



Cabinet

Report Title	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 - 2029
Date of Meeting	30 April 2024
Report Author	Caroline Wagstaff – Assistant Director Housing
Director	Steph Cordon – Director of Thriving Communities
Lead Cabinet Member	Cllr Judith Derbyshire – Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness
Why is this a key decision?	<p>1. An executive decision which is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates. NO</p> <p>2. or is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the Council. For these purposes, savings and expenditure are "significant" if they are equal to or greater than £500,000. NO</p> <p>For clarification, no treasury management decision shall constitute a Key Decision.</p>
Wards Affected	All
Identify exempt information and exemption category	None
Reasons for urgency (only where applicable)	N/A
Appendices (if any)	Appendix 1 – Westmorland and Furness Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029. Appendix 2 – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029 Equality Impact Assessment.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks to establish the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029 which has been developed to inform and promote the Council's approach to the prevention and relief of homelessness and Rough Sleeping.
- 1.2 The development of a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping is a statutory requirements under the Homelessness Act 2002.

2. Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029 attached at Appendix 1.

3. Information: the Rationale & Evidence for the Recommendations

- 3.1 The provision of advice and support to prevent and relieve homelessness is a statutory duty. The strategy sets out the Council's key objectives and includes an action plan outlining the steps that will be taken to achieve the objectives.
- 3.2 The development of a Homelessness Strategy is required under the Homelessness Act 2002. It is considered best practice to include Rough Sleeping. The strategy contains statistical information to inform service development and delivery including data relating to rough sleepers.
- 3.3 The provision of support in safe accommodation for people escaping domestic abuse is a requirement under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The strategy outlines the Council's approach to supporting victims of domestic abuse presenting as homeless.
- 3.4 Both nationally and within Westmorland and Furness homelessness presentations are increasing as the demand for affordable accommodation outstrips supply. The strategy identifies the current position with a view to working with partners to ensure an adequate supply of interim and settled accommodations is available.
- 3.5 The strategy sets out how the Council will work with partners to prevent homelessness and the actions it will take to ensure people experiencing homelessness are supported to access accommodation that meets their needs.

4. Link to Council Plan Priorities: (People, Climate, Communities, Economy and Culture, Customers, Workforce)

- 4.1 This strategy will contribute to the delivery of key council priorities by ensuring a clear plan is in place to prevent homelessness and for securing sufficient accommodation and support for people who become homeless.
- 4.2 The provision of safe, long term housing is fundamental to ensuring people are healthy, happy and able to lead fulfilling lives.
- 4.3 Access to housing is essential in reducing inequalities including: accessing employment; education; health care and community activities, which enables people to reach their full potential.
- 4.4 The strategy identifies the needs of individuals to ensure that support is available to those in most need to ensure young people and adults alike are protected from harm and empowered to achieve their ambitions.

5. Consultation Outcomes

- 5.1 The Westmorland and Furness Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been developed and shaped with involvement from colleagues from across the organisation. It has also been informed by feedback from external partners.
- 5.2 Formal public consultation is not required for the adoption of this strategy.
- 5.3 An engagement exercise was undertaken through a public survey between 19 January 2024 and 2 February 2024. Key stakeholders included: statutory services; commissioned services; Third Sector Organisations and the general public.
- 5.4 The views of the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Committee were also gathered at their meeting in February 2024.
- 5.5 The feedback gathered from stakeholders has informed the strategy development including:
- Amending references to ‘former districts’ by defining the Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland areas.
 - Improving reference to other Strategies relevant to homelessness and Rough Sleeping.
 - Reference to the National Health Services Act 2006 as introduced by the Social Care Act 2012.
 - Confirmation that identifying Care Experienced Young People does not lessen services for other young people.
 - Amending the delivery model to consider rurality and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018.
 - Improving actions to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
 - Confirming the Councils commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant by strengthening the relevant actions.
 - Clarifying reporting and monitoring mechanisms.
 - Clarifying references to the Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation service and referrals to partner agencies.
- 5.6 Feedback regarding wider housing issues will be considered when producing the Housing Strategy. This includes the need for: improved options for mental health support; supported accommodation; long term funding; the inclusion of Registered Providers in the early stages of planning housing developments; and early contact regarding strategy development.

6. Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 The formation of a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is a statutory requirement, therefore no alternative options have been considered.

7. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 7.1 The approval of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy fulfils the statutory requirement under the Homelessness Act 2002.

8. Climate and Biodiversity Implications

- 8.1 Actions in relation to the implementation of this strategy will be assessed against the Council's key priorities linked to environmental, climate change and Net Zero. The impacts will be considered and assessed against each individual action.
- 8.2 Actions with the most significant climate and biodiversity implications are likely to be associated with the future development of housing. Details will be included in the Housing Strategy which will be developed on completion of the Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment.
- 8.3 Climate change/extreme weather can disproportionately impact people who are rough sleeping. This is due to their inability to protect themselves from the impact of extreme cold, heat, wind and rain. The development of this strategy will help to protect vulnerable people against the societal effects of climate change.

9. Legal and Governance Implications

- 9.1 The Council has a duty under section 1(4) of the Homelessness Act 2002 to ensure that a homelessness strategy for its district is published within five years of the publication of the previous homelessness strategy for the district.
- 9.2 Officers have prepared the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029 and consulted on this with services, statutory and voluntary agencies and the public. The strategy is appended to this report at Appendix 1.

10. Human Resources, Health Wellbeing and Safety Implications

- 10.1 There are no direct Human Resources implications arising from this report however progress against objectives outlined within the strategy, are reliant upon having an established and skilled homelessness team. Consideration should also be given to ensure compliance to workplace safety in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1 There are no direct financial implications of the recommendation contained within this report.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications (please ensure these are compliant with the EIA guidance)

- 12.1 The strategy contains information relating to the characteristics of individuals approaching the homelessness service and pays due regard to the public sector equality duty.

12.2 An Equality Impact Assessment undertaken on the draft strategy is attached at Appendix 2.

12.3 Mitigating actions have been incorporated into the final strategy.

13. Background Documents

13.1 Homelessness Act 2002 [Homelessness Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/56/contents/enacted)