

<b>Committee:</b> Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee	<b>Date:</b> 14 January 2020
<b>Subject:</b> Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020	<b>Wards Affected:</b> All
<b>Report of:</b> Angela Abbott, Housing Services Manager	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report Author/s:</b> Name: Stuart Morris, Housing Options Manager Telephone: 01277 312 500 E-mail: stuart.morris:brentwood.gov.uk	<b>For Decision</b>

### Summary

The current strategic document “*Homeless Prevention Strategy 2017 - 2020*” is due to expire at the end of the year. To forward the aims of the Service and Council a new document is required to outline in strategic terms proposed service provision.

The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 (*‘the Strategy’*) will set out the approach to dealing with both homelessness and rough sleeping.

The core elements of the new strategy recognise current housing needs and requirements, reflected against current and future challenges and demands.

Subject to Committee approval the draft Strategy will be put to an online public consultation for residents and partner agencies. The consultation will allow for a final version of the Strategy to be completed for ratification at the next Committee.

### Recommendation(s)

**Members are asked to:**

- R1. That the Committee approves the draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025.**
- R2. That the Committee formally approves the use of a public online consultation concerning the draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025.**

### Main Report

#### **Introduction and Background**

1. It is a legal requirement to produce a homeless prevention strategy. It underpins the core duties to homeless individuals, as per the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

2. The Strategy demonstrates the Council's plans for how to deal with homelessness and the causes of homelessness.
3. Rough sleeping within the Borough is low compared to our neighbours, with our annual Government 'Rough Sleeping Estimate' returning a nil response this year. In 2019 the Council undertook a physical 'Rough Sleeping Count' as per Ministry guidance, and two individuals were recorded as rough sleeping as per the technical meaning.
4. Despite the low recorded level of rough sleeping it is still important to have a strategy, to recognise the difference between rough-sleeping and other forms of homelessness. Even with a low level of rough sleeping it is still vital that relevant services and actions are provided to deal with rough sleeping and its causes.
5. In terms of wider homelessness there is an increase, both locally and nationally, and focus must be placed on prevention and relief. The Strategy outlines our core responsibilities and the mechanisms we can utilise both internally and with our partner agencies to deal with the issues that homelessness creates.
6. The causes of homelessness can be complex and a flexible and innovative approach to service provision is therefore required.

### **Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

7. With limited resources and increased demand for homelessness assistance it is vital that the Council provides a clear and transparent strategy to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.
8. Economic and social imperatives require continual re-focussing and re-consideration of homelessness prevention options. The new Strategy puts this at the very core of service provision.

#### **Option 1: Implementation of the Policy:**

Implementing the policy will allow for:

- Transparency, particularly for individuals affected by homelessness
- Targeting of key issues and provision of a strategic approach to homelessness.
- Tailored operational provision, including partnership working.
- Statutory compliance.

#### **Option 2: Non-implementation of the Policy:**

Non-implementation will potentially:

- Fail to advance Corporate priorities
- Breach statutory requirements
- Create lack of focus on service provision
- Lead to service delivery failure for the homeless and/or rough sleepers.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

9. Option 1 is recommended as the correct option for the Council, ensuring transparency and legal compliancy. It will provide a clear document for applicants to hold the Council to account.

### **Consultation**

10. An online public consultation is proposed for recommendation by Committee.

### **References to Corporate Plan**

11. The Council's Corporate Plan aims to:

- To deliver safe and comfortable homes which are efficient and sustainable.
- Manage our stock to recognise the limited resources available and supporting those in greatest need.
- Review the future delivery of housing services to provide the best outcomes for Brentwood residents.

### **Implications**

#### **Financial Implications**

**Name/Title: Phoebe Barnes, Corporate Finance Manager**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312839/ phoebe.barnes@brentwood.gov.uk**

12. The online consultation can be met from within existing budgets any other associated costs in resourcing the strategy will be met from existing budgets

#### **Legal Implications**

**Name & Title: Paula Harvey, Paula Harvey, Corporate Governance Solicitor & Deputy Monitoring Officer**

**Tel & Email: 01277 312705/paula.harvey@brentwood.gov.uk**

13. It is a legal requirement to produce a homeless prevention strategy. It underpins the core duties to homeless individuals, as per the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

#### **Economic Implications**

**Name/Title: Phil Drane, Director of Strategic Planning**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312610/philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk**

Beyond the social benefits and responsibility that the Council has to serve the needs of all those in the local community, the benefits of reducing homelessness and rough sleeping also extend to the perceived quality of the local economy, such as the High Street environment.

Approval of the policy, which is in place to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in line with national legislation, will help contribute to the Council's aims for maintaining a pleasant and prosperous local economy and built environment.

**Other Implications** (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

None

### **Background Papers**

None

### **Appendices to this report**

Appendix A: Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025