



Royal Borough Windsor & Maidenhead
Homelessness & Rough Sleeping
Strategy
2018-2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out a collaborative approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead over the next five years working closely with partners from the statutory and voluntary sectors.
- 1.2 The Council believes the most effective way to deal with homelessness and rough sleeping is to prevent it from happening and it places great emphasis on this approach through the provision of specialist housing advice and assistance to those in housing difficulty in the Borough.
- 1.3 An early help approach has been shown to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping but also to achieve wider outcomes such as improved health and wellbeing and better job opportunities. There is a big opportunity for all partners in the area to deliver services in different, co-ordinated ways so that a 'no wrong door' approach delivers outcomes that meet customer needs.
- 1.4 The Council will also work with partners to tackle the root causes of homelessness and rough sleeping by working with people to improve their life opportunities to prevent them from becoming homeless again in the future.

2. PURPOSE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY

- 2.1 This strategy guides the Council's approach to the provision of homelessness and rough sleeping services in the Borough over the next five years working with its partners.
- 2.2 An action plan, see Appendix A, sets out how the priorities in this strategy will be achieved and this will be refreshed and updated with new actions each year.
- 2.3 This strategy has been developed through:
 - ☐ Homelessness review, trends and issues, both quantitative and qualitative.
 - ☐ Consideration of national and local policy, current and proposed.
 - ☐ Analysis of best practice from across the country.
 - ☐ Engagement and discussion with partners including voluntary organisations such as Brett Foundation and the Windsor Homeless Project, housing providers such as Radian and Housing Solutions, health service providers and Thames Valley Police.

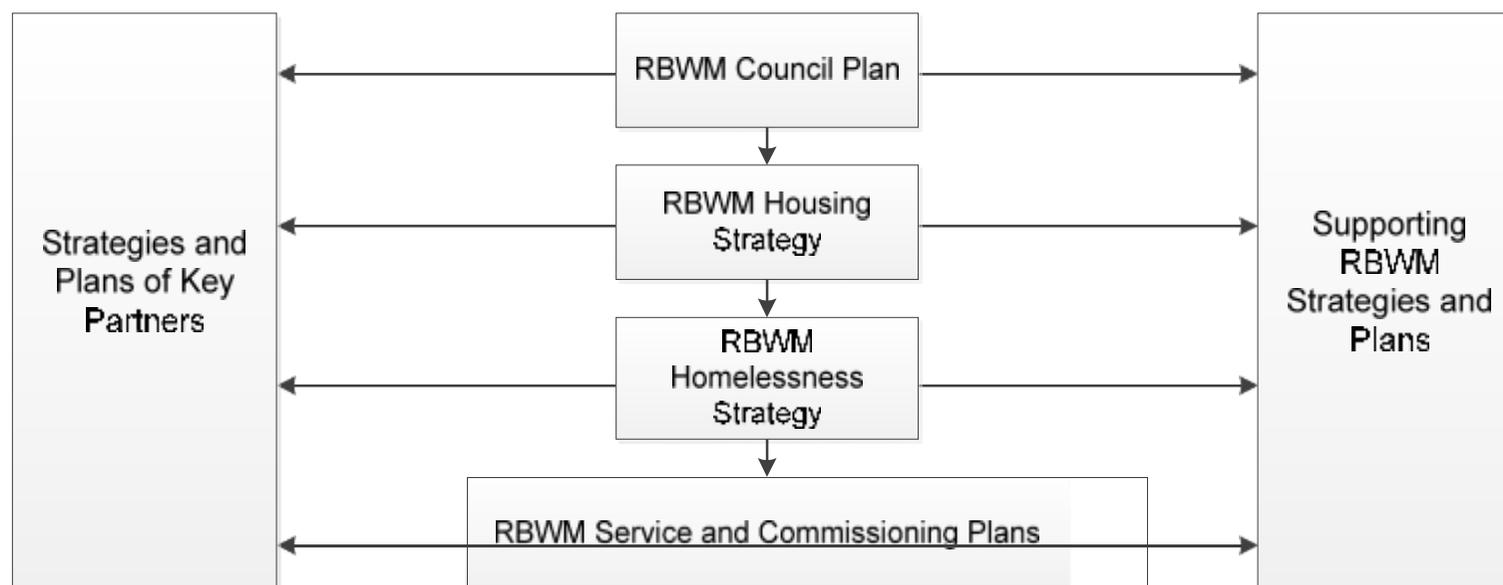
3. LEGISLATIVE AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.1 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.

3.2 A homelessness strategy is defined in Homelessness Act 2002 s3(1) as one formulated in order to:

- a) prevent homelessness in an authority's area
- b) secure accommodation that is and will be available in that area for people who are or may become homeless; and
- c) provide support for such people or those who have been homeless and need support to prevent it recurring.

3.3 The strategic context for this strategy is set out in the diagram below:



4 LOCAL CONTEXT

Homelessness applications, prevention and early help

- 4.1 Homeless applications and acceptances have increased in recent years and there has been a reliance on high levels of temporary accommodation. This strategy aims to address the causes and effects of homelessness, offering appropriate support and solutions to prevent and reduce homelessness through an early help approach while minimising reliance on temporary accommodation.

Rough sleeping

- 4.2 The Council carries out an annual rough sleeper count and takes action to help those identified back into secure and sustainable housing. The Council recognises that Windsor currently has specific challenges with rough sleeping. The Council is committed to preventing rough sleeping and will dedicate significant resources, working with partner organisations, to preventing rough sleeping, as well as providing support to anyone who finds themselves on the street. This includes the employment of a specialist Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) coordinator to provide intensive support and assistance to rough sleepers, the funding of supported accommodation, reconnection to home areas, and provision of support, accommodation and advice through our newly formed Rough Sleeper Pathway.

Temporary accommodation

- 4.3 The Council has previously had a high number of households in temporary accommodation. As services have improved recently this number has reduced significantly. In future the Council aims to have a small pool of good quality temporary accommodation for those who need emergency accommodation.

Private rented sector

- 4.4 There are opportunities for the private sector to play an even more important role in delivering new supply but there are serious concerns over access and affordability. This strategy aims to work with the sector, supporting landlords to deliver supply that meets required standards of management and maintenance and is accessible to people on a range of incomes in a market that is well regulated and offers appropriate protection to tenants and landlords.

Partnership working

- 4.5 There are many areas of overlap between the priorities and the successful provision of these services requires collaborative working with local public, private and voluntary services. To support this, the Council will actively engage with its partners in the development and delivery of services and encourage collaborative working wherever possible.

Allocations policy

- 4.6 An updated allocation was agreed in 2018 to ensure the legislative changes within the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, implemented on the 3rd April 2018, were adopted and included with the policy. The allocations policy sets out in detail who is eligible for housing and the priority they will receive for social housing the Council has nominations right to.

5 WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

- 5.1 This vision for this homelessness strategy is that:

‘The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is a place where agencies work effectively together to support those who are or may become homeless guided by a focus on prevention and early help.’

- 5.2 The Council will to do this by working collaboratively with our partners focusing on five key priorities:

- ☐ Reducing the numbers of people becoming homeless.
- ☐ Reducing the numbers of households in temporary accommodation and improving the quality of that accommodation.
- ☐ Supporting people into good quality, affordable and sustainable accommodation options.
- ☐ Reducing rough sleeping and supporting those who find themselves on the street.
- ☐ Improving the customer service provided to people approaching housing services.

6 HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

6.1 The Council working with our partners will carry out the following refreshed actions to achieve our priorities:

Priority 1: Reducing the numbers of people becoming homeless.	Priority 2: Reducing the numbers of households in temporary accommodation and improving the quality of that accommodation.	Priority 3: Supporting people into good quality, affordable and sustainable accommodation options.	Priority 4: Reducing rough sleeping and supporting those who find themselves on the street.	Priority 5: Improving the customer service provided to people approaching housing services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Carry out a review to determine the potential for implementing a mediation service to assist with helping to maintain people in their existing accommodation. <input type="checkbox"/> Increase enforcement activity with landlords who maintain private rented properties in poor coordination or do not follow proper tenancy processes <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a gap analysis of homelessness prevention education delivered through schools, colleges and youth organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Increase partnership working with local landlords through a forum and exploring an accreditation scheme. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a smaller dedicated pool of temporary accommodation providers. <input type="checkbox"/> Continue the cyclical programme of temporary accommodation inspection. <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to ensure effective safeguarding for those in temporary accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review the potential for a private sector scheme to give people more private rented options <input type="checkbox"/> Work with environmental health to ensure the correct advice to people in accommodation with disrepair issues. <input type="checkbox"/> Improve pathways for young people leaving care to ensure sustainable accommodation and that tenancies are maintained. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop and adopt an RBWM score card sharing key stats with our stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Establish a multi agency forum to jointly review cases and develop integrated individual plans <input type="checkbox"/> Explore models from elsewhere that include holistic approaches involving accommodation, learning and employment. <input type="checkbox"/> Carry out a feasibility study for the potential for future supported accommodation <input type="checkbox"/> Build on the success of bringing all rough sleepers off the streets <input type="checkbox"/> Implement an alternative giving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Improve the quality of information available to housing option clients on housing options and service arrangements through multiple channels <input type="checkbox"/> Improve quality assurance processes within case management <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure partnership working is at the heart of service delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Implement a Homelessness Forum reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board

<p>and refine the approach accordingly.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Work with partners to improve pathways for young people leaving care to ensure sustainable accommodation and that tenancies are maintained.</p> <p>Develop a joint <input type="checkbox"/> hospital discharge policy to prevent homelessness and bed blocking.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Increase the supply of TA and supported accommodation in the Borough</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Actively bid for all relevant future funding streams and support partner bids</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adopt the MEAM principles throughout service delivery</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Develop a response to harassment and illegal evictions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Review the 'offer' for armed forces personnel within RBWM</p>	<p>scheme</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Embed and share the success of the Rough Sleeping Pathway</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Adopt a prison release protocol</p> <p>Map and promote homeless services <input type="checkbox"/> across the Borough</p> <p>Review the need for a Gypsy & Traveller <input type="checkbox"/> Liaison Officer</p> <p>Promote the duty to <input type="checkbox"/> refer and wider partnership approach to referrals</p>
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7 HOW WILL WE KNOW?

7.1 The Council will monitor delivery of the key actions and the impact on key performance measures including:

- Number of homeless preventions per quarter.
- Numbers of young people presenting as homeless.
- Number of people placed into temporary accommodation.
- Average cost of temporary accommodation.
- Numbers of people accommodated in private rented accommodation.
- Number of approaches from people threatened with homelessness.
- Numbers of people sleeping rough.
- Waiting times for housing advice.

7.2 The strategy and action plan will be reviewed, refreshed and updated on an annual basis both to measure performance and to ensure that the actions continue to be the right ones to meet the five key priorities of the strategy.

7.3 Where identified, new key areas of action to meet priorities will continue to be introduced as part of the review which will be

carried out with partners and key stakeholders.

APPENDIX 1: ACTION PLAN (Proposed new actions under the existing 5 key priorities)

Priorities		Key Actions	Target date	Key Performance Measure	Officer/Agency Lead
1	Reduce the numbers of people becoming homeless	1.1 Review options for mediation services to assist with helping to maintain people in their existing accommodation.	Dec 2020	Number of homeless preventions per quarter	To be agreed at the homeless focus group
		1.2 Increased enforcement activity with landlords who maintain private rented properties in poor condition or do not follow proper tenancy processes.	Ongoing	Number of complaints from tenants	To be agreed at the homeless focus group
		1.3 Conduct a gap analysis of homelessness prevention education delivered through schools, colleges and youth organisations and refine accordingly.	March 2021	Numbers of young people presenting as homeless	To be agreed at the homeless focus group
		1.4 Work with partners to improve pathways for young people leaving care to ensure sustainable accommodation and that tenancies are maintained.	Ongoing	Reduced numbers of young people presenting as homeless	To be agreed at the homeless focus group
		1.5 Develop and agree with partners a joint hospital	March 2021	Number of homeless preventions per quarter	To be agreed at the homeless focus

		discharge policy.			group
2	Reduce the numbers of households in temporary accommodation and improve the quality of that accommodation	2.1 Increase partnership working with local landlords through a forum and exploring an accreditation scheme.	March 2021	Number of people placed into temporary accommodation	HSM & EHSM
		2.2 Develop a smaller dedicated pool of temporary accommodation providers.	March 2021	Average cost of temporary accommodation	HSM
		2.3 Continue the cyclical programme of temporary accommodation inspections.	Ongoing	All accommodation passing requirements	HSM
		2.4 Continue to ensure effective safeguarding for those in temporary accommodation	Ongoing	Any concerns appropriately investigated and addressed Number of people placed into temporary accommodation	HSM
		2.5 Increase the supply of TA and supported accommodation in the Borough	March 2022		HSM
3	Support people into good quality affordable and sustainable accommodation options	3.1 Review the potential for a private sector access scheme to give people more private rented options	March 2022	Number of homeless preventions per quarter	HSM
		3.2 Work with environmental health to ensure the correct	March 2021	Number of homeless preventions per quarter	HSM & EHSM

		advice to people in accommodation with disrepair issues.		Number of homeless preventions per quarter	
		3.3 Improve pathways for young people leaving care to ensure sustainable accommodation and that tenancies are maintained.	March 2022	Implementation of score card	HSM & Children Services Lead
		3.4 Develop and adopt an RBWM score card sharing key stats with our stakeholders	July 2020	Number of homeless reliefs per quarter	HOH&EH
		3.5 Actively bid for all relevant future funding streams and support partner bids	Ongoing	Number of homeless preventions & reliefs per quarter	To be agreed at the homeless focus group
		3.6 Adopt the MEAM principles throughout service delivery	Ongoing	Number of homeless preventions & reliefs per quarter	MEAM Coordinator
		3.7 Develop a response to harassment and illegal evictions	March 2021		HOH&EH
		3.8 Review the 'offer' for armed forces personnel within RBWM	March 2021		HOH&EH

4	Reduce rough sleeping and support those who find themselves on the street	4.1 Establish a multi agency forum to jointly review cases and develop integrated individual plans	Sept 2020	Number of homeless reliefs per quarter	HSM
		4.2 Explore models from elsewhere that include holistic approaches involving accommodation, learning and employment.	Ongoing	Number of homeless preventions & reliefs per quarter	To be agreed at the homeless focus group
		4.3 Carry out a feasibility study for the potential for future supported accommodation.	March 2021	Number of homeless preventions & reliefs per quarter Number of homeless reliefs per quarter	Enabling Officer/Property Company
		4.4 Build on the success of bringing all rough sleepers off the streets	Ongoing	Reduction in street activity	To be agreed at the homeless focus group
		4.5 Implement an alternative giving scheme	Sept 2020	Number of homeless reliefs per quarter	HOH&EH
		4.6 Embed and share the success of the Rough Sleeping Pathway	Ongoing		To be agreed at the homeless focus group

5	Improve the customer service provided to people approaching housing services	5.1 Improve the quality of information available to housing option clients on housing options and service arrangements through multiple channels	Ongoing	Number of homeless preventions per quarter	To be agreed at the homeless focus group
		5.2 Improve quality assurance processes within case management	Ongoing	Customer satisfaction results	
		5.3 Ensure partnership working is at the heart of service delivery	Ongoing	Homeless Forum	HSM
		5.4 Implement a Homelessness Forum reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board	Ongoing	Implementation of forum	To be agreed at the homeless focus group
		5.5. Adopt a prison release protocol	Sept 2020	Number of successful cases per quarter	To be agreed at the homeless focus group
		5.6 Map and promote homeless services across the Borough	Dec 2020	Publication of services	HOH&EH
		5.7 Review the need for a Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Officer	March 2021	Agreed protocol for illegal encampments & development of liaison role	To be agreed at the homeless focus group
		5.8 Promote the duty to refer and wider partnership approach to referrals	Sept 2020	Increase in referrals	To be agreed at the homeless focus group
		Dec020		HOH&EH	HOH&EH