

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET

Decision Made: 19 March 2024

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029

Issue for Decision

To seek approval to adopt the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy setting out the current environment and the priorities for the next 5 years.

Decision Made

That

1. The new Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy attached at Appendix B to the report, be adopted; and
2. Authority be delegated to the Head of Housing and Regulatory Services to make any non-material typographical corrections or formatting changes as required to the Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy attached at Appendix B to the report.

Reasons for Decision

Since the enactment of the Homelessness Act 2002, Local Housing Authorities have been required to carry out a strategic assessment of homelessness in their area and publish a homelessness strategy outlining their intentions and vision for preventing and supporting those who face homelessness. In 2018 the Government published their national rough sleeping strategy which obligated local authorities to include a special focus on Rough Sleeping and this is our second combined Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The preceding years have presented many challenges for us as a local housing authority these include the pandemic which hugely altered the way services could be delivered, and how staff worked; world events such as the war in Ukraine and the turmoil of withdrawing from Afghanistan; and the current cost of living crisis and associated demand for housing has caused homelessness to surge. All of these have presenting extreme challenges to our housing and homeless teams but alongside these, we have had many opportunities to tailor the manner in which we work and provide services to our local community.

Maidstone Borough Council continues its commitment to providing a robust and effective housing and homelessness service to the local community. The provision of these services is a key borough priority and is reflected through our strategic plan under Homes and Communities banner, with the commitment to preventing homelessness and rough sleeping by 2045. This strategy sets out our aims for the coming five years (2024-2029) to support our priority of breaking the cycle of homelessness.

The strategic review of the outgoing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024 was undertaken in the latter part of 2023, and included the

achievements of the Council over the preceding five years, as well as the environmental changes faced when delivering services. A briefing and the full review can be found in Appendix A to the report.

96% of respondents to the Consultation felt the previous priorities created in our 2019 Strategy were felt to still be relevant for the new strategy.

The four priorities are:

Homeless Prevention – supporting households to sustain and maintain their current accommodation, reducing the demand for temporary accommodation and the need for crisis interventions.

Accommodation – provision of good quality housing and housing options

Support vulnerable people and households – this includes domestic abuse survivors.

Target and alleviate rough sleeping within our borough.

The Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee considered the matter on the 12 March 2024, and recommended that the report recommendations be agreed by the Cabinet.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

To not do anything, however this was not recommended as the local housing authority's Homelessness Strategies are often cited during legal challenges to decisions made by officers and not having an up to date Strategy would increase the risk of legal challenge, as having a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is a statutory requirement.

Background Papers

None.

I have read and approved the above decision for the reasons (including possible alternative options rejected) as set out above.



Signed: _____
Councillor David Burton – Leader of the Council

Full details of both the report for the decision taken above and any consideration by the relevant Policy Advisory Committee can be found at the following area of the [website](#)

Call-In: Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call-in form signed by any three Members to the Proper Officer by: **5pm on 28 March 2024**