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Ward (s) affected	All	Key Decision	No
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Subject	Homelessness Strategy 2015-2020 Review and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
RECOMMENDATION	
<p>The Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the progress made over the last 12 months to achieve the actions contained in the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2015-2020 and the progress made to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.</p>	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>The Homelessness Act 2002, requires local authorities to publish a five year homelessness strategy. Mole Valley District Council's (MVDC) third strategy was approved by the Executive on 3 February 2015, when it was agreed that progress be reviewed annually by the Scrutiny Committee. The last review was 8 November 2016.</p> <p>A key feature of the Strategy is to achieve the National Practitioner Standard for Homelessness and since the Strategy was approved the peer review has been completed with a score of 72% (pass mark 60%) and nine out of the ten evidence based challenges have been achieved. Silver standard was awarded to MVDC on completing the peer review and the fifth challenge. Ten challenges need to be achieved to be awarded gold. The updated Homelessness Strategy Action Plan is attached at Appendix 1, and includes the relevant recommendations from the peer review.</p> <p>In April 2018, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 will be implemented and the actions that are required to implement the new legislation are also incorporated into the Action Plan at Appendix 1. A summary of the requirements of the Act and the implications are explained in section 3 below.</p>

CORPORATE PRIORITIES: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

- Support individuals and families who find themselves unintentionally homeless so that education and employment are not put at risk.

Homeless households are offered emergency, temporary, private rented and permanent housing association accommodation close to their employment and children's schools if it is available. When households are placed outside of MVDC every effort is made to move them back to the area as soon as it is practically possible.

The Executive approved on 19 January 2016, the policy on the Suitability of Emergency Accommodation for Homeless Applicants that directly links to this priority.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Homelessness Act 2002, requires local authorities to publish a five year homelessness strategy. Mole Valley District Council's third strategy was approved by the Executive on 3 February 2015. On 20 October, the first six months of operation of the Strategy was reviewed by the Executive. Upon approval of the Strategy, the Executive Member confirmed that it would be subject to annual review by the Scrutiny Committee and this is the second such review.

2.0 PROGRESS

2.1 Progress is detailed in the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan attached at Appendix 1. The key achievements to date are summarised below.

2.2 Key Achievements

- A key feature of the Strategy is to achieve the National Practitioner Gold Standard for Homelessness. Five Surrey authorities (Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead, Runnymede, Surrey Heath and Tandridge) came together to undertake peer reviews to achieve the first stage of the Standard. The peer reviews have all been completed and presented a valuable opportunity for shared learning. Mole Valley achieved the highest score of the group with 72% (pass mark 60%) for the peer review. The relevant recommendations from the review have been incorporated into the Housing Strategy Action Plan attached at Appendix 1.
- MVDC has since achieved nine out of the 10 challenges for the National Standard and these are: the corporate commitment to prevent homelessness; a proactive housing options service for all clients; adoption of a 'No Second Night Out' ethos for rough sleeping; a pathway approach for all clients within the housing options services; a successful private rented sector scheme and offer for clients; to actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions; a proactive homelessness strategy; not placing homeless 16 and 17 year olds into bed and breakfast accommodation and to actively work in partnership with the voluntary

sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs. To achieve the tenth challenge and the ultimate Gold Standard MVDC must have for at least 12 months no families with children in bed and breakfast for more than six weeks.

- The LocalPad software has been implemented to provide a fit for purpose database to monitor the HomeChoice Plus rent deposit bond scheme and provide a service for local landlords.
- All clients who approach MVDC for housing advice on their situation now receive a written summary of their housing options.
- Six additional self contained emergency accommodation properties have been acquired to increase the Council's stock for homeless households that the Council has a responsibility for under the homelessness legislation.
- The East Surrey Outreach Service (eSOS) is well established and is now funded by MVDC, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council and Tandridge District Council. It continues to provide a targeted outreach service to those single people and couples who are either roofless, or in danger of becoming homeless to access accommodation and support services.
- Over the lifetime of this strategy the Council has assisted 111 households access accommodation within the private rented sector through the HomeChoice Plus rent deposit bond scheme. At the time of writing there are 169 households living in the private rented sector who have been assisted through the Council's HomeChoice Plus Scheme
- Preparations have commenced to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, from April 2018 and include piloting detailed housing options interviews and personal housing plans. A summary of the Act can be found in section 3 below.
- 40 new affordable homes were completed in 2015/16. 15 affordable homes were completed in 2016/17, with a further 40 to complete in 2017/18.

2.3 Monitoring Statistics

Key homelessness statistics for 2016/17 to date compared to 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2016/17 are detailed below.

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	31 August 2017	Projection 2017/18
Nos. New Housing Options Cases¹	270	286	365	130	312
Nos. Homelessness Preventions²	96	110	130	84	200
Nos. Homelessness Applications	84	85	70	48	104
Nos. Homelessness Acceptances	28	41	28	20	44
Main reason for Homelessness	End of private sector tenancy	End of private sector tenancy	Family members unwilling to accommodate	Family members unwilling to accommodate	
As at -	31 March 2015	31 March 2016	31 March 2017	31 August 2017	
Nos. in Bed and Breakfast and nightly stay	15	11	18	20	
Nos. of Families in Bed and Breakfast Over 6 Weeks	0	1	1	0	
Total in all Types of Emergency Accommodation	39	40	54	56	

2.4 The statistics show the trends described below.

¹ New cases seeking advice

² Cases where advice on housing options has been given and homelessness has been prevented

- While the table shows fluctuations the overall trend is upwards in terms of numbers approaching and applying to the Council as homeless with a corresponding increase in the number of cases of homelessness prevented.
- The table also shows that the main reason for homelessness has changed from homelessness applicants' private rented sector tenancies coming to an end to applicants who live in a family members' home being asked to leave that accommodation.
- The numbers of families living in bed and breakfast for more than six weeks is currently at zero.

3.0 Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

3.1 A summary of the requirements of the Act and the implications are explained below.

- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA), received Royal Assent on 27 April 2017, and will place increased duties on local housing authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness. It will amend the current duties under the Housing Act 1996.
- The changes will not come into effect immediately as councils will need time to prepare. The Government also has to issue comprehensive new guidance on how to deliver the duties as well as publish a commencement order. The government has confirmed that the Act will commence from 1 April 2018, and is currently consulting on the accompanying new Code of Guidance.
- The HRA transforms the help councils are expected to provide to all homeless people. It aims to ensure provision of new support to people who aren't entitled to help under the current system. Councils are required to try and prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place, intervening early and encouraging other public sector bodies to actively assist in identifying and referring those at risk of homelessness.

The key provisions include:

- **A prevention duty:** This is a continuation of the current duty to prevent homelessness although the time period for this to be triggered has increased from 28 days before a household is homeless to 56 days, provided they are eligible for assistance on the basis of their immigration status. This duty will arise irrespective of their connection to the area.
- **A relief duty:** a new duty for councils to try and resolve the homelessness of people who are already homeless by helping them to secure accommodation. To qualify for help they must be eligible for assistance on the basis of their immigration status **and** have a connection to the local area, otherwise they can be referred to another local authority where they have a connection.

- **Measures to incentivise cooperation:** People being helped under the prevention and relief duties will be expected to take reasonable steps to resolve their own homelessness and cooperate with the Council's attempts to assist them. Should they deliberately and unreasonably refuse to cooperate, the duty owed to them by the Council at any given stage of the process may end.
- **A duty to refer:** a new duty on other public services to refer people to the local housing authority if they are working with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- **Continued temporary accommodation protection for families:** councils are required under existing law to accommodate homeless families, if they meet a number of tests and the HRA maintains these protections in cases where councils are unable to help families under the new prevention and relief duties.

Implications

Personal Housing Plans and statutory documentation

- Officers will need to carry out up to three stages of assessment of a client's needs and communicate their findings by formal letter at both the initial 'prevention' stage and also under the 'relief' stage. They will need to produce 'personal housing plans' to share with clients both at the prevention stage (i.e. prior to someone becoming homeless) and relief stage (at point of or just after homelessness), which set out a series of actions to be taken by the council and by the applicant to address their homelessness and resolve their situation wherever possible. These will be important documents because there will be a statutory right to challenge these plans and where the applicant does not fully cooperate, there will be potential repercussions on the longer term duties of the Council to assist. These plans will need to be regularly reviewed.

The duty to refer

- A number of other local agencies (defined as 'public sector' organisations), who work with families and single people, will need to be made aware of their new duties under the Act, so that they can identify clients they are working with who may be at risk of homelessness and refer them to the Council so work can begin to prevent their homelessness.
- Further guidance is expected to clarify the full list of agencies covered by this new duty and whilst the DCLG is expected to carry out some communication directly on this matter, the Council will need to ensure appropriate referral arrangements are in place to respond to those referrals. Public bodies are likely

to include schools, hospitals, GP's, the Police, County Council and Department of Work and Pensions. There will be training for agencies on both a county wide and local basis.

Reviews of the Council's decisions

- Clients will have increased rights to seek reviews of the Councils' decisions at each stage of the assessment process and over any aspect of the personal housing plan that they disagree with. The impact of this workload will need to be carefully monitored.

Housing Allocations Scheme

- The Housing Allocation Scheme has been amended to reflect the changes, which the Homelessness Reduction Act will have on the practical operation of the scheme. This is the subject of a report to Executive on this agenda.

Resources

- The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) will be providing local authorities for two years with grant to assist with the cost of implementing the Act and the allocations per authority will be announced later in the year. It will be in addition to the Flexible Homelessness Grant allocated by the DCLG for 2017/18 of £136,000 and 2018/19 of £156,000. This funding has allowed MVDC to be more creative in preventing homelessness and securing homes in the private rented sector, supporting the East Surrey Outreach Service and potentially funding a Housing Trainee position and an officer to detect housing fraud. It will also be used to pay for software changes required in advance to implement the Act.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1** The cost of the homelessness service is met from the Housing budget. There is pressure placed on the budget by the demands of meeting MVDC's statutory homelessness responsibilities and in particular by the cost of bed and breakfast accommodation when there are no alternatives available, storage of belongings and the up front costs of the private rent scheme, some of which are recovered through loans to customers.
- 4.2** MVDC is also at financial risk if it is legally challenged on homelessness decisions, for which it may incur legal fees and if a family is placed in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than 6 weeks and makes a successful challenge through the Local Government Ombudsman that results in MVDC paying compensation.
- 4.3** As mentioned above in section 3 of this report the DCLG will provide funding for two years to assist with the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act and there is the additional benefit of the Flexible Homelessness Grant, which will assist in implementing a different approach.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1** The Homelessness Strategy was produced in accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002, and accompanying Code of Guidance.
- 5.2** The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003, states that bed and breakfast accommodation should not to be regarded as suitable accommodation for an applicant with family commitments, except where no other accommodation is available and the applicant does not occupy the bed and breakfast accommodation for a period, or a total of periods, not exceeding 6 weeks. The Council is, therefore, at risk of being challenged if it allows an applicant with family commitments to remain in bed and breakfast for longer than the 6 week's period.
- 5.3** The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, will be implemented from April 2018, and appropriate steps are being taken, which are incorporated into the Appendix 1 Action Plan, to ensure MVDC is prepared and ready for the change.

6.0 CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The Monitoring Officer confirms that all relevant legal implications have been taken into account.

6.2 S151 Officer Commentary

The review of the Homelessness Strategy does not in itself have direct financial implications. However, the report highlights the success of the Council in controlling a Housing budget that is essentially demand driven and highly dependent on changes in the economic wellbeing of Mole Valley residents. Mole Valley is economically stronger than many areas of the UK, but a change in the economy or in the benefits system can still easily lead to a significant increase in pressure on the housing budget. As such it is potentially one of the Council's most volatile budgets, which needs, and receives, particularly close monitoring and management.

6.3 Risk Implications

A sudden change in the economy that causes mortgage repossessions and private renters to lose their homes is a significant risk. This would increase homelessness applications, place pressure on MVDC's stock of emergency accommodation and mean that MVDC could possibly become heavily reliant on bed and breakfast accommodation. If families remain in bed and breakfast for more than six weeks MVDC is at risk of challenge that is referred to above in the financial and legal implications. MVDC is also at risk of legal challenge if isn't prepared for the Homelessness Reduction Act.

MVDC's approach to homelessness is one of prevention and this alongside MVDC's programme of investment to increase its own stock of emergency accommodation, enabling the development of new affordable homes and

commitment to improve the homelessness service provides mitigation to reduce the risks identified.

The risks mentioned in the above paragraphs have been assessed and are included in MVDC's risk register.

6.4 Equalities Implications

An equalities impact assessment was produced for the Homelessness Strategy and there has been no significant change that requires it to be amended.

6.5 Employment Issues

To aid with the implementation of the Homelessness Act a Housing Trainee position will be created using funding from the DCLG. The development of a Housing Intelligence Officer is also under consideration that would also be funded with the DCLG grant.

6.6 Sustainability Issues

There are no sustainability issues relating to this report.

6.7 Communications

Communications will be prepared for the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and in particular to ensure statutory bodies with a responsibility to refer people threatened with homelessness to the Council are aware of their new duty.

6.8 Consultation

Consultation has not been undertaken with partners for this review.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 MVDC Homelessness Strategy 2015 to 2020, homelessness statistics and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Appendix 1 HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2015/20 November 2017 Update

ACTION	PURPOSE	HOW	BY WHO?	PROGRESS & TARGET DATE
Reinforce the corporate commitment to the National Practitioner Standard for Homelessness across MVDC's services	To confirm MVDC's commitment to the Standard	Approval of the Homelessness Strategy by the Senior Management Team (SMT) and Executive	Executive and Senior Management Team	The National Practitioner Standard for Homelessness challenge on the corporate commitment to homelessness was achieved in 2016 .
Consult the National Practitioner Team on how to achieve the Standard, which includes conducting a peer review of the homelessness service and achieving the ten Standard challenges.	To highlight areas where improvement is required and enable the Council to meet the Standard	Pass with 60% the peer review exercise with other local authorities and complete the submission of evidence for the ten challenges	Housing Options Manager; other local authorities; stakeholder agencies	The peer review was completed in September 2015 with a 72% score in 2015. The pass mark was 60%.
Ensure that there is a robust plan in place for the implementation of Universal Credit. This will cover: how we support people to apply for benefits; arrangements for monitoring Universal Credit payments and the rent contribution; how to arrange for housing payments to be paid to direct to landlords; and knowledge on how to help households apply for a range of benefits	To minimise the impact of welfare reform on the most vulnerable and have a planned approach with the HomeChoice Plus scheme	Making contact with local links within the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to ensure simple easy dialogue and communication on vulnerable cases	Housing Options Manager, DWP and Housing Benefit	Housing staff have received training. Private sector landlords have also received information at the landlords' forum from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) on Universal Credit (UC). The roll out of UC has been slow and subsequent actions are ongoing .
Licensing and accreditation of private rented sector landlords	To ensure good quality private	Consider schemes already	Housing Options Manager,	This target date has been reprogrammed for September 2018

ACTION	PURPOSE	HOW	BY WHO?	PROGRESS & TARGET DATE
	rented sector provision within Mole Valley and elsewhere and ensure a professional HomeChoice Plus service	in place both locally and nationwide to affiliate too; consult with the landlords forum regarding this.	Environmental Health, local landlords	due to legislative changes meaning that there has been a concentration on supporting landlords in such areas as welfare reform and requirements in relation to the Right to Rent rules.
Implement Local Pad software	To update our private rented sector landlord and property database and provide a forum for local landlords	On receipt of development timetable and demonstration system share with landlord focus group before full implementation	Housing Options Manager	Local Pad has been installed and launched for private sector landlords in 2015
Ensure that clients are referred to support services.	To ensure clients benefit from a range of services that may meet their needs	Staff to be aware of all services and how to make referrals	Housing Options Manager	Achieved and in place. All clients have their support needs identified at housing options interviews and through continuing case work. Referrals are then made to appropriate agencies. This is monitored through case work meetings and 1-2-1s with staff.
To monitor and promote the use of the Housing Options Wizard	To ensure clients make maximum use of the wizard to help prevent homelessness early	Promote from time to on the MVDC website and magazine	Housing Options Manager	This will be ongoing throughout the strategy period. To further adapt the wizard and provide more detailed information based on individuals circumstances will require additional costs. Before pursuing a detailed investigation of the use of the wizard will be undertaken to ensure changes will be cost efficient. Some parts of the wizard are already interactive.

ACTION	PURPOSE	HOW	BY WHO?	PROGRESS & TARGET DATE
Ensure that all clients have a written summary of the advice they are given	To ensure all clients receive clear understandable advice	Staff to be trained on how to incorporate this practice in their day to day work	Housing Options Manager	Achieved and in place. This is available both following an initial housing options interview as well as through the Housing Options Wizard online. This is monitored through staff 1-2-1s.
Seek to adopt a no second night out approach to rough sleepers within Mole Valley by writing a new policy and reconnection criteria	To ensure that no household has to spend a second night on the streets and meet the National Practitioner Standard challenge	Write a new policy in conjunction with the Surrey- wide re-connection policy developed by Guildford and already in operation.	Housing Options Manager; other Surrey housing authorities; Leatherhead Start; Surrey County Council Adult Social Care and Public Health; local hostel and supported housing providers	Achieved and in place. Through the East Surrey Outreach Service (eSOS) this has been adopted and we have also adopted a reconnection policy. The National Practitioner Standard challenge for this area was achieved in March 2017 .
Ensure that vulnerable clients housed in supported accommodation have a housing pathway	To ensure that vulnerable care leavers have a pathway that will allow them to succeed in living in independent accommodation	Improve procedures to ensure a pathway is included for all cases	Housing Options Manager and partner agencies	Achieved and in place. This action has been in place for some time and the National Practitioner Standard challenge for this area was achieved in June 2017 .
Provide a 'flat mate' function through our HomeChoice internet pages to help single people and couples to find rooms to rent within and outside the district	Increase the availability and ease of access for single people and couples to find affordable	Develop Localpad to include a flatmate search option	Housing Options Manager	September 2018 – Achievement of this action has been deferred until the National Practitioner Standard challenge is complete and implementation of universal credit for single people is embedded.

ACTION	PURPOSE	HOW	BY WHO?	PROGRESS & TARGET DATE
	accommodation in Mole Valley in the private sector			
Signpost clients facing mortgage repossession to the Getwise service, Citizens Advice Mole Valley (CAMV) for money advice and other appropriate support services	To help prevent repossession	Ensure staff know how to refer to these services	Housing Options Manager	Achieved and in place. Whilst Getwise has ended, all clients are referred to CAMV for money advice (whether relating to mortgages or other financial problems).
Refer clients facing mortgage repossession to government schemes available	To help prevent repossession	Ensure staff know how to refer staff to these services	Housing Options Manager	Achieved and in place. There are no current government schemes in operation, however, MVDC works with clients to relieve and prevent their mortgage issues. The National Practitioner Standard challenge for this area was achieved in June 2017 .
Negotiate with mortgage lenders to prevent homelessness where possible	To help prevent repossession	Ensure staff know how to refer staff to these services	Housing Options Manager	Achieved and in place. MVDC works with clients to relieve and prevent their mortgage issues through discussions with mortgage providers and other housing options. The National Practitioner Standard challenge for this area was achieved in June 2017 .
The Homelessness Strategy to be reviewed annually by the Scrutiny Committee.	To ensure the Homelessness Strategy is delivered	Report progress annually to the Scrutiny Committee	Housing Options Manager	This action is ongoing during the strategy period. The Executive reviewed the strategy in October 2015 and the Scrutiny Committee in November 2016. The next review is November 2017 followed by review in November 2018.
To ensure where possible that bed and breakfast accommodation is not used for 16 or 17 year olds and emergency	To ensure 16 and 17 year olds are not	Work with partners and ensure the multi-	Housing Options Manager	Achieved and in place Throughout the strategy period to date no 16/17 year olds have been placed in bed and

ACTION	PURPOSE	HOW	BY WHO?	PROGRESS & TARGET DATE
beds through Surrey County Council and Surrey night stop are fully utilized.	inappropriately house in bed and breakfast	agency panel meets to make best use of the accommodation available for young people		breakfast. The National Practitioner challenge was achieved on this action in August 2016.
Complete the acquisition of additional self contained emergency accommodation units	To prevent the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless households with a priority need	Purchase properties on the open market	Housing Options Manager and Property Team	Six properties have been acquired and two existing corporate properties have been converted for emergency accommodation. The acquisition programme is complete
Look to source nightly stay and bed and breakfast placements in Mole Valley or the surrounding areas	To restrict the need for the use of bed and breakfast accommodation outside the district	Contact local providers in Mole Valley and discuss availability, provision and requirements. Work with other Surrey local authorities to identify providers	Housing Options Manager and other Surrey housing authorities	This action will be ongoing throughout the strategy period. Since the start of the action plan MVDC has been working with one provider within the district and alternatives are still being sought.
Ensure that no household with dependent children is in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks	To provide suitable accommodation options for homeless households and prevent the Council breaching the	Source greater numbers of nightly stay accommodation; discharge duties to all suitable homeless clients who are able to sustain	Housing Options Manager	This action is in place will be ongoing throughout the strategy period. During 2016/17 there were eight households placed in bed and breakfast for over six weeks for various reasons relating to location requirements and personal household requirements. To date in 2017/18 there has been one household who chose this option within

ACTION	PURPOSE	HOW	BY WHO?	PROGRESS & TARGET DATE
	Homelessness Suitability of Accommodation Order 2013.	accommodation into the private rented sector to free up Council owned emergency accommodation units; Closer monitoring through monthly reports to Executive.		the district rather than self contained accommodation outside of the district.
Develop an average of 50 new affordable homes per year	To ensure that there is a flow of new affordable homes to prevent bottle necks of households waiting for accommodation	Work with local housing associations to enable new homes and provide financial investment where needed	Strategic Housing Manager	This action will be ongoing throughout the strategy period. The average from 2006/07 to 2016/17 is 55 completions per year. During the first three years of this strategy 40 affordable homes were completed in 2015/16, 15 in 2016/17 and 42 are on site projected to complete in 2017/18. The average for the three years is 32. A further 87 affordable homes are on site scheduled for completion in 2018/19.
Assist those affected by the spare room subsidy to find lodgers through advice on advertising of rooms available	To prevent financial hardship to those households affected by this welfare reform whilst also assisting non priority households with	Consider development of LocalPad to allow advertisement of rooms to let; promote HomeChoice Plus to these potential landlords.	Housing Options Manager	September 2017 Achievement of this action has been hampered due to the delay in implementation of Universal Credit for single people and needs to be embedded before introducing this initiative to customers and landlords. This will be part of the flatmate scheme promotion mentioned in the earlier action above. This action will also link

ACTION	PURPOSE	HOW	BY WHO?	PROGRESS & TARGET DATE
	accessing lodgings			to the appropriate National Practitioner Standard.
Work closely with Leatherhead Pitstop to provide a short term directed and focused service to those homeless or socially excluded service users and to reconnect to areas where a local connection is held	To ensure that the service does not lead to an increase in homelessness within Mole Valley and helps individuals to move on and ensure that service users are reconnected to areas where they have a local connection and are able to access the most amount of services. To prevent service users to Pitstop rough sleeping in the Mole Valley area.	Write a new policy in conjunction with the Surrey- wide re-connection policy developed by Guildford and already in operation. Offer training opportunities to Pitstop staff to ensure understanding of options and housing / homelessness issues	Housing Options Manager, Pitstop, Other Surrey housing authorities; Leatherhead Start; Health; local hostel and supported housing providers; Respond; SaDas	The Pitstop was unable to find suitable premises and the trustees of the charity decided in 2016 not to continue its activities. This action is no longer active.
Speak with local banks regarding the possibility of ring fencing monies for rent once universal credit begins	To minimise the effect of welfare reforms such as universal credit for households who need assistance with	Visit local banks and discuss ways of referring and assisting clients set up jam jar accounts.	Housing Options Manager	June 2017 The roll out of Universal Credit has been slow and subsequent actions have been delayed. This action is deferred until the new financial year when the National Practitioner challenges will have been completed

ACTION	PURPOSE	HOW	BY WHO?	PROGRESS & TARGET DATE
	budgeting and to give greater security to landlords within the private rented sector			and Universal Credit is embedded.
Consider closer links with the Surrey Credit Union	To ensure that the effects of welfare reforms are minimised for households and that the need by service users for unauthorised financial systems such as loan sharks is minimised within the district. To investigate the use of jam jar accounts	Discussions with Surrey Credit Union regarding referrals for clients	Housing Options Manager and Surrey Credit Union	June 2017 This action links with the above and therefore the target dates are concurrent.
Additional Actions Recommended by the Peer Review September 2015				
Annually conduct a review of service costs compared to the rest of Surrey	To ensure that service costs are monitored and comparisons made with other Surrey authorities	Compare figures on B&B expenditure; salary levels; rent deposit and rent in advance spend with other Housing Options	Housing Options Manager	March 2017 This will be updated at financial year end. This action has not been completed for 2017/18 because the Surrey Housing Options Managers have been concentrating on the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

ACTION	PURPOSE	HOW	BY WHO?	PROGRESS & TARGET DATE
<p>Ensure all appropriate funding streams are investigated on an ongoing basis to assist in homelessness prevention services</p>	<p>To maximise funding opportunities for the service</p>	<p>Managers Monitor grants and funds available throughout the year from various sources</p>	<p>Strategic Housing Manager</p>	<p>This action will be ongoing throughout the strategy period. Projects such as ESOS and Employment Training and Housing Options Service (ETHOS) require additional funding provision and identifying and applying for these funding streams is required. Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) funding for the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, will be used for implementation costs, to improve the service and assist with creative solutions to prevent homelessness.</p>
<p>Ensure MVDC's corporate service standards are available on the housing section of the website</p>	<p>To give transparency to the public and other agencies</p>	<p>Add a page to the MVDC website within Housing to highlight service standards and monitor progress against these standards</p>	<p>Affordable Housing Officer and Housing Options Manager</p>	<p>The Council's Customer Promise came into effect in March 2017. It was created through consultation with Customer Care Champions, staff, managers and residents and is closely aligned to our Corporate Values, which are to listen, trust, care, respect and lead.</p>
<p>Introduce an annual Homelessness Forum for stakeholders</p>	<p>To update stakeholders on current performance against the</p>	<p>An annual meeting</p>	<p>Housing Options Manager and stakeholder agencies</p>	<p>April 2018</p>

ACTION	PURPOSE	HOW	BY WHO?	PROGRESS & TARGET DATE
	homelessness strategy and receive support on actions where appropriate and feedback			
Consider implementing a system with the Customer Services Unit (CSU) to monitor time spent for Housing Options clients from arrival to being seen in reception.	To ensure that good customer service is provided	Investigate system requirements and possibilities for monitoring this	Customer Service Unit (CSU) Information Technology Team and Housing Options Manager	April 2017 The viability of this is being investigated with the Customer Service Unit
Advise customers of Wi-Fi ability to be able to self investigate options before, during and after interviews	To facilitate Housing Clients investigating their options on their portable devices whilst in the building	WiFi sign in reception	CSU	Completed. Public Wi-Fi is available in the reception of the Council's office.
Ensure all staff receive regular interview refresher training and updates on Housing options and homelessness legislation and case law	To ensure that staff are legally informed and updated and that skills are updated regularly	Internal and external training through various agencies including NPSS	Housing Options Manager	This action will be ongoing throughout the strategy period. An annual update on case law and legislation is received by staff through either a team training session or individual courses. The Housing team receives the Legal Action Journal that includes monthly updates on case law and legislation, as well as web based case law updates. This also includes preparation for the Homelessness Reduction Act.
Ensure all case files are consistently dealt with by officers with full interview	To ensure that all cases are	Regular file reviews both at 1-	Housing Options Officers and	This action is ongoing. All housing options cases are

ACTION	PURPOSE	HOW	BY WHO?	PROGRESS & TARGET DATE
notes and enquiries made within service guidelines	consistently dealt with and able to be picked up by any given officer. To ensure that enquiries and decisions are made promptly to prevent homelessness and establish statutory responsibilities	2-1's and at case closure by senior officer	Housing Options Manager	monitored through 1-2-1's to ensure that interview notes are fully completed and up to date. Service guidelines for response and enquiries are still to be written
Ensure that risk is always assessed for any applicant approaching due to violence or previous threats of violence	To manage risk and safeguard Housing (and other Council) officers	Officers to regularly check alerts on Abritas and update where required. Officers to be aware and use the soon to be implemented Council wide Clients of Concern list	Housing Options Team. Health and Safety Officer.	This action will be ongoing throughout the strategy period. As well as marking high risk cases, there is a corporate client of concern procedure, which staff are aware of and receive notifications when new clients are added. Staff are also aware of the violence at work procedure and how to report an incident.
Ensure applicants goals and preferred options are included on initial assessment form.	To understand and manage customer expectations whilst attempting to meet the desired outcomes	Additional field added to initial assessment form	Housing Options	Achieved and in place. This is now part of the initial housing options form and is monitored at officer's 1-2-1 meetings.
Consider a marketing strategy for	To promote the	Promotional	Housing Options	Ongoing: An article has been included

ACTION	PURPOSE	HOW	BY WHO?	PROGRESS & TARGET DATE
housing options service	work of the team and reach out to a wider clients base who we may then prevent from becoming homeless	posters in stakeholder agencies and adverts in journals or papers	Manager and Communications Team	in the Mole Valley News that is sent to residents by email and will be repeated regularly. Social media and other communications alerts are also used during the years e.g. how to report rough sleepers.
Review and update the customer feedback process	To obtain feedback on the service to monitor customer satisfaction and to guide and influence service improvements	Investigate web based feedback options (ie. Survey monkey)	Housing Options Manager, Customer Service Unit	January 2017 Corporately the Council is undertaking a Customer Excellence Programme, which includes the Housing service achieving Customer Service Excellence accreditation. The Housing Team achieved the standard in April 2017.
Review existing service level agreements and identify where new service level agreements are needed with partners	To ensure that all Service Level Agreements (SLA) are relevant and highlight gaps where SLA's are required	Identify all areas where SLA is required; review those in place and enter into discussions where these are not present to put these in place	Housing Options Manager; relevant stakeholders	March 18
Review the framework structure and procedure around Housing options casework	To identify any gaps in our current framework structure and look at where service improvements can be made	Consider Options casework structure from other authorities within the Gold Standard process to compare and look to implement areas of good	Housing Options Manager	March 2018

ACTION	PURPOSE	HOW	BY WHO?	PROGRESS & TARGET DATE
		practice. Consider the NPSS toolkit		
Homelessness Reduction Act Implementation Actions				
Revise the Housing Allocations Scheme policy to consider relief and interim accommodated category clients as reasonable preference groups in Band 2	To ensure compliance with legislation and continue to help relieve homelessness when in interim accommodation		Housing Options Manager	The Housing Allocations Scheme will be reviewed by Executive on 28 November 2017
Revise the Housing Allocation Scheme to allow those accepted households without a local connection to be allowed into Band 3	To ensure compliance with legislation		Housing Options Manager	The Housing Allocations Scheme will be reviewed by Executive on 28 November 2017
Procure the appropriate IT solutions for the practical implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA)	To ensure that officers and the Council comply with the new legislation	Compare current software with other options	Housing Options Manager; Information Technology Team	The Council's existing software for the housing service will be updated in time for the implementation of the HRA in April 2018
All referral agencies to understand the new HRA and their role	To ensure legal compliance amongst referring agencies and assist them with appropriate referrals related to local connection	Mutli-agency Surrey wide training and localised training at partner agency team meetings.	Surrey Housing Needs Managers to organise Surrey wide training and locally to be implemented by Kirsty Jones	March 2018
Ensure up to date money advice income and expenditure analysis tools are	To ensure affordability and	Have formalised referral	Housing Options Manager; CAMV	February 2018

ACTION	PURPOSE	HOW	BY WHO?	PROGRESS & TARGET DATE
available	true housing options for people whilst providing a more rounded advice service	mechanisms with CAMV; embed the money advice service income and expenditure model into MVDC housing options approach		
Employ an housing trainee for the first two years of the HRA with position in place by March	To increase capacity within the team whilst investigating where the gaps in service provision may be once the HRA is implemented. Role could cover coordination of referrals to supported accommodation providers; bed and breakfast placements; tenancy support referrals; and assistance with the Universal Credit (UC) process.	Employ a housing trainee using DCLG Homelessness Flexibility funding	Housing Options Manager	March 2018
Increase funding for initiatives to prevent homelessness		Allocate and plan Flexible	Strategic Housing Manager;	Ongoing – funding so far allocated for software changes, to support clients

ACTION	PURPOSE	HOW	BY WHO?	PROGRESS & TARGET DATE
		Homelessness Support Grant from the DCLG; Consider allocation of funding from the DCLG for HRA implementation; register for Nationwide Building Society	Housing Options Manager	into the private rented sector and proposals for a housing trainee and housing intelligence officer. Pre-notification registration has been completed for innovative housing issue funding which is being offered by the Nationwide Building Society. The allocation of HRA implementation funding allocation is awaited.
New paperwork for gathering initial information from clients prior to interview	To ensure that processes are in place to meet compliance with the HRA	Revisit all forms currently used in interviews	Housing Options Manager	This action has been piloted from July 2017
Ensure relevant protocols are updated to account for HRA	To ensure that processes are in place to meet compliance with the HRA	Map and revisit all protocols across Surrey to ensure compliance	Surrey Housing Needs Managers	MVDC has the lead responsibility for the Surrey wide Care Leavers Protocol – December 2017
Update MVDC website to reflect HRA	To ensure information available to the public is relevant and legally correct	Revisit all Housing webpages	Housing Options Manager; Affordable Housing Officer	March 2018
Pilot Housing Plan approach for clients	To prepare the Housing service for the implementation of the HRA and iron out any issues in	Begin to adopt a 56 day prevention model formally and produce agreed housing plans	Housing Options Manager; Housing Options Officers	October 2017 – This is currently being piloted alongside our new housing assessments and interviews.

ACTION	PURPOSE	HOW	BY WHO?	PROGRESS & TARGET DATE
	advance of it becoming legally binding			

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