

Chelmsford City Council Housing Services- Service & Continuous Improvement Plan October 2024.

The aim of the plan is to demonstrate the achievements and outcomes based on the Implementation Plan (March 2024) and establish priorities and next steps for the next 6 months.

	Achievements / Outcomes	Next Steps issues to consider / Actions	Lead Officer	Estimated Commencement Date
Policy & Plans	Housing Strategy Priorities drafted / agreed.	Housing Strategy Review – Consult on priorities. Draft document for consultation and approval.	Paul Brookes	March 2025
Policies Approved	Tenure Strategy 2024-2029 (June 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation process to be designed and implemented Use as basis for discussions with housing providers on increasing supply and access.	Paul Gayler	December 2024
	Review of Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Strategy complete. Strategy drafted Policy Board approval (September 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report drafted for public consultation – to be finalised • Consultation & Communication Plan to be finalised December 2024 • Final approval Policy Board January 2025 	Paul Gayler	November 2024 December 2024 January 2025
	Temporary Accommodation Placement & Procurement Plan (March 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement of further providers in progress (Property Stop) & agree further contract award. 	Paul Gayler	Ongoing
	2-year contracts in place with 2 providers – commenced 1 st September 2024 (estimated savings £80K per 50 properties) – target 200 = £320K potential saving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Review of contract management – to monitor & maintain savings 	Steve Morgan / Ben Glasson	November 2024

	<p>Rent Policy (July 2024) & Fair Charging Policy for Temporary Accommodation (July 2024)</p> <p>Private Rented Sector Offer Policy (January 2024) Pilot with Ukrainian households – reduction from 20+ to 2 families in TA</p> <p>Supported Housing Act 2023 enacted – guidance awaited</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of changes to Omni system. • Rent notifications to tenants December 2024 – 4 weeks’ notice required. • Team to undertake individual assessments of write offs. • Implementation date 1st January 2025. <p>Omni enables former accounts to be held separately, negating future issues with possession action.</p> <p>Next step – target households in TA outside Chelmsford.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation to commence November 2024 – resource identification / develop effective business plan / invest to save. • Approval <p>Develop Supported Housing Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of current provision and needs assessment. (Based on JSNA) • Assessment of options for revenue funding including use of Intensive Housing Management (IHM) Exempt Housing Benefit <p>Business case required & agreement at Corporate Leadership Team / Revenues & Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Project / Resource Plan <p>Develop Strategy for an Aging Population Link to downsizing / allocation policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Project / Resource Plan 	<p>Steve Morgan</p> <p>Steve Morgan</p> <p>Alison Hawkins/ Steve Morgan</p> <p>Paul Gayler / Paul Brookes</p> <p>Paul Gayler</p>	<p>January 2024</p> <p>November 2024</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>March 2025</p> <p>June 2025</p>
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	Active training and development of staff in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review staff welfare and succession planning for service and maximise access to corporate programmes 	Paul Gayler	
Partnerships	CHP strategic and operational discussions ongoing.	<p>SLA review required to regularise differing arrangements – outcomes required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single Nomination and performance agreement for all CHP owned TA. (CHP to undertake all landlord functions inc: rent collection) Agreement of CHP homes to purchase CCC stock 77 homes (valuations / existing use value & loan redemption assessment required) Under- Occupation Project linked to allocations policy to increase supply of family accommodation. <p>Health Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on relationship building to address customer pathways & reduce inappropriate hospital discharge. Engagement for shared outcomes of Supported Housing Strategy. <p>Domestic Abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of local domestic abuse housing forum in development to be prioritised, & action plan developed. <p>Support Voluntary / Community Sector Housing Providers</p>	<p>Paul Brookes / Paul Gayler</p> <p>Paul Brookes</p> <p>Alison Hawkins</p> <p>Paul Gayler / Paul Brookes</p> <p>Paul Gayler</p>	<p>December 2024</p> <p>December 2024 (in principle agreement) April 2025</p> <p>March 2025</p> <p>November 2024</p> <p>August 2025</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with provider to gain RP status (CHESS & Housing Dilemmas). 	Paul Gayler	March 2025
		<p>ECC -RSI Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of commissioned services for rough sleepers 	Paul Gayler	
Internal Partnerships		<p>Legal Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review & implement service standards to minimise delays & simplify process. (Currently 8-10 weeks to prepare for court application = £4,200 cost in TA plus) Review licenses & tenancy agreements & achieve sign off by Legal Services 	Paul Gayler / Legal Services	October 2024
		<p>Revenues & Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a Business Case and funding agreement for the use of Intensive Housing Management (IHM) Exempt HB for revenue funding of supported housing. 	Steve Morgan	October 2024
		<p>Housing Standards & Licencing</p> <p>Implementation of the Supported Housing & Renters Rights legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of project plan 	Paul Gayler / Paul Brookes	March 2025
		<p>Housing Standards & Licencing</p> <p>Implementation of the Supported Housing & Renters Rights legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of project plan 	Paul Gayler / Chris Cooper	As legislative is finalised / implemented
Communications Strategy	<p>Actions to date</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of homelessness / housing position in Chelmsford- infographics to share with partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly review of comms to customers & partners to be undertaken and monitored <p>Focus on ECC Social Care/ Statutory partners & Voluntary Community organisations to support understanding of housing market and access to social / affordable rent and enable appropriate housing options advice and expectation is delivered.</p>	Paul Gayler / Comms	Ongoing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myths & facts leaflet in development 			
Systems & Operational improvements	<p>Transport & removals process change completed achieving £60K pa. savings achieved.</p> <p>Locate new contract in place.</p> <p>Non- cooperation – discharge of duty procedure in place (March 2024)</p> <p>Homelessness Prevention Support systems in place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent deposit • Homelessness prevention fund <p>Housing Savings March – September 2024 - £230K (Transport & removals, commissioning external providers & use if IHM benefits.</p> <p>£1m saving on predicted TA spend September2023 – September 2024. 145 households less than predicted in TA.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor expenditure & impact- quarterly • Explore development of a business case (invest to save) to access private rented sector proactive development of relationships with letting agents and landlords. • Annual savings statement to be published • Re-assess Housing Service Plan & implement annual team review 	<p>Steve Morgan</p> <p>Alison Hawkins / Steve Morgan</p> <p>Paul Gayler</p> <p>Paul Gayler</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p>

<p>Horizon Scanning – things to watch!</p>		<p>Do the Consumer Standards apply to TA? – not currently but as a LA need to demonstrate quality and drive standards in TA. It's likely Awaab's Law will apply and therefore requirements to be built into contracts / performance and nomination agreement with CHP & others.</p> <p>Renter Rights Bill – Introduced in parliament 11th September 2024 – Implications to be assessed -key issues for Chelmsford +ve – potential reduction in homeless presentations -ve – reduction of supply in private rented sector</p> <p>Affordable Housing Programme – Budget commitments – but funds unlikely to be available until mid-2025.</p>		
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