

Appendix 3b

Housing Pressures in Gravesham – ISH14

- Gravesham is the smallest district in population terms within Kent (106,800 2021 mid-year estimate)
- There are nearly 1,000 households on the housing register with an identified housing need. Around 250 lets to the housing register per year whilst still losing homes due to Right to Buy (RTB). The average wait for a 3 bed can be up to 3 years.
- Gravesham's Housing Options Service has seen an increase in the number of households presenting for housing advice and assistance. 1,131 households have presented to the Council since April 2023, which is forecast to be over 12% increase when compared to 2022/23.

Reasons: Renters Reform Bill - Section 21, landlords leaving the market, DA, relationship breakdown.

- Over 230 households already in Temporary Accommodation (TA) where 39 of these placements are outside of the borough due to lack of local accommodation provision.
- There is a reliance on expensive nightly paid accommodation of which 65% of placements are accommodated in this type of accommodation which is forecast to cost Gravesham around £2m net which is unsustainable.
- Considerable Asylum pressures – not only Ukraine host placements coming to an end, Afghan, Syrian schemes, ceased bridging hotels – Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF). Also we have an asylum hotel within the borough which provides 70 bedspaces that is already impacting on services when determination of their asylum applications are made. Now new burdens as we have to consult on 'New safe and legal routes' which is another ask for us to find accommodation.
- Gravesham is on the outskirts of London and therefore have pressures of placements within the borough with 51 x S.208 temporary notifications (32 from London) since April by local authorities alone (excluding probation / home office / social services etc). This also doesn't demonstrate the number of placements made where there are no legal obligations to notify us.
- Other Local Authorities accessing the Private Rented Sector (PRS) due to their own areas unaffordability and offering larger incentives than the local council can offer. Additional households would saturate the market.
- To import new residents within the borough will of course impact the local authority with the assumption that most will access the PRS. Knock on effect with schools, GP's and other health services of which some schools are oversubscribed already.
- Today (27/11/23), Rightmove is advertising only 53 Private rented properties within the whole borough.
- Autumn Statement agreed to increase the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates and therefore enables the PRS to become more affordable for those in need which is a good news story for GBC however with potential impacts this extends the challenges.
- KCC is ending supported provision – care leavers and supported provision lost

- If the Council cannot prevent homelessness then this will impact on the ability of Homeless Prevention Grant in the future which is relied upon greatly
 - Over the last decade the scale of the challenge has grown significantly, and Gravesham are looking at options and ways to alleviate some financial burdens however the changes needed to reduce homelessness at scale will take years to work
 - Therefore, we are reliant on ensuring the boroughs position is clear of the pressures and represent the challenges we face both with vulnerable households and accessing the good quality private sector housing
 - There needs to be greater efforts to provide general provision for worker accommodation to ensure the project does not exacerbate these local pressures. Using the private rented sector would impact Gravesham Council greatly especially within homelessness and in our homeless prevention efforts
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