



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 13th March, 2018

To the Chair and Members of the
Regeneration and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel

HOMELESSNESS UPDATE

Relevant Member(s)	Cabinet	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Cllr Glyn Jones		All	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. A scrutiny review of homelessness took place between November 2016 and January 2017 by the Regeneration and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel at Doncaster council. Three recommendations were made and approved by Ros Jones the Mayor of Doncaster.
 - The Homelessness Strategy added to the Panel's work plan in 2017/18.
 - An update on the successful funding bid from Central Government be provided to the Panel during 2017/18.
 - Support be given to the Principle of 'Housing First' and an update be provided to the Panel in 2017/18.
- 1.1 Since the Homelessness review in 2016/17, significant changes to legislation have been introduced through the Homelessness Reduction Act, which has fundamentally changed the responsibilities for Local Authorities. It has placed a greater responsibility on providing advice, extended the period someone may be threatened with homelessness, created new prevention and relief duties as well as creating the requirement for individual Personal Housing Plans for each applicant. The act also created a 'duty to refer' for other public bodies.
- 1.2 Following the tented protests in late 2016 / early 2017, a new partnership approach to supporting those finding themselves sleeping rough in Doncaster has been introduced through the establishment of the Complex Lives Alliance. Complex Lives is one of the areas of opportunity in the Place Plan, established to develop integration of health and social care services. It aims to provide wrap-around support for people who have become locked in a cycle of homelessness, rough sleeping, addiction, offending behaviour, poor physical and mental health – often underpinned by deep trauma

- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to respond to the three recommendations approved by the Ros Jones, Mayor of Doncaster, as referenced in paragraph 1, and to provide a general update on homelessness and Doncaster's partnership response.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. Not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. Regeneration and Housing Scrutiny Panel note the responses to the recommendations approved by the Mayor, and to note the wider update on work being undertaken to address the problem of homelessness and rough sleeping in Doncaster.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. Addressing homelessness and rough sleeping has a positive impact on the citizens of Doncaster. It ensures that no one need sleep on the streets on Doncaster and that support is available for those who need it.

BACKGROUND

5. Since the scrutiny review was undertaken, significant changes to the legislative framework have been introduced as part of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018, which came into effect on the 3rd April 2018. This introduced new duties for local housing authorities. The key changes are:
 - Duty To Provide Advisory Services - Requires free homelessness advice and information services to be provided to all residents and to provide advice designed with certain vulnerable groups in mind, including care leavers, former armed forces, people leaving custody, victims of domestic abuse, people leaving hospital and people with mental health issues. Advice must include:
 - Prevention of homelessness
 - Securing accommodation when homeless
 - The rights of applicants and Local Housing Authority duties
 - Help available to people threatened with or homeless
 - How to access the available help
 - Meaning Of 'Threatened With Homelessness' - Extends the period during which someone might be threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days and; An applicant is threatened with homelessness if they have been served with a valid section 21 notice to end the Assured Shorthold Tenancy of their only available accommodation, that has expired or will expire within 56 days.
 - Prevention Duty – A new duty to prevent homelessness has been introduced:

- Local Housing Authorities must take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness for any at risk eligible applicant, regardless of priority need.
 - This can involve assisting them to stay in their current accommodation, or helping them to find a new place to live
- Relief Duty – A new relief duty has been introduced:
 - Local Housing Authorities must take reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure suitable accommodation;
 - Help could be, for example, providing a bond guarantee, funding a rent deposit or working with a private landlord to make properties available
 - Assessments And Personalised Housing Plans - Local Housing Authorities must carry out an assessment of the circumstances and needs of all eligible applicants who are homeless, or threatened with becoming homeless within 56 days. The assessment has to be shared with the applicant. A Personal Housing Plan will be drawn up which sets out the ‘reasonable steps’ the authority and the applicant will take (and other agencies/people as appropriate). ‘Reasonable steps’ should be tailored to the individual and the plan should be realistic.
 - Duty to Refer - under the act, from 1st October 2018, public bodies in England have a duty to refer an individual’s case (with consent) to the local housing authority. The aim of the duty is to develop effective referral arrangements and accommodation pathways that involve all relevant agencies to provide appropriate jointly planned help and support to prevent homelessness.
- 6 In addition to the changes in legislation, the context of homelessness locally has changed, especially with the most complex individuals who find themselves sleeping rough, or at risk of. Over the last 12 months, we have seen a significant increase in the level of people sleeping on the streets of Doncaster, as well as the complexity of the issues that they present with. Whilst the number of rough sleepers fluctuates, we saw a spike to around 67 in the summer of 2018, mostly in the town centre.
- 7 A new partnership approach to supporting those finding themselves sleeping rough in Doncaster has been introduced through the establishment of the Complex Lives Alliance. Complex Lives is one of the areas of opportunity in the Place Plan, established to develop integration of health and social care services. It aims to provide wrap-around support for people who have become locked in a cycle of homelessness, rough sleeping, addiction, offending behaviour, poor physical and mental health – often underpinned by deep trauma.
- 8 A Complex Lives Team has been established which is managed on behalf of the Alliance by the Council’s Head of Localities & Town Centre. The core team consists of a Team Manager, 3 MEAM¹ (Making Every Adult Matter) Officers and 3 Support Navigators. The principle being that intensive individual support can be provided. The initial casework levels were to be 6/7 individuals per MEAM Worker and 15 individuals per Support Navigator, giving a capacity to work with approximately 65 individuals.

¹ The MEAM approach is a way to design and deliver better coordinated services for people experiencing multiple disadvantage. www.meam.org.uk/the-mean-approach/

- 9 Currently there are 115 cases on the complex lives cohort, not all of which are supported all the time, some may be out of area or in prison. Through the intensive work of St Leger Homes Home Options Team, the Complex Lives Team and the wider alliance, we have seen the level of rough sleeping in Doncaster reduced to around 16.
- 10 The Complex Lives Alliance has created capacity to enable management of more complex cases. This has proved an important resource, as existing services are not set up to deal with the complexity of issues involved. In the last six months the team has become more integrated and effective through:-
- Co-location with Complex Lives team of St Leger Homes' Homelessness Single Point of Access;
 - Clincial Commissioning Group/Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber commitment to appoint and embed a specialist Mental Health Nurse to Complex Lives team (recruitment now concluded);
 - DMBC mental health social worker to be aligned to team.
 - DMBC Housing Benefits Officer seconded to team
 - Nacro (a social justice charity) worker (offender support) seconded to team
 - Doncaster Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Service trauma worker commissioned for 1 day per week
- 11 Learning from the pressures during the 2017/18 winter period, a comprehensive winter plan has been put in place which sees the level of temporary accommodation increase between November and March, but also additional capacity for when the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol is activated so that we can ensure that no one need sleep on the streets.

UPDATE ON SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12 **Recommendation 1 - The Homelessness Strategy to be added to the Panel's work plan in 2017/18.**
- A new Homeless Strategy is required every 5 years. The current strategy runs until 2019. Work to refresh the strategy has been delayed as a result of the changes to the legislation and the need to understand the impact of those changes.
 - In August 2018, the Government published its Rough Sleeping Strategy with a pledge to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. In December 2018 they published the Rough Sleeping Strategy Delivery Plan. The delivery plan set out a requirement for councils to have a significant focus on rough sleeping and to publish an updated Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy by Winter 2019.
 - Doncaster Council and partners are in the process of reviewing its Homelessness Strategy, and integrating our response to Rough Sleeping to create a combined strategy. The findings of this review will directly inform the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. To ensure that the strategy really challenges Doncaster to do all it can to end rough sleeping, Crisis have agreed to be a critical friend and provide challenge where needed to ensure the Strategy meets the requirements for Doncaster.

13 **Recommendation 2** - That an update on the successful funding bid from central government be provided to the panel during 2017/18

- The 2016/17 scrutiny review highlighted that Doncaster had, as part of a sub- regional approach, led a bid for government funding from the Rough Sleepers Grant allocation. A key element of what government were looking for was cross authority working to ensure consistency of approach between neighbouring areas. This bid was successful and the sub region were allocated £400k over the two years 2017/18 & 2018/19. It was agreed that £48k per annum should be used to have a South Yorkshire Homeless Development Coordinator who would support all 4 local authorities and bring together sub-regional approaches. Each local authority were then allocated £38k per annum for it to utilise to support the prevention of rough sleeping. In Doncaster it was decided to utilise this funding to support the creation of the complex lives team.
- In March 2017 the Government changed elements of its grant funding to support homelessness, ending the 'temporary accommodation management fee' grant and creating a new 'flexible homelessness support grant'. With the change of grant came a change in the criteria upon which the grant was allocated. Doncaster did not receive any grant under the temporary accommodation management fee criteria, however it did receive grant under the new flexible homeless support grant criteria. Doncaster received £208k in 2017/18, £228k in 2018/19 and will receive £308k in 2019/20. This grant allocation, in its entirety, has been utilised to support the prevention of rough sleeping ad homelessness in Doncaster funding the complex lives team and the single point of access function.
- In October 2017 the government announced that it would provide 'New Burdens Funding' to support the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. In February 2018 it was announced that Doncaster would receive £240k over three years 2017/18 to 2019-20. The principle behind the funding period was that it was recognised that over the three years there would be increased work associated with the changing duties placed on the local authorities statutory homeless functions. It was felt that over the three year period local authorities should see a reduction in 'full duty' statutory homeless cases at the acute end of the spectrum which would enable it to shift resource to deal with cases at the 'prevention' less acute end of the spectrum.
- Following the government publishing its Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018, the government have announced a number of funding allocations aimed at reducing rough sleeping that local authorities have been able to bid for. In Doncaster, we have submitted bids for three funds.

Rapid Rehousing Pathway – aimed at local authorities that wished to be 'Early Adopters' to support the establishment or enhancement of a Rapid Rehousing Pathway for rough sleepers. Doncaster's bid for this was based upon enhancing the Complex Lives approach and St Leger Letting's approach to accessing private rented properties for those who we may not have a statutory duty to accommodate, who without support may end up sleeping rough.

- Bid Submitted 7 November 2018 – announcement 8 February 2019 that Doncaster were to be one of the early adopters. Details of exact funding to be allocated had not been formally confirmed at the time of writing.

Private Rented Sector Access Fund – aimed at schemes that will enable better access and sustainment of tenancies for those who are, or at risk of becoming homeless and rough sleeping.

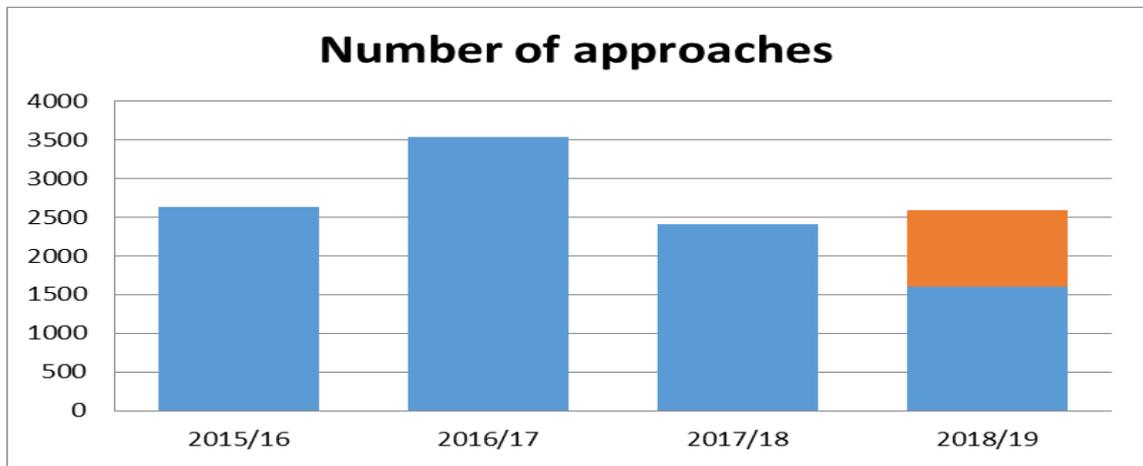
- Bid submitted 21 November 2018 – still awaiting outcome.
- **Rough Sleeping Initiative** – In January 2019, Doncaster along with Rotherham & Barnsley submitted a joint bid for the second round of the Rough Sleepers Initiative for funding to enhance our provision to support vulnerable people sleeping rough into services and accommodation.
 - Bid submitted 14 January 2019 – still awaiting outcome.

14 **Recommendation 3** - That support be given to the Principle of Housing First and an update be provided to the Panel in 2017/18.

- The principle of Housing First is being developed as part of the wider response to addressing the accommodation needs for the most complex individuals. Work has been agreed with the current provider of the single hostel accommodation, Riverside Care and Support, to review the existing accommodation offer which will include Housing First.
- It is acknowledged that a successful accommodation offer that includes Housing First can have a significant beneficial impact. At the Sheffield City Region Mayoral Summit in November 2018, the Chief Executive of Crisis highlighted that research had shown that Housing First models, on average show an 80% success rate with, over time, individuals sustaining independent living, compared to traditional hostel approaches where we often see people revolving in and out of service.
- A small number of properties within the St Leger Homes managed stock have been utilised to pilot the delivery of a Housing First model, with the complex lives team providing the wrap around support. Success of this is being monitored and whilst not all cases have been successful, we have seen some significant successes and behavioural changes in individuals. Discussions are also ongoing with a local registered provider to see how a housing first model can be rolled out wider.

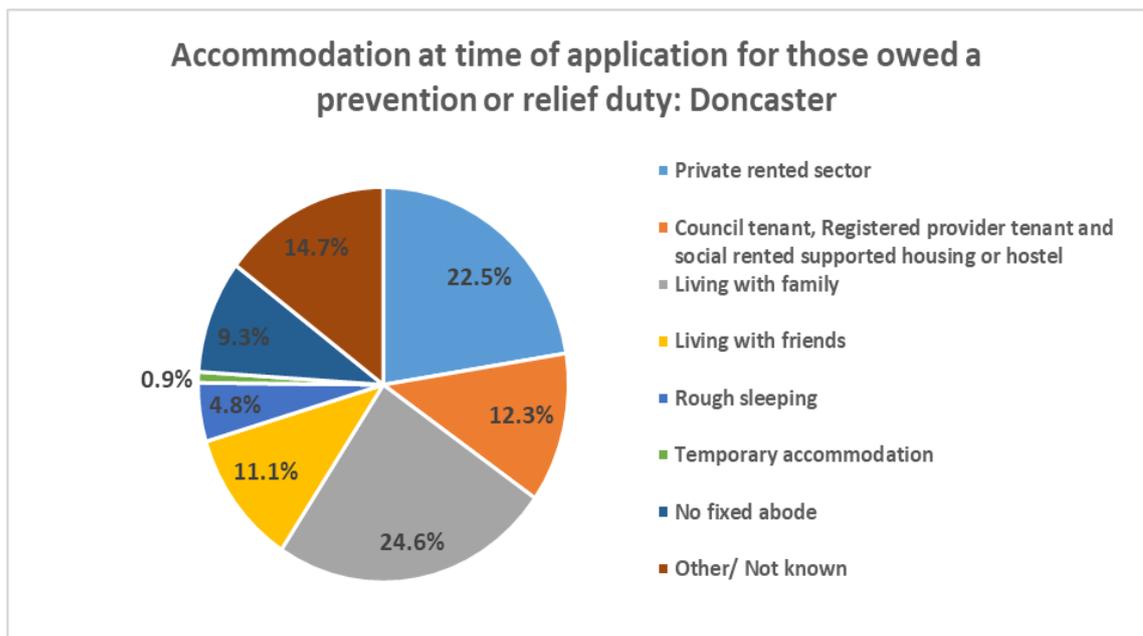
UPDATE ON CURRENT HOMELESS POSITION

- 15 Approaches into the service - Nationally, local authorities are reporting an increase in approaches to their service area. The number of approaches to services in Doncaster remained similar to last year for the first three quarters of the year, however approaches have significantly increased since Christmas and overall we are anticipating a slightly higher number of approaches than last year, which mirrors the national picture



16 Main reasons for homelessness - The main reason for homeless continues to be loss of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy. The top 4 reasons are:

- End of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy
- Relationship Breakdown (Violent and None Violent)
- Eviction by Parents
- Eviction by Friends



17 Use of Temporary Accommodation and Bed & Breakfast – Over the last 12 months, the need to provide additional temporary accommodation, over and above the commissioned provision, has significantly increased. Prior to winter 2017/18 the level of dispersed temporary accommodation was in the region of 20 properties. After the winter period the use of dispersed accommodation had increased to 45 properties. To help address the spike in rough sleeping this was increased by a further 20 properties to a total of 65.

18 In developing the 2018/19 Winter Plan, learning from last year it was agreed that additional temporary accommodation would be made available between November & March. In addition to this ‘winter crash pads’ have been put in place using dispersed accommodation to ensure sufficient capacity is available for when Severe Weather Emergency Protocol is activated. Combined this has increased the overall used of dispersed accommodation to 82 properties.

19 Despite the additional temporary accommodation that has been made available, we have also seen a significant increase in the need to use bed and breakfast accommodation when no other suitable accommodation is available. In the first 3 quarters of the current financial year, we have needed to place 199 households in bed & breakfast.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

20 This report is for information only.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

21 This report is for information only.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL’S KEY OUTCOMES

22 In 2017, Doncaster Growing Together was launched, with a clear focus on ensuring appropriate affordable housing for all. This initiated the ‘Homes for all Board’ which brought together key strategic representatives to deliver the key housing priorities, including addressing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping; The 5 key themes are:

- Housing Delivery
- Care Leaver Accommodation
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping
- Older Peoples Housing
- Housing for people with learning and physical disabilities

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	<p>Supporting individuals off the streets and into services and accommodation is the first step to enabling someone to rebuild their live and be ready for work.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster’s people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean 	<p>A warm, secure affordable home is a basic human right. Ending rough sleeping in Doncaster not only positively impacts on the individuals who find themselves rough sleeping, it has a positive impact on the vibrancy of our communities.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	<p>A strong focus on homeless prevention can have a positive impact on families and children who may find themselves homeless. A warm and safe home is critical to children growing and learning. Research has shown that homelessness has a negative impact on a child's educational attainment.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	<p>People who find themselves sleeping on the streets are some of the most vulnerable in our society. The work to support people to end rough sleeping supports our vision for people to have support they trust and someone to live and call home.</p>
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

23 There are no risks or assumptions associated with this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials...HMP..... Date...26.02.19.....]

24 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 provides new responsibilities on public authorities and these are set out at section 5 of the report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials...PMc..... Date.....27.02.19.....]

25 The budget for the Housing Options Service was set at £907k for 2018/19, with additional New Burdens funding of £90k and SPoA (Single Point of Access) funding of £55k.

As at the end January 2019, The Service is predicting a year end overspend position of £120k

The budget pressures identified in 2018/19 have been reflected in the budget for 2019/20. Overall service funding for 2019/20 is based on the following assumptions

Management Fee	£938k
New Burdens	£150k
SPoA	£57k
Winter Plan	£35k
Total	£1,180k

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials..AC..... Date...21.02.19..]

26 There are no HR implications specific to the Homelessness update. Any matters that emerge from the committee that impact on the workforce would require HR engagement at the appropriate time and would be subject to separate approval.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials...PW..... Date...26.02.19.....]

27 There are no specific technology implications in relation to this report. A proposal to enhance the capturing of information in reference to rough sleeping individuals was agreed by the Technology Governance Board (TGB) in January 19. Digital Transformation & ICT have worked with the service area to deliver these capabilities as part of modifications to the existing Complex Lives technology.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials...KH/HC.....Date ...21.02.19.....]

28 Poor health can be both a cause and consequence of homelessness and there is evidence to show that the health and wellbeing of those who are homeless is significantly worse than the general population. Living on the streets, in temporary accommodation or in an insecure tenure can have an impact on physical and mental health, drug and alcohol use and ability to utilise the health systems meaning, as a group, those whom experience homelessness also experience high levels of health inequality.

29 The activity reported in this Homelessness Update details a partnership response to those with the most complex needs that includes health and non-

statutory partners, and a preventative approach for those at risk of homelessness. By reducing the number of people sleeping rough, homeless or at risk of homelessness it can be expected that there will be a positive health impact on this vulnerable population.

30 Although placements bed and breakfast accommodation can be necessary in some cases, it recommended that measures are taken to reduce the number of people, especially families, living in bed and breakfast accommodation. Providing a secure, healthy and appropriate home will have a positive impact on health and wellbeing.

31 Homelessness is more likely to affect those in society who are most at risk of experiencing other inequalities and poor health, than the general population. Those with experience of the criminal justice system, BME young people, LGBT young people, gay, bisexual or transgender men, gypsies and travellers, sex workers, those who have experienced domestic violence, people with long term illnesses or a disability, people with substance misuse problems, refugees and asylum seekers, care leavers and young people from rural areas are at greater risk of being homeless (LGA, 2017). It is recommended that decision makers take into account the inequalities experienced by these groups and the barriers they may face during planning, delivery and evaluation.

32 It is recommended that decision makers closely monitor and evaluate the impact of this approach ensuring that it represents the best use of resources and provides the best health outcomes for Doncaster residents.

33 It is recommended that prevention continues to be the approach of choice wherever possible. This is not only cost-effective, but also prevents our vulnerable communities developing more complex needs and experiencing further negative health impacts of homelessness and rough sleeping.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials..... Date.....]

34 For information no equality implications.

CONSULTATION

35 For information no consultation.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

36 None.

REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

Steve Waddington
Director of Housing & Customer Services
St Leger Homes of Doncaster
Tel:01302 8862708
Email: steve.waddington@stlegerhomes.co.uk

Name & Title of Lead Officer

Steve Waddington
Director of Housing & Customer Services

St Leger Homes of Doncaster
Tel:01302 8862708
Email: steve.waddington@stlegerhomes.co.uk