

Report for: Health and Wellbeing Board, 18 September 2025

Title: **Draft Homelessness Strategy**

Lead Officer: Marc Lancaster

1. The purpose of this report

- 1.1. On 11 November 2025, Haringey's Cabinet will consider approving a draft homelessness strategy for consultation. If Cabinet approve that draft, officers will formally consult residents and other stakeholder until late January 2026, analyse responses to that consultation, and develop a final draft for Cabinet to consider adopting in March 2026.
- 1.2. Homelessness is a crisis that has devastating impacts on health and wellbeing, so any action that reduces homelessness will have a positive impact from a public health perspective. Alongside that, and before it is considered by Cabinet in November, the council would like to strengthen the draft strategy's explicit focus on the health and wellbeing of homeless people and those threatened with homelessness.
- 1.3. This report provides a brief summary of work to date developing the draft homelessness strategy before setting out the key actions proposed within it for the council and its partners. It focuses on the proposals related most closely to promoting health and wellbeing.
- 1.4. Health and Wellbeing Board are therefore asked:
 - 1.4.1. To agree that services represented on the Health and Wellbeing Board will seek to meet commitments given in the strategy for member organisation of the Homelessness Reduction Board (set out here in paragraph 3.3)
 - 1.4.2. To give directions so that the draft sent for consultation has a much clearer and more explicit focus on health and wellbeing.

2. Background: A new homelessness strategy for Haringey

- 2.1. The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to have a homelessness strategy that deals with the prevention of homelessness, the supply of appropriate accommodation, and the provision of support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- 2.2. The council has a separate, standalone rough sleeping strategy in place until 2027. After 2027, it plans to produce a unified homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.
- 2.3. The council is in the final stages of producing a draft homelessness strategy for the period to the end of 2027.
- 2.4. The draft strategy will be considered by Cabinet in November 2025. If Cabinet agree the draft, it will be subject to formal consultation before returning to Cabinet in amended form for adoption by March 2025.
- 2.5. The current draft of the homelessness strategy has been driven by three processes:

- The council has undertaken a thorough review of evidence.
 - A Homelessness Reduction Board has met every two to three months since November 2023 to consider issues feeding into the draft homelessness strategy. The Board comprises statutory and voluntary organisations from across the borough – including - and council officers from across housing and social care services.
 - Between October 2024 and April 2025, the council spoke to more than 100 people with experience of homelessness across 26 different organisations and venues. At the same time a survey on the council's Commonplace site received 136 responses. Almost everyone asked the council to improve the way that it communicates with people experiencing homelessness - and with organisations supporting them. Many people identified a need for the council to provide better support for people experiencing homelessness, especially in terms of person-centred and trauma-informed approaches.
- 2.6. The current draft of the homelessness strategy aims to build on best practice and the positive work already being done – for example our exemplar homelessness support service at Mulberry Junction and impacts of our new build programme.
- 2.7. Partnership and prevention are key themes – we know we cannot deliver our objectives alone. We want to build on the strong and positive relationships we have in place locally to improve the way we work with colleagues in our communities, with landlords and with residents to provide better and more joined up support – especially to more vulnerable groups.

3. Structure and Key Actions within the Draft Homelessness Strategy

- 3.1. The strategy proposes five strategic objectives, each with a series of commitments that will help us to meet those objectives and actions to achieve them. This section sets out the key actions.

First strategic objective: To prevent homelessness in Haringey through more effective partnership working

- 3.2. The council and each HRB member organisation will take a cooperative and partnership approach to homelessness based on mutual trust, the open acknowledgement of mistakes as a learning opportunity, and the avoidance of a blame culture.
- 3.3. To support that approach, over the next two years each member of the Homelessness Reduction Board will:
- Take an 'ask and act' approach, asking as early as possible about each service user's housing situation, and then acting urgently and effectively to avoid them becoming homeless wherever that is a risk.
 - Agree and publicise a shared protocol setting out the roles and responsibilities of all HRB partner agencies around homelessness.
 - Produce and regularly update a guide for other HRB members summarising the work of their own organisation or department in relation to homelessness, its key

procedures, and the contact details of key staff with descriptions of their responsibilities.

- Nominate an agreed individual to take strategic responsibility for facilitating joint work around homelessness.
- Provide opportunities for joint training and visits between agencies.
- Put in place and monitor Service Level Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding or protocols where relationships critical to the prevention of homelessness generate conflict or uncertainty – including between housing, the DWP, hospitals, and mental health services.
- Review mechanisms for ensuring that homeless people have clear access to assessment by Adults' and Children's Services through joint protocols between housing, social services, health, probation, police, and voluntary agencies.
- Take individual and shared responsibility for adult safeguarding and improving the health of homeless people.

Second strategic objective: To protect Haringey's population from the risk of homelessness

- 3.4. The council will work with partners to support the delivery of new homes, with the right mix to meet our communities' diverse needs.
- 3.5. At the heart of this is the commitment to deliver 3,000 new council homes by 2031. In the last two years, we have completed and let more than 500 new council homes. Between January 2026 and December 2027, we will complete and let another 500 new council homes.
- 3.6. The council will take an approach to homelessness prevention where Every Contact Matters. By the end of this strategy, all council officers working directly with residents will be trained to provide good quality signposting to advice and support around tenancy rights and homelessness.
- 3.7. The council will improve its online offering to provide accessible, quality and consistent advice on homelessness and tenancy rights, enabling residents to service their own help.
- 3.8. The council will pilot two tenancy sustainment officer posts within the housing management services to provide support to vulnerable council tenants who may be at risk of homelessness. The council will evaluate the success of this pilot by 2027.
- 3.9. The council will strengthen its partnership with Housing Associations... its approach will include a formal focus on developing best practice and shared approaches to tenancy sustainment and early intervention.

Third Strategic Objective: To improve the council's homelessness prevention services for those facing the crisis of homelessness

- 3.10. The council will open a new homelessness prevention hub to provide a trauma-informed, person-centred approach at an in-person, appointment only assessment space for those at risk of or experiencing homelessness, providing a more sensitive

and dignified experience, and maximising opportunities for homelessness prevention work.

- 3.11. The council will co-locate an independent advice service at its new homelessness prevention hub.

Fourth Strategic Objective: To provide specific interventions for groups at high risk of homelessness

Private renters

- 3.12. The council will work in a coordinated, planned way to enforce the rights of private renters' including as set out in the new Renters Rights Act. The council will be ready to advise and support private renters around all aspects of the new Act across a series of defined timelines over the next two years.
- 3.13. Through 2026 and 2027 the council will conduct planned and sustained renters' rights campaigns.

Young people

- 3.14. The council will provide housing needs staff with specialist training on mediation...
- 3.15. The council commit to stopping its young care leavers becoming homeless
- 3.16. The council will continue to grant care leavers priority status on the housing register...
- 3.17. During the first year of a young care leaver's council tenancy, they may at any point end that tenancy and return to supported housing, with the opportunity to be placed back on the housing register when they are more ready for independent living.

Survivors and victims of sexual and domestic violence and abuse

- 3.18. By 2027 the council will gain Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation so that its housing and housing needs services reflect best practice in the way they respond to domestic abuse.
- 3.19. As a landlord, the council will use the Domestic Abuse Act to exclude perpetrators and facilitate safe housing for victims, including like-for-like transfers and other preventative measures.
- 3.20. Victims and survivors will not be required to provide its housing management or Housing Needs services with inappropriate levels of evidence or statements from the police...
- 3.21. Housing Needs staff will be trained in trauma-informed care and domestic abuse awareness. Housing Needs services will be culturally competent and inclusive of LGBTQ+ survivors.
- 3.22. Housing Needs services will attend and participate in Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences
- 3.23. When the council provide Temporary Accommodation or other kinds of emergency accommodation for survivors and victims of Domestic Abuse, the council will take a Whole Housing Approach within DAHA principles.

Vulnerable single people and those with complex needs

- 3.24. The council will develop a new delivery model that can significantly increase the quality and quantity of supported housing options for vulnerable homeless people.

- 3.25. The council aim to move single people with complex support needs out of emergency and Temporary Accommodation into supported housing.
- 3.26. The council will provide access to council tenancies for single people with complex needs through Housing First alongside the provision of long-term support
- 3.27. The council will work towards agreements with partners so that during the first year of their council tenancy, anybody moving from supported housing or through Housing First into a council tenancy can end that tenancy and return to supported housing, with the opportunity to be placed back on the housing register with the same level of priority when they are assessed as being more ready to cope with independent living.
- 3.28. The council will develop a new supported housing commissioning model between Housing Related Support and Adult Social Care to provide better alternatives to supported living for adults with mental health needs and learning disabilities.

Victims of cuckooing

- 3.29. The council will establish a new Haringey Cuckooing Team to provide victim-focused, multiagency support where a vulnerable person has had their home taken over.
- 3.30. Alongside this the council will establish a Cuckooing Protocol, Cuckooing Panel, and Steering Group. The team will provide specialist training for staff and frontline professionals to identify and refer potential cuckooing cases.

Communities experiencing racial inequality

- 3.31. The council will work to improve the way we collect data and other intelligence on the needs of our most marginalised racialised communities, including in relation to households approaching the council as homeless or threatened with homelessness. We will use that data to inform a strategic approach from 2027 that will be centred on partnership working with specialist organisations.
- 3.32. The council will make specific arrangements for communicating information about benefits and key housing rights information connected with the Renters Rights Act.

Fifth Strategic Commitment: To improve accommodation options for those experiencing the emergency of homelessness

- 3.33. The council will expand its programme of acquisitions of homes from the open market for use as good quality settled accommodation, acquiring 250 homes every year.
- 3.34. The council will take a series of steps to increase the number of good quality homes it can lease – especially over longer periods – from private landlords for use either as Temporary Accommodation or longer-term settled accommodation.
- 3.35. The council will work with its agents and partners to ensure that all Temporary Accommodation fully meets its quality and safety standards...
- 3.36. The council will build two new Temporary Accommodation lodges in the borough. They will provide high quality Temporary Accommodation that includes ensuite shower rooms and generous storage alongside shared cooking facilities, bathtubs for younger children, and external play space...

- 3.37. The council will ensure that families moving into Temporary Accommodation have basic furniture and appliances in their accommodation. We will seek to budget from April 2026 to provide safe sleeping equipment - such as cots, Moses baskets, new baby mattresses with waterproof covers and baby gates – wherever these are needed for households with babies.
- 3.38. The council will improve move-on support for households in Temporary Accommodation, with dedicated staff providing tailored support to individual households.
- 3.39. The council will consider how to put in place an expanded support offer for households in Temporary Accommodation. This will include working with NHS and public health partners to improve the health outcomes for people in Temporary Accommodation – for example, through teen health assessments and outreach around mental health, sexual health, and dental health.
- 3.40. During the next two years the council will work to understand better the health needs of children and young people in Temporary Accommodation, and we will work with partners including NHS and education services to deliver more structured and effective ways of meeting those needs.
- 3.41. When we place households with children in Temporary Accommodation, and when we move them between placements, the council will always use London Councils' Notify system to make education, social care, and health services aware so that families can be properly supported.
- 3.42. During 2026 we will bring forward a Supported Housing Strategy that will include our approach to Exempt Accommodation. We will aim through the strategy to preserve the number of supported bedspaces in Haringey at the same time as we drive out poor quality provision.
- 3.43. We aim to place more of the vulnerable people who present to our Housing Needs services into good quality supported housing.
- 3.44. 10% of the new council homes we build will be delivered as supported housing. This will include Housing First options and specialist schemes for specific cohorts of vulnerable people including young people leaving care, adults with mental health needs, and adults with learning disabilities

People who sleep rough

- 3.45. During the next two years, the council will work with partners to produce an integrated Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2027 – 2032.