

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING	Climate Emergency & Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING DATE:	3 July 2025	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		n/a
TITLE:	Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Update	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
None.		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Council provides statutory support for individuals at risk of homelessness and those who are homeless. This is accomplished through commissioned services, partnerships with the voluntary sector, and a dedicated Housing Options & Homelessness Team. This report updates on these services, comments on increasing demand and future commissioning plans.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to;

- 2.1 Note and comment on the contents of the report.

3 THE REPORT

Background

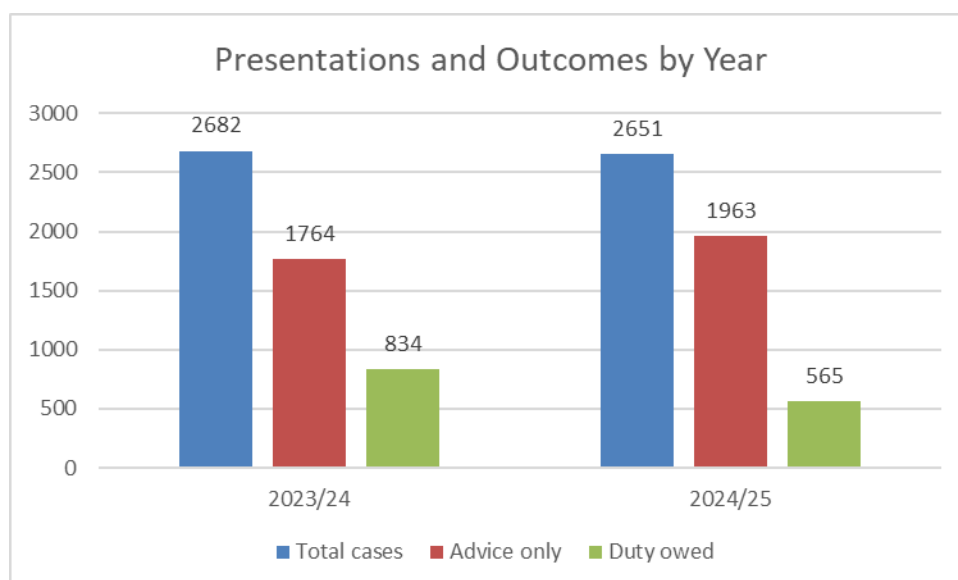
3.1 The Council delivers support and assistance to homeless people by providing services directly, working in partnership with the voluntary sector and the commissioning of specialist services. The term homelessness is broad and includes: households threatened with imminent homelessness; those living in non-settled accommodation, such as “sofa surfing”, bed & breakfast or other types of temporary accommodation; or people sleeping on the streets/tents/cars etc.

3.2 The key issues currently impacting on local homelessness presentations are:

- The number of households struggling with the cost of living and debt has increased. This not only causes homelessness but also slows down move-on into permanent accommodation.
- The occurrence of 'no-fault' evictions has risen. A significant aspect of the new Renters Rights Bill is the elimination of the mechanism for ending this type of tenancy. However, in the interim this may lead some landlords to terminate tenancies and re-let them at a higher rent or exit the rental market entirely.
- The numbers of people presenting with complex needs has increased. A lack of enough suitable supported accommodation leaves individuals in worsening situations that lead to deterioration in their conditions and homelessness.

Presentations

3.3 Households experiencing housing issues can contact the Housing Options & Homelessness team. An initial triage assessment will be undertaken and, if necessary, an appointment for a comprehensive assessment with a Housing Advisor will be scheduled. These interactions are recorded as presentations. If the Housing Advisor's assessment results in a resolution or referral to another service, these are recorded as advice only. If the assessment identifies a risk of homelessness and determines that either a Prevention or Relief duty is owed, additional detailed work is conducted, which may include the provision of temporary accommodation (TA). Figures for 2023/24 and 2024/25 are provided below.



3.4 The chart shows that the number of presentations remained flat compared to the previous year. However, importantly the Council was able to convert a higher proportion into prevention cases, shown as advice only. This contributed to a significant reduction in the duty-owed category, as households were enabled to resolve their problems or find accommodation solutions. This demonstrates the value of timely, skilled interventions by an easily accessible and effective team.

3.5 It is also important to note that the B&NES approach to making homelessness presentations accessible and straightforward is not universally applied. Many councils have adopted a 'call-centre' or online form approach. The authors of this report believe that maintaining openness to direct contact facilitates early intervention, which is both effective and preventative.

Temporary Accommodation

3.6 Where households meet eligibility requirements the Council is required to provide temporary accommodation (TA). The Council currently uses the following sources of TA:

- Hostel type accommodation and dispersed flats commissioned from Curo and the YMCA.
- Hostel type accommodation and dispersed flats provided directly by the Council, via B&NES Homes.
- Bed & Breakfast type accommodation.

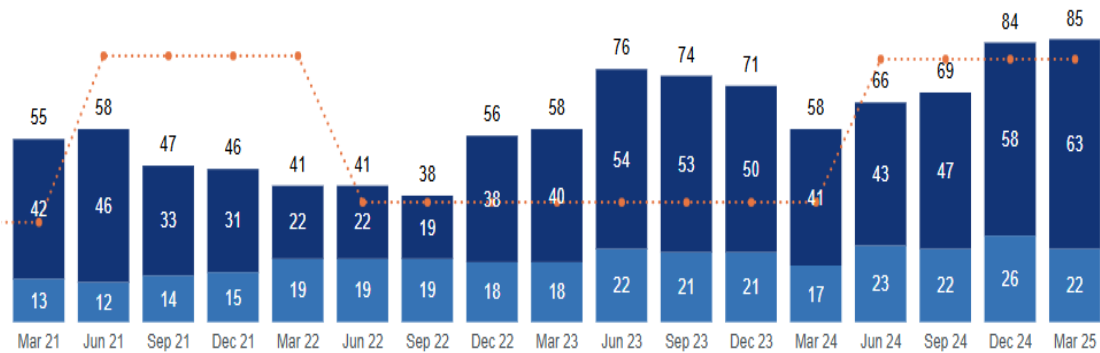
3.7 The Curo hostel at Dartmouth Avenue offers high-quality accommodation for singles, couples, and small families of up to three people in seventeen rooms with shared communal facilities. The dispersed flats include six two-bedroom units and one one-bedroom unit, suitable for families with more than two children. Support is provided as a condition of occupation.

3.8 Since February 2024, the Council, through B&NES Homes, has managed and operated in-house TA. These include 16 units of accommodation across 4 locations including Theobald House hostel, a separate shared accommodation

scheme and two dispersed units. Again, provision includes support as a condition of occupation.

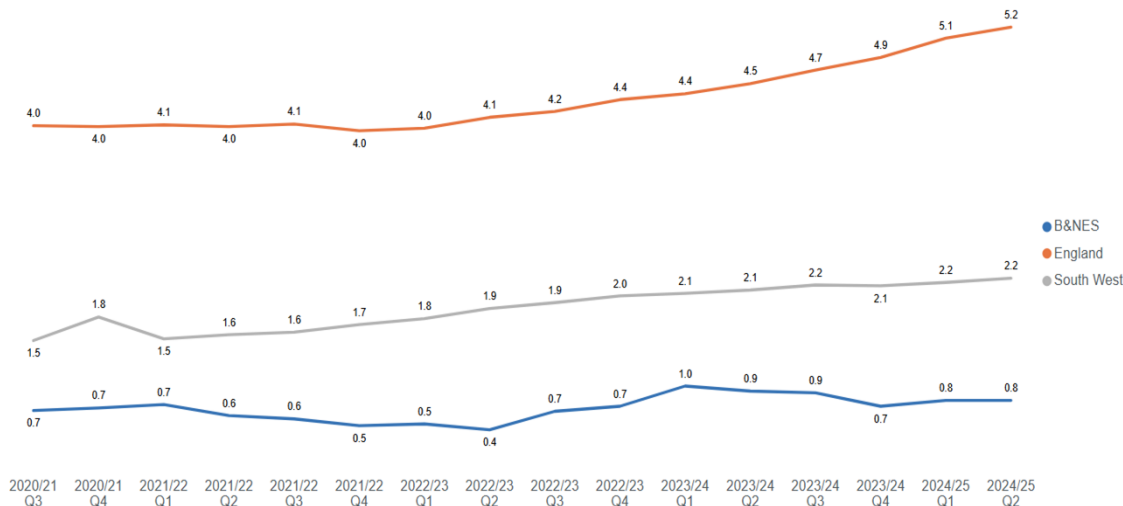
3.9 The Council tries not to use Bed and Breakfast accommodation (B&B). However, where there is no alternative, or it is an emergency, it will be used. In these circumstances the Council will attempt to accommodate households in B&B within district and for the shortest time possible. However, securing local B&B accommodation can be a challenge, particularly during periods of high tourism, and as such out of district placements can also be used on occasion.

3.10 In recent years the use of TA has been increasing as shown in the chart below, rising from a total of 55 households in TA in March 2021 to 79 at the time of writing, reflecting a broader national increase in homelessness. The chart below also shows that most of the increase has been due to singles (dark blue shading) as opposed to families (light blue shading).



3.11 Despite the recent increase in TA usage, the Council still has very low usage rates compared to local and national averages. Our rate is about 0.8 households per 1,000, while the England average is 5.2 households per 1,000.

Households in temporary accommodation: rate per 1,000 households



3.12 The use of more cost effective inhouse TA provision has allowed the Council to reduce our net expenditure costs on TA. Indeed, last year the Council was able to reduce costs by 53%, realising net savings of £532,000, as demonstrated in the table below.

Year	Gross TA spend	HB Subsidy received	BANES Net Spend
2019-2020	£ 261,305	£ 130,543	£ 130,762
2020-2021	£ 291,188	£ 135,467	£ 155,721
2021-2022	£ 489,048	£ 233,205	£ 255,843
2022-2023	£ 610,681	£ 238,050	£ 372,631
2023-2024	£ 1,404,834	£ 393,006	£ 1,011,828
2024-2025	£ 1,061,735	£ 581,998	£ 479,737

Rough Sleeping

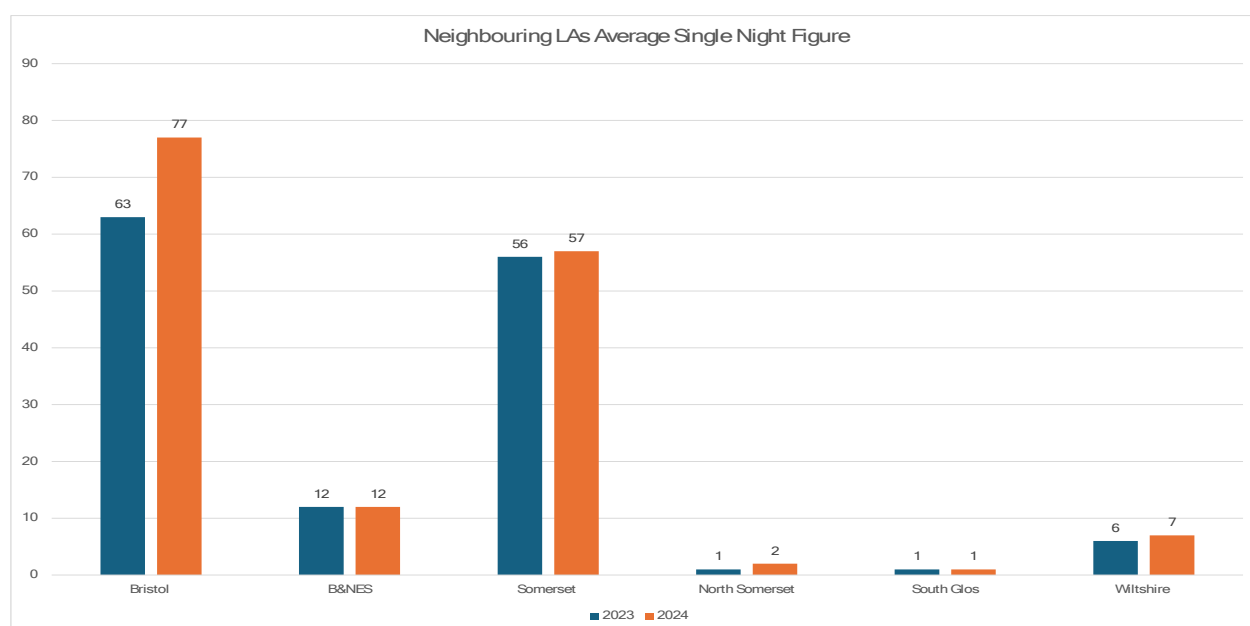
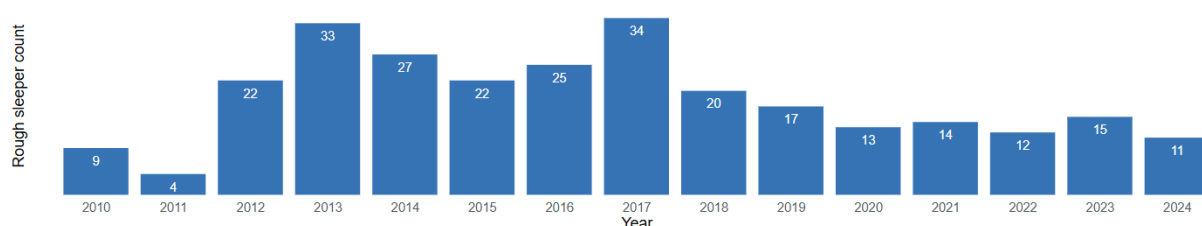
3.13 Whilst rough sleeping is a relatively small part of the wider homelessness agenda it is the most visible element and the most challenging. High levels of specialist support are required to provide positive outcomes. Working with local partners, including health, welfare, housing and criminal justice, the following services are in place to help rough sleepers make a transition into safer and healthier lives:

- Assertive outreach, provided in partnership by Julian House and DHI, supports individual rough sleepers into accommodation and other services by working with them on the street.
- 20 units of supported emergency accommodation with on-site medical provision at Manvers Street Hostel
- 23 Grosvenor Place is a 20-flat block that was acquired in 2020 in response to the government's Everyone In programme for rough sleepers during the Covid-19 pandemic. For several years the property was managed and residents supported by Julian House. In April 2025, management of the building and support was taken on by the B&NES Homes team.
- A Reconnection Service. Some rough sleepers arrive from other parts of the country, having left accommodation and support networks behind. Wherever possible, contact will be made to ascertain that accommodation is still available and that appropriate support can continue. Where this is the case, travel costs are covered and the person offered the opportunity to return home. If there is any suggestion of violence or any other threat, this is not implemented.
- A co-ordinated multi-agency response during periods of severe weather to ensure that rough sleepers have an offer of shelter and support.
- Range of specialist support workers including: dual-diagnosis (mental health and substance misuse) worker; female outreach worker, criminal justice worker.
- Homeless hospital discharge service based at the RUH which averts people leaving hospital from returning to rough sleeping.
- Housing First Project for former rough sleepers with high, complex needs, providing 22 units of accommodation with plans to extend this to 26 units.
- Supported Housing Gateway – single access point for supported housing schemes.
- Priority on Homeseach Scheme for people in supported housing. This helps release bed-spaces that can then be allocated to people new to homelessness or moving away from rough sleeping.

- Task & Targeting and Target Priority multi-disciplinary groups that share information on and identify solutions for entrenched rough sleepers.
- Training and support for staff in all housing-related services on how to deliver psychologically informed and trauma-informed services. This will increase the levels of positive outcomes for individuals accessing services and help to reduce rough sleeping.

3.14 The charts below provide data from formal Annual Rough Sleeper Counts, conducted in November. The first chart shows the Council's historic figures, whilst the last chart shows recent comparative data with neighbouring authorities.

Rough sleeper count by year (snapshot)



3.15 B&NES, and Bath city in particular, has good support service provision and this is reflected in the relatively low numbers of rough sleepers compared to neighbouring areas and the recent decline in incidences of rough sleeping.

3.16 Strong partnerships and regular panel-style working help to deliver well on rough sleeping and the Council regularly receives positive feedback from the Government's Rough Sleeper Initiative team. It is important to note that approximately 65% of people worked with by outreach services and Manvers Street Hostel have a connection to the B&NES area.

Homelessness Pathway Review

- 3.17 Housing Services has led a review of the Homelessness Pathway in B&NES. This is a root and branch examination of how people access and use the services we have in place to prevent and address homelessness. It has been conducted in partnership with key providers, including Julian House, DHI, Home Group and Brighter Places and will be completed by the end of August 2025, with consultation with the Homelessness Partnership to follow immediately. Once these steps are completed the findings of the Review will be used to articulate the Council's commissioning intentions for supported housing and floating support services.
- 3.18 The main findings of the Review are likely to include:
- The Pathway delivers broadly what we need to see in place for B&NES.
 - Some minor adjustments may be needed to enable quicker throughput and improved outcomes for individuals.
 - A Rapid Rehousing model, allowing people with complex or specialist support needs to be assessed by a panel before being put forward as a priority for supported accommodation.
 - Young people's services should be considered separately as a distinct Pathway.

Housing Support Contracts

- 3.19 Housing-related support aims to reduce homelessness by preventing it or helping people move into stable accommodations. This can be through community support (floating) or specific accommodation where support is required (accommodation-based). In April 2025, management of these contracts returned to Housing Services (formerly HCRG) aligning them with strategic goals and government targets for Rough Sleeper and Domestic Abuse funding streams. Services have already improved for female rough sleepers by designating four flats using domestic abuse funds. In the future all these contracts will be aligned with the findings of the pathway review whilst at the same time achieving the required corporate budget savings.

Manvers Street Direct Access Hostel

- 3.20 The hostel, located in the basement of Manvers Street Baptist Church and operated by Julian House offers 20 bed spaces through pods and 4 emergency sit-up spaces in the communal area. However, the Baptist Church has confirmed that they will be terminating the lease for the hostel, possibly in August 2026, albeit they have confirmed their willingness to be flexible where possible. As such officers are currently working with Julian House and/or potentially other interested partners, to support re-provision elsewhere. However, given the nature of the provision this will be challenging.

Partnership Working with Children & Families

- 3.21 Housing Services collaborates with internal colleagues and third-party providers to meet local housing needs. Recently, they worked with Children & Families teams to prioritise 3 of the 8 homes at Great Hayes Court for care-experienced young people. This new B&NES Homes development is located on Lower Bristol Road, Bath.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The Housing Act 1996, the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 all place significant statutory duties on local housing authorities (the Council) to ensure that advice, assistance and other housing duties are available to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- 4.2 The delivery of services for homeless people has implications for corporate statutory considerations such as equalities, crime and disorder, safeguarding and public health and inequalities.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 Providing homelessness services and temporary accommodation impacts the Council financially. However, this report is for information only and therefore has no direct financial implications.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 Given the nature of this report, which is for information only, a risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has not been undertaken.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 None arising from this information report.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 8.1 The Council will continue efforts to secure temporary accommodation within the district to both minimise unnecessary travel and enhance client outcomes. The Council's in-house provision for temporary housing adheres to the highest practical emergency efficiency standards, with the two main schemes meeting the AECB standard or achieving an EPC B rating. Any future developments will be designed to incorporate the most effective energy efficiency measures.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 None.

10 CONSULTATION

- 10.1 None.

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Background papers	None
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	