

Report Title:	Report on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information?	No - Part I
Lead Member:	Councillor McWilliams, Lead Member for Housing, Communications and Youth Engagement
Meeting and Date:	Windsor Town Forum – 23 rd September 2020 at 6.15m
Responsible Officer(s):	Russel O’Keefe Executive Director for Place, Tracy Hendren Head of Housing and Environmental Health
Wards affected:	Windsor Area

www.rbwm.gov.uk



REPORT SUMMARY

1. This report provides an update on the work of the revised Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy, as approved at cabinet on 25th June 2020. The report focuses specifically on the Windsor area and is produced for the Windsor Town Forum.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Windsor Town Forum notes the report and:

- i) **Note the positive impact of the revised Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy**
- ii) **Note the introduction of the new alternative giving scheme in Windsor**

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 On 25th June 2020 Cabinet approved the revised Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy with the updated Action plan.

2.2 The updated action plan gave 5 key priorities

- 1. Reduce the numbers of people becoming homeless
- 2. Reduce the numbers of households in temporary accommodation and improve the quality of that accommodation
- 3. Support people into good quality affordable and sustainable accommodation options
- 4. Reduce rough sleeping and support those who find themselves on the street
- 5. Improve the customer service provided to people approaching housing services

2.3 The revised strategy recognised that Windsor currently has specific challenges with rough sleeping. It affirmed that the Council is committed to preventing rough sleeping and that it would dedicate significant resources, as well as work with partner organisations, to preventing rough sleeping.

2.4 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was updated to be inline with the aims of the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government Rough Sleeper Strategy 2018, that stated:

We will work with the Local Government Association and local authorities so that by winter 2019:

- *All local authorities update their strategies and rebadge them as homelessness and rough sleeping strategies*
- *Strategies are made available online and submitted to MHCLG; and*
- *Local authorities report progress in delivering these strategies and publish annual action plans*
- *Where local authorities do not follow these changes, we will take action*

2.5 Windsor has a particular challenges around street activity that can include rough sleeping and begging, as outlined in the strategy, and the Housing Service have worked hard to implement some key improvements to the service within the Windsor area.

2.6 Alternative Giving Scheme: Tap 4 Lasting Change

- 2.6.1 The Alternative Giving Scheme is a program being established across the Royal Borough to enable the public to actively support the priority of reducing rough sleeping, with the goal to end rough sleeping.
- 2.6.2 The scheme will provide electronic stations to allow for contactless donations for the to be made in the community at high traffic areas to allow the public to donate money to those sleeping rough.
- 2.6.3 The scheme is administered by RBWM, and the funds raised will be directed towards helping individuals through the Councils Rough Sleeper Pathway; off the streets and into sustainable accommodation.
- 2.6.4 The scheme is being supported by local businesses and will have a location in Windsor that the public will be directed too if they would like to donate to those sleeping rough.
- 2.6.5 Our partners will work with RBWM to identify key rough sleepers that would benefit from additional financial intervention and will identify specific needs that need to be addressed. There is a clear governance structure for the scheme, and funding allocations will be signed off through homeless forum. Funding decisions will be clearly based on support plans held by the Rough Sleeper Pathway.
- 2.6.6 The scheme is nearly ready, with venues for the contactless donation points established in Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton. Once a venue has been identified for Ascot, the scheme can be launched. The proposed date for launch is World Homelessness Day on 10th October 2020.
- 2.6.7 This aim of this scheme is not only to provide targeted support to those sleeping rough, but it should also result in a reduction of street activity across the borough, as members of the public are enabled to support those sleeping rough without providing cash directly to people perceived to be begging on the streets.

2.7 Homelessness Forum

- 2.7.8 To achieve the priority of improving the customer service to those that approach the housing service, one of the actions is to implement a homelessness forum.
- 2.7.9 This is on track to be established as a virtual meeting for the beginning of October, and will be attended by key partner agencies across the borough.
- 2.7.10 The forum has several objectives:

- Monitor and ensure the progress of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan
- Monitor the success of and use of fund raised by the Alternative Giving Scheme
- Allow for regular communication and consultation with key partners and stakeholders within the borough
- Ensure a joined-up service for those facing homelessness across the borough

2.8 Continued Engagement with partners

- 2.8.11 To ensure that key partners are engaged with the service and are jointly achieving the objectives set out in the Strategy, the Housing Service has set up a number of key liaison meetings.
- 2.8.12 The most relevant to Windsor is the establishing of a weekly liaison meeting with the Windsor Homelessness Project.
- 2.8.13 This meeting is set up to ensure operational alignment between the two organisations, and to ensure that both services are working cohesively together to reduce rough sleeping in Windsor.
- 2.8.14 This partnership has been especially important during the Covid 19 restrictions, where the Windsor Homelessness Project have assisted in supporting mutual clients who have been housed under the Government 'Everybody In' objective.
- 2.8.15 Another operational liaison meeting that has been implemented is the Rough Sleeper Operational meeting that happens on a weekly basis.
- 2.8.16 The Rough Sleeper Opps Meeting is attended by internal and external partners with the aim of picking up relevant, up to date information on rough sleepers and their current engagement with services. This meeting helps inform the Rough Sleeper and MEAM panel meeting in identifying the actions needed on a case and what agency should be responsible.
- 2.8.17 The new Rough Sleeper and MEAM Panel Meeting was launched on 3rd September 2020 as the parent meeting for the smaller organisational liaison meetings.
- 2.8.18 The Rough Sleeper and MEAM Panel is set up to track the progress of all rough sleepers and complex cases in the borough, with the goal of ensuring continued progression of Rough Sleepers from the streets and into stable accommodation.
- 2.8.19 The Rough Sleeper and MEAM Panel meets on a monthly basis to track those actions on each case, and hold both the Council and its partner agencies to account if actions are not being completed.
- 2.8.20 The Rough Sleeper Pathway have also been working closely with Thames Valley Police to implement a support before enforcement approach in tackling street activity.
- 2.8.21 Support before enforcement ensure that street activity is picked up by the outreach service within the Rough Sleeper Pathway, who will try to engage with individuals who may be sleeping rough or causing ASB in the borough.
- 2.8.22 If an individual does not engage with the support offered, there are clear lines of communication to both the wardens and Thames Valley Police to progress incremental levels of enforcement to try and encourage engagement with services being offered.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

Table 2: Key implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Refreshed action plan delivered	Actions not delivered	Actions delivered in line with timescales	Actions delivered in advance of timescales	N/A	March 2022

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

4.1 The Alternative Giving Scheme has had start up costs of £2000 that was provided through kickstart funding. Once up and running the scheme will generate revenue that will be used to pay for the minimal upkeep costs, allowing the large proportion of funds to be allocated through the governance structures to individual identified rough sleepers.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 imposes a duty on local housing authorities to carry out a homelessness review in their area and formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on its results every five years. Housing authorities must keep their homelessness strategy under review and continue to update the actions annually to ensure they are appropriate and up to date, reflecting local need and national policy.

5.2 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published a Rough Sleeping Strategy in 2018 stating that they would work with the Local Government Association and local authorities so that by winter 2019, all local authorities update their strategies and rebrand them as homelessness and rough sleeping strategies.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 Key risks associated with the recommendation are shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Impact of risk and mitigation

Risks Uncontrolled	Risk	Controls	Controlled Risk
Homelessness strategy action plan not delivered	Medium	Effective management of action plan	Low

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation was carried out with key stakeholders, customers and

partner agencies which informed the updating of the action plan.

8. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Activity	Timescale
Alternative Giving Scheme	10 th October 2020
Homelessness Forum	7 th October 2020

9. APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix A – Renamed Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy including the refreshed Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan

10. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date issued for comment	Date returned with comments
Cllr Ross McWilliams	Lead Member for Housing, Communications and Youth Engagement	09/06/2020	12/06/2020
Duncan Sharkey	Managing Director	09/06/2020	09/06/2020
Russell O’Keefe	Executive Director	08/06/2020	08/06/2020
Adele Taylor	Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer)	09/06/2020	12/06/2020
Hilary Hall	Director of Adult Services	09/06/2020	09/06/2020
Kevin McDaniel	Director of Children Services	09/06/2020	
Nikki Craig	Head of HR and Corporate Projects	09/06/2020	
Mary Severin	Monitoring Officer	09/06/2020	
Elaine Browne	Head of Law	09/06/2020	10/06/2020
Louisa Dean	Communications	09/06/2020	

