



Housing Committee

10 October 2019

Title

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Report of

Cllr Gabriel Rozenberg

Wards

All

Status

Public

Urgent

No

Key

Yes

Enclosures

Appendix 1 – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

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Summary

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 is one of the largest changes to housing and homeless legislation in recent times. The Act requires the council to carry out a review of homelessness and produce a strategy based upon this evidence base. At its June 2018 meeting the Housing Committee instructed officers to prepare a draft strategy for consideration. This strategy summarises the findings of the review and sets out the council's approach to tackling and preventing homelessness and rough sleeping in Barnet over the next five years, from 2019-2024.

If approved by the Housing Committee, the council will undertake a public consultation on the aims of the draft strategy with key stakeholders including housing associations, community and voluntary sector, tenants and residents. Housing Committee will then be asked to review the responses to the consultation and approve a final version of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Officers Recommendations

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| 1. That Housing Committee approves the proposed draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for public consultation. |
| 2. That the results of the consultation be reported back to Housing Committee on 1 April 2019 together with officer recommendations and a revised Strategy if appropriate. |

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The council's Housing Strategy dates from 2015, and a number of changes have occurred since then which mean that the council's approach to homelessness needs to be reviewed and updated. These changes include:
- a new London Mayor with a new London Housing Strategy,
 - new legislation including the Housing and Planning Act 2016, and
 - the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and
 - the updated Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities.
- 1.2 The council's Homelessness Strategy also requires an update to take account of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA 2017). Barnet's Homelessness Strategy is currently a component of the Housing Strategy but as agreed by the Housing Committee on the 21 June 2018 the two are separated to reflect the increased focus on tackling homelessness.
- 1.3 Officers have updated the evidence base that supports the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy by carrying out a 'Review of Homelessness' in Barnet. A new Strategic Housing Market Assessment has also been commissioned, setting out the level of housing need in the borough.
- 1.4 The Housing Committee considered the above matters in June 2018, and instructed council officers to prepare a new draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy based on the following themes:
- **Preventing homelessness**
 - **Reducing the use of temporary accommodation and securing accommodation for people who are homeless**
 - **Establishing effective partnerships, working arrangements and support to improve resilience for those who are or used to be homeless, to prevent them from becoming homeless again**
 - **Supporting rough sleepers to address their housing and other needs**
- 1.5 Officers have now produced a new draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for the consideration of the Housing Committee which is attached at Appendix 1.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is proposed that the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is approved for public consultation, and that following this consultation a further draft is brought back to the Housing Committee to be considered for adoption at its meeting on 1 April 2019.

- 2.2 A period of public consultation will ensure that Barnet residents, the council's partners and other stakeholders have an opportunity to comment on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy before it is finalised.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 The Housing Committee has already instructed officers to draft a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, so alternative options have not been considered further.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Following on from approval from Housing Committee a public consultation will take place from November 2018 to February 2019.
- 4.2 Housing Committee will be asked to consider and approve a final version of the strategy in April 2019 which considers the outcomes of the consultation exercise.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy contributes to the council's Corporate Plan as follows:

Successful Places	Meeting the housing needs of the borough is key to ensuring Barnet remains a successful place
Great Outcomes	A good home is important to helping residents achieve great outcomes
Quality Services	Housing and Homelessness services provided by Barnet Homes, Re and Housing Associations alongside the Community and Voluntary Sector
Resilient Communities	Access to housing and reducing homelessness is key to building resilient communities

- 5.1.2 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy contributes to key priorities identified in councils Corporate Plan priority of **tackling homelessness**.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy includes proposals to prevent households from presenting as homeless and reduce the use of temporary accommodation. More detailed proposals will be worked up before the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is finalised and it is the intention, that these proposals will be funded through existing council budgets and plans including Government grants for Rough Sleeping and Preventing Homelessness.

5.3 Social Value

5.3.1 Not applicable

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

5.4.1 The council's Constitution Article 7.5 Responsibility for Functions, states that the Housing Committee is responsible for housing matters including housing strategy, homelessness, social housing and housing grants, commissioning of environmental health functions for private sector housing.

5.5 Risk Management

5.5.1 There is a risk that homelessness will increase if the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is not updated, which as well as being a poor outcome for people becoming homeless, could increase pressure on council budgets.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

5.6.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

5.6.2 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services. The nine protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership

5.6.3 The Corporate Plan 2015 – 2020 sets the Strategic Equalities Objective, which is: that citizens will be treated equally, with understanding and respect, and will have equal access to quality services which provide value to the tax payer.

5.6.4 Changes to policies and services are analysed in order to assess the potential equalities impacts and risks and identify any mitigating action possible, through an equalities impact assessment, before final decisions are made. Consideration will also be made to the equalities and data cohesion summary.

5.6.5 A full equalities impact assessment of the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be carried out prior to reporting back to the Housing Committee on 1 April 2019.

5.7 Corporate Parenting

- 5.7.1 Youth homelessness is a particular focus of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. This includes ensuring that care leavers make a successful transition to independent living and young adults are supported to stay if safe to do so in their existing accommodation.

5.8 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.8.1 Initial consultation has been undertaken with some of the council's stakeholders, including the Children and Young Person's Partnership Board, the Performance Advisory Group comprising tenant and leaseholder representatives and the Barnet Housing Association Liaison Group.

- 5.8.2 A six-week online consultation exercise was carried out over the summer inviting members of the public and stakeholders to comment on matters relating to homelessness which has helped to shape the development of this draft strategy.

- 5.8.3 A summary of the responses was as follows:

- The council received 102 responses, with 39% of responses coming from residents and 33% from organisations providing services to homeless clients.
- Respondents supported the key findings from the Review of Homelessness in Barnet (Section 4, Appendix 1) agreeing the main reasons for homelessness in the borough were due to the loss of rented accommodation and family breakdown.
- 36% agreed that early support and 24% said help with finding alternative accommodation were the most effective ways to prevent homelessness.
- The majority of the respondents felt that working more collaboratively between agencies to establish clear referral routes as well as procuring more affordable housing was important.
- 73% of respondents felt that support for rough sleepers should be improved and this should include outreach work alongside the provision of more hostel and supported accommodation to help them address their housing and other needs.

- 5.8.4 Subject to approval by the Housing Committee, a wider public consultation will take place between November 2018 to February 2019. This will include an online survey and inviting comments from partner organisations and other stakeholders.

5.9 Insight

- 5.9.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was informed by an evidence base as well as carrying out a more detailed review of homelessness in Barnet. A summary of the evidence base was reported to the Housing Committee in June 2018 and the review is summarised in Section 4 of Appendix 1.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 Housing Committee 21 June 2018 – Item 7 Housing Strategy -
<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=699&MId=9486&Ver=4>
- 6.2 Housing Strategy (2015)
<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s24071/Housing%20Strategt.pdf>