

Crawley Borough Council

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Commission 25th November 2024

Report to Cabinet 27th November 2024

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 to 2029

Report of the Head of Strategic Housing – SHAP/092

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To request approval and adoption of the attached draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 to 2029 to replace the council's existing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 to 2024 that will cease to be operational at the end of the year.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:

That the Commission consider the report and strategy and decide what comments, if any, it wishes to submit to the Cabinet.

- 2.2 To Cabinet:

That the Cabinet is requested to recommend to Full Council the approval and adoption of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 to 2029 (Appendix A of report SHAP/92) from 1st January 2025.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 To fulfil the council's legal duty to publish a homelessness strategy upon expiry of the previous strategy.

4. Background

- 4.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities carry out a homelessness review for their district and formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of the review.

- 4.2 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review 2019 to 2023 (Appendix B) that accompanies the strategy provides statistical analysis of homelessness approaches and outcomes over the past five years and identifies current and emerging trends regarding homelessness in the borough. The review will be published online alongside the strategy. The findings of the review help determine the priorities for the strategy and the way forward for the council over the coming five years.

- 4.2 The draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 to 2029 has been developed following consultation with statutory and voluntary agencies, stakeholders, service users, staff and councillors (via email following on from formal notification in the members bulletin). The consultation took the form of online questionnaires, emailed out and made available via the council's website. Amendments to the strategy following on from consultation feedback include placing additional emphasis on the pressures temporary accommodation expenditure is putting on the councils' finances and expanding upon the response to the challenges faced by people who do not have English as their first language.
- 4.3 The draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 to 2029 sets out the issues and challenges that the Council face in tackling homelessness within the Borough and how it will fulfil its legal obligations laid down in the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 in providing services to homeless households and those threatened with homelessness.
- 4.4 Consideration has been given to the priorities within the previous strategy and the focus of priority one has shifted to promote a greater focus on prevention and early intervention, reflecting evidence that better outcomes can be achieved at an earlier stage. The needs of vulnerable people have been reflected throughout the strategy and within the priorities for the coming years. Specific actions in relation to meeting the needs of those households have been incorporated into each of the priorities of this strategy.

5. Description of issue to be resolved

- 5.1 Homelessness strategies can be operational for no longer than five years, however authorities can conduct homelessness reviews and publish homelessness strategies more frequently if circumstances in the district change. The existing strategy will expire at the end of the year and needs to be replaced.
- 5.2 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 to 2029, if adopted, applies to all wards and all service users in Crawley.

6. Information & Analysis Supporting Recommendation

- 6.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review 2019 to 2023 and consultation process identified four key priorities for the Council over the coming five years:
- Prevention and early intervention
 - Maximising the supply of affordable housing
 - Tackling rough sleeping and single homelessness
 - Preventing repeat homelessness
- 6.2 These priorities shape the strategy and will steer the council in how it tackles homelessness in Crawley over the coming five years.
- 6.3 To achieve the priorities, the council has identified actions that will form an Action Plan. The Action Plan will be finalised following on from the consultation phase and will form part of the submission to OSC and Cabinet, alongside the strategy and the review. The Action Plan will be reviewed and published annually so that it continues to remain current throughout the operational period of the strategy.

7. Implications

- 7.1 Financial - Where additional funding may be required to take forward specific initiatives (such as rough sleeping services), these will be identified and addressed through bids to the relevant Government department, such as the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). There is a risk of receiving less funding in future years, which may require reevaluating what services the council are able to offer.
- 7.2 Staffing – There are no staffing implications due to implementing the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 to 2029. The only uncertainty is the future of posts within the rough sleeping multi-disciplinary team funded by the Rough Sleeping Initiative (MHCLG), the future of which beyond 31st March 2025 is not yet known.
- 7.3 Legal - Adoption of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 to 2029 fulfils the council's statutory obligations to have a homelessness strategy. There are no other legal implications from implementing the strategy.
- 7.4 Equalities - An equalities impact assessment has been carried out and does not identify any action that would need to be taken in the event the strategy is approved.

8. Background Papers

[Housing Act 1996](#)

[Homelessness Act 2002](#)

[Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#)

[Homelessness Code of Guidance issued to local authorities \(MHCLG\) 2024](#)

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