

Appendix 1

Housing Strategy Action Plan 2023-28

The delivery of Housing				
Objective				
To deliver a mixture of housing types and tenures, including 1000 new affordable homes, that meet the needs of everyone in the borough				
Commitments	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Completed
We will Deliver the council's ambition to deliver 1,000 affordable new homes to be retained by the Council and let on secure tenancies once the probationary period is completed		William Cornall	2023-25	
Develop our readiness to reopen the Housing Revenue Account.	Open Housing Revenue Account in line with legal responsibilities, when 200 properties are delivered. Information needs to be shared across three teams- Finance, Development, and Housing, as well as monitoring process put in place.	John Littlemore Adrian Lovegrove	2025	
Develop a suite of housing management policy and practice documents to comply with the Regulator of Social Housing's guidance to ensure we provide the highest levels of service to our tenants	Develop policies to support the delivery of the Council's Affordable Housing and obtain approval from relevant Cabinet Member	Policy team, Joanna Medley and external solicitors.	March 2024	
Work in partnership with Homes England to deliver a unique, attractive, and desirable new rural Kentish town located between Maidstone and Ashford. Heathlands will provide around 5,000		Philip Morris and Planning team to work	2023-25	

<p>new homes, of which 40% will be affordable for local people. The new community will be designed sensitively to respond to its natural and distinctive setting</p>		<p>on delivery of Heathlands</p>		
<p>We will</p> <p>Review our current HomeFinder scheme to ensure it is value for money, and is supporting our strategic aspiration to provide good quality affordable accommodation for homeless households in both temporary accommodation and those under a Prevention Duty</p>	<p>To ensure the landlord offer is standardised and transparent, offering fair access to incentives.</p> <p>Investigate operating a social lettings agency such as Ashford</p>	<p>Hannah Gaston</p>	<p>December 2023</p>	
<p>Reduce the time households spend in temporary accommodation (TA) by providing a range of options that will include the council's ambition to build and manage its own affordable housing stock.</p>	<p>Monthly oversight and resettlement pathway review.</p> <p>Seek to find options other than TA through social landlord partners, purchasing new affordable housing and potentially a social lettings scheme.</p> <p>Offer landlords the option to let accommodation on a short-term basis – which the team can manage as TA</p> <p>Proactively work with our Registered Provider partners in the borough to explore how we can make more use of their stock available for those affected by homelessness</p> <p>Seek to work more proactively on homeless prevention to reduce the numbers approaching who need TA – build on One View and partnerships.</p> <p>Continue to build relationships with the Golding Homes Private Rented Sector.</p>	<p>Hannah Gaston and Accommodation Resource Team</p>	<p>Review the pilot team in December 2023 and continue</p>	

<p>We will</p> <p>Purchase more temporary accommodation stock to reduce our reliance on nightly paid private temporary accommodation and provide a better quality of home within our own locality</p>	<p>Increase our own stock by 80 units.</p>	<p>Alison Elliott and Joanna Medley</p>	<p>2023-2025</p>	
<p>Offer households a trauma informed approach to service delivery – helping and support those caught in homelessness cycle to develop resilience and break the need for households to have council lead housing support.</p>	<p>All housing and support staff trained in a trauma informed approach</p> <p>Support and drop-in sessions at Trinity to ready households for move on and living independently.</p> <p>Personalised Housing Plans are household specific ensuring applicants are preparing for move on – including accessing the new Housing Register processes and the DWP dashboard.</p> <p>Continue to deliver the Early Intervention Model and No Wrong Door approach.</p>	<p>Hannah Gaston, Alan M'Grady and Natalia Merritt</p>	<p>Dec 2023</p>	

Existing Homes and Housing Standards				
Objective				
To ensure existing homes meet the decent homes standard, are energy efficient and safe, to enable healthy, independent living.				
Commitments	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Completed
We will Continue to work with private landlords where hazards have been identified.	Use the Council's Housing Standards Enforcement Policy and Housing Renewal Policy where appropriate. Inspect all Homefinder properties.	Housing Standards Team	On-going	
Make sure that both, private and registered provider, landlords abide by their legal responsibilities and good practise to ensure their properties do not put their tenant's health and safety at risk	Update guidance for landlords on what standards that we expect to find in privately rented properties. Work with Registered Providers, Maidstone Health and Wellbeing Board, and West Kent NHS to provide a Damp and Mould Coordinator to review our interventions regarding damp and mould issues and update guidance. Join with the National Residential Landlord's Association to undertake forums. Licence houses in Multiple Occupation and undertake inspections of them and non- licensable HMOs as part of the risk rating schedule. Promote training courses for private landlords. Integrate new legislation, which is likely to be brought in, such as the Decent Homes Standard in privately rented properties and the Property Portal of private landlords.	Housing Standards Team	April 2024 On-going On-going On-going On-going April 2024	

Ensure supported housing providers are value for money	Participate on Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) with neighbouring boroughs to increase standards in the supported housing sector.	Hannah Gaston and Phil Jennings	April 2024	
Work with Registered Providers, private landlords, freeholders and Kent Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that all residential buildings, including those that are managed by ourselves abide by the relevant fire safety legislation.	Work with KCC children’s services to define “good enough” home standards and develop a procedure to support.	John Littlemore and Charlotte King	December 2023	
	Assess premises, and where appropriate and take action when required.	Housing and Health team	On-going	
	Signpost guidance to landlords on new responsibilities under the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Fire Safety Order/ Act 2022.	Housing and Health team	On-going	
Continue to support residents access national funding programmes to ensure homes are energy efficient, to meet the national ambition to “Improve the quality of UK homes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to safeguard our comfort, health and wellbeing as the climate changes”. UK housing: Fit for the future	Promote the Home Upgrade Grant (2), Energy Companies Obligation (ECO) and ECO flex to residents.	Housing Standards Team, Biodiversity and Communication Teams.	September 2023	
	Update the Affordable Energy Strategy	Housing Standards Team & Biodiversity Teams.	April 2024	
	Undertake action in relation to rented dwellings which fail to meet the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES).	Housing Standards Team	On-going	
Work in partnership with suitable providers and the Greater South-Eastern Energy Hub to promote and support the delivery of government funding schemes to homeowners,	Sign up to the relevant grant schemes	Housing Standards Team	On-going	

Introduce as part of our Housing Renewal Policy a more effective mechanism to prioritise the completion of discretionary and statutory grants for those residents experiencing a repaid onset illness and end of life condition.	Work with partners such as the Home Improvement Agency, Kent County Council's Occupational Therapy Service and Finance to facilitate the Housing Renewal Policy.	Housing Standards Team & Housing Inclusion Projects Team		
	Work with partners to help people home from hospital or to avoid hospital admission where relevant under the Helping You Home project	Sarah Ward Helping you Home and the Housing and Inclusion team		
	Update website and promotional material with the Housing Renewal Policy and procedure on Disabled Facilities Grants	Phil Jennings and John Littlemore	March 2024	
Connections to other plans				
Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan				
Affordable Energy Strategy				

Assisting Vulnerable Households				
Objective				
To secure the very best support and housing outcomes for Maidstone's most vulnerable groups				
Commitments	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Completed
We will Work with communities and groups to provide the most holistic and responsive approach to their needs – to include a trauma informed approach and health interventions.	Deliver mandatory reframe for resilience and 'Adverse Childhood Experiences' training for staff on a regular basis.	Hannah Gaston and HR	Ongoing	
	Embed a trauma aware approach into all policies and procedures.	All staff	Ongoing	
	Complete a trauma aware audit. Take actions from the audit to improve scoring and measure improvements at a later point in time	Charlotte King	Dec 2023	
	Provide a welcoming trauma aware environment in all spaces, including Trinity as our "Front Door"	Hannah Gaston	Ongoing	
	Survey customers accessing services regularly to understand feelings on arrival and departure.	Policy Team and Housing and Inclusion	On-going	
	Provide a robust support service for those facing homelessness and other complex issues such as domestic abuse and mental health crisis.	Alan M'Grady	On-going	
	Work with partners to provide health and social interventions e.g. mental and physical health support to households accommodated at trinity; sexual health clinics; smoking cessation groups.	Hannah Gaston	On-going	

	Develop a health questionnaire and review findings to inform service provision for the homelessness populations and wider groups affected by homelessness.	Sarah Ward	June 2023 and regular intervals	
	Seek to deliver a range of supported housing options for those within Maidstone – to include direct access hostels, floating support and specialist provision for those fleeing Abuse	Hannah Gaston	On-going	
Ensure that the golden thread of health and inclusion is embedded in all our policies and operational delivery of front line services	Continue to work in partnership with health colleagues to deliver programmes which will enhance life chances of those impacted on by poor social and economic impacts including: Community Ladders – continue funding Damp and Mould Co-ordinator role Rough sleeper health interventions Sexual health clinics in Trinity	Hannah Gaston and Sarah Ward	On-going	
Work with the Home Office and other stakeholders to ensure those placed here from other areas and countries are properly supported and their longer-term needs are met. To include the ending of Homes for Ukraine and the Afghan resettlement schemes	Continue to work with the UK Government (particularly the Home Office) to ensure that identified premises for use with displaced persons are appropriately located and meet the required standards/ regulations.	John Littlemore	On-going	
	Continue to work with partners, such as Kent County Council, to ensure refugees, from Afghanistan and Ukraine are housed in appropriate dwellings and are provided with sufficient support.	Sarah Ward	On-going	
	Devise and deliver a 'local area welcome pack' for new arrivals and information regarding asylum claims.	Sarah Ward	By the end of 2023	
	Continue to deliver the fortnightly Ukrainian support hub located at Trinity.	Alan M'Grady	Until no longer required	
Work on a number of new initiatives to support victims of domestic abuse.	Working with private landlords to provide immediate housing options for those accessing the HELP pathway.	Sharon Hoy	On-going	

	Providing digital mapping of the nearest support and future plans to coordinate a programme for male victims of domestic abuse, as well as medium to low-risk domestic abuse victims.	Charlotte King	End of 2023	
	Develop the Predictive Analytics initiative with Xantura and Kent Police, to use data to intervene as early as possible.	Natalia Merritt	End of 2023	
	Continue to develop the One Stop Shop at Trinity ensuring good weekly participation and representation from all stakeholders.	Charlotte King	Review April 2024	
	Attain the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation	Charlotte King	Annual review	
	Deliver the perpetrator support programme and anger management strategies	Charlotte King		
Develop a multi-agency approach to financial inclusion and monitor trends to be able to deliver what assistance and grant schemes are available.	Ensure relevant grants are awarded to those most in need to include: Disabled Facilities Grant Welfare and Hardship Funds Personal Budgets Discretionary Housing Payments	All staff	On—going	
	Continue a close relationship with colleagues at the Department of Work and Pensions – creating good access to work and welfare benefits for our shared customers.	Natalia Merritt	On-going	
	Continue with predicative analytics and the One View programme in relation to debt and homelessness prevention. This will also include specialist staff to support those customers identified as most in need.	Natalia Merritt	March 2024	
	Host a multi-agency financial inclusion event with OneView to better understand available local offer.	Natalia, Anna CM and Charlotte G.	Oct 2023	

	Review the Homefinder scheme and confirm it is value for money.	Hannah Gaston	Summer 2023	
	BEAM – ensure they are meeting their funding obligations and providing a robust employment and resettlement access for those on the periphery of the jobs market.	Alan M’Grady	Oct 2023	
Ensure all clients, including older members of the community and those with additional needs, can confidently access services and we are inclusive of all needs and abilities:	Continue to offer Digital Assistance sessions and Assistance Referring Customers sessions for individuals who may have limited literacy skills.	Holly Veal	On-going	
	Undertake a co- production exercise with individuals who have lived experiences to generate service improvement.	Hannah Gaston	Sept 2023	
	Provide a map of support services outside of Trinity for those who attend Trinity – link this with wider community access via the MBC Policy Team.	Hannah Gaston and Orla Sweeny	End of 2023	
Work in partnership with Planning colleagues to develop policies that will be adopted in response to the need for more gypsy and traveller sites.	Review the organisation’s ability and cultural competency in terms of working with gypsy and travellers.	Joanna Medley	Sept 2024	
	Engage the Gypsy and Traveller community in the co-production of relevant polices especially in relation to finding appropriate sites.	Joanna Medley	Sept 2024	