

# **It's a Journey, Not a Destination...**

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# What We'll Cover...

- Achieving legal compliance (*& corporate support*)
- Having a rethink...
- Working with partners
- Impacts & lessons learned
- Next steps
- Challenging attitudes...
- Discussion

# Test Valley

## The Borough:

- Western Hampshire
- 116,398 population (51k households)
- Second lowest population density in Hampshire
- 2 population centres – Andover and Romsey
- Mixture of urban, semi-urban and rural areas
- Relatively expensive housing market area
- Deprivation and affluence

## Housing Demand:

- 2,000 households registered on the Housing Register
- 1,700 households presenting at interview
- 60+ homelessness applications a year
- Official estimate of 2 rough sleepers
- 400+ households prevented from becoming homeless

# The mechanical stuff...

# HRA2017: Achieving Legal Compliance

- “Warmed up” SMT, OMT, PG and Council
- Increased staff complement: 2 x FTE with no homelessness background
- Training, training, training! (Internal and external)
- Practical exercises
- Procedural guides and new literature
- Group discussions
- Preventing Homelessness Forums
- Private Landlord’s and Lettings Agents’ Forum
- Front Line Workers’ Event

# HRA2017: Achieving Legal Compliance

- Minor temporary restructure
- Joint work with County Council on social inclusion
- “Experimental KPIs”
- Consulted widely on direction of travel
- Completely new Preventing Homelessness Strategy Action Plan
- Implementation in advance of commencement...
- “Developmental Pilot” approach

# HRA2017: Achieving Legal Compliance

- Duty to refer – route in
- Revised Allocations Policy
- Developed a suite of letters
- Resolved ICT and ensured H-CLIC compatibility
- Changed the operating model – no more appointments, asset focused assessments...
- Empowered the team to make and propose adjustments

# Myth Busting

- 18% of households on the Housing Register are over 60 years of age (*24% of over 60s registered are in work*)
- 70% of 16-59 year olds registered are in work (*and 70% of those do not receive any welfare benefits*)
- 4% of 16-59 year olds have not provided relevant information to establish if they are in work or not

# High Demand: Context

Total Households	(51,000)	% of Total Households:
<i>Housing Register:</i>	2,000	<b>3.9%</b>
<i>Presentations:</i>	1,700	<b>3.3%</b>
<i>Homelessness Applications:</i>	60	<b>0.1%**</b>

*\*\*Across England – this figure would be 0.2%*

# Rethinking how we think?

*“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”*

[Albert Einstein]

## ***We can accept that...***

- Enabling affordable housing is important.
- Delivering new homes is important.

## ***And yet...***

- Are we succeeding in our efforts to make our housing market fit our local residents?
- Are we doing *enough* to help our residents fit local housing markets?

# Culture: Inward and Outward Change

- Working with, not doing to...
  - Half empty? (*Treating and preventing problems*)
  - Half full? (*Developing and preparing for positive outcomes*)
  - Runneth over? (*Full engagement in social opportunity*)
- Are we doing enough to work with people in a glass half full way?
- Do we accept that the person in front of us, at that time, is as good as they will ever be?
- What is good and what could be good? Rather than what is terrible and what is the problem...?
- *Everyone* has positive personal, social and community assets and resources

# Who is at risk of homelessness?

- The person in high levels of debt?
  - The claimant being refused financial support?
  - The patient affected by anxiety and depression?
  - The person seeking advice who admits addiction?
    - The employee being made redundant?
- The person indicating their relationship may have broken down?
  - The child with low school attendance?
- The parent trying to manage alone with demanding children?
  - The offender who has received a custodial sentence?
  - The patient who was just admitted to hospital?
- Anyone?
- You and me?

*“Homeless person”*

OR

*“Person experiencing homelessness”*



*“What’s been happening? Why has it been so bad?”*

*OR*

*“Given how things haven’t been as good as they could be recently, what are your best hopes for our time together?”*



**Language, understanding and  
approach reinforces individual  
potential and ability**

# Personalised Assessment

About You and Your Household

Understanding Your Current Situation

About Your Skills & Strengths

About Your Financial Situation

About Your Support Networks

About Your Health & Wellbeing

*And only then:*

About Your **Housing**

About **Homelessness**

**How Can We Do Better?**

**“Easy access to the right support, in the right place, at the right time, for the time that you need it”**

# 3 Priorities – To Ensure That:

1. People are treated well, fairly, and in a personalised way, which enables them to cope, adapt and then thrive
2. Our partners understand and become involved, as active participants in our journey, and service users help us to shape the future
3. We recognise what isn't working, we are prepared to take some risks, and we don't try and fix what isn't broken

# “Developmental Pilot”

- Headlines:
  - *Internal Prevention Fund*
  - *Multi-Agency Task & Targeting Fund*
  - *Prototyping Fund*
  - *Single Homelessness Fund*
- Informal report to members Dec 2018
- Report to Cabinet March 2019

*“I see this Act not just as something we in the Council have to fulfil by law but an opportunity to go even further...to ensure people don't become homeless in the first place and those that are, do not have to return to the streets.”*

*“At our recent Cabinet meeting we authorised a new Homelessness Fund which ensures that, no individual who presents themselves as homeless will have to leave the council offices and sleep rough, without first being made an offer of accommodation.”*

**Councillor Phil North, Leader of TVBC**

# The first two months of the HRA...

- In the first 56 days following commencement:
  - **213** households approach the Council for advice and assistance
  - **118** of those were homeless or threatened with homelessness
  - **79%** of applicants threatened with or homeless received an asset based assessment (target 85%)
  - **68%** of all cases triggering a ‘prevention duty’ are resolved at that stage (target 80%)
  - **79%** of all cases triggering the ‘relief duty’ are resolved at that stage (target 80%)
  - **73%** reduction in “main duty” acceptances (target to achieve a 20% reduction)

# ***How we want partners to participate***

- ✓ Helping us to identify people at risk of homelessness at the earliest opportunity
- ✓ Helping us to develop our shared knowledge of services across Test Valley, facilitating more effective signposting, and warm handovers of shared customers between agencies
- ✓ Exploring opportunities to increase co-location of staff across agencies to deliver services in a more holistic way; and with a view to cementing relationships between front line practitioners
- ✓ Exploring how your agency can contribute to new enabling agreements (personalised housing plans) between local services and their customers
- ✓ Providing a named “Homelessness Prevention Champion” within your service, who can facilitate joint working across agencies

# “Champions” Network

- To act as a point of contact for us with regard to homelessness prevention.
- To advocate and promote the value of working differently.
- To support your agency to proactively identify people who may be at risk and refer.
- To work with us to develop the way we respond across partnerships.
- To help us develop our approach by sharing your ideas.
- To support your agency to adopt new ways of working.
- To advocate on behalf of a more joined up approach to tackling homelessness.
- To act as a point of contact to support us in gathering relevant data as and when required.

# Staff Feedback

- *“...It was built up to be massive and a far higher mountain than it has been to climb...”*
- *“Everyone was involved in the development of the service and it made the team more cohesive.”*
- *“...I was surprised by how much I actually knew!?”*
- *“...huge amount of administration and paperwork – some of this may be the result of taking an asset-based approach...”*
- *“...but; we’re getting more information from customers, and different information than we would have got, and customers are engaging in the personalised assessments...”*

# Staff Feedback

- *“Customers feel that you are interested in them as a person not just a number”*
- *“Interviews taking approx. 1-2hours dependent on officer experience / interview style etc”*
- *“...housing not the only issue, it is part of a whole problem.”*
- *“...we’ve seen an influx of single people, more so than families, and doing more now for single people than we were before...”*
- *“...now we’re working on a Link Partnership and Housing First, and a universal referral form is being built around our personalised assessments”*

# Next Steps...

- Consolidate cultural and system changes
- Engage partners and start to change lives
- Introduce Housing First and think about the future...
- Keep talking to each other
- Listen to front line views
- Fill our knowledge and skills gaps
- Work with service users on the redesign process
- Engage landlords and support them
- Monitor and evaluate the pilot

***“It’s a lifestyle choice...”***

***“You can take a horse to water...”***

***“I’ve seen it all before...”***

**We’ve got a lot of work to do:  
The system has to change**

# Workshop!

- **What has your local authority's approach been to preparing for and implementing the HRA?**
- **What do you see as the biggest challenges?**
- **How have you / do you plan to overcome these challenges?**
- **How do you think this work will improve service for your customers?**
- **What support or guidance would help you to do this?**

# Thank you for coming!

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