

**Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 -  
2024**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Council
<b>Lead Head of Service/Lead Director</b>	William Cornall Director of Regeneration and Place
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	John Littlemore Head of Housing & Community Services
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**Executive Summary**

The Council is under a statutory obligation to publish a strategy every five years setting out how it will tackle the issues of homelessness and rough sleeping within their area. The Committee is asked to approve the draft Strategy to enable a period of consultation to take place.

**This report makes the following recommendations to Communities, Housing & Environment Committee**

That:

1. The draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy is approved for consultation with key partners and stakeholders.
2. The final Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy is submitted to an appropriate Communities, Housing and Environment Committee for approval.

**Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Communities, Housing & Environment Committee	19 March 2019
Communities, Housing & Environment Committee	Summer 2019
Council	Summer 2019

# Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 - 2024

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 (as amended) requires local housing authorities in England to formulate and publish a strategy in response to an assessment of homelessness within their area. The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018 brought about significant change in the duties and powers available to a local housing authority and it is therefore timely for the Council to reconsider its Strategy in the light of the new legislation.
- 1.2 The Homelessness Review was received by the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019 and the Strategy has been developed using the information collated in the Review.
- 1.3 Four themes have been developed from the Review in order to address the issues of homelessness within the borough. These are:
- i. Prevent homelessness
  - ii. Provide accommodation
  - iii. Supporting vulnerable people
  - iv. Tackling rough sleeping
- 1.4 The Strategy includes a number of new initiatives that will be implemented, or explored over the period of the Strategy. These includes:
- Using data analytics to inform how and when services are delivered;
  - reviewing how we support families that are found to be intentionally homeless;
  - investigating whether a change to the Council's Allocation Scheme would help reduce the need for temporary accommodation;
  - developing a sustainable solution to rough sleeping
- 1.5 The Housing Service has been particularly successful in lobbying for grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in order to deliver a range of new services to both rough sleepers and families that find themselves homeless or threatened with homelessness. This means that the majority of the ambitions expressed in the Strategy can be delivered without the need for an increased budget funded from the Council's general fund.

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## 2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 In order to remain compliant with the Council's statutory duties and to ensure best practice, the Committee is recommended to agree the draft Strategy for consultation.

- 2.2 A failure to adopt an up to date Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy leaves the Council open to challenge and disadvantages the Council when making bids for government grants to help tackle homelessness, as and when they become available.
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### **3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The recommendation at paragraph 2.1 is preferred, as this provides the best possible direction when tackling the issue of homelessness, which remains a key priority for the Council in its Strategic Plan.
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### **4. RISK**

- 4.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

### **5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 5.1 The legislation requires that key stakeholders, in particular social services, are consulted as part of developing the Strategy. A period of 30 days minimum consultation will take place following approval of the draft Strategy and the results of any amendments will be reported to a subsequent meeting of the Committee.
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### **6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve the priorities set out in the Council's Strategic Plan	Head of Housing & Community Services
<b>Risk Management</b>	Already covered in the risk section – if your risk section is more than just a paragraph in this box then you can state 'refer to paragraph ... of the report'	Head of Housing & Community Services
<b>Financial</b>	The initiatives required to implement the Strategy are	Section 151

	<p>funded by a combination of central government grant and MBC revenue and capital funding. Whilst service pressures have been reflected as far as possible in setting the budget for 2019/20, housing services are demand led and so there remains a risk that funding will not be adequate.</p>	Officer
<b>Staffing</b>	<p>We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.</p>	Head of Housing & Community Services
<b>Legal</b>	<p>1. The report and attached draft strategy correctly outlines the current obligations under the Homelessness Act 2002 (the 2002 Act) which imposes a duty on the Council to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness. This duty is further reinforced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which enables the Council to engage with groups who fall outside of any priority status of the Housing Act 1996</p> <p>2. In formulating or modifying its homelessness strategy the Council is required to have due regard to the statutory guidance published by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The Council should also have regard to its allocation scheme and its tenancy strategy.</p> <p>3. The homelessness strategy should set out the Council's strategy for preventing homelessness in their Borough, securing that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people in their Borough who are or may become homeless and securing the satisfactory provision of support for people in their</p>	Principal Solicitor

	<p>Borough who are or may become homeless or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.</p> <p>4. There is no formal consultation required by the 2002 Act but before adopting or modifying its homelessness strategy the Council should consult such public authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons as it considers appropriate. The MHCLG guidance provides that housing authorities will wish to consult with service users and specialist agencies that provide support to homeless people in the Borough.</p> <p>Accepting the recommendations will fulfil the Council’s duties under the homelessness legislation. Failure to accept the recommendations without agreeing suitable alternatives may place the Council in breach of the various homelessness legislation.</p>	
<p><b>Privacy and Data Protection</b></p>	<p>Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with the relevant policies.</p>	<p>Head of Housing &amp; Community Services</p>
<p><b>Equalities</b></p>	<p>It is recognised that the recommendations will have varying impacts on different communities within Maidstone. These will be considered as part of the development of the Strategy via the EqIA process.</p>	<p>Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer</p>
<p><b>Public Health</b></p>	<p>We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals.</p>	<p>Head of Housing &amp; Community Services</p>

<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	The recommendation will have a positive impact on the community.	Head of Housing & Community Services
<b>Procurement</b>	None immediately identified	Head of Housing & Community Services

**7. REPORT APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 - 2024

**8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Report to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee January 2019 "Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Review".