

# Birmingham City Council

## Report to Cabinet

15<sup>th</sup> December 2020



**Subject:** **ROUGH SLEEPING ADDENDUM TO BIRMINGHAM HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY**

**Joint Report of:** **Rob James,**  
**Interim Director Neighbourhoods**  
**Professor Graeme Betts**  
**Director for Adult Social Care**

**Relevant Cabinet Members:** **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, consultation outcome, following consultation with service users including a 42-day consultation on Be-Heard. The strategy is an addendum to Birmingham's overall Homelessness Prevention Strategy. The findings of the consultation presented in consultation findings report (**Appendix A: Consultation Findings Report**) are based upon surveys, gathered via Be Heard and in person interviews with people that have a lived experience of homelessness and rough sleeping.
- 1.2 In person consultation was enabled by professional teams involved in the delivery of rough sleeping services across Birmingham during the COVID pandemic. Traditional face-to-face focus group methods relied upon to reach out to those with lived experience have not been a viable option in the context of the COVID 19 operational safety constraints.
- 1.3 The outcome of the consultation work undertaken to date indicates that there is very strong consensus and support for the overall "preventative pathway led approach" of the strategy – with 89% in agreement; 8% unsure and just 2% in disagreement.
- 1.4 In terms of the 5 "domain" levels of action set out in the consultation making up proposed strategy and associated key actions set out in the consultation document, again there has been a strong level of overall support: -
  - 'Universal Prevention' – pre-emptive collaborative action across organisations and wider community through raising public awareness and learning to continuously improve services. 88% in agreement; 11% unsure; and just 1.3% in disagreement.
  - 'Targeted Prevention' for groups at disproportionate rough sleeping risk including, care leavers and young people, vulnerable adults, prison leavers (offenders), people affected by domestic abuse. 88% in agreement; 8.5% unsure and 2.3% in disagreement.
  - 'Crisis Prevention & Relief'- Time critical interventions to respond to rough sleeping at the point of crisis such as outreach support and emergency accommodation. 90% in agreement and 10% unsure, 0% disagreement.
  - 'Recovery' – multi-agency personalised support to keep people from returning to the streets through improving efforts to maintain tenancies, sustain and improve health, economic and social wellbeing. 93% in agreement and 6% unsure. 0% in disagreement
  - 'Move-On' – actions specifically linked to ensuring that there is a supply of short-term and longer-term transitional accommodation necessary to provide former rough sleepers with a route out of emergency accommodation. 80% in agreement; 18.5% unsure and; 1.2% in disagreement.

- 1.5 COVID-19 constraints and priorities presented some challenges in terms of deploying planned consultation activities, with traditional face to face consultation methods, such as focus groups, facilitated discussion not being possible during the localised lockdown measures. Despite this, the work of services actively working on the ground in supporting rough sleepers during the consultation period enabled 30% (26 people) of respondents, to bring their lived experience views of rough sleeping. Whilst the overall total of 87 people involved in consultation is modest, the 26 people with lived experience represents a sizeable number of people in relation to overall numbers of people sleeping rough in Birmingham.
- 1.6 Consultation on the Rough Sleeping Addendum has also highlighted the critical role and value added, by the range of stakeholder agencies including those on the frontline supporting rough sleeping related issues. One of the lessons learned and recommended changes to draft Rough Sleeping Addendum, is the need to build up actions that bring voices and views of lived experiences directly into the strategy delivery and review processes over the next three years. This can be achieved by bringing together existing multi-sector commissioner partnerships, with the wealth of community-led service user involvement informal and formal groups such be-friending services, experts by experience.

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to;
- 2.1.1 Approve of the amended strategy (**Appendix B, Rough Sleeping Addendum**), which reflects feedback from the consultation.
- 2.1.2 Approve onward progression of the (**Appendix B, Rough Sleeping Addendum**) to the meeting of Full Council on 12 January 2021.
- 2.1.3 Note that the outcome of the consultation indicated support for the strategy whilst highlighting the value of involving service users and people with lived experience of rough sleeping, who can play a key role as part of the overall strategy. The Rough Sleeping Addendum now includes a commitment to do this alongside building upon the sustained reductions in rough sleeping.

## **3 Background**

- 3.1 Birmingham has been making significant progress with regards to reducing the levels of rough sleeping across the city over the last eighteen months, including the period leading up to and after national COVID-19, three-month national lockdown. Prior to 'Lock-Down' there was a 42% reduction in the levels of rough sleeping in Birmingham, the sharpest recorded fall amongst English Core Cities. This was followed by March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 'Everyone-In' policy mandate from government which resulted in further reductions in street homelessness.
- 3.2 The range of local partners involved in delivering support to people sleeping rough has helped supplement the consultation on the Rough Sleeping Addendum, specifically in terms of reaching people with lived experience of rough sleeping. In total 87 responses to the consultation were received – from online Be-Heard Survey, targeted completions of the survey through face to face completions with

people with lived experience of rough sleeping or homelessness by range of service provider organisations in Birmingham (St Basil's, CGL, SIFA Fireside).

- 3.3 Whilst the largest share of respondents were members of the general public (37%), the use of local agencies already involved in providing support to rough sleepers during the pandemic enabled 30% of respondents profile to include people with lived experience of rough sleeping to share their views on the strategy.

#### **4 Options considered and Recommended Proposal**

- 4.1 Option 1: Undertake further engagement with stakeholders, partners, providers, service users or others to enhance the overall numbers of people involved in consulting on it. This will mean that the strategy and action plan adoption by Full Council as part of the overall Homelessness Prevention Strategy will be deferred. Whilst the overall sample of size of the responses to the consultation will be increased, it will not necessarily yield a different outcome.

4.2 Option 2: Recommended Option

Rather than undertake additional time limited consultation on the Rough Sleeping Addendum, it is recommended that the theme of ongoing engagement and service user involvement be embedded into the final strategy.

This recommended proposal reflects feedback received from several individuals and organisations that took part in the consultation, who felt this was an important and necessary step to include the views of people with lived experiences of homelessness over the course of the implementing the strategy.

#### **5. Amended strategy and action plan**

- 5.1. Building upon proposed consultation activities identified in July 2020, the amended strategy (**Appendix B**) includes a specific commitment to include lived experience and service user voices as part of the delivery and oversight review process related to action on rough sleeping. This will be carried out via the multi-agency Rough Sleeping Sub-Group (established in 2019) which will coordinate work with a range of service user groups to strengthen service user oversight, delivery and review of the strategy.
- 5.2 Rough Sleeping is one of the most acute forms of homelessness and social exclusion, therefore it's appropriate that the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities will be routinely briefed and updated on this work over the course of the strategy, in addition to the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care.

#### **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 Consultation with service users, including a 42-day consultation on Be-Heard, has been undertaken. Opportunities for stakeholder organisations were provided to comment on the draft Rough Sleeping Addendum via established regular meetings of the Birmingham Homelessness Partnership Board (HPB) and Birmingham Homelessness Forum (BHF). The HPB is chaired by BCC

and attended by a range of senior partners from organisations involved in delivering or supporting homelessness services. The BHF runs independently of BCC and is attended by frontline community and voluntary practitioners and homelessness organisations.

- 6.2 The Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety & Equalities has been briefed on the consultation findings.

## **7 Risk Management**

- 7.1 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.

## **8. Compliance Issues:**

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

- 8.1.1 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.

- 8.1.2 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 Strategy 2018+
- Refresh of Adult Social Care Vision and Strategy 2020 – 2024
- Financial Inclusion Strategy 2017-2020+
- Transition Strategy 2018+

## **9.1 Legal Implications**

- 9.1.1 The Rough Sleeping Addendum from part of the overall Birmingham 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 that sufficient accommodation and support are or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

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

## **9.2 Financial Implications**

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

## **9.3 Procurement Implications (if required)**

- 9.3.1 None identified for this proposed decision.

## **9.4 Human Resources Implications (if required)**

- 9.4.1 None identified for this proposed decision.

## **9.5 Public Sector Equality Duty**

- 9.5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed which identifies positive impacts for groups with protected characteristics. The assessment has also identified actions to be included in the amended draft strategy to strengthen and promote the equality duty. This is chiefly through an additional commitment to include Lived Experiences of Rough Sleeping, as part of monitoring, evaluation and local oversight arrangements over the life of the strategy.

## **10. Appendices**

**Appendix A:** Rough Sleeping Addendum Consultation Findings Report.  
(October 2020)

**Appendix B:** Rough Sleeping Addendum – Amended Draft

**Appendix C:** Rough Sleeping Addendum, Equalities Analysis