

COMMITTEE REPORT TEMPLATE

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Housing and Wellbeing Committee – 10 September 2024
SUBJECT:	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029
LEAD OFFICER:	Richard Tomkinson, Group Head of Housing, Wellbeing & Communities Jayne Knight, Housing Options Manager
LEAD MEMBER:	Cllr Carol Birch, Chair Housing and Wellbeing Committee
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivering the right homes in the right places• Supporting our environment to support us• Improving the wellbeing of Arun	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: <p>Arun District Councils Housing and Homelessness strategy was approved in 2019 to cover the period 2019 to 2021. The strategy was subsequently extended at Committee to October 2024 to allow the service time to develop two new strategies.</p> <p>There is a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to have a Homeless Strategy that is less than 5 years old under the Homeless Act 2022. Whilst rough sleeping is a non-statutory service it is considered good practice to include in overall strategy.</p> <p>The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will underpin development of service policies and procedures ensuring alignment to the overall priorities in the strategy.</p>	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: <p>Any costs associated with the development and consultation of the strategies was contained within the overall project budget.</p>	

For general release.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To ask Members to adopt the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for the period 2024-2029.
- 1.2 The Council is required by the Homelessness Act 2002 to create a five-year homelessness strategy, setting out the authority's plans to prevent homelessness and secure sufficient housing and support for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so. The strategy must be renewed every five years.
- 1.3 To provide Members with the details of the public consultation carried out during the period 8 July 2024 to 4 August 2024

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the outputs of the public consultation, and the amendments made to the final strategy as a result.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Housing & Wellbeing Committee grant delegated authority to the Head of Housing Wellbeing & Communities to make minor amendments to approve the final version of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029 sets out the Council's vision for addressing homelessness which is that 'Homelessness in Arun should be prevented wherever possible, and when it cannot be prevented it should be rare, brief and non-recurrent. That Arun District Council should support those who are homeless, street homeless or at risk of homelessness in emergency or temporary accommodation to improve health outcomes and Arun District Council should support households with complex needs to secure suitable accommodation.
- 3.2 To achieve the vision the strategy recommends that Arun District Council focus its efforts on activities in three areas:
 - a) Prevention of homelessness
 - b) Development of more permanent solutions to homelessness
 - c) Building on partnership work

4. DETAIL

- 4.1 The Council is required Under the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Code of Guidance 2018 (as amended February 2024) to produce a Homelessness Strategy every five years. The Strategy must be accompanied by a Homelessness Review which examines the available data and identifies trends in homelessness and rough sleeping, and an action plan that sets out how the Council will deliver the activities required to address the priorities set out in the strategy.
- 4.2 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out the Council's vision for addressing homelessness and rough sleeping in Arun. This vision is that 'Homelessness in Arun should be prevented wherever possible, and when it cannot be prevented it should be rare, brief and non-recurrent'.
- 4.3 To achieve the vision the strategy recommends that Arun District Council focus its efforts on activities in three areas.

4.4 Prevention of Homelessness

- 4.4.1 The data analysed and discussions with stakeholders has identified that homelessness is growing in Arun, and although not as quickly as in some

neighbouring authorities, the growth is in line with national and regional averages.

4.4.2 The key drivers of this growth are the end of private rented sector tenancies, families no longer able to accommodate, and relationship breakdowns. Domestic abuse is also an increasing factor particularly in relation to homelessness amongst families with children where it has increased by 11% over the last 3 years.

4.4.3 For rough sleepers the key reasons are loss of rented accommodation, loss of tied accommodation, and evictions from supported housing.

4.4.4 The Strategy finds that Arun is doing good work to prevent homelessness but finding permanent housing for homeless families and single people has become increasingly difficult in the last 3 years and the use of temporary accommodation, which is often expensive, is growing. The strategy recommends that the Council focus on a number of activities to improve how it is able to prevent homelessness in the first place. These measures include:

- a) Better use of Discretionary Housing Payments to prevent evictions.
- b) Developing family mediation to increase the prevention of youth homelessness.
- c) Improving the management of known risks of homelessness through more co-ordinated work with Prisons/Probation services and Children's Social Care (for ex-offenders and care leavers) – to build on existing joint working arrangements to reduce the risk of people becoming homeless.
- d) Encouraging housing associations to develop their tenancy sustainment support for people at high risk of becoming homeless for example through better financial and debt advice and identifying high risk households for early support.
- e) Also encourage additional tenancy sustainment work in the private rented sector for people at high risk of becoming homeless.
- f) Make better use of intelligence/insights to drive early intervention to prevent homelessness, using all available information to identify at risk households and intervene quickly to support them so that they do not become homeless.
- g) Building on the already excellent work with private landlord that Arun is doing to further develop relationships with private sector landlords, to understand pressures/drivers of evictions and reduce these and to increase access to the private rented sector.

4.6 Development of more permanent solutions to homelessness

4.6.1 There is a need for more affordable housing so that where homelessness cannot be prevented stable long-term housing can be found. The strategy recommends that Arun Council take the following steps to identify and secure more stable affordable housing:

- a) Encourage greater development of larger family homes, particularly within social rented sector.
- b) Keep the Council's allocations policy under review to ensure access to social housing remains a positive outcome for homeless people.
- c) Consider developing a private sector leasing (PSL) scheme to provide a better alternative to nightly paid accommodation for temporary accommodation, and potentially a longer-term housing solution.
- d) Develop an improved move-on programme for people in supported housing and hostel accommodation. Work with supported housing providers and build relationships with private sector landlords to encourage them to provide additional units of accommodation for move-on.

4.7 Build on Partnerships

4.7.1 Arun has good working relationships with a range of partners at the County Council, with Adult Social Care, with Children's Social Services, with NHS partners and with the voluntary and charity sector, as well as with private sector landlords. There is however room to strengthen these relationships and joint working. In particular action should be taken to:

- a) Build on existing multi-disciplinary work on entrenched rough sleepers and those with complex needs to improve the ability of all partners to work together to resolve these issues for the individuals concerned and support them to address mental health and addiction issues and move towards stable housing.
- b) Work in partnership with the County Council to develop their commissioning plans for supported housing. There is also a need to ensure that new supported housing is of a good standard and well-managed in line with the Supported Housing Regulatory Oversight Act 2023 and any guidance that is published by the Government on how this act is to be implemented.
- c) Strengthen partnerships with the private rented sector and with social landlords to improve access to housing in both these sectors for homeless households and to reduce evictions from private landlords and social landlords.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 A public consultation ran for the period 8 July 2024 to 4 August 2024

5.2 A stakeholder event was held on 10 July 2024 with partners from various agencies from the third sector attending.

- 5.3 During the consultation period a member's event was held on 16 August 2024. District, Town and Parish councillors were invited to attend to discuss the aims of the strategy. In total 16 members attended
- 5.4 We held two drop-in events for the public on 23 & 25 July in Bognor Regis & Littlehampton, unfortunately only one member of public attended.
- 5.5 A survey was conducted throughout this period and published on our website, and on our social media channels, posters advertising the consultation were put up at both offices and with key partners across the district. We received 50 number of responses to the survey and a summary of the responses are set out as Appendix 1.
- 5.6 As an outcome of the consultation the following changes have been made to the draft strategy:
- a) 6.4 – empty homes figure was incorrect in the draft strategy; this has been amended to the correct figure.
 - b) 6.13,6.14.6.15- new paragraphs to set out the new context for housing under the new government administration.
 - c) 12.3 A new objective has been set to develop a plan of acquisitions and disposals to increase the council's stock of temporary accommodation

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- 6.1 To not adopt the Homeless & Rough Sleeping strategy, however this is not a feasible option. The current Homeless Strategy is in its fifth and final year and cannot be legally extended any further.

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 7.1 Costs relating to the consultation process are contained within the overall project budget.
- 7.2 The financial implications arising from this strategy will need to form part of the budget setting processes and be managed within budget constraints. The Q1 budget monitoring report provides further information on current years budgets and forecast.
- 7.3 The funding settlement in respect of the Rough Sleeper Initiative currently runs until March 2025, with no confirmation yet of onward funding.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 To not provide a new homeless strategy would leave Arun unable to continue to legally deliver their statutory homeless service.
- 8.2 Any actions taken forward as part of this strategy will be risk assessed before proceeding and where appropriate added to operational risk registers for the relevant department. An action plan that sits behind this strategy will be created with an annual update on progress being brought to this committee.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1 There is a statutory requirement to have a Housing and Homelessness Strategy. The legislation concerning Homelessness Reviews and Strategies is set out in sections 1 to 3 of the Homelessness Act 2002 (“the 2002 Act”). Additional information about what is to be addressed in a Homelessness Strategy is set out in section 3 of the 2002 Act. The scope of what a Homelessness Review should cover is set out in section 2 of the 2002 Act and section 2(3) of the 2002 Act requires that the outcome of the Council’s Homelessness Review must be available for public inspection after its completion.

9.2 Section 1 of the 2002 Act provides that local housing authorities may from time to time carry out a Homelessness Review for their district and formulate and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on the results of that review. They must publish a new Homelessness Strategy within five years of the date of publication of their last Homelessness Strategy.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1 None identified.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1 None identified.

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1 None identified.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1 EIA at Appendix 2

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1 None identified.

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1 None identified.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1 None identified.

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1 Taking part in the consultation survey was not mandatory and those who took part was provided with links to our privacy policy and were advised how we would use their feedback to shape the policy.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: