



Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and Action Plan 2019 to 2023

On the 1st of April 2023, Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset West and Taunton Council and South Somerset District Council were replaced by Somerset Council. This strategy was written before April 2023 and therefore this document will reference those councils that no longer exist. It has also been agreed that this strategy is extended to give the new Somerset Council enough time to review and formulate a new homelessness strategy. Therefore this strategy will expire in March 2025.

Contents Page

Contents	Page
Foreword by Cabinet and Executive Members for Housing	3
Introduction	5
How the strategy links with other strategies	6
Overview of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Somerset West and Taunton	7
Challenges and Gaps	10
Priorities	12
The priorities are	12
How will we be measured?	16
Action Plan	17

Foreword by Cabinet and Executive Members for Housing

Welcome to the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy, which sets out a clear vision and robust plan for tackling homelessness and rough sleeping across Somerset. Recognising that homelessness is detrimental to wellbeing, the strategy focuses on preventing homelessness through early intervention to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping and its impact on families, individuals and communities.

We are fortunate in Somerset to live in a beautiful rural county with a central County Town and a network of many market towns. We want our communities, businesses and residents to thrive. A decent place to live is essential for positive health, social and economic wellbeing.

We provide our homelessness services in a landscape of constantly changing government policy and legislation and challenges such as increasing rental prices. At the same time Local Housing Allowance rates generally fall short and not enough homes suitable in size, type and affordability are available for everyone in need. Hinkley Point C is an added pressure on housing markets in the west of the county. The Covid-19 crisis is a serious challenge for all service users, service delivery and supply chain. It will leave a challenging legacy from which we also hope there may be some positives, such as more collaborative working alongside local communities.

Our belief is that fundamentally, no-one should be without a place they can call home and no one should have to sleep rough. We have set out achievable solutions to help prevent homelessness and reduce or eliminate rough sleeping. We know that prevention is the most effective way to tackle homelessness. We want to ensure that we have the right provision in place to prevent homelessness whenever we can and to help people faced with homelessness and sleeping rough to access accommodation. We have welcomed the government's Rough Sleeper Initiative, which helps us to address the complex issues around rough sleeping across the county and successfully bid for further funding because our interventions are working.

This strategy and accompanying action plan provides direction and helps us to focus our energies and limited resources, using them creatively to make the biggest impact on prevention and to provide help where people find themselves without a home or rough sleeping. It will bring together the work of all partner agencies and sets out our priorities and underpins our commitment to homelessness prevention and reduction.

We are delighted to endorse this strategy and action plan. We would like to extend our thanks on behalf of the Somerset district councils to all who contributed to its development, the ongoing work and partnerships that are so vital to our homelessness services and our aim to prevent rough sleeping and homelessness as far as we can in the future.

Councillor Richard Pinnock

Portfolio Holder for Housing Services Mendip District Council

Councillor Fran Smith

Portfolio Holder for Housing Somerset West and Taunton Council

Councillor Andrew Gilling

Portfolio holder for Housing Sedgemoor District Council

Councillor Val Keitch

Portfolio Holder for Housing and Leader of South Somerset Council

Introduction

This strategy and action plan are based on the evidence in the Needs Assessment which we recommend reading first. The 2002 Homelessness Act places a duty on Local Authorities to develop a homelessness and rough sleeper strategy and an obligation to renew it every five years. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 brought significant changes, transforming service delivery to prevention focused services. New measures for dealing with homelessness were introduced including:

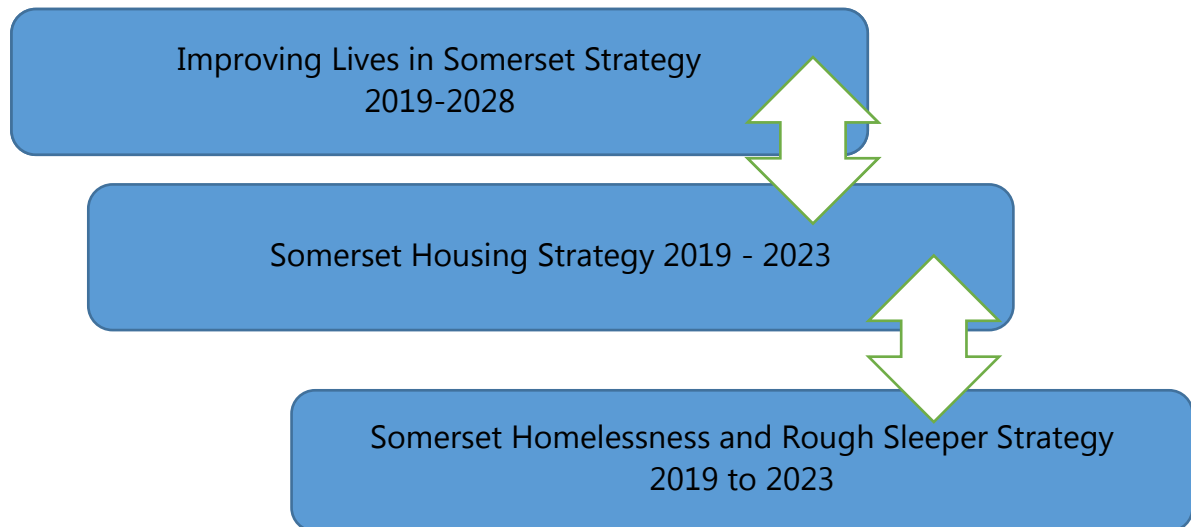
- Increasing the length of time a housing authority should treat someone as threatened with Homelessness from 28 to 56 days;
- The introduction of Personalised Housing Plans for clients to outline the circumstances of homelessness, the housing needs of the client, any support required to secure and sustain accommodation, steps that the client is required to take along with the steps the local authority is required to take to assist the client;
- A new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible households threatened with homelessness;
- A new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants;
- A new duty on public services to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

In 2018 the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published its “Rough Sleeping Strategy” which set out the government’s vision “to support every person who sleeps rough off the streets and into a home”; to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027. It focuses on three key themes: Prevention; Intervention; and Recovery, aspirations which we also share.

The current interim strategy was developed by the four District Councils in Somerset and was adopted in 2018. Since the adoption of the Interim Strategy we have conducted a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Needs Assessment which has been used as the evidence base for the “Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023” We have also considered the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the need for continued service development to address emerging new priorities.

The delivery of this Strategy will be monitored by the Homeless Managers Group (HMG). A full review will be conducted in 2023 when a new needs assessment will be carried out to guide development of a refreshed strategy.

How the strategy links with other strategies



In Somerset we have an overarching strategy, developed by the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board “Improving Lives in Somerset Strategy 2019 - 2028”, which details the county vision which includes the following:

- A thriving and productive Somerset that is ambitious, confident and focused on improving people’s lives
- A county of resilient, well-connected and safe and strong communities working to reduce inequalities
- A county infrastructure that supports affordable housing, economic prosperity and sustainable public services
- A county and environment where all partners, private and voluntary sector, focus on improving the health and wellbeing of all our communities

The “Somerset Housing Strategy 2019 – 2023” was launched in March 2019, covers the whole county and sits beneath the “Improving lives Strategy in Somerset Strategy 2019 - 2028”. The Strategy sets out the following vision for the county:

- **Strong and effective strategic Leadership:**
To deliver leadership across an integrated system that embraces communities, housing, health & wellbeing, social care and town & country planning
- **A local Economy that provides opportunity for all:**
To increase housing supply across all tenures and maximise the proportion of affordable homes including within rural communities, to be constructed by a skilled local labour force

- **Homes in Somerset are good for your Health:**

A healthy living environment with secure and decent homes that fosters independent living within strong communities

- **A Society that supports the vulnerable:**

Coordinated support to individuals and communities to reduce the impact of Welfare Reform, to prevent homelessness, and to facilitate a balanced housing stock that meets the needs of all local people

The "Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023" sits beneath the "Somerset Housing Strategy" and works to support the vision and priorities detailed in it. The "Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023" details what we know, what we are doing and what we will do to continue to improve the service we provide.

Overview of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Somerset West and Taunton

A main homeless duty is owed where the authority is satisfied that an applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a specified priority need group. Statutorily homeless households are referred to as 'acceptances'.

There were 478 application decisions taken in Somerset during 2018/19. Out of these 218 were owed a homelessness duty. The most common reason for initial contact throughout the county was the loss of an assured shorthold tenancy. The main reason for priority need was having dependent children, with the remaining factors covering the main criteria for a vulnerable individual.

Of the applicants owed a main duty, 58% were aged 25-44 years of age, followed by the 16-24 years of age group, who made up 25% of the applicants. The younger bias of those in need of support is very clear.

A total 1495 prevention and relief cases presented during 2018/19. Of this, 133 were assisted to remain in their accommodation and 516 were assisted into alternative accommodation under the prevention duty (there were also another 251 that were assisted under the prevention duty but we were unable to break this down further), whilst 589 were assisted to relieve their homelessness under the relief duty.

The use of temporary accommodation has been consistently low in Somerset over the last few years; we have accommodated 120 people, in such accommodation, as of quarter 4 (January to March 2019).

As a result of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) we are expecting demand for temporary accommodation to increase. This expectation stems from the fact that under this statutory provision we are obliged to help prevent an applicant becoming homeless, or relieve them of homelessness regardless of whether they are intentionally homeless. This requirement can mean that an applicant who is intentionally homeless will still need to be placed into temporary accommodation, if needed, whilst we try to relieve their homelessness during the 56 days 'relief duty'.

We are also seeing an increase in the volume of approaches and the length of time staff are working on an individual case. This increase in volumes can mean that often cases where an applicant is likely to be intentionally homeless now remain with the officer concerned, as part of their casework, until a final decision is made.

We currently have approximately 568 armed forces veterans in the county who neither own nor rent a property and who could potentially become homeless. Homeless veterans have been found on average to be older and more likely to have additional needs such as alcohol-related problems. In considering the needs of homeless veterans, directing them to specialist advice can be as important as meeting their accommodation needs.

Pathways to Independence (P2i) is the commissioned service that deals with youth housing in Somerset. The highest proportion of youths needing help during 2018/19 were aged between 18-21 years, with the main reason for presenting being the threat of homelessness.

Citizens Advice services remain key to supporting many of our clients – a significant proportion of whom have debt / budgeting support needs and require specialists who are trained to give advice to these individuals and in turn will support them in being financially stable moving forwards. The Local Authorities all support Citizens Advice services financially in our local areas to help prevent and relieve homelessness.

Positive Lives, which support adults with complex needs, supported 850 people during 2018. They provided other support too, such as helping 380 people to engage with education and training, 226 people to move into independent living and 47 people to gain employment.

We also saw the launch, in April 2019, of the 'Second Step' service funded by Somerset County Council which helps clients with complex needs to live fulfilling lives in their communities, thus retaining their tenancy and reducing repeated homelessness.

Gypsy and Travellers definition:

Excerpt definition of Gypsy and Travellers under the Housing Act 2004:

- *“Persons with a cultural tradition or nomadism or of living in a caravan and all other persons of a nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin”*

Excerpt definition of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessment (GTAA) 2007 was withdrawn in Dec 2016 and has not yet been replaced, however, the updated definition in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015 excerpt:

- *“persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin”*
- However, it no longer includes those who have *“ceased travelling permanently for any reason including old age or disability”* which is a departure from the previous definition which did include those who had ceased travelling either temporarily or permanently on the grounds of old age, ill health or educational needs.

In addition, there are a number of van dwellers also known as ‘new travellers’, living in specific areas of Somerset, who would not fall into the planning policy definition of travellers.

Gypsies and Travellers require a different type of housing in that they require a pitch. A pitch should allow for a static van, a touring van and have a day room. There are a number of different Gypsy and Traveller groups in our county including English / Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers, Showmen and Others. Gypsies and Travellers do travel by the nature of their culture, however they can become homeless or be at risk of homelessness where they are either asked to leave the pitch they are on or living on land that does not have permission for a Gypsy pitch or other situations such as domestic violence. Gypsy and Travellers are not homeless simply because they live in accommodation that is moveable or impermanent nor because they travel; however, like any household who needs advice and assistance they will be supported by the homeless service in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act, as would ‘new travellers’.

Somerset does have a number of issues regarding Gypsy and Traveller sites, with work progressing to establish transit provision and temporary stopping places. Currently the Somerset planning policy officers are seeking an update of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment which is due in the summer 2020. That will give both Housing officers and planning officers a better understanding of need for pitches in Somerset.

Rough sleeping within the county is currently a challenge in the Taunton area of Somerset West and Taunton Council, Sedgemoor and for Mendip District Council, but is at lower levels the South Somerset area. Living on the street is detrimental to mental and physical health and wellbeing. People sleeping rough develop chronic health problems and die younger and are more at risk from violence. Rough sleeping also has an impact on local residents and visitors.

Any rough sleeping is a concern and we aim to find ways to alleviate, reduce and ultimately end all rough sleeping across the county. Mendip and Somerset West and Taunton District Councils have a comprehensive range of intensive interventions in place to tackle rough sleeping funded through the government Rough Sleeper Initiative funding.

In addition, there are a number of effective services already in place through existing district funding. All districts have a Severe Weather Protocol (SWEP) in place and across the County we provide a range of outreach, advice, support services and accommodation for single homeless/rough sleepers:

- Direct access beds
- Outreach
- Access to sheltered and single homeless supported accommodation
- Drop in support, advice centres and sessions in targeted locations
- Schools outreach programme to raise awareness about the risks and realities of homelessness and rough sleeping

Challenges and Gaps

The Somerset Homeless Needs Assessment identified a number of areas of concern including:

- Population projections show that the population is due to grow faster than anticipated, especially in the former Taunton Deane area and in Sedgemoor. The challenge to deliver sufficient affordable homes and to support the tenure needs of our residents will become more pressing, not less
- The gap between the local housing allowance and market rent for private lets is a significant barrier in allowing applicants to secure a private rented property because they cannot secure financial support to make the home affordable. This can force people to make a difficult choice and move away from support, e.g. to move away from their family.
- Bringing empty properties back into use is always a challenge. There is value in exploring and sharing best practice to increase the numbers brought back into use
- When assessing what housing is needed in the county we need to ensure that adequate housing is provided which is suitable and available to help prevent youth homelessness.
- In particular we need to work with enablers to encourage increased numbers of single social rented accommodation units being bought forward on developments to meet the needs of the majority of people who are seeking single unit accommodation via Homefinder

- There is a need to recognise the need for smaller units rather than larger multi-occupancy dwellings, to allow single and couples and non-priority households the ability to access housing. Working with planners to reflect housing needs in what is built could support this need.
- Educating young people whilst they are at school about homelessness, to educate them with the aim of helping alleviate future youth homelessness, although funding will need to be considered to support this
- Whilst we have been successful with cases in preventing and relieving their homelessness, we continue to seek new ways to reduce the number of people approaching us needing temporary accommodation in crisis
- The Homeless Reduction Act 2017, brought in the need to produce a Personal Housing Plan (PHP) for clients. The consultation information identifies that further work is needed to in respect of PHP and the processes and systems needed to empower and enable customers to find solutions
- Work with veterans and their families to put in place any additional protocols that could be needed to signpost to support with other factors, such as PTSD, alcohol or mental health problems which can exacerbate the situation
- We have an ageing population in Somerset, especially 85 years and older group. The future needs of older people need to rise up the agenda and more energy given to understanding their requirements and future housing options.
- Rough sleeping is a concern for all and a challenge in much of the county, in particular, due to higher numbers and complexity of need. It will continue to demand sustained focus and resource with additional interventions, strategies and coordinated partnership working. It's likely that there rough sleeping which is 'unseen', which would include sleeping in vehicles and tents hidden in rural areas. It is important that we also ensure we address reconnections robustly and swiftly.
- Feedback from the consultation events about key issues expressed the need for more suitable, affordable sustainable accommodation. To achieve this there needs to be:
 - A continued need for increased collaborative working with partnership agencies where homelessness is an issue or risk, especially to support the vulnerable and those with complex needs. Resources are limited and in many cases, different agencies hold a different part of the jigsaw
 - Continued intervention where possible to help clients to remain in their existing homes to aid the prevention of homelessness. It is well recognised that homelessness costs individuals in terms of their mental and physical health as well as the cost to their finances and local service resources

- A review of relevant county-wide and local strategies, policies and practices to ensure they support homelessness prevention and fair access to social and affordable housing and do not discriminate against those most in need
- Consultation also highlighted concerns about vulnerable individuals with complex needs who find it hard to engage, access, navigate services and sustain accommodation without specialist support. Those with complex needs can be a concern for those with lower needs, when placed together. This necessitates a review of gaps in service provision and the identification of alternative accommodation options (e.g. housing first initiatives) alongside necessary resourcing

Priorities

It is clear from above that there are a lot of challenges to be tackled either through this strategy and actions or through the role of influencer with the wider Somerset Strategic Housing Group (SSHG). A good example of this is affordable housing. It is clear from the needs assessment that demand is greater than supply, particularly for social housing. Whilst the Homeless Managers Group can acknowledge this as a fundamental issue, their role is to influence SSHG to support the continued supply of affordable housing across the County.

No single organisation has the resources, skills or solutions needed to tackle all aspects of homelessness effectively on their own. We recognise that partnerships are integral to successful prevention and relief of homelessness and reduction in rough sleeping. Therefore, partnership working will play a large part in delivery of all priorities.

Since the adoption of the Interim Homelessness Strategy we have seen the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) in April 2018. A priority for the new strategy will be to track and respond to the impacts of the Act over the term of the new strategy.

The priorities are

1. Provision of adequate affordable accommodation
2. The provision and effective use of temporary accommodation
3. Support the Government's commitment to combat rough sleeping
4. Support prevention and early intervention
5. Enable specific client groups to access suitable accommodation
6. Maintain strong working relationships across the partnerships

In the table below we have identified, using the needs assessment, some of the reasoning behind the identification of the priorities.

Priority	Why it is a priority
Provision of adequate, affordable housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a widening affordability gap - Population projections to 2041 show an average of 11% increase in population across the county with Taunton Deane area and Sedgemoor seeing the highest increases - There are over 2000 empty properties in the county and there is therefore an opportunity to bring properties back into use - Housing needs to be adequate and meet the needs of those needing help, for example, single units for single people and couples
The provision and effective use of temporary accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The relief duty requires housing authorities to help those that are homeless to secure accommodation - The duty lasts 56 days, during which time reasonable steps must be taken by the housing authority and the applicant to secure accommodation - We recognise that temporary accommodation is not ideal and does not fit with individual/family's housing and wider social and economic needs in relation to work, school, and support networks. It is not a long term solution and it is essential that clients are enabled to find more suitable settled accommodation as early as possible. - The steps that need to be taken are set out in Personal Housing Plans (PHP) are critical to minimising reliance on and time spent in temporary accommodation. We need to recognise that further work is needed with PHP to ensure that we empower and enable people to take responsibility for their own housing needs as much as we need to support them - There is a need to find new ways to reduce the number of people approaching needing temporary accommodation - We need to recognise the need for temporary accommodation to meet the needs of our clients, for example disabled clients needing accessible accommodation

Priority	Why it is a priority
Support the Government's commitment to combat rough sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All districts are committed to support the MHCLG commitment to combat rough sleeping - Mendip and Taunton Deane are leading the way in the work that can be done to combat rough sleeping, with a range of approaches being used - Recognition that some rough sleepers could well be former members of the Armed Forces and that their needs could be more complex and therefore there is a need to work to develop any additional protocols to signpost to the support available to the forces community such as Veterans Gateway - We need to have robust and timely reconnection policies and practices - Work to ensure there is effective and adequate emergency accommodation for rough sleepers especially during severe weather - Enhance our cold weather provision to engage rough sleepers who are otherwise hard to reach - Try to gain an understanding of the root causes of homelessness and non-engagement - Developing policies to support prevention, intervention and recovery for rough sleepers
Support prevention and early intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a need through policy and legislative agendas to prevent homelessness, looking to improve the range of options, support and tools that can assist an individual to remain in their accommodation - There has been an increase of incidences of clients being given notice to quit – there is a need to understand why this is happening - The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 details the 'prevention duty' which places a duty the councils to make available for all who are at risk of becoming homeless, not just those that are in a 'priority need' The duty last 56 days

Priority	Why it is a priority
Enable specific client groups to access suitable accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is not always possible for a client to remain in their current accommodation so where a move cannot be avoided, there is a need to support and empower them to access suitable accommodation that is affordable - There is a need to influence housing providers to deliver suitable accommodation that is affordable and meets local needs - We have an ageing population, especially 85 years and over – the future needs of older people need to rise up the agenda and time taken to understand their requirements and future housing options - There is a need to recognise the differing needs of a wider range of clients requiring support including young people, Gypsy and Travellers
Maintain strong working relationships across the partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The strategy cannot be delivered in isolation - There is a need to recognise effective partnership working and the benefits that can bring including sharing best practice, effective use of resources and delivery of cost savings - There is a need to ensure that there are effective accessible pathways to empower vulnerable individuals and those with complex needs such as P2i, Positive Lives and Step Together

How will we be measured?

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 to 2023 will be implemented by each district through the Homeless Managers Group (HMG) who will be responsible for the day to day delivery of this strategy and actions contained within the action plan. HMG will monitor progress against the actions and targets at the monthly HMG meetings.

HMG will maintain close links with the Somerset Strategic Housing Officers Group who are responsible for the delivery of the Somerset Housing Strategy 2019 to 2023, in order that progress on all actions be tracked.

Each district will also have their own additional measures in place to monitor the progress of the actions relating to their district as well as performance monitoring which covers areas such as

1. Number of households helped
2. Number of households in temporary accommodation
3. Average number of nights in bed and breakfast
4. Number of rough sleepers

These measures are normally reported on a quarterly basis so, can be evaluated at each quarter to assess if there is anything that needs to be looked at in more detail or actioned in addition to the action plan itself.

Action Plan

The following actions have been developed in response to the priorities identified, with each priority having a series of actions that have been identified. They are county-wide as a whole, although where an action is connected to a specific organisation this will be detailed.

The actions are categorised into the following Roles:

1. **Enable** – these 7 actions which HMG will enable
2. **Support** – these 5 actions where the role of the council is to support
3. **Deliver** – these 16 can be delivered directly by HMG

Each action is linked to the 6 priorities – (some actions meet multiple priorities), as a reminder the priorities are as follows:

PRIORITY 1 – Provision of adequate, affordable housing stock

PRIORITY 2 – The provision and effective use of temporary accommodation

PRIORITY 3 - Support the Government's commitment to combat Rough Sleeping

PRIORITY 4 - Support prevention and early intervention

PRIORITY 5 – Enable specific client groups to access suitable accommodation

PRIORITY 6 - Maintain strong working relationships across the partnerships

Role: Enable						
Action ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
1.1	Strengthen our relationships with registered providers and developers to increase the amount of new affordable rented and social housing provided within the county whilst maximising in particular the provision of 1 bed affordable social rented housing accommodation. (Links to action 1.6)	Ongoing	Enabling Teams & SSHG	Evidence that we have tried to influence development programmes to include increased volume of affordable and social housing Development programmes take into account identified local needs (including disability) Innovative solutions are given consideration	Dec 2020 and annually	Priority 1 & 6
1.2	Share best practice to bring more private sector properties back into use to increase our success rate	October 2020	Empty homes officers/ private sector / housing standards team	Positive local case studies and best practice shared between LA teams	March 2021 & annually	Priority 1 & 4
1.3	Review the effectiveness of bond schemes to ensure they support access to the private rented sector	February 2021	HMG	Aim to increase the take up of bond schemes in private sector lettings Annual statistical report on take up of bond schemes in PRS access for homelessness applicants to monitor	March 2021	Priority 1, 4, 5 & 6

Role: Enable						
Action ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
				effectiveness of private rental access.		
1.4	Empower clients through proactive case work and the effective use of the PHPs to manage expectations about the reality of available housing and find early solutions to their housing need and minimise time in temporary accommodation (links to actions 1.7 and 3.9)	Ongoing March 2021	Districts to commission independent review	<p>Clients are increasingly proactive in taking steps to gain access to suitable accommodation and officers are proactively chasing and reviewing client actions.</p> <p>A focus on income maximisation to manage arrears and debts and encourage clients to start saving</p> <p>Officers are proactive in encouraging clients to take the steps in PHP and where clients do not are officers following legislation to end duties (e.g. non co-operation)</p> <p>Proactive timely actions by clients will result in reduced length of time in TA analysed</p>	April 2022	Priority 2, 4, 5

Role: Enable						
Action ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
				by household type, need and age		
1.5	Work with partner organisations to ensure there are viable accommodation options and effective housing pathways to help new and longer term rough sleepers	Ongoing	HMG	Reviews with partners aimed at improving access to suitable accommodation More rough sleepers accessing and sustaining accommodation	October 2022	Priority 3, 5 & 6
1.6	It is essential that local strategies, policies and practices support homeless prevention and relief and are inclusive of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged clients. It is critical that they also support rapid throughput and early exit from temporary accommodation Review the Common Lettings Policy and its implementation by Registered providers, referring any issues back to	September 2020 and annually	Homefinder Somerset Co-ordinator & Homefinder Monitoring Board	Relevant policies reviewed and updated to meet this objective including the "4 week" rule element of the policy, and connectivity in rural areas. Allocations do not exclude or discriminate against any groups in relation to vulnerability and protected characteristics Undertake a review of skipping reasons initially with homeless prevention / relief clients to assess any areas for improvement / training	December 2022	Priority 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6

Role: Enable						
Action ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
- 1.6	Homefinder Monitoring Board for action. Contribute to county-wide discussion of need to review the Somerset Tenancy Strategy and any subsequent in house or commissioning of independent review of the Tenancy strategy (links to actions 1.1 & 2.1)	September 2022	SSHG / Enabling teams (Homefinder Somerset Co-ordinator/ HMG/)	Findings reported to the monitoring board. HMG participation in relevant activities to Tenancy Strategy Review such as discussions, scoping, commissioning of review, involvement or input into project	December 2022	(As above)
1.7	Review Housing Options Teams' practice and processes to ensure efficient, effective and high quality including: -Quality/ timeliness of advice -PHPs tailored with clients to their needs -Proactive and timely casework triage process to ensure clients presenting to other agencies can easily be referred to avoid duplication -Explore systems in place with partners to improve the client journey & reduce the number	March 2021	Districts to commission independent review	Independent Review commissioned. Process improvements identified and in place Best practice in PHPs and general identified and shared across HMG Learning put into practice and shared through HMG Improved effectiveness of information sharing and protocols	May 2022	Priority 4 & 6

Role: Enable						
Action ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
	of duplicated contacts/ assessments (links to 1.4 & 3.9)			Discussions with partners to explore streamlining duplicate processes		

Role: Support						
Action ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
2.1	<p>Work with P2i to look at the types of accommodation that are needed for dealing with youth homelessness and where these dwellings would be best located.</p> <p>Link to review of Homefinder Common lettings policy to ensure it supports timely move on (links to action 1.6 and also 1.1 in terms of influencing enablers and developers to deliver shared and 1 bed accommodation and consider innovative accommodation</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>September 2020 & annually</p>	<p>HMG / P2i board</p> <p>Homefinder Somerset Co-ordinator & Homefinder Monitoring Board</p>	<p>Continually monitor the effectiveness of P2i for homeless clients in conjunction with the Homefinder policy including:</p> <p>Analysis of feedback from clients</p> <p>Numbers of successful move-on from P2i accommodation within 9 months of P2i tenancy start date.</p> <p>Monitor success of move on from P2i accommodation, accommodation type and</p>	<p>September 2021</p> <p>December 2022</p>	<p>Priority 1, 4, 5 & 6</p>

Role: Support						
Action ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
				length of time to move on from "ready to move on date"		
2.2	Monitor the impact of Hinkley Point C (HPC) development on the private rented sector and housing markets, making links to any changes to homelessness being reported, especially as peak construction is approaching	Ongoing	SDC/ SWT/ HMG	<p>SDC and SWT to monitor rental and house price data and availability and, as far as we able, displacement of the local population.</p> <p>Evidence of mitigating actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Deliver small family and single persons accommodation through empty homes activity, lodgings and enabling schemes -Target schemes for move-on from Temporary Accommodation -Support local landlords through the use of bonds, rent-in-advance, landlord and 	September 2020 and annually until 2022	Priority 1 & 6

Role: Support						
Action ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
				tenant accreditation schemes, to prevent displacement -Safeguard tenancies through work with HMRC and DWP around inflated rents for Hinkley workers and non-declared tax		
2.3	Identify support schemes across the county and work in partnership with providers and other key support agencies to ensure the most vulnerable and complex needs clients can -access suitable accommodation effectively - sustain accommodation - respond quickly to escalation of support needs and risks which in turn could lead to tenancy failure Ensure gaps are identified through improved data capture, monitoring and annual review	July 2020 January 2021 and annually	HMG	Improved timescales and customer journey to access suitable accommodation Support schemes are utilised appropriately to enable access Statutory agencies and provider organisations have clear effective information sharing and joint working protocols to enable individuals with complex needs to access, settle into <u>and</u> sustain accommodation, with fast track support escalation processes in place to prevent failure once support has reduced/ended Monitoring and review of data	July 2021	Priority 3, 4, 5 & 6

Role: Support						
Action ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
2.4	Explore funding opportunities where they don't exist to enable young people to be educated in school regarding homelessness to try and help alleviate youth homelessness	July 2021	HMG	Districts to consider funding opportunities where "schools" work is currently not funded.	July 2021	Priority 3, 4, 5 & 6
2.5	Work with DWP to increase advice and opportunities to our customers to maximise income and skills	September 2020	HMG	Explore opportunities to build links with DWP to train and support our staff on options available to customers to maximise their income / skills	September 2021	Priority 4, 5 & 6

Role: Deliver						
Action Ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
3.1	Look at the vacancies that have arisen on Homefinder for social housing supported accommodation for older people which have been difficult to let to try and establish the reasons why and look at what is	June 2021	Homefinder co-ordinator	Statistical Homefinder Somerset report reviewed by HMG Evidence of work with landlords to establish reasons for hard to let sheltered	December 2021 and 2022	Priority 1, 5 & 6

Role: Deliver						
Action Ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
	needed to ensure that this accommodation is desirable to older persons			properties and potential solutions		
3.2	Regularly review local provision of temporary accommodation to ensure it has capacity to meet demand and needs in terms of size and accessibility	December 2020 and annually	Districts	Statistical review of demand compared to provision including household needs and size/flexibility of provision Where relevant, plans in place with accommodation providers to address gaps	March 2022	Priority 2 & 6
3.3	Continue to monitor the extent of rough sleeping at a frequency appropriate to local need, daily if required, so that swift action can be taken when new rough sleepers are identified	Ongoing	HMG/ Districts	Systems in place to monitor numbers and respond to new rough sleepers at a frequency relevant to each district's needs Reducing numbers of rough sleeper HMG to review statistics quarterly	December 2020 and annually	Priority 3

Role: Deliver						
Action Ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
3.4	Where appropriate review and share reconnection success & best practice in order to strengthen reconnection policy and practice	September 2020	Districts/HMG	Local practices reviewed and improved in light of identified successful reconnections across districts	December 2020	Priority 3
3.5	Identify organisations and groups inadvertently sustaining rough sleeping and begging. Help them to understand the issues and work together to create a consistent approach	October 2020	Districts	Range of communications with organisations which helps their understanding of the issues and the approach of services tackling rough sleeping. Where possible and relevant, seek opportunities for working together with key services identified and consider countywide diverted giving scheme.	March 2021	Priority 3 & 6
3.6	Review opportunities presented through severe weather provision to engage rough sleepers who are reluctant to accept services	Ongoing and seasonal	Districts	Agreed partnership approach in advance of cold weather to engage and support all individuals	April 2021	Priority 3 & 6

Role: Deliver						
Action Ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
				Increased engagement of rough sleepers as a result of SWEP contact		
3.7	Continuously monitor, review and develop our existing rough sleeper interventions to optimise their effectiveness in order to meet the government target of a 50% reduction over 2 years	Ongoing	Districts	Evidence of regular review of what works to develop our local approaches Statistics and feedback demonstrate positive impact of interventions	April 2022	Priority 3 & 6
3.8	Ensure practice focuses on prevention, early intervention/reconnection and recovery for rough sleepers	December 2020 and annually	Districts	Local practices reviewed in light of national and local rough sleeper strategy priorities	April 2022	Priority 3 & 6
3.9	Making use of intelligence from HCLIC data, identify what works well and the extent to which teams prioritise early intervention homelessness prevention to get the best	Ongoing March 2021	Districts to commission independent review	Quarterly casework and statistical reviews Independent review of services is commissioned in each district	May 2022	Priority 4

Role: Deliver						
Action Ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
	outcomes (links to actions 1.7 & 1.4)			Quality of casework & outcomes achieved.		
3.10	Review collection and analysis of information from applicants and landlords on reasons for the issue of notice to quits, to inform how we can help the landlords to prevent evictions and to keep the properties in the private rented market in the future	December 2020	Districts & Private sector housing teams	Consider engagement with landlords via district private sector housing forums to encourage early notification at prevention stage to help reduce notices and evictions from private sector housing tenancies Monitor proportional reduction in number of evictions from PR Sector.	Review findings and undertake actions identified 2021/22	Priority 4 & 6
3.11	Monitor effectiveness of all homeless prevention initiatives and schemes and ensure we deliver 'value for money'.	March annually	Districts and HMG	Conduct annual review of funded service delivery partnerships and schemes, ensuring schemes offer VFM and are effectively preventing and relieving homelessness.	March 2022	Priority 4 & 6

Role: Deliver						
Action Ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
				Continually share best practice between LAs.		
3.12	Consider joint training opportunities for staff to upskill to continuously improve our service delivery including high quality Personal Housing Plans (PHP) and trauma informed practice at triage stage	September 2021	HMG	Range of joint training opportunities e.g. shadowing (across districts), good practice sharing workshop, tailored locally delivered training.	December 2021	Priority 3, 4, 6
3.13	Monitor the incidence of clients with mental health needs without dual diagnosis unable to access services due to their high needs. If there is evidence of unmet need in this respect, ask Somerset County Council commissioners to review provision to ensure they can meet identified local needs	End June 2020	HMG	Review of referrals made and outcomes feeding back to SCC commissioners via HMG.	October 2020	Priority 5 & 6
3.14	Review the demands & needs of armed forces veterans to enable us to consider how we continue	December 2021	HMG	Review undertaken by HMG	April 2022	Priority 5

Role: Deliver						
Action Ref no.	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Measure	Review date	Links to Priority
	to work with veterans and where they can be directed for additional support			Consider ways to improve data collection for this need		
3.15	Review the outcomes of the use of the hospital discharge worker in South Somerset and explore opportunities to roll out any best practice from this pilot	June 2021	HMG	Service outcomes and best practice reviewed	September 2022	Priority 4, 5 & 6
3.16	Review the outcomes of the use of a drug and alcohol worker in South Somerset and explore opportunities to roll out any best practice from this pilot	July 2021	HMG	Service outcomes and best practice reviewed	March 2022	Priority 4 & 5