**Background**

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) was formed in April 2021as a new unitary authority. WNC comprises the former Northampton Borough, Daventry District and South Northants District Councils, as well as disaggregated services of the previous Northampton County Council departments, including Adult Social Care and Public Health.

West Northants geographically incorporates the town of Northampton, the three market towns of Brackley, Daventry and Towcester, and a large rural area.

The creation of WNC, alongside the introduction of the new Integrated Care System, provides new opportunities for collaborative working at both strategic and operational levels across Health, Public Health, Adult Social Care, Northants Children’s Trust and Housing services. Considerable work is being undertaken across all these areas, although against the backdrop of the financial crisis and its impact on service demand and delivery.

**Current delivery of Homelessness and Housing solutions services**

Prior to becoming the unitary authority, Housing Options services were delivered via the three legacy district and borough councils. The unitary council’s Homelessness and Housing Solutions service offers a General Needs advice and assistance service, on a range of housing related issues, including the provision of statutory homelessness services and advisory services, and utilising various powers to secure accommodation either on an interim basis or as a settled home. The service also manages two housing registers and nominations to our registered providers.

Within the Northampton locality, the Street Services Team deliver advice to all non-priority single homeless people, as well as outreach and resettlement services to those who have slept rough or are at risk of doing so. The team includes three Transition Officers, each focussing on those leaving care, leaving hospital or leaving prison. The COVID-19 pandemic and ‘Everyone In’ initiative has provided learning on implementing a more person-centred approach, which is helping to better respond to the needs of this cohort. The Street Services Team offers a solution-focused, multi-agency approach to tackling rough sleeping, which has substantially reduced the prevalence of rough sleeping, since the pandemic.

The three legacy teams, and the Street Services Team, continue to provide services substantially distinct from each other. The aggregation and transformation of the service was scheduled for delivery before vesting day in 2021 but was delayed due to the pandemic. There is a significant amount of transformation work outstanding, across the authority. The Housing service is currently part of several internal Transformation workstreams, which will progress in parallel with this consultation exercise.

**Prevalence of rough sleeping in West Northants**

Table 1 shows rough sleeping trends within West Northants, before and since the pandemic and ‘Everyone In’ intervention in 2020.

Table 1:

Table 2 shows the estimated number of people sleeping rough on a single night within each month, September 2021- August 2022, including the number of people new to rough sleeping in West Northants that month.

Table2:

**Accommodation-based support**

There are a range of services, within the Northampton locality, including accommodation and support for those who sleep rough, or are at risk of doing so. These have been established on a range of agreements, at different points in time. None are currently commissioned, and there were no active SLAs in place at the point the unitary authority was created. The current single homeless pathway in West Northants generally provides a linear approach to housing people who are experiencing homelessness, where individuals progress through a series of accommodation and services until they are ready to move to more sustainable and independent housing options. This approach is designed around the understanding that individuals that engage with the single homelessness pathway, often have multiple and overlapping needs. A multi-agency panel meets weekly, to discuss the needs of those currently known to be sleeping rough or who are at risk of eviction from accommodation, to establish needs and appropriate allocation.

Our current provision, within Northampton, comprises:

* 27 self-contained units of accommodation with trauma informed 24/7 high level support
* Access to 52 units at Oasis House, max 2 year stay, with support
* Access to 196 PRS supported bedspaces through the housing charity, NAASH, which include 13 bedspaces in their Intensive Support Service.
* 19 NSAP/RSAP properties with tenancy support (to increase to 25 units)
* Additional winter provision
* A range of additional supported accommodation through a variety of providers, which people can move onto and which take referrals from the direct access provision. There is a limited amount of accommodation for those with a higher level of support need.

Across the rural parts of West Northants, accommodation for anyone who sleeps rough is within temporary accommodation, with tenancy support. There has been a very low prevalence of people sleeping rough outside of Northampton, since the pandemic.

**RSI funding**

WNC’s Housing Service secured funding from the Government’s Rough Sleeper Initiative, 2022-25 (RSI5) programme. As part of this funding award, we are seeking to establish a commissioning framework for services. Short-term service remodelling is due to commence from 1st April 2023 for a period of approximately 12 months and will feature in the longer-term needs assessment. A review of the short-term remodelling will inform a new commissioning framework from 1st April 2024.

The new commissioning framework will consider the delivery of services beyond the expiry of the RSI funding in 2025. Provision needs to ensure that addressing health and wellbeing inequalities for those who sleep rough or are at risk of doing so is at the heart of our approach and helps to achieve our vision.

**Public Health**

A detailed homelessness Health Needs Assessment (HNA) commenced in Northamptonshire in 2017. During this time, a review of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) function in the county was conducted, resulting in the HNA being published instead as a [Homelessness Insight Pack](https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/health/health-and-wellbeing-board/northamptonshire-jsna/Documents/Homelessness%20JSNA%20Insight%20Pack.pdf).

Since then, in additional to the creation of the two new unitary authorities and disaggregation of Public Health functions, the Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board (NICB) was, taking on the functions of Northamptonshire CCG in commissioning healthcare services for the county.

There are significant opportunities for greater collaboration and commissioning between Public Health, Housing, Adult Social Care, Health and NHFT services. Work currently underway includes:

* A review of substance misuse commissioned services
* NICB developing its work on reducing health inequalities.
* JSNAs on substance abuse and on Mental Health