

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET HOUSING PANEL 19TH MARCH 2025
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (PLACE)

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY – 2025 - 2029

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update and summarise the Council's Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Strategy 2025-2029, and its attached action plan.
- 1.2 Every 5 years the council publishes a revised Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review and Strategy. This captures the context of homelessness within the borough and sets out an action plan to reduce the levels of homelessness and rough sleeping, with support of the housing officers and our partner organisations.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet Housing Panel note the contents of this report and agree that the consultation process for the Council's Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Strategy for 2025-2029 (Appendix One) can commence.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 The strategy provides a review of rough sleeping and homelessness within the borough. It clearly demonstrates the increase of homelessness approaches over the past 5 years, however, the number of rough sleepers has remained around the same level. It notes this is greatly due to the COVID19 Pandemic, Cost of Living Crisis and Housing Crisis. Consequently, the review demonstrates the need for action.
- 3.2 The review accounts for local context (undertaken through a statistical review, and staff engagement), as well as national context. Most considerably, it gives an indication towards the national policy changes which have occurred altering the housing scene, and the future of housing in relation to the new labour government.
- 3.3 The proposed action plan included covers the 4 aims below, breaking down each into objectives and actionable measures to ensure we can achieve our goals. The following four objectives have been developed from the statistical review of homelessness and rough sleeping within the borough, national and local context, alongside stakeholder engagement: including Staff, Partner Organisations and Residents.

- **Eradicate Rough Sleeping in the Borough;** This objective will ensure that everyone within the borough has access to warm spaces, and a bed to feel safe and secure. To be achieved by ensuring all rough sleepers are engaged with outreach services, holding regular meetings with external services to maintain consistent communication and strong intermediate support services.
- **Proactive Preventions and Relief for Homelessness;** by committing to staying informed and proactively respond to government legislation, including Domestic Violence Acts and Armed Forces Acts, we aim to comprehensively address all aspects of homelessness support and options.
- **Maximise the efficiency of our services;** includes undertaking a review of internal and external teams and services to highlight gaps and ensure funding is appropriately allocated. We will also use this to identify additional services needed for the borough and develop a strong marketing campaign to increase the presence and awareness of available services.
- **Enhance Housing Options to Meet Resident Needs;** this objective aims to widen the support we offer to all in need. We will ensure feedback is accounted for, that there is sufficient housing available for all individuals, through redevelopment of Temporary Accommodation, and a continuation of personalised and varied housing pathways.

3.4 The proposed Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan is included in Appendix 1.

3.5 The Council received a significant increase in the grant funding for homelessness and rough sleeping, the grant award for 2025/26 was £1,666, 292. This grant will be used to increase the support to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

4 Legal Implications

4.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the strategy.

5 Financial Implications

5.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy has been developed with consideration to the upcoming HRA forecast, and Housing Business Plan with budget setting for 2025/26.

5.2 There has been certainty for 2025/26 with a grant award from central Government about the continuation of certain funding streams to local authorities that currently support homelessness. The strategy therefore takes into account that this funding streams.

6 Risk Management Implications

6.1 Risks are associated with the delivery of key projects and service performance.

6.2 Risk management implications will be reviewed as part of the Council's project management and risk management frameworks.

7 Security and Terrorism Implications

7.1 There are no security and terrorism implications directly arising from the recommendation.

8 Procurement Implications

8.1 There are no procurement implications directly arising from the recommendation.

9 Climate Change Implications

9.1 There are actions surrounding planning and increase of temporary accommodation which may have implications on our Climate Change initiatives.

10 Health and Wellbeing Implications

10.1 The continued promotion of Health and Wellbeing of our residents is a key commitment from the Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Strategy. This is primarily in respect of those in need of drug and alcohol support, as well as mental health services.

11 Communication and Engagement Implications

11.1 The draft strategy will be subject to a six week consultation period which is proposed to commence in mid April and concluding at the end of May. The consultation will be available online and will be sent to all partners, It will be promoted through the Council's website and social media posts

11.2 This report will involve an element of communication, through implementation of the action plan in internal team communication channels. Additionally, it will involve the communication and engagement team when developing marketing campaigns to promote awareness of services.

12 Human Resources Implications

12.1 There are no direct human resources implications directly arising from the recommendation.

13 Link to Corporate Priorities

13.1 This strategy is linked to the Council's Corporate Priority:

"Homes to be Proud of"

- Build new social and affordable homes
- High quality homes for all
- Support and prevent homelessness
- Plan for future homes in the right places

The strategy covers all our priorities within the action plan in dedication to lowering levels of homelessness and rough sleeping within the borough.

14 Equality and Diversity

14.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken for this strategy.

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Appendices:

Appendix One – [Rough sleeping and Homelessness strategy .docx](#)