



Committee Report

PURPOSE: Final Decision Report

KEY OR NON-KEY DECISION: Key decision affects 2 or more wards

COMMITTEE: Homes and Housing Delivery Committee

DATE: 13 December 2024

TITLE: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030

Ward(s): All.

Officer presenting the report: Paul Sylvester **Job title:** Head of Housing Options

Committee Chair: Cllr Barry Parsons

Executive Director lead: John Smith: Executive Director for Growth & Regeneration

Proposal origin: BCC Staff

Purpose of Report:

1. To seek Committee approval on the council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030 in compliance with the Council's legal requirement to produce an updated homelessness strategy at least every five years (Homelessness Act 2002)
2. To seek Committee approval on the accompanying Action Plan for 2025 which will be revised and updated annually to support the delivery of the four strategic priorities of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030.

Evidence Base / Options to consider:

1. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030 has been produced alongside a comprehensive Homelessness Review (2024) which analysed data between 2019 and 2024. The review forms the basis of the evidence for the strategy and is listed as an appendix to this paper. The review provides a statistical assessment of trends in homelessness presentations in Bristol, the underlying causes, activity in preventing and relieving homelessness, cohorts that may be more likely to become homelessness and the profile of households experiencing homelessness. In summary, the review notes that:
 - i. Over the past few years, Bristol has seen some of the most challenging conditions for living standards on record. Particularly in relation to the cost of private rents, frozen Local Housing Allowance rates, and inflation. This has impacted demand for homelessness related services in the city.

- ii. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a 25% increase in households (averaging 510 a month) approaching the Council because of homelessness related issues. The number of households owed a statutory homelessness duty and currently in temporary accommodation (TA) is 92% higher than before the pandemic.
 - iii. There has been a significant increase in the number of households being provided with TA since the last strategy (2019-2024) was published. The number of households living in TA in Bristol in June 2017 was 585, rising to 1587 in March 2024.
 - iv. The number of people sleeping rough in Bristol is rising following the 'Everyone In' initiative during the Covid-19 pandemic. In total, there were 912 people sleeping rough in Bristol over the 2022-23 financial year. This was a rise of 28% from 701 people sleeping rough in Bristol in 2021-22. Demand for the Rough Sleeping Prevention Service has increased year on year, with 653 people entering the service in 2021-23, and 812 in 2022-23; a 24% increase.
 - v. It is estimated that over 800 people are living in vehicles in the city. The single biggest reason given for this is inability to afford other housing options and a lack of social housing in the city. The council's current social housing waiting list stands at over 21,000 households.
 - vi. There is an overrepresentation of households from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic groups facing homelessness. Those from these backgrounds represent 18.9% of the population but 31.1% of relief duty acceptances in 2022.
2. Further to the Homelessness Review (2024), extensive engagement took place to develop the four strategic priorities and objectives. As part of the engagement, the council conducted 13 different workshops and listening exercises which resulted in speaking to over 170 different colleagues, professionals, volunteers, and people with lived experience of homelessness. Feedback from those with lived experience at these meetings helped shape the priorities and objectives of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030, which were then publicly consulted on.

Officer Recommendations:

That the Committee for Homes and Housing Delivery:

1. Approves the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030 and accompanying Action Plan (2025)

Corporate Strategy alignment:

1. The current [Corporate Strategy](#) (2022-2027) outlines the council's objective to reduce and prevent homelessness and rough sleeping, tackling the underlying causes.
2. The Corporate Strategy commits to reducing the number of households in TA, helping to improve health and wellbeing. Where people have high or complex needs, it says the Council will take a 'Housing First' approach to provide stable accommodation at the start of providing wider support.

3. The Corporate Strategy says the Council will help prevent homelessness by building and retaining social housing, supporting good mental and physical health, developing employment and skills opportunities, taking ethical approaches to debt collection, and responding to the diverse needs of different people.
4. The Corporate Strategy commits to putting homelessness prevention at the heart of everything the council does. This includes finding new ways of both understanding different people's needs and addressing the complex factors that can lead to homelessness.
5. The Corporate Strategy says that the Housing First and Changing Futures schemes will continue to build on existing city partnerships that support people with multiple disadvantages such as homelessness, mental health needs, substance misuse issues, domestic abuse, and being in the criminal justice system.

City Benefits:

1. Homelessness and rough sleeping is linked with a range of other issues - poor physical and mental health, drug and alcohol misuse, offending, domestic abuse, crime and anti-social behaviour. Reducing homelessness and rough sleeping will have an overall positive impact on health and wellbeing as well as helping alleviate some of the most negative aspects of austerity and socio-economic disadvantage.
2. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030 outlines the direction of travel for the council going forward with an emphasis on prevention, delivery of suitable accommodation, partnership working and the need to help people move forward following homelessness and/or rough sleeping. This will benefit residents of the city, particularly those cohorts most impacted by homelessness, rough sleeping, and their associated impacts.

Consultation Details:

1. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030 was shaped by a steering group which includes membership from both statutory and voluntary services from across the city. The group met in person four times between March and October 2024 and was Co-chaired by someone with lived experience of homelessness. The membership included:
 - Ashley Community Housing (ACH)
 - Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) Integrated Care Board
 - St Mungos
 - Changing Futures
 - 1625 Independent People
 - InHope
 - One25
 - Stand Against Racism & Inequality (SARI)
 - Housing Matters
 - Caring in Bristol
 - Shelter

- Second Step
 - Sovereign Network Group (SNG), formerly Sovereign Housing Association
2. Prior to consultation, the council conducted pre-engagement with several key stakeholder groups. These groups helped shape the priorities and objectives that went out for consultation. Council officers ran 13 different workshops and listening exercises which resulted in hearing from over 170 different colleagues, professionals, volunteers, and people with lived experience of homelessness. As part of this pre-engagement the council organised/attended engagement sessions across May and June 2024 with the following groups:
 - Bristol Homelessness Forum
 - Food on the Streets
 - Logos House staff
 - Independent Futures – Changing Futures Bristol lived experience group
 - Shelter – lived experience women’s group
 - 1625 Independent People – lived experience young person's group
 - Housing Matters Advisory Board
 - One25 - Bridging Gaps lived experience women’s group
 - Ashley Community Housing (ACH) and Bristol Refugee and Asylum Seeker Partnership (BRASP) – lived experience refugee and asylum seekers group
 - Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Survivor Forum – lived experience (Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership)
 3. A cross-council workshop on the development of the strategy was organised at City Hall to ensure colleagues from across Bristol City Council were collaborating and able to feed in to the work.
 4. After the strategic priorities and objectives were developed collaboratively with colleagues, professional, volunteers and those with lived experience, they went out for public consultation between August 2024 and October 2024. To promote the consultation and hear from those with lived experience paper copies were sent to several key locations along with information postcards. The consultation was also promoted across social media, a press release was issued on the council’s newsroom, information was shared in newsletters, with stakeholders, and through the council’s Community Development team.
 5. In total, the consultation received 126 responses, with disproportionately low or no response from certain key demographics – including those disproportionately represented in homelessness and rough sleeping data. This included Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African people; Muslims; those from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background and Refugees and Asylum Seekers.
 6. Due to the low response rate and lack of representation from certain equalities groups that are disproportionately impacted by homelessness and rough sleeping in the city, the consultation was reopened on October 30th for a 3-week period. This involved conducting further engagement and communication with a range of groups across the city as outlined in the accompanying Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA).
 7. Following the reopening of the consultation the response rate increased from 126 to 395. Although the consultation extension did increase response rates, there was still some under-representation in terms of response rate relative to percentage of the Bristol population, including amongst Muslims, Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African people, and Asian or Asian British people. A full

breakdown in response data is available in the accompanying consultation and engagement report.

8. Overall, the breakdown in support of the priorities and objectives was positive. In total, 94% of respondents said that Priority 1 (Prevention) was of Very High (79%) or High Importance (15%); 93% said that Priority 2 (Accommodation) as of Very High (77%) or High Importance (16%); 89% said that Priority 3 (Working in Partnership) was of Very High (57%) or High Importance (32%); and 91% said that Priority 4 (Helping people move forward) was of Very High (64%) or High Importance (27%). A full breakdown is available in the consultation and engagement report.
9. The consultation feedback was analysed in real time and helped shape the final version of the strategy and action plan, along with feedback from the steering group and engagement sessions.

Background Documents:

1. [BCC Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024](#)
2. [Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping](#)

Revenue Cost	N/A	Source of Revenue Funding	N/A
Capital Cost	N/A	Source of Capital Funding	N/A
One off cost <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing cost <input type="checkbox"/>		Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/> If yes - existing or new saving? Choose an item. OR Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	

Professional comments section:

1. Finance Advice: There are no financial implications associated with the approval of this strategy. However, if approved then future spending plans may need to be amended in line with the strategies action plan and the ongoing requirement to reduce overspends on homelessness. Any such changes will be subject to the usual approvals process.

Finance Business Partner: Martin Johnson – Interim Finance Manager – Housing and Landlord Services 25 November 2024

2. Legal Advice: s.1 Homelessness Act 2002 gives local housing authorities the power to carry out a homelessness review for their district and formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of the review. This strategy complies with the prescribed statutory requirements.

Legal Team Leader: Kate Meller, Team Manager 25 November 2024

3. Implications on IT: I can see no implications on IT regarding this activity.

IT Team Leader: Alex Simpson – Lead Enterprise Architect, 8 October

4. HR Advice: There are no HR implications evident

HR Partner: Celia Williams, HR Business Partner, 26 November 2024

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal

YES

Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)	YES
Appendix C – Environmental Impact Assessment	YES
Appendix D – Decision Risk Assessment	NO
Appendix E – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix F – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	YES
Appendix G – Options appraisal matrix	NO
Appendix H – Business case / financial analysis	NO