

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Report Title	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
--------------	--

Meeting / Date	Cabinet, 14 th March 2024
Cabinet portfolio	Councillor Ahsan Khan, Deputy Leader (Housing and Regeneration)
Report author/ Contact details	Jane Martin, Interim Corporate Director of Housing. Place Directorate Jane.martin@walthamforest.gov.uk Lindsay Megson Director of Housing Options and Support lindsay.megson@walthamforest.gov.uk
Wards affected	All
Public access	Open
Appendices	Appendix 1: Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Appendix 2: Draft Delivery Plan Appendix 3: Homelessness Review Appendix 4: Equalities Screener

1. Summary
 - 1.1 The purpose of the report is to ask Cabinet for input and approval of the final draft of our new Housing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. This document derives from and supports the delivery of the borough's overarching Housing Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet in January 2024.
2. Recommendations
 - 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
 - 2.1.1 Agree the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (Appendix 1) and refer it to Full Council for approval.
 - 2.1.2 Agree the draft Delivery Plan (Appendix 2).
 - 2.1.3 Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Housing, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Lead Member for Housing and Regeneration, to make any necessary minor changes to the Strategy documents prior to Full Council.



3. Proposals

- 3.1 The Council's current Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy runs until 2024. Since its publication in 2019, the context of housing has changed significantly. The housing crisis has worsened, and increasingly residents struggle to afford decent housing. For the borough, the challenge of procuring the necessary units of temporary accommodation to meet demand has become much more acute. Across the housing sector, social landlords are now faced with a more rigorous regulatory and legislative regime that seeks to place residents at the centre of the service, following the tragic events at Grenfell and Awaab Ishak's death.
- 3.2 The Homelessness Act 2002 includes a requirement that all local authorities must undertake a Homelessness Review and develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy every five years. Local authorities are required to consider the following as part of their review:
- 3.3 The current and future levels of homelessness in the borough
- 3.4 The services provided which:
 - Help to prevent homelessness
 - Help to find accommodation
 - Help to support homeless people, including support to help prevent them becoming homeless again
- 3.5 The resources available to the authority including, housing and social services, other public sector and voluntary sector partners etc.
- 3.6 We have met these requirements firstly by undertaking a comprehensive Homelessness Review (Appendix 3), which addresses the legislative requirements as detailed above and secondly by building and expanding on this review and through engagement with partners, staff and residents.
- 3.7 The new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out actions for delivery, which seek to address the findings of the Homelessness Review, as well as incorporating what we learned in developing the Housing Strategy, the Affordable Housing Commission and through staff and partner workshops.
- 3.8 The first section of our overarching Housing Strategy outlined key outcomes that will be delivered to address homelessness and rough sleeping. These outcomes form the basis of, and are expanded upon, in the new Homelessness Strategy.

4. Options and Alternatives Considered

- 4.1 An alternative option was to develop the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy as a fully integrated part of the new Housing Strategy. However, in order to cover the necessary level of detail it was

agreed in consultation with the Housing Strategy Officer Steering Group, that a stand-alone Homelessness Strategy, with the key areas also highlighted in the new Housing Strategy, was the best approach.

5. Council Strategic Priorities (and other National or Local Policies or Strategies)
 - 5.1 This proposed Homelessness and Rough Strategy has been developed to support the ambitions of the Council around tackling inequalities and improving residents' experience. It also draws from other strategies such as the Council's 15 Minute Neighbourhood Framework and Inclusive Growth and Economy Framework (currently in development).

6. Consultation
 - Member engagement
 - 6.1 Housing Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy on 22nd February 2024.
 - 6.2 The documents were considered by informal cabinet on 1st February 2024).
 - 6.3 The overarching Housing Strategy, including the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, will go to full Council in April 2024,
 - 6.4 Conservative Group were briefed on the overarching Housing Strategy, inclusive of the outcomes for the Homelessness Strategy on the 8th of January 2024.
 - Resident, staff and partner engagement
 - 6.5 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy has been very much shaped by the extensive resident engagement that was led by PRD consultants in the development of the Housing Commission and overarching Housing Strategy. In addition, a series of workshops with staff, partners and managers in the homelessness service has been undertaken and the results are reflected and summarised in the Strategy document.

7. Implications
 - 7.1 Finance, Value for Money and Risk
 - 7.1.1 There are currently no direct additional costs associated with the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy with delivery being supported from existing budgets.
 - 7.2 Legal
 - 7.2.1 We have a statutory duty to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy every 5 years under the Homelessness Act 2002.
 - 7.3 Equalities and Diversity

- 7.3.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was conducted for the overarching Housing Strategy and a separate equalities screener has been conducted for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and is attached as Appendix 4. Our resident engagement process was designed to ensure proper representation of views across all protected characteristics.
- 7.4 Sustainability (including climate change, health, crime and disorder)
 - 7.4.1 The main impact from the strategy in respect to climate change relates to the focus on providing more affordable accommodation. Although the building of new homes has an environmental impact, new homes built in the Borough will be more energy and carbon efficient than existing homes. This will mean that they cost less for residents to heat and run, helping address fuel poverty during this cost-of-living crisis, whilst also minimising any increase in carbon emissions from new developments and supporting infrastructure. There is also the opportunity through the planned Second Joint Venture to influence the standard of accommodation used, which could form part of our work targeting EPC “B” for homes by 2030. The outcomes framework for this strategy focuses on resident’s health and wellbeing and will help the council to deliver on the recommendations of the Marmot report into health inequalities in the borough.
- 7.5 Council Infrastructure
 - 7.5.1 This strategy will be delivered within existing resources with no additional, HR, Facilities or ICT requirements.

Background Information (as defined by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

Not applicable.