

# 1 Year 1 Action Plan

TMBC Housing Strategy Action Plan Year 1, 2022-23		
Action	Notes and 2022-23 target	Lead
<b>Priority 1: Making best use of existing homes, improving housing quality and sustainability</b>		
1.1 Ensure efficient use of existing housing stock		
Review Housing Allocations Policy	Policy review to be completed by end of 2022-23	Housing Solutions Manager
Investigate occupation levels (under-occupation and overcrowding) to inform projects to encourage and enable downsizing or mutual exchanges	Analyse information from Registered Providers, the housing register and housing needs research and consider options to address under-occupation.  Update members through an information report during 2022-23 and consider in future allocations policy review. Investigate a pilot project in partnership with Clarion and support agency.  C/F into 2023/24	Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager and Housing Solutions Manager
Bring empty homes back into use; identify empty homes and use a range of interventions to bring them back into use, using enforcement action where appropriate	Work with Registered Provider partners to understand the extent of empty properties within existing social housing stock and explore options to address this. Agree a performance indicator for empty homes within the engagement framework.  Clarion engagement ongoing	Housing Improvement Manager
	Promote the No Use Empty Scheme in partnership with Kent County Council	Housing Improvement Manager
	Consider altering the Council's approach to tackling Empty homes: report exploring the subject of Empty homes and possible changes to approach to be taken to members to provide steer and form the basis for an Empty Homes Policy to be developed. <b>Some initial work completed.</b> Empty Homes Policy to be developed and adopted in year 2 (2023-2024).	Housing Improvement Manager
1.2 Improve property conditions to provide safe, healthy homes		
Develop a programme of targeted interventions to improve standards informed by the stock condition survey	Review the stock modelling report and integrated database to identify the least energy efficient private rented stock to inform priority areas of work and targeted use of resources and enforcement action.  Develop an action plan for 2022-2023 to implement programme. Programme not relevant as work ongoing.	Housing Improvement Manager

	Provide advice and assistance to owners of homes that do not reach a minimum energy efficiency standard (MEES) of Energy Performance Certificate band E and take appropriate enforcement action where necessary for rental properties. <i>Work ongoing as part of team.</i>	Housing Improvement Manager
Fulfil requirements under extended HMO licensing scheme	Inspect additional HMO needing licenses as a result of the new scheme and process or enforce as necessary.	Housing Improvement Manager
Use powers to impose financial penalties in line with our Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy	Each offence will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The council will seek to impose a financial penalty for a relevant offence, unless there are circumstances relating to the offence that advocate pursuing a criminal prosecution instead.	Housing Improvement Manager
<b>1.3 Improve the energy efficiency of housing stock to alleviate fuel poverty and help address climate change</b>		
Continue to bid for decarbonisation funding to bring investment into improving existing housing stock, in partnership with other local authorities and Registered Providers as appropriate	Continue retrofitting project with Clarion	Housing Improvement Manager
Identify and promote services and initiatives to improve energy efficiency; including warm homes, energy efficiency and retro-fit technologies	Promote services and initiatives through effective media campaigns and proactive targeted promotion as appropriate to maximise the opportunity for take-up.	Housing Improvement Manager
	Work in partnership with the Kent Energy Efficiency Partnership (KEEP) to support and contribute to the delivery of actions in the Fuel Poverty Strategy for Kent.	Housing Improvement Manager
Assist households to improve the energy efficiency of their homes	Help a minimum of 10 households with energy efficiency improvements in line with our commitment in the Climate Change Strategy. <i>Commitment within the CC Strategy has been amended and no longer includes 10 households.</i> Explore and apply for funding opportunities throughout the year to help deliver energy efficiency improvements to existing homes. <i>Work ongoing. CC strategy amended.</i>	Housing Improvement Manager
<b>1.4 Support residents to have a suitable home where they can live independently</b>		
Continue delivery of mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	Maximise use of Disabled Facilities Grants for adaptations to support residents to continue living in their own home. Explore use of trusted assessors. <i>Part of pilot but West Kent will be part of second phase rollout of trusted assessors.</i>  Revised Housing Assistance Policy by end of 2022-23, for adoption in Year 2	Housing Improvement Manager

(2023-24). **Policy amended**

## Priority 2: Improving housing options and opportunities to prevent homelessness

### 2.1 Develop a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and action plan

Use local intelligence and data to develop a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	Strategy and action plan developed and approved by end of 2022-23 <b>C/F to 2023/24</b>	Housing Solutions Manager
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### 2.2 Provide housing options advice focussing on homeless prevention through a personalised approach

Investigate the use of the Policy and Practice LIFT and Xantura tools within our homelessness prevention work	Prepare a proposal to Management Team by end of December 2022 regarding the use of the prevention tools and the available funding to progress this work. <b>MT report went to MT</b>	Head of Housing and Health
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Continue to develop a focus on homeless prevention services and interventions, and implement ways of working to support this	<b>Embed Prevention Officer roles within the Housing Solutions team</b> Improve online information and advice tools to enable customers to self-serve and help manage expectations	Housing Solutions Manager
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Seek customer feedback to inform service provision and improve customer experience	Ensure people feel supported and listened to when accessing services and that they can access services with ease. Ensure collaborative working across teams to provide consistent efficient services	Housing Solutions Manager
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Maximise use of existing funding and take up new opportunities to help households access the private rented sector	Use funding such as Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), Accommodation for Offenders Funding (AFO), Rough Sleepers Initiative and Discretionary Housing Payments to help households access the private rented sector and sustain tenancies.  Links to objective 2.4 below.	Housing Solutions Manager
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Promote and improve awareness of duty to refer and improve monitoring of referrals	Deliver informal training to partners about the duty to refer and promote it through attending meeting for relevant organisations to share and improve understanding of the duty to refer. <b>C/F for 2023/24 for certain partners however partnership work has improved the situation overall.</b> Improve our data collection and monitoring of cases resulting from a duty to refer. <b>C/F to 2023/24</b>	Housing Solutions Manager
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Continue with our commitment for the resettlement of 12 families as part of the UK resettlement scheme and deliver our commitment to the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme and Homes for Ukraine scheme.	Work with KCC to help as many households as we can under both the UK resettlement scheme, Afghan citizens resettlement scheme and Homes for Ukraine scheme.	Housing Solutions Manager
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2.3 Work with voluntary and statutory partners to help rough sleepers off the streets into settled accommodation and prevent rough sleeping		
Continue with and develop our Rough Sleeper action plan and task force meetings	Continue to identify rough sleepers and find ways to move them away from rough sleeping, finding accommodation solutions along with prevention work	Housing Solutions Manager
	Continue collaborative working to tackle rough sleeping using responsive outreach work for any rough sleepers identified.	
	We will continue to monitor rough sleeping and improve our intelligence about rough sleepers in the borough through robust procedures, ensuring people are verified before they are placed in accommodation.	
Expand and continue to develop Housing First	Expand the scheme by another 7 units, to <i>total 14, by [date]</i> in partnership with Look Ahead, Porchlight and Clarion Housing Association.	Housing Solutions Manager
	Work with Jobcentre Plus and other voluntary agencies to explore ways to maximise opportunities for those with complex needs to access education, training and employment or support needs, with a view to enable withdrawal of Housing First tenancy support services for existing cases.	
2.4 Ensure vulnerable groups and those with complex needs have access to support to maintain their tenancy		
Work with partners to ensure vulnerable people have the support they need	Continue to work with KCC homeless connect for tenancy sustainment services <i>KCC Homeless Connect contract ended. New action for 2023/24 regarding ending of transition funding etc</i>	Housing Solutions Manager
	Investigate a pilot project with KCC and the Home Improvement Agency to support our approach to working with hoarding cases. Project proposal to be completed by end of 2022-23. <i>C/F into 2023/24</i>	Housing Improvement Manager
	Continue to use Rough Sleeper Initiative funding for the supported lettings project with Look Ahead	Housing Solutions Manager
2.5 Improve links with landlords in the private rented sector to work together to prevent homelessness and increase housing options		
Continue to develop our Private Landlord offer to make it effective in engaging landlords to work with us to prevent homelessness	Review pilot 'golden hello' incentive and rent guarantee within an options appraisal for the Private Landlord offer. Options report for Landlord Offer to members, March 2023. <i>C/F into 2023/24</i>	Housing Improvement Manager
Develop positive working relationships with local lettings agents and landlords	The Housing Solutions Officers and Accommodation Officers will build relationships with lettings agents and landlords to find tenancy opportunities in line with the Discharge of Duty into the Private Rented Sector Policy <i>Ongoing work</i>	Housing Solutions Manager and Housing Improvement Manager
Improve and extend engagement with private landlords	Continue our work with neighbouring authorities to deliver the West Kent Landlord Forum events and information. <i>Ongoing</i>	Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager

	Host at least 1 event during 2022-23 (online or in person). Landford forum held on 19/3/23 hosted at TMBC.	
	Develop and trial local engagement options such as networking gatherings or workshops; hold local event/s during 2022-23 and gather feedback to inform future approach. C/F into 2023/24 and establish what we use them for.	
2.6 Minimise the use of nightly paid accommodation to manage temporary accommodation costs and seek alternative provision, including property purchase or development		
Research and consider options for alternative provision such as property acquisitions and options to lease properties	Carry out options assessment to establish preferred option/s and provide a report to members by end of 2022-23. Seek Cabinet approval for implementation and required resources, NB this may be in year 2 of this action plan.  Some progress made – HAP funding secured. Revised action to carry forward to 2023/24.  Secure 30-40 units the Council has control of and access to for use of for temporary accommodation.	Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager
Reduce use of nightly paid Temporary Accommodation	Increase homelessness prevention, in turn reducing use of temporary accommodation. Number of HPO resources increased. Monitoring etc to be further developed.	Housing Solutions Manager
Increase the supply of self-contained homes in council control for use as temporary accommodation	Explore option to lease properties - assess options including a cost benefit analysis, and report to members by end of 2022-23 as above. HAP project to consider.  Complete project to alter 4 council owned properties in Tonbridge to provide 2 properties as HMO temporary accommodation and consider outcomes of this to inform approach to remaining 2 properties.	Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager  Property Services Team and Housing Services
<b>Priority 3: Delivering the homes our residents need in the places they are needed</b>		
3.1 Understand local housing need with up to date information on affordable and specialist housing need for a range of housing (including type, tenure and location) to inform decision making and priorities		
Research and analyse local housing needs to inform affordable housing delivery.	Carry out Housing Needs Research and report; due to complete June 2022. This research will analyse local housing need across areas of the borough, for a range of tenures and consider affordability thresholds for various tenures including for rented homes and affordable home ownership.	Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager

	Use insight into housing needs provided by the research to inform work towards achieving Priority 3 of this Strategy and inform projects and policy decisions, including the Affordable Housing Statement and new Local Plan. <i>Await development of Local Plan. Protocol updated.</i>	Head of Housing and Health and Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager and Planning team
3.2 Provide housing choice by encouraging housing of different types, size and tenure in suitable locations, at a range of prices to be within reach of different household financial capacities		
Research types of affordable home ownership, for example living rent and rent to buy	Consider options for affordable home ownership other than shared ownership, informed by local housing needs research and information from Registered Providers in the Borough. Present an information report to members by end of 2022-23. <i>C/F into future action plan</i>	Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager
Monitor the tenure and mix of homes delivered to inform future policy	Monitor delivery through the Annual Authority Monitoring Report and additional monitoring of affordable housing provision, as a percentage of overall delivery and recording tenure and mix information. <b>Action on collation of stats across housing &amp; planning to be considered for 2023/24 – Agile dependent for automation.</b>	Planning Team & Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager
3.3 Consider options for the Council to influence and take a pro-active role in housing delivery, including through a Local Housing Company.		
Consider use of council owned assets for use to deliver affordable housing	Review of council owned assets through the internal Assets Group and consider their use to delivery new affordable housing units through joint working with Registered Providers. Establish an agreed way forward for identified sites that could deliver affordable housing by end of 2022-23. <b>Consider action required for taking into 2023/24 as some work on Council assets completed.</b>	Head of Housing and Health
<b>Priority 4: Working in partnership</b>		
4.1 Work in partnership with local authorities and partner organisations including active membership and engagement in Kent Housing Group to share best practice, learning and resources		
Continue our membership to Kent Housing Group	Actively contribute and engage with partners of the Group.	Head of Housing and Health & service representatives of each sub-group
4.2 Engage with Registered Providers and private developers through regular strategic and management/liaison meetings to ensure efficient and effective delivery of services		
Work with Registered Providers to maintain and improve housing management services and joint working with the Council and other agencies	Develop and agree an approach to monitoring and engagement between Registered Providers and the Council; including meetings to share staff and service updates, review specific cases and any areas of concern. <i>Links to Priority 1 objectives C/F into 2023/24</i>	Head of Housing and Health

	Monitoring will require data, management and performance information, including customer satisfaction and steps being taken to implement the 'Charter for social housing residents' as set out in the Social Housing White Paper 2020. <b>C/F into 2023/24</b>	
Develop an approach for regular engagement with Registered Providers to influence housing delivery in the borough	Set up strategic meetings with Registered Providers: bi-annual meetings with Registered Providers with large amounts of stock in the Borough, and annual meetings with Registered Providers with lower amount of stock. First meetings to be in 2022-23. <b>C/F into 2023/24</b>	Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager
4.3 Work with health colleagues and organisations to ensure preventative focussed work and improve wellbeing through links between services		
Work in partnership with Health Services to provide integrated services taking account of individual needs	Take an active role in partnership working with health providers to address the health needs of residents with more integrated services through representation at the West Kent Integrated Care Partnership and associated health forums.	Head of Housing and Health
Continue to take an active role in cross sector initiatives and projects with Health Services	Work with health partners to ensure that housing continues to play a key role in supporting timely and safe discharge from hospital. Continue to review relevance and focus of the hospital discharge service to inform future commitment.	Housing Improvement Manager
4.4 Maximise our joint working with local commissioned organisations and third sector partners to add value to our housing services		
Work with KCC commissioned services on wellbeing and older persons	Ensure housing related services link into available support through partnership meetings to have an open dialogue and share information. <b>Ongoing.</b>	Head of Housing and Health