

**HOUSING & NEW HOMES
COMMITTEE**

**NEIGHBOURHOODS,
COMMUNITIES & EQUALITIES
COMMITTEE**

Agenda Item 74

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Rough Sleeping Strategy 2016: Consultation Draft		
Date of Meeting:	2 March 2016: Housing & New Homes Committee 14 March 2016: Neighbourhoods, Communities & Equalities Committee		
Report of:	Executive Director, Adult Services and Acting Executive Director, Environment, Development & Housing		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The issue of rough sleeping has become more acute recently with a visibly increased presence on the streets. This not only impacts on the individual's life chances, but also the city's reputation and costs to public services and business.
- 1.2 The city's current approach to rough sleeping is being re-assessed to ensure that the city's commissioners, service providers and those supporting people sleeping rough are working in partnership to a clear strategic plan. This plan will reduce rough sleeping in the city and improve outcomes for people sleeping rough and those at risk of rough sleeping.
- 1.3 This report presents the draft Rough Sleeping Strategy 2016 and requests permission to carry out formal consultation to shape the final version that will be brought back for adoption later in the year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Housing & New Homes Committee and the Neighbourhoods, Communities & Equalities Committee:
 - (1) Approve the consultation draft of the Rough Sleeping Strategy 2016 (Appendix 1).
 - (2) Authorise the Executive Director, Adult Services and the Executive Director, Environment, Development & Housing to carry out consultation on the draft strategy.

- (3) Note that it is intended for the final strategy to come back to a joint meeting of the two committees for formal adoption and permission to implement.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 People sleeping rough are a transient population and the city's street services work with more than 1,000 cases each year, 20 every week. Around a third of these relate to people being seen more than once (in 2014/15 there were 1,129 cases involving 775 people). In November 2015, a snapshot of a single night estimated there were 78 people sleeping rough in Brighton & Hove:

People living on the streets	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Street service cases (financial year)	588	732	1,163	1,066	1,129
Official street count (people on a single night)	14 (Nov'10)	36 (Nov'11)	43 (Nov'12)	50 (Nov'13)	41 (Nov'14)
Street estimate (people on a single night) ¹	x	76 (Nov'11)	90 (Mar'13)	132 (Mar'14)	78 (Nov'15)

- 3.2 There are concerns that numbers could increase further over the next year with the natural draw of Brighton & Hove as the place to be, the impact of welfare reforms and the high cost of accessing and sustaining accommodation in the city's private rented sector.
- 3.3 As of the January 2016, the city has 272 hostel beds and 25 mental health hostel beds which are full and has a waiting list of 197 clients, 82 of which are considered a high priority.
- 3.4 Information is not available for many of the hidden homeless in our city that may be living in squats, sleeping on sofas, and staying with friends and family.
- 3.5 Rough sleeping is not a lifestyle choice, but often driven out of desperation, poverty and ill health. Police, prisons and health service report high levels of service need caused by rough sleeping:
- People sleeping rough are more likely to be the victim of crime and also more likely to commit crimes
 - The City's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment² highlights a high prevalence of mental and physical ill-health and drug and alcohol dependency amongst people sleeping rough. Other common problems include physical trauma (especially foot trauma), skin problems, respiratory illness and infections (including hepatitis).

¹ The Rough Sleeper Estimate is a different methodology from the official count and records the number of rough sleepers known to services in the city on a particular date.

² Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2014: Rough Sleeping and Single Homeless:
<http://www.bhconnected.org.uk/sites/bhconnected/files/jsna-6.4.3-Rough-sleepers2.pdf>

- Nationally, it is estimated that the use of inpatient hospital care by people who are sleeping rough or living in insecure accommodation (such as hostels) is eight times higher than in the general population aged 16-64
 - The average age of death for a homeless person nationally is estimated to be 47 years old compared to 77 for the general population
- 3.6 The rough sleeping and single homeless population is not representative of the wider city with the 2014/15 Rough Sleeper Annual Report showing that of the 1,129 cases (involving 775 people):
- 83% were male; 17% were female
 - 12% (136 cases) were aged 17-25; 7% (83 cases) were over 55
 - 81% (917 cases) indicated that they were UK nationals
 - 19% (212 cases) were not from the UK with the largest group from central or eastern Europe (86 cases, a 50% increase from this region on 2013/14)
 - 39% (438 cases) had a local connection.
- 3.7 The council is facing significant budget reductions which have seen £77m saved in recent years and a further £68m needing to be saved by 2020. The budget for Housing Related Support and Better Care linked to rough sleeping services was £4.8m for 2015/16 (£4.2m Housing Related Support and £0.6m Better Care in partnership with the NHS). The Community and Voluntary Sector is estimated to contribute many more millions from other funding sources and in-kind support such as through volunteering.

What will our new strategy achieve?

- 3.8 The strategy is allowing us an opportunity to refocus and reprioritise services within the available funding to better meet the needs of those at risk. Amongst the range of actions proposed in the draft strategy, we would like to see:
1. A new shared agreement, a **Multi-Agency Protocol**, between the council, service providers, and other groups supporting people sleeping rough aimed at making sure we are all promoting the same consistent message, a single offer of support focussed on moving away from rough sleeping and street life.
 2. A new permanent **Assessment Centre** with a number of temporary (sit-up) beds to enable service providers to assess the needs of people sleeping rough in a stable environment.
 3. Each person having their own **Multi-Agency Plan** that will outline who is responsible for co-ordinating their care, which services are working with them and the support available. A key part of the Plan will be to outline the client's housing options to help them make an informed choice about their future.
 4. A **primary care led hub** with a multidisciplinary team delivering services in a number of settings in the city. This will support homeless people to access primary and community healthcare services and include outreach to street settings where appropriate, day centres and hospitals to support care and discharge planning.
 5. **New accommodation** for older homeless people with complex needs following a successful bid to the Homes & Communities Agency for £569,000. The accommodation which will offer at least eight en-suite rooms

adapted for people with physical disabilities, they will be able to get the extra support they need to improve their lives. This will also free up much needed hostel space for others in need.

City's Vision (draft)

- 3.9 People sleeping rough die younger than the general population yet the cost of preventing rough sleeping or supporting someone back into independence is much less than the cost to the individual and society than a life on the streets . Our draft strategy vision is:

“To make sure no-one has the need to sleep rough in Brighton & Hove by 2020”

Strategic Principle: Working together, a partnership (draft)

- 3.10 Within these priorities there is an underlying principle that, as a city, whether service commissioner, provider, community group, or individual with the desire to help, we need to work together to provide a consistent message and response to rough sleeping to support people to turn a corner and improve their lives.
- 3.11 The city's strategy needs to harness this expertise, energy and goodwill to enable all those with a stake in the city to work together and deliver our shared vision in partnership to make sure our combined efforts are not keeping people on the streets, but are focussed on getting people off the streets.

The City's Strategic Priorities (draft)

- 3.12 To help us come together as a city and deliver the strategic vision, we have focussed our strategy on five priority areas, each with a number of goals and strategic actions:

Priority 1: Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping – to provide a consistent message about housing options that helps services prevent homelessness and moves people away from sleeping rough

- Goal 1: Develop a consistent citywide approach to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping
- Goal 2: Improve housing options for single person households

Priority 2: Rapid Assessment and Reconnection – outreach to assess the needs of people sleeping rough to plan support, and where appropriate, reconnect people with friends, families and support networks, before they are fully immersed in street life

- Goal 3: Provide rapid assessment, support planning and effective reconnection
- Goal 4: Target people sleeping rough with complex needs to ensure there is an integrated plan to move people into accommodation
- Goal 5: Ensure services are sensitive to the needs of all vulnerable groups including LGBT* people, young, older, women and ex service personnel

Priority 3: Improving Health – to ensure people sleeping rough are supported by health and social care services that help them to regain their independence

- Goal 6: Improve outcomes by delivering integrated primary care led health and social care services that are accessible to homeless people and support them to regain their independence

- Goal 7: Ensure those on the streets have access to emergency shelter during extreme weather

Priority 4: A Safe City – making sure people sleeping rough, residents and visitors are safe and free from intimidation

- Goal 8: Focus on managing risks, harm and promoting appropriate behaviour
- Goal 9: Promote alternatives to discourage begging

Priority 5: Pathways to Independence – to support people sleeping rough into regaining their independence

- Goal 10: Have a flexible accommodation pathway that responds to changing needs
- Goal 11: Develop bespoke supported accommodation options where appropriate
- Goal 12: Ensure timely move-on to independent accommodation

Timescales:

3.13 The Rough Sleeper Strategy Review is being developed in phases to give stakeholders opportunity to help shape the city's priorities and future action:

1. **Position Paper (Nov/Dec 2015):** this was published in November 2015 and summarised the city's current approach to rough sleeping. The Paper was used as the basis for consultation in December 2015.
2. **Draft Rough Sleeping Strategy 2016 (Mar/Apr 2016):** building on the Position Paper and options developed in the summit. We wish to consult on the draft strategy and particularly welcome contributions from those who are, or have been, sleeping rough. The results of this consultation will help shape the final strategy.
3. **Final Strategy (July 2016):** stakeholders will be encouraged to formally sign-up to the vision, aims and objectives of the strategy to ensure a unified and consistent approach across the city.
4. **Implementation 2016/17:** Delivery of the city's strategy and remodelling or redesigning services where necessary.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Options for service delivery and design will be reviewed as part of the development of the new Strategy.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Subject to this report being accepted, we intend to consult on this draft strategy between 16 March and 17 April 2016. As part of the consultation there will be workshops for service providers and community organisations, online consultation for all residents and businesses through the council's consultation portal, and we encourage those working with people sleeping rough to ensure their clients have a voice in responding to the consultation.

- 5.2 To support the development of this draft strategy, a Position Paper was produced in November 2015 that summarised the city's current approach to rough sleeping, existing plans as well as highlighting the challenges we face. This Paper included the draft vision and priorities for the new strategy and was the basis of the initial scoping consultation. The Paper was emailed to all councillors, MPs and stakeholders with consultation carried out through December 2015.
- 5.3 During the consultation, a stakeholder summit was held which had 78 professionals attend, and there was online consultation through the council's consultation portal which received 36 detailed submissions covering all aspects of our proposals. The council's website, social media and press engagement was used to promote the consultation.
- 5.4 There was overwhelming support for the proposed vision and priorities of the strategy, with many suggestions for improvements to the way we work. Many respondents highlighted the significant challenges faced by the strategy arising from the fundamental issues arising from the shortage of high quality affordable housing and budget pressures.
- 5.5 As a result of the consultation, there have been a number of changes to the initial priorities for the city's strategy suggested by the Position Paper:
- **Street Triage and Reconnection** have been merged into a new priority on **Rapid Assessment and Reconnection** which is developing Multi-Agency Plan's for people sleeping rough, where professionals work together with clients to agree the most effective course of action.
 - **Managing the Street Communities** received criticism, particularly as people sleeping rough are more likely to be the victims of crime and around half of those in the city's street communities are not sleeping rough. There were also opposing views on the balance between support and enforcement. This priority has been rewritten to focus on making Brighton & Hove **A Safe City** – for rough sleepers, residents, businesses and tourists – and recognises that a life on the streets is not appropriate and should not be supported
 - **Working with the City** has been removed as a priority as it was very clear that partnership working needs to underpin the whole strategy rather than be a separate element. We recognise that not a single element of our strategy is achievable without the combined efforts of all those living and working in the city. **A Partnership Approach** is now the strategic principle of this strategy and underpins all of the work we do.
- 5.6 Other responses to the consultation highlighted the need for the strategy to take into account the specialist needs of particular groups who may be more vulnerable and require a slightly different approach, such as the young, women and LGBT* people.
- 5.7 The detailed consultation responses were shared with those responsible for the priorities within the strategy to develop the goals and strategic actions presented in this document. A transcript of these responses is contained in the **Consultation Report at Appendix 2.**
- 5.8 A set of five partnership **Homeless Strategy Working Groups** are tasked with developing action plans to implement the priorities of the Homeless Strategy

2014. These are focussed on the Integrated Support Pathway; Work & Learning; Youth Homelessness; Homeless Prevention; and Day & Street Services. Alongside the development of this strategy, these working groups are being reviewed to develop stronger links with health and other support services to encourage the shared ownership of actions which relate to improving services and improving the outcomes of service users. This model will include wider representation from service users. The review will be complete in March 2016 and implemented by March 2017.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The issue of rough sleeping has become more acute recently with a visibly increased presence on the streets. This not only impacts on the individual's life chances, but also the city's reputation and costs to public services and business.
- 6.2 We are concerned that numbers could increase further over the next year with the natural draw of the city, the impact of welfare reforms and the high cost of accessing and sustaining accommodation in the city's private rented sector.
- 6.3 The city's current approach to rough sleeping needs to be re-assessed to ensure that the city's commissioners, service providers and advocates are working in partnership to a clear strategic plan that will reduce rough sleeping in the city and improve outcomes for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 Any housing related costs associated with the consultation on this strategy will be managed from within the general fund budget. Once the strategy is consulted upon, the final strategy will be reported back to this committee and any housing costs of implementation will be highlighted prior to approval.

Finance Officer Consulted: Neil Smith

Date: 08/02/16

Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks

Date: 08/02/16

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 This is a draft consultation request and at this stage does not bind the Council to any decision save commitment to a small amount of resources to pursue the consultation. Given the stages process described it is sensible to have consultation take place. Choosing the correct consultees who represent all the relevant interest groups will be important.
- 7.3 There will be a significant portion of the cohort of street population who will have a range of issues which may then bring them under the umbrella of the Equalities Act and there may be some legal duties owed to them depending on their level of need. The Care Act may also apply in some instances. This should be noted in relation to the consultation process going forward.
- 7.4 The proposals themselves are proportionate and reasonable in relation to consultation and then referring back for final approval.

- 7.5 The function of street homelessness straddles the functions of the Housing & New Homes Committee as well as that of the Neighbourhoods, Communities & Equalities Committee. That is why the report is coming to both committees

Lawyer Consulted: Simon Court

Date: 04/02/16

Lawyer Consulted: Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis

Date: 08/02/16

Equalities Implications:

- 7.6 Rough sleepers are a vulnerable group more likely to have contact with the criminal justice system, drug, alcohol and health conditions, be excluded from mainstream services and have much worse outcomes than other groups. Measures to reduce rough sleeping will have a direct impact on reducing inequality in Brighton & Hove. An **Equalities Impact Assessment** has been completed for this draft strategy which is included at **Appendix 3**.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.7 None directly arising from this report.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.8 Rough sleepers are more likely to commit crime and be the victim of crime. Measures to reduce rough sleeping will decrease the level of crime and perception of crime and increase the availability of the emergency services making the city a safer place for residents and visitors alike.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.9 Genuine good practice that does not simply result in rough sleepers being pushed to less visible locations appears limited and highlights the challenge faced by the city. We need to ensure that our approach does not view rough sleepers as a problem to move but provides real solutions to prevent rough sleeping and improve the lives of those affected.

Public Health Implications:

- 7.10 As part of the Better Care initiative overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Board, an integrated health and care model for the single homeless is being developed. Although the remit of this work is broader than rough sleeping, it will be closely linked with the emerging work to develop a Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.11 If we do not reduce rough sleeping there will be:
- More early deaths
 - Wasted lives
 - Reputation damage as a caring city
 - Tourism impact from street begging
 - Crisis pressure on Police, A&E and other services
 - Crime / ASB associated with rough sleeping / street drinking
 - Increased costs to the local authority, Police and NHS
 - Increased use of acute services

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Draft Rough Sleeping Strategy 2016
2. Consultation Report 1: Position Paper
3. Statement of Due Regard to Equalities Impacts

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. Rough Sleeper Strategy Update, Neighbourhoods, Communities & Equalities Committee, 5 October 2015: [http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000885/M00005949/AI00047907/\\$20150923114229007841_0032963_ReportRoughSleeperStrategyUpdate2015.docxA.ps.pdf](http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000885/M00005949/AI00047907/$20150923114229007841_0032963_ReportRoughSleeperStrategyUpdate2015.docxA.ps.pdf)
2. Housing Related Support Budget & Commissioning, Housing & New Homes Committee, 23 September 2015: [http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000884/M00005929/AI00047254/\\$20150914111457007769_0032819_HousingRelatedSupportCommissioningUpdateforHousingNewHomesCommitte.docxA.ps.pdf](http://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000884/M00005929/AI00047254/$20150914111457007769_0032819_HousingRelatedSupportCommissioningUpdateforHousingNewHomesCommitte.docxA.ps.pdf)

