

Birmingham City Council

Report to Cabinet

21st July 2020



Subject: ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Joint Report of: Rob James,
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Relevant Cabinet Member: Cllr Sharon Thompson - Homes & Neighbourhoods
Cllr Paulette Hamilton - Health & Social Care

Relevant O &S Chair(s): Cllr Penny Holbrook - Housing & Neighbourhoods
Cllr Robert Pocock - Health & Social Care

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Are specific wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No – All wards affected
If yes, name(s) of ward(s):		
Is this a key decision?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, add Forward Plan Reference: 007791/2020		
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential:		

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides details of the draft Rough Sleeping Addendum and Action Plan 2020-23, for which a period of public consultation is being sought.

Supplementing Birmingham's overall Homelessness Prevention Strategy approved by Full Council on 8th January 2018, these two documents (**Appendix A and B**) detail the approach and specific actions initiated to tackle and respond to rough sleeping needs (**Appendix C: Rough Sleeping Needs Analysis, January 2020**) across the city.

- 1.2 Between November 2018 and 2019 there was a 42% reduction in rough sleeping in Birmingham, the highest fall across all of the English Core cities. This has been achieved through strategic partnership work on the ground and additional investment from regional and national programmes such as Housing First and the Rough Sleeping Initiative respectively. Learning from the comprehensive range of local partners involved in delivering these programmes, has highlighted and confirms, that tackling and preventing rough sleeping involves putting in place a combination of health, social and economic wellbeing interventions, alongside time-critical provision of outreach support and accommodation.
- 1.3 In line with the overall Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+, the approach and corresponding actions set out in the Rough Sleeping Addendum (**Appendix A**) are based on embedding a comprehensive preventative framework for tackling and preventing rough sleeping, covering five action areas 1) universal, 2) targeted prevention, 3) crisis relief, 4) recovery, 5) move-on accommodation.
- 1.4 The draft action plan presented with this report, has been informed with input from a Rough Sleeping Sub-Group of Birmingham's Homelessness Partnership Board. This multi-sector partnership includes commissioners and frontline service delivery organisations including housing, health, social care and community safety delivering responses to rough sleeping across the city. Council officers from Adult Social Care (Commissioning) and Neighbourhoods (Housing Options) Directorates jointly undertook a review of the action plan in March 2020. A further review was undertaken in May 2020 following the Government's COVID-19 "Everyone-In" rough sleeping notification to local authorities, issued on 26 March 2020. The updated actions have been reported and shared with the Homelessness Partnership Board (May 2020). A final action plan will be ratified at the end of July 2020.
- 1.5 The Rough Sleeping Addendum and Action plan 2020-23 supplement the city's overall Homelessness Prevention Strategy. The associated rough sleeping action plan timescales have been aligned with the overall strategy and fulfil local accountability expectations from Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), by demonstrating and setting out in detail, how the city is responding to rough sleeping.
- 1.6 The issues involved in reducing and preventing rough sleeping intersect several Council portfolios and key priorities including corporate parenting, improved health and wellbeing, building resilient and independent communities and access to suitable and sustainable housing options for the most vulnerable.

- 1.7 Cabinet approval is required in order to initiate the proposed consultation via Be-Heard to supplement the Council's Homelessness Prevention Strategy with Rough Sleeping Addendum and its associated action plan.
- 1.8 Subject to approval, the consultation is proposed to run from 3rd August 2020 for a period of 42 days, closing 13th September 2020.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve commencement of the proposal to undertake a 42-day public consultation via Be-Heard on the Rough Sleeping Addendum and Action Plan 2020-23 and to liaise with Birmingham's Homelessness Partnership Board and other public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons, including service users.

3 Background

- 3.1 In August 2018, the Government launched its National Rough Sleeping Strategy, with a stated goal ending rough sleeping by 2027. In addition to announcing a series of funding packages, MHCLG also set out a series of policy measures. These included requiring all local authorities, starting with those with highest levels of rough sleeping, to update their statutory Homelessness strategies, setting out their local plans for delivering in relation to responding to rough sleeping.
- 3.2 In order to meet the expected local accountability requirements, set out in the Government's National Rough Sleeping Strategy, a draft local strategy and action plan have been developed as an addendum to the overall Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+ which was approved by Full Council in January 2018. These additional documents specifically detail how the city aims to embed its overall preventative framework for homelessness in response to rough sleeping.
- 3.3 Reflecting the range of stakeholders involved in rough sleeping related issues, in addition to statutory services and functions, the Rough Sleeping Addendum and action plan have been developed with multi-sector input across the housing, health, social care, welfare and community safety service areas. The approach centred around prevention themes which follow the overall Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+ which it supplements:
 - Universal Prevention – pre-emptive action aimed at averting rough sleeping through collaborative action across organisations, raising public awareness and learning to continuously improve services.
 - Targeted action for groups at disproportionate rough sleeping risk including, care leavers and young people, vulnerable adults, prison leavers (offenders), people affected by domestic abuse.
 - Crisis - Time critical interventions to respond to rough sleeping at the point of crisis such as outreach support and emergency accommodation.

- Recovery – concerted multi-agency personalised support to keep people from returning to the streets through improving and maintaining housing, health, economic and social wellbeing. Areas covered include access to Housing First and / or employment training, and health support (physical and mental) operating as coordinated system of rough sleeping services
- Move-On – actions specifically linked to ensuring that there is a supply of short term and longer transitional accommodation necessary to provide former rough sleepers with a route out of emergency accommodation.

4 Options considered and Recommended Proposal

4.1 Option 1:

Do not undertake any engagement with stakeholders, partners, providers, current service users or others. This will mean that the strategy and action plan only reflect the views, ideas and opinions of those involved in its development. Therefore, it may be difficult to gain support and commitment to deliver the actions from others and there would be no reality check as to whether the actions can be achieved.

4.2 Option 2: Recommended Option

To undertake a 42 day Be–Heard consultation and to liaise with Birmingham’s Homelessness Partnership Board and other public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons, including service users.

This recommended proposal reflects the statutory duty to consult and demonstrates an openness and desire to seek additional contributions thoughts, views and opinions from service recipients, stakeholders and citizens. This will allow sufficient time for stakeholders and citizens to respond to the consultation taking into account their needs and vulnerabilities. In addition, we will be able to gain commitment to helping us deliver the actions and be confident that the actions are realistic and achievable.

5 Consultation

5.1. Opportunities to maximise the effectiveness of the consultation are also being identified with input from Birmingham’s Homelessness Partnership Board and its Rough Sleeping Sub-Group set up to develop and provide input into the action plan. These arrangements will enable partners from across health, housing, social care, neighbourhoods, community and voluntary sector organisations oversight and opportunities to add value to consultation activities including service user voices.

5.2 A Rough Sleeping Sub-Group which operates to enable multi-agency working represented by service leads responding to rough sleeping across the city has been involved in shaping the strategy on behalf of the Homelessness Partnership Board including producing the accompanying draft action plan 2020-23.

- 5.3 Alongside the proposed online consultation period, officers will be meeting with providers, key stakeholders and service users to help to refine the strategy and action plan. Digital platforms (such as MS Teams) and telephone survey methods are being used to maintain communication and adhere with appropriate social distancing with both frontline service providers and service users. This includes the majority of existing engagement activity and support, which has been maintained with very limited need for face to face meetings
- 5.4 Once consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the statutory duty, all comments made will be considered and the draft Action Plan will be reviewed as appropriate.
- 5.5 The proposed timetable for consultation and approval of the strategy and action plan is shown in the table below.

Be-Heard Online Consultation start	3 rd August 2020
Homelessness Partnership Board	27 th August 2020
Trident Reach Rough Sleeping Outreach Service - Service User Group	August 2020 (date tbc)
Shelter - Entrenched Rough Sleeping Mentor/Peer Navigator	August 2020 (date tbc)
Vulnerable Adults Citizens Panel - BCC Adult Social Care Customer Engagement Group	August 2020 (date tbc)
BVSC – No Wrong Door Network – Every Step of the Way Service User group	August 2020 (date tbc)
St Basil’s Under 25’s – Young Person’s Outreach Rough Sleeping Navigation Service & Youth Voice	August 2020 (date tbc)
Birmingham Homelessness Forum	September 2020 (date tbc)
Health Now – Lived Experience Service User Group run by homeless charity Crisis	September 2020 (date tbc)
Consultation finish (including Be-Heard)	13 th September 2020
Amended final strategy to Cabinet (following consultation)	13 th October 2020
Full Council Approval	3 rd November 2020

- 5.6 The Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities has also been briefed on the proposed activity and is supportive of proposals.

6 Risk Management

- 6.1 The risk management of this strategy and action plan is overseen by the Birmingham Homelessness Partnership Board which has assisted in informing and developing the draft Rough Sleeping Addendum on behalf of City and Cabinet.

7 Compliance Issues:

7.1 How are the recommended decisions consistent with the City Council's priorities, plans and strategies?

7.1.1 The recommended decisions are consistent with the Council's priorities, plans and strategies and supports the Vision and Priorities in the Council Plan 2018-2022 as agreed by Cabinet across four priority areas:

Children – an aspirational city to grow up in: We will inspire our children and young people to be ambitious and achieve their full potential.

Housing – a great city to live in: We will work with our partners to build a fair and inclusive city for all.

Health – a fulfilling city to age well in: Citizens and communities will have choice and control over their care and improved resilience and independence.

Jobs and skills – an entrepreneurial city to learn, work and invest in: We will create opportunities for local people to develop skills and make the best of economic growth.

7.1.2 The decision within this report will contribute and support the delivery of the following strategies:

- Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+
- Health and Well-Being Strategy 2017+
- Domestic Abuse Prevention 2018+
- Vision and Strategy to Modernise Adult Social Care 2017+
- Financial Inclusion Strategy 2016+
- Transition Strategy 2018+

7.2 Legal Implications

7.2.1 The Rough Sleeping Addendum is part of the overall Homelessness Prevention Strategy. Under the Homelessness Act 2002 all housing authorities must have in place a homelessness strategy based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their district. The strategy must be renewed at least every 5 years. The strategy must set out the authority's plans for prevention of homelessness and for securing sufficient accommodation and support are or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

7.2.2 Section 3 (8) of the Homelessness Act 2002 provides that "Before adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy the authority shall consult with such public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons as they consider appropriate".

7.2.3 Formal consultation is a statutory duty and should be undertaken with the range of local services and sectors necessary to deliver an effective approach to rough

sleeping. A formal consultation will also complete the engagement process and assist for best practice purposes.

7.3 Financial Implications

7.3.1 In this instance there are no financial implications specific to the proposed consultation.

7.4 Procurement Implications (if required)

7.4.1 None identified for this proposed decision.

7.5 Human Resources Implications (if required)

7.5.1 None identified for this proposed decision.

7.6 Public Sector Equality Duty

7.6.1 A relevance test to decide whether the planned activity has any relevance to the equality duty contained within Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 of eliminating unfair/unlawful discrimination and to promote equality and human rights commenced April 2020. The screening identifies no requirement to assess this further at this stage. The consultation activity will inform and help develop an Equality Assessment.

8. Appendices

Appendix A: Rough Sleeping Addendum- Draft

Appendix B: Rough Sleeping Action Plan 2020-2023 - Draft

Appendix C: Rough Sleeping Needs Analysis, January 2020

Appendix D: Draft Rough Sleeping Consultation Document

Appendix E: Draft Consultation Questionnaire