



INTERIM
HOMELESSNESS
STRATEGY
2018/19

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Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 placed a duty on all local authorities to publish a Homelessness Strategy and update it regularly.

In light of the growing national issue of homelessness and the recognition that more emphasis needed to be placed on preventing homelessness, the statutory landscape in homelessness changed significantly in 2017 with the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017. This legislation will introduce significant changes to the duties on and prescribed processes used by local housing authorities in managing homelessness and also helping those who could potentially become homeless.

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council published its first Homelessness Strategy in July 2003 with the most recent strategy covering the period 2008 to 2013. Given the significant changes resulting from the HRA 2017, during 2018/19 the Council will be required to produce a substantial review of homelessness within the Borough which will be instrumental in the preparation of a new strategy, in consultation with our partners and residents.

This interim strategy is intended to meet the Council's legal obligations to produce a Homelessness Strategy which will be replaced by the more substantial review after the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 comes into force in April 2018.

Legal requirements and strategic homelessness objectives

The Homelessness Act 2002 was intended to bring about a radical change in the way that central and local government, together with partner agencies worked to tackle homelessness, an important part of which is the formulation of a Homelessness Strategy.

Pending the more comprehensive homelessness review and strategy following the introduction of the HRA 2017, this Interim Homelessness Strategy is intended to meet the minimum legal requirements as set out in the existing Homelessness Act 2002.

This Interim Homelessness Strategy has specifically been designed to meet the needs of particular groups who are at particular risk of becoming homeless, including care leavers, people leaving prison, people who have left the regular Armed Forces, victims of domestic abuse, people leaving hospital and people suffering from mental illness.

The duty set out in the Homelessness Act 2002 requires local housing authorities to formulate a strategy for the following homelessness objectives:

- The prevention of homelessness, including reducing the levels of homelessness against the main causes;
- Ensuring there is sufficient accommodation available for people who are, or who may become homeless;

- Ensuring there is satisfactory support for people who are, or who may become homeless, or who need support to prevent them from becoming homeless again;

Response to strategic homelessness objectives

Objective 1 Preventing homelessness in Epsom and Ewell Borough

- Negotiations with parents, friends and relatives to prevent or delay homelessness to allow for a planned move
- Housing Options interviews for those threatened with homelessness
- Provision of housing advice
- Provide a Rent Deposit Scheme including, provision of bond/deposits, advice to landlords and tenants, inventory service, arrangement of Discretionary Housing Payments and Housing benefit liaison.
- Special Needs Panel in place to secure better access to supported social housing for vulnerable clients locally.
- Sanctuary scheme to help victims of domestic violence remain safe in their own homes
- The Council is represented at the regular meetings of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences set up to discuss and address the legal, support and accommodation needs of households suffering from domestic abuse.
- Support Citizens Advice Epsom and Ewell which provides financial and legal advice.
- With our east Surrey partners we have commissioned outreach services for rough sleepers called East Surrey Outreach Service (eSOS). The inclusion of non-statutory single homeless people and rough sleepers in our prevention approach has been very successful.
- Provide an enhanced Housing Options service addressing unemployment called Employment Training Housing Options Service (ETHOS)
- Hospital Discharge Protocol
- Parashoot floating support service providing tenancy sustainment
- Provide Severe Weather Provision to provide emergency housing in periods of very cold weather

Objective 2 Ensuring sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people in Epsom and Ewell Borough who are or may become homeless

- Provide a Rent Deposit Scheme including, provision of bond/deposits, advice to landlords and tenants, inventory service, arrangement of Discretionary Housing Payments and Housing benefit liaison.
- Creating additional temporary accommodation located close to or within the borough, through the council creating a £3m residential property purchasing fund which is used to purchase accommodation for temporary accommodation use
- Creating additional in borough temporary accommodation by completing a major renovation of 1 – 3 Blenheim Road to create high quality, energy efficient 9 x 1 bed temporary accommodation units, including one level access unit.
- Maximise access to additional sources of homelessness prevention accommodation wherever possible - such as the 11 units of accommodation in Ewell village procured from Paragon Housing Association
- Provision of supported accommodation for young homeless people in DeFoe Court
- Purchasing other property for use as temporary accommodation
- Planning policy requirement for 40% affordable housing in developments of 10 units or more.
- Provision of a Private Sector Leasing scheme to provide additional temporary accommodation through the long term leasing of suitable property within the borough
- Established a corporate Empty Property Group to reduce the number of empty residential properties and advocate their use for affordable housing
- Work with Rosebery Housing Association to ensure that all housing stock used as homelessness prevention accommodation is fit for purpose, self-contained and suitable for its residents' use.
- Working supported housing providers to ensure an adequate supply of supported accommodation.

Objective 3 Securing the satisfactory provision of support for people in Epsom and Ewell Borough who are or may become homeless; or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.

- With our east Surrey partners we have commissioned outreach services for rough sleepers called East Surrey Outreach Service (eSOS). The inclusion of non-statutory single homeless people and rough sleepers in our prevention approach has been very successful.
- Parashoot floating support service providing tenancy sustainment
- Provide an enhanced Housing Options service addressing wordlessness called Employment Training Housing Options Service (ETHOS)
- Working with Surrey County Council and Supported housing providers
- Work with Special Needs Panel to accurate assess the needs of households with additional support needs
- Work closely with colleagues in the police, probation and prison service to ensure we keep this risk to a minimum.
- In conjunction with Surrey County Council and other agencies in the area, the Family Support Team has been set up to will work with families to address school attendance, employment and anti-social behaviour and improve outcomes
- Joint working protocol for young people and care leavers with Surrey County Council to co-ordinate services for youth homelessness.
- Reviewed the council's Allocation Policy to ensure provision is made for Armed Forces and ex- forces personnel and their families