Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

September 2026 to December 2028

Updated Autumn 2026 to comply with new requirement to publish and submit

Introduction

This Action Plan relates to the Councils Homelessness Strategy, which was published in 2022, and spans 5 years, delivery of which has been overseen by the Housing Options and Advice Manager. However, given the new requirement to publish and submit an action plan to MHCLG by December 2026, this standalone document has been developed.

The action plan includes:

- Local targets in relation to the Local Outcomes Framework
- Local governance structures
- Details on how partnerships work across the district

The focus of the Action Plan is to deliver the promises set out in the Strategy itself. This is achieved through robust development of clear actions, targets, milestones, with an emphasis on accountability and tracking progress.

Local Outcomes framework

The Priority Outcome – to prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping

Priority Outcome Metrics:

Priority Outcome Metrics	Standardised reporting data
Households with children in TA	Rate per 1000 household
Families in B&B over 6 weeks	Number of households
Success at preventing and relieving homelessness	% of all duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved
People sleeping rough on a single night	Number of people

People sleeping rough over the month who are long term	Number of people

These Local Outcomes will be monitored by the Housing Options and Advice manager, will performance reported to the Harlow Homelessness Partnership.

The Delivery Plan

The structure of the Delivery Plan has been aligned with the three national targets relating to homelessness and rough sleeping:

Eliminate the use of B&B for families, other than very short terms use in emergencies – we aim to provide safe, suitable, decent temporary accommodation. Our target is to have zero families in B&B except for short term use.

Prevention – increase the percentage of households whose homelessness prevention or relief duty ends because they have secured accommodation – we note that the national average when the National Plan was adopted was 46.5% . We aim to continually perform above this.

Tackle long term rough sleeping – the government has set a target to halve the numbers of long term rough sleepers. We will set our target at zero and strive to maintain it.

Governance

The senior responsible officer for this Delivery Plan is the Housing Options and Advice Manager. Their role is to oversee delivery against targets and report progress to the Assistant Director and the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

Partnerships

We have a robust Harlow Homelessness Partnership locally, chaired by the Council. The Partnership meets quarterly to monitor homelessness and rough sleeping, and track progress on delivering the Homelessness Strategy. The Partnership is also key in managing working arrangements, referral pathways, meeting frequency, and ensuring all partners contribute to prevention, TA reduction and reducing rough sleeping.

Sign off

This Delivery Plan has been signed off by:

Housing Options and Advice Manager :

Director of Housing:

Portfolio Holder for Housing:

Delivery Plan - Actions

Area One

Eliminate the use of B&B for families, other than very short terms use in emergencies – we aim to provide safe, suitable, decent temporary accommodation. Our target is to have zero families in B&B except for short term use.

Task	Target / Measure	Milestone / Outcome	Lead Owner	Review / Due Date	Status
Monitor families in Bed & Breakfast weekly	Zero families in Bed & Breakfast for more than six weeks; all placements reviewed weekly.	Weekly monitoring log maintained, with barriers to move-on recorded and escalated where required.	Housing Options & Advice Team Leader	Weekly; reported quarterly	In progress
Strengthen move-on planning	Move-on plan completed within two weeks of placement for all households in temporary accommodation.	Move-on plan template implemented and used consistently, with priority given to families and households with children.	Housing Options & Advice Team Leader	November 2026	In progress
Build more homes	Enable the development of housing association (Registered Providers) properties Develop more council homes	New homes delivered year on year	Director of Housing (Operations)	Annually – end of March	In progress

Provision of Housing IDVA role in the Housing Options & Advice Team	Focussing on reducing the need for B&B for those fleeing domestic abuse	Fewer people fleeing Domestic Abuse requiring emergency accommodation (B&B)	Housing Options and Advice Manager	Annually - end of March	In progress
Landlords Forum	Set up a landlords forum to assist in securing additional homes in the private rented sector	First meeting of Landlords Forum Action Plan for future engagement	Housing Options and Advice Manager	March 2028	
Increase self-contained accommodation supply	Identify additional suitable self-contained accommodation options and bring them into use where viable.	Accommodation options reviewed with housing providers and private landlords; viable options recorded and progressed.	Housing Options and Advice Manager	December 2026	In progress
Report temporary accommodation performance	Temporary accommodation indicators included in quarterly reporting.	Quarterly performance report includes families in Bed & Breakfast, households with children in temporary accommodation and move-on activity.	Housing Options and Advice Manager	From Quarter 4 2026/27	H-CLIC reporting and local PI's.
Review emergency placement procedure	Bed & breakfast use limited to short-term emergencies, with clear approval and escalation arrangements.	Updated procedure approved, circulated to relevant officers and embedded in casework practice.	Housing Options & Advice Team Leader	October 2027	

Area Two

Prevention – increase the percentage of households whose homelessness prevention or relief duty ends because they have secured accommodation – we note that the national average when the National Plan was adopted was 46.5% . We aim to continually perform above this.

Task	Details	Milestone / Outcome	Owner	Delivery Date	Status
Strengthen early intervention	Increase the proportion of cases resolved at prevention stage and reduce escalation to relief duty where possible.	First-contact prevention reviews embedded, with advice, assistance and partner referrals recorded on case files.	Housing Options & Advice Team Leader	October 2026; monthly review	
Increased partnership working	Building stronger networks and partnerships that deliver warm handovers and facilitate conversations focussed on solutions	Meetings of the Harlow Homelessness Forum 3 times a year Delivery through sub group meetings	Housing Options and Advice Manager	Ongoing	In Progress

Increase access to the private rented sector	Review the rent bond scheme linking to Renters Rights Act Engage with landlords Secure homes Negotiate with landlords where notice served (including financial incentives)	More homes available in the PRS year on year	Housing Options and Advice Manager	March 27 March 28	
Ensure local homes are secured for local people	Review local connections policy in Housing Allocations Scheme to actively demonstrate that homes are let to local people	Data evidencing impact of revised local connection policy	Housing Options & Advice Team Leader	March 2028	
Support landlords in understanding the Renters Rights Act	Training and information sharing	Understanding landlords needs and delivering accordingly	Housing Options & Advice Team Leader	February 2027 and ongoing	
Promote the use of the homelessness prevention fund amongst the team	Prevention Fund to be used to assist in prevention – promote to staff team and partner agencies	Increased take-up	Housing Options & Advice Team Leader	March 27 March 28	

Encourage early approach by raising awareness of services	Making use of social media and other comms outlets to promote early help	Earlier approaches	Housing Options & Advice Team Leader & Harlow Homelessness Partnership	March 28	
Improve Personalised Housing Plans	All Personalised Housing Plans to include specific, realistic and time-bound actions.	Training Monthly audit process implemented, with findings recorded and learning shared across the team.	Housing Options & Advice Team Leader	July 26 Nov 2026; monthly audit	Training complete
Home visits	Home visits for all parental and family / friend evictions	Increase early invention/housing options	Housing Options & Advice Team Leader	March 28	
Enhance private rented sector access	Increase successful prevention and relief outcomes through access to suitable private rented accommodation.	Landlord engagement activity recorded, with suitable opportunities progressed and outcomes monitored monthly.	Housing Options & Advice Team Leader	December 2026	In progress
Monitor prevention and relief outcomes	Maintain performance above the national benchmark where possible.	Monthly data reviewed, improvement actions agreed and performance reported quarterly.	Housing Options & Advice Team Leader	Monthly; reported quarterly	In progress

Area Three

Tackle long term rough sleeping – the government has set a target to halve the numbers of long term rough sleepers. We will set our target at zero and strive to maintain it.

Task	Details	Milestone / Outcome	Lead Owner	Delivery Date	Status
Continued support for Bromley Cottages	Support the sustainment of these homes and continued funding for practical support	Reduced rough sleeping	Housing Options and Advice Manager & Streets2Homes	March 27 March 28	In progress
Maintain rapid response to rough sleeping reports	All rough sleeping reports reviewed promptly and routed for verification, assessment and support.	Response process documented, reports logged and actions recorded through casework systems.	Rough Sleeper Prevention Coordinator	Monthly review	In progress
Introduce a No First Night Out policy	To prevent people hitting the streets	Policy agreed and introduced	Housing Options and Advice Manager	March 29	
Develop a person centred approach to individual rough sleepers	Individual wrap around services	Pathways in place.	Rough Sleeping Prevention Coordinator & Streets2Homes	March 28	In progress
Maintain a by-name case list	Live case list maintained for anyone verified as rough sleeping or at immediate risk.	Case list includes support needs, accommodation pathway, next actions and review date.	Rough Sleeping Prevention Coordinator	September 2026; monthly review	In progress

Strengthen multi-agency case coordination	Holding Harlow Task and Target Group Meetings every month. Multi-agency plans in place for complex cases where rough sleeping risk is identified.	Partner meetings used to agree actions, review risks and coordinate support where relevant.	Rough Sleeper Prevention Coordinator & Streets2Homes	November 2026; quarterly review	In progress
Use social media to raise awareness of rough sleeping and homelessness	Regular public messaging to promote how residents can report concerns, including through StreetLink, and how people can access homelessness advice and support.	Communications plan agreed with relevant teams, seasonal posts published, StreetLink and local contact routes promoted, and engagement reviewed to inform future messaging.	Rough Sleeper Prevention Coordinator & Harlow Homelessness Partnership	December 2026; seasonal review	
Improve prevention for people at risk of rough sleeping	Reduce new rough sleeping presentations through earlier partner referrals and intervention.	Referral arrangements reviewed with prisons, hospitals and support agencies, with early intervention cases monitored.	Rough Sleeper Prevention Coordinator & Harlow Homelessness Partnership	December 2026	
Increase emergency housing units to provide a route off the street	Explore opportunities for more modular housing. Need to be located in a suitable place for those with complex needs. Consider support. Explore funding opportunities	Opportunities reviewed, costed and appraised. Decision made on feasibility to progress. Increased pathways from the street	Housing Options and Advice Manager Steets to Homes	December 2027	

Monitor rough sleeping data and trends	To aim for a local target of zero long-term rough sleepers.	Monthly data reviewed, trends reported quarterly and exception actions agreed where required.	Harlow Homelessness Partnership	Monthly; reported quarterly	In progress
LHA rates	Campaigning to raise profile of impact of LHA rates on ability to provide housing for under 35s	Raising awareness with government advisors	Harlow Homelessness Partnership	During 2027	