

Brighton & Hove City Council

Overview & Scrutiny

Agenda Item

Subject: Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025 to 2030

Date of meeting: 8 October 2025

Report of: Cabinet Member for Housing

Contact Officer: Name: Director of Housing People Services

Email: harry.williams@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: All wards

Key Decision: No

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 Under the Homelessness Act (2002) all housing authorities must have a homelessness strategy based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their district. The strategy must be renewed every 5 years. The council is currently consulting on a draft homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025 to 2030. This sets out proposals for preventing and reducing homelessness and for ensuring that sufficient accommodation and support are available for people who are at risk or those who become homeless. The draft strategy can be found at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The strategy contributes to the delivery of Outcome 2 in the council plan: A fair and inclusive city. It is identified as an action in both the council plan and the housing strategy.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Overview & Scrutiny notes the findings of the review of homelessness 2025.
- 2.2 Overview & Scrutiny comments on proposed priorities and commitments set out in the draft homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025 to 2030.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 There are an increasing number of people experiencing homelessness in Brighton & Hove. Analysis by Shelter in 2024 indicated that homelessness affects around 1 in 77 people in the city (3,580 people or 1.3% of the city's population). They estimated that at the end of June 2024 there were 3,528 people experiencing homelessness and living in temporary accommodation.

Trends in homelessness are set out in more detail in the review of homelessness 2025 at Appendix 2.

- 3.2 Shelter estimated that there were 1,411 homeless children in the city in June 2024: almost 40% of the total homeless population. This is confirmed by council data. Most of these children are living in temporary accommodation. At the end of 2024, 47% of households living in temporary accommodation contained children.
- 3.3 Rough sleeping is also rising in the city, reflecting national and regional trends. The rate of rough sleeping in Brighton & Hove was 30 per 100,000 population in March 2025, up from 20 per 100,000 in October 2020. Brighton & Hove has the joint 19th highest rate of rough sleeping in England.
- 3.4 More people are approaching our services with significant and often complex needs. Data from a recent audit of people with Multiple Compound Needs indicates that there were 704 people in contact with services who were experiencing homelessness with 2 or more other compounding needs (mental health, substance misuse, domestic violence, history of offending).
- 3.5 There are specific legal duties that the council, as the local housing authority, must comply with. This includes providing information and advice and preventing or relieving homelessness. If homelessness cannot be prevented the council may have a duty to help applicants find a settled home if they are eligible, have a priority need and other tests are met. There are other duties relating to homelessness, including the Duty to Refer, and responsibilities under the Children Act 1989, that also apply to the council's partners. There will also be some duties owed by adult social care in limited circumstances,
- 3.6 While people's homeless applications are being processed or while they are waiting to be rehoused, they may be placed in temporary accommodation. After falling between 2020 and 2022, the use of temporary accommodation by the council has again risen, with 1,928 households living in temporary accommodation at the end of 2024. We know from national evidence and local data, that living in temporary accommodation has adverse effects on people's health and wellbeing, employment, education and training, and other outcomes.
- 3.7 The cost of temporary accommodation is not sustainable with both rising prices and increasing demand. We anticipate a significant reduction in grant funding over the life of the strategy. To deliver the strategy with its planned shift to prevention, it must be financially sustainable in the short and medium term to deliver the desired long term benefits.
- 3.8 The draft strategy puts strong emphasis on partnership working with partners in the public, voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors involved in providing data and shaping the development of the strategy. Partnership with people with lived experience has also been a key element of strategy development and is embedded within the commitments which will underpin delivery.

- 3.9 The number of people who are homeless with high level or complex needs is increasing. This has informed the third priority area in the strategy 'Provide joined-up support with our partners to people who most need help'.
- 3.10 Due to the large number of children and young people affected by homelessness we have included a dedicated chapter addressing the impact of homelessness on children, families and young people. We have sought support from Public Health for an in-depth assessment to better understand the support needs of children, families and young people living in temporary accommodation.
- 3.11 Homelessness is rooted in structural inequalities and system wide challenges. Unemployment, disability, physical ill health, mental health needs, substance use, domestic abuse, and family breakdown create pathways into homelessness for many. The current cost of living crisis has intensified these pressures, while a chronic shortage of genuinely affordable housing means that even those in work can struggle.
- 3.12 The broader determinants of homelessness require comprehensive, coordinated responses that span multiple partners and levels intervention. The draft homelessness and rough sleeping strategy focuses on prevention and early intervention, temporary accommodation, and support for those in greatest need. Sustainable progress, however, depends on addressing the underlying causes of homelessness through a broader strategic lens. This includes actions set out in the housing strategy, the city plan, economic development strategy, the health and wellbeing strategy and more.
- 3.13 The proposed priorities for the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025 to 2030 are to:
1. Increase our effectiveness in preventing homelessness and rough sleeping
 - 1.1 Early identification of risk and early intervention
 - 1.2 Support people to stay in their homes or to find a new home
 - 1.3 Deliver targeted prevention for people at risk of rough sleeping
 2. Improve temporary accommodation pathways and experiences
 - 2.1 Improve move on from temporary accommodation into settled housing
 - 2.2 Support people living in temporary accommodation
 - 2.3 Improve the supply and quality of temporary accommodation
 3. Provide joined-up support with our partners to people who most need help
 - 3.1 Target support for people who are most vulnerable
 - 3.2 Create integrated services for people with Multiple Compound Needs
 - 3.3 Support people experiencing rough sleeping to access services and accommodation

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 The development of a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy at least every 5 years is a legal responsibility for the council as the local housing authority. The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities

indicates that housing authorities may collaborate to produce a joint housing strategy across a sub-regional area. This option was considered but not taken forward. However, the draft strategy does contain a commitment to work with national, regional and local partners to tackle the root causes of homelessness.

- 4.2 A new national homelessness strategy was announced by the incoming government in 2024, with an anticipated publication date to coincide with the 2025 Spending Review. In consultation with the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government we agreed to defer the city's homelessness and rough sleeping strategy with a view to incorporating new national priorities. At the point of writing this report, the national strategy has not been published and there is no indication when this will take place. If the national strategy is published in time, then consideration will be given to this in the final Brighton & Hove strategy.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 Both the review of homelessness and the draft strategy have been developed with extensive engagement from statutory and voluntary, community and social enterprise partners. They have also been shaped by input from people with lived experience of homelessness.

- 5.1 Public consultation on the draft strategy runs from 8 September to 26 October 2025 with more information about how people can respond on the council's consultation website at yourvoice.brighton-hove.gov.uk. Findings will inform the final strategy with a consultation report published alongside it.

- 5.2 The consultation and communication plan is at Appendix 3

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 to 2030 indicates a robust and well-structured plan aimed at addressing the critical issue of homelessness.

- 6.2 The financial appraisal of the strategy reveals significant and increasing risks associated with shrinking budgets and diminishing resources. The strategy prioritises prevention and early intervention, as these represent the most cost-effective approaches. However, persistent pressures on temporary accommodation, including rising unit costs, limited supply, and extended stays, continue to drive up expenditure and put a strain on the Council's finances.

- 6.3 The overall funding environment is contracting. The Council's core budget remains static, while external grants from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), namely the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) and Rough Sleeping Prevention and Recovery Grant (RSPARG) are under threat. Notably, following a formal consultation on the HPG funding formula for 2026/27, Brighton & Hove City Council faces a potential reduction of approximately 45%, falling from £10.9 million in 2025/26 to around £6 million in

2026/27. Although transitional arrangements may partially cushion the impact, the reduction in grant income will still be considerable.

6.4 RSPARG allocations for 2025/26 are currently stable, but there is no confirmed funding for 2026/27. There is a real risk that RSPARG could be absorbed into HPG and subject to substantial cuts. New initiatives, such as a 'No First Night Out' model, would require decommissioning existing services or reallocating funds, as no new grant funding is expected. This poses a major financial risk.

6.5 Charitable and NHS contributions are also under financial pressure, which may further limit support and compound strain on Council services.

6.6 Short-term cost pressures impede progress towards prevention strategies, and reliance on expensive spot purchasing for temporary accommodation increases costs. Difficulties in moving individuals out of temporary accommodation result in further financial burdens. Proposals to reduce the use of costly placements, including relocating people outside the area, present practical and political challenges.

6.7 In summary, the financial context for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025–2030 is increasingly constrained, with declining funds and mounting risks. The combined effect of static Council budgets threatened external grants, and wider pressures on partners and charities is likely to result in significant negative financial implications for homelessness and rough sleeping services.

Name of finance officer consulted: Ferrise Hall Date consulted:(04/09/2025):

7. Legal implications

7.1 Under the Homelessness Act (2002) all housing authorities must have a homelessness strategy based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their district. The strategy must be renewed every 5 years. The current strategy expires this year. Consultation is an essential part of any review.

Name of lawyer consulted: Simon Court Date consulted (11 September 2025)

8. Equalities implications

8.1 An initial equality impact assessment has informed the review of homelessness 2025. Key issues are identified in the review in the sections 'Who experiences homelessness?' and 'Support needs of people experiencing homelessness'. The assessment has also informed the consultation and communication plan. A full equalities impact assessment will accompany the final strategy to council cabinet following consultation. The consultation findings will also be taken into account.

9. Sustainability implications

9.1 There are no immediate sustainability implications arising from this report.

10. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

10.1 Poor health and disability can be a cause and consequence of homelessness. Data and evidence on health and homelessness in the city is included in the review of homelessness at Appendix 2 alongside summary information on healthcare services for people experiencing homelessness in the city. There is evidence from local Health Counts data and national research that living in temporary accommodation has a negative impact on both physical and mental health. People with multiple compound needs have significant health and care needs.

Other Implications

11. Procurement implications

11.1 There are no immediate procurement implications arising from this report.

12. Crime & disorder implications:

12.1 The review of homelessness and draft strategy identify domestic abuse as a key cause of homelessness. Under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 the council is required to set out its plans for accommodation for survivors of domestic abuse. It last did this in the Pan-Sussex Strategy for Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support 2021-2024. The strategy was developed in partnership with the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council. Work is currently underway to refresh the strategy.

12.2 Homelessness and rough sleeping are sometimes associated with begging and other forms of anti-social behaviour. While the strategy does not explicitly address these issues (being more appropriately matters for the Community Safety and Community Safety Strategy), it does make a commitment to challenge stigma, build trust and promote community integration and social connections. This is likely to have a positive impact on crime, disorder and community cohesion.

13. Conclusion

13.1 Comments and feedback from members of the committee will inform the final strategy due for consideration by council Cabinet on 11 December 2025.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Draft homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025 to 2030
2. Review of homelessness and rough sleeping 2025

3. Consultation and communication plan

