

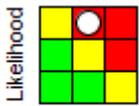
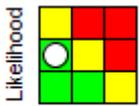
Increased Homelessness

Generated on: 03 February 2021



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| Risk Code | CR60 | Risk Title | Increased Homelessness |
| Risk Owner | Ian Fullstone | Updated By | Martin Lawrence |
| Year Identified | 2011 | Council Objective | Support the delivery of good quality and affordable homes |
| Risk Description | <p>As a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 - The ongoing impact of welfare reform - Major difficulties for some members of the public to access the private rented sector - The full occupation of temporary accommodation - An increase in the number of single homeless people with complex needs (e.g. offending histories, substance misuse and/or poor mental health) - The current and future impact of Covid-19 (including accommodating those threatened with rough sleeping and ending of furlough scheme and 'eviction ban') <p>There is a risk of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An excessive demand from the public for housing services - An increase in the levels of homelessness - A lack of alternative housing options - An increased use of hotel accommodation for homeless households | | |
| Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential homelessness is managed through prevention and/or relief activity and there are accommodation options for those experiencing housing challenges, including those with nowhere to live | | |
| Consequences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There may be lower levels of homelessness prevention and/or relief, resulting in detrimental outcomes for the households - An increase in homelessness levels could lead to the full occupation of temporary accommodation units. This in turn would lead to increased usage of hotel accommodation, which in turn would have the following consequences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- A significant budget gap for the Council, as only a limited amount of housing benefit costs can be reclaimed by way of government subsidy -- Adverse impact on households, as hotel accommodation in itself is not ideal and it could be located anywhere in Hertfordshire or beyond -- Negative publicity for the Council -- The process for securing hotel accommodation is inefficient and a poor use of officer resources | | |
| Work Completed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agreed that discretionary housing payments (funded by the DWP) that involve potential homelessness will be managed by the Benefits Team in partnership with Housing Services - Utilisation of government homelessness grant to provide a Rough Sleeper Outreach Worker, specialist support for victims of domestic abuse and two 5-year fixed-term contracts to increase officer capacity and support the frontline delivery of housing services - The grant has also provided some extra capacity for environmental health services to help tackle illegal evictions and poor conditions in the private rented sector - Ongoing training programme for staff, including weekly meetings - Introduced new software to manage casework more efficiently and produced a comprehensive procedure manual - Introduced new web-based portal that enables customers to refer themselves directly and external bodies to highlight homeless households to the Council in an efficient manner - SIAS Temporary Accommodation audit report received in March 2020 (Overall Assurance - Good, with no recommendations) - SIAS Housing Allocations audit report received in November 2020 (Overall Assurance - Good, with no recommendations) | | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Housing Strategy (2019-2024), which includes Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, agreed by Cabinet in March 2019 - Updates to Common Housing Allocation Scheme agreed in March 2019 and further updates due September 2020 - Financial Risk identified for 2020/21: Usage of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless households (£180k/Medium) - Restructured staff resources with focus on accommodation options and the introduction of two externally funded five-year fixed-term contracts - £183k secured from MHCLG to help fund extra capacity for Haven First supported housing provision for single people and their intensive service too, as well as a contribution to the Council's net hotel costs | | |
| Ongoing Work | <p><u>Business-as-Usual Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A continuous review of all homeless households accommodated by the Council, in order to establish whether an ongoing accommodation duty exists and if so, the best way to manage this - Develop key actions to reduce hotel use and improve move-on/create capacity in temporary accommodation on a weekly basis - Increase options to prevent and relieve homelessness - Improve and develop meaningful partnerships with key agencies, including settle and First Garden City Homes, with particular focus on potential evictions - When new homeless households present themselves, prioritise activities that establish whether an ongoing legal accommodation duty exists at the earliest possible stage - Liaising with registered providers and other local authorities, in order to see whether alternative accommodation options exist - Continue to fund a CAB Court Desk Worker in order to prevent homelessness - Continue to work with Herts Young Homeless (HYH) regarding Education Project - Continue to support Haven First (North Herts Sanctuary) outreach and supported housing resettlement service for single people - Liaise with key registered providers due to increased number of evictions and agree joint approach to prevent homelessness - Review opportunities to reduce the administrative burden introduced by the new legislation - Support delivery of specialist accommodation service for single homeless people - Continue to work with private rented sector to improve accessibility and supply of units for those in need - Ensure continuous training and support for team and build resilience <p><u>Other Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Haven First submitted planning application for 40-bed hostel for single people with complex needs in North Hertfordshire, which will be considered by Planning Committee in March 2021 - Amend Memorandums of Understanding with relevant partner organisations to focus on the prevention and relief of homelessness for period beginning April 2021 - Establish options for meeting potential high levels of homelessness when Covid-19 lockdown eases, especially the private rented sector - Continue with resettlement activity with all single homeless people in hotels when Covid-19 lockdown eases - Launch intensive support service with Haven First (due February 2021) - Work with MHCLG on funding opportunities for services to prevent/relieve homelessness - Meet with settle to attempt to secure units to provide extra accommodation capacity for Haven First supported housing service (due February 2021) | | |
| Current Overall Risk Score | 7 | | |
| Current Impact Score | 2 | Current Likelihood Score | 3 |
| Current Risk Matrix |  | Target Risk Matrix |  |
| Date Reviewed | 01-Feb-2021 | Next Review Date | 30-Apr-2021 |

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| Latest Note | 02-Feb-2021 Risk reviewed and updated by Martin Lawrence on 1 February 2021. Ongoing Work updated to reflect the latest position of mitigating activities. At the time of the review, there were 130 households in temporary accommodation, of which, 54 were in hotels or nightly paid units. In view of the prolonged period of increased levels of homelessness and increased use of temporary accommodation, the likelihood score has been increased to 3-High. |
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