

Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee



24 September 2024

Title	Establishment of Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Working Group and Terms of Reference
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	Steph Green, Assistant Strategic Housing Lead
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Corporate Priority	Addressing Housing Need
Recommendations	<p>Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree the establishment of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Working Group ('the Working Group'). 2. Agree the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Working Group, outlined in Appendix A. 3. Agree membership of the Working Group, including the nomination of any Elected Members.
Reason for Recommendation	The Committee is asked to agree to the ToR to enable the Working Group to contribute their views and expertise to a draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy and act as a conduit to feedback to the Committee.

1. Summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is a key strategy for addressing housing need and homelessness in Spelthorne. This strategy is due to be refreshed by Spring 2025. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 1(4) of the Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to publish a new homelessness strategy, based on the results of a homelessness review, every 5 years. A Working Group of Officers and nominated Elected Members will play a critical role in the success of the development of the strategy.
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Working Group to support the on time delivery of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree the ToR and membership for the Working Group.

- 1.1 Developing a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy every 5 years is a requirement of Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002. In addition to regulatory requirement, delivering a high-quality strategy is a matter of particular concern for both our residents and Elected Members.
- 1.2 Engagement with key Officers and Members is fundamental to the successful development of the strategy. Setting up a cross departmental Working Group with up to four Elected Members for this project will:
 - (a) Allow expertise to be shared by colleagues to inform new strategic priorities.
 - (b) Facilitate ongoing engagement with Members outside of formal Committee meetings.
 - (c) Allow Members of the Working Group to develop a deeper understanding of the process, offering them an opportunity to champion the project with their colleagues and the wider community.
- 1.3 The proposed Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Working Group will report to the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee.

2. Key issues

- 2.1 Appendix A sets out the proposed ToR for the Working Group. It is intended that the Working Group has some Committee representation, though there is no requirement for political proportionality.
- 2.2 The timescale for developing the strategy is ambitious and such work is already underway to achieve this by Spring 2025. Housing Officers have already undertaken a Homelessness Review analysing data from the last 5 years, surveyed clients that have used the service in the last 5 years and retrieved feedback from stakeholders at a summer joint housing and health forum.
- 2.3 In July 2024, the Chair of the Committee contacted all Committee members requesting volunteers for the working group and sought agreement on these nominations (subject to the formalities being agreed at the September Committee meeting). This request was made as it was recognised that if nominations were not made until September, this would leave limited time in October for the working group to meet. Consequently, there would have been less time for discussion and for a draft strategy to be prepared to meet the next Committee deadline.

3. Options analysis and proposal

Option 1: Agree the proposed ToR and appointment of Members (Recommended)

- 3.1 It is recommended that Committee agree the proposed ToR and the official appointment of Members. Four Members have already volunteered and will have been brought up to speed on the progress of the project at working group meetings, approval will allow them to continue playing an active role from the outset.

Option 2: A Working Group is not considered necessary.

- 3.2 If the decision is made that a Working Group is not required for the development of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, this will not impact on the project reporting to keep Members up to date on progress. However, the development of this Strategy is a complex process and the Working Group offers the opportunity for greater involvement of key colleagues and Members to share expertise. It also provides Members with the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding and act as champions among their colleagues and communities.
- 4. Financial management comments**
- 4.1 N/A
- 5. Risk management comments**
- 5.1 If option 2 is chosen, no formal Working Group will exist, however the Council still needs to produce a Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Officers from the Housing Options team will meet to discuss ideas and put them forward to 'Strategic Housing Group' before a draft is presented back to Committee in December. Strategic Housing Group meet monthly to discuss various housing strategy projects within the Council.
- 6. Procurement comments**
- 6.1 N/A
- 7. Legal comments**
- 7.1 Legal Services has advised on the development of the ToR of this Working Group in accordance with the Constitution, which will report to the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee for decision-making.
- 8. Other considerations**
- 8.1 None
- 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**
- 10.1 N/A
- 11. Timetable for implementation**
- 11.1 The development of the new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will need progressing at pace to meet the Spring 2025 deadline. It is anticipated that the Working Group will have specific meetings as set out in the draft ToR. The Working Group will run for the length of the development of the strategy.
- 12. Contact:** HousingStrategy@spelthorne.gov.uk

Background papers: Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Plans (July 2024 briefing report distributed to the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee)

Appendices: Appendix A: Terms of Reference