

## Local Lettings Plan for Rough Sleepers

1 Reason and Purpose for this Plan	
1.1	The number of rough sleepers in Stoke-on-Trent has decreased over the last 12 months, however, there remains a relatively small cohort of entrenched individuals for whom existing approaches have not been successful.
1.2	The Government has committed to end rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament (2025) and the City Council has benefited from additional funding from the Rough Sleepers Initiative to help deliver this aim. Finding accommodation for some rough sleepers can be challenging as due to behaviours arising from multiple complex needs they are often excluded from the Council's Housing Register.
1.3	The additional funding for rough sleepers has enabled new approaches to supporting this cohort to be developed, for example Housing First, and this Plan will ensure the Council's Housing Allocations Policy can support this.

2.0 Aims and Objectives:	
2.1	<p>This Local Lettings Plan will:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the City Council to achieve the Government's aim of ending rough sleeping by 2025;</li> <li>• Ensure rough sleepers supported through the City Councils' Rough Sleeping Initiatives are able to access City Council accommodation where appropriate;</li> <li>• Provide a clear framework for officers and partners for allocating homes to existing or former rough sleepers who would normally be excluded from the Housing Register by virtue of "unacceptable behaviour"<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>

3.0 Key Elements:	
3.1	The unacceptable behaviour criteria set out in paragraph 7.4.4 of the City Council's Housing Allocations Policy will not be applied to existing or former rough sleepers where waiving this will enable them to access the Housing Register and support from the Council's Rough Sleeping Initiative.
3.2	This will only apply to existing or former rough sleepers verified by the Rough Sleeper Outreach Team.
3.3	All usual options to provide suitable alternative accommodation, for instance in the private rented sector or with supported housing providers, must have been explored by the Council's Housing Solutions Team and considered unsuitable.
3.4	A clear programme of support, recognised by the Rough Sleeping Action Group, must be in place prior to an offer of accommodation being made.
3.5	Only one offer of suitable accommodation will be made. The decision of what constitutes "suitable accommodation" will be made by the Housing Options Team Lead in accordance with the Allocations Policy.
3.6	Any person provided with accommodation under this Plan must demonstrate a clear commitment to repaying any rent arrears and other debts to the Council through a budgeting plan agreed with CAB or similar recognised debt advisor.

<sup>1</sup> Stoke-on-Trent City Council Allocations Policy 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018, para 7.4.4

3.7	Any person provided with accommodation under this Plan must demonstrate a clear commitment to continued engagement with any support plan put in place through the Rough Sleepers Action Group.
3.8	Failure to unreasonably continue with a payment plan or support programme will be considered to be a breach of tenancy conditions and may result in possession proceedings.
3.9	Any person aggrieved by any decisions made in respect of this Plan has the right to request a review by a Service Manager delegated by the appropriate Service Director.

#### **4.0 Timescales:**

4.1	This Plan will become operational as soon as it is agreed by the Director of Housing and Customer Services at the relevant Operational Business Meeting and will remain in place for an initial period of 3 years from that date.
4.2	The Plan will be reviewed no later than 12 months after the date it becomes operative at which point the Director of Housing and Customer Services may decide to extend, amend and/or end the Plan.
4.3	After the initial period of 3 years has elapsed (or later depending on 4.2 above) the Plan will be reviewed again at which point the Director of Housing and Customer Services may decide to extend, amend and/or end the Plan.

#### **5.0 Areas and Properties Covered by the Plan:**

5.1	This Plan will apply to all City Council properties in all areas.
5.2	The type of property offered will be based on the identified Housing Need in accordance with the Allocations Policy in place at the time.
5.3	The final decision on the property offered will rest with the Housing Options Team Manager; however, they will consult with the relevant Housing Team Manager or Housing Operational Lead when any offers are considered to be sensitive.

#### **6.0 Allocation and Shortlisting of Properties:**

6.1	The Housing Needs Officer working with the Allocations Team will identify a suitable property that meets the needs of the individual to be accommodated. Where appropriate this will be discussed and agreed with the individual's case worker, the Rough Sleepers Action Group and the Local Centre.
6.2	The offer will be discussed with the relevant individual and any concerns considered. After taking all relevant issues into consideration the offer may be withdrawn by the Housing Needs Officer and an alternative property sought or, if the property is considered suitable, the individual advised that no other offers will be made.
6.3	Where there is a dispute about the suitability of the property the final decision whether to make or withdraw the offer will rest with the Housing Options Team Manager.
6.4	Any person aggrieved by any decisions made in respect of this Plan has the right to request a review by a Service Manager delegated by the appropriate service Director.

#### **7.0 Resources Required:**

7.1	Operation of this plan depends on the provision of appropriate support for individuals offered accommodation to sustain their tenancy. Withdrawal or reduction of support services may lead to suspension or closure of the plan.
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#### **8.0 Equality Impact Assessment:**

8.1	See separate Equality Impact Assessment.
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## 9.0 Consultation:

9.1	Key providers of services for rough sleepers in the City have been consulted on these proposals and are supportive.
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## 10.0 Risks:

10.1	See separate Risk Log.
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## 11.0 Measuring Success:

11.1	<p>The success of the scheme will be measured using the following indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Numbers of rough sleepers in the City;</li><li>• Numbers of rough sleepers accepting long term accommodation in the Council's stock;</li><li>• Number of former rough sleepers sustaining City Council tenancies after 6 months, 12 months and 2 years.</li></ul>
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