

# Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025

## Introduction

Reducing homelessness and rough sleeping is a key priority for Brighton & Hove Council. Since the last review of homelessness in Brighton and Hove there have been significant challenges as well as a number of opportunities.

Our immediate, recent challenge has been in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We have made an accommodation offer to all people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough. We now need to continue to progress this work, supporting them into sustainable accommodation, ensuring rough sleepers do not return to the streets. The council intends to provide appropriate move on support and accommodation for all rough sleepers currently accommodated. However, we do not currently have sufficient resources to meet all of the needs and therefore have requested support from Government if we are to avoid people returning to the streets. Whilst this continues to be an extremely difficult time for many people, we also have a unique opportunity to ensure homeless people have a route to a more secure life and better future.

This strategy developed in a context of increasing demand for services. The financial climate over the past five years has been challenging for many residents, the council and other statutory and voluntary sector partners.

The rising costs to own or rent a home have continued. Locally the difference between the maximum housing benefit for accommodation and actual rent is significant. This currently stands at a shortfall of £118.70 per calendar month for a single room in a shared house and for a two-bedroom property this rises to £345.62.

The cost of renting means that residents are increasingly struggling to make ends meet, with many people living in fuel and food poverty. In line with other parts of the country, throughout the lifetime of the last strategies we saw a substantial increase in people sleeping rough.

Rough Sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness. This is however only a part of the challenge that we face. The numbers of people in temporary accommodation remain high, work needs to continue to prevent people from becoming homeless. Over the period of the pandemic we have accommodated people who were insecurely housed. This means we're now working with people who were previously 'hidden homeless', sofa surfers and those who might otherwise have been in hostels with shared facilities. This gives us an opportunity to help them to find sustainable solutions going forwards.

This strategy will look at the issue of homelessness in all of its forms.

During the life of the last strategies, the council has been successful in obtaining additional funding primarily from central government. As Chair of Housing Committee, I have seen the amount of work going on in the city, across all sectors and within the community to reduce homelessness. This has been highlighted during the period of the pandemic. It includes the range of services available to people sleeping rough to move them out of homelessness. We have seen homelessness prevention focussing on earlier interventions, acting before things get to a crisis, this approach is enabling us to prevent around 1000 households a year from becoming homeless.

There is however much more to do. This strategy will build on our substantial knowledge, while reflecting an approach that has an emphasis on accountability and transparency for the delivery services to everyone affected by homelessness. It aligns to the aspirations of the Homelessness Bill of Rights, which has a welfare first based approach to homelessness.

A fundamental change to the strategy is the governance structure, a formation of the Homeless Reduction Board. The board will direct the work and form an annual action plan. Effective partnership working will be essential to ensure it meets its aims. The governance arrangements will ensure we capture work being done across the city and are able to work collaboratively to keep a focused and deliverable approach

Thank you to everyone who to everyone who works every day to help deliver the services that contribute to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping. I also want to thank everyone who took part in the development of this strategy.

Best wishes

Cllr Gill Williams

DRAFT

## Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Homelessness means that someone has no home that is available and reasonable for them to live in.

### Examples of homelessness:

- Rooflessness (e.g. sleeping rough)
- Houselessness (with a place to sleep but temporary, or a shelter)
- Living in insecure housing (threatened with eviction, domestic violence, or staying with family and friends known as 'sofa surfing')
- Living in inadequate housing (in caravans on illegal campsites, in unfit housing, extreme overcrowding).

The causes of homelessness can be structural, individual, or both.

### Structural factors may include:

- Poverty
- Inequality
- Housing supply and affordability
- Unemployment or insecure employment
- Access to social security.

### Individual factors may include:

- Relationship breakdown
- Poor physical health
- Mental health problems, including the consequences of adverse childhood experiences
- Learning Disability
- Experience of violence, abuse, neglect, harassment or hate crime
- Drug and alcohol problems (including when co-occurring with mental health problems)
- Bereavement
- Experience of care or prison
- Refugees.

There isn't a single intervention that can tackle homelessness and rough sleeping, there needs to be a citywide partnership approach.

### The Homelessness Act

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to carry out a review of homelessness and homelessness services in their area and publish a homelessness strategy based on this review.

In 2019/20 Brighton & Hove carried out a review of homelessness and rough sleeping and related services. It also carried out consultations with residents, service users, voluntary and statutory services, charities & community activists with experience in this area as well as other interested parties such as landlords and the business community, an online citywide consultation was open in November-

December 2019. In January-February 2020 the first draft of the strategy was consulted on.

Over the past 16 years, Brighton & Hove has developed four homelessness strategies, in addition to a separate strategy that addressed the needs of people sleeping rough and a number of related strategies covering youth homelessness, single homelessness and temporary accommodation.

## Aims & Principles of the Strategy

This strategy sets out a strategic framework to inform work plans, engagement with communities and the citywide response to homelessness and rough sleeping. The strategy is designed to be agile to allow the city to meet emerging challenges during its lifetime. Including, responding to situations such as the Covid-19 pandemic and our intention to provide appropriate move on and support for all rough sleepers currently housed in response to the current emergency to avoid them returning to rough sleeping. **Values:**

We believe that everyone, whether homeless or not should have:

- A safe, secure accommodation and if needed, an appropriate level of support to create a good quality of life
- The full protection of the law, and not be subjected to violence, abuse, theft and discrimination
- Respect and a good standard of service
- Equality of access to information and services
- Equality of opportunity to employment, training, volunteering, leisure and creative activities.

We will work with partners making sure:

- We work collaboratively with people who are in need of services, to ensure they are listened to, involved in determining the solutions to their own housing need, and are given a voice in the development of solutions to homelessness and rough sleeping.
- We communicate effectively across services and communities to ensure a consistent person centred approach is delivered across all services.

### Principles

#### People

- We work collaboratively with individuals and families to find a solution to their homelessness.
- We will support peoples' strengths whilst recognising the barriers that may prevent people resolving their own homelessness or rough sleeping.
- We will try to prevent or resolve homelessness working with people to promote wellbeing, greater social inclusion and positive relationships.

#### Partnerships

- We will work in collaboration with all services and agencies providing services and support around homelessness prevention, interventions and sustainability.

- We will work in collaboration with people experience homelessness to inform and co-produce the design, delivery and evaluation of services addressing homelessness and rough sleeping
- We will work collaboratively with partners to ensure that we are supporting the aims and principles of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

## Progress in delivering Previous Strategies

The Homelessness Strategy 2014 – 2019 was agreed by the Housing Committee in June 2014. Its aim was to prevent homelessness or provide accommodation and various support services to tackle a range of issues. The Rough Sleeping Strategy was agreed in June 2015. The Council and its partners worked hard to coordinate and focus combined energies on preventing homelessness and improving services for people experiencing homelessness. Despite homelessness and rough sleeping providing an ongoing and growing challenge for the city, there have been a number of achievements. A full list of achievements can be found in the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Review. This is available to view and is included as an appendix.

### Homelessness Strategy 2014–19

- Trailblazer funding awarded to trial new ways of working and intervening to prevent homelessness at a much earlier stage
- 1645 young people engaged with Prevention Workshops as part of the Trailblazer project, 95% reported improved knowledge
- 1403 households were helped to move to the private rented sector via the council's Direct lets Scheme.
- Housing Allocations Policy was reviewed, 40% of social housing is now allocated to statutory homeless households. This has increased the number of homeless households securing a permanent home. In 2016/17 147 homeless households were allocated social housing. The changes to the policy have seen an additional 356 households housed through the housing register in 18/19 bringing it to a total of 797

### Rough Sleeping Strategy 2016 – 2020

- The development of new services for people sleeping rough in the city, including those without a local connection to improve reconnection work 'No Second Night Out', 'Somewhere Safe to Stay', and a 365 day a year night shelter.
- A successful bid to establishment a Social Impact Bond (SIB) as a means to fund the resolution or prevention of rough sleeping for a group of 100 people.
- The establishment of the Multi-Disciplinary Rough Sleeper Navigator Team, an assertive outreach service working to end the rough sleeping of people with multiple and compound needs by working holistically, assertively and through the lens of trauma informed care.
- The ongoing delivery of dedicated primary health care services to homeless people via Arch Healthcare.
- Expansion of our Housing First service from 12 units to a minimum of 40.
- An enhanced Severe Weather Emergency protocol offer

- The delivery of a gender informed service for women with multiple and compound need and the establishment of a gender informed move on pathway for vulnerable women.
- Provision of a weekend winter shelter

A full list of achievements can be found in the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Review document.

## Summary findings from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping review

As the council prepared to update the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy, we reviewed local data on homelessness and housing issues. Through this process several findings were identified, whilst many will not be surprising, it does support several of the strategic priorities identified later in the document. It firmly supports the fact that affordability in the city is growing issue as the housing market continues to be out of the reach of average households.

The full review of homelessness can be found in the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Review document

## Summary of findings from the City-Wide consultation

The Council carried out a city-wide consultation. The first was an online questionnaire and facilitated sessions, the second was a consultation on the first draft of the strategy. A range of individuals and organisations across the city responded. A full consultation feedback report on the analysis has been produced and the findings have been used to develop this strategy.

We also carried out a consultation aimed specifically at private rented sector landlords, 386 responded. The biggest cause of homelessness is end of private rented sector tenancy. The consultation with landlords highlighted significant opportunity to increase earlier intervention.

In total 164 people attended group sessions, 721 individuals and 23 organisations responded to an online portal.

The full Consultation Report is available as an appendix to the strategy. These are the key findings of the consultation:

### Support

We know that there are many factors to why someone is insecurely housed or experiencing homelessness. There is a wide range of support needs from those needing practical support, such as financial, or finding accommodation, to those that have multiple and compound needs and may experience several overlapping problems at the same time, such as mental ill health, addiction, offending and family breakdown.

In addition, we have identified the need to examine how we can increase support to people who have exited homelessness to ensure they are able to maintain their accommodation and avoid returning to homelessness. This supports sustainability as a key strategic priority.

## **Meaningful Partnerships**

The consultation identified the importance of meaningful partnerships to the delivery of our strategic priorities and the council will ensure that partnerships are a major factor in developing the annual action plans associated with the delivery of this strategy. For this reason, Partnerships and Collaboration are contained as values & principles that underpin the strategy.

## **Communication**

Communication is a key component also contained within the values and principles of the strategy. This is essential for the way we and partners work with homeless people and their households, making sure they are listened to: involved in determining the solutions to their own housing need and are given a voice in the development of solutions to homelessness and rough sleeping.

It is important communication is effective between partners to ensure we are all working to support the same aim of reducing homelessness.

## **Education & training**

We know that increasing income is vitally important in order for people to move from homelessness to greater stability. However only 62% of Brighton & Hove residents, who are in work are employed full time. Increasing education and training opportunities was a recurring theme through the consultation activities, especially as it related to increasing employment training and access to job opportunities beyond traditional service industries.

Another element identified was the need for a community education effort to help dispel the common misconceptions and stigmas surrounding homelessness. The associated negative stereotypes that burden people experiencing homeless make recovering from homelessness more challenging

The consultation highlighted the need to ensure all staff, both within the Council and externally, that are interacting with people experiencing homelessness are appropriately trained and have the skills to provide a person-centred approach to advising and supporting people experiencing and at risk of homelessness

## **Challenges**

### **Affordability**

We know that affordability is a major factor for the City. The impact of this is felt particularly by those who live in the private rented sector, or who are ready to exit supported accommodation. Where the council cannot intervene directly in the private rented sector we wish to support positive engagement with local private landlord associations and landlords to prevent homelessness and insecurity of accommodation and promote more long-term affordable private rented sector homes. In addition, it is important to identify interventions that can help offset these impacts to support people to move into more stable accommodation.

Findings from the review of homelessness showed that the gap between the average rent and Local Housing Allowance (LHA) expanded, to £771 per month between the

average rent in Brighton and the LHA. The average annual rent inflation is higher than the Retail Price Index (RPI) and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all bedroom categories. The result of this is that Brighton & Hove became increasingly unaffordable for a significant percentage of the population, especially those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Recent changes to the LHA rate came into force from the 1<sup>st</sup> April. Early indications show that affordability of accommodation in the private sector has improved slightly within the city. The accommodation outside of the city that falls within the same LHA rate has shown an increased improvement, albeit with less properties to rent. It is not known currently what effect, if any, the increase LHA rates will have on rents in the area.

### **Rough Sleeping**

Rough sleeping in Brighton and Hove has been increasing since 2010 with over 800 rough sleepers found in the city over a 2-year period. In November 2019 the official street count of rough sleepers on one night was 88.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic there is an accommodation offer to all rough sleepers, so we are in the unique position where no-one needs to sleep rough during the pandemic. We have accommodated around 400 people and we are working with all of them to develop personal housing plans and accommodation pathways to prevent a return to rough sleeping.

Following the pandemic accommodation with shared sleeping spaces may no longer be acceptable, in response we are also changing the model of provision so that we do not have congregate accommodation.

### **Universal Credit Full Service (UCFS)**

UCFS rollout in Brighton and Hove began in October 2017. Housing cost decisions for UCFS claimants are not made locally.

### **Hidden Homelessness**

This group of people do not appear in official statistics and it is therefore difficult to quantify this issue. Polling conducted by ComRes, in 2017, suggests that two-fifths of 16- to 25-year-olds in the UK have sofa-surfed at one time because they had nowhere to live. One in ten of these young people did so for more than a month in total. Crisis Homeless Monitor estimate that the number of hidden homeless nationally has risen since 2008 by one third. It is believed that the tight housing market and the worsening real income/living standards are key drivers to homelessness in this group. It is known that the Hidden Homelessness can be in a dangerous position leaving people at risk of abuse, assault and exploitation. This may include destitute and vulnerable asylum seekers in the community.

### **Social housing**

There are currently 17,910 social rented properties in the city. Council housing stock has fallen by 778 properties since 2011 but the council remains the largest landlord. There are just under 10,000 households on the council waiting list for social housing. However, in 2018/19 only 787 properties became available to let, half of which were one bedroom flats or studio. This means that as demand is much higher than supply that there will be a long waiting times for many households.



Providing additional affordable homes is a key priority in our Housing Committee Work plan 2019-2023 approved by Committee in September 2019, including developing 800 additional council homes and 700 other new homes.

The number of households in temporary accommodation, who are owed either a full housing duty or a duty owed under the Children's Act or Adult Social Care legislation that require accommodation remain high. Under the Council's Allocations Policy 40% of available properties are prioritised to accepted homeless households, and 10% to the Council's Interest Queue (which cover Children's Act and Adult Social Care requirements)

Homeless acceptances fell in 2018/19 to 283 as a result of the positive prevention work, we undertook. Whilst 314 social tenancies were allocated to those accepted homeless this will have a small positive impact on the number of households in temporary accommodation, which at the May 2020 is 1711. As a city we need to increase prevention and reduce the number of accepted households still further or develop more options for moving people in to the private rented sector.

### **Multiple and Compound Needs and Rough Sleeping**

We know that over a quarter of people sleeping rough in Brighton & Hove have multiple and compound needs, which means that they may experience several overlapping problems at the same time, such as mental ill health, homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction, offending and family breakdown. This group of people require greater levels of support to find a route off the streets and can struggle to engage with services including Health & Adult Social Care, and Substance Misuse Services.

### **Supported Housing**

Brighton & Hove commission almost 690+ units of supported housing through a series of pathways. However, many people find it hard to move on when they are ready to live independently due to the shortage of available of social housing or access to private rented homes. Additionally, there is a lack of accommodation for those needing enhanced services such as those impacted by Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Mental Health, Substance Use, and Learning Disabilities.

Following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic some of the supported housing delivery will need to be reconsidered. This is a good opportunity to work with all people who were sleeping rough or about to sleep rough and to develop an alternative model going forwards taking into account the impact of Covid-19 for accommodation with shared facilities.

The Covid-19 crisis response has also provided an opportunity to consider the long-term solution to homelessness and to work with Government to seek additional resources to enable this. It includes the expansion of the Housing First model, to give people with high need the best chance to sustain secure accommodation; expanding access to private rented accommodation. Expanding the capital grant programme to purchase more accommodation and supporting reconnection, where it is safe to do so by a national response so local authorities have adequate provision to for people who would otherwise be rough sleeping in their area.

## Strategic Context

### **The National Rough Sleeper Strategy 2018**

Brighton and Hove Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will reflect the national approach. The national strategy includes the targets to halve rough sleeper numbers (from the 2017 baseline) by 2022 and to end rough sleeping by 2027. The national strategy is rooted in three 'pillars', Prevention, Intervention, and Recovery. These are reflected in Brighton and Hove's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The current pandemic provides a unique opportunity for all rough sleepers to have accommodation.

### **The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**

The Homelessness Reduction Act came into force in April 2018, key measures in the Act include:

- An extension of the period 'threatened with homelessness' from 28 to 56 days.
- A duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need.
- A 'duty to refer' - public services need to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

## Local Context

### **The Corporate Plan 2020-2023**

The Corporate Plan was approved by full Council on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2019. The Council has identified six outcomes that we want to achieve for the city. They are:

- A city to call home
- A city working for all
- A stronger city
- A Growing and learning city
- A sustainable city
- A healthy and caring city.

A city to call home has five key areas of action which relate to this strategy. These are:

- Reduce homelessness and rough sleeping
- Provide genuinely affordable homes
- Improve private rented housing
- Improve council housing
- Make better use of existing housing capacity.

The Corporate Plan places the issues of homelessness and rough sleeping at the heart of work.

Further to this, objectives in the Housing Committee Work Plan 2019-23 includes 'Alleviating homeless and rough sleeping' as a key priority.

Key actions include:

- Develop 800 additional council homes.
- Develop 700 other new homes
- Improving private rented housing
- Research and review an ethical loan scheme
- Develop/commission an information/advice hub for private renters and consider options for a private tenants forum
- Research and develop a social lettings agency
- Ensure homeless people are involved in the early design and development of services which directly affect them.
- Develop the enforcement approach to private sector housing to reflect the full range of potential options available to improve management and standards.
- Provide a 365 day night shelter
- Expand Housing First
- Develop a strategy for the provision of council run temporary accommodation including Seaside Homes
- Work with Community Land Trust to develop self-build opportunities
- Work with Homes for Brighton & Hove and registered providers in the city to develop 500 shared ownership properties for essential workers who live and work in the city. Make fuller use of shared housing capacity
- Review our empty homes policy to ensure 650 empty homes are brought back into use
- Develop an arrears policy for temporary accommodation, which gives tenants the same level of support and assistance as those in permanent accommodation

This Homeless & Rough Sleeping Strategy also aligns with the following;

[Health and wellbeing in Brighton & Hove Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2019 \(JNSA\)](#)

[Brighton & Hove Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2030](#)

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment International Migrants in Brighton & Hove 2018](#)

### **Homeless Bill of Rights**

The values of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy align to aspirations within the [Homeless Bill of Rights](#) as amended for Brighton & Hove by Housing Rights Watch, FEANTSA and Just Fair.

The Homeless Bill of Rights should be viewed as a standard against which the Council and its partners judge our policies and practices. The progress of the aspirations contained in the Homeless Bill of Rights will be monitored by the Homeless Reduction Board.

### **Strategic Priorities 2020–25**

#### **Post Covid-19 Pandemic Recovery**

We are currently in the midst of a global pandemic which will have a profound impact on the way we all live and work. This will have implications for the foreseeable future

as we redevelop services to ensure staff, customers and residents are safe. This presents challenges but also opportunities.

Events of the past 3 months have seen an increase in demand for homeless & rough sleeping services in the city. As people have lost their jobs or have unable to carry out their normal work routines, this will inevitably cause additional pressure on people's housing situations. Much of the demand may still be to come once the economy opens back up.

We have also seen the amazing work which has been undertaken within the authority, partner organisations, and other community and resident groups city wide. It is everyone's wish that this can be sustained.

It is clear the pandemic will have a significant financial impact both locally and nationally. This will be relevant in terms of funding streams and also the response of the economy may lead to increased economic insecurity. Similarly health impacts (physical and mental) are unknown and this may also have an impact on housing need. Many of our partner agencies from this strategy will see impacts on their services. We need to develop new approaches. Whilst this is a challenge this also gives us a unique opportunity.

We propose to reflect our emerging response to provision of appropriate move on and support for the homeless and rough sleepers we have accommodated during the current pandemic in development of our Action Plan via the Homeless Reduction Board for reporting back to future Housing Committee meetings.

This strategy covers the period of 2020-2025 and details how we will work in this new environment with partners and those experiencing homelessness to develop and improve services, which prevent and alleviate homelessness and rough sleeping. It looks at strengthening the way we make improvements across homeless services. In order to make significant impacts the strategy focuses on three key priorities and will be accompanied by a detailed action plan. Full details on the actions being undertaken will be outlined in the Action Plan.

## **Prevention**

*"The best way to tackle homelessness is to stop it happening in the first place. To do so is both cost effective and humane."*<sup>1</sup>

Prevention is about addressing the issues that give rise to people being at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping, supporting people to sustain suitable accommodation and enabling people to lead fulfilling lives as independently as possible.

This means reducing risk factors and, supporting people to manage risks as effectively as possible.

Effective prevention can only be achieved if there is a systematic approach to prevention with all services, agencies and the community working to an early

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<sup>1</sup> Everybody In. The Plan to end Homelessness 2018

intervention model and knowing where to offer support or signpost people for support.

The earlier we can identify a risk to accommodation the more likely we can prevent homelessness by enabling a household to sustain suitable housing or by supporting them to find alternative suitable housing.

### **Key Objectives:**

- We will continue to develop our preventative work to reduce the number of households presenting to homelessness services in Brighton and monitor our progress in this area.
- Work towards eliminating the need for rough sleeping in line with the joint 2019-2023 Housing programme.
- We will work with those with a lived experience to understand the reasons for homelessness and seek to ensure that we are addressing these risks at an early stage.
- We will remodel the Housing Options service to offer a psychologically informed environment, learning from people with experience of homelessness; ensuring staff are trained and are working in a personalised way with those approaching us for support.
- We will enhance our service offer for those for whom we were unable to prevent their homelessness by strengthening relationships between street outreach, and Housing Options
- We will endeavour to ensure that those who come through our Housing Options service do not end up rough sleeping by focusing work with those leaving institutions and by working closely with services like Somewhere Safe to Stay and Sussex Nightstop.
- We will continue to work with partners to develop the duty of public bodies to refer when they identify someone is a risk of homelessness, as laid out in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

### **Intervention**

Interventions to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in Brighton & Hove are a key priority. Rough Sleeping within Brighton and Hove is significant issue with the city remaining one of the top ten areas nationally for rough sleepers.

### **Key Objectives**

- In line with the National Rough Sleeper Strategy we have undertaken to work in partnership to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eradicate it by 2027. In response to the Coronavirus pandemic the council intends to provide appropriate move on support and accommodation for all rough sleepers currently accommodated. However, we currently do not have sufficient resources to meet all of the needs and therefore have requested additional support from Government if we are to avoid people returning to the streets.

- We will utilise data to ensure we understand our rough sleeping and homeless population and are able to target resources effectively to support individuals and groups.
- We will use evidence and national good practice to inform service design and delivery.
- We will seek to further develop our 'no second night' out model with the aim of intervening quickly to offer accommodation away from the streets and preventing entrenchment.
- We will increase our 'Housing First' offer in line with the corporate plan.
- We will ensure the voices of those with lived experience of homelessness are fed into the evaluation and remodelling of accommodation pathways for single homeless people.
- We will ensure that the services we offer for those experiencing homelessness are accessible and work for all.
- We will increase access to mental health support and improve advice and training for staff working with complex needs clients to create 'psychologically informed environments' within all homelessness services
- We will ensure that the services we provide put equality and diversity at the heart of their delivery.
- We will work with stakeholders to improve the quality of and the support offered in our emergency and temporary accommodation provision.
- As we enter the Covid-19 recovery phase, we will take the opportunity increase the supply of private accommodation available to homeless households by working with landlords who have previously targeted the student market, including acquiring use of HMOs subject to business case and budget

## **Sustainability**

Providing somewhere to live is not the end of the story. In order to succeed we need to make sure that accommodation is sustainable. This means that resettlement plans for individuals and households are in place. We will work to build resilience and ensure that people understand both their rights and their responsibilities.

Ending the cycle of homelessness is not just about housing. We know that a change in circumstance can quickly put someone at risk of repeat homelessness and we need partners to work with us to ensure that referral routes back into a service are quick and as seamless as possible.

We also need staff to be able to work with people in a way that means that they do not feel stigmatised or feel that they have failed if they ask for support.

## **Key Objectives**

- We will develop our work with those experiencing homelessness to build resilience, develop support networks and prevent repeat homelessness.
- We will ensure that referral routes back into preventive services are as quick and seamless as possible.
- We will evaluate and develop our support for people accessing private rented accommodation to ensure they have the best possible chance of sustaining their accommodation long term.

- We will continue to develop our relationships with private landlords to increase the accommodation available to those who have experienced homelessness.
- We will increase our move on options for those exiting supported accommodation.
  - We will work with former rough sleepers, accommodated during the Covid-19 pandemic to develop accommodation pathways to reduce risk of anyone needing to return to rough sleeping.
- We will ensure that services are in place to support those transitioning between supported accommodation and independent accommodation.
- We will develop our support for people who wish to access training, education and work in order to break the cycle of poverty.

## Governance and delivery of the strategy

No one organisation alone can solve the complex issues that the city faces around homelessness and rough sleeping. The next five years will require a multi-agency approach to deliver excellent services, look for innovation and drive forward this strategy. We need to ensure that together with our partners we have the structures and skills in place for the delivery of the strategy's priorities.

### Delivering the Strategy

There is a considerable amount of work underway to tackle homelessness. However, in order to ensure the success of this strategy we need to make sure that together with our partners the structures are in place to deliver on the strategic priorities in a transparent and accountable manner.

Each key objective will be accompanied by an action plan. These action plans will take into account of the work of the council and its commissioned services. Brighton & Hove City Council Housing and Health & Adult Social Care will work in partnership with Health, Children's Services, the Probation Service, Sussex Police, and our voluntary and third sector partners to develop collective commitments to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. Once these commitments are made, they will be included in the action plan and monitored. This will ensure that all agencies are committed to playing an active role ending homelessness.

In an ever changing environment we will make sure that the action plans remain agile and kept up to date to reflect the current and emerging needs in our city and look to innovate and learn from good practice elsewhere.

### Governance

Brighton & Hove City Council's Housing Committee has the overall responsibility for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

A Homeless Reduction Board (HRB) will be established. The governance of the strategy will reflect the model used for the Housing Supply member board, with the addition of the chair of the Health & Wellbeing board as non-voting member.

The purpose of the HRB will promote homelessness reduction and prevention through the development of improved and integrated homelessness services.

The Strategy and Action Plan shall be referred to the Housing Committee. Progress against the Action Plan will be monitored by the Housing Committee on a six monthly cycle. Quarterly statistics will be provided to Housing Committee.

### **Composition**

**Voting members:-**Four elected Members

- Chair of Housing Committee
- Opposition Spokesperson (Green Party)
- Group Spokesperson (Conservative Party)

**Non-voting members (Panel Members):-**

- Chair of Health & Wellbeing Board
- Clinical Commissioning Group
- Probation Service
- Prison Service
- Brighton & Sussex University Hospital Trust
- Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust
- Sussex Police

**Officer(s) in Attendance**

- Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing
- Executive Director Families, Children and Learning;
- Executive Director Health and Adult Social Care;

### **Quorum**

At each meeting, the quorum requirement is at least two voting members

### **Chair**

The Board will be Chaired by Chair of the Housing Committee

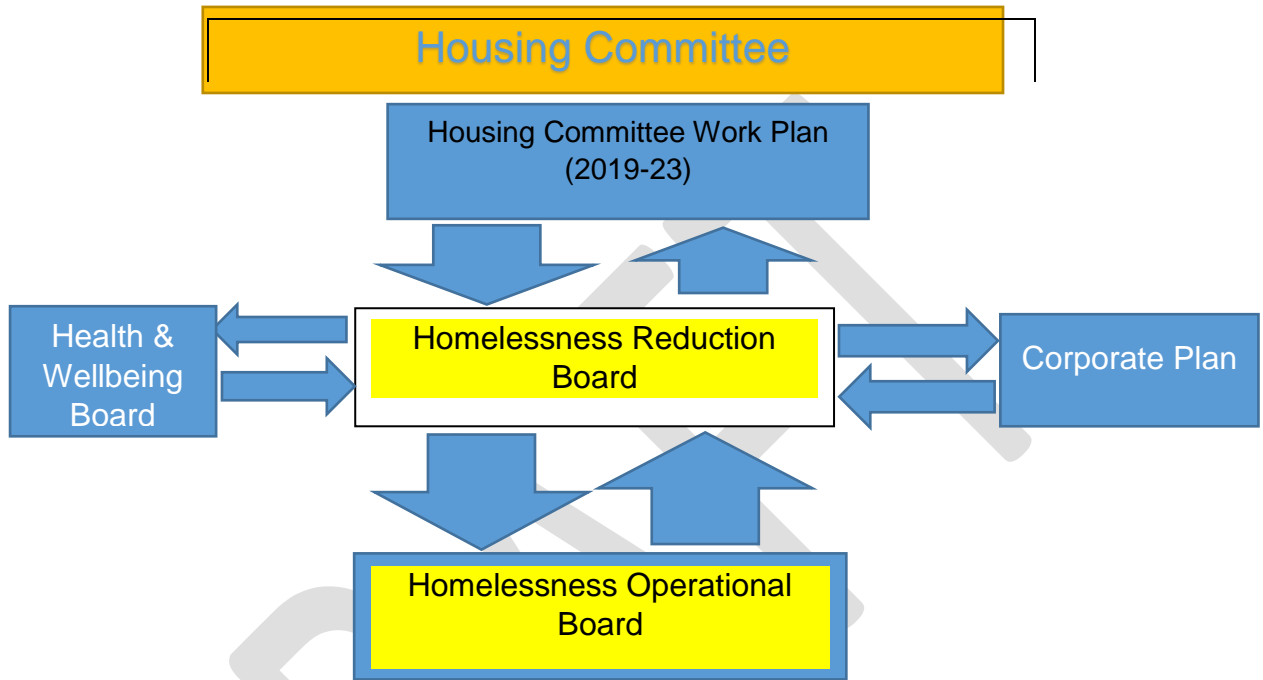
A Homeless Reduction Board will be responsible for developing the strategic vision for reducing homelessness in the locality and monitoring progress in achieving it, including:

- Monitoring any key actions;
- Setting and monitoring key performance indicators (KPIs), across homeless services.
- Using data, evidence, and the input of those with lived experience of homelessness to identify challenges, gaps in provision, including those that may apply to particular groups of people, and priority actions.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of service provision and interventions;
- Coordinate and agree to all funding bids (within budget resources) in respect of homelessness and rough sleeping;
- Mapping homelessness services and the delivery chain in the locality, redesigning them where appropriate to improve effectiveness and outcomes;
- Identifying and co-ordinating across all partners the effective use of funding for homelessness services and interventions; and,
- Promoting and facilitating the joint commissioning of homelessness services and interventions.



### Homeless Operational Board

A Homelessness Operational Board will also be established. Its role will be to assist the Homelessness Reduction Board by developing the key actions and key performance indicators. It is key to the success of the strategy that it has representation from a wide range of organisations including from the BME, LGBTQ+, Faith Groups and those with a lived experience of homelessness. This board will be chaired at Executive Director Level.



## Appendix One

### Research reports

#### **LGiU Homelessness Commission 2019:**

The Local Government Information Unit (LGiU) held a commission on homelessness that reported in 2019. The LGiU is a local authority membership organisation.

The report notes that the drivers of homelessness are:

- Growth in the Private Rented Sector
- Low Housing Supply
- Broken Welfare System
- Young people and other vulnerable groups often fall through the cracks of a fragmented and overly centralised public sector.

The report made the following recommendations:-

- A sustainable housing and homelessness strategy, with adequate funding.
- Local variation of housing allowance varied by local councils
- Introduce minimum three-year tenancies.

#### **Crisis - The Homelessness Monitor: England 2019**

The Homelessness Monitor series is a longitudinal study providing an independent analysis of the homelessness impacts of recent economic and policy developments in England and elsewhere in the United Kingdom. This eighth annual report for England updates Crisis account of how homelessness stands in 2019, or as close to 2019 as data availability allows.

The report allows local authorities to see what is going on regionally and nationally. The year includes some feedback on the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This contextualises the issues seen in Brighton and Hove and assists in our development of the strategy. Some of the key points are:-

- Rough sleeping may have levelled off somewhat in England after rapid growth since 2010, with official estimates recording a 2 per cent decrease nationally, and a 19 per cent reduction in those areas targeted by the Rough Sleeping Initiative, between 2017 and 2018.
- Three quarters of local authorities responding to this year's survey (75%) consider rough sleeping a problem in their area, and for nearly one council in four (23%) it was said to be a "major problem".
- Statutory homeless acceptances fell slightly in 2017/18, although still remain 42 per cent above their 2009 low point.
- The rise since 2010 in the number of households made homeless by the ending of private tenancies seems to have peaked.

- Homelessness temporary accommodation placements, have continued to rise, and now stand 71 per cent higher than in 2011, with a disproportionate rise in Bed & Breakfast use.
- By mid-2018 some 85,000 homeless households were living in temporary accommodation, equating to over 200,000 people.
- Most local authorities (62%) reported that the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which came into force in April 2018, had enabled a more person-centred approach to managing homelessness.
- There are concerns about impacts of future welfare reforms. Nearly two thirds of local authorities anticipate a “significant” increase in homelessness as a result of the full roll-out of Universal Credit, with a further 25 per cent expected some level of increase.

### **Homelessness National Audit Office 2017**

The National Audit Office (NAO) scrutinises public spending for Parliament. In 2017 the published a report on Homelessness in England. It can be seen from the recommendations that this is now a driver for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in its direction of travel. The recommendations have translated into action plans for the MHCLG which aim to increase transparency on Local Authority Plans and accountability in delivering against the plans.

- The MHCLG should develop and publish a strategy that sets out how it will achieve its objectives relating to homelessness.
- The MHCLG should work with local authorities to establish how they are making use of measures to tackle homelessness, in order to gain a full understanding of effectiveness and share best practice.
- The MHCLG should work with local authorities to ensure that they are making the most effective use of temporary accommodation. This work should include enabling local authorities to increase their use of the innovative short-term solutions that they are taking.
- The government, led by the MHCLG and the Department for Work & Pensions, should develop a much better understanding of the interactions between local housing markets and welfare reform in order to evaluate fully the causes of homelessness.

To date a National Rough Sleeping strategy has been developed.

### **Homelessness: Applying All Our Health Public Health 2018**

This is a public health resource to help front-line health and care staff use their trusted relationships with patients, families and communities to take action on homelessness.

Health and care professionals play an important role, working alongside other professionals to:

- Identify the risk of homelessness among people who have poor health, and prevent this.
- Minimise the impact on health from homelessness among people who are already experiencing it.
- Enable improved health outcomes for people experiencing homelessness so that their poor health is not a barrier to moving on to a home of their own.

There needs to be clear local action, partnership working (across the local authority, clinical commissioning group and other local organisations), understanding, and alignment of commissioning decisions to prevent and respond to homelessness across the life course. This can include:

- Reducing the risk of homelessness to children and young people to strengthen their life chances.
- Enabling working-age adults to enjoy social, economic and cultural participation in society.
- Breaking the cycle of homelessness or unstable housing by addressing mental health problems, or drug and alcohol use, or experience of the criminal justice system.

This requires strong local leadership and prioritisation to identify unmet need, funding and actions to address gaps in provision.

A full list of other reports that have been considered in the development of this strategy can be found in the Homelessness Review.

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