

Community Wellbeing & Housing Committee

July Briefing Pack



Title	Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Plans
Purpose of the report	To note
Report Author	Steph Green, Assistant Strategic Housing Lead
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Corporate Priority	Addressing Housing Need
Recommendations	Members are asked to: Note the plans for the compilation of the new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
Reason for Recommendation	N/A – to note only

1. Summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing Housing Strategy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy are dated 2020-2025. We are required to refresh the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy every 5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities, to formulate a homelessness strategy every 5 years.
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start to formulate a new strategy to meet the Spring 2025 deadline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timetable for implementation is given in more detail in point 11 of this report.

1.1 This report seeks to inform Committee members of a proposed plan to ensure the timely delivery of a new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030.

2. Key issues

2.1 The Council currently has two strategies, which are the Housing Strategy and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, they both contain several priorities and a detailed action plan for tackling housing needs and homelessness in the borough of Spelthorne. In 2023, the Housing Options Strategy team consulted and agreed with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities advisor to merge these two strategies, this is due to the large crossover in both. Merging both strategies has become usual practice for local authorities.

- 2.2 The Housing Options Strategy team are currently following a project timeline to ensure the timely delivery of the new strategy by Spring 2025.
- 2.3 A review of homelessness must take place prior to a homelessness strategy being formulated and published. This review has been undertaken and analyses data from the last 5 years. The completed review will be shared with Committee at a later date. A preview of initial key findings is provided in Appendix A.
- 2.4 A working group will be set-up to discuss initial ideas. The working group will be made up of officers and Members nominated by the committee, to consider the Homelessness Review findings and the feedback collated from both service users and stakeholders. The working group will meet to discuss and agree a draft strategy prior to public consultation. They will also consider the public consultation responses to help inform a final strategy draft before it is submitted to Committee for approval.
- 3. Options analysis and proposal**
- 3.1 None – this report is to note only.
- 4. Financial management comments – N/A**
- 5. Risk management comments**
- 5.1 If the Council does not have a new strategy agreed by Spring 2025, then there is a risk that the Council would not be compliant with legislation that requests councils to have a new strategy every 5 years. A detailed project plan has been drawn up with key milestones to ensure the timely delivery of the new strategy. This is briefly provided in point 11 of this report.
- 6. Procurement comments – N/A**
- 7. Legal comments**
- 7.1 Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 gives housing authorities the power to carry out a homelessness review for their district and formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of the review. Section 1(4) requires housing authorities to publish a new homelessness strategy, based on the results of a further homelessness review, within the period of 5 years beginning with the day on which their last homelessness strategy was published.
- 7.2 Although the requirement to develop and publish a Housing Strategy is no longer a statutory duty for local authorities, it is significant that the Council develops a strategy that clearly states its housing ambitions and goals for the benefit of the residents of Spelthorne Borough Council. By merging the two strategies, the Council will not only comply with its statutory duty under the 2002 Act but this will also help to ensure that the homelessness strategy for the borough forms part of a coherent approach to tackling homelessness and address the wide range of factors that could contribute to homelessness in the local area.
- 8. Other considerations**
- 8.1 Short, medium and long-term actions have been agreed for Addressing Housing Need under the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028. There have also been several actions agreed to address affordable housing delivery following a presentation from Professor Morphet to Officers and Councillors. Over the last

several years, Professor Morphet has collated extensive research on local government options for the delivery of affordable housing. Two sessions were held with Admin Group Leaders, and Chair of the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee, to agree a priority list in response to Professor Morphet's suggestions. Actions from both projects will need to be weaved into the new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

9. Equality and Diversity

9.1 A full equality and diversity impact assessment will be undertaken and attached as an appendix to the final strategy.

10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications – N/A

11. Timetable for implementation

Date for completion	Action
Spring 2024	Homelessness Review 2019-2024 compiled
22 nd May – 12 th June 2024	Housing Options client feedback survey open
3 rd July 2024	Useful stakeholder feedback collected from a joint event between Spelthorne Healthy Community Partnership and Spelthorne Homelessness Prevention Forum. Approximately 80 attendees joined.
24 th September 2024	Terms of Reference for working group to be agreed by Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee.
October 2024	Two working group meetings to discuss ideas and reflect on the Homelessness Review findings, client and stakeholder feedback. Draft strategy to be agreed.
5 th November 2024	Strategy draft to go to MAT with public consultation framework for approval.
2 nd December 2024	Strategy draft to go to Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee with public consultation framework for approval.
December 2024 – January 2025	Public Consultation to run for six weeks.
January 2025	Working group to discuss public consultation feedback and amend final strategy draft.
11 th February 2025	Final strategy presented to MAT for approval.
11 th March 2025	Final strategy presented to Committee for approval.
March – April 2025	Communications team to add graphics to strategy before publishing. Press release to be prepared for April 2025.

12. Contact: HousingStrategy@spelthorne.gov.uk

Background papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A: Homelessness Review 2019-2024 Key Findings