

# MUNICIPAL YEAR 2018/2019 REPORT NO. 93

## MEETING TITLE AND DATE:

Cabinet – 17 October 2018

## REPORT OF:

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<b>Agenda - Part: 1</b>	<b>Item: 11</b>
<b>Subject:</b> The approach to reducing Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation in Enfield	
<b>Wards: All</b>	
<b>Cabinet Members consulted: Cllr Maguire &amp; Cllr Lemonides</b>	

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Enfield faces significant challenges in addressing homelessness. Homelessness is increasing nationally due to complex and interrelated factors. The rising cost of renting and purchasing a home in London one factor. Enfield is also seeing, in common with all other local authorities, an increase in demand for homelessness services arising from welfare reforms and a major reform of England's homelessness law since April 2018.
- Given the above there are increasing pressures on preventing homelessness and the provision of sufficient housing supply in Enfield. In particular, pressure on temporary accommodation has increased significantly. At the end of March 2018 Enfield was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> highest nationally for the number of families in temporary accommodation, equating to 3350, most of which are housed in private sector owned properties.
- The numbers of households approaching Enfield are increasing and we need to find a sustainable way to intervene to address the highest causes of homelessness and reduce the demand for temporary accommodation.
- The Council's duty under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) to house the homeless poses significant budget pressures for the Council. Given current trends and new legal requirements to prevent and relieve homelessness under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the budget pressures will only increase unless action is taken to provide a more cost-effective alternative and put in place initiatives to reduce homelessness

- This report sets out an approach to reducing homelessness and to reducing the budget gap on temporary accommodation. The report recommends a mix of interventions and initiatives, including investing in reducing the numbers of homeless cases and increasing housing supply and reliance on nightly paid accommodation.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To note the report and cost the council is facing dealing with increasing homelessness demand and the cost of temporary accommodation services.
- 2.2 To agree that officers do further work on proposals in section 3.15 – Modular (flexible) Housing, section 3.16 – Social Lettings Agency and investment in prevention to reduce demand and increase supply of housing and bring these back for a further consideration by January 2019.
- 2.3 To note that the council's focus on preventing homelessness, a new Homelessness Prevention Strategy is in development and it is planned go to cabinet early in the new year.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

### **3.1 Strategic Context**

Enfield faces significant challenges in addressing homelessness including budget pressures. Homelessness is increasing nationally due to complex and interrelated factors. Enfield is also seeing, in common with all other local authorities, an increase in demand for homelessness services arising from major reforms to England's homelessness law since April 2018.

The 2019/20 financial year will be the ninth year in which local government has faced significant funding reductions. Enfield Council's core government funding has been reduced by over 50% since 2010/11, a cash reduction of £100m. In addition, increasing service demand over this period has created significant budgetary pressures. This means that we must find savings and additional income of £18m in 2019/20 in order to balance the budget.

In 2011/12 the total budgeted cost of homelessness and TA was covered by the rent received from the TA portfolio, we had in the region of 1950 households in TA.

However, in 2018/19 the total cost of providing this service is in excess of £8m (taking into account rent received) with 3350 households in TA and is set to increase without intervention by 10% per annum. There is further risk in

relation to the Flexible Housing Support Grant as is only guaranteed until 2019/20 and subject to the council's performance in preventing and relieving homelessness

- 3.2 There are increasing pressures on housing supply for residents of the borough and this has led to a burden on Enfield's temporary accommodation (TA). There is a significant increase in the use of TA particularly nightly paid accommodation (NPA) over the last few years after a period of declining numbers and relative stability. While the demand for TA is outstripping the supply, the forecast also indicates a continuous increase in the use of expensive nightly paid accommodation (NPA).
- 3.3 Historically TA was accessed by households where they had been asked to leave by family or friends, this accounted for circa 75% of homeless approaches per annum. This profile has changed in the last 4 to 5 years where now we see circa 64% of homeless approaches per annum are due to loss of private rented accommodation through no fault of their own i.e. the landlord has served notice to leave as they may wish to sell, move back in to the property, but more prominently to relet at a higher yield for both guaranteed rent or the professional private market

#### 3.4 **Homelessness Trends in Enfield**

Since 2012/13 the number of households accepted a homeless in Enfield has been consistently above the national average for London boroughs. During 2017/18 the Council dealt with 1,072 homeless applications and booked 1,233 households into temporary accommodation.

On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 there were 3,350 households in temporary accommodation in Enfield, a 70% rise from 2012. Enfield was second highest nationally. The increase in homelessness combined with multiple pressures on the private rented sector is causing an increase in the number of households being placed into expensive nightly paid temporary accommodation. In 2017/18, 784 households were accepted as homeless. Loss of private rented accommodation was the highest cause of homelessness accounting for 64% acceptances; host ejections accounted for 23% of acceptances.

#### 3.5 **Factors driving an increase in homelessness**

During 2018 the Council undertook a review of the factors driving an increase in homelessness in Enfield. In summary, they include:

- A rising population, including international migration and increasing levels of deprivation
- Welfare reforms including benefit caps and the introduction of Universal Credit
- A lack of affordable accommodation including rising house prices, a serious shortage of social rented homes and rising rents in the private rented sector that are above the Local Housing Allowance (LHA).

- Private landlords withdrawing from letting private rented homes to low income and benefit dependant households due to welfare reforms, instead preferring to move into the temporary accommodation market with less risk
- Other boroughs placing their homelessness families in Enfield through procuring private properties for temporary accommodation or a prevention solution

### 3.6 **Legal Requirement for a homelessness Strategy**

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to have a Homelessness Strategy that includes plans for:

- Preventing homelessness
- Ensuring sufficient accommodation is available for people who are, or who may become homeless
- Ensuring there are satisfactory support services for people who are, or may become homeless, or who need support to prevent them from becoming homeless again

Enfield's new 5-year Homelessness Prevention Strategy is in development with a strong focus on identifying people at risk at an early stage. Through partnership working the strategy aims to make best use of resources and ensure advice, support and assistance helps people stay in their homes or find sustainable alternative homes elsewhere.

Importantly, successful delivery of this strategy links closely with wider Council strategies and policies that already exist or are in development including:

- Enfield's Housing Strategy
- Health and Well-being Strategy
- Children and Young People's Plan
- Customer Experience Strategy
- Enfield's Allocations Scheme
- Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy
- Discretionary Housing Payments Policy
- Intermediate Housing Policy
- Tenancy Strategy and Policy
- Housing Enforcement Policy
- Housing Assistance Policy

### 3.7 **Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 (HRA) was enacted on 3rd April 2018 and significantly reforms England's homelessness law by placing

new duties on local authorities to intervene at a much earlier stage to assess and prevent homelessness. The changes require local authorities to assist all homeless households irrespective of their priority need status and put in place a Personal Housing Plan that is kept under regular review. The legal requirement for prescribed public bodies to refer those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 is expected to increase demand for services.

### **3.8 Increased Service Demand**

When the HRA was introduced, Industry experts predicted that homelessness approaches would increase by 50% with most of this increase coming from single homeless households. Current staffing levels, included recruitment of 27 extra front-line staff, based on financial modelling undertaken in December 2017 and an estimate of 3,432 homeless approaches annually. Between April – June 2018 there were 1,027 homeless approaches with demand forecasted in year 1 at 4,000 approaches. Developing a shared intelligence about homelessness and keeping this under review is key for managing and reducing demand including targeting resources appropriately.

### **3.9 Increased Casework Administration**

The HRA has introduced a significant burden regarding casework administration and management including the legal requirement to draw up a Personal Housing Plan that addresses the Housing and support needs of all applicants and all household members. Officers are required to draft many more Notifications and decision letters to administer a case and record in detail the progress and outcomes to comply with Government H-Click statutory data returns. The number of opportunities for applicants to request a Judicial Review regarding case administration and decisions has increased from 2 to 7 requiring the right level of trained staff for greater thoroughness and robustness in decisions and case administration.

### **3.10 A new Service Model for delivering homelessness and prevention services**

Implementation of the new legislation has resulted in significant changes to the way homelessness and prevention services are delivered. Measures undertaken to implement the changes are set out in Appendix 1.

Providing the right advice and casework support to prevent residents from being made homeless and empower them to make positive choices about where they live is at the heart of our new service model and features in our Homelessness Prevention Strategy. Homelessness prevention initiatives require significant investment to reduce the number of eligible families going into expensive and unsuitable temporary accommodation. Many homeless households approaching the Council for services are the most vulnerable in social and economic terms. Ensuring equality of opportunity and timely access to services is essential for preventing homelessness.

Many homeless households present with multiple and complex issues. Enfield has a range of services in place to prevent homelessness and these need to be ramped up and enhanced to address the increase in households approaching for homelessness and prevention services. New services also require development.

### **3.11 Loss of Private Rented accommodation**

Essential services required to address the highest cause of homelessness, loss of private rented homes include:

#### Tenancy Sustainment Services

Enfield has a frontline tenancy sustainment and casework service for reducing evictions covering advice on tenancy rights, defending possession proceedings, mediation with landlords and agents, addressing rent arrears and disrepair, maximising income including applications for discretionary housing payments, addressing benefit issues including Universal credit delays, illegal eviction and rogue landlords. Close working with the Council's Financial Assessments and Enforcement Teams provide added value.

#### Rent Deposit Scheme

Where tenancies cannot be sustained rent deposit schemes play an important role in preventing homelessness. Enfield has a successful rent deposit scheme called Home Finder Scheme to assist eligible homeless households to find their own suitable and affordable home in the private rented sector. In 17/18 the service assisted 383 households. This service faces additional pressure considering increased service demand.

#### Tenancy Relations Service

A current gap in service is dedicated resources to more effectively address illegal evictions and rogue landlords. More can be done to prevent private landlords from evicting and harassing their tenants into leaving accommodation with additional resources.

#### County Court Representation Service

Investment in dedicated resources for representing tenants who have a defence to possession proceedings and building positive relationships with the Court Service can prevent more households from being made homeless.

### **3.12 Host Ejections**

Host ejections continue to be the second highest cause of homelessness.

Targeting and strengthening mediation and home visit services at priority need households who have been asked to leave by family and friends has positive homelessness prevention benefits. These include the ability to confirm homelessness and residency, address reasons for the relationship breakdown, manage expectations and agree a planned housing solution.

### Relationship Breakdown

Relationship breakdown is the 3rd highest cause of helplessness and requires multi agency pathways to effectively support those facing serious domestic abuse and harassment.

### **3.13 Pathways and Customer Journeys**

The Council has a wide range of multi-agency pathways and customer journeys in place to address homelessness including attendance at the Multi-Agency Public protection arrangement meetings (MAPPA) hospital discharge, prison discharge, 16 & 17-year olds mental health, rough sleepers and care leavers.

Intervening to prevent homelessness, often in an emergency or crisis, often requires an immediate joint responses and sufficient resources to unravel complex challenges that have resulted in the risk of homelessness. Where homelessness cannot be prevented the local authority is required to assess housing need, support and find suitable accommodation. Additional resources are required to strengthen and enhance Enfield's approach.

### Holistic and Enhanced Housing Options and advice services

With additional investment, homelessness prevention services can be strengthened by introducing enhanced services providing targeted opportunities for applicants and household members to access work, training and education opportunities. Providing services aimed at increasing income, budget management as well as health and screening checks within the right environment can contribute towards improved health and well-being.

### Outreach work

Investing in targeted outreach work, for example, to schools and colleges aimed at raising awareness about housing options and the realities of leaving home can support a reduction in homelessness.

Joining up services and exploring further opportunities with statutory, voluntary and community organisations are essential in order to make best use of all resources. Involving customers in designing and shaping services will also support better outcomes for reducing the use of temporary accommodation.

### **Existing and new supply initiatives to reduce TA and cost**

- 3.14 We have developed a list of projects to assist in driving down the cost of TA and ultimately to drive down homelessness in the borough. We are committed to £1.1m in savings for FY19/20 to address the net loss on the TA portfolio, the projects below are already in process and are as follows:

- 'Move on' to the PRS
- Matching supply with household demand
- Reduction in high cost TA (NPA)
- Increase in leased accommodation

- Use of council regeneration properties for Private Rented Sector (PRS)

**‘Move on’ to the PRS** – many house households have been staying in TA for a long period of time, the average length of time currently 2.4 years (nightly let portfolio). With use of the Flexible Homeless Support Grant (FHSG) we have recruited a team of officers to commence carrying out suitability assessments to assist households to move to more suitable accommodation in the private sector

**Matching Supply with household demand** – some households have been placed in TA for a long period of time, however their circumstances may have changed. This project aims to ensure that households are placed in the right properties to assist in reducing spend on TA, particularly NPA.

**Reduction in high cost TA (NPA)** – target those families in high cost TA to move on to either more reasonably priced leased TA or move on to the private sector if appropriate. This will help reduce TA spend and change agents market expectations.

**Increase in leased accommodation** – we are keen to reduce the use of NPA by acquiring more long term privately leased properties, this will aid portfolio stability and give better value for money.

**Use of council regeneration properties** – there are number of empty social housing units earmarked for demolition in regeneration areas around Enfield. Following a successful re-tender for a managing agent to manage and refurbish these units we are in the process of handing over and initial 92 (of a proposed 150) properties for use on a discharge of duty basis until they are demolished. This project provides significant income and savings to the council.

3.15 **Existing supply projects:** We have additional supply projects proposed, some of which have already been agreed at cabinet, that will add new more cost-effective supply to our portfolio both from a TA and PRS (Discharge of Duty) perspective. This will help us to be less reliant on expensive letting/estate agents, the projects that have agreement at cabinet are as follows:

- Modular (Flexible) Housing - **KD 4238** and **KD4292**
- Roof Space Conversions – **KD 4679**

**Modular (Flexible) Housing** – this project aims to provide a flexible, quick build housing to secure short term, cost effective accommodation to help meet the rising demand for accommodation. Flexible Housing can take a number of forms including temporary, relocatable modular accommodation. This will also enable the council to make use of underutilised sites on a ‘meanwhile use’ basis.



There is an approved key decision for this project (KD 4238) from January 2016 where at cabinet the principle of flexible housing was agreed and that the decision for use of sites be delegated to Lead Members for Housing and Finance, and Executive Directors for Place and Resources. Further to this decision we completed a tender exercise for the delivery of Flexible Housing. From the tender exercise we have an approved framework of 7 providers, this was agreed at cabinet in July 2016 under a key decision (KD 4292). This project will enable us to reduce the use of costly nightly paid accommodation and provide more supply in the Enfield area.

**Roof Space Conversions** - We have identified more than 80 low rise blocks (up to 3 floors) around the borough that have roof space that could lend themselves to conversion of more than 200 flats (2 to 3 flats per block). The projected costings for this project show that we can deliver 1 and 2 bed properties at 40 to 60% of the cost of buying properties on the open market.

We can make use of right to buy receipts for this project as is development of social housing units. This represents a far more efficient use of right to buy receipts than using them to buy properties on the open market. Importantly, the creation of properties rather than a dependency on the private market will give us more control over pricing. This project will also assist in providing much required new supply of properties in Enfield. The project received Cabinet approval in July (KD 4679) and is now in process.

3.16 **New supply project:** We are in the process of preparing cabinet report:

- Social Lettings Agency (SLA)

**Social Lettings Agency (SLA)** – Social lettings agencies are a form of private renting access scheme run on a commercial basis. They help homeless and vulnerable people to access and sustain PRS tenancies, but also generate income to cover operational costs. We are looking to explore the use of an SLA to help us to discharge our homeless duty in the private sector and reduce the use of costly TA. An SLA will enable us to further engage with private landlords directly rather than costly letting agents as we do currently. This will also help to reduce the use of TA and therefore cost. It also proposed that with use of an SLA we can service other areas of the council for accommodation such as Adult Social Care clients with physical disabilities for example.

We have set up a brand named 'Enfield Let' and have in place a marketing campaign to include advertising in local papers/magazines, digital marketing (social media), attendance at landlord shows. The overriding aim of Enfield Let is to provide landlords with an honest deal, and assist households to move to stable, good quality and affordable accommodation in the private sector with a

brand they can have confidence in. We are in the process of gaining advice on the set up and operational costs of an SLA and hope to come back to cabinet by January 2019 with a proposal.

There is a new pan London initiative named 'Capital Letters' that all London Boroughs have been invited to join. This is a jointly funded project by the Ministry of Housing (MHCLG) and GLA. It is proposed that a central procurement hub for PRS and leased TA is set up to service all boroughs to gain more control over the housing market. The issue with the pan London initiative is that it intends to pay incentives to landlords and agents to let their properties, however we feel that this may assist in escalating prices further (especially in Enfield) due to the level of incentives on offer. It also involves the council becoming part of a trading company, and the potential transfer of staff to the company in a central location. This initiative requires a full financial and impact assessment before we commit to potentially joining.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 **Do nothing** – Preventing homelessness is a statutory duty. If the local authority does not invest in prevention activities and administer applications correctly there is a risk of Local Government Ombudsman challenges and Judicial Review legal challenges as well as reputational damage to the council. A lack of prevention activity will cause increased homeless approaches and demand for emergency accommodation.

If we were not to implement the list of move on and supply projects this will lead to escalating TA costs as the portfolio will continue to grow, with little chance of move on for families.

- 4.2 **Invest in prevention but not supply initiatives** – Our primary aim is to prevent homelessness wherever possible. Where this is not possible and there is insufficient supply and alternative housing options are available this will result in eligible household's being placed into expensive nightly paid accommodation. This will drive the market further towards the guaranteed rent market causing further private rented sector evictions. This will also create an increasing portfolio of families living in costly TA with limited chance of move on and discharge of the council's homelessness duty into the private sector.

- 4.3 **Implement supply initiatives, but no investment in prevention** - We can implement all supply initiatives as detailed in this report, however if we do not invest in prevention there will be a continual flow of homeless families approaching with a requirement for temporary accommodation and private rented accommodation.

Increased demand on this service causes pressure on the nightly paid market leading to escalated prices. This will also drive landlords in the private rented market towards guaranteed rent with letting agents who currently supply us with nightly paid accommodation, this will lead to further price inflation.

## **5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 Without addressing the net loss across the TA portfolio and the increasing number of homeless approaches the net loss is estimated to increase by approximately 10% per year, adding further pressure to the Councils overall financial position.
- 5.2 Potential investment in a Social Lettings Agency will enable us to engage directly with landlords rather than letting and estate agents where there is an additional layer of costs in providing TA and PRS accommodation. This will enable us to roll out the 'Enfield Let' brand as a trusted offer to landlords and assist households to move to stable, good quality and affordable accommodation in the private sector with a brand they can have confidence in.
- 5.3 The development of Modular (Flexible) Housing will enable us to provide good quality TA with the use of sites in the Enfield area on a 'meanwhile use' basis. This will help to reduce our reliance on costly nightly paid accommodation and will also set the expectation that TA is provided on a 'temporary' basis whilst we find a more suitable property in the private sector.
- 5.4 By addressing the pressure on TA costs this will enable us to invest in frontline homelessness and prevention services, addressing the main causes of households becoming homeless and efficiently administer cases whilst working with the market to stabilise the PRS. This will help to ensure that TA is provided as a last resort for those in need where homelessness cannot be prevented.

## **6. COMMENTS OF OTHER DEPARTMENTS**

### **6.1 Financial Implications**

The gross cost of Temporary Accommodation (TA) in Enfield is currently more than £50m per annum (net cost is £4.2m) and without intervention will continue to rise year on year (currently estimated at approximately 10% per year). This is unsustainable in the medium to long term and adds to the budgetary pressures that the Council faces. In addition, it costs approximately £4.5m in staff costs in providing homelessness services. There is a commitment to reduce this pressure with a range of savings and initiatives designed to both prevent homelessness in the borough and where homelessness does occur to provide cheaper, better accommodation for those in need.

The Council has currently identified £1.1m of savings around the supply of TA which will be in place for the start of 2019/20. These are linked to the savings initiatives described in paragraph 3.14 in the main body of the report.

The Council is currently in receipt of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG) which is partly administered to give Local Authorities the means to implement a successful prevention strategy. However, this funding is currently only agreed until 2019/20 so although this could be used to fund the yet unquantified additional resources as mentioned in the report these may only be short term.

A more detailed assessment of the finances for each scheme described in paragraphs 3.15 and 3.16 will follow in due course once they have been approved in the early part of the new year together with the new Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

## **6.2 Legal Implications**

6.2.1 The 2017 Act made several amendments to existing homelessness legislation extending the duties of housing authorities. The duty to prevent and relief homelessness is at the forefront of the changes. Effective prevention and or relief action means less households will be owed the s188 interim accommodation duty thereby reducing the number of households placed in expensive nightly paid accommodation.

6.2.2 There is however not an unlimited period of time for any such prevention or relief work to be done successfully and this reports correctly and identifies the need for investment in prevention.

6.2.3 It is not possible to prevent homelessness successfully in every case and the further recommendations in this report to increase supply and reduce cost will assist the Council to comply with its housing accommodation duties. Increasing supply will reduce legal challenges as the Council will be in a better position to comply with its duties as and when an accommodation duty arises

6.2.4 The recommendations in this report are in accordance with the Council's statutory duties under homelessness legislation including duties imposed by Children Act legislation.

## **6.3 Property Implications**

None

## **7. KEY RISKS**

None

## **8. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

### **8.1 Good homes in well-connected neighbourhoods**

The proposed options will help the Council to deliver good homes in well - connected neighbourhoods and help to reduce the use of temporary accommodation across the Borough.

## **8.2 Sustain strong and healthy communities**

By reducing homelessness and Temporary Accommodation in Enfield we can help support and strengthening our local communities and work to address and improve health outcomes for our residents.

## **8.3 Build our local economy to create a thriving place**

By empowering tenants to being more self-sufficient and make their own choices this will support the delivery of the council priority to build a local economy a thriving a place.

# **9. EQUALITIES IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

**9.1** Local authorities have a responsibility to meet the Public-Sector Duty of the Equality Act 2010. The Act gives people the right not to be treated less favourably because of any of the protected characteristics. We need to consider the needs of these diverse groups when designing and changing services or budgets So that our decisions it do not unduly or disproportionately affect access by some groups more than others.

**9.2** Corporate advice has been sought regarding equalities and an agreement has been reached that an equalities impact assessment is neither relevant nor proportionate for the approval of this report outlining the approach to reducing homelessness and Temporary Accommodation in Enfield

However, it should be noted that projects or work stream deriving from this may be subject to a separate Equalities Impact Assessment. Therefore, the separate projects and work streams will be assessed independently on its need to undertake an EQIA to ensure that the council meets the Public Sector Duty of the Equality Act 2010.

# **10. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Robust performance management provides the Council with accurate data and ensures that service delivery is meeting local needs and priorities. The Corporate Performance scorecard presented quarterly to cabinet includes an over view of the key measures around Homelessness and Temporary accommodation. Through performance monitoring we can ensure our

interventions are successfully support service delivery and achievement the council's priorities.

**11. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

None.

**12. HR IMPLICATIONS**

None.

**13. PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

Decent housing is a basic tenant of a healthy life. Beyond the notions of warmth and shelter it provides security, refuge and the basis of a family life. Anything Enfield can do to prevent or mitigate the effects of homelessness will be useful in improving the health of the public.

**Background Papers**

None

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Homelessness and Prevention Service Changes and Improvements arising from the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**

The homelessness Reduction Act 2017 enacted on 3 April 2018 has required the local authority to put in place a range of service improvements to deliver the changes and improve the customer experience. They include:

- Procuring a new IT solution (HOPE) for managing casework and reporting on outcomes in line with government H-Click data requirements. Future government Flexible Homeless Support Grant allocations will depend on demonstrating success in preventing and relieving homelessness.
- Implementing a new service model and structure including Triage and back office casework function and keeping it under review to ensure efficiency and value for money. Phase 2 involves working with homeless households and partner agencies to build financial resilience and resilience with employment, education and training support to improve health and well-being.
- Emending the right staff behaviours and culture through staff training and development to deliver robust and timely assessments and a positive customer experience
- Working with partner agencies to map high demand customer journey processes for challenging issues including domestic abuse, rough sleeping, private sector evictions, host ejections, hospital and prison discharge.
- Development of customer service standards, improving customer communications and reviewing the website offer
- Implementing a corporate communications project to encourage those at risk of homelessness to get advice and assistance early and improve access to services
- Using customer insight to shape, design and inform service delivery
- Using local intelligence to forecast and effectively manage demand for services
- Exploring options for improving the current facilities and environment at John Wilkes House to improve the customer experience and enhance service delivery