



Corporate Context and Strategy

Oversight

- There is significant political oversight & support which has historically focussed on rough sleeping but there has been more focus on statutory homelessness in the last few years as temporary accommodation placements have risen.
- There is regular member scrutiny with performance reports on both rough sleeping and numbers in temporary accommodation
- There is a clear commitment to support frontline homelessness services in regard to supporting the response to all types of homelessness. This includes offering a 'gold standard' service to care leavers.
- A new Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2023/27 (the Strategy) confirms these commitment and provides a statutory framework on which to deliver services from. There is a very much a 'golden thread' that exists from through the organisation.
- The Strategy confirms the response to 'all' types of homelessness including those at risk of losing their homes and those in vulnerable housing situations. It clearly links homelessness, health & wellbeing and understands that a tailored approach is required to deliver effective and life changing services.
- The Strategy confirms the commitment to learn through lived experience and the Corporation's role of leadership in a community where there is responsibility to help those who are more vulnerable than others.
- A Strategy Delivery Plan is in place and is monitored through a Sub-Committee that meets every 2/3 months and includes updates on the individual strategy workstreams.

Potential next steps

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a real opportunity to share learning & best practice and by doing has the potential of promoting upstream homeless prevention across London & England. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence who your rough sleepers are, why they are rough sleeping and the geographical area that they have come from with the aim of sharing this information regionally to promote interventions that could reduce future rough sleepers by supporting them at an earlier stage (includes challenges from NRPF) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a yearly progress report that breakdowns whole numbers of homelessness demand and sets a clear picture of the pressures that the Corporation is facing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence reasons for homelessness from those residents at risk of losing their home with the aim of reviewing how future targeted intervention work could support these residents at earlier stage going forward. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link health & wellbeing needs to demand and evidence the interventions/support that were needed to support this demand | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence how service delivery or strategic thinking has changed because of lived experience learning |



- A clear understanding of the link between strategic ambitions and frontline service delivery
- Excellent knowledge of homelessness & associate legislation and a practical understanding of how it used on day-to-day basis (specifically to note the ability to offer accommodation under a power)
- Understanding of the current challenges specifically in regard to current temporary accommodation numbers and the need to be able to move homelessness prevention upstream and increase the use of the private rented accommodation for those applicants where this would provide a suitable & safe move on option.
- Positive recognition that investment in officers (training, office culture, career progression) creates a knowledgeable workforce that seeks to offer a holistic service to residents and by doing so improves the outcomes for both the resident and the organisation as a whole.
- Positive understanding that a variety of different housing solutions are needed depending on the needs of the applicants. This includes access to social housing where appropriate and investment into PRS access.
- Clear picture given of how the service operates on a daily basis broken down into the customer journey and how the front door operates. Clear processes identified in how a customer is triaged and allocated to officers.
- Understanding of current caseloads per officer (currently running at 20/25 per officer) and linked temporary accommodation placements

Potential next steps

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Personal Housing Plans for all approved applicants in TA (21 out of 32 current placements) with a view of confirming the move-on option for each applicant. Potentially seek to make more social housing offers to reduce overall TA numbers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the very low numbers of rough sleepers going through the statutory homeless route (regardless of whether they go into temporary accommodation) to ensure that City is meeting all of its statutory obligations under homelessness legislation. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the triage calls to ensure that all applicants that are meeting the threshold for an assessment of their circumstances & needs (the first HCLIC trigger) are having that assessment carried out. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review PRS options with specific regard to reviewing existing schemes nationally and across London. This could also mean working with individual boroughs. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider formal management and officer training through accredited management courses and housing qualifications. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider team size when reviewing next steps in regard to increasing casework provision. |



- Clear link identified by officers to support the strategic ambitions of the Corporation and the understanding how it was being monitored and reported on.
- Officers are also responsible for project areas (rough sleeping, MARAC, MAPPA, DA etc...) which is in addition to casework duties (which is further broken down into specific workstream duties). This is positive as it enables a good understanding of how services deliver together (and the individual's role in that) but comes with a risk of being able to time manage effectively and be able to perform well in all areas.
- Good teamwork identified through case management meetings which provides an opportunity to discuss and work through solutions.
- Officers continue to 'own' cases until final discharge and this has ensured that PHP's continue to be updated throughout the applicant's journey through the service. Officers' therefore have a mixture of cases in each of the homelessness stages.
- Excellent understanding of homelessness & associate legislation and a practical understanding of how it used on day-to-day basis. Practical examples given on day of visit that shows confidence in legislation interpretation.
- Officer learning & development at present is led individually by officers.
- There is a good understanding of workload pressures and an open environment in which that can be talked about. This should be regularly reviewed

Potential next steps

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the triage process to ensure that all applicants that are meeting the threshold for an assessment of their circumstances & needs (the first HCLIC trigger) are having that assessment carried out (for example there is no need for an applicant to provide documentation in order for an assessment to be carried out). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review cases currently going straight into a relief duty. If family/friends eviction or end of PRS (and PO has not already expired) then a prevention duty is likely owed in the first instance. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that expired relief cases (where a main duty is owed) are completed shortly after 56 days unless a housing option is imminent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider pulling housing allocations & HB into the bi-weekly casework meetings when necessary to discuss move-on or prevention options. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create personal development plans for all officers (including managers) to ensure relevant training & qualifications are identified | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep under review all project areas to ensure capacity within officer workloads and share best practice/swap projects to ensure multi-skilled officer base. |



- Meetings with internal partners - Housing Benefit, Social Services, Housing Allocations
- Meetings with external partners – Providence Row, St Mungos & Thames Reach
- Clear commitment by external partners that the aspirations to support rough sleepers is a shared responsibility
- Good understanding of the homelessness service identified across all partners including the current challenges and service aspirations.
- A number of examples of good practice including a social worker based in the housing options team, flexible use of DHP, care leaver offer
- Operational links between services clear and known to officer level
- Regular operational meetings have ensured that shared pressures are identified and joint solutions considered/acted upon.
- In regard to housing allocations more partnership work is recommended to review direct offers to households in temporary accommodation, void relet times and the priority given to other homeless households in order to prevent homelessness.

Potential next steps

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assure the Corporation that void relet times are solely due to major repairs and not difficulties with existing working practices. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider introducing a yearly annual lettings plan which forecasts the lettings for the coming financial year and allocates them between competing housing demand groups |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the homelessness prevention work carried out by the allocations team to understand whether there is duplication with a view to a closer working relationship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence learning & changes in practice from lived experience with all partners |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure enough time and commitment is given to strategic discussions with partners when reviewing the homelessness strategy actions and next steps. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure housing allocation policy meets current legal requirements especially in regard to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. • Support the allocations team to ensure their IT systems are fit for purpose which should then include auto-bidding and auto re-registration |



Potential cross-Corporation actions

- Consider purchase / or repurposing of existing socially owned stock for both self contained and shared temporary accommodation. This includes reviewing existing sheltered accommodation.
- Combine housing register / housing needs service to remove duplication and make best use of existing resources.
- Ensure the best use of existing social housing
 - As part of stock survey work review & visit of all properties to determine housing need of current tenant
 - Active downsizer & under-occupation scheme
 - Be able to identify & work with overcrowded households at a much earlier stage to reduce future homeless approaches from family members.
 - Active reciprocal programme with other LA's (London & nationally) when a DA or gangs move is needed.
- Ensure strategic approach to development work both inside and outside of the Corporation boundaries
 - Ensure homelessness data is included with housing register data when determining need