

EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



REPORT OF: Executive Member for Adult Services and Prevention

LEAD OFFICERS: Director of Adults and Prevention

DATE: Thursday, 8 October 2020

PORTFOLIO(S) AFFECTED:

WARD/S AFFECTED: (All Wards);

KEY DECISION: N

SUBJECT:

Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2020-2025

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To formally adopt the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2020-2025 and authorise its publication on the Council's website.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board: Makes the decision to adopt the Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2020-2025 as Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's formal strategy for the next five year period. Strategy attached at Appendix 1

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 As part of the Homelessness Act 2002, the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and the Governments more recent Rough Sleeper Strategy each Local Authority has a duty to agree and publish a strategy document that details how the authority plans to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the following five year period.

3.2 The strategy is set against a backdrop of changes in social and fiscal policy at the national and local level and consequent budget cuts across all sectors.

3.3 The strategy has been developed following a comprehensive review of homelessness and rough sleeping in the Borough. As well as a desktop review of current literature the reviewer carried out 'face to face' consultations with all of the key stakeholders within and outside of the Council along with service users and those with lived experience of homelessness.

3.4 Covid-19; the strategy was written and ready for formal adoption by the council as Covid-19 started to become a pandemic. This is a five year strategy and has not taken Covid-19 into consideration, however it has had implications for homelessness within the borough but these will hopefully be short-lived and only last the duration of the pandemic. More information on the impacts of Covid-19 can be obtained directly from the Housing Needs Team.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

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4.1 Whilst there has been a significant general increase in those at risk of homelessness in recent years

the biggest increase in the Borough has been amongst single people, particularly those with substance abuse, alcohol dependency and those with poor mental health who are living or have a history of living in the numerous Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's). These chaotic individuals often find themselves forced to rough sleep due to their associated behaviour and the number of rough sleepers in the Borough significantly increased from 2 rough sleepers in 2017 to 21 in 2019.

4.2 The actions that need to be undertaken to deliver the Council's strategic aim and meet its objectives cannot be done without the buy in from partners and the strategy is linked to partner strategies including Vulnerable Persons Strategy, Adolescent Strategy, Alcohol and Substance Misuse Strategy, Community Safety Strategy, Domestic Abuse Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Public Health Outcomes Framework and the Borough's Corporate Plan.

4.3 The strategy contains our vision to end rough sleeping and reduce homelessness across the Borough and also details our values that we believe everyone who is homeless has a right to expect. The strategy is split into four strategic objectives:

- Prevention and relief of homelessness
- Limiting the use of B&B and the provision of suitable temporary accommodation.
- Tackle and reduce the levels of rough sleeping.
- Addressing the over-supply of Houses in Multiple Occupation.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy does not stand in isolation; rather it has been designed to help the Council and its partners to achieve aims that cross boundaries and address issues of health, social care and community safety. Successful implementation of the strategy will therefore help to achieve some of the objectives of both our internal and external partners.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No direct costs are associated with the strategy although indirect costs may result from some of the actions contained within the strategy these will be met from current financial resources and from additional funding that we will receive from Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There is a legal duty under the Homelessness Act 2002, The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and the Governments Rough Sleeper Strategy to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy in place and to publish this strategy and make it available to anyone who requests a copy.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Any additional resources that are identified over the period of the strategy will be met from within current resources or secured using additional funding made available from MHCLG.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision.

10. CONSULTATIONS

As part of the review of the current homelessness and rough sleeping situation and also the production of this strategy a comprehensive consultation exercise was undertaken by the reviewer. As well as a desktop review of current literature the reviewer carried out 'face to face' consultations with all of the key stakeholders within and outside of the Council along with service users and those with lived experience of homelessness.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

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DATE:	21 September 2020
BACKGROUND PAPER:	None