

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 11 October 2021

Portfolio:	Housing
Subject:	Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy - Consultation
Report of:	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Corporate Priorities:	Providing Housing Choices

Purpose:

To approve the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for an eight-week period of public consultation.

Executive summary:

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all housing authorities to review homelessness in their area and produce a new homelessness strategy, based on the review findings, every five years. Following a comprehensive review of homelessness in Fareham, a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is now proposed.

The draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 – 2025 can be found at Appendix A and a draft Delivery Plan can be found at Appendix B.

The review of homelessness in Fareham, undertaken by Neil Morland & Co Housing Consultants, considered all the activities being carried out to tackle homelessness in the Borough and assessed whether the activities are reflective of good practice, deliver good outcomes for people experiencing homelessness, and are of value for money.

The Strategy has been drafted using the results of research, data analysis and benchmarking. It has also been developed through consultation with key partners, staff, service users and elected Members. Full details can be found in The Review of Homelessness in Fareham at Appendix C.

The Strategy builds on the successes of the previous strategy and has been developed in the context of the new provisions and duties of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which came into force in April 2018 and the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-27.

This draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is recommended for publication for an eight-week period of public consultation. This will provide the local community and other interested parties the opportunity to comment on the content

of the Strategy and accompanying Delivery Plan. Following this period, and once any necessary amendments are incorporated, it is intended that the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be presented to the Executive for adoption.

An Equality Impact Assessment of the Strategy will be undertaken before it is recommended for adoption.

Recommendation/Recommended Option:

It is recommended that the Executives agrees that:

- (a) the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, as provided in Appendix A to the report, and accompanying Delivery Plan, as provided in Appendix B to the report, are published for an eight-week period of public consultation; and
- (b) the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, following consultation with the Executive Member for Housing, is authorised to make any necessary minor amendments to the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and accompanying Delivery Plan, prior to publication, provided these do not change the overall direction or emphasis.

Reason:

To undertake a period of public consultation as part of the on-going progression of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Cost of proposals:

The costs of publication and consultation are covered in existing operational budgets.

Appendices: **A:** Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
 B: Draft Delivery Plan
 C: Review of Homelessness in Fareham

Background papers: Corporate Strategy 2017-2023
 Optimising Social Housing - Applications and Allocations Policy

Reference papers: Homelessness Act 2002, Sections 1-3
 Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018, MHCLG
 Making Homelessness Strategies Happen 2019, LGA

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BOROUGH COUNCIL

Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	11 October 2021
Subject:	Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy - Consultation
Briefing by:	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Portfolio:	Housing

INTRODUCTION

1. The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all housing authorities to carry out a review of homelessness for their area and develop and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of that review.
2. The strategy must set out the authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for securing sufficient accommodation, and support is, or will be, available for people who become homeless or are at risk of becoming so.
3. The draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022–2025 builds on the successes of the previous strategy and has been developed in the context of the new provisions and duties of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-2027.

THE REVIEW OF HOMELESSNESS IN FAREHAM

4. In accordance with legislative requirements, to inform the development of the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the accompanying Delivery Plan, a review of homelessness services was undertaken. The Council appointed Neil Morland & Co Housing Consultants to undertake the review, which was completed in May 2021, and considered:
 - The Council's achievements during the lifetime of the previous Homelessness Strategy,
 - Current and future likely levels of homelessness,
 - Activities to prevent homelessness,
 - Activities to secure accommodation for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness,
 - Activities to provide support for people who are homeless, threatened with homelessness, or have previously experienced homelessness, and
 - The resources available to deliver the above activities.

5. The Review of Homelessness in Fareham can be found at Appendix C.

THE DRAFT HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY

6. The findings of the review have informed the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2025 which can be found at Appendix A. Four key priorities have been identified:

- **Meeting demand** – The nature of homelessness in Fareham is changing. More single people, often needing more complex assistance to resolve their homelessness are approaching us for help. There is also a changing age profile, with increased numbers of younger households. There are problems accessing the private rented sector and home ownership remains out of reach for many. We believe that the first step in meeting these demands is the provision of high quality, consistent housing advice, tailored to the individual and delivered in a sensitive and supporting manner. This is our first and overriding commitment. We will continue to invest in our staff and their training to ensure they keep up to date with best practice and we will continue to invest in our relationships with key partners.
- **Providing solutions** – Whilst the provision of high-quality advice and information is an essential foundation and necessary to empower those who can help themselves and support those who cannot, it must be backed up by effective solutions. It is also clear that not everyone who wants a social housing tenancy can have one, and that this is often not a realistic solution to homelessness or the threat of homelessness. The private rented sector will continue to play an important role in tackling homelessness therefore we will explore ways to increase our offers to private landlords as part of our Farelets scheme.
- **Preventing homelessness and supporting tenancies** – Many of the above actions will also help to deliver on our third priority, to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place. Key to this is the provision of high-quality support for those who need it to maintain their tenancies. We will also strengthen our mediation capability to reduce family/friend evictions. We will explore how we can further develop our working relationships with key agencies by formalising joint working protocols.
- **Ending rough sleeping** – Street homelessness is the most visible form of homelessness and, perhaps, the most challenging to deal with. Significant progress has already been made and we will continue our efforts in support of the Government’s commitment to end rough sleeping by 2027.

7. To deliver these priorities, a comprehensive Delivery Plan has been developed which can be found at Appendix B.

CONSULTATION

8. The draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2025 and accompanying Delivery Plan have been carefully developed through considerable evidence, research and analysis. The Review of Homelessness has considered the views of service users, key stakeholders and staff and it is now appropriate for the draft strategy to be published for a period of consultation which is open to all for comment.
9. The draft strategy and delivery plan will be available online for a period of eight weeks. The most appropriate methods to notify and publicise the consultation will be discussed

and developed with the Council's Communications Team.

NEXT STEPS

10. Following the consultation period, it is intended that any necessary changes will be incorporated into the documents before they are returned to the Executive with a recommendation to adopt.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Caroline Newman (Ext 4645)