



## Dacorum Council Homeless Reduction Act – Detailed Delivery Plan

### Resources Plan

Each of the items listed below in the Work Plan will have its own delivery plan with milestones, responsibilities and target dates for implementation.

Desired Outcome	Description	What needs to be done	Lead Officer and Progress	Timetable
1	Developing a Council wide approach to preventing and tackling homelessness	<p><b>Action: Obtaining a Corporate Commitment to prevent and tackle homelessness.</b></p> <p><b>Proposed actions and dates</b></p> <p>1. This process has already been started in Dacorum. A CMT briefing was completed in June 2017 to this effect.</p> <p>2. A report was submitted to Cabinet in July 2017 where proposals were made for the Homeless Reduction Act</p> <p>3. A presentation has also been completed at the leadership event to let all service areas know they will need to nominate a homeless champion moving forward.</p> <p>4. Following on from this an email has been sent to all Group Managers requesting that all nominations need to be submitted by October 20<sup>th</sup>.</p>		Oct/Nov 17

		5. Once completed a briefing report detailing the Project Plan will also need to be submitted to the Portfolio Holder.		
2	<p><b>Working in Partnership to prevent and tackle homelessness and the new duties in the Homelessness Reduction Act</b></p> <p><b>1) Obtaining a commitment from all relevant statutory and voluntary sector partners to work in partnership to pilot and successfully implement the new model of prevention to meet the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act</b></p> <p><b>2) Deliver the Homelessness Reduction Act objective to provide early intervention prevention work through partnership working</b></p>	<p><b>Actions to deliver: Set up a Sub Group of the Homeless Forum to create the Homeless Hub in Dacorum.</b></p> <p><b>Proposed actions and progress:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Homeless Forum in Dacorum has been advised on the requirement to create a Homeless Hub in the borough.</li> <li>2. Agreement obtained from the Forum to set up sub group to help create the Homeless Hub.</li> <li>3. Requests via the Homeless Forum have been made for members to nominate a Homeless Champion to work in partnership with the Project lead to create the Homeless Hub.</li> <li>4. Following on from this an email has been sent out to all members requesting nominations for this to be submitted by 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2017.</li> </ol> <p><b>Actions to deliver this action</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Overall aim is that all relevant partners' (including Hertfordshire Local Authority partners) sign up to a new <b>"Homeless Prevention Charter"</b> structured around the partnership aims of the Homelessness Reduction Act and linked to the Council's Homelessness Strategy.</li> <li>2. Work will then commence with each partner as well as services in the voluntary sector such as HYH, Druglink and Community Action Dacorum to</li> </ol>		<p>Nov/Dec 17</p> <p>Jan 18</p>

	<p><b>3) Deliver bespoke prevention help through Personal Housing Plans as required by the Homelessness Reduction Act and to seek to make the Personal Housing Plans a live and</b></p>	<p>identify their organisations role and agree their contribution in helping to deliver early intervention prevention work. The charter appendixes will also set out their contributions by way of Partnership agreements (or memorandums of understanding)</p> <p>3. The objective is to provide effective prevention help and advice through the principle of 'no wrong front door' Applicant would be able to receive the same quality of advice from any partner agency even if the delivery of specific prevention actions may be the responsibility of the Council or a specific agency in that partnership.</p> <p>4. Building on this the Homeless Hub will be created both in a physical and virtual sense. There will be regular sessions set up at a location (to be decided), initial considerations are that this location could be The Elms, where clients can attend in person and see a representative from the service they are looking to access. The same information and advice will also be made available for clients to access online allowing flexibility for those who have other commitments or reasons that prevent them from being able to attend in person.</p> <p><b>Actions to deliver the objective of bespoke Personal Housing Plans:</b></p> <p><b>Actions set 1: Delivering Personal Housing Plans through the Housing Solutions Service</b></p> <p>Dacorum has already begun implementing this requirement in anticipation of the HRA. Currently this is in the format of a word document. This is completed with client during the initial interview and signed when both parties are happy with the agreed actions.</p> <p>This will be developed and evolved into an online version that is accessible to both the caseworker and applicant that can be amended throughout the process to create a live and evolving plan.</p> <p><b>Action set 2: Delivering Personal Housing Plans in Partnership</b></p>		<p>Feb/March 18</p> <p>Jan 2018</p>
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	<p><b>evolving plan through partnership working</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider feasibility of adaption the current Enhanced Housing Options assessment tool to achieve the PHP requirements through Civica.</li> <li>2. This will involve developing a system whereby copies of all PHPs will be stored online ideally on a password protected server</li> <li>3. Applicant will be given password and link to own their own Personal Housing Plan.</li> <li>4. We will also work with IT services to create a system where a notification will be sent via email to the caseworker when the PHP is added to or amended.</li> <li>5. Will explore the option of developing a system with selected partners who will have access to the persons personal housing plan (with consent) to help keep the PHP and the actions relevant and live to increase the chances of a successful prevention outcome. If feasible in Dacorum and agreed to, all partners to be asked to follow a protocol whereby they can (with the customers consent) to add, amend and support the delivery of that plan</li> </ol> <p>This is to realise the objective of the plan being a live and evolving set of actions to be taken with support from the Council and Partners to try and achieve a solution.</p> <p><b>Action set 5: Develop Pathway Plans for a number of specific vulnerable groups</b></p> <p>Dacorum, in response to the new section 179 advice duty in the HRA will as will be required by the new legislation develop Pathway Plans – These can be seen as a specific form of a Personal Housing Plan for specialist vulnerable groups who may have more problems in preventing homelessness or help to obtain accommodation.</p> <p>Dacorum already has joint working protocols in place for the majority of vulnerable groups. For groups where they do not already exist, plans will be created. For those that currently exist, these will need to be reviewed and updated to reflect new legislative changes.</p>		<p>Jan/Feb 18</p> <p>Feb 18</p>
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		<p><b>Actions: Pathway Plans and Joint Working Protocols will be created and developed to provide meaningful prevention help, support, and an accommodation pathway for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 16/17 year old homeless cases</li> <li>b. Care leavers</li> <li>c. Hospital discharge cases including mental health</li> <li>d. Leaving prison or young offenders</li> <li>e. Service personnel homeless on leaving the armed forces</li> </ul> <p>A framework for each Pathway Plan for each vulnerable group will be developed between partner agencies who work with each vulnerable group</p>		
3	<p><b>Improving the quality and effectiveness of prevention work to meet the requirements of the new section 195 prevention duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act</b></p> <p><b>1) Develop and introduce new prevention focused casework resource toolkits targeting the 2 main causes of homelessness in Dacorum - parents/relatives exclusions and section 21 notice cases.</b></p>	<p>Dacorum currently has a Homeless Prevention Toolkit, however this will need to be reviewed as it is based on current service and not the changes that will come with the HRA.</p> <p>Review effectiveness of the new prevention approaches by measuring specifically prevention outcomes for all parental/extended family exclusion cases and all AST/Possession action cases at 6/12/18 months after introduction compared to prevention rates prior to introduction for these 2 main causes – <i>actions at 6/12/18 months after introduction</i></p> <p><b>Actions to deliver a ‘Formal Offer to Resolve’ Model</b></p>		Feb 18

	<p><b>2) To introduce the ‘Offer to Resolve’ model</b></p>	<p>Southwark have introduced a new concept in prevention work of making ‘a <b>formal offer to resolve the problem</b>’ to any person wishing to exclude covering all approaches where there is a threat of homelessness relating to a notice for any tenure, or withdrawal of a permission to live with parents, relatives or friends.</p> <p>This is not a requirement of the new Homelessness Reduction Act but Southwark believe it is an essential model to give discipline to prevention work and to ensure everything has been tried before it is accepted that homelessness cannot be prevented.</p> <p>This is different to a personal housing plan and covers a formal written bespoke offer to resolve the problem that has been identified and made to the person wishing to exclude or repossess (in AST/tenancy cases)</p> <p>This will be a written offer tailored to the problem and potential solution (unless it is a case where it is assessed that it is unsafe for the applicant to remain).</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formal offer to resolve templates to be developed</li> <li>2. Homeless Prevention Team to trial the new concept for all casework once template is ready</li> <li>3. Review compliance and effectiveness of the formal offer to resolve process at 6 months and 12 months</li> </ol>		<p>Trialled from Nov 17 Reviewed in Feb/March 18</p>
	<p><b>3) To look into sustainment plans at the point of ending a prevention, relief or main duty</b></p>	<p><b>Action: To consider appropriate options for sustainment plans at the point of ending a prevention, relief or main duty</b></p> <p>As a trailblazer Southwark have piloted an approach where each household who is offered accommodated will be given a sustainment plan. Dacorum already has a lot of sustainment options in place, such as working relationships with Living</p>		

		<p>Stable Lives and the Advice, Support and Guidance workers etc. Individual plans may be a duplication of this and increase the workload of staff.</p> <p>However we can look at generating a Sustainment Pack that provides generic information and advice on how to sustain a tenancy too all households when duty discharged. To do this we will look at what information is given at the sustainment courses that tenancy run and adapt that into a pack.</p> <p>We will monitor the success of the sustainment plans through discussions with a random section of households (who have had the duty ended and are still in accommodation 6 months following) to ascertain whether or not to continue.</p>		Feb/March 18
	<p><b>Improving the quality and effectiveness of help to single applicants to help them to find accommodation to meet the new section 189B 'Help to Secure' Duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act</b></p>	<p><b>Action 1: Extra support to help single people secure accommodation</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This will be most effectively met through the development of the Homeless Hub. This will deliver a multi-agency advice, options accommodation finding and access to support service accommodation finding.</li> <li>2. This is anticipated to be available both in a physical and virtual Hub that is easy to access.</li> <li>3. All prevention schemes will also be reviewed to try and increase accommodation options for single people and help them secure accommodation</li> <li>4. Longer term Dacorum will also review the provision of the Elms contract</li> </ol>		March 18 and ongoing as the service develops
4	<p><b>To develop a self-help prevention of homelessness strategy</b></p> <p><b>The objective is to promote concept of <i>Customer Choice and Empowerment</i> as a core principle for how the new prevention model is intended to operate</b></p>	<p><b>Encouraging the principle of self help for applicants who are not so vulnerable that they are able to help themselves to find a solution</b></p> <p><b>Self help on line resources</b></p> <p>The Self-Help principle is enshrined in the Homelessness Reduction Act and Dacorum Council will adopt this approach in several ways. Applicants should be seeking a solution themselves with the support of the Council and should be helped to take actions through bespoke practical resources. (Note: an assessment will be made to ensure an applicant can help themselves.</p>		

	<p><b>both in the pilot stage and to inform thinking post enactment of the HRA.</b></p>	<p>Applicants with a level of vulnerability that means they cannot help themselves will not be expected to pursue self help options)</p> <p>This will be achieved through several strands of work</p> <p>A self help strategy will be delivered through:</p> <p><b>1) Developing a fully interactive on-line self help prevention and options advice module</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop the EHO toolkit to create an online advice service where applicants can receive all advice on prevention and options in relation to their housing online.</li> <li>2. This will be accessed via our website and will be developed to be an interactive tool that can be tailored to the individual's requirements</li> </ol> <p><b>2) Develop practically focussed Self Help Packs to be provided to applicants at the earliest point where an approach for help is made</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Self help packs for the main causes of homelessness and for single people and families who are homeless when they present</li> <li>2. The packs will be introduced and monitored and reviewed following feedback</li> <li>3. A focus session with residents to be run by staff at the Elms to establish what they would like to see in these packs and what their expectations are for housing and homelessness.</li> </ol> <p><b>3) Finding out early customer expectations to manage expectations and provide realistic help at the earliest point of contact</b></p> <p>The Council to consider adopting the Welsh model where by within the new statutory assessment applicants are asked what solution they are seeking. This will allow the council to discuss how realistic that solution is and may mean applicants are more receptive to the practical solutions when discussed at the development of the personal housing plan stage</p>		<p>Jan/Feb 18</p> <p>March 18</p> <p>March/April 18</p>
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		<p>1. Question to find out applicant's expectation of a solution to be incorporated into new assessment form</p> <p><b>4) Providing clear facts and illustrative materials on what solutions are available so people can understand their options quickly</b></p> <p>1. Dacorum Council will develop illustrative materials giving facts on the likely housing solutions available</p> <p>2. These will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Fact sheets on social housing prospects</li> <li>b. Fact sheet on where people can afford to live and what they can afford</li> <li>c. These will be incorporated in the PHP's as well as on the online toolkits.</li> </ul> <p><b>5) Piloting the 'passport to Independent living model' to support the principle of <i>Self-help: Promoting Customer Choice and Empowerment</i></b></p> <p>Southwark Council have specifically piloted a new approach to parents seeking to exclude – however Dacorum is already implementing some of this work as a part of the service we provide. This is where the conclusion is that there are tensions at home and a desire to see son/daughter into independent housing to provide very practical help and support to try and engage parents and applicants through a more honest approach to address the <i>housing need problem</i> rather than the <i>homeless in crisis</i> problem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) This is to support parents where they feel they have to exclude to obtain help</li> <li>b) Provide solutions that are planned and therefore more likely to be sustainable through the person being more ready for independent living.</li> <li>c) Setting this out in a model called '<b>Passport to Independent living</b>' setting out help and support and milestones for the person to seek to achieve working towards being ready for independent living</li> </ul> <p><b>Actions</b></p>		<p>March 18</p>
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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We already work alongside Herts Young Homeless (HYH) to provide mediation for families in this situation.</li> <li>2. We can look at providing additional leaflets or information about the service to incorporate what they already do as a part of our plan/pathway.</li> <li>3. Strengthen the working relationship with HYH and ensure their participation in the Homeless Hub – meeting already scheduled in October to start this process</li> </ol>		Initial meeting in Oct 17 and ongoing from that
5	<p><b>Treating Customers with Compassion, Understanding and Empathy to tackle the <i>culture change</i> issue highlighted by the DCLG Select Committee and change which the Government have publically stated they want to see brought about by the HRA</b></p>	<p><b>Action 1: Changing the language used in statutory notification letters</b></p> <p>Dacorum Council will change the language used in all contact with customers for example: advice letters and statutory decision letters to avoid technical language and bureaucratic framework to be replaced by plain English explanations and clear information on customer options, e.g. – this is what is likely to happen if you go down avenue A versus this is the likely outcome if you choose avenue B rather than language that indicates the customer will be ‘punished’ in some way</p> <p>Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop new plain English notification letters</li> <li>2. Develop plain English principle to all options and advice notifications</li> <li>3. Review templates of all letters on Civica, and all statutory decision letters and notifications to be rewritten in new customer focused language</li> </ol> <p>Requests have already been sent to Southwark who have piloted this for template examples</p> <p><b>Action 2: Develop a new approach to intentionally homeless households</b></p> <p><b>Positive pathways</b></p> <p>Promote a new approach to intentional homelessness within the personal housing plan with the concept of a ‘pathway out of intentional homelessness’</p>		Jan/Feb 2018

		<p>Aim is to change the approach to intentional homelessness to tackle the causes of any deliberate action rather than punish that action providing a better 'deal' for potentially IH applicants who are willing to address any issues that cause the loss of their accommodation. Intentional homelessness will still be applied to those unwilling to take action to address causes or who fail to cooperate with help offered</p> <p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>Dacorum has already implemented a positive pathways scheme. This is currently on hold due to procedural issues. The procedure as a whole will be reviewed before implementation to establish if this is a feasible initiative that can work in Dacorum alongside the HRA requirements.</p>		Feb 18
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**Develop a number of new initiatives to support the new section 189B 'Help to Secure Accommodation Duty' for single people and families**

**Action 1: Providing a new *Accommodation Finding Service* tailored to find a solution based on a customers informed choice**

A new Accommodation Finder Service is to be developed to search for private rented accommodation in any area where the Council and the applicant agree that is realistic and affordable for a household to consider living in.

The new service will be based on the following key principles:

- a) People should be given all the information available to freely identify what accommodation options are realistic and affordable
- b) They will be offered the new service and supported to secure any accommodation options in whatever area that is affordable based on a clear discussion and acceptance by the client
- c) They will receive bespoke practical help and materials to help them secure including information on any guarantees re deposit, rent in advance, landlord incentive package, etc
- d) The offer will include helping people to apply to register for any council housing register or registered provider waiting list where the person would qualify and wish to live

**Actions:**

- 1. Include a specific 'Accommodation Finder' tool on EHO to allow people to look for themselves for places to live, ideally tailored to their needs.
- 2. Include links to websites for accommodation such as Gumtree/Spare-room etc.
- 3. Look at what incentives can be offered to landlords, tenancy sustainment training, consider the expansion of the Homeless Prevention Fund to include rent in advance, discuss with Housing Benefit DHP provision for deposits etc.
- 4. Develop the paperwork and procedures to operate the new service

February 2018

**Action 2: Look at schemes to increase accommodation options for single people**

1. Review consultation by Homeless Link for accommodation for single people
2. Review provision of the Elms contract
3. Review existing stock provision to see what developments could be made to make the best use of it i.e. conversions of bigger properties that are less in demand into HMO's that could house a number of single people.
4. Develop stronger working relationships with Den's Rent Aid and similar organisations to increase use of the service.
5. Development of Help to Rent scheme to increase accessibility to private sector housing in Dacorum.

7	<p><b>Development of Resettlement Support Service to provide on-going support to the most vulnerable and act as an early warning service for those housed who may experience difficulties in sustaining their accommodation.</b></p>	<p>Dacorum already has support in place for vulnerable tenants, through in-house teams and other organisations such as Living Stable Lives.</p> <p>As part of service development the Help to Rent scheme will be fully reviewed, in line with the development of Dacorum's Private Sector Housing Strategy to look at the scope of the service and how this can be potentially delivered to meet requirements.</p> <p>The Homeless Hub, once set up, will also be key in making sure the most vulnerable tenants have access to appropriate support.</p>		February 2018
8	<p><b>Making sure there is a holistic approach to assessing housing needs and homelessness with Children Services and Adult Social Care and ensure that where no duty is owed applicants are dealt with correctly under social services legislation supported by the Housing Service</b></p>	<p><b>Developing effective working protocols with Children Services aimed at preventing and relieving homelessness develop on JHP</b></p> <p>Actions to review the existing Joint Housing Protocol, which covers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 16 and 17 year olds</li> <li>2. Care leavers</li> <li>3. No Housing Duty cases</li> </ol> <p><b>Actions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dacorum Council already has existing protocols in place in relation to these areas.</li> <li>2. A review will take place for all existing protocols in the light of operational experience and how it relates to the new legislation.</li> <li>3. To look into what scope there is for a joint protocol for adults who may lack mental capacity or may trigger services under the Care Act as this currently doesn't exist in Dacorum.</li> </ol> <p><b>Action 2: To develop a 'one council' accommodation finder service for individuals and households who are homeless and require help with obtaining accommodation regardless of which legislation duty applies (Children, Housing, No Recourse, Adult Care Legislative duties)</b></p> <p><b>Actions</b></p>		February 2018

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To scope out whether a one council accommodation finding service (for homeless individuals and families who may be owed a duty under children and families law and Adult social Care Law) is a feasible option in Dacorum.</li> <li>2. If this is a feasible option, this should be done through the development of the Homeless Hub, agreements in place with all services and homeless champions and the possible sign up to the Homeless Prevention Charter</li> </ol>		
9	<p><b>Working with DCLG to develop a new P1E reporting framework</b></p>	<p>In order to fulfil the requirements of the HRA the current systems Dacorum use are not sufficient.</p> <p>We will continue to work with Civica and Dacorum's IT team to review the new Homelessness Module and reporting software to ensure that the systems meet the necessary requirements.</p> <p>These will include;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Once the appropriate changes have been made, to test and report back on the new core reporting requirements for the new Prevention and Relief duties and how these will impact on the other reporting requirements of the P1E</li> <li>2. The ability to generate one unique reference number for all applicants</li> <li>3. The ability to convert all existing cases to having this reference number</li> <li>4. Alert systems in place to notify advisers for when a case changes from Prevention to Relief Stage</li> </ol>		March 2018
10	<p><b>Anticipating and tackling problems that may undermine the successful implementation of the new prevention model</b></p> <p><b>Action 1) Tackling potential recruitment and retention of staff problem</b></p>	<p>Southwark are looking at piloting new schemes to avoid issues in this area, however as a borough outside of London, Dacorum may not face the same challenges.</p>		April/May 18

		<p>Dacorum is already recruiting new staff ready for the implementation of the Act, including Project Lead, another Homeless Prevention Officer, an additional Temporary Accommodation Officer, a Review Officer and a Triage Officer.</p> <p>A review of staffing will have to be done once the Act is implemented to ensure staffing levels are appropriate for the increased demand on the service.</p>		
11	<p><b>Anticipating and tackling problems that may undermine the successful implementation of the new prevention model.</b></p> <p><b>Action 2) Tackling any potential negative impact of introducing Universal Credit on landlord confidence to let properties</b></p>	<p>Universal Credit (UC) has been implemented in some of the village areas in Dacorum. This is due to be fully rolled out in September 2018 for all household groups</p> <p>Work will need to be done with Housing Benefit and the DWP to develop a framework and procedures to minimise the risk of non payment of benefit for applicants on or switching over to UC which will be on-going.</p> <p>Initial project group meeting to prepare for this scheduled for the 26<sup>th</sup> of October</p> <p>This work will need to extend to cover applicants in TA, Social Housing and in mainstream PRS tenancies in order to effectively prevent homelessness in the borough.</p> <p>This will be essential as the full implementation of Universal Credit possibly poses the biggest risk to the success of the new prevention focused legislation through the HRA.</p>		<p>Oct 17 for initial meetings and ongoing throughout the year until rollout completed</p>
12	<p><b>Ensuring as the service develops in is in line with service users expectations and shaped by their views.</b></p>	<p>Dacorum will conduct regular briefings on the developments of the HRA and what that means for the service and service users.</p> <p>Communications team will be involved to ensure that the developments are shared both throughout the service and with the service users.</p> <p>Will also liaise with the tenant involvement team to look at what scope there would be for service user feedback on the changes to the service.</p> <p>Reduction Act training will be arranged for all service areas affected by the new legislation.</p>		<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Initial training to be completed by Jan/Feb 18</p>



		<p>This will be prioritised to ensure the services that will be affected the most are trained first and then filtered out to the rest of the teams affected over the coming months.</p> <p>To consider whether appropriate to commission a 'mystery shopper' review of the service quality to provide a check of the service at 9 months and 18 months into the new model.</p>		
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