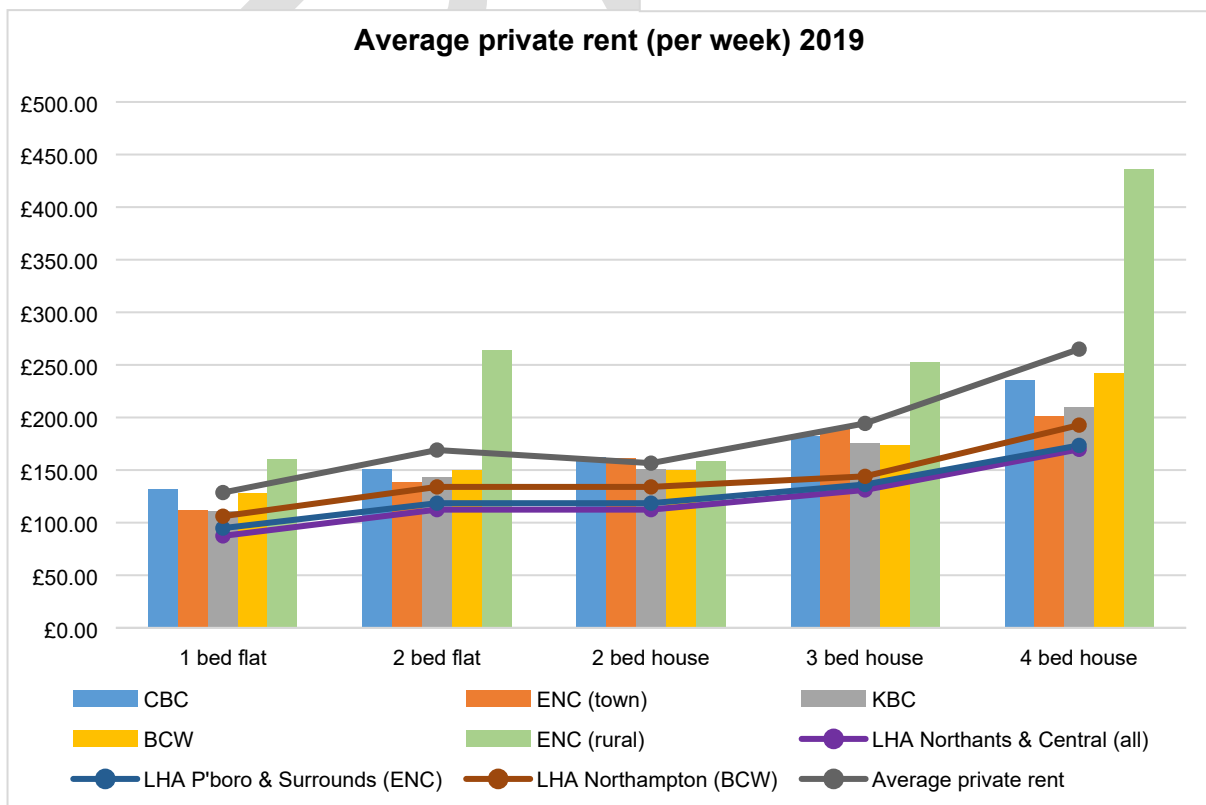
5.8 Affordability

Various factors have contributed towards an increase in demand for affordable housing in North Northamptonshire. Average property prices have been rising in the long run and have continued to increase steadily throughout 2018, supported by a shortage of housing supply.

The affordability of renting in the private sector is under pressure from a gap between private rents and the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), making private rentals inaccessible for those on lower incomes. This is a significant issue and compounds the demand for affordable housing as the private rented sector grows in size as a proportion of overall housing supply. The gap is seen throughout the country as the Chartered Institute of Housing reported in May 2019 that in 97% of England the LHA barely covers a fifth of private rents.

Welfare reform poses a substantial challenge to housing affordability as Universal Credit continues to be rolled out in North Northamptonshire. Although alternative payment arrangements (a Managed Payment to Landlord) are available in some cases, the change from direct housing payments has particularly affected those seeking accommodation in the private rented sector and escalates the inaccessibility of this sector experienced by lower income households.

All the Councils offer schemes to assist households with the affordability of rented accommodation. CBC and BCW also run deposit bond schemes.



5.9 Resources and ongoing response

North Northamptonshire has had mixed success in securing grant funding towards homelessness and rough sleeper services. Where an application is unsuccessful the Councils seek feedback to inform future applications.

Budgets are necessarily robust and tightly managed. The key importance of an experienced and skilled Housing Options / Housing Advice function is acknowledged by all the authorities.

At the time of writing joint resources include:

- A sub-regional Keyways CBL scheme and IT system shared by CBC, KBC and BCW (ENC has similar policy headings and bandings in their CBL scheme); and
- The Turning Point Project which is provided across CBC, ENC and KBC's areas, following a joint bid to MHCLG's Help for Homeless fund which secured £181,300 in 2015/16.

The introduction of the HRA has transformed the way in which local authorities provide support for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Emphasis is placed on prevention at an early stage rather than dealing with homelessness at the point of crisis. The Councils have provided training to partner agencies on how to make referrals via an online portal, to support their compliance with the HRA's Duty to Refer.

Across Northamptonshire all local authorities are taking action to improve homelessness services and take a more preventative approach, comprising the following strategies:

- Building new homes – a key reason for the ongoing housing crisis is an insufficient supply of affordable homes. In North Northamptonshire CBC and KBC are building new council housing, and the councils across Northamptonshire are working with Homes England and housing associations to build new affordable rented and shared ownership housing. Overall in 2017/18, 884 new affordable homes were built within the county.
- Working with private landlords - over the past twenty years the private rented sector has quadrupled in size. Despite issues covered earlier in this strategy, the sector represents a valuable housing resource. Financial incentives for landlords and the provision of support services for vulnerable tenants are two examples of initiatives being developed to encourage private landlords to let to households on low incomes.
- Improving the quality of TA – the councils are working to reduce the use of poorer quality, high cost accommodation such as bed and breakfast hotels and instead place households in self-contained accommodation within easy reach of family and support networks.
- Preventing homelessness through tenancy support – to assist an increasing proportion of tenants who are vulnerable the councils are offering practical

support to help tenants to successfully maintain their tenancies. This includes specialist tenancy support workers, a regime of intensive contact during introductory tenancies, welcome meetings prior to tenancies starting, and life skills training.

- Providing focussed homelessness prevention schemes – an example of the schemes provided by the councils is a One-Off Payment Scheme to assist households to maintain their current accommodation or access new accommodation by making small one-off payments. This contributes towards reducing the need for TA and other social costs which arise through homelessness.
- Developing specialist housing with support for rough sleepers – the councils are taking advantage of funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to develop a range of schemes to provide transitional housing and intensive support for people who are street homeless.

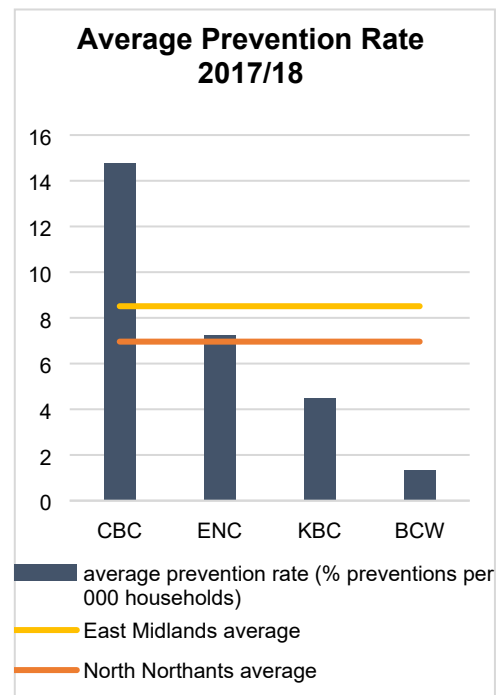
6 Performance

In North Northamptonshire the performance headlines for homelessness are:

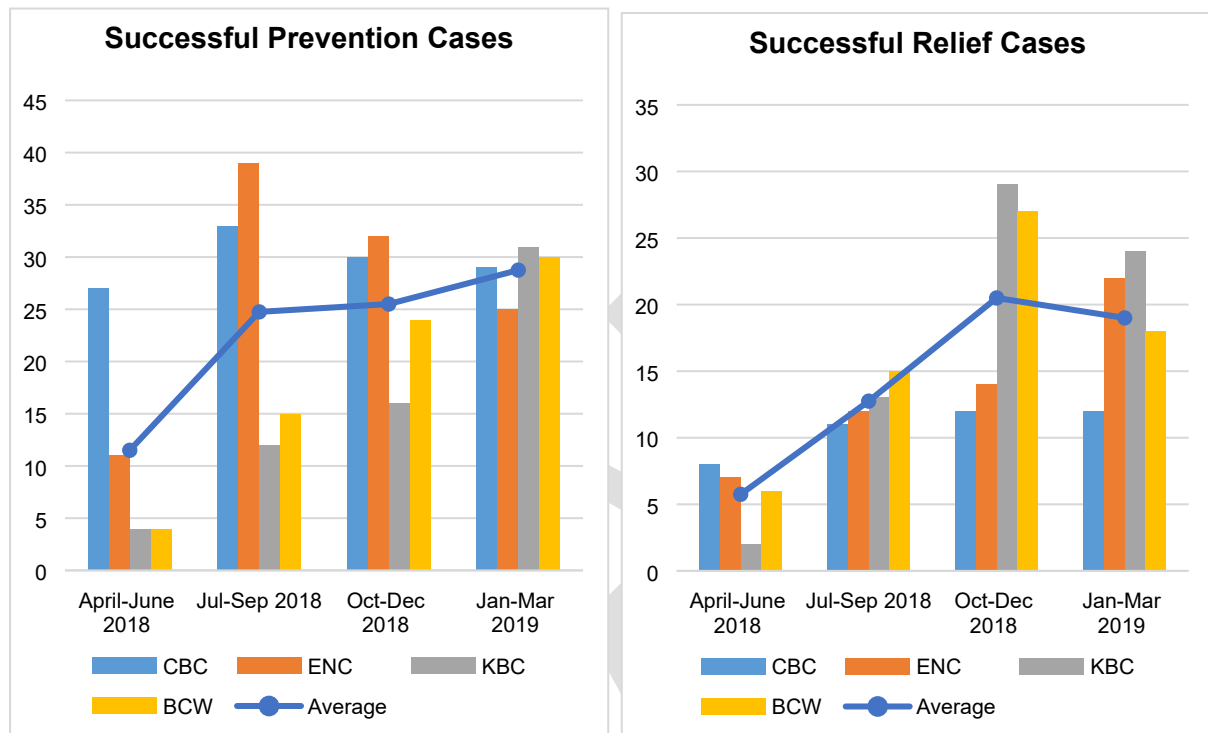
- levels of homelessness are increasing;
- numbers of rough sleepers are increasing;
- affordable housing supply is under pressure from rising costs (e.g. in the private rental sector, and a shift from social towards affordable rent levels);
- success in securing funding has been affected by tight submission timescales and previous uncertainty over local Government reorganisation; and
- the high demand vs. capacity of for example social services, permanent support, mental health, alcohol and substance misuse, and money and debt advice services are particularly affecting more vulnerable households.

A reduction in local Government funding in recent years has had an impact across England on the availability of non-statutory social support services, which are vital in addressing some the risk factors for homelessness and rough sleeping. This has been further compounded in Northamptonshire by NCC's financial position requiring a rapid realignment of budgets to bring spend in line with the reduction in core funding.

Average prevention rates (the percentage of homelessness preventions per 000 households) during 2017/18 varied between the Councils and were (except for CBC) below the East Midlands average. During the process of North Northamptonshire becoming a unitary authority, working collaboratively to improve our homelessness service is essential to achieve a higher average rate of prevention across the Councils as they currently operate.



In 2018/19 the numbers of successful prevention cases and relief cases in North Northamptonshire both increased on average. CBC and ENC's number of prevention cases share a similar trend, rising to a peak in quarter two before decreasing to the end of the year, whilst the number of prevention cases recorded by KBC and BCW increases steadily throughout the year. The numbers of relief cases in CBC and ENC remained well below the numbers of prevention cases during the year, indicating efforts to prevent homelessness were having a positive outcome. In comparison, the numbers of relief cases in KBC and BCW were the same or higher than the successful prevention cases in quarters two and three.



VISION for HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY
“Working collaboratively across North Northamptonshire to end homelessness.”

Themes	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Targets/Measures
PREVENT: preventing homelessness and rough sleeping	Increase access to safe and decent housing	ensure a sufficient supply of affordable housing is in place	work with housing associations to implement an affordable housing development programme in response to local needs KBC	short
			build 78 new council houses and flats including larger homes for families with disabled children KBC	short
			continue the Hidden Homes programme to develop new housing in existing council housing estates KBC	short
			increase the supply of shared housing for people under 35 KBC	medium
			explore opportunities to provide market rented properties at LHA rent levels ENC	medium/long
		increase accessibility of private rented accommodation	recruit private landlords to use rent assistance and bond schemes through new Tenancy Sustainment Officer roles BCW	June 2019
			develop tools to enable access such as deposit schemes/rent advances ENC	short/medium
			work actively with landlords through the provision of incentives (access Government funding) ENC / CBC	medium / from September 2019
			develop 'Private Rent Plus' which will provide incentives to private landlords to work with the Council in meeting local needs KBC	medium
			Reduce and prevent homelessness amongst all groups at risk	understand the reasons for and characteristics of homelessness
	provide training for staff and volunteers on learning disabilities and other special needs ENC	short		
	undertake periodic rough sleeper counts throughout winter 2019/20 KBC	short		
	improve data collection on the characteristics of clients at risk of homelessness and use this to inform bespoke pathways for prevention (for example care leavers / prison leavers / survivors of domestic abuse) ALL	31 March 2021		
	continue partnership working with MAPPA and review the leaving prison discharge protocol ALL	ongoing/short		
	seek information and perspectives from partner organisations through the Kettering Homeless Action Partnership KBC	medium		
	increase provision of tenancy support in partnership with accommodation providers, particularly for high risk clients in supported housing, including pre-tenancy support ENC	medium/long		
	explore potential to increase supply of supported accommodation, including leasehold arrangements to make use of existing schemes/units ENC	medium/long		
	research the causes of rough sleeping and identify opportunities to improve its prevention, including the roles and suitability of emergency and temporary accommodation CBC	ongoing		
	mitigate the impact of welfare reform	maximise access for customers to support services provided by partner organisations such as CKCAS, Accommodation Concern and the Social Inclusion Team KBC		
			consider setting up a social letting agency ENC	medium
set up a protocol for early identification of clients at risk of eviction, e.g. assistance through the DWP Alternate Payment Arrangement ENC			medium	
review the Allocation Policy to ensure that it supports this Strategy BCW			September 2019	
Take account of national and local housing priorities	meet local housing need	ensure that the Housing Strategy remains relevant and takes account of Government initiatives such as the social housing green paper and the white paper on the 'broken housing market' KBC	ongoing	

Themes	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Targets/Measures		
INTERVENE: early intervention for those at risk	Follow the Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it by 2027	identify support needs of rough sleepers	research the needs of rough sleepers (e.g. ask service users/primary research) ENC	short		
			work closely with Safe Until Daylight to identify the support needs of individual rough sleepers using the night shelter KBC	short		
			increase access to mental health, alcohol and drug support provision, and health services ENC / CBC	short / ongoing		
			promote a positive message to the public about the best way to help a rough sleeper, and raise awareness of the difference between street based activity and those who are homeless CBC	from October 2019		
			review annual national two week data gathering exercise to ensure appropriate details are collected CBC	by November 2019		
			adopt a 'Housing First' protocol through the night shelter/supported housing facility CBC	from November 2019		
			develop continuous monitoring systems to improve the measurement of rough sleeping, and enable the recording and assessment of work on an individual level, to produce data which can be shared within our partnership with stakeholders CBC	by March 2020		
			open Night Shelter BCW	by October 2020		
			review night shelter provision and foodbank, and look at potential for day centre provision ENC	medium		
			investigate options for a 'Housing First' scheme ENC	medium		
			monitor numbers and characteristics of rough sleepers ALL	ongoing		
			regular liaison with outreach workers and partner agencies to identify housing and support needs of rough sleepers KBC	ongoing		
			review severe weather plans to ensure they offer appropriate protection for rough sleepers, and proactively help them to access more suitable housing and support ALL	ongoing		
			endeavour to engage with rough sleepers		recruit an Outreach Worker using funding from MHCLG to increase rates of prevention and reduce rough sleeping through additional resources BCW	June 2019
	encourage the early referral of new rough sleepers to local authority and other public services CBC	by end of 2019				
	use a case management framework and appropriate IT system to provide assertive and accessible outreach services to help each rough sleeper secure accommodation and support, including supporting those who wish to return to areas where they have strong connections CBC	from September 2019				
	promote emergency housing arrangements (through Dorking House project), and support a 'no second night out' approach CBC	from October 2019				
	engage with and promote work to reduce the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), including training for Rough Sleeper Outreach Worker in trauma informed practice and related skills CBC	by December 2019				
	promote services to build the skills and confidence of rough sleepers, and assist access to training/employment CBC	by December 2019				
	encourage development of peer support, including training for peer mentors CBC	31 October 2020				
	increase the number of outreach workers for rough sleepers ENC	short				
	consider coaching opportunities provided by DWP work coaches – training ENC	short				
	identify two council move-on flats which will be used for an intensive training and support project for rough sleepers KBC	short				
	investigate the feasibility of providing a 24/7 accommodation and support hub for rough sleepers at Wellington House KBC	medium				
	investigate Government funding opportunities				develop projects to take advantage of funding when available ENC	short
					bid for resources from the 'Cold Weather Fund' and Rough Sleeper Initiative when opportunities arise KBC	short
	Increase the advice and support available to those at risk of homelessness	improve accessibility of advice and support services	explore options for providing accessible drug and alcohol support services without the need for clients to travel ENC	short		
investigate services available to those at risk of or fleeing domestic abuse and work collaboratively to ensure sufficient provision ENC			short			
undertake home visits to help clients to sustain their tenancies through new Tenancy Sustainment Officer roles BCW			June 2019			
explore options for providing assistance with transport costs for clients to access services ENC			medium			

			investigate the feasibility of providing support and advice services for vulnerable homeless households with partner agencies at Wellington House KBC	medium
			pilot development of bespoke services for clients who are single and homeless/rough sleeping, working with partners and voluntary agencies, e.g. short term lets to assist clients with tenancy management skills BCW	ongoing
		ensure clients with mental health, drug and alcohol needs can access appropriate support	investigate the provision of a Clean Needle Exchange, in association with local NHS ENC	short
			investigate options for increasing the provision of mental health services ENC	medium
			investigate options for providing a Day Centre facility offering one to one support ENC	medium
			work with Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, Accommodation Concern and Safe Until Daylight to develop specialist services for vulnerable customers KBC	medium

Themes	Aims	Objectives	Actions	Targets/Measures		
RECOVER: relief through appropriate accommodation and support services	Address temporary accommodation housing needs	make best use of temporary accommodation	investigate ways to speed up void process, fast track works and improve communication on individual cases ENC	short		
			investigate ways of increasing move on accommodation ENC	short		
			improve move-on to release bed spaces CBC	from November 2019		
			improve settled housing pathways, and encourage the application of Housing First principles, through work with private/social landlords and support networks to deliver tailored, affordable and sustainable outcomes for rough sleepers CBC	from November 2019		
		ensure temporary accommodation is well located and of good quality	continue to implement Temporary Accommodation Strategy to ensure that placements are responsive to customer needs and cost effective KBC	ongoing		
			eliminate use of bed and breakfast accommodation ALL	ongoing		
		increase supply of good value, self-contained temporary accommodation	continue to implement Temporary Accommodation Strategy to ensure that placements are responsive to customer needs and cost effective KBC	ongoing		
			ensure emergency accommodation with appropriate support services is available to rough sleepers throughout the year CBC	from November 2019		
			investigate potential to increase supply of supported accommodation ENC	medium		
			consider adoption of a Phase housing (or similar) model to provide accommodation and support options for drug/alcohol dependent clients ENC	medium/long		
		PUBLIC SERVICES	Provide excellent Public Services	good value for money	investigate options for increasing supply of smaller properties across all tenures for use as TA or move on accommodation ENC	medium/long
					continue to acquire temporary accommodation on the open market and reduce the use of bed and breakfast hotels and nightly paid accommodation KBC	ongoing
risk management	report key outcomes and achievements to partners and the public appropriately ALL			31 March 2021		
	establish processes to monitor outputs and outcomes to help steer the review of the strategy ALL			31 March 2021		
	monitor and reflect objectives in annual service plans ALL			31 March 2021		
	understand risks to achieving action plans and put in place appropriate mitigation ALL			31 March 2021		
common working practices	regularly report progress against action plan to SMT/members/multi-agency partners ALL			31 March 2021		
	work collaboratively between statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure sufficient services are available ENC			short		
	provide information to and promote responsibilities of external agencies and partners ALL	31 March 2021				
	review Keyways allocation scheme ALL	medium				
	strengthen pathways between services (local authority/voluntary/health) to ensure staff can appropriately signpost and assist rough sleepers to access support services CBC	ongoing				
	work with partners to strengthen the development of good practice in helping rough sleepers, including through events, workshops and websites CBC	ongoing				

	demonstrate corporate commitment	ensure Elected Members and Senior Managers are kept aware of and engaged with local homelessness issues BCW	ongoing
	use consultation to inform services	analyse feedback to identify gaps/improvement opportunities ALL	31 October 2020
	ensure housing staff have sufficient skills and competencies	update homelessness prevention toolkit to incorporate pathways for specific customer groups and new processes KBC	short
		continue to implement housing options service improvement plan KBC	short
		reflect key actions and objectives in staff annual appraisals and monitor via meetings/1to1s ALL	ongoing
		provide and maintain relevant and up-to-date training for officers, and identify joint training opportunities, to ensure service standards are consistently high CBC	ongoing
		review staff resources and team structure to ensure they are fit for purpose in light of the HRA and local Government reorganisation BCW	ongoing
		ensure all staff are fully trained on the Homeless Reduction Act, and to engage with clients, landlords and partners to resolve housing issues BCW	June 2019 & ongoing
	succeed in internal and external funding bids	understand and be able to evidence local housing need ALL	ongoing
		co-ordinate strategic approach between areas to strengthen bids ALL	ongoing
		seek feedback on any unsuccessful funding bids to ensure the reasons are understood ALL	as required

Key:

ALL – all local authority areas within North Northamptonshire

CBC – Corby Borough Council

KBC – Kettering Borough Council

ENC – East Northamptonshire Council

BCW – Borough Council of Wellingborough

Timescales:

SHORT – within years 1-2 of plan (by 2021)

MEDIUM – years 2-3 of plan (by 2022)

LONG – years 3-5 of plan (by 2024)

8 Partnerships

North Northamptonshire's homelessness service is provided in conjunction with a number of Registered Providers, other partner agencies, and voluntary organisations. Some of these are common between the Councils, including local health services and pre-unitary NCC services. Reviewing homelessness across North Northamptonshire in preparation for this Strategy highlights the importance of interagency working and of strengthening ties not only between the local and county authorities which will become the unitary authority of North Northamptonshire, but in general between all homelessness service providers within the area in order to achieve the aims and objectives of this Strategy.

9 Related Strategies, Policies and Resources

Of each district or borough council including:

- Local Plan
- Housing Strategy
- Allocation Scheme
- Tenancy Strategy
- Rough Sleeper Policy
- Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

Legislation and guidance includes the:

- [Housing Act 1996](#)
- [Homelessness Act 2002](#)
- [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#)
- [Homelessness Code of Guidance for local authorities](#) (2018)
- [MHCLG Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) (2018)

10 Review and Monitoring

This Strategy will be reviewed when required by legislative or regulatory changes. If staff become aware of any problems with effective operation of the Strategy or the associated action plans, they should report this to the Strategy Owner in the first instance, or the owner of the relevant Action Plan. This feedback will be incorporated into the review process.

Progress on the priorities in this Strategy will be monitored through the appropriate channels within each district or borough council making up North Northamptonshire.



ROUGH SLEEPING OFFER 2019

Corby Borough Council aims to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027.

We will:

1. Be aware of anyone who is sleeping rough.
2. Let the public know what they can do to help.
3. Know our customers and respond to them.
4. Make somewhere to stay a priority.
5. Connect our customers with the support services they need.
6. Provide support to stay in housing.
7. Help our customers to get back in touch with people they know.
8. Consider housing options in a familiar area.
9. Work together with other groups who help people sleeping rough.
10. Keep a list of all the services available.
11. Protect our customers from the most severe weather.
12. Do everything we can to prevent deaths from rough sleeping.
13. Apply for funding to improve our services.

Committee	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	Item 12	Page 1 of 4
Report Originator	John Conway Head of Housing	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> A19/016	
Wards Affected	St Michael's and Wicksteed	4 December 2019	
Title	ACQUISITION OF WELLINGTON HOUSE		

Portfolio holders: Councillor Mark Rowley and Councillor Lloyd Bunday

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek the approval of the Executive Committee in principle to acquire Wellington House so that it can provide premises for a preventative homelessness service for vulnerable adults and a permanent night shelter.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Wellington House was built by Home Group in 2002/03 and was initially run as a hostel by the YMCA until funding was withdrawn by Northamptonshire County Council. The building then lay disused for several years until July 2015 when Home Group and the Council agreed that the premises would be reopened as a homeless persons' hostel providing accommodation and support for vulnerable single people and couples.

2.2 Wellington House has proved to be a valuable resource for the Council in meeting the needs of vulnerable homeless households who require support to develop their life skills. The premises contain five self-contained flats and 16 rooms with shared amenities. In addition, Wellington House has a drop-in centre, which was used as a night shelter for rough sleepers over last winter, and various activity rooms on the ground floor.

2.3 Home Group gave the Council notice of termination at the end of December 2018 and closed the facility in March 2019.

2.4 The Council, in common with other areas across the country, is experiencing unprecedented levels of homelessness. A report elsewhere on this agenda provides detailed information on the reasons for this increase in homelessness and sets out the Council's strategic response. One aspect of the Council's strategy is to develop accommodation and support services for particularly vulnerable people so that they develop the skills required to sustain a tenancy over the long term. There is a unique opportunity in respect of Wellington House to develop a service of this type in a purpose-built setting.

2.5 Since the closure of Wellington House, officers have liaised closely with Home Group about the future use of the premises and have stated that the Council's preferred solution would be for Home Group to sell the building to the Council so

Committee	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	Item 12	Page 2 of 4
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that short term accommodation and support for the most vulnerable people in our community can continue to be provided. Following an option appraisal, Home Group have now indicated that they are willing in principle to sell Wellington House on a lease in excess of 250 years to the Council, subject to the agreement of Home Group's board.

3. THE VISION FOR THE NEW SERVICE

- 3.1 Under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Council has a statutory duty to prevent homelessness as well as to relieve homelessness at the point of crisis. One of the most challenging groups at risk of homelessness is single people with mental health support needs. Currently, there are 57 single homeless people in Kettering and of those 86% require support due to their mental health. Many of these people lead chaotic lives and find it difficult to maintain a tenancy due to behavioural issues, low self-esteem or poor financial management skills. As a result, they can experience episodes of homelessness and are more likely than most to end up sleeping on the streets.
- 3.2 The initial vision for Wellington House is therefore to provide short and medium term accommodation for vulnerable, single people focusing on their mental health support . In addition, the premises could provide a permanent base for the night shelter and move-on accommodation through tenancy-ready training flats. This facility would have the potential to make a major contribution to the Council's strategy for preventing homelessness among the most vulnerable people in our community and to help rebuild lives.
- 3.3 It is therefore proposed that the drop-in centre be offered to Safe Until Daylight as a base for them to run a year-round night shelter, should they have the capacity to operate such a facility.
- 3.4 It is envisaged that the Council would work with partner organisations in the statutory and voluntary sector to deliver the support services at Wellington House. Exploratory discussions have already taken place with Northamptonshire Health Care Foundation Trust to see how this might work.

4. FEASIBILITY STUDY

- 4.1 In order to explore the viability of the vision for Wellington House in both financial and service terms, a project team has been established to undertake a feasibility study. The study is focusing on the following areas:
- Acquisition
 - Valuation and funding requirements
 - Physical condition of the premises

Committee	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	Item 12	Page 3 of 4
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- Need for refurbishment works and decoration
- Furniture and equipment requirements
- Operational issues
 - Building management and security
 - Staffing structures
 - Running costs
 - Rents and other income
 - Operational budgets
 - Policies and procedures
 - Referral, allocation and move-on arrangements.

5. TIMESCALE

- 5.1 The feasibility study is currently in progress as are negotiations with Home Group. Subject to a positive outcome from the feasibility study and once the cost and terms of acquisition have been provisionally agreed with Home Group, formal approval will be sought from Executive Committee to proceed with the project. A further report will therefore be submitted to the Committee early in 2020.
- 5.2 It is anticipated that the transfer of ownership would take place before the end of this financial year subject to a positive outcome from the feasibility study and approval by Full Council to an amendment of the capital programme. This would enable the new service to open during autumn 2020.

6. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

- 6.1 The proposal to acquire Wellington House has been discussed with the Kettering Homelessness Action Partnership and the members of the partnership have expressed support and a willingness to be involved in the project.
- 6.2 In customer service terms, the proposal will enhance the Council's capacity to provide a supportive and life-changing housing service for some of the Council's most challenging customers.

7. POLICY AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 General Fund expenditure on homelessness is a major commitment for the Council. In the current financial year, the net revenue budget for homelessness is £807,420. However, this budget is under pressure due to the high level of homelessness being experienced and the outturn for the year is projected to be £150,000 above budget.

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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7.2 As well as being a desirable project in service terms, the proposal to acquire and operate Wellington House also has financial merit in that it will help to reduce expenditure on procuring temporary accommodation and thereby meet the objectives of the Council's temporary accommodation acquisition strategy.

8. LEGAL AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Local housing authorities respond to homelessness within the statutory framework provided by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This act, which came into effect in April 2018, has transformed the way that councils provide help and support for households. There is now a greater emphasis on prevention at an early stage rather than dealing with homelessness at the point of crisis.

9. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 In designing the new service, full consideration will be given to the need to ensure that it has a minimal adverse impact on the environment.

10 RECOMMENDATION

The Executive Committee is requested to endorse the principle of acquiring the Wellington House premises for a supported housing project for single vulnerable people with mental health support needs, and as a location within which a permanent night shelter can be provided, subject to a satisfactory business case and an amendment to the capital programme.

Background Papers:

Title

Date

25th November 2019

Contact Officer

John Conway

Previous Minutes/Reports:

Wellington House, Kettering

Executive Committee - 18 September 2019