

# Community Wellbeing and Housing



11 March 2025

<b>Title</b>	Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report Author</b>	Steph Green, Assistant Strategic Housing Lead
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Exempt</b>	No
<b>Exemption Reason</b>	Not applicable
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Addressing Housing Need
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Committee is asked to:</b> Approve the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	The Council has a statutory duty to publish a new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy every 5 years. The next publication is due by Spring 2025.

## 1. Summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following public consultation, the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Working Group (the 'Working Group') have agreed on a final draft to be considered for approval by the Committee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have the Strategy approved by this Committee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For Committee to consider approval of the proposed Strategy.</li> </ul>

1.1 This report seeks the Committee's view on the final draft of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

1.2 As previously advised to Committee, the Working Group has:

- Reviewed the findings from the Homelessness Review that analysed data from the last 5 years.
- Considered the responses from a survey that was circulated to Housing Options service users from the last 5 years.

- Discussed the feedback received from stakeholders which was collected from breakout groups during the summer joint health and housing forum.

Using these findings, the Working Group proposed some new strategic priorities which were considered by Committee in November 2024.

- 1.3 Following Committee's decision, Officers held a public consultation to capture final views of residents and stakeholders, as detailed in 2.3-2.5 of this report.
- 1.4 Despite the ongoing discussions on the local government reorganisation proposals, there is still a statutory requirement to renew the Strategy every 5 years.

## **2. Key issues**

- 2.1 The existing Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will expire in Spring 2025. As per the statutory duty to publish a new Strategy every 5 years, Officers have been liaising with the Working Group to formulate a new set of strategic priorities. The draft Strategy is provided in Appendix A with a proposed Action Plan provided in Appendix B.
- 2.2 Following public consultation, the Working Group continues to propose 3 key strategic areas:
  - (a) Partnership working: A multi-agency approach to tackling homelessness.
  - (b) Identifying opportunities to address housing need.
  - (c) Proactive homelessness prevention and an effective service response.

These strategic priorities are supported by a detailed Action Plan that will act as a working document throughout the Strategy's existence.

- 2.3 A public consultation was held for 6-weeks between Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024 – Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2025. A total of 159 online questionnaires were completed with a further 3 emails received. The public consultation outcome report is provided in Appendix C.
- 2.4 In summary, respondents were asked to what extent that they agreed with each of the priorities proposed. The three strategic priorities are noted in 2.2 of this report, 87% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that A should be a priority, 91% agreed or strongly agreed that B should be a priority, and 86% agreed or strongly agreed that C should be a priority.
- 2.5 Respondents to the consultation were also given the opportunity to provide comments or priorities that they felt the Council should focus on. The Working Group considered this feedback and have made some minor changes to the final draft strategy to reflect the comments received. These amendments have been noted in detail under section 4 of Appendix C.

## **3. Options analysis and proposal**

### Option 1: Approve the Strategy (recommended)

- 3.1 The Strategy has been proposed by the Working Group based on the data from the Homelessness Review and the views of the Council's stakeholders, service users and wider public. The public consultation has demonstrated wider support for the Strategy and its Action Plan. Approving the Strategy will ensure the Council is on target in meeting its statutory duty to renew the Strategy every 5 years.

## Option 2: Approve the Strategy with amendments

- 3.2 As noted, the Strategy proposed has been formed using supporting data collated in the Homelessness Review and views from stakeholders, service users and the wider public. The priorities have been formed by the Working Group who have all been thoroughly briefed on the findings. Any amendments should aim to meet the key themes, otherwise they could risk not being data-led.

## Option 3: Do not approve the Strategy

- 3.3 This is not recommended due to the timescales involved to approve and adopt a Strategy by Spring 2025. The proposed Strategy has been formed following extensive data analysis and engagement with stakeholders, service users and the public.

### **4. Financial management comments**

- 4.1 This will be dependent on actions that arise from the Strategy Action Plan and funding opportunities that may be announced by the Government within the next 5 years. Consideration may need to be given on the resources to support the delivery of the actions throughout the lifetime of the Strategy; these will be reflected in Service Plans.

### **5. Risk management comments**

- 5.1 Should the Council miss the 5 year deadline to approve and publish a new Strategy by Spring 2025, Officers will liaise with MHCLG to request an extension.
- 5.2 Most of the creation and consultation of the draft Strategy was undertaken prior to the Government's devolution and reorganisation proposals. Before we have greater clarity on the reorganisation proposals, the Strategy and Action Plan has been produced on a business as usual basis. Officers will focus on delivering as much of the Action Plan as currently proposed but recognises that during the five year period, responsibility for taking forward the Strategy would pass across to the successor unitary council. The Council will look to engage with the Shadow Authority to seek to ensure that the Strategy is taken on by the new body.

### **6. Procurement comments**

- 6.1 Not applicable at this stage. The Council's procurement obligations will be followed should the need arise from actions noted in the Action Plan.

### **7. Legal comments**

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 The definition of "Homelessness Strategy" is a strategy formulated by a local housing authority for preventing homelessness in their district, securing that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people in their district who are or may become homeless, securing the satisfactory provision of support for people in their district who are or may become homeless, or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again. It further states that a Homelessness Strategy may include specific objectives to be pursued, and specific action planned to be taken.

## **8. Other considerations**

- 8.1 The Strategy Action Plan is designed to be a working document to allow for additional projects to be weaved in that will help the Council achieve its strategic priorities.
- 8.2 The Action Plan will be monitored by Officers and Strategic Housing Group (made up of Officers and the Community Wellbeing Housing Committee Chair and Vice Chair). Officers will publish an annual update on the progress made.

## **9. Equality and Diversity**

- 9.1 As noted at the November Committee meeting, a full [Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment](#) has been undertaken. This assessment has not identified any significant impact on equalities.

## **10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**

- 10.1 Due regard will be given to any climate change implications that may arise out of the actions from the Strategy Action Plan.

## **11. Timetable for implementation**

- 11.1 If the Committee chooses the recommended option, the Strategy and associated Action Plan will be submitted to our Communications team for graphic enhancement. Once finalised, this will then go live and be published on the council's website.

## **12. Contact**

- 12.1 [HousingStrategy@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:HousingStrategy@spelthorne.gov.uk)

**Please submit any material questions to the Committee Chair and Officer Contact by two days in advance of the meeting.**

### **Background papers:**

- [Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Plans](#) (July 2024 Committee briefing pack)
- [Establishment of Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Working Group and Terms of Reference](#) (24 September 2024 Committee meeting)
- Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Working Group Minutes (October 2024, November 2024 and February 2025 Committee briefing packs)
- [Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) (28 November 2024 Committee meeting)

### **Appendices:**

- Appendix A: Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
- Appendix B: Action Plan
- Appendix C: Public Consultation Outcome Report