

Report for: Cabinet Member Signing – 8 February 2023

Title: Rough Sleeping Strategy

Report

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Ward(s) affected: All

Report for Key/

Non Key Decision: Key Decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1. Haringey's current Rough Sleeping Strategy was written in 2018. Over the course of 2021/22 a new draft Rough Sleeping Strategy has been co-produced with residents with lived experience of homelessness, council officers and community partners.
- 1.2. The proposed draft Rough Sleeping Strategy is attached in Appendix 1. It builds on successes delivered in the previous strategy to set out the principles, commitments and activities we will deliver to achieve our ambition to end rough sleeping in the borough.

2. Recommendations

The Cabinet Member is asked:

- 2.1 To approve the draft Rough Sleeping Strategy attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 To approve the commencement of a public consultation on the draft Rough Sleeping Strategy at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 To note the significant resident and stakeholder co-production undertaken throughout 2021 and 2022. Specifically, to note that the draft commitments and activities within the strategy were co-produced by residents with lived experience of homelessness, council staff and partners using a participatory democracy approach, which included a public legislative theatre event in January 2022, facilitated with support from Arts and Homelessness International.

3. Reasons for decision

- 3.1. Rough sleeping is one of the most harmful and visible consequences of an unequal society. People affected by it are disproportionately victims of abuse and exploitation, more likely to die prematurely and less likely to secure their legal rights and fair access to health services. In 21-22, 268 people slept rough on the streets of Haringey; the cost of living crisis, ongoing impact of Covid-19 and a challenging national policy environment means this figure is likely to increase in the coming years.

- 3.2. Haringey's current Rough Sleeping Strategy was written in 2018. A new Strategy is required to reflect the significant reduction in rough sleeping achieved in the previous strategy period, and to restate our ambition to end rough sleeping and articulate the commitments and activities needed to do this.
- 3.3. The Rough Sleeping Strategy is not a statutory requirement and therefore a statutory consultation is not required. However, the Council is committed to enabling all residents to actively participate in strategy development, as such, following approval of the draft Rough Sleeping Strategy a comprehensive consultation will be undertaken to seek the views of those who have not been involved in the development of the strategy so far.

4. Alternative options considered

- 4.1. Not to develop a new Rough Sleeping Strategy. This was rejected because, although developing a Rough Sleeping Strategy is not a statutory requirement, it is an important mechanism for securing shared understanding and borough-wide commitment to tackling this crucial issue.

5. Background

- 5.1. Haringey's current Rough Sleeping Strategy was adopted in 2018.
- 5.2. Since the current Rough Sleeping Strategy was adopted, we have made significant steps in learning 'what works' to reduce rough sleeping. We are committed to ending rough sleeping in Haringey and have developed a strong partnership between residents, grassroots organisations, commissioned services and public sector partners to achieve this. Together our partnership has achieved a 71% reduction in rough sleeping, implemented a wide range of new services and established the borough as a site of national best practice in the field.
- 5.3. The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the challenges and opportunities around ending rough sleeping. In particular, the disproportionate harms affecting people with insecure or undetermined immigration status were crystallised as were the opportunities to break down criterion and administrative barriers to supporting this group. Similarly, the specific vulnerabilities and relative invisibility of women and LGBTQ+ people who rough sleep also became clearer, along with the need for specialist services and spaces, the need for inclusive and informed practices and Work through the Dying Homeless Project findings showed that the *Everyone In* scheme met its primary goal of preventing people dying from Covid-19. Less than 3% of recorded causes of death were directly attributed to the disease, a significant achievement given the overall death toll from the pandemic.¹ Learning from our Covid-19 homelessness response has strengthened our partnership working and highlighted the crucial role of health, social care and public health partners at both strategic and operational levels within our work.
- 5.4. Between November 2021 and May 2022, people with lived experience of homelessness, Arts and Homelessness International and Council staff worked together to create an original play based on their real experiences. This process is

¹ 2021 Museum of Homelessness report of findings on homeless deaths in 2020 ([squarespace.com](https://www.squarespace.com))

- called Legislative Theatre and it's a form of creative co-production or participatory democracy. In Legislative Theatre, audiences and policymakers watch a play based on the community actors' experiences with ineffective policies and practices. Then, audiences interact with the play to propose new approaches, rules, and policies to address the problems being performed on stage. At the end, community members, actors and policymakers agree a series of commitments and decision makers in the audience are asked to commit to taking immediate and longer-term actions.
- 5.5. As well as legislative theatre, co-production took the form of 1:1 interviews, group discussions, stakeholder events, literary contributions and graphic design. This was supplemented by data and insight from our directly delivered and commissioned rough sleeping services, both locally and sub-regionally.
 - 5.6. This work highlighted the systemic issues experienced by both staff and people affected by homelessness as they try to navigate the complex landscape of services, policies and laws. Issues with training, capacity, system barriers and eligibility criteria were all highlighted. The Legislative Theatre performance created a foundation from which a Steering Group of staff and residents has built the commitments and activities described in the draft strategy.
 - 5.7. Learning from the above, as well as significant changes at the regional and national level, require a new strategy which reflects new challenges and opportunities.
 - 5.8. The draft Rough Sleeping Strategy asks that all of our practitioners and partners align to the following approach:
 - We are committed to changing the system around homelessness and we believe it is possible
 - We are ambitious and determined in the context of challenging national policy
 - We recognise the causes of homelessness and challenge systemic inequality
 - 5.9. Our draft commitments are as follows:
 - To make rough sleeping rare, and to prevent it where possible
 - To ensure that where rough sleeping does occur, that it is brief
 - To ensure that rough sleeping is non-recurrent
 - To exhaust all options to support people with undetermined eligibility to have a route away from the streets
 - 5.10. We are proud that this strategy is a collaboration between our residents, partners, Council teams and Arts & Homelessness International. The co-creation of this strategy builds on the Council's ongoing commitment to improve homelessness services by embedding co-production into our decision-making. A full report, written by Arts and Homelessness International describing their work with Haringey and their full findings can be found at Appendix 2, and online at: [Haringey Rough Sleeping Strategy and Arts and Homelessness International Mapping Report 2022 | Arts & Homelessness International \(artshomelessint.com\)](https://www.artshomelessint.com/2022/07/20/haringey-rough-sleeping-strategy-and-arts-and-homelessness-international-mapping-report-2022/)
 - 5.11. It is proposed to conduct a public consultation on the draft Strategy over a 6-week period. Residents' and other stakeholders' views will be recorded and will inform the
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final version of the Strategy. Our proposed approach has been developed to ensure that the consultation is well publicised using various channels, and that residents disproportionately at risk of rough sleeping are encouraged and supported to engage with the consultation. A programme of workshops and 1:1 sessions will be facilitated to encourage input from existing residents of homelessness and rough sleeping services. Following the consultation, a final draft Strategy will be brought back to the Cabinet Member for approval.

6. Contribution to strategic outcomes

6.1. The draft Rough Sleeping Strategy directly contributes to the objectives and outcomes of the Borough Plan, in particular Priority 1: 'a safe, stable and affordable home for everyone, whatever their circumstances', in particular to;

- Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation
- Aim to end street homelessness
- Ensure access to high quality housing support that prevents or relieves homelessness for people with additional needs

7. Statutory Officer Comments

Finance

7.1. The draft Rough Sleeping Strategy does not present any financial implications. However, future programmes and projects resulting from implementing the strategy will be assessed and reviewed for financial implications.

Legal

7.2. The Head of Legal has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.3. There is no statutory requirement for the Council to publish a Rough Sleeping Strategy but the Council does so in order give coherence to our approach, clearly setting out our commitments towards ending rough sleeping and how we will work with partners and stakeholders to tackle it.

7.4. The strategy has been consulted on in the past, giving rise to a legitimate expectation of consultation on the new strategy. In conducting the consultation, the following general principles of consultation apply:

- That consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage;
- That the proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration and response;
- That adequate time must be given for consideration and response; and
- That the product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any statutory proposals.

7.5. The proposed consultation is in accordance with these principles and there is no reason why the Cabinet Member should not approve the recommendations in this report.

Procurement

- 7.6. Strategic Procurement notes the report and confirms there are no procurement implications from the proposal.

Equality

- 7.7. The council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not
 - Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not
- 7.8. The three parts of the duty apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.
- 7.9. Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.
- 7.10. The decision in question is concerning approval of the Councils new Rough Sleeping Strategy which is required to replace the now out of date 2018 strategy.
- 7.11. In 2021 to 22 268 people were seen rough sleeping in the borough of Haringey. As such, the Rough Sleeping Strategy affects a relatively small number of people in the borough. However, those who experience rough sleeping are often the most marginalised and disadvantaged in terms of accessing services, and are those who achieve the poorest health, housing and social care outcomes in the borough. By setting out a vision to end rough sleeping to unite partners in this work, and by making concrete commitments to prevent and reduce rough sleeping, the strategy will have a positive impact on BAME residents, disabled residents and hidden homeless groups such as women, young people and the LGBTQ+ community.
- 7.12. By seeking to prevent a return to rough sleeping by ensuring the provision of appropriate supported housing services, the strategy will have a positive impact on BAME residents, those with disabilities and hidden homeless groups such as women, young people and the LGBTQ+ community.
- 7.13. The draft Rough Sleeping Strategy specifically recognises systemic inequality as a root cause of homelessness. Ending rough sleeping means tackling and transforming the conditions that create it and requires us to recognise and respond to the effect of systemic inequality as they appear in the borough and in the way people access services. Those who experience rough sleeping are disproportionately disadvantaged across multiple areas and often have intersecting protected characteristics, particularly in terms of race, socio-economic status, sex

and disability. The Rough Sleeping Strategy prioritises meeting the needs of these groups.

7.14. A full analysis is contained in the Equalities Impact Assessment at Appendix 3.

8. Use of appendices

Appendix 1: Rough Sleeping Strategy, 2023-2027

Appendix 2: Haringey Rough Sleeping Strategy and Arts and Homelessness Mapping Report 2022

Appendix 3: Equalities Impact Assessment

9. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Not applicable.