

Executive Board – 17th December 2024

Subject:	Nottingham Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy 2025-2029
Corporate Director(s)/Director(s):	Nicki Jenkins - Interim Corporate Director for Growth and City Development Geoff Wharton - Interim Strategy Director of Housing
Executive Member(s):	Councillor Jay Hayes - Executive Member for Housing and Planning
Report author and contact details:	Rachael Harding - Homelessness Strategy Manager rachael.harding@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
Other colleagues who have provided input:	
Subject to call-in:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Criteria for Key Decision:	
(a) <input type="checkbox"/> Expenditure <input type="checkbox"/> Income <input type="checkbox"/> Savings of £750,000 or more taking account of the overall impact of the decision	
and/or	
(b) Significant impact on communities living or working in two or more wards in the City <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Type of expenditure: <input type="checkbox"/> Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Capital If Capital, provide the date considered by Capital Board Date:	
Total value of the decision: N/A	
Section 151 Officer expenditure approval Has the spend been approved by the Section 151 Officer? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/a Spend Control Board approval reference number:	
Commissioner Consideration Has this report been shared with the Commissioners' Office? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Any comments the Commissioners wish to provide are listed below.	
Wards affected: All	
Date of consultation with Executive Member(s): 12 th September 2024, 13 th November 2024	
Relevant Council Plan Key Outcome:	
Clean, Green and Connected Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping Nottingham Working	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carbon Neutral by 2028	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safer Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child-Friendly Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Living Well in Our Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keeping Nottingham Moving	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve the City Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Serving People Well	<input type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users): Local authorities have a statutory duty to produce a strategy outlining what they will do to prevent and respond to homelessness and rough sleeping in their area. The strategy should be developed with input from partners from across the public and community sectors, who have roles and responsibilities in homelessness prevention. The strategy should be updated every five years following an annual review of homelessness. The term of the current strategy is 2019-2024 and the new strategy has been developed for 2025-2029 following the completion of a homelessness needs assessment.	

Does this report contain any information that is exempt from publication?

No

Recommendation(s):

- 1 To approve the content of the Nottingham Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy 2025-29 and adopt it for delivery as in line with the statutory requirement.
- 2 To support the introduction of a Homelessness Reduction Board to provide cross sector accountability from senior leadership teams

1. Reasons for recommendations

1.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to lead on the development and implementation of a strategy outlining how they will work with partners to prevent and respond to homelessness.

1.2 Homelessness in Nottingham

In Nottingham, homelessness assessment rates are high compared to comparator areas and around one third of households assessed present when they are already homeless. Most people who present before they are homeless (i.e. at Prevention duty stage) are homeless from a private rented sector tenancy. Most households who present when they are already homeless (i.e. at Relief duty stage) are homeless from their friends or family. The most significant increase in reason for homelessness since 2019/20 is because of Home Office support ending for new refugees.

Similarly to most other comparable cities, in Nottingham there has been a reduction since 2019/20 in the proportion of housing outcomes being achieved before a household becomes homeless (i.e. under the Prevention duty). When a housing outcome is achieved it is most often a move to alternative accommodation rather than supporting the household to remain in their existing home. The rate of private rented sector tenancies secured at this stage is high in Nottingham compared to the other areas and consequently the rate of social housing secured is lower (primarily due to limited availability of social housing lets).

In most comparable cities there have been an increased number of Relief duties ended but a lower proportion of housing outcomes secured. This means that more people are moving through to a Main duty decision which indicates that many local authorities are struggling to secure accommodation within two months of a household becoming homeless.

In Nottingham, the average age of the main applicant within a homeless household has increased since 2019-20. There has been a notable increase in ethnic diversity with the percentage applicants from Black and Minority Ethnicities being 5% higher than the percentage of people of Black and Minority Ethnicities in the population. Around one fifth of homeless households are working, two thirds are unemployed or not working due to a long-term illness or disability.

In Nottingham, there has been an increase of 122% in the number of households in Temporary Accommodation from a snapshot of 349 households in 2019/20 to 776 households in 2023/24. The rate of households per thousand of the population is high for the region but low compared to other similar areas nationally. Considering that Nottingham had a higher-than-

average rate of assessments, it could be determined that this means there is a lower assessment to Temporary Accommodation conversion rate in Nottingham. However, Nottingham does have a high proportion of families in Temporary Accommodation.

Generally, Nottingham's Temporary Accommodation portfolio is varied and has increased significantly from around 250 units in 2019/20 to over 600 units in 2023/24. The profile of Nottingham's Temporary Accommodation portfolio is quite different to the average amongst the comparator areas. Less of Nottingham's portfolio is hotels, nightly paid temporary accommodation and private rented sector and the city uses a larger proportion of hostels and social housing stock.

1.3 Strategy Vision

- Everyone receives quality advice and support to stay in their home or find somewhere to live.
- Wherever possible homelessness and rough sleeping is prevented and
- When it cannot be prevented it is brief, does not reoccur and its impact on individuals, families, and communities is minimised

1.4 Strategy Approach

The new strategy renews the Homelessness Prevention Charter which contains a series of values identifying how the partnership will work together and with people who are homeless or at risk. The Charter is the key document to demonstrate the partnership commitment to the strategy. Partners are invited to make specific pledges to the charter which are formalised into delivery plans.

The strategy commits to promoting access and inclusivity through partnerships, processes and pathways.

There is clear acknowledgement of the shared responsibility across sectors to work together to prevent homelessness. Strong partnerships exist and will be further developed through:

- Fostering professional curiosity - listening to people and delivering a person-centred approach in the context of what is realistically achievable
- Setting and delivering a communications strategy with consistent messaging to manage expectations whilst improving experiences
- The council committing to fulfilling statutory duties whilst enabling partners to support households more broadly
- Holistic and collaborative assessments and support with mutual accountability across partners and including the homeless household
- Maximising existing resources through coordination of services and bidding for new funding opportunities through
- Better insight and target setting, anticipating challenges and planning
- Addressing inequalities and gaps in service delivery
- Expanding partnerships with other local authorities, including within the combined authority
- Outlining different pathways and joint protocols for specific groups (e.g. young people, prison leavers, domestic violence survivors, refugees)

1.5 Priorities and Aims

Priority 1. Homelessness is prevented and does not reoccur. The aims are to achieve a reduction in the number of households ever threatened with homelessness, becoming homeless, are homeless more than once. The areas of focus and key recommended areas of activity within this priority are:

- a) Working with tenants and landlords to reduce evictions from the private rented sector

Through increased casework following the statutory service restructure, an expanded Nottingham Private Rented Assistance Scheme, focussed support services, earlier identification of issues, maximising income

- b) Minimising unplanned exclusion from family or friend's homes

Through recommissioning of homeless young people services, in depth data analysis to understand how to help earlier and achieve planned moves

- c) Preventing eviction from social housing and supported accommodation

Through renewing eviction prevention processes and embedding the work of the Supported Housing Improvement Programme with non-commissioned providers

- d) Bridging the transition to accommodation when institutionalised support ends

Through renewing joint protocols with hospital and prison, formalise an early intervention approach for supporting new refugees and assessing pathways and accommodation options for young people who are care experienced

Priority 2. The issues causing homelessness are addressed. The areas of focus and key recommended areas of activity within this priority are:

- a) Promoting financial capability and independent living skills

Through exploring how to maximise the resources that are available

- b) Helping to protect people from violence and abuse

Through the domestic violence safer accommodation statutory duty and safeguarding of vulnerable adults

- c) Embedding systemic change for people with Severe and Multiple Disadvantages

Through continuing to expand joint working to holistically meet needs

- d) Improving Health and Wellbeing

Through health, housing and social care working together to reduce health inequalities faced by homeless households

Priority 3. Homelessness is Brief. The aims are to achieve a reduction in the number of households living in Temporary Accommodation, to decrease the length of time in Temporary Accommodation and to achieve a sufficient supply of Temporary Accommodation at best value for the council. The areas of focus within this priority and key recommended areas of activity within this priority are:

- a) Delivering sufficiency in suitable Temporary Accommodation that is of best value

Through developing the procurement protocol and sufficiency strategy

- b) Delivering housing solutions

Through reviewing the allocation policy, facilitating access to the private rented sector in and outside of Nottingham.

Priority 4. Rough Sleeping is reduced. Where funding allows, to continue to develop and deliver the system of services to prevent, identify, engage,

support, shelter and resettle rough sleepers with a varied model of provision and linked with wider services supporting single homelessness.

Each priority addresses what the strategy seeks to achieve by identifying the overall aims and objectives, benchmarking our current position, and setting measurable improvement targets.

Within each area of focus the strategy examines what the issue is, what action we are already taking to address it and what the recommended areas of activity are over the next five years.

1.6 Strategy delivery

A range of strategic and operational infrastructure groups are in place to develop and deliver the action plans.

The recommended areas of activity will formulate annual action plans, the delivery of which will have oversight from a renewed Strategy Implementation Group. The partners will take ownership of actions through their pledges to the Homelessness Prevention Charter which will be managed via the Homelessness Prevention Stakeholder Forum. A new data group will work to bring together information sources to build a comprehensive annual homelessness review.

An annual report of the progress of the strategy will be presented to the Health and Wellbeing and Adult Safeguarding Boards. It is also recommended that a Homelessness Reduction Board is established to bring more direct and regular leadership and accountability to the delivery of the strategy.

The strategy looks to extend partnerships beyond the cross-sector localised arrangements - including the opportunities with the East Midlands Combined County Authority.

2. **Background (including outcomes of consultation)**

- 2.1 Throughout 2024, an assessment of homelessness needs has been underway to determine how the local context has changed since the development of the previous strategy. This involved statistical analysis of data (for Nottingham as well as with statistical comparators), research into other areas and qualitative surveys, interviews and workshops with stakeholders (including people with lived experience of homelessness). This work has formed the evidence base for the new strategy.
- 2.2 The review of the last strategy period recognises that the aims, approach and priorities were not inaccurate but restricted by the challenging climate. The introduction to the new strategy clearly describes the ongoing difficult context and how this is more acute because of the legacy of operating in crisis as well as both the national societal pressures and local financial issues.
- 2.3 Therefore, whilst the approach in the new strategy is still one of partnership and promoting equitable access to services, it is very clearly established in reality of what the council can deliver and what partners and homeless households have to take accountability in doing for themselves.

- 2.4 The strategy does not commit to any activity beyond that deliverable within existing budgets. Data and insight will be used to target effective use of the resources that are available and monitor and review service delivery and performance. Nottingham City Council will continue to try to secure all government funding opportunities and enhance our enabling function for partners to promote consistent advice and information to manage expectations and demand.
- 2.5 The new strategy recognises the need to anticipate changes on the horizon that may impact homelessness (such as the Renters Rights Bill) and plan for new reoccurring situations (such as Home Office clearing backlogs of immigration decision and introducing early release schemes of prisoners).
- 2.6 From August 2024, the council has been working with partners to draft the new strategy, including through meetings of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy Group, a focussed workshop and targeted requests for insight and input. A development draft was circulated for further partner input in September and the consultation draft was published in October 2024 and circulated across housing and homelessness stakeholder networks with a questionnaire. 86% of respondents agreed with the vision, priorities and approach.

3. Other options considered in making recommendations

- 3.1 Not to develop a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy. This was rejected because the current strategy expires at the end of the year and it is a statutory requirement for local authorities to have one in place.

4. Consideration of Risk

4.1 Please list any known risks and any mitigating actions.

Risk	Mitigation
4.2 Ongoing wider national societal pressures increasing the number of households who become at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping and compromising any overall reductions achieved locally.	Providing clear messaging and resources explaining when and how people can get help and support to meet a range of needs, including housing and promoting a culture of early intervention. Collating regular and accurate data and analysis to provide insight to quickly identify trends and plan mitigations as well as to help lobby government to nationally address the causes and reasons of homelessness.
4.3 The ability of services to intervene at earlier stages of homelessness risk is currently constrained by the need to respond to emergency level need. Ongoing budgetary pressures can affect the ability to	Maintained commitment to current levels of core funding for homelessness services. Wherever possible opportunities for maximising grant funding will be pursued. A planned approach to reducing new flow

direct sufficient resource to achieve a shift to increasing prevention and reducing relief at the same time as addressing a high volume of legacy cases (including many in temporary accommodation)

whilst resolving those already in housing need.

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| 4.4 | Limited provider interest in delivering alternative temporary accommodation models. | Collaborative working with providers of all forms of accommodation to develop the models. Review alternative frameworks and reopen existing frameworks. |
| 4.5 | Lack of affordable housing solutions | Maximising supply through increased partnership with the private rented sector, reviewing the allocations policy for social housing, enabling delivering of new homes, maximising household income, managing expectations, expanding out of area options. |
| 4.6 | Financial pressures faced by commissioned and other local services because of reduced budgets and/or budgets not aligning with inflationary costs | Assess requirements for current contracts. Allow inflationary increase assumptions within future tenders. Facilitate and coordinate partnership working to maximise collective resources. Support partner bids for external funding opportunities. |
| 4.7 | Reductions in grant funding to deliver services for rough sleepers | If the grant funding for rough sleeping services ends or is reduced, the council is not able to continue to commission the services and exit planning will be instigated which will result in rough sleeping increasing in Nottingham. |
| 4.8 | There is not shared commitment, ownership and resource across all sectors and services to achieve delivery of the strategy | Partners have the opportunity to input into the development of the strategy and pledge their contributions to the Charter. The strategy recommends the introduction of a Homelessness Reduction Board. A governance structure has been set in the strategy which enables escalation of issues across corporate leadership and through cross sector boards such as Adult Safeguarding and Health and Wellbeing |

5. **Best Value Considerations, including consideration of Make or Buy where appropriate**

- The strategy is being introduced following a recent restructuring of the statutory homelessness service, designed to support an increased number of households when homelessness can be prevented and resolve homelessness more quickly to minimise the requirement and time spent in temporary accommodation.

- Within the strategy period there is commitment to review (and if required) redesign the models for all homelessness services funded through council budgets and government grants.
- The strategy is supported by a number of recently established procurement frameworks to ensure that the council has access to a wide range of providers and can secure services at Best Value.
- The strategy recommends considering opportunities for joint development and delivery of services across local authority boundaries (particularly within the county and combined authority) and across sectors.
- Communication and promotion of information is integral to the approach of this strategy. The Council is committed to an enhanced enabling function which will support faith and community-based partners as well as those from elsewhere in the public sector to help meet the aims of the strategy.
- The strategy will be delivered alongside a recently renewed regime of contract management to ensure that commissioned services are delivering against intended outcomes and steps can be taken to support or (where necessary) cease services where this is not happening.

6. **Commissioner comments**

6.1 Commissioners have reviewed and approved with no further commentary

7. **Finance colleague comments (including implications and value for money/VAT)**

Local authorities receive a Homelessness Prevention Grant allocation to help fulfil statutory duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The allocations beyond 2025 have not yet been announced. Nottingham City Council generally uses the grant to fund the cost of the Nottingham Private Rented Assistance Scheme and flexible payments to deliver prevention solutions.

Nottingham City Council invests £4.2m per annum into housing related support. This includes rough sleeping reablement, independent living support and supported accommodation for single adults, young people and teenage parents. Contracts are committed until 2027. In 2026/27 a homelessness commissioning review will be undertaken to determine the future service models.

The Nottingham City Council temporary accommodation budget has been set in accordance with forecast need, in line with a plan to reduce reliance on using hotels. The budget is set in the MTFP with a rolling 4 year budget plan which incorporates the need for growth and/or savings opportunities. This has to be reviewed every year due to the volatile nature of this area. There are so many uncertainties in future demand, costs and availability.

Nottingham relies on opportunities to bid for grant funding to support its work tackling rough sleeping. All current funding is due to end in 2025 but the council will engage in all further opportunities to secure ongoing funding.

The current identified budgets must be maintained. Failure to do so would risk the aims of the strategy resulting in a failure to deliver. Whilst the strategy

suggests investment could do more to support the aims, it also recognises the council's financial position is limited and therefore there is no commitment to do anything further.

Michelle Pullen
Senior Commercial Business Partner
8th October 2024

8. **Legal colleague comments**

The formulation and adoption of a Homelessness Strategy must follow a formal statutory process pursuant to the Homelessness Act 2002 which provides, that 'a local housing authority ("the authority") may from time to time (a) carry out a homelessness review for their district; and (b) formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of that review.'

Furthermore, that; *'The authority shall exercise that power so as to ensure that a new homelessness strategy for their district is published within the period of five years beginning with the day on which their last homelessness strategy was published.'*

As set out in the body of the report the Council's current Homelessness Strategy is due to expire at the end of 2024 and the new strategy that has been developed meets the statutory requirement to develop a new Homeless Strategy for the City.

It is a statutory requirement of the Homelessness Act 2002, that, before *'adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy the authority shall consult such public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons as they consider appropriate.'*

Details of the consultation and responses are set out in the body of the report.

Beth Brown, Director of Legal and Governance, 14 November 2024

9. **Other relevant comments**

N/A

10. **Crime and Disorder Implications (If Applicable)**

- 10.1 There are many connections between homelessness and crime. Homelessness people can be more likely to commit crimes to escape their homelessness or because of their homelessness. criminal behaviour can be the cause of homelessness and also homeless people are often the victims of crime. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy identifies the criminal justice sector as a key partner to help tackle homelessness, which in turn will help to meet aims to reduce offending and maximise successful resettlement following prison release.

11. **Social value considerations (If Applicable)**

- 11.1 Homelessness has a significant impact on personal health, wellbeing and positive life experiences. It also negatively impacts society more widely

particularly through economical pressure. A strategy seeking to prevent homelessness will positively impact on socio-economic factors locally.

12. **Regard to the NHS Constitution (If Applicable)**

12.1 The NHS constitution states that NHS care is to be provided to all based on clinical need irrespective of an individual's background. Homeless people can face extreme health inequalities in both health outcomes and access to healthcare. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy will seek to identify and address barriers to assessment and treatment. Partnerships with Health and Social Care are key to the successful delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy in both helping to address conditions that can cause homelessness, ensure care and treatment plans and pathways are available for people who are homeless and especially when they unlock access to appropriate housing solutions.

13. **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

13.1 Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

Yes



Attached as Appendix A, and due regard will be given to any implications identified in it.

14. **Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)**

14.1 Has the data protection impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No



A DPIA is not required because there are no direct data impacts arising from the recommendations.

15. **Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA)**

15.1 Has the carbon impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No



A CIA is not required because there are no direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

16. **List of background papers relied upon in writing this report (not including published documents or confidential or exempt information)**

16.1 Nottingham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024

17. **Published documents referred to in this report**

17.1 None