

Decision Pathway – Report



PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 03 September 2019

TITLE	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24		
Ward(s)	All		
Author: Dave Clarke/Graham Jones	Job title: Policy Officers (Housing Options)		
Cabinet lead: Cllr Paul Smith	Executive Director lead: Colin Molton		
Proposal origin: <i>BCC Staff</i>			
Decision maker: Cabinet Member Decision forum: <i>Cabinet</i>			
Purpose of Report:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To seek Cabinet approval for adoption of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24 in compliance with the Council's legal requirement to produce an updated homelessness strategy at least every five years (Homelessness Act 2002). 			
Evidence Base:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Homelessness Strategy has been produced alongside a comprehensive Homelessness Review document. The Homelessness Review document forms the basis of the evidence base for the revised strategy. In brief, the Review document notes that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the annual rough sleeper count in November 2018 Bristol reported 82 long term rough sleepers which is the fifth highest return nationally. It is recognised that these figures represent just the 'tip of the iceberg', with people sleeping in unsafe buildings and "sofa surfing" not included in the official statistics. The most common factor leading to statutory homelessness over the past five years has been the loss of a private rented tenancy, closely followed by parents or other relatives not willing or able to accommodate. The main reason for establishing priority need in statutory homeless cases over the past five years has been due to the household including dependent children. Households aged between 25 and 44 are the most common age group accepted as statutorily homeless in Bristol. Female lone parent households account for most homelessness acceptances The gap between average rents in Bristol and the Local Housing Allowance has grown considerably in recent years. The number of households living in temporary accommodation (TA) in Bristol in March 2012 was 160. On the 31st December 2018 (a seasonal low point for TA) this figure was 491. This is a 206% increase. The number of households living in temporary accommodation for more than six months was 287 on 31st March 2018. This accounts for 53% of all temporary accommodation. The average time between statutory homelessness being agreed and a household making a successful bid for social housing is 18 months. 			
Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:			
That Cabinet			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the revised Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and high level action plan. 			
Corporate Strategy alignment:			
The strategy aligns with the following Corporate Plan theme and priority: 'Empowering and Caring - Reduce the overall level of homelessness and rough sleeping, with no-one needing to spend a 'second night out' and the			

Corporate Strategy key principle to: 'Maximise opportunities to work with partners and other stakeholders locally, nationally and globally'.

The strategy also aligns with the One City Plan vision for 'Homes and Communities' which states that:

'By 2050 everyone in Bristol will live in a home that meets their needs within a thriving and safe community'

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 etc. 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.

Consultation Details:

1. The draft strategy was shaped by the Early Intervention and Preventing Homelessness Challenge Group which includes membership from both statutory and voluntary services from across the city.
2. The draft strategy went out for public consultation (between April and May 2019).
3. There has been a large amount of pre-engagement communication with key stakeholders citywide.
4. Full details of the consultation can be found in the [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Consultation report](#)
5. Some key findings from the consultation:
 - There were 377 responses
 - Between 83% and 97% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the five priorities
 - The top five identified actions implemented from the findings of the consultation and incorporated into the strategy and its associated high level action plan were:
 - Provide more 'move on' accommodation for people sleeping rough
 - Reduce the numbers in Temporary Accommodation through prevention work and a range of more affordable options
 - Increasing the supply of affordable homes, and ensuring that the right homes are delivered to meet housing needs
 - Build on existing links with health services
 - Review and where needed change the range of supported accommodation options available

Background Documents:

[Homelessness Review – Evidence Base](#)

[Housing Act 1996](#), [Homelessness Act 2002](#), [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#), [Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018](#)

Revenue Cost	£12.8m	Source of Revenue Funding	2019/20 General Fund budget for Housing Options plus grants for Flexible Homelessness Support and Rough Sleepers
Capital Cost	£0	Source of Capital Funding	
One off cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:

1. Finance Advice: The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy sets out the overall approach for a range of services, for which any associated expenditure remains subject to the Council's financial regulations. Each year an annual action plan is to be agreed, in consultation with the Cabinet member, to utilise the resources as determined by the Corporate budget setting process in the most efficient and effective way.

For 2019/20, there is £10.3m of general fund budget allocated for the provision of Housing Option services. There are also £2.0m Flexible Homelessness support grant and £0.5m Rough Sleepers Initiative grant. These grants have been instrumental in allowing the development of value for money solutions to these significant issues impacting on Bristol. The strategy document may be used to support future grant bidding opportunities.

There is uncertainty regarding the grant funding over the lifetime of the strategy. If the level of grant funding changes significantly in future years, then an options paper would be developed to be considered by the Director of Housing and Landlord Services in conjunction with the Cabinet member, to ensure that actions are prioritised in line with the overall strategy within the budget envelope available for that financial year.

Finance Business Partner: Wendy Welsh, Finance Manager (Commented on 20/08/19)

2. Legal Advice: Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 requires a local housing authority to formulate carry out a homelessness review; and formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of that review every five years. Consultation has taken place in relation to the decision to be taken. The responses to the consultation must be taken into account by Cabinet when taking the decision. Cabinet should also be satisfied that proper consultation has taken place in that (i) proposals were consulted on at a formative stage (ii) sufficient reasons have been given for the proposals and (iii) adequate time has been allowed for consideration and response. Appendix B of this report sets out the process that was undertaken and how responses have been taken in to consideration by officers when developing their proposals for final decision.

The Public Sector Equality duty requires the decision maker to consider the need to promote equality for persons with “protected characteristics” and to have due regard to the need to i) eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; ii) advance equality of opportunity; and iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

The Equalities Impact Check/Assessment is designed to assess whether there are any barriers in place that may prevent people with a protected characteristic using a service or benefiting from a policy. An Equalities Impact Assessment should be carried out for this decision. The decision maker must take into consideration the information in the assessment before taking the decision. A decision can be made where there is a negative impact if it is clear that it is necessary, it is not possible to reduce or remove the negative impact by looking at alternatives and the means by which the aim of the decision is being implemented is both necessary and appropriate.

Legal Team Leader: Sarah Sharland, Senior Solicitor (Commented on 27/06/19)

3. Implications on IT: There are no direct implications arising from the publication of the strategy. However, it is likely that IT related initiatives and data sharing arrangements may arise as a consequence of its implementation. These will need to be developed and scheduled in accordance with CLB priorities, to ensure that appropriate IT resources are made available

IT Team Leader: Ian Gale – Service Delivery Manager (IT) (Commented on 27/06/19)

4. HR Advice: Celia Williams – No HR implications are evident

HR Partner: Celia Williams HR Consultation Manager (Commented on 01/07/19)

EDM Sign-off	Colin Molton	3 rd July 2019
Cabinet Member sign-off	Paul Smith	16 th July 2019
For Key Decisions - Mayor’s Office sign-off	Mayor’s Office	5 th August 2019

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal <i>Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy</i> <i>Draft high level action plan</i>	YES
Appendix B – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Consultation report	YES
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment	YES
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal <i>The environmental impacts of this report are not significant and a full Eco IA is not required. Overall the impacts are positive, with a projection to reduce fly tipping across the city by reducing incidents of rough sleeping. Nicola Hares, Environmental Project Manager (Commented on 16/05/19)</i>	NO
Appendix G – Financial Advice	NO
Appendix H – Legal Advice	NO
Appendix I – Exempt Information	NO

Appendix J – HR advice Celia Williams	NO
Appendix K – ICT	NO