Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD (EXTRAORDINARY MEETING) AGENDA

6.30 pm	Tuesday 15 September 2020	VIRTUAL MEETING

Members 16: Quorum 6

COUNCILLORS:

Conservative Group (8)	Residents' Group (2)	Upminster & Cranham Residents' Group (2)
Ray Best	Ray Morgon	Linda Hawthorn
Philippa Crowder	Barry Mugglestone	Christopher Wilkins
Judith Holt		
Sally Miller		
Nisha Patel		
Christine Smith		
Maggie Themistocli		
Michael White (Vice-Chair)		

Independent Residents' Group (2)	Labour Group (1)	North Havering Residents Group (1)
Natasha Summers	Keith Darvill	Darren Wise (Chairman)
Graham Williamson		

For information about the meeting please contact:
Richard Cursons 01708 432430
richard.cursons@oneSource.co.uk

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Under the Localism Act 2011 (s. 9F) each local authority is required by law to establish an overview and scrutiny function to support and scrutinise the Council's executive arrangements.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board acts as a vehicle by which the effectiveness of scrutiny is monitored and where work undertaken by themed sub-committees can be coordinated to avoid duplication and to ensure that areas of priority are being reviewed. The Board also scrutinises general management matters relating to the Council and further details are given in the terms of reference below. The Overview and Scrutiny Board has oversight of performance information submitted to the Council's executive and also leads on scrutiny of the Council budget and associated information. All requisitions or 'call-ins' of executive decisions are dealt with by the Board.

The Board is politically balanced and includes among its membership the Chairmen of the six themed Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committees.

Terms of Reference:
The areas scrutinised by the Board are:

- Strategy and commissioning
- Partnerships with Business
- Customer access
- E-government and ICT
- Finance (although each committee is responsible for budget
   processes that affect its area of oversight)
- Human resources
- Asset Management
- Property resources
- Facilities Management
- Communications
- Democratic Services
- Social inclusion
- Councillor Call for Action
-

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

What matters are being discussed?

DPI

Does the business relate to or is it likely to affect a disclosable pecuniary interest. These will include the interests of a spouse or civil partner (and co-habitees):
• any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation that they carry on for profit or gain;
• any sponsorship that they receive including contributions to their expenses as a councillor; or the councillor's election expenses from a Trade Union;
• any land licence or tenancy they have in Havering
• any current contracts leases or tenancies between the Council and them;
• any current contracts leases or tenancies between the Council and any organisation with land in Havering in they are a partner, a paid Director, or have a relevant interest in its shares and securities;
• any organisation which has land or a place of business in Havering and in which they have a relevant interest in its shares or its securities.

NO

YES → Declare Interest and Leave

PERSONAL INTEREST

Might a decision in relation to that business be reasonably be regarded as affecting (to a greater extent than the majority of other Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of ward affected by the decision)
• Your well-being or financial position; or
• The well-being or financial position of:

o A member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association; or
- Any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors;
- Any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000;

o Any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by your Authority; or

o Any body exercising functions of a public nature, directed to charitable purposes or whose principal includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management?

YES

NO

PECUNIARY INTEREST

You must disclose the existence and nature of your personal interests

Would a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, reasonably regard your personal interest to be so significant that it is likely to prejudice your

NO → You can participate in the meeting and vote (or remain in the room if not a member of the meeting)

YES

- Does the matter affect your financial position or the financial position of any person or body through whom you have a personal interest?
- Does the matter relate to an approval, consent, licence, permission or registration that affects you or any person or body with which you have a personal interest?
- Does the matter not fall within one of the exempt categories of decisions?

NO

YES

Speak to Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting to avoid allegations of corruption or bias

AGENDA ITEMS

1   CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman will announce details of the arrangements in case of fire or other events that might require the meeting room or building's evacuation.

2   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

(if any) - receive.

3   DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Members are invited to disclose any interest in any of the items on the agenda at this point of the meeting.

Members may still disclose any interest in an item at any time prior to the consideration of the matter.

4   PROTOCOL ON THE OPERATION OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD MEETINGS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESTRICTIONS (Pages 1 - 4)

5   PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY PROTOCOL (Pages 5 - 6)

Attached for reference.

6   PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF A CABINET REPORT - HAVERING CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY (Pages 7 - 48)

Report and appendices attached.

7   PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF A CABINET REPORT - PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2020 - 2025 (Pages 49 - 78)

Report and appendices attached.

**Andrew Beesley
Head of Democratic Services**

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAVERING

PROTOCOL ON THE OPERATION OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD MEEETINGS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESTRICTIONS

1.   Introduction

In accordance with the Local Authority and Police Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, all Overview and Scrutiny Board Committee hearings held during the Covid-19 restrictions will take place using a 'virtual' format. This document aims to give details on how the meetings will take place and establish some rules of procedure to ensure that all parties find the meetings productive.

2.   Prior to the Hearing

Once the date for a meeting has been set, an electronic appointment will be sent to all relevant parties. This will include a link to access the virtual meeting as well as guidance on the use of the technology involved.

3.   Format

For the duration of the Covid-19 restrictions period, all Board meetings will be delivered through conference call, using Zoom software. This can be accessed using a PC, laptop or mobile/landline telephone etc. and the instructions sent with meeting appointments will cover how to do this.

4.   Structure of the Meeting

Although held in a virtual format, Overview and Scrutiny Board Meetings will follow the standard procedure with the following principal stages. Board Members may ask questions of any party at any time. Questions are however, usually taken after each person has spoken.

- The Chairman's announcements, apologies and disclosures of Member interests will be dealt with.
- Consideration of reports as shown in the agenda papers. Officers will introduce the report, questions will be asked by Board Members and the report debated. The Board will make any decision that it wishes with regards to the report and/or make any recommendations for further action.
- The clerk will confirm the details of any decision made by the Board.

5. Technology Issues

An agenda setting out the items for the meeting will be issued in advance, to all parties in accordance with statutory timetables. This will include details of reports to be considered and any other relevant documents. The agenda will also be published on the Council's website – www.havering.gov.uk in the normal way.

All parties should be aware that the sheer volume of virtual meetings now taking place across the country has placed considerable strain upon broadband network infrastructure. As a result, Zoom meetings may experience intermittent faults whereby participants lose contact for short periods of time before reconnecting to the call. The guidance below explains how the meeting is to be conducted, including advice on what to do if participants cannot hear the speaker and etiquette of participants during the call.

Members and the public will be encouraged to use any Zoom video conferencing facilities provided by the Council to attend a meeting remotely. If this is not possible, attendance may be through an audio link or by other electronic means.

Remote access for members of the public and Members who are not attending to participate in the meeting, together with access for the Press, will be provided via a webcast of the meeting at www.havering.gov.uk.

If the Chairman is made aware that the meeting is not accessible to the public through remote means, due to any technological or other failure of provision, then the Chair shall temporarily adjourn the meeting immediately. If the provision of access through remote means cannot be restored within a reasonable period, then the remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Chairman. If he or she does not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next scheduled ordinary meeting of the Board.

6. Management of Remote Meetings for Members

The Chairman will normally confirm at the outset and at any reconvening of an Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting that they can see and hear all participating members. Any Member participating remotely should also confirm at the outset and at any reconvening of the meeting that they can see and hear the proceedings and the other participants.

The attendance of Members at the meeting will be recorded by the Democratic Services Officer. The normal quorum requirements for meetings as set out in the Council's Constitution will also apply to a remote meeting.

If a connection to a Member is lost during a meeting of the Board, the Chair will stop the meeting to enable the connection to be restored. If the connection cannot be restored within a reasonable time, the meeting will proceed, but the Member who was disconnected will not be able to vote on the matter under discussion, as they would not have heard all the facts.

7. Remote Attendance of the Public

Any member of the public participating in a meeting remotely in exercise of their right to speak at a Overview and Scrutiny Board or other meeting must meet the same criteria as

members of the Board (outlined above) in terms of being able to access and, where permitted, speak at the meeting. The use of video conferencing technology for the meeting will facilitate this and guidance on how to access the meeting remotely will be supplied by the clerk.

8. Etiquette at the meeting

For some participants, this will be their first virtual meeting. In order to make the hearing productive for everyone, the following rules must be adhered to and etiquette observed:

- The meeting will be presided over by the Chairman who will invite participants to speak individually at appropriate points. All other participants will have their microphones muted by the Clerk until invited by the Chairman to speak;

- If invited to contribute, Members or other participants should make their statement, then wait until invited to speak again if required;

- If it is possible, participants should find a quiet location to participate in the Zoom meeting where they will not be disturbed as background noise can affect participants.

- The person speaking should not be spoken over or interrupted and other participants will normally be muted whilst someone is speaking. If there are intermittent technological faults during the meeting then the speaker will repeat from the point where the disruption started. Whilst intermittent disruption is frustrating, it is important that all participants remain professional and courteous.

9. Meeting Procedures

Democratic Services Officers will facilitate the meeting. Their role will be to control conferencing technology employed for remote access and attendance and to administer the public and Member interaction, engagement and connections on the instruction of the Chairman.

The Council has put in place a technological solution that will enable Members participating in meetings remotely to indicate their wish to speak via this solution.

The Chairman will follow the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rules set out in the Council's Constitution when determining who may speak, as well as the order and priority of speakers and the content and length of speeches in the normal way.

The Chairman, at the beginning of the meeting, will make reference to the protocol for Member and public participation and the rules of debate. The Chairman's ruling during the debate will be final.

Members are asked to adhere to the following etiquette during remote attendance of the meeting:

- Board Members are asked to join the meeting no later than fifteen minutes before the start to allow themselves and Democratic Services Officers the opportunity to test the equipment.

- Any camera (video-feed) should show a non-descript background or, where possible, a virtual background and Members should be careful to not allow exempt or confidential papers to be seen in the video-feed.

- Rather than raising one's hand or rising to be recognised or to speak, Members should avail themselves of the remote process for requesting to be heard and use the 'raise hand' function in the participants field.

- All participants should only speak when invited to by the Chair.

- Only one person may speak at any one time.

- When referring to a specific report, agenda page, or slide, participants should mention the report title, page number, or slide so that all members have a clear understanding of what is being discussed at all times

- Should any voting be required, the clerk will ask Members individually to indicate their vote – either FOR, AGAINST or ABSTAIN, on the recommendations as shown in the report, once the debate has concluded.

- The Democratic Services Officer will clearly announce the result of the vote and the Chairman will then move on to the next agenda item.

Any Member participating in a remote meeting who declares a disclosable pecuniary interest, or other declarable interest, in any item of business that would normally require them to leave the room, must also leave the remote meeting. The Democratic Services Officer or meeting facilitator, will confirm the departure and will also invite the relevant Member by link, email or telephone to re-join the meeting at the appropriate time, using the original meeting invitation,

10.   After the Hearing - Public Access to Meeting Documentation following the meeting

Members of the public may access minutes, decision and other relevant documents through the Council's website. www.havering.gov.uk

For any further information on the meeting, please contact richard.cursons@onesource.co.uk, tel: 01708 432430.

Overview & Scrutiny Protocol – Pre-decision Scrutiny

WHAT IS PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY?

Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny recognise that in order for effective scrutiny to happen they need to work together for the benefit of the Council and to improve decision-making.

The Council is required to give 28 days' notice of a planned key decision. The decisions are brought to scrutiny as drafts of the final cabinet or delegated decision report.

The range of possible outcomes may include support for a decision, a different view on the way forward, the flagging up of concerns (e.g. in relation to the consultation process), or a recommendation that the decision should be deferred pending further work etc. It does not mean that decisions will necessarily be changed or withdrawn, however it gives an opportunity for those decisions to be more informed. Pre-decision scrutiny can be viewed as non-Executive Members performing a 'critical friend' role in relation to the Executive.

Overall, pre-decision scrutiny can help the decision-making process by:

Providing an impartial perspective – scrutiny can gather its own evidence to contribute towards the decision-making process, and consult those directly affected by the decision impartially and independently.

Challenging assumptions and making evidence-gathering more robust – scrutiny can look at projections relating to the impact of the decision – financial, social, economic, environmental – and consider whether those projections and assumptions are justified.

Developing realistic plans and targets – scrutiny can help to develop challenging but realistic targets that will be impartial and focused on outcomes rather than outputs.

Securing ownership and buy-in to the final decision – engaging with scrutiny will help the executive to understand the expectations of the wider group of elected councillors and, by extension, the public.

WHAT PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY IS NOT

Pre-decision scrutiny does not replace decision-making. It is not intended to blur the lines of accountability, which will always rest with the Executive.

Pre-decision scrutiny is not the same as general service or policy development / formulation. Separate to pre-decision scrutiny there are occasions where scrutiny is already involved at an earlier point in the development of policy or service proposals.

WHY IS A PROTOCOL NEEDED?

The aim of this protocol is to set out an agreed way of working with the Cabinet, in line with the Council's Constitution, to facilitate the proper role of Overview and Scrutiny in respect of pre-decision scrutiny.

Protocol for pre-decision scrutiny of Forward Plan items

1. Overview and Scrutiny Board will monitor and review the Council's Forward Plan of forthcoming key decisions (as standing items on agenda) to determine which items they would like an input into before decisions are made by the Cabinet or the individual decision maker with delegated responsibility.

2. It is permissible for the Leader or individual Cabinet Members to suggest topics for pre-decision scrutiny however the decision to accept rests with the Board. The request, stating reasons, will be made in writing to the Chairman of the Board. The clerk of the O&S Board will write to Members giving up to 5 working days for the suggestion to be accepted onto the agenda for the next scheduled meeting. A majority of Members from the committee is required to achieve this. In the event of a tie, the Chairman will have a second and casting vote. That a suggestion is rejected does not prevent the use of call-in at a later date. The matter will progress for consideration by Cabinet or delegated decision maker and be available for call-in subject to any exemption.

3. Where pre-decision scrutiny of a forthcoming key decision is requested by the Overview & Scrutiny Board, a draft copy of the Cabinet report or Executive Decision will be provided. Where necessary, an extraordinary meeting of Board or committee will be convened in accordance with procedure rules.

4. The relevant Cabinet Member, Director, Assistant Director and/or appropriate officer(s) will attend the Overview and Scrutiny meeting to present the draft report and answer any questions posed by members of the committee.

5. The Overview and Scrutiny Board discusses the report and identifies any points it would like addressed in the final report to be presented before Cabinet or the individual decision maker with delegated responsibility; this could include any alternative recommendations which the Board consider necessary.

6. Unless the proposal is different from that which the decision-maker is subsequently required to consider, the pre-decision scrutiny of the subject prevents the opportunity for call-in once the decision is made by the Cabinet or the individual decision maker with delegated responsibility.

Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

Overview & Scrutiny Board
15 September 2020

REPORT

Subject Heading:	Pre-Decision Scrutiny of a Cabinet Report – Havering Corporate Parenting Strategy
SLT Lead:	Abdus Choudhury – Deputy Director of Legal & Governance
Report Author and contact details:	Richard Cursons – Democratic Services Officer richard.cursons@onesource.co.uk
Policy context:	To support our community of Children Looked After by the local authority and those leaving care.
Financial summary:	The Corporate Parenting strategy will be implemented from existing resources.

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering	[X]
Places making Havering	[X]
Opportunities making Havering	[X]
Connections making Havering	[ ]

SUMMARY

In accordance with the pre-decision scrutiny protocol included in the agenda papers, the attached report is brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for scrutiny and comment prior to a final decision being made by Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board considers the Cabinet report and appendices and determines whether there are comments, amendments they wish to recommend to Cabinet or the individual decision maker.

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REPORT DETAIL

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The attached report on the Havering Corporate Parenting Strategy has been selected by the Board as a subject for pre-decision scrutiny. It is suggested that the Board discuss the proposals contained in the report and agrees any points, comments or, if appropriate, alternative recommendations it would like addressed when the report is presented to Cabinet on 16 September. These will be addressed by the Cabinet Member in his introduction to the report at the Cabinet meeting.

It should be noted that, unless the proposal is different from that which the decision-maker is subsequently required to consider, the pre-decision scrutiny of the subject prevents the opportunity for call-in once the decision is made by the Cabinet.

As per Appendices

Appendix A – Cabinet report
Appendix B – Equality and Health Impact Assessment
Appendix C – Havering Corporate Parenting Strategy

CABINET

Subject Heading:	Havering Corporate Parenting Strategy
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Robert Benham, Deputy Leader, Lead Member for Children and Learning.
SLT Lead:	Robert South, Director, Children's Services
Report Author and contact details:	Ian Elliott, Programme Manager, Children's Services ian.elliott@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	To support our community of children Looked After by the local authority and those leaving care.
Financial summary:	The Corporate Parenting strategy will be implemented from existing resources.
Is this a Key Decision?	This is a Key Decision.
When should this matter be reviewed?	The Havering Corporate Parenting Panel should oversee the implementation of the strategy and provide an annual update to the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee.
Reviewing OSC:	Havering Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering   [X]
Places making Havering   []
Opportunities making Havering   [X]
Connections making Havering   [X]

SUMMARY

This report presents the Havering Corporate Parenting Strategy for approval by Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

- approves the Havering Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020-2023;
- agrees for the Havering Corporate Parenting Panel to oversee implementation of the strategy; and
- that an annual update should be provided to the Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

REPORT DETAIL

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1. Havering Council has a duty to seek out every opportunity to support children and young people in our care. This strategy, informed by views of children and young people and presenting to Havering's Cabinet for approval, will deliver our ambition to support children in care and care leavers who (for whatever reason) are not able to live with their birth parents.

REASONS AND OPTIONS

Reasons for the decision:

2. Corporate parenting refers to the shared responsibility across the Council to ensure that children and young people in our care or leaving care are supported to thrive. Young people in care and care leavers are vulnerable individuals who often have difficult and traumatic experiences in some of the most formative years of their lives.

3. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 guides the actions of corporate parents towards children in care and care leavers. These are covered in detail in Havering's Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Other options considered:

4. It is good practice to state our ambition across the Council in relation to children in our care. Havering has the option of not producing a Corporate Parenting Strategy. This option has been discounted on the basis that it does not meet good practice standards. In addition the local authority would not be in a position to articulate its strategy in relation to children in our care, to regulators such as Ofsted when necessary.

> **IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

Financial implications and risks:

5. The Havering Corporate Parenting Strategy will be implemented within existing resources.

Legal implications and risks:

6. The Council has various duties under the Children Act 1989 to children its care and to children and young people who leave its care. It also has a duty under s 1 Children and Social Work Act 2017, in carrying out functions in relation to the children and young people in its care and formerly in its care who meet statutory criteria to have regard to the need—

(a) to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;

(b) to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;

(c) to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;

(d) to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;

(e) to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;

(f) for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;

(g) to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

7. In achieving these obligations it must have regard to the statutory guidance. This states amongst other things:

   "The critical question that local authorities should ask … is: 'would this be good enough for my child?' Local authorities that have a strong corporate parenting ethos recognise that the care system is not just about keeping children safe, but also to promote recovery, resilience and well-being.

   Strong corporate parenting means strong leadership, challenge and accountability at every level. The quality of support can be measured in how the child or young person experiences the support they receive and the extent to which they feel listened to and taken seriously.

   To that end, many top tier local authorities have established Corporate Parenting Boards or Panels to look strategically at the way in which their looked-after children and care leavers experience services."

Human Resources implications and risks:

8. The recommendations made in this report do not give rise to any identifiable HR risks or implications that would affect either the Council or its workforce.

Equalities implications and risks:

9. An Equality and Health Impact Assessment (EqHIA) has been carried out in relation to the Corporate Parenting Strategy and is included as Appendix One to this report.

Health and Wellbeing implications and Risks

10. The health and wellbeing of children in our care are central to our safeguarding duty. The Havering Corporate Parenting Strategy makes clear our priorities to safeguard young people, specifically including a priority on health (both mental health and physical wellbeing).

11. All services of the council have a role to play as corporate parents. We have a commitment to ensure good access to quality of education and training opportunities for those in our care. We want them to be safe in our green spaces, sports facilities and be able to interact socially with other people safely.

12. The strategy, to be delivered across the Council, is informed by an Equality Health Impact Assessment and will secure better health and wellbeing of children, young people and young adults leaving care.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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Equality & Health Impact Assessment (EqHIA)

Document control

Title of activity:	*Havering Corporate Parenting Strategy*
Lead officer:	*Ian Elliott, Programme Manager, Children's Services ian.elliott@havering.gov.uk*
Approved by:	*Robert South, Director, Children's Services*
Date completed:	*13/07/2020*
Scheduled date for review:	*The strategy runs for three years and a further review will take place once when drafting the new strategy, if relevant.*

Did you seek advice from the Corporate Policy & Diversity team?	Yes
Did you seek advice from the Public Health team?	Yes
Does the EqHIA contain any confidential or exempt information that would prevent you publishing it on the Council's website?	No

Please submit the completed form via e-mail to EqHIA@havering.gov.uk thank you.

1. Equality & Health Impact Assessment Checklist

Please complete the following checklist to determine whether or not you will need to complete an EqHIA and ensure you keep this section for your audit trail. If you have any questions, please contact EqHIA@havering.gov.uk for advice from either the Corporate Diversity or Public Health teams. Please refer to the Guidance in Appendix 1 on how to complete this form.

About your activity

1	Title of activity	*Havering Corporate Parenting Strategy*		
2	Type of activity	*Strategy approval.*		
3	Scope of activity	*The scope of activity is the Corporate Parenting Strategy, which summarised our vision and priorities for children in our care and care leavers for the next three years.*		
4a	**Are you changing, introducing a new, or removing a service, policy, strategy or function?**	Yes	If the answer to <u>any</u> of these questions is **'YES'**, please continue to question **5**.	If the answer to <u>all</u> of the questions (4a, 4b & 4c) is **'NO'**, please go to question **6**.
4b	**Does this activity have the potential to impact (either positively or negatively) upon people (9 protected characteristics)?**	Yes		
4c	**Does the activity have the potential to impact (either positively or negatively) upon any factors which determine people's health and wellbeing?**	Yes		
5	**If you answered YES:**	**Please complete the EqHIA in Section 2 of this document.** Please see Appendix 1 for Guidance.		
6	**If you answered NO:**	*N/A*		

Completed by:	*Ian Elliott, Programme Manager, Children's Services* *ian.elliott@havering.gov.uk*
Date:	*13/07/2020*

2

2. The EqHIA – How will the strategy, policy, plan, procedure and/or service impact on people?

Background/context:
Havering Council has a duty to seek out every opportunity to support children and young people in our care. The Corporate Parenting Strategy, informed by views of children and young people and presented to Havering's Cabinet for approval, will deliver our ambition to support children in care and care leavers who (for whatever reason) are not able to live with their birth parents. *Expand box as required*

Who will be affected by the activity?
The Corporate Parenting Strategy affects children in our care and care leavers. The strategy does not seek service change but does indicate our priorities and actions to improve the lives and life chances of the c450 children in our care. Children in care and care leavers typically achieve poorer outcomes in terms of education, health and employment when compared with their peers. This is a situation reflected nationally, hence children in care and care leavers are a vulnerable group for which inequality exists. *Expand box as required*

Protected Characteristic - Age: Consider the full range of age groups	
Please tick (✓) the relevant box:	**Overall impact:**

Positive	(✓)	The Corporate Parenting Strategy will lead to improvements for children of all ages in our care, from birth to 25 years old. The largest age group in our care is consistent with the national picture, with 34% aged 10-15 years; 14% are aged 16 years and over. Only 7% are aged 5-9 years and only 3% of children in our care are under 1 year.
Neutral		
Negative		Over the last 5 years the average age of children in care has been steadily increasing both locally and nationally. *Expand box as required*

Evidence:
Local data and statutory returns to the Department of Education are the main evidence bases used in this assessment.

Expand box as required

Sources used:
Department for Education Children Looked After Statistics 2019
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/850306/Children_looked_after_in_England_2019_Text.pdf

A guide to looked after children statistics in England, May 2020

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/885676/CLA_Statistics_Guide_Version_1.5.pdf

Expand box as required

Protected Characteristic - Disability: Consider the full range of disabilities; including physical mental, sensory and progressive conditions		
Please tick (✔) the relevant box:		**Overall impact:**
Positive	(✔)	Disability can be a reason to become "looked after" although in Havering only a small number of children in our care are disabled. As with the national picture, this represents fewer than 5% of the cohort but their needs are complex and their outcomes lower than their peers.
Neutral		
Negative		The Havering Corporate Parenting Strategy outlines how we intend to be a good corporate parent, irrespective of disability, particularly how we will better hear the voice of all children in our care.
		Expand box as required

Evidence:
Local data and statutory returns to the Department of Education are the main evidence bases used in this assessment.

Expand box as required

4

Sources used:	
	Expand box as required

Protected Characteristic - Sex/gender: Consider both men and women		
Please tick (✓) the relevant box:		**Overall impact:**
Positive	*(✓)*	The Havering Corporate Parenting Strategy outlines how we intend to be a good corporate parent, irrespective of gender and sexuality. Children in our care are disproportionally male, representing around three quarters of the cohort when care leavers are included. The priorities outlined in the strategy and our vision seek to improve outcomes for young people in our care.

Children in care are vulnerable group and within this group evidence suggests outcomes for boys are lower still. For example within the looked after group of children, girls continue to outperform boys in all subjects. The largest differences are in reading and writing, where in 2018 looked after girls outperformed looked after boys by 12 and 18 percentage points respectively. This is broadly similar to patterns in the gender attainment difference for non-looked after children.

The strategy carries a clear aim to ensure our children in care attend a school that is Good or better (in Ofsted terms).

Expand box as required |
| **Neutral** | | |
| **Negative** | | |

Evidence:
Local data and statutory returns to the Department of Education are the main evidence bases used in this assessment.

Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities in England, 31 March 2018.

Expand box as required

5

Sources used:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/794535/Main_Text_Outcomes_for_CLA_by_LAs_2018.pdf
Expand box as required

Protected Characteristic - Ethnicity/race: Consider the impact on different ethnic groups and nationalities		
Please tick (✓) the relevant box:		**Overall impact:**
Positive	(✓)	Data is recorded locally and as such we are aware that half of our children in care / care leavers are of BAME background, which is disproportionate when compared with the wider borough population (84% white British).
Neutral		
Negative		The strategy as proposed intends to reflect this difference and provide opportunities for those in our care to learn about and celebrate their cultural heritage. It is intended for children in care and care leavers to participate fully in the borough's race relations review.

Expand box as required |

Evidence:
Locally held data is the main evidence bases used in this assessment.
Expand box as required

Sources used:
Expand box as required

Protected Characteristic - Religion/faith: Consider people from different religions or beliefs including those with no religion or belief		
Please tick (✓) the relevant box:		**Overall impact:**
Positive		The impact of the strategy on religion and faith is not fully know because this information is not always provided and / or recorded on local or national systems.
Neutral	(✓)	

6

Negative		The strategy as proposed intends to provide opportunities for those in our care to learn about and celebrate their cultural heritage which incorporates religion and faith where relevant and appropriate.
		Expand box as required

Evidence:
Local data and statutory returns to the Department of Education are the main evidence bases used in this assessment. Local and national data is limited in this regard.

Expand box as required

Sources used:

N/A

Expand box as required

Protected Characteristic - Sexual orientation: Consider people who are heterosexual, lesbian, gay or bisexual		
Please tick (✔) the relevant box:		**Overall impact:**
Positive		The impact of the strategy on sexual orientation is not fully know because this information is not always provided and / or recorded, locally or nationally.
Neutral	(✔)	
Negative		
		Expand box as required

Evidence:

Local data and statutory returns to the Department of Education are the main evidence bases used in this assessment and data is not routinely collected to assess this characteristic.

Expand box as required

Sources used: N/A	
	Expand box as required

Protected Characteristic - Gender reassignment: Consider people who are seeking, undergoing or have received gender reassignment surgery, as well as people whose gender identity is different from their gender at birth

Please tick (✓) the relevant box:		**Overall impact:**
Positive		The impact of the strategy on sexual orientation is not fully know because this information is not always provided and / or recorded, locally or nationally.
Neutral	(✓)	
Negative		
		Expand box as required

Evidence:
Local data and statutory returns to the Department of Education are the main evidence bases used in this assessment and gender reassignment is not one of the statutory reporting data lines.

Expand box as required

Sources used:
N/A

Expand box as required

Protected Characteristic - Marriage/civil partnership: Consider people in a marriage or civil partnership

Please tick (✓) the relevant box:		**Overall impact:**
Positive		This characteristic only potentially applies to a small number of the cohort covered by the Corporate Parenting Strategy, given the age phases concerned.
Neutral	(✓)	
Negative		
		Expand box as required

Evidence:
Local data and statutory returns to the Department of Education are the main evidence bases used in this assessment. Data on marriage and civil partnerships is not recorded.
Expand box as required

Sources used:
N/A
Expand box as required

Protected Characteristic - Pregnancy, maternity and paternity: Consider those who are pregnant and those who are undertaking maternity or paternity leave

Please tick (✓) the relevant box:		**Overall impact:**
Positive	(✓)	Whilst females over 16 years represent a smaller percentage of the cohort covered by the strategy, there is a clear priority in it to support the health (and mental health) of all. The borough already supports young mothers (including those pregnant) and the strategy reinforces our ambition to continue to improve.
Neutral		
Negative		
		Expand box as required

Evidence:
Local data and statutory returns to the Department of Education are the main evidence bases used in this assessment but this does not routinely record pregnancy or maternity.
Expand box as required

Sources used:
N/A
Expand box as required

Socio-economic status: Consider those who are from low income or financially excluded backgrounds

Please tick (✓) the relevant box:	**Overall impact:**

Positive	(✓)	Children in care and care leavers account for less than 1% of the general population, yet over 25% of the adult prison population has been in care. Care leavers are more likely to reoffend after offending for the first time. Care leavers are less likely to have achieved 5 A*-C GCSEs than their peers.
Neutral		
Negative		The Corporate Parenting Strategy carries clear priorities to address this locally, by ensuring a good education; providing opportunities for training and employment; and referring to the Council's Social Values strategy to provide opportunities for children in our care.

Expand box as required |

Evidence:

Local data and statutory returns to the Department of Education are the main evidence bases used in this assessment.

Expand box as required

Sources used:
N/A

Health & Wellbeing Impact: Consider both short and long-term impacts of the activity on a person's physical and mental health, particularly for disadvantaged, vulnerable or at-risk groups. Can health and wellbeing be positively promoted through this activity? Please use the Health and Wellbeing Impact Tool in Appendix 2 to help you answer this question.		
Please tick (✓) all the relevant boxes that apply:		**Overall impact:**
Positive	(✓)	The cohort of children in care and care leavers is disproportionality male, from BAME heritage and suffering potentially lower outcomes than children not in care in relation to criminal exploitation and education.
Neutral		
Negative		This situation locally reflects a national picture and is the reason why the borough has raised aspirations via the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

The strategy, if fully implemented, will have a positive intervention for the protected characteristics as outlined above, specifically relating to poor outcomes for health, education and employment for a group of children and young adults for whom life presents significant challenges.

Expand box as required |

10

		Do you consider that a more in-depth HIA is required as a result of this brief assessment? Please tick (✓) the relevant box Yes ☐ No (✓)
Evidence: Local data and statutory returns to the Department of Education are the main evidence bases used in this assessment. *Expand box as required*		
Sources used: **As listed above relating to each characteristic.** *Expand box as required*		

11

3. Outcome of the Assessment

The EqHIA assessment is intended to be used as an improvement tool to make sure the activity maximises the positive impacts and eliminates or minimises the negative impacts. The possible outcomes of the assessment are listed below and what the next steps to take are:

Please tick (✓) what the overall outcome of your assessment was:

	1. The EqHIA identified <u>no significant concerns</u> OR the identified <u>negative concerns</u> have already been <u>addressed</u>	**Proceed with implementation** of your activity (✓)
	2. The EqHIA identified some <u>negative impact</u> which still needs <u>to be addressed</u>	**COMPLETE SECTION 4:** **Complete action plan** and finalise the EqHIA
	3. The EqHIA identified some <u>major concerns</u> and showed that it is <u>impossible to diminish negative impacts</u> from the activity to an acceptable or even lawful level	**Stop and remove** the activity or **revise** the activity **thoroughly.** **Complete an EqHIA on the revised proposal.**

12

4. Action Plan

The real value of completing an EqHIA comes from the identifying the actions that can be taken to eliminate/minimise negative impacts and enhance/optimise positive impacts. In this section you should list the specific actions that set out how you will address any negative equality and health & wellbeing impacts you have identified in this assessment. Please ensure that your action plan is: more than just a list of proposals and good intentions; sets ambitious yet achievable outcomes and timescales; and is clear about resource implications.

Protected characteristic / health & wellbeing impact	Identified Negative or Positive impact	Recommended actions to mitigate Negative impact* or further promote Positive impact	Outcomes and monitoring**	Timescale	Lead officer
	No negative impacts were identified in this assessment.		N/A	N/A	N/A

Add further rows as necessary

* You should include details of any future consultations and any actions to be undertaken to mitigate negative impacts

** Monitoring: You should state how the impact (positive or negative) will be monitored; what outcome measures will be used; the known (or likely) data source for outcome measurements; how regularly it will be monitored; and who will be monitoring it (if this is different from the lead officer).

5. Review

In this section you should identify how frequently the EqHIA will be reviewed; the date for next review; and who will be reviewing it.

Review:

This assessment should be reviewed consistent with the review of the Corporate Parenting Strategy as agreed by the Council's Cabinet. The strategy is anticipated to run for three years from 2020-2023 and a full review should take place as planning begins for a revised strategy.

Scheduled date of review: August 2023.

Lead Officer conducting the review: Ian Elliott, Programme Manager, Children's Services.

*Expand box as required

Please submit the completed form via e-mail to EqHIA@havering.gov.uk thank you.

Havering's Corporate Parenting Strategy

Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

Foreword – Care experienced young person

I came into care when I was seven years old with my older brother. I remember feeling scared and not knowing what was happening or why. This experience is something that many of us have when we come into care. What is happening and why it is happening are not usually explained in a way that we can understand. However, Havering, my Corporate Parents, found us carers who are kind, caring and patient—instantly making me feel like I was part of their family, which made a world of difference. My brother and I could stay together, which was not only important to us but, was also a big help to support me to understand what was happening. It's essential to have people around you that know what you are going through.

My Carer's, Social Worker and opportunities provided by Havering have not only supported my journey and personal growth but, have also helped me to make friends with other children who share similar experiences. Being treated with respect and care is vital to us – it's often the little things that make a difference. Listening to the views, wishes and feelings of people in care, who all have very different experiences, good and bad, is something Havering as a Corporate Parent should continue.

Havering celebrate our achievements in several creative ways – please do not underestimate how great this is and how positive it makes us feel. The fact that we get to perform and share other talents is great! It's nice to see people who are older than me (Care Leavers) who may have had a hard background, overcome obstacles.

Knowing our rights and entitlements is crucial and also helps create understanding. My message to you all would be, please remember we are children who need to feel safe, cared for and listened too. Please be patient when you are trying to explain something to us – you may need to find a different way to help us understand. And lastly, some of our behaviours may be seen as challenging – we are trying to tell you something, that we are struggling to articulate verbally.

I'm looking forward to updating our Pledge/Promises over the next six weeks, supported by the Children in Care Council, which is now a Children in Care Youth Club. Gaining the thoughts and feelings of as many care experienced children and young people as possible will support the delivery of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Ashwina Sobrun
Young person in care

Foreword – Cllr Robert Benham

Both members and officers at Havering council aspire to be the best "corporate parent." We have a duty to seek out every opportunity to support children and young people in our care. This strategy, informed by views of children and young people and approved by the council's Cabinet, will deliver our ambition to support children in care and care leavers who (for whatever reason) are not able to live with their birth parents.

Children in our care and young adults who are care leavers are the most disadvantaged in our society, and it is the role of the local authority (supported by carers and our partners) to provide stability, support and care they need to achieve their ambitions in life.

We want to be the best corporate parent that we can be. But what does that mean?

It means a step-change in our ambition for the children in our care. It involves them being supported by all of us, across the council. It means providing them with the many opportunities our borough has to offer. Above all, it means hearing their voice (and acting on it), support their aspirations, recognising and celebrating their diversity, celebrating their success and taking pride just as any birth parent or grandparent would with their children.

Everyone can play their part. This strategy sets out our vision and priorities about things that matter to young people. They tell us they want to feel safe and live in a home where they feel safe. They want a good education and for us to be ambitious for them. They, like many young people, have been affected by the COVID pandemic and may have significant mental health challenges in the months and years ahead.

Children in our care need us to support them, to push them and to be on their side when things are tough. Between us, we can deliver the ambition in this strategy and be proud parents to the 400 plus children in our care and those leaving our care.

Robert Benham, Cabinet Member for Education, Children & Families and Deputy Leader of the Council

Contents

Page 33

Introduction

The role that the council plays in looking after children is one of the most important things we do. The local authority has a unique responsibility to the children we care for and also to our care leavers. This makes us a Corporate Parent to over 400 children and young adults in our care.

A good corporate parent should have the same aspirations for a child in care or care leaver, as a good parent would have for their child. It means providing them with the stability and support they need to make progress; and helping them to access new opportunities and experiences that inspire them to set ambitious goals for themselves. It means celebrating their successes, but also recognising that they will sometimes make mistakes and need help to get back on track. It also means supporting them to gain the skills and confidence to live independent lives, while letting them know that they have someone to call on for help if the going gets tough.

This document has been produced to set out how we intend to challenge ourselves as corporate parents over the next three years. It provides the legal and local context in which we operate, our vision for children in our care and how we intend to deliver on the priorities which are set out in legislation.

Our duty to children

Corporate parenting refers to the shared responsibility across the council to ensure that children and young people in our care or leaving care are supported to thrive. Young people in care and care leavers are individuals who often have had difficult experiences in some of the most formative years of their lives. As good corporate parents we must ensure, as any good parent would for their child, that we listen to our young people, care for them, keep them safe, celebrate their success, cultivate their talents, support them when things go wrong, and prepare them to live successful independent lives.

There are seven principles set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which must guide the actions of corporate parents towards children in care and care leavers.

1 To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people.

2 To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.

3 To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.

4 To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.

5 To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.

6 For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.

7 To prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

Page 35

Our duty to children cont'd

These duties should not be understood as seven separate entities but as interlinked components that are all required, to ensure we act as a good corporate parent.

This strategy sets out how we will deliver on these principles to be the best corporate parent we can, as we would want to be for our children.

Havering's vision

Our vision to be the best corporate parent aligns with the council's vision of creating a borough that is cleaner, safer, and prouder together.

➤ We want all our young people to feel they are safe at home, at school, and in all manner of public spaces. Overwhelmingly, when talking to young people about this strategy, this is what they told us was most important to them.

➤ We want our borough to be a clean area with accessible services and spaces for our young people that feel like their own. Where possible we want young people to live in their borough, not some distance away, so they can benefit from these spaces.

➤ We want our young people to know that we take pride in them and to feel proud of themselves and the communities they are from. As a corporate parent, we should acknowledge and celebrate their successes and ensure their voices are heard in the borough's independent review into racism.

➤ We want to support young people to stay together with their families whenever it is safe to do so, and when it is not, we will work better together to meet their needs and aspirations.

This strategy sets out the commitment of Havering Council, and explains how we will be a competent and trustworthy corporate parent for any child or young person who is in our care irrespective of their age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, faith or disability.

Our vision and our strategy extends to those leaving care. We shall also ensure our young people receive quality advice and support as they leave care at 25 years old and become independent members of society.

Local context

To achieve our vision, we must fully understand the position of the current service so that our actions are targeted at the areas of most need and that we predict future challenges, proactively preparing for them to establish a resilient offer for our young people.

We have seen an increase of young people for whom Havering had a corporate parental responsibility from 433 in March 2019 to 469 in March 2020 (239 of which are care leavers). Nationally, the number of children in the care of local authorities rose 28% over the last ten years.

Profile of our children in care

Children who cannot be placed with a parent or someone with parental responsibility must be placed with an approved foster carer, with preference given to someone who is a family member, friend or other person connected with the child who is also an approved foster carer. The diagram below shows that most of the children in our care live with foster carers or family/friends placement.

Where do our young people live

As of 31st March 2020 we have corporate parenting responsibility for 469 children and young people.

26% live in semi-independent or supported accommodation

44% are female and 56% are male

37% live with foster families (inc. Staying Put arrangements)

51% identify as Black, Asian, Mixed Race or from Minority Ethnic backgrounds

Page 37

8

Local context cont'd

We have an army of treasured carers who provide stability, support and care for our most vulnerable children. The council provides financial, social and personal support to foster carers to ensure they offer children the best possible care and opportunities to our children and young people.

A significant number of children live in residential or "semi-independent" accommodation which for young adults means bridging the gap between childhood and adulthood, so they are prepared for the challenges of living independently. There has been a continuous change in the ethnic makeup of children in our care. While Havering has an 84% White British population, half of the children in our care are from ethnic minority groups. We must recognise this by offering space for young people to learn and celebrate their cultural heritage.

Changes to legislation and funding arrangements for local authorities has meant that we have to do more with less. The coronavirus pandemic has also presented challenges to local authorities and its partners and, at the time of drafting the strategy, the impact on the mental wellbeing and long term prospects of young people in our care are not fully known.

Within this context, we recognise that we must provide our young people with the best possible care by being innovative, hearing their thoughts, wishes and feelings and finding new ways to meet their needs while providing excellent value. Ensuring support is personalised and allowing young people the opportunity to have control can improve outcomes while also reducing costs. This will require co-operation across services and partners, clear evaluations of projects to ensure that products are resulting in the outcomes expected, and rethinking how we provide services for our young people.

Care experienced young people celebrating the anniversary of The Cocoon.

9

Priorities

Care experienced young people celebrating the anniversary of The Cocoon.

Based on what we know of our children in care, using data and listening to their thoughts and feelings we have prioritised a number of areas which this strategy will deliver. These priorities will also deliver the government's seven principles as outlined above.

In order to achieve our vision to be a good corporate parent we have identified six main priority areas that this strategy will deliver:

1 Every young person should feel safe in their homes, schools, and public spaces.

2 Hear the voice of young people more, to better develop our services and the care young people receive.

3 For every child to have a caring home.

4 To provide aspiration, an excellent education, and opportunities for employment and learning for life.

5 A clear and shared picture of our service.

6 Excellent health outcomes for our children (explicitly mental health).

Priority 1 - Keeping our children safe
Every young person should feel safe in their homes, schools, and public spaces

How we will deliver this priority:

✓ We will work with schools to ensure that children in care are not permanently excluded from mainstream education or if exclusion is necessary to ensure a smooth transition to a school that is Good or Outstanding.

✓ Ensure children in care, and care leavers are at the forefront of the development of our contextual approach to safeguarding young people, to protect them from exploitation.

✓ Provide training to all Councillors and bespoke training for members of the corporate parenting panel, to specifically include adolescent safeguarding and exploitation.

✓ When anti-social and/or criminal activity involves children or young people, we will seek to understand and tackle the root causes and explore restorative approaches.

Feeling safe isn't just a physical thing, it's emotional too.
Quote from one of our young people

Page 40

Priority 2 – Hear young people

Hear the voice of young people to better develop our services and the care young people receive

Roti making demonstration from charity trip to India for children in care.

How we will deliver this priority:

✓ Involve our young people in the design and commissioning of services as well as assessing the quality of care they receive.

✓ Work with children and young people to create a "pledge" of commitments, from us to them.

✓ Co-produce a children in care and care leavers "offer" with our young people, for our young people.

✓ Ensure a children in care 'takeover' of at least one corporate parenting board per year, ensuring that senior leaders hear their perspective.

✓ Work with our young people to co-produce 'top tips' on corporate parenting, involving young people delivering to staff across the organisation and senior leaders.

✓ Give our black, asian and minority ethnic (BAME) care experienced children a voice in services we develop and the care we offer, which reflects and celebrates their culture and heritage.

Page 41

Priority 3 - Caring home for all
Every child to have a caring home

How we will deliver this priority:

13

✓ We will offer every care leaver the option of a council property or private rental.

✓ Develop a robust quality monitoring and accountability process to ensure commissioned providers are working in accordance with the seven principles of corporate parenting.

✓ House young people in borough whenever it is possible.

✓ Increase local options for alternative homes by increasing the number of Havering foster carers.

✓ Work with birth families who (with the right support) can be united with and care for their own children.

> **I remember when I first saw my bed at my carer's house – I'd never had my own bed, I always shared a bed with my sister.**
>
> **Quote from one of our young people**

13
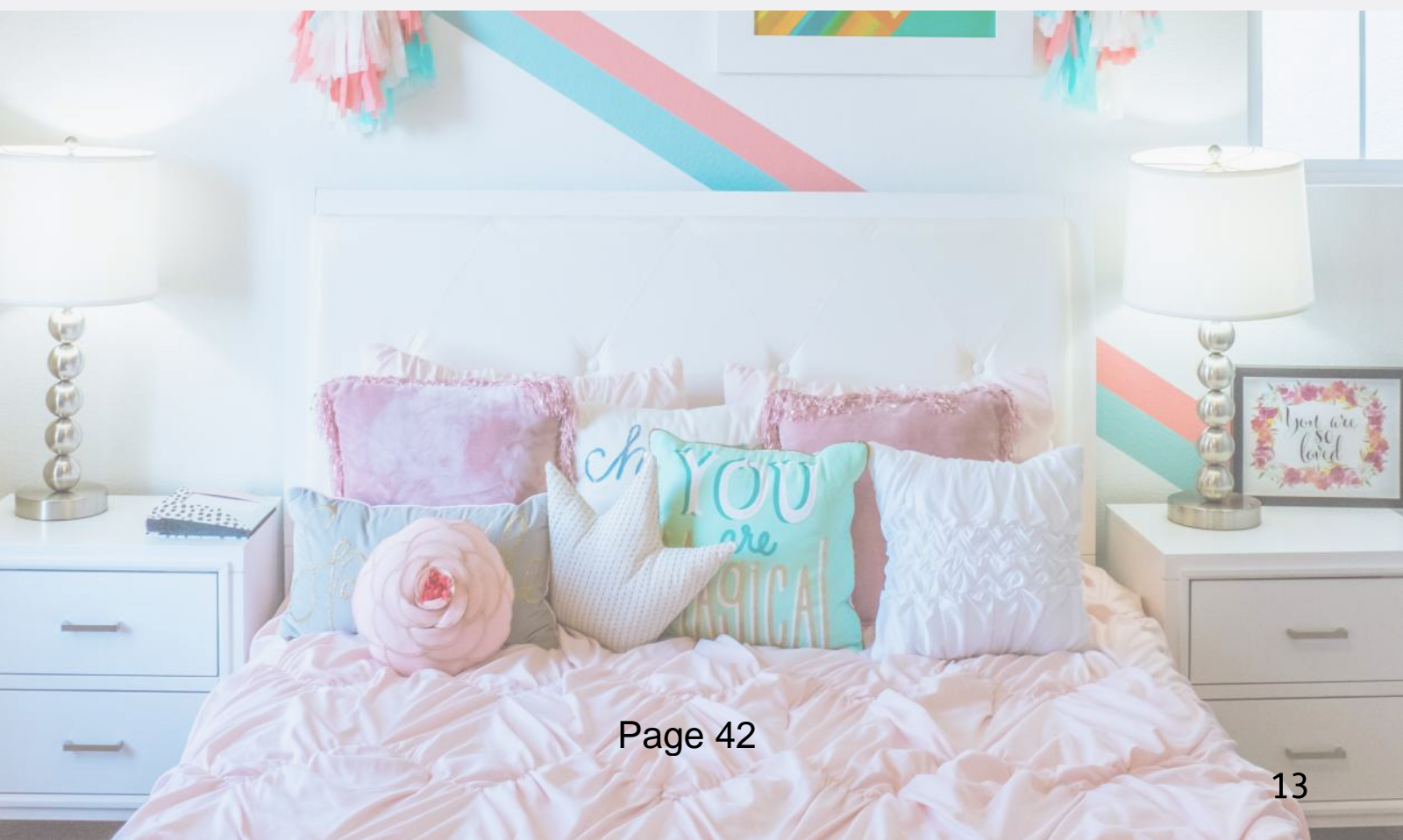
Priority 4 - Aspiration, education and opportunity
To provide aspiration, an excellent education, and opportunities for employment and learning for life

Young people receiving their awards.

How we will deliver this priority:

✓ Ensure all our children attend a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' school, and if not, they should only remain at the school because it is in their best interests.

✓ We will celebrate success by holding a virtual school graduation and other celebratory events.

✓ Develop a mentoring program to offer support, foster aspiration and promote best interest of children in our care.

✓ Ensure the right support is in place during transition periods between primary and secondary school, and between secondary school and sixth form, or college.

✓ When special educational needs are identified, we will ensure an education, health, and care plan is in place within 20 weeks.

✓ To contribute to the council's Social Values Strategy by supporting all our young people to build social capital through apprenticeships and work experience with the council and our partners.

Page 43

Priority 5 - Understanding our service
A clear and shared picture of our service

❝ **We really like the way you have kept in touch during lockdown – we can't wait to make biscuits at the Virtual Youth Club! And the fact that we are asked what activities we would like to do, means a lot, especially as we know we have been listened too, because what we say, happens.** ❞

Quote from one of our young people

How we will deliver this priority:

✓ Develop clear data sharing procedures to ensure information is shared between relevant partners such as schools, local healthcare providers, and the police.

✓ Ensure information is regularly shared with other departments to inform their planning and sufficiency strategies.

✓ Robust recording process for a wide range of outcomes including health, criminality, education, and housing.

✓ Record feedback from young people, clearly showing how we responded to it; holding an annual, 'you said we did session' with the children in care council.

✓ Increase the variety of services represented at the corporate parenting board to create a multi-agency panel support.

✓ Engage the council and its partners to deliver the priorities in this strategy via working groups, including officers from the borough's Regeneration team and Joint Venture partner Wates Residential to deliver social value.

Page 44

Priority 6 - Excellent health outcomes
Excellent health outcomes for our children

16

Children In Care preparing for their trip to India, taken outside Havering Town Hall.

How we will deliver this priority:

✓ Ensure timely and appropriate access to mental health and wellbeing services for children and young people, especially those with specific health needs.

✓ All young people to have regular and timely health and dental checks.

✓ All those working with children in our care to act as advocates and promote their best interests in relation to physical and mental health, including up to date and timely health records.

✓ Health passport for young people to be up to date and timely.

Page 45

Making it happen

Havering's corporate parenting strategy will be formally agreed by the Council's Cabinet and responsibility for its implementation will be delegated to the corporate parenting panel. To ensure it is fully equipped to deliver our ambition the panel will contain representatives from a variety of service areas alongside children's services. Four working groups will be established, terms of reference formed and action plans agreed to deliver the principles and priorities in this strategy, along the following themes:

- Health (incorporating mental health and emotional wellbeing)
- Accommodation
- Aspiration, education, employment and learning for life
- Participation and involvement of young people.

The voice of children and young adults will be paramount to the delivery of the strategy and the borough's two Children In Care Councils, the borough's Youth Management Team and Youth Councils will all guide our engagement.

The strategy will be agreed by the local authority's senior leadership team, to ensure that all departments of the council are aware of their duty towards our young people and that the strategy is deployed strategically across all services.

A key initial task will be for a pledge to be agreed, whereby children in care and care leavers work with the local authority and its partners to summarise and agree the expectations of the local authority in delivering its vision to be the best corporate parent.

This strategy will be reviewed in early 2023 to measure its success and to develop a new set of priorities that are relevant at that time.

Page 46

17
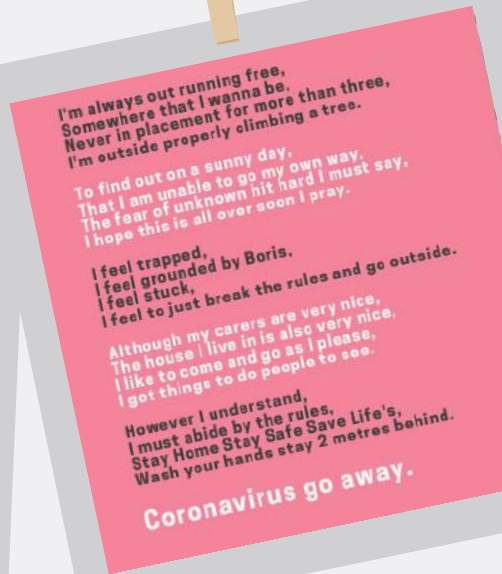
"I remember being told about the carer that I was going to stay with – her patience and care made the world of difference to me."

Quote from one of our young people

"After coming into care my confidence grew and I made more friends."

Quote from one of our young people

"I worry that all the people that have been supporting me, will suddenly not be there."

Quote from one of our young people

Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

Overview & Scrutiny Board

15 September 2020

REPORT

Subject Heading:	Pre-Decision Scrutiny of a Cabinet Report - Prevention of Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 - 2025
SLT Lead:	Abdus Choudhury – Deputy Director of Legal & Governance
Report Author and contact details:	Richard Cursons – Democratic Services Officer richard.cursons@onesource.co.uk
Policy context:	(a) With the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017, the Council is required to have a separate, stand-alone strategy dedicated to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping. (b) Impact of COVID 19 on households and staff.
Financial summary:	There are minimal financial implications arising from publishing a statutory proposal. However, the implementation of this proposal will have significant financial implications

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering   [X]
Places making Havering   [X]
Opportunities making Havering   [X]
Connections making Havering   [ ]

SUMMARY

In accordance with the pre-decision scrutiny protocol included in the agenda papers, the attached report is brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for scrutiny and comment prior to a final decision being made by Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATION

The attached report on the Prevention of Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 - 2025 has been selected by the Board as a subject for pre-decision scrutiny. It is suggested that the Board discuss the proposals contained in the report and agrees any points, comments or, if appropriate, alternative recommendations it would like addressed when the report is presented to Cabinet on 16 September. These will be addressed by the Cabinet Member in his introduction to the report at the Cabinet meeting.

It should be noted that, unless the proposal is different from that which the decision-maker is subsequently required to consider, the pre-decision scrutiny of the subject prevents the opportunity for call-in once the decision is made by the Cabinet.

REPORT DETAIL

As per Appendices

Appendix A – Cabinet report
Appendix B – Prevention of Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 - 2025

CABINET

Subject Heading:	Prevention of Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 - 2025
Cabinet Member:	Joshua Chapman, Lead Member for Housing
SLT Lead:	Patrick Odling-Smee, Director of Housing
Report Author and contact details:	Darren Alexander, Assistant Director, 01708 433751
Policy context:	(a) With the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017, the Council is required to have a separate, stand-alone strategy dedicated to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping.
	(b) Impact of COVID 19 on households and staff.
Financial summary:	There are minimal financial implications arising from publishing a statutory proposal. However, the implementation of this proposal will have significant financial implications.
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
When should this matter be reviewed?	16 September 2020
Reviewing OSC:	15 September 2020

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering   [x]
Places making Havering   []
Opportunities making Havering   [x]
Connections making Havering   []

SUMMARY

The Prevention of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 sets out the London Borough of Havering's commitment to tackling all forms of homelessness in the borough.

We will seek to further help those who do become homeless into stable, long-term homes, whilst intervening early to prevent residents becoming homeless.

We have a clear and genuine aspiration to end long-term rough sleeping by 2022, whilst meeting the Government's objective to eliminate it altogether by 2024.

The strategy sets out a number of measurable priorities, through a dedicated action plan, to support some of the most vulnerable people in our borough who are at risk of homelessness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To agree the Prevention of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025.

REPORT DETAIL

The Council recognises the importance of working with partners and industry experts to tackle homelessness and develop a truly bespoke pathway for each person that needs support, advice or housing. The Strategy has four over-arching objectives:

- Objective 1 – End long-term rough sleeping

- Objective 2 – Reducing the number of people in temporary accommodation

- Objective 3 – Supporting people who become homeless

- Objective 4 – Provide good value, integrated services that deliver excellent customer care

The draft strategy went out to consultation in December 2019 with the voluntary sector, housing associations, other public sector agencies, internal and external partners as well as Havering residents.

The resulting Action Plan reflects our response, highlighting how Havering and its partners will tackle homelessness in future years and deliver its strategic objectives. The delivery of the Action Plan will be monitored by the Homelessness Strategy and Rough Sleeping Steering Group made up of Council, statutory and voluntary sector partners.

Following the Covid-19 outbreak, the Government has taken unprecedented steps to limit the impact of the virus by announcing a number of measures to prevent and reduce the risk of homelessness.

Guidance was issued to local authorities on social distancing, self-isolation, necessary travel and the closure of all but essential retailers. Housing authorities were asked to close night-shelters and further guidance was issued on managing people in supported housing. Additionally, the Government implemented a blanket ban on private sector evictions.

People experiencing homelessness are especially vulnerable to contracting COVID-19 and the risks of those sleeping on the streets are even greater. We anticipate the pandemic to cause a rise in reports of domestic abuse and relationship breakdowns, as well as an increase in parental, family and friend evictions; we will actively monitor these scenarios to provide early intervention from the moment of contact.

We expect to see an increase in the demand for homelessness services and a reduction in the supply of affordable housing in the private sector. This strategy will therefore be monitored and reviewed in 12 months to ensure we respond to the changing circumstances of homelessness in the borough.

The development of new, affordable, social housing is critical to the success of the Prevention of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The Council's ambition to double the number of social homes in the borough through our Regeneration Programme demonstrates our commitment to reducing the levels of homelessness and supporting those most in need of housing.

REASONS AND OPTIONS

Reasons for the decision:

As a local housing authority, Havering Council has a statutory duty to publish a Homelessness strategy.

With the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017, the Council is now required to have a separate, stand-alone strategy dedicated to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping. The HRA 2017 presents the biggest change to homelessness legislation in 40 years including new duties to prevent and relieve homelessness.

Havering Council's Prevention of Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 aims to ensure the provision of support to people who were previously not entitled to help. It also seeks to help prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place by intervening earlier and encouraging other public sector bodies to actively assist in identifying and referring those who are at risk of becoming homeless.

Other options considered:

To not develop a standalone Prevention of Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

This was not a feasible option. We have a statutory duty to deliver a standalone Homelessness strategy.

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IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

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Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- Section 2 of the Homelessness Act 2002 ("HA 2002) requires local housing authorities to review homelessness in their district and to formulate and publish a strategy based on the results of the review. It is accordingly a statutory requirement for the Council to have a published homelessness strategy.

- Local housing authorities have discretion to carry out a homelessness review and republish a homelessness strategy as often as they wish to, providing they do so at least every five years. The proposed Strategy is clearly compliant with this, being the Strategy effective from 2020 – 2025.

- The Homelessness Strategy and results of the Homelessness Review are to be made available to the public. It is recommended that these are published on the council's website.

- Housing and social services authorities must take the homelessness strategy into account when exercising their functions.

- Local housing and social services authorities are obligated to have regard for the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Homelessness Code of Guidance ("the Code") in exercising their functions relating to homelessness and the prevention of homelessness.

- A chapter of the code sets out provisions for homelessness strategies and reviews. This includes that the homelessness strategy should take account of the additional duties introduced through Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The proposed Strategy does this.

- The Code states that housing authorities "must" consult public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons as they consider appropriate before adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy. This paper sets out that a wide range of organisations have been consulted with regard to the Strategy.

- Local authorities are under a statutory obligation to take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of people in the area, including those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Code focuses on having a multifaceted approach to homelessness and threatened homelessness with involvement of relevant departments and partner agencies. The Strategy proposes a multi-agency approach and references new protocols to be set up with NHS partners amongst other things.

- The challenges for homelessness as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic are set out in both this report and the Strategy. It is noted that as part of the Government's 'Everyone In' policy, that the Council may be accommodating individuals who usually would not be entitled to assistance under Part 6 or 7 Housing Act 1996 (for example those with no recourse to public funds). This is currently acceptable as it is in line with

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government policy in response to the pandemic. The Council would need to keep the situation under review as government guidance evolves.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

There are minimal financial implication arising from publishing a statutory proposal. However, the implementation of this proposal will have significant financial implications. Grant funding of £3.4m exists within Housing Demand. The grant funding which is administered by the MHCLG is made up of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant, Rough Sleeping Strategy (Pathways & Initiative) Prevention Fund, New Burdens and the Private Rented Sector Access Fund. £1.1m of this funding was brought forward from 2019/20 and £2.3m awarded for the year 2020/21. There has been no grant funding agreed to date for 2021/22. There is a risk that if unable to secure future grant aid for the years 2021/22-2024/25, the Authority will have to meet this funding deficit from its own budget.

The Government has committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminating it altogether by 2027. This will only be possible for Havering to achieve 5 years ahead of the target deadline, if sufficient funding and resources are allocated by the Government.

The change to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate to the lowest 30th percentile due to COVID-19 will enable more homeless individuals to afford private sector accommodation, however, the details of the duration of this change is still not known, which puts at risk their ability to sustain this type of accommodation as it may only be affordable in the short term.

Havering Council's regeneration scheme, which includes the redevelopment of 12 Estates across the borough has created the availability of short term temporary accommodation that are vacant, subject to delays in each phase of the redevelopment. It also creates a short-term rise in demand on housing stock as a result of the need to house existing tenants that are temporarily displaced by the programme.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The recommendations made in this report do not give rise to any identifiable HR risks or implications that would affect either the Council or its workforce.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:
(i) the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
(ii) the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
(iii) foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.
Note: 'Protected characteristics' are: age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage

and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

A full EIA has been completed as part of the Prevention of Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 – 2025 and is available as Appendix 2.

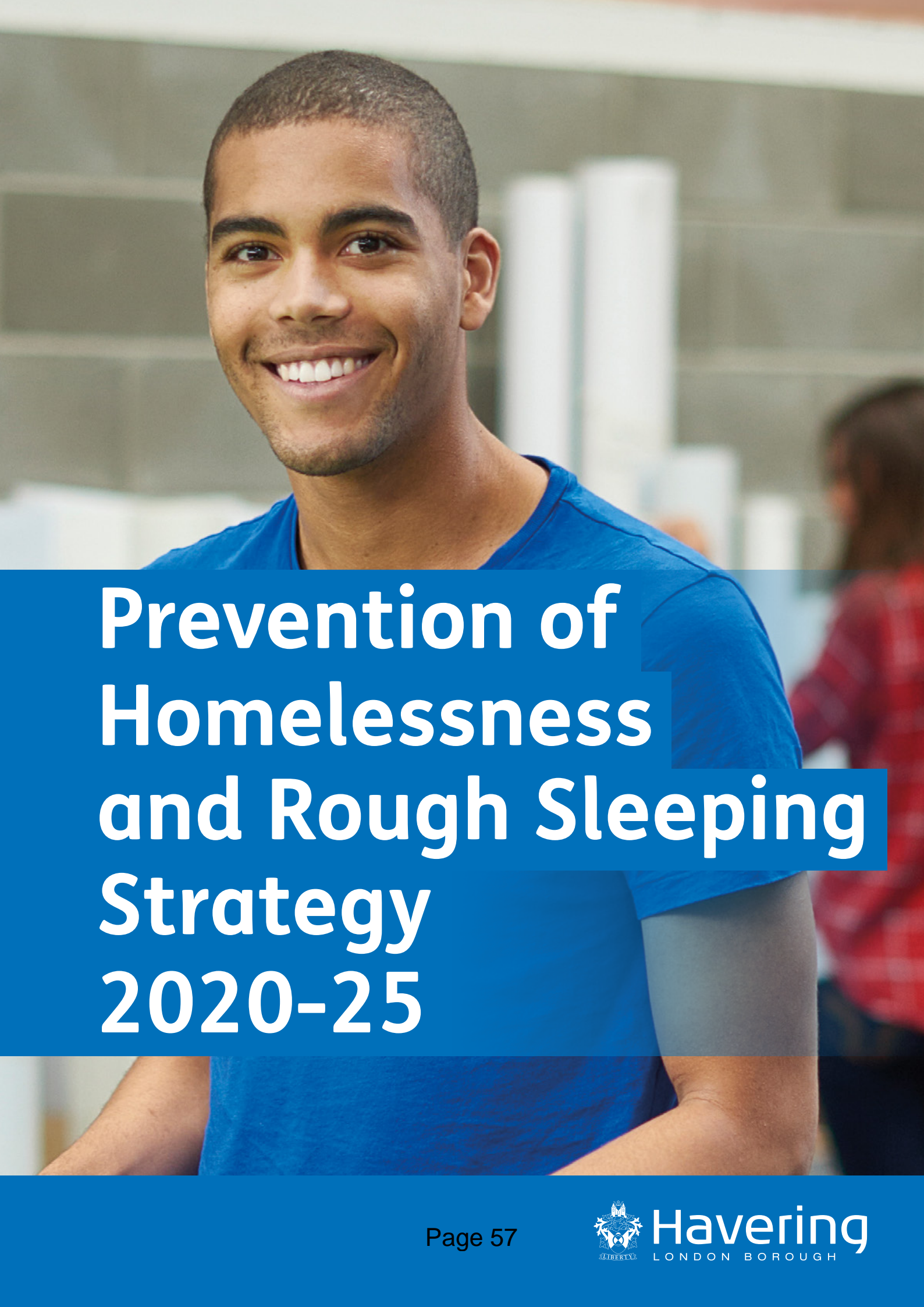## HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The strategy captures the profound impacts of homelessness in all its forms on physical and mental health.

The implementation of this strategy will generate significant benefits to the health and wellbeing of vulnerable residents. Significant decisions entailed in implementing aspects of the strategy will be informed by EqHIAs which will serve to identify opportunities to maximise health benefits and mitigate potential harms arising from the specific actions proposed.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 – 2025

Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 – 2025 - Equality and Health Impact Assessment

Prevention of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25

Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

Contents

Page 58

Foreword

To ensure Havering is able to continue looking after some of the most vulnerable people in our care, we have created this new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy. Homelessness presents itself in many different ways. Championing early intervention and increasing support for mental health and wellbeing will drive our clear and genuine aspiration to eliminate rough sleeping in Havering by 2022.

However, the Council cannot do this alone. It must work with its partners and those with experience of rough sleeping to drive change and align agendas across our public, voluntary and community sectors. We will provide strategic leadership to undertake this cross-sector challenge so that our partnership is committed to the principles identified in this strategy.

Whilst a person sleeping on the street is the most noticeable face of homelessness, many people are living in hostels or temporary accommodation provided by the Council, or 'sofa-surfers' relying on help from friends or relatives.

Addressing homelessness is particularly challenging due to a lack of good quality, affordable housing in the private rented sector, and a limited stock of social rented homes. This is particularly prevalent in London boroughs. In a bid to address this, we are undertaking one of the most ambitious council home building programmes in London, which will double our existing social housing stock, creating affordable homes for local people.

We have made great progress in helping people out of homelessness and into accommodation, but there is more to do. It is vital that we recognise the need for a broad approach to tackling homelessness, which includes understanding barriers to long-term stability and supporting people through their journey into a permanent home.

This strategy continues our commitment to improving the lives of those threatened with homelessness and provides a great opportunity to develop an effective and collaborative approach to tackling homelessness within Havering. Our strategy signals a move towards a culture where homelessness is everyone's responsibility so that all residents have a safe, stable place to live, now and in the future.

Thank you,

Joshua Chapman

Councillor Joshua Chapman

Cabinet Member for Housing

Page 59

Introduction

What is homelessness?

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 defines someone (a 'household', i.e. an individual, couple or family) to be homeless if they do not have accommodation that they have a legal right to occupy. This should be accessible and physically available to them, and in which it would be reasonable for them to continue to live.

People sleeping on the streets

People sleeping on the street, or 'rough-sleeping', is probably the most visible form of homelessness and also describes people who sleep outside, in disused buildings or in places that are unfit for human habitation - for example, in car parks, walkways, cars, public transport, stations, and doorways.

It is a dangerous and isolating experience, with significantly reduced life expectancy compared to the general population. People sleeping rough are almost 17 times more likely to become a victim of violence or assault, according to a report from Crisis.

Many people who have experienced sleeping on the streets for long periods may be exploited by drug suppliers, exacerbating addictions to drugs and alcohol, often leading to greater anti-social behaviour on our streets and a corresponding rise in the fear of crime for residents.

In our public consultation with people with lived experience, it was established that people who beg are often assumed to be people who are sleeping rough, which is not always the case. However, they may be just as vulnerable as people living on the streets as they may have been coerced into begging by drug suppliers to pay off outstanding debts.

Hidden homelessness

Many single, homeless people are not visibly homeless. They may live in overcrowded accommodation, in squats, or sleep on someone's floor. They may 'sofa-surf' with friends or sleep outdoors in concealed locations. If they have not approached a local housing authority for help with finding accommodation, they are unrecorded and, effectively, 'hidden', and will not have had the chance to receive housing support.

We know that hidden homelessness exists. In a recent December 2019 Crisis article, the number of hidden homeless in the UK was estimated to be around 79,000 people.

Page 60

Introduction

Why do people become homeless?

The reasons why people become homeless are numerous and often the result of a combination of factors coming together.

Sometimes it can arise from personal circumstances and start as a child or young adult who has experienced trauma. For instance, a person leaving care is at greater risk of homelessness. A relationship breakdown, issues with substance abuse, or mental health issues can also result in poverty and homelessness.

People leaving care, the armed forces or prison with insufficient resettlement advice and support are at particular risk of homelessness and often struggle to sustain their tenancies.

Long-term unemployment (a particular risk at this time of economic uncertainty following COVID-19), not being in education and employment, or a lack of qualifications or in-demand skills can all lead to homelessness.

Homeless households may:

• have lost their assured shorthold tenancy (AST). There are various reasons used by landlords to issue a section 21 (eviction) notice

• have lost their home due to rent/mortgage arrears

• be living in poor conditions that affect the health and wellbeing of their household

• be living apart from their family because changed circumstances mean they do not have a place to live together.

However, every homeless person has a different journey and the key to effectively tackling homelessness for the long-term lies in intervening from the earliest possible point, and taking a personalised, holistic approach to each individual.

Page 61

Introduction

Homelessness in Havering

Havering Council is proud of its record in offering assistance to homeless people within our borough. As demand for housing in the borough has outstripped growth in our housing stock, we have worked in partnership with housing associations and within the private sector to find housing solutions. Although this has provided much needed housing, the number of properties is insufficient to meet current and projected housing demand.

Private Sector Leasing (PSL) has been our major source of temporary accommodation (TA) for many years, with approximately 800 properties sourced in this way. Over 70% are from property owners who supply one or two properties. Although this demonstrates the commitment of the Havering community to supporting households experiencing homelessness, TA costs have risen by over 50% in the past four years, making temporary accommodation an expensive and ineffective long-term solution.

The difficulty of acquiring secure, long-term affordable housing is a fundamental cause of homelessness, and remains a significant barrier to reducing the wider problem.

Our 2020 – 25 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy builds on our shared, collective experience gained internally and through collaborative work alongside local partners. It sets out how we will work closely with these partners to both prevent and resolve the problems faced by households at risk of homelessness, and the long-term, sustainable and affordable solutions we will develop to meet these challenges.

This strategy also sets out actions we are taking to end long-term rough sleeping, and the solutions we will put in place to provide residents with early advice and intervention to avoid the destructive consequences of homelessness.

This strategy marks Havering Council's continuing commitment to improving the life opportunities for households threatened with homelessness and the most vulnerable residents in our borough.

The strategy has now become more challenging to deliver due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the risks of a resulting rise in homelessness. However, developing the strategy during the initial stages of the pandemic has allowed us to incorporate current guidelines and protocols into our action plan to ensure that the safety of our staff, partners and residents is maximised whilst maintaining the quality and promptness of support offered.

This is Havering Council's plan to tackle homelessness, and end long-term rough sleeping.

Page 62

Objectives

1. **End long-term rough sleeping**
2. **Reducing the number of people in temporary accommodation**
3. **Supporting people who become homeless**
4. **Provide good value, integrated services that deliver excellent customer care**

Page 63

1. End long-term rough sleeping

The Government has committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminating it altogether by 2024.

Havering has a relatively low number of rough sleepers compared with many other London authorities, and we are committed to supporting each person off of the streets into secure accommodation.

The Homeless Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 highlights a clear, increased emphasis on early intervention and prevention of homelessness, mirroring the three key themes of **prevention, intervention and recovery** identified within the national Rough Sleeping Strategy. These ideals form the basis of our own ambitions for this strategy.

Integrated, early intervention outreach teams have been created to work with partners in mental health services, the NHS, and discharge teams. We are fully supporting a holistic approach to preventing, intervening and supporting the recovery of homeless people. Considering the emotional and psychological needs of the individuals under our care, we will develop resilient relationships and provide tailored support to keep them off the streets.

Despite the prevention and relief duties introduced in the HRA 2017, single people remain at particular risk of homelessness due to the limited number of affordable options available to them. Our supply of supported accommodation for single residents with additional needs is strong, but residents sometimes struggle to move on into their own home.

Page 64

2. Reducing the number of people in temporary accommodation

Simply placing families and households into temporary and emergency accommodation does not provide a suitable, long-term solution for communities.

Where we have used temporary accommodation, extensive work has been undertaken to ensure that it provides a safe and comfortable environment that supports the emotional and psychological needs of those using it.

We are proud to have been one of the few local authorities not to use high-cost and low-quality bed and breakfast hotels and nightly charged temporary accommodation as part of our approach to tackle the national shortage in housing supply.

We have also seen significant progress with the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act, which has supported over one thousand households each year in Havering to live independently in the private sector through our Find Your Own (FYO) Scheme.

Page 65

3. Supporting people who become homeless

Whilst the main goal is to prevent homelessness, there is sometimes a need to provide temporary accommodation to residents who have become homeless. For Havering, this means ensuring that temporary accommodation is more sustainable and better value for money, and provides residents with a foundation to move towards long-term, permanent accommodation.

It is our vision to deliver a Housing-Led service to ensure we make the right accommodation available with suitable support very early on in the process.

Secure housing is seen as the first necessary step, not a final reward, and a foundation from which other issues can be addressed.

We want for our residents to have access to suitable, affordable accommodation. As well as increasing the supply of new affordable homes in the borough, we will protect existing social housing and focus on bringing the small number of empty homes we have back into use.

We will also work with Mercury Land Holdings (MLH), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Havering Council, to purchase properties for a 5-year tenure, giving us high-quality and good value temporary accommodation as we work to reduce homelessness.

Objective 4

4. Provide good value, integrated services that deliver excellent customer care

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into force in April 2018. This represents a major change in how we work to prevent and relieve homelessness and shifts the focus toward a cohesive, multi-agency response.

We want to ensure our most vulnerable residents get the help they need at the optimal time, avoiding the need for costly and complex interventions that have a more disruptive effect at a later stage.

We will develop new relationships with our community, and work together to help them play a part in addressing local homelessness, making sure everyone knows about the support and services we offer.

As part of the Homelessness Charter being developed with the third sector to bring together hardworking organisations, charities and individuals dedicated to supporting people who experience homelessness, we will look to share skills and resources to tackle priority issues in Havering such as entrenched rough sleeping, on-street begging and mental health engagement. This Charter will be used where possible to seek and secure external funding opportunities.

Along with our partner organisations, our relationship with those who are homeless needs to evolve to ensure we are finding lasting solutions to help prevent the devastating effect of homelessness. We will continue to nurture and grow our relationships with housing providers, third sector partners and statutory bodies to better integrate the help we provide and develop an evidence base to share best practice and ensure consistency across the sector.

We will develop new protocols in partnership with the NHS and other Council teams to ensure that support is integrated, delivered when required and nobody falls through any cracks between our services, with a particular focus on groups most vulnerable to homelessness. These groups include those discharged from hospitals, residents who misuse drugs and alcohol, and released prisoners.

Our vision is to remove the institutional burden of repeat evictions and support the principle that accommodation for our most vulnerable residents is unconditional.

Page 67

Challenges

Risks and Potential Solutions

Challenges – Risks and Potential Solutions

Housing availability

Since the early 1980s, house building has been sustained almost exclusively by private sector companies and housing associations. Development within the borough has slowed down, with housing stock calculated to have grown by just 6.1% over the last 10 years, a rate insufficient to meet current and projected housing demand.

In addition, the supply of housing is likely to slow further following the downturn in the housing market after Covid-19.

To counteract this, Havering Council has recently embarked on an ambitious regeneration scheme, part of which will see the complete redevelopment of 12 Council estates across the borough. The scheme will deliver around 3,500 new homes in the next 12 to 15 years.

The £1bn scheme is delivered through a joint venture with national developer, Wates Residential, and will seek to double the amount of council rented accommodation and more than double the number of affordable properties.

As part of the project, Havering Council has developed a social value initiative, which is committed to ensuring the regeneration scheme creates a lasting legacy by investing in education, training and skills opportunities, and employing local businesses to work on the scheme. This is valued at £100m of contracts, ensuring money flows back into the local area.

The regeneration scheme has created a short-term rise in demand for our housing stock as a result of the need to house existing tenants that are temporarily displaced by the programme.

Page 69

Challenges – Risks and Potential Solutions

Unaffordable rents

For residents in receipt of benefit, rises in local property prices have significantly reduced the number of properties within affordable reach.

We know that the inability to afford, or sustain, an assured shorthold tenancy (AST) in the private rented sector is a key cause of homelessness. This is not just an issue for people receiving benefits, but also for many in low-paid employment.

Though average market rents in Havering have slightly reduced, there remains a sizable gap between average market rent levels for different bedroom sizes in the private sector and the level of rent that housing benefit will cover. The change to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate to the lowest 30th percentile due to COVID-19 will enable many more households to afford private sector accommodation, however, the details and the duration of this change is still not known, potentially giving a temporary and unrealistic sense of affordability.

Gap between local housing allowance and lowest percentile of market rents
from internal data and Zoopla.

2019	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Average monthly rent	£874	£1,111	£1,338	£1,716
Housing Benefit entitlement	£694	£858	£1,082	£1,396
GAP individuals and families need to find each month (average monthly rent – housing benefit entitlement)	£180	£253	£256	£320
Percentage gaps	20%	22%	19%	19%
2020	**1 bed**	**2 bed**	**3 bed**	**4 bed**
Average monthly rent	£896	£1,189	£1,377	£1,802
Housing Benefit entitlement	£694	£858	£1,082	£1,396
GAP individuals and families need to find each month (average monthly rent – housing benefit entitlement)	£180	£253	£256	£320
Percentage gaps	20%	22%	19%	19%
2020 post COVID-19 16 March 2020	**1 bed**	**2 bed**	**3 bed**	**4 bed**
Average monthly rent	£896	£1,189	£1,377	£1,802
Housing Benefit entitlement	£898	£1,147	£1,371	£1,725
GAP individuals and families need to find each month (average monthly rent – housing benefit entitlement)	+£2	-£42	-£6	-£77
Percentage gaps	0	1%	1%	1%

Taken across the London region, the disparity between monthly rent levels and housing benefit entitlement was greater, resulting in unprecedented affordability issues for inner London authorities. However, the uplift in LHA rates during the COVID-19 period has significantly reduced this deficit in line with the current market rents. This makes Havering more attractive to other boroughs as an option to house residents, as it has become a more affordable rental area compared to their own boroughs, and provides an unrealistic view of affordability long-term when the LHA returns to its previous position.

Page 70

Challenges – Risks and Potential Solutions

Impact of COVID-19 on government spending plans

Nationally, over 1.5 million households have applied for Universal Credit since the 16 March 2020. For those in receipt of work-related benefits, an additional 250,000 job seekers allowance claims have been made.

Government has raised the Local Housing Allowance rates to the 30th percentile of market rents, which has improved affordability.

Despite these efforts, COVID-19 has had a tremendous effect on livelihoods of all in our society. Businesses have resorted to furloughing their staff on 80% wages paid by the Government, while their premises remain closed.

The self-employed, who have been included in the Government relief package, will also face uncertainty over the plans for how the economy is allowed to restart. Whilst it is too early to assess the long-term impact, we expect the resurfacing of mortgage repossessions for the remainder of 2020, as well as the processing of all private rented possession orders that created a backlog of casework when the courts suspended all landlord notices.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic came with a whole host of ongoing challenges, including the need to balance preventing the risk of transmission by practising social distancing and hygiene protocols, whilst ensuring we are able to engage, interact and build relationships with people who have become homeless during this time.

The Government has provided guidance to people and groups helping those sleeping on the streets, in night shelters and hostels to access accommodation and to keep them and others safe during the pandemic. Information has been given to local authority staff to assess clinical risk and follow instruction from NHS professionals either in-person or remotely.

The Government identifies three groups to consider and recommends a simple approach to triaging, assessing and accommodating people:

1. The symptomatic group would include anyone with a new persistent dry cough and fever/temperature over 37.8 degrees Celsius. This group should be placed in COVID-CARE sites

2. The asymptomatic high clinical risk group would include people who are eligible for the flu vaccination, and those who are extremely vulnerable. This group should be placed in COVID-PROTECT sites

3. The asymptomatic and low-risk group would include people not included in either of the groups above. This group should continue to use current service provisions or be placed in accommodation to meet current guidance on self-isolation.

Existing risk-management protocols for accommodation for specific client groups (for example, people with substance dependency, mental health issues, a history of violent behaviour, and women) is currently being used.

To tackle this greater challenge, all partners need to work together in a coordinated and strategic way including:

• Local Authorities – to lead on securing funding for accommodation, commissioned drug and alcohol treatment services, social care and support

• NHS – commissioning and provision of primary care, community services, urgent and emergency care, hospital discharge and mental health services

• Voluntary Sector – providing shelters, hostels, outreach support and food banks.

The multi-agency response should be organised and coordinated through local emergency response arrangements, specifically with:

• Local Resilience Forums to support those in our communities who are at the highest risk of severe illness

Page 71

Challenges – Risks and Potential Solutions

• NHS priority - leadership for people in COVID-Care (symptomatic) and COVID-Protect (asymptomatic, high clinical risk) using the COVID-19 emergency response structures

• Local Government priority - leadership for people in the asymptomatic and low-risk group.

One of the biggest daily challenges is the need to balance our safeguarding responsibilities with the need to protect families and workers by minimising the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and to ensure that we prioritise support for the most vulnerable, including undertaking necessary visits and contacts, whilst taking appropriate infection control measures. Staff across all teams must agree a coordinated plan for the effective distribution of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) following updated Havering risk assessment protocols.

Outreach staff do not routinely need PPE unless they are in close contact with symptomatic or confirmed cases of COVID-19, in which case surgical masks, gloves, aprons, and goggles/visors are recommended.

Future funding

On 23 December 2019, the Government announced an injection of £263 million homelessness funding citing that: "It cannot be right in the 21st century that people are homeless or having to sleep on our streets, and this Government will work tirelessly to bring this to an end."

The first £200 million will come from the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant that replaced the Temporary Accommodation Management Fee in 2017, and the remaining £63 million will be delivered to local authorities through the Homelessness Reduction Grant.

Working with local landlords

The Government announced a further delay in February 2020 to the full rollout of Universal Credit pushing this back to the end of 2024.

Lettings agents and private landlords remain reluctant to enter into new AST arrangements with benefit-dependent tenants without a rent guarantor or credit checks being carried out, however, will rent the same properties as temporary accommodation on a nightly basis, given that the greater rent premium covers the risks of damage and non-payment of rent.

This has created competition in the market place with landlords and agents offering their properties to the highest local authority bidder willing to pay incentives. As market rents remain up to 25% above the local housing allowance, it is still far more attractive to offer tenancies to private tenants.

Page 72

Action Plan

1. **End long-term rough sleeping**
2. **Reducing the number of people in temporary accommodation**
3. **Supporting people who become homeless**
4. **Provide good value, integrated services that deliver excellent customer care**

Page 73

Action Plan – Objective 1

1. End long-term rough sleeping

We will achieve this by:

Coordinating services for rough sleepers	• Provide an integrated outreach team to engage and build relationships with rough sleepers with mental health and psychological support needs
	• Provide safe environments supporting the emotional and psychological needs of the individuals using them
	• Provide healthcare and pathway navigators to plan appropriate services
	• Work with NHS to improve the hospital discharge process
	• Empower staff to build effective relationships with rough sleepers
Developing specialised support and housing solutions	• Develop a long-term housing solution for Havering's long-term rough sleepers as part of the COVID-19 restart and recovery plans
	• Develop a flexible tenure scheme to allow housing flexibility those who are at risk of homelessness
	• Enhance our cold weather provision
	• Commission supported housing for rough sleepers who have mental health and substance misuse issues
Bringing together all community support	• Promote volunteering and support schemes
	• Discourage begging through CPN and alternative donation schemes
	• Support EU nationals to obtain settled status
	• Develop a homeless charter for local businesses

Page 74

Action Plan – Objective **2**

2. Reducing the number of people in temporary accommodation

We will achieve this by:

Reviewing the Housing Allocation Scheme to ensure that it supports the prevention of homelessness	• Utilise under-occupations to free up family size properties
	• Developing an enhanced tenant incentive scheme to support tenants who may be under-occupying their property to move
	• Incentivise households to remain in private sector accommodation
Providing clear pathways into affordable housing, council properties or supported housing	• Offer long-term, sustainable alternatives to those in temporary accommodation
	• Provide housing, training flats and second chances for care leavers
	• Offer pre-tenancy training for tenants, both face-to-face and online
Improving relations with landlords	• Work with landlords to ensure more high-quality homes are available to rent
	• Improve energy efficiency and reduce costs for tenants
	• Develop a landlords' forum to improve the quality of housing management in the private sector and reduce evictions
Improving homelessness prevention by:	• Work with schools to identify families at risk of homelessness and educate teenagers about their housing options
	• Provide free Wi-Fi in temporary accommodation
	• Enhance the "Find Your Own" scheme
	• Develop Tenancy forums to develop support networks and inform those in temporary accommodation of relevant changes to legislation
	• Support prevention through outreach with health services, community hubs and landlord liaison services
	• Develop an evictions protocol with social landlords and offer early financial assistance
Building and buying more affordable housing	• Develop more affordable build-to-rent homes to support our temporary and permanent accommodation provision as part of our country-leading regeneration programme
	• Make sure we are getting our full allocation of nominations from Housing Associations, and more, to maximise the number of homes available to residents
	• Lobby for changes to LHA rates and a level playing field between private sector and TA subsidy
	• Negotiate better and earlier on S106 affordable housing agreements

Page 75

Action Plan – Objective **3**

3. Supporting people who become homeless

We will achieve this by:

Developing & providing specialist supported housing options.	• Build a high-quality new welcome and assessment centre for families, whilst phasing out our existing hostel provision
	• Provide on-site, specialist support & suitable accommodation to meet all needs
	• Work with hospital discharge teams to help people move into appropriate accommodation
Improving the quality of existing temporary accommodation	• Support Children and Adults services to provide higher quality and better value accommodation for some of the most vulnerable in society
Increasing the supply of quality accommodation	• Develop a sophisticated and nuanced supply and demand model to better predict and provide appropriate temporary accommodation where necessary
	• Procure accommodation of a higher quality and value standard to meet variations in need

Page 76

Action Plan – Objective 4

4. Provide good value, integrated services that deliver excellent customer care

We will achieve this by:

Intelligent business practices and better coordinated working with partners	• Enhance the protocols for joint working with colleagues in children's services, adult social care, mental health, and the learning disabilities services
	• Utilise a comprehensive 360-degree customer feedback process to develop services for people with lived experience of homelessness
	• Implement systems that support intelligence-led practices to help us to know what is happening across Havering
	• Enable enhanced system functionality to support online access and case monitoring
Ensuring we have well-trained, knowledgeable housing staff building valuable relationships with rough sleepers	• Staff provide trauma-informed care using motivational interviewing techniques and strength-based approaches
	• Staff should be curious, compassionate, creative and constructive in providing solutions
	• Propose our duty to refer scheme to ensure people get an effective response
Ensuring we fully receive and utilise income streams	• Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG), and better care funds to prevent homelessness
	• Ensure that we collect all income due in temporary accommodation
	• Review recharges to tenants and landlords post property inspection.
	• Review the standard lease agreement to make it fit for the future
Providing high-quality properties	• Drive up the standard and quality of private sector leased homes
	• Develop incentives for residents who care for their property
	• Enhance the management of maintenance contractors to improve their performance
	• Fully utilise income streams such as the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and better care funds to improve the standard of properties

Page 77

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