



ADUR & WORTHING
COUNCILS

Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee
19 January 2023

Key Decision [Yes/No]

Ward(s) Affected:

Review of progress on the delivery of the Housing Strategy

Report by the Director for Communities

Executive Summary

1. Purpose

- To update the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee on progress made against the commitments in the Housing Strategy 2020-2023 'Enabling communities to thrive in their own home'

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note:-

- The progress made over the last 12 months; and
- Department for Levelling Up Communities and Housing (DLUCH) funding update

3. Context

- 3.1 The Councils' Housing Strategy 2020-2023 sets out the Councils' ambition to deliver secure and appropriate housing for the people of Adur and Worthing and support all sectors within the communities to live healthy, secure and purposeful lives.
- 3.2 The Councils housing strategy formed part of a connected set of plans and strategic vision for our places to build platforms from which people, communities, businesses and ideas can develop and thrive. However, the Councils' ability to deliver its ambitions in the Housing Strategy 2020-2023 has been impacted by a number of events and factors.
- 3.3 The COVID-19 Pandemic - which has changed the way we live and to an extent, the way housing support services are delivered. Working from home has become more prevalent than prior to the outbreak of the pandemic. While more people working from home is positive because of all the wellbeing advantages particularly to households with children, it has also resulted in more people moving to the coast. A changed mindset and improved technology, which came to the fore during the pandemic, meant people could be effective in their work regardless of the distance. The result is even more demand for homes in Adur and Worthing, with house prices becoming even more unaffordable compared to local income, and more people on low income reporting having been "gazumped" while trying to rent a property.
- 3.4 The Cost of living crisis - has seen more people on low income struggle to maintain their homes.
- 3.5 More private sector landlords leaving the market - A lot of landlords have reported having been negatively impacted by the measures put in place to manage homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the impending increased regulation of the sector through the Renters Reform Bill, a lot of landlords are selling their properties or seeking tenants with higher income. The result is few properties are available in the private rental market for those on low income or on welfare benefits, with rents getting higher as demand exceeds supply. With high interest rates in the foreseeable future, it is likely that rents will continue to rise, making the sector unaffordable for more local people on low income.

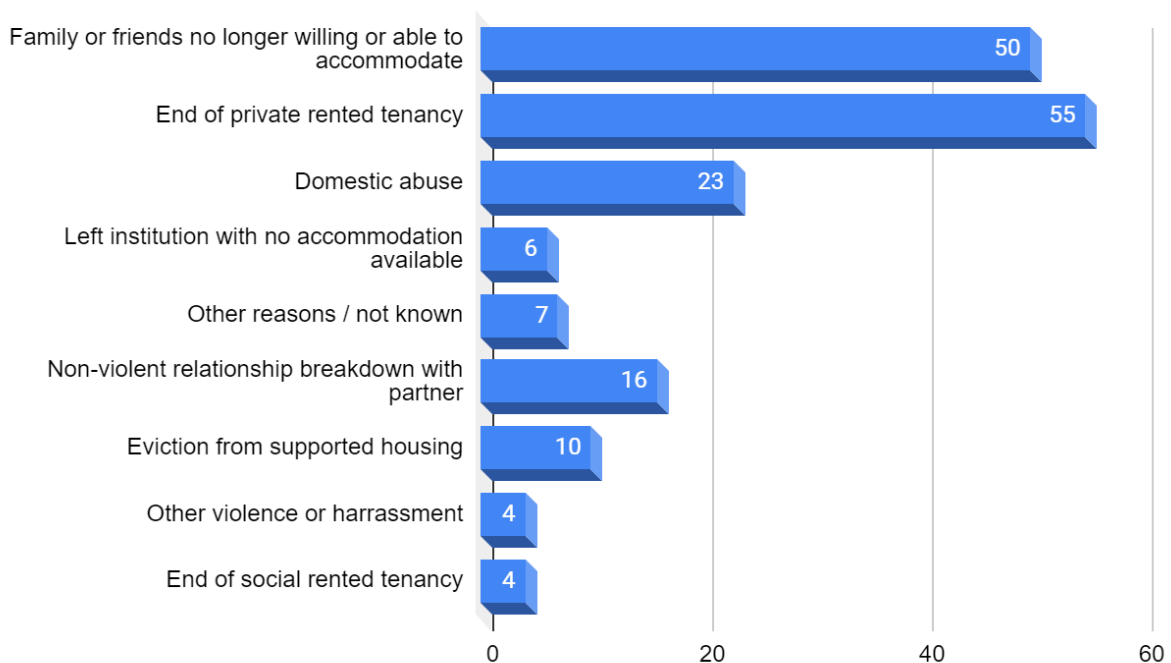
4. Preventing Homelessness

4.1 The events and factors above have driven an increase in homelessness prevention in the last 12 months. The Councils accepted either a prevention or relief duty for most of those formally assessed. This does not include those not threatened with homelessness who were given general housing advice

- Prevention duty - to work with people who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days to prevent them from becoming homelessness
- Relief duty - to take reasonable steps to help households that are homeless and in priority need to find suitable accommodation that will last for at least six months

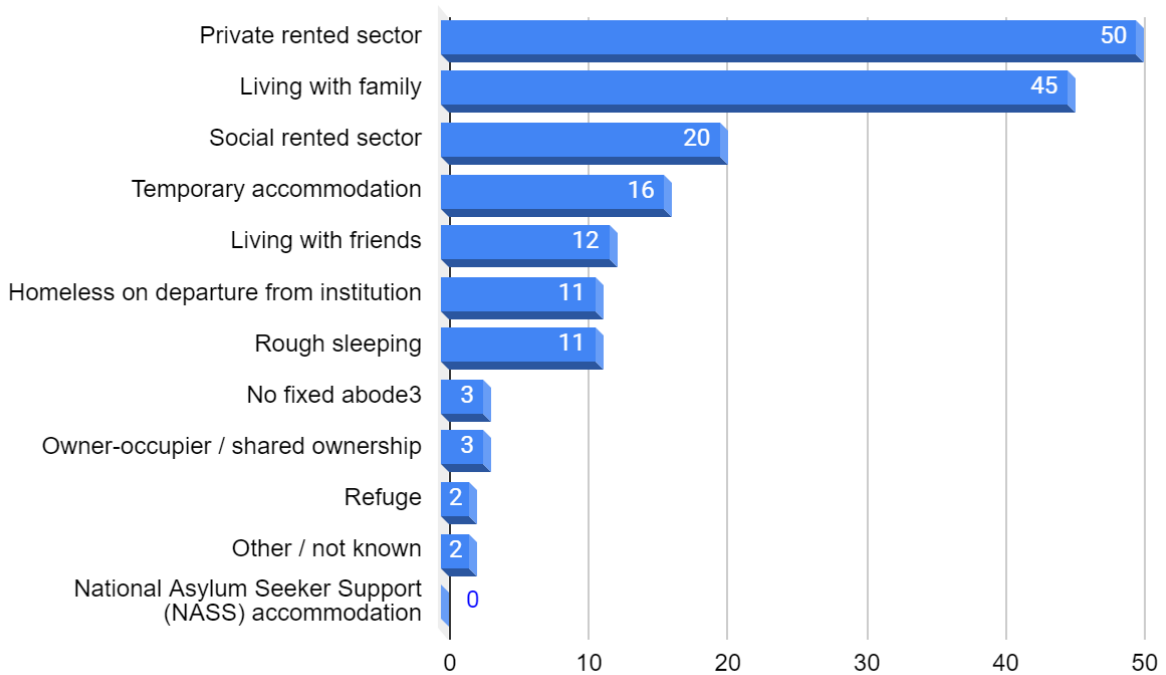
Preventing homelessness in Adur

4.2 177 households were assessed and 175 were accepted as owed either the Prevention Duty (63) or Relief Duty (112). Those owed the relief duty were provided with temporary accommodation. The graph above shows the reasons households presented homelessness in the last 12 months.



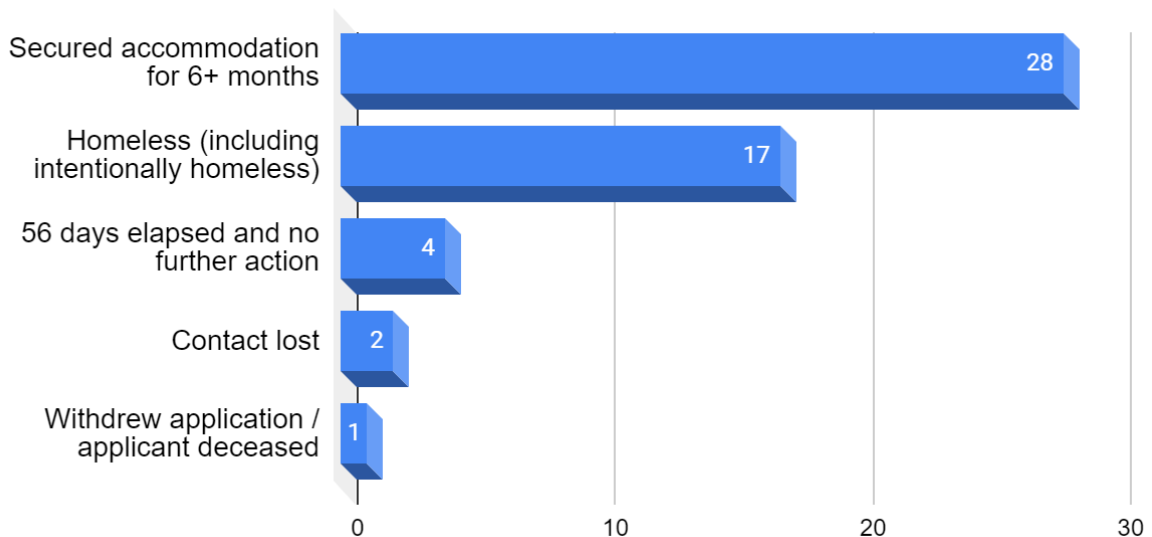
Adur - Reasons for loss of last settled home (Jul 2021 - Jun 2022)

4.3 The graph below shows that private rented accommodation and accommodation with friends and family are the two most common types of accommodation from which households presented homeless.



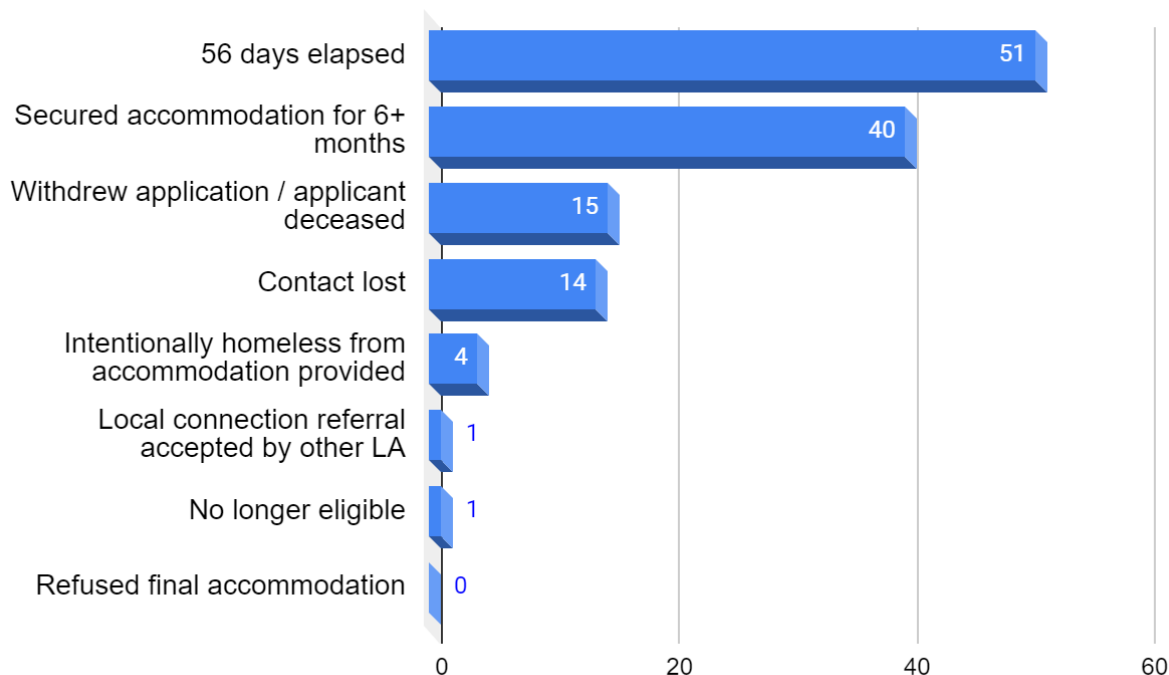
Adur - Accommodation at the time of application (Jul 2021 - Jun 2022)

4.4 The graph below shows a breakdown of the outcomes for those owed the prevention duty. Of the 63 owed a prevention duty, 44% (28) were assisted to find alternative accommodation.



Adur - Outcomes for those owed the prevention duty (Jul 2021 - Jun 2022)

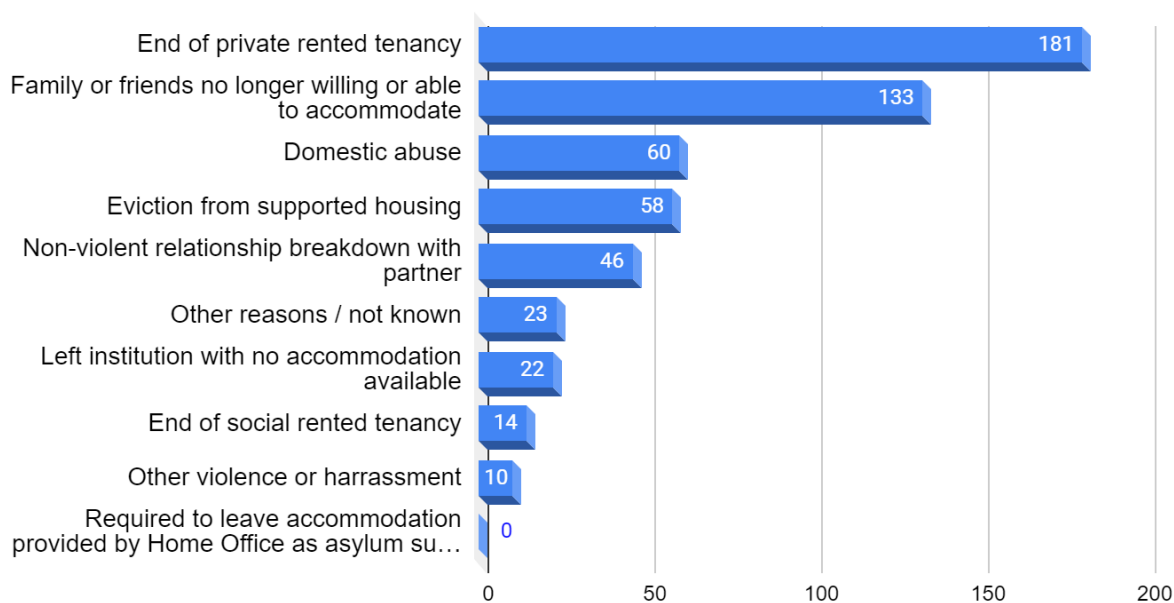
4.5 The graph below shows a breakdown of the outcomes for those owed the relief duty. Of the 112 owed a relief duty, 36% (40) were assisted to find alternative accommodation.



Adur - Outcomes for those owed the relief duty (Jul 2021 - Jun 2022)

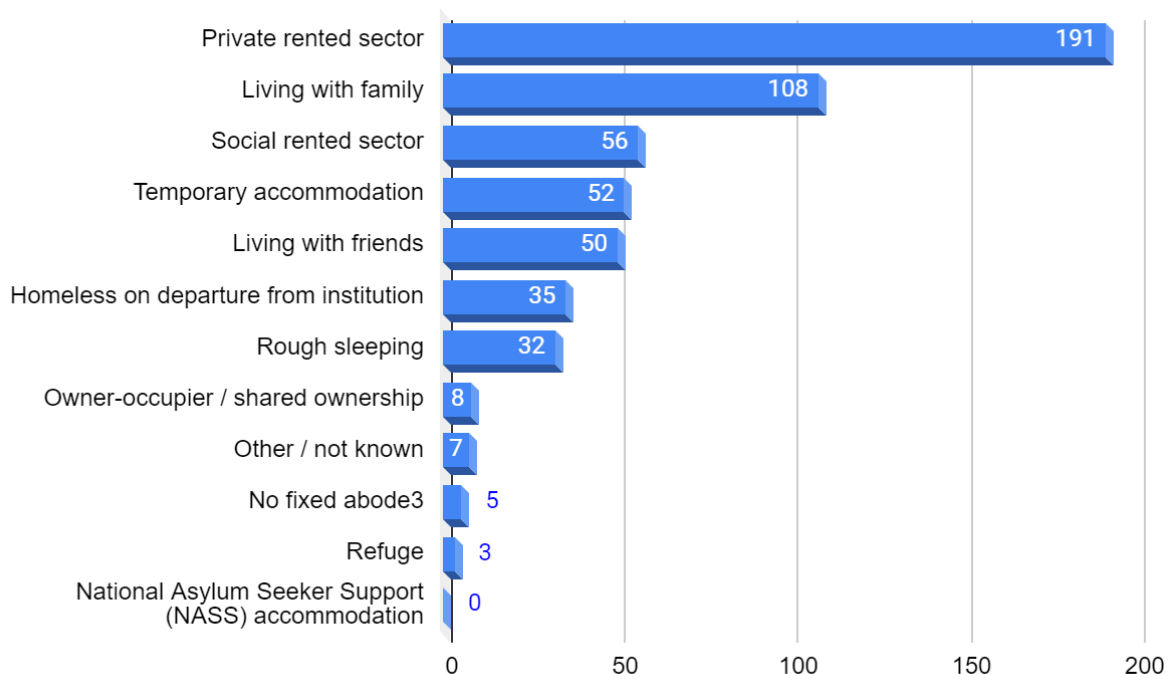
Preventing homelessness in Worthing

4.6 In Worthing, 560 households were assessed and 547 were accepted as owed either the Prevention Duty (189) or Relief Duty. (358). All those owed the relief duty were provided with temporary accommodation. The graph below shows the reasons households presented homelessness within the last 12 months.



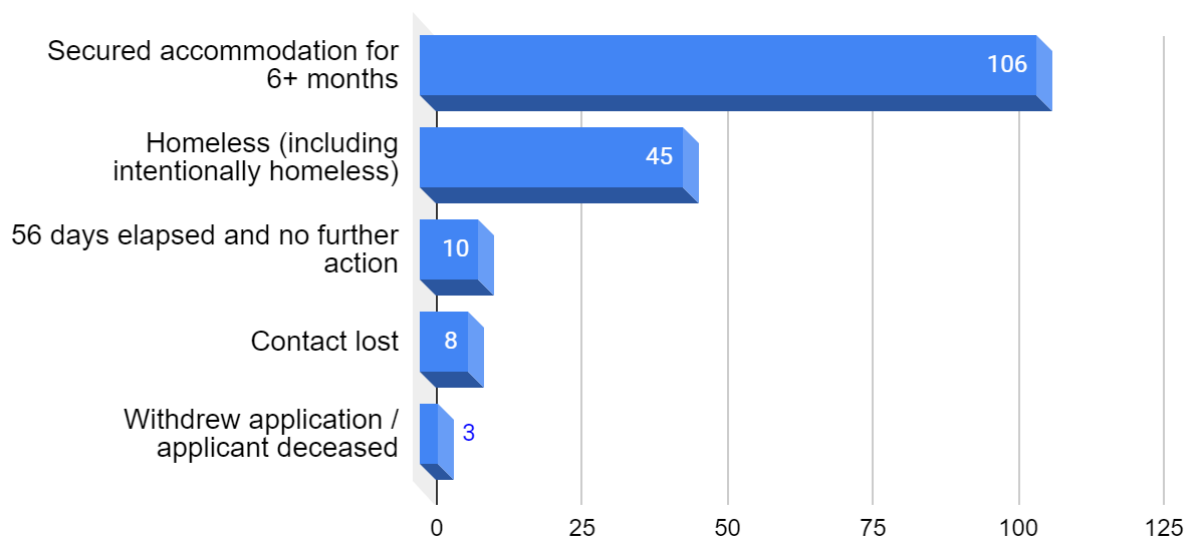
Worthing - Reasons for loss of last settled home (Jul 2021 - Jun 2022)

4.7 The graph below shows that private rented accommodation and accommodation with friends and family are the two most common types of accommodation from which households presented homeless.



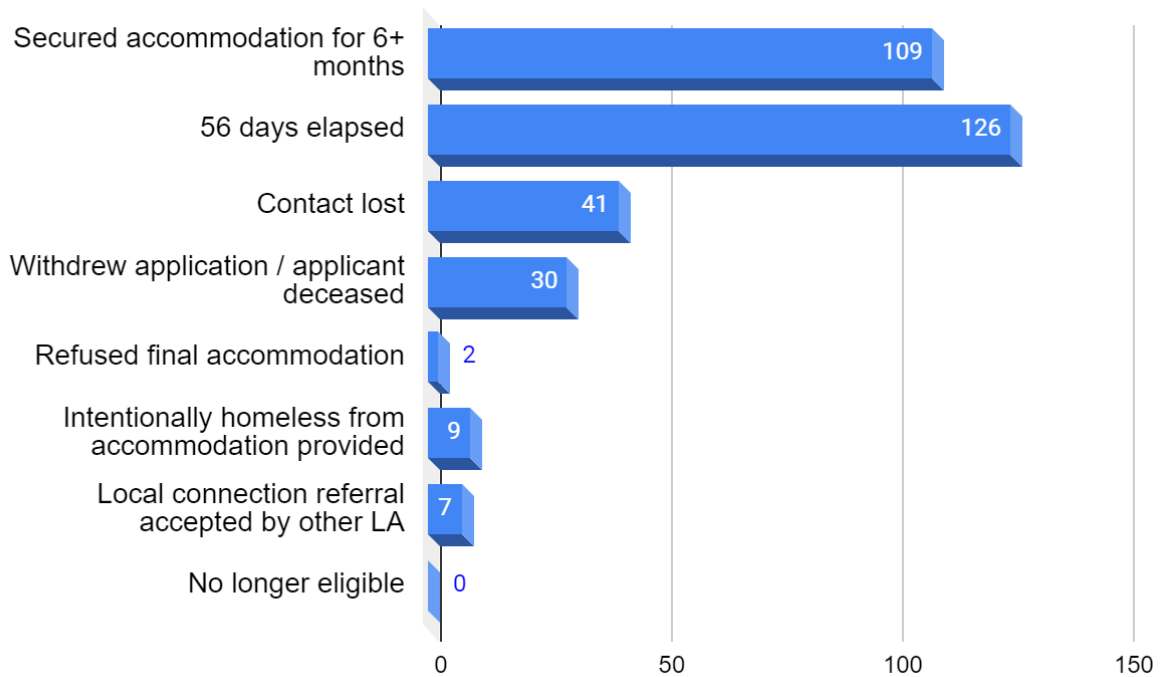
Worthing - Accommodation at the time of application (Jul 2021 - Jun 2022)

4.8 Of the 189 owed a prevention duty, 56% (106) were assisted to find alternative accommodation. 70 of these were in the private rented sector and 27 were in the Social rented sector. The graph below shows a breakdown of the outcomes for those owed the prevention duty.



Worthing - Outcomes for those owed the prevention duty (Jul 2021 - Jun 2022)

4.9 Of the 358 owed a prevention duty, 30% (109) were assisted to find alternative accommodation. The graph below shows a breakdown of the outcomes for those owed the relief duty.



Worthing - Outcomes for those owed the relief duty (Jul 2021 - Jun 2022)

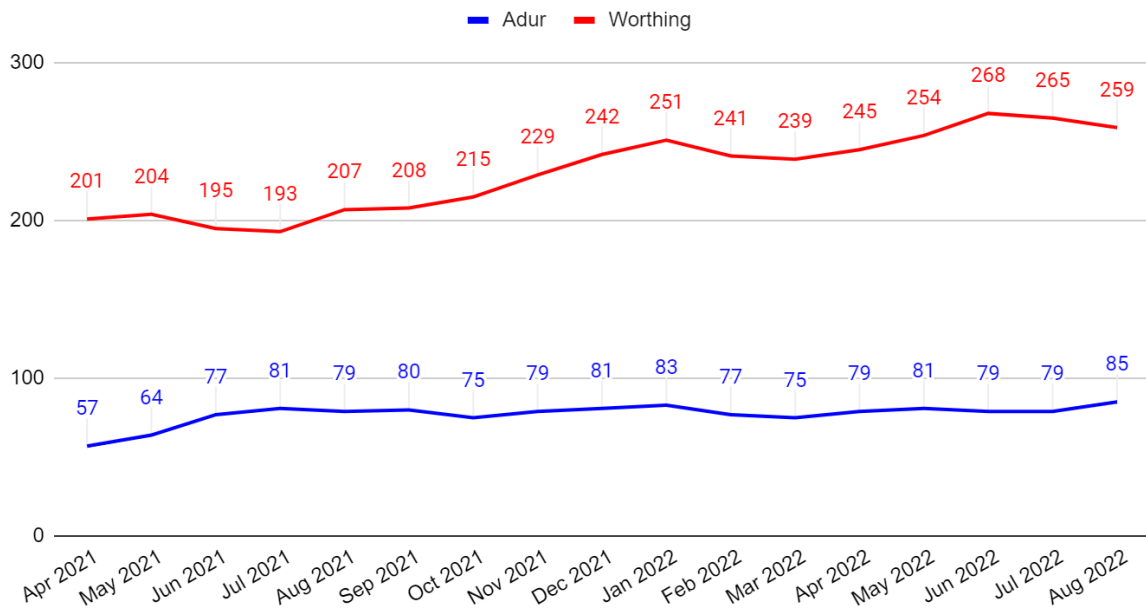
4.10 The Councils continue to jointly fund the Pathways Home Homeless Prevention Support Service with West Sussex County Council. The service is delivered by Southdown. The table below shows the total number of referrals to Pathway Homes in Quarter 1 (April 2022 - June 2022). In addition to the support provided by Pathway Homes, some residents also received additional support from other agencies such as CGL, who provide support for substance misuse, SPFT who support people with mental health.

Qu.1 22/23 Support Needs	Total Referrals to Pathway Homes	Receiving additional support
Customers with MH needs	41	17
Customers with LD	8	0
Customers with Physical Disabilities	18	2
Customers with Autism Spectrum Condition	5	0
Customers with substance misuse issues	16	6
Customers with Dual Diagnosis	3	1

- 4.11 In addition to the Pathways Home contract the Housing Needs Team continue to work in partnership with WORTH domestic abuse service and have an Independent Domestic Abuse worker co-locate with the team as well as a specialist social worker for adults who has been invaluable in supporting us to achieve accommodation outcomes such as Extra Care and residential placements as well as ensuring as rapid a response as possible for those in temporary accommodation needing care packages, which highlights our strong partnerships as these roles are not replicated across the county.
- 4.12 After piloting for West Sussex County Council and Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust (SPFT); SPFT have now funded a permanent Mental Health Housing Advisor to work between mental health inpatient settings and housing for three councils including AWC and our advisor is now in post. In addition the Discharge to Assess mental health scheme is being rolled out across east and west sussex and we have also been successful in securing a Clinical Psychologist trainee who will start with the service in April with a focus on clients with learning disabilities as we have a cohort of homeless and rough sleepers who have no housing options that meet their needs.
- 4.13 The Telljo pilot has commenced which will be reported under Proactive. Under the pilot we are the first authority to be trialling its use as a first point of contact for those registering with the councils for housing advice (i.e. the early stage of a homeless application where either advice is given and a case closed or Prevention and Relief duties are triggered). Early indicators are this will be an invaluable tool in upstreaming support for those approaching the councils for advice and support and improve the service we are delivering for homeless applicants. Members will be receiving further briefings and will be provided with a demonstration of the tool. Its use has resulted in people contacted reaching out to thank the service for the support received via the scheme and early indicators are very encouraging.

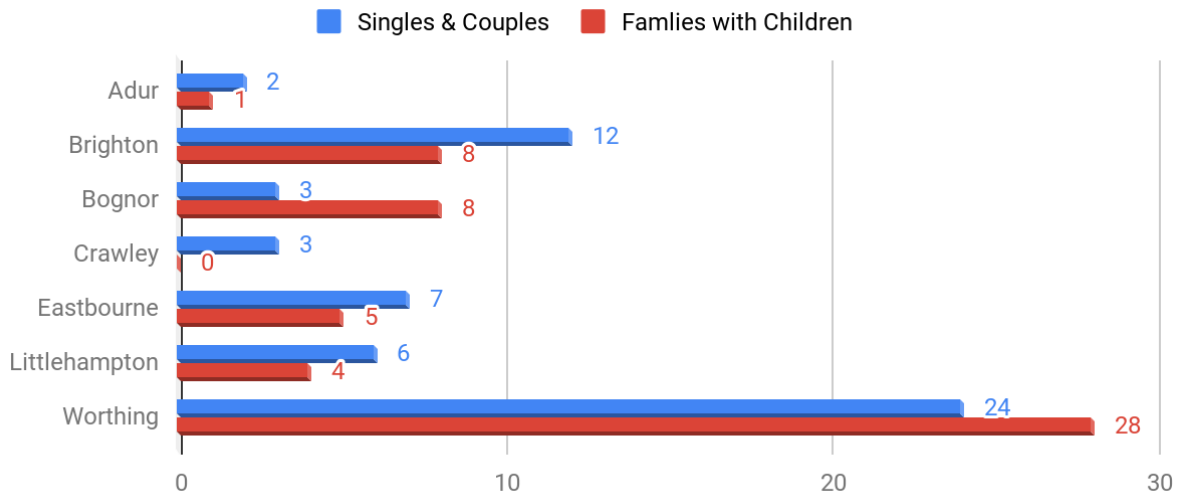
5.0 Temporary Accommodation

- 5.1 Over the last 12 months, demand for temporary accommodation in both Adur and Worthing has grown. Demand for temporary accommodation will continue to increase due to the factors mentioned in above Paragraphs 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5

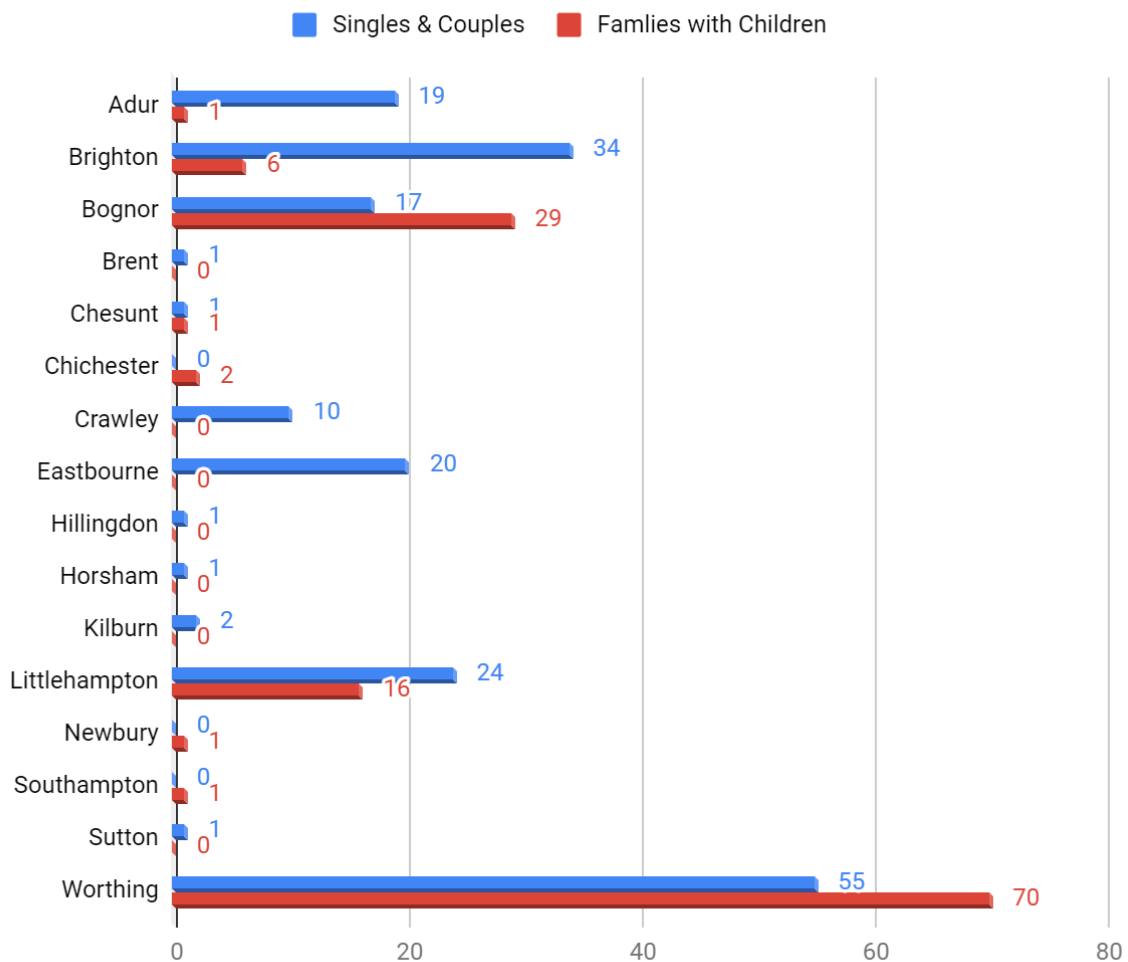


Average households in temporary accommodation (Month)

- 5.2 In 2021/22, Adur spent £1,036,198.00 (gross) in providing temporary accommodation, while Worthing spent £3,088,816.00 (gross). Between April 2022 and August 2022, Adur has spent £526,884 (net) and Worthing £1,602,337.00 (net). Based on these figures, it is projected that this financial year, Adur will spend £1,264,521.60 on providing temporary accommodation while Worthing is projected to spend £3,845,608.80. However, the spend on temporary accommodation is likely to exceed these projections due to the uncertainty driving homelessness presentations i.e. Cost of Living, changes in legislation for landlords affecting revenue from properties as well as expected abolition of the Section 21 (no fault) notice.
- 5.3 It is increasingly difficult to source temporary accommodation locally due to increasing demand. Current temporary accommodation portfolio include owned, leased, contracted and spot booked units. As much as possible, households are placed within the Sussex area where they cannot be placed within Adur or Worthing. Placements are dependent on availability on the day, though efforts are being made to bring households back into the area as soon as possible. JOSC working group established to explore support for those placed out of area, currently some in reach is provided into out of area placements to ensure welfare monitored.



Adur - Snapshot of placements location as at 13.10.2022



Worthing - Snapshot of placements location as at 13.10.2022

5.4 It is challenging finding suitable temporary accommodation placements within Adur Districts. The graph above is a snapshot of Adur Council's temporary

accommodation placements as at 13.10.2022. Of the 111 temporary placements, 47% are accommodated in Worthing and 18% in Brighton.

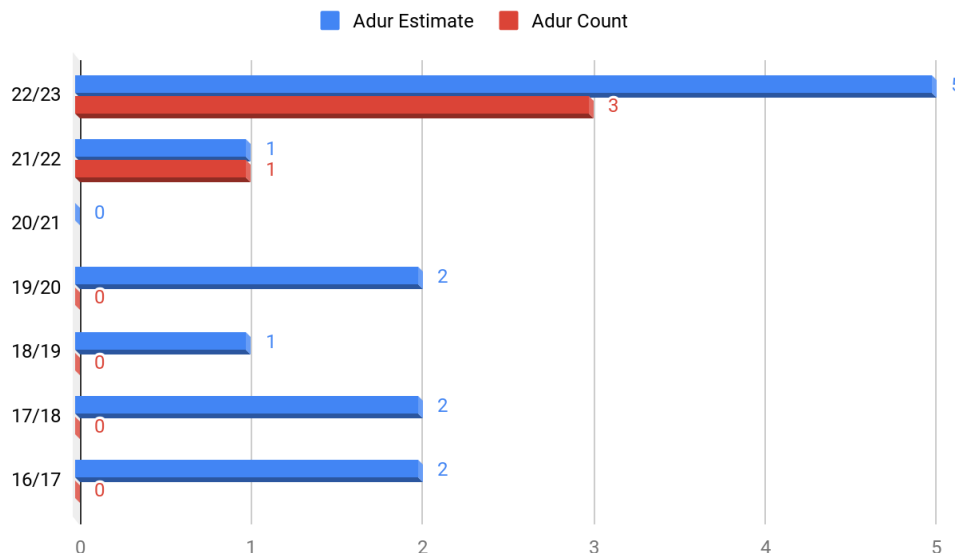
- 5.5 Due to the significant demand for temporary accommodation placements from Worthing residents, some residents are accommodated further out of the area, especially single individuals. The graph above is a snapshot of Worthing Council's temporary accommodation placements as at 13.10.2022. Of the 313 placements, 40% are accommodated within Worthing, and 13% and 15% accommodated in Brighton and Bognor respectively.
- 5.6 The Councils continue to seek opportunities to own or procure temporary accommodation locally. The Councils are also in discussion with local proprietors however it is becoming increasingly challenging to secure family units at a competitive cost.
- 5.7 Adur Council is developing 6 temporary accommodation units as part of the Albion Street development and 8 units in South Street. Other sites are also being considered
- 5.8 Worthing already owns 17 units of temporary accommodation in Downview Road and 19 units in Rowlands Road. A site in Victoria Road is being considered for 11 units. Worthing is also considering other sites for temporary accommodation development.
- 5.9 The Councils intend to review its Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Policy to ensure it contributes towards achieving the missions in Our Plan and the service we provide to our residents who are homeless is resilient, adaptable and participative.
- 5.10 The current policy, which was written in October 2017 was due for review in 2020 however, this was not completed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A paper will be brought to the Joint Strategic Committee in March to request extensions of current policy and to detail work being undertaken to meet the need as well as proposed timetable for development of the new policy and strategy. Continuing with the current policy in 2023/24 does not impact the Councils ambition of owning temporary accommodation.
- 5.11 The increasing numbers of homeless and lack of temporary accommodation has resulted in families with children being placed in Bed and Breakfast (B&B), and for longer than 6 weeks. As a result Worthing Borough Council is being monitored by DLUCH regarding its use of B&B for families. To deal with this challenge the Councils have spot-purchased 65 self contained temporary

accommodation units. There are currently 9 households with children in B&B - 2 Adur and 7 Worthing households.

6.0 Rough Sleeping

6.1 The number of individuals sleeping rough is rising. In part this is due to the Homeless Reduction Act, which places additional duties on local housing authorities for single homeless people. It is also as a result of the impacts of the pandemic, the cost of living as well as the closure of Turning Tides' Lyndhurst Road accommodation, which provided 34 beds of supported accommodation. While all those who were housed at Lyndhurst were decanted into other accommodation, the loss of the provision will continue to impact numbers of single people in temporary accommodation and rough sleepers who are in need of supported accommodation. In addition, individuals sleeping rough are unable to sustain temporary accommodation due to the complexity of their support needs, resulting in multiple temporary accommodation placements until accommodation options are exhausted.

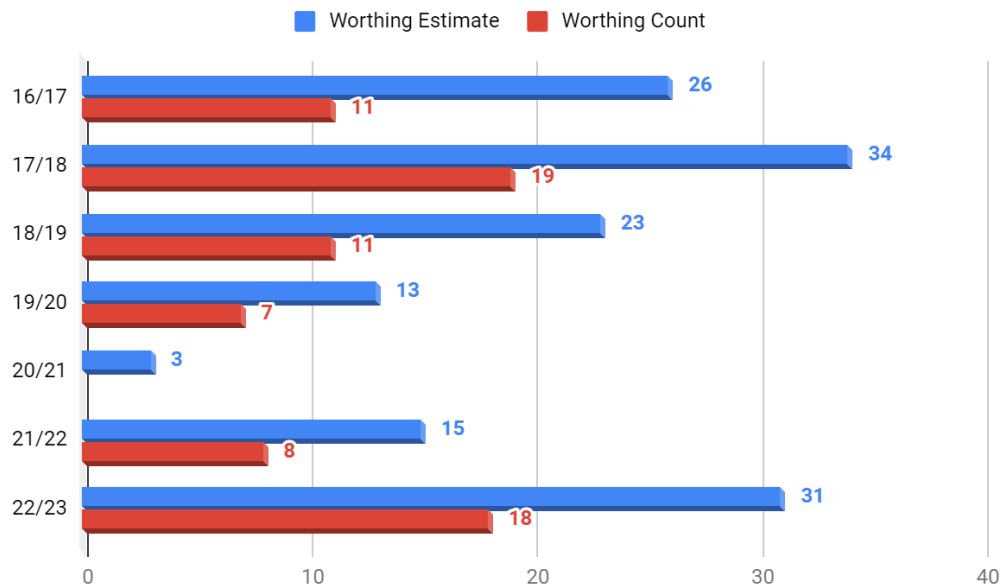
6.2 Unlike the pandemic period where there were more hotel options due to the closure, hotels are no longer willing to house individuals with complex needs due to impact on their business. Local hotels are no longer available for even short term placements.



Adur - Street Count

6.3 The loss of these accommodation options and the increasing numbers of single homeless people with complex needs means that there are no suitable housing options other than temporary accommodation, which is often not

suitable. There is also a very limited number of specialist supported accommodation to move them into from temporary accommodation and rough sleeping situations. Furthermore, evictions from supported housing return them to rough sleeping situations. 58 people were evicted from supported accommodation in Worthing in the period between July 2021 - June 2022 which represents 10.5% of those approaching the council as homeless. The graphs below show the street counts for the last 7 years.



Worthing - Street Count

6.4 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUCH) funding opportunities to support the work to tackle rough sleeping has been maximised but does not address the fundamental issue of lack of supported housing that meets the needs of the client group. Worthing has more eligibility for funding than Adur in recognition of the level of need in Worthing, there are no plans to extend RSI funding beyond 2025 and we are reliant on it for our delivery of core services to this client group. The bids are required to be submitted in partnership with a provider and co-designed with our appointed DLUCH advisors:

- I. **Rough Sleeper Initiative 5 (RSI5)** in partnership with Turning Tides - £629,491.00 for the period 2022 - 2025 with interventions being delivered by the councils and Turning Tides.
- II. **Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP)** - Worthing x2 flats within Rowlands Road and x9 flats in partnership with Southdown, Adur x2 flats within Albion Street. The funding awarded capital funding of £150K capital for the Albion Street development and £100K for the Southdown development as well as revenue to provide support workers

across the 3 sites at £175,550pa. The workers will be employed by Southdown for their site and by the councils for Albion Street and Rowlands Road. The x9 flats with Southdown are ready to let but recruitment issues have resulted in Southdown delaying opening.

- III. **Accommodation for Ex Offenders (AFEO)** in partnership with Stonepillow - £135,750 (for period until 31.03.23) with a further award of £230,871.00 for the period 2023-2025

- 6.3 Since the winter of 2019 when we had two night shelters, we have not had a night shelter provision due to covid restrictions and reduced need as rough sleepers were housed under the Everyone In, and Protect and Vaccinate initiatives under which we were able to procure hotels and HMOs with support. The HMOs have been absorbed into our temporary accommodation stock as demand has continued to increase. This year the council has opened a night shelter at 24 Marine Place to enable the complex clients rough sleeping to be provided shelter and support over the winter period. To date 26 individuals have accessed the shelter with up to 16 in one night. To date 6 have been housed from the shelter, 2 supported for assessment for access to Recovery Project and housing plans for a further 4 in place.

7.0 Supporting our residents to live in safe and suitable homes

Maintaining Standards in the Private Rented Sector

- 7.1 The Councils are committed to continue to use their powers to drive up standards in the private rented sector by making landlords carry out improvements where these are necessary and by licensing Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).
- 7.2 Between April 2022 and December 2022, the Councils received 197 complaints from residents; 171 (Adur - 60, Worthing - 137) of which were about their housing conditions with rest relating to filthy and verminous conditions.
- 7.3 The Councils carried out 31 (Adur - 9, Worthing - 22) formal Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) inspections and served 73 formal notices (Adur - 15, Worthing - 58). About 35 enforcement notices have been revoked meaning that required actions have been completed by the landlords and the properties in question are now safer to use. The Councils served 4 Fixed Penalty Notices (which are subject to appeal), where owners have failed to maintain properties in a safe condition or have not complied with statutory notices .

7.4 In Adur and Worthing, there are now 180 licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO). 17 of these are in Adur and 163 are in 163. This represents a five fold increase since 2018. There 30 properties awaiting HMO licences (Adur - 5, Worthing - 25). Four properties in Worthing are currently under active investigation as unlicensed HMO.

Helping people stay home for longer

7.5 To assist more residents remain in their home safely, especially those who have disability or mobility related issues, the Councils provide grant assistance and support for adaptations and equipment such as stair lifts and level access showers,

7.6 Between April 2022 and December 2022, the Council received 215 new applications (Adur - 72, Worthing - 143) for both Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) Repairs Grant Assistance (RGA). 183 of these applications (Adur - 67, Worthing - 135) were recommendations from West Sussex County Councils (WSSCC) Occupational Therapists for DFGs for major adaptations.

7.7 145 grants for disabled residents were completed during the same period. Due to the long term nature of these projects, some of these were started before 1 April 2022.. In total 108 of the applications received during the period have so far proceeded to completion, with the rest likely to complete in the next year.

7.8 The total spend over this period in Adur was £382,130.02 and in Worthing £913,367.251. This level of spend has been possible because of Government funding through the Better Care Fund.

8.0 Our role as a Social Landlord (Adur District)

8.1 Adur District Council continues to focus on ensuring our social housing stock is safe and meets the required standards continuously.

8.2 The Adur Joint Sub- Committee recently approved additional resources of £47,410 to be released from the Capacity Issues Reserve to support the proposed programme of Health and Safety work. An Asset and Compliance Board, chaired by the Director for Communities, has been set up to ensure achievements are sustained in this area. Contracts have either been procured and mobilised or still in the process of being procured. Areas of focus include asbestos management, electrical safety, and lift servicing. Significant work has already been done on fire safety and gas safety.

- 8.3 The Council is also undertaking a strategic review of some of the stock which requires significant investment. Options appraisals are being conducted to allow a long term view on these assets. The Council aims to create a long term asset management plan to ensure continuous planned maintenance in our social housing stock.

Southwick Estate

- 8.4 Consultation on options for Southwick Estate has not yet been completed. The Council continues to engage with the Residents Working Group on the proposals and four options identified. A subgroup for leaseholders has also been set up to ensure their views are represented in the consultation.
- 8.5 Interim maintenance works to the estate, which will cost about £1, 800,000, is planned to commence in Summer 2023. The aim of the works is to ensure safety of the buildings.
- 8.6 During surveys to plan for the interim works, concerns were identified with some of the balconies in the property on the estate. To ensure safety of the residents in these buildings, they have been asked not to use their balconies while we arrange for temporary works. All affected residents in Southwick Estate have been formally written to.

Housing Revenue Account

- 8.7 More recently the HRA has experienced financial difficulties due to a higher than expected voids level. In the current year, the level of void properties is contributing £0.5m to the in year position
- 8.8 The 7% cap on social housing rent whilst better than expected, will mean that rents again fail to keep pace with inflation. Unbudgeted salary increases are estimated to be close to 8% whilst we expect most contracts to increase by 8% in the current year.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 The cost of delivering the housing strategy is built into the Councils' revenue and capital budgets.
- 9.2 The Councils have significant revenue budgets for the provision of the housing need service:
- Adur District Council £1,002,890
 - Worthing Borough Council £2,224,770

- 9.3 In the current year, these budgets are likely to overspend significantly due to the pressure of increasing demand (Adur £300k, Worthing £600k). Whilst these pressures will be accommodated as part of the development of the 2023/24 budget, increasing demand for the service is placing both Councils under financial pressure.
- 9.4 Contained within the capital budgets for both Councils is provision for new delivery of new Council owned temporary and emergency accommodation along with grants to support the delivery of additional affordable homes by Registered Social Landlords.

Finance Officer: Sarah Gobey

Date: 10th January 2023

5. Legal Implications

- 6.1 Section 9 of The Housing Act 1985 confers power on the Local Authority to provide, repair and maintain houses for rent.
- 6.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into force on 3 April 2018. It places legal duties on housing authorities, with a focus on preventing homelessness. The most significant change is that anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness is able to access support, regardless of their priority need status.
- 6.3 Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 continues to place a duty on every local housing authority to consider housing conditions in their district and the needs of the district with respect to the provision of further housing accommodation.
- 6.4 Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or which is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.
- 6.5 s1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do apart from that which is specifically prohibited by pre-existing legislation

Legal Officer: Joanne Lee

Date: 10/01/2023

Background Papers

- Housing Strategy 2020-2023
- Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Policy
- DLUCH Rough Sleeping Strategy
- Delivering Pathways to Affordable Homes

Officer Contact Details:-

Akin Akinyebo

Head of Housing

Akin.Akinyebo@adur-worthing.gov.uk

01273 263232

Sustainability & Risk Assessment

- Matter considered and no issues identified

1. Economic

- Matter considered and no issues identified

2. Social

2.1 Social Value

- The Strategy promotes thriving communities where families and individuals are not at risk of homelessness, can settle and be part of the local community.

2.2 Equality Issues

- The Strategy aims to provide affordable and long-term accommodation for those who need it, irrespective of race, gender, sexuality, age, religion or belief, disability, marital status, pregnancy or maternity.

2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

- Improving access to homes, supporting people to be part of their communities as well as providing a night shelter will support a reduction of anti-social behaviour.

2.4 Human Rights Issues

- Matter considered and no issues identified

3. Environmental

- The Strategy supports the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, through our commitments to help those in poverty and prevent homelessness, to promote health and wellbeing and to ensure our developments are sustainable by design.

4. Governance

- Considered and no matters identified.