

Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2024

Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	William Cornall Director of Regeneration and Place
Lead Officer and Report Author	John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Community Services Hannah Gaston, Housing & Inclusion Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	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. Following the consultation period, the Committee is asked to approve this final version of the Homelessness Strategy.

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

That the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2024, attached as Appendix 1, to this report be approved.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Communities, Housing & Environment Committee	17 th September 2019

Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2024

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	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
Risk Management	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
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are within approved budgetary limits (as supplemented by external grant funding), so there is no requirement for additional funding.	Interim Head of Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer)
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Head of Housing & Community Services
Legal	<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>Learning from cases reviewed by the Local Government Ombudsman and through judicial review will be incorporated to ensure best practice via the Strategy.</p>	Head of Housing & Community Services

Privacy and Data Protection	Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with the relevant policies.	
Equalities	An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed alongside the development of the of the draft strategy. This will be revisited and any impacts with be considered as part of the final strategy document.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of homelessness and potentially homeless individuals.	Head of Housing & Community Services
Crime and Disorder	The recommendation will have a positive impact on the community.	Head of Housing & Community Services
Procurement	None immediately identified	Head of Housing & Community Services

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The Strategy was developed using the information collated in the homelessness review, which was undertaken in early 2019 and through the public consultation that took place in the summer of 2019.
- 2.3 Four themes/priorities have been developed 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
- 2.4 The Strategy includes a number of new initiatives that will be implemented, or explored over the period of the Strategy. These includes:
- 2.4.1 Providing a robust response to rough sleeping within the district;
 - 2.4.2 Using data analytics to inform how and when services are delivered;
 - 2.4.3 Looking to support families that are found to be intentionally homeless in an innovative way;
 - 2.4.4 investigating whether a change to the Council's Allocation Scheme would help reduce the need for temporary accommodation;
- 2.5 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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3 AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 In order to remain compliant with the Council's statutory duties and to ensure best practice, the Committee is recommended to agree to the final strategy.
- 3.2 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 to government grants to help tackle homelessness, as and when they become available.
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4 PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 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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5 RISK

- 5.1 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.
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6 CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The consultation which took place in summer 2019 and we had a total of 500 respondents. The majority overwhelming supported our four main themes as set out in paragraph 1.3. Of the respondents over half felt that preventing homelessness should be our top priority, which supports the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2018.
- 6.2 Alongside public consultation we also consulted staff and service users on our proposals and many of the actions within the action plan come directly from these groups.
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7 REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2024
 - Appendix 2: Consultation Feedback
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8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee March 2019
“Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy”.