

Meeting: Cabinet / Council

Date: 26 November 2024 / 5 December 2024

Wards affected: All wards

Report Title: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

When does the decision need to be implemented? 5 December 2024

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Hayley Tranter, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health and Inequalities plus Communities

Director Contact Details: Joanna Williams, Director of Adults and Community Services

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To outline the feedback from the consultation on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the amendments undertaken to produce the final strategy and therefore seek approval for the document. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy forms part of the Council's Policy Framework and therefore it is presented to Cabinet to recommend its approval by full Council.

2. Reason for proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local housing authorities to take strategic responsibility for tackling and preventing homelessness and consider the statutory guidance on homelessness strategies.
- 2.2 The Strategy is a legal requirement for the Council and is required to publish a strategy informed by a homeless review of its area, at least every 5 years.
- 2.3 The Strategy will better inform our communities, stakeholders and members about what the Council and its partners are doing about local homelessness priorities and issues.
- 2.4 An associated action plan will be developed collaboratively by the newly formed Torbay Homelessness Partnership and agreed by Cabinet. This will give stakeholders and elected members a clear annual delivery plan from which performance can be monitored. A performance framework will also be developed to enable the monitoring of performance and impact of interventions.
- 2.5 The proposals in this report help deliver our vision of a healthy, happy and prosperous Torbay through cross-organisational, collaborative working. It provides the structure against which the Council can develop other, more specific policies affecting its homelessness.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

That the Cabinet recommends to Council:

- 3.1 That following the results of the consultation, the Torbay Homelessness and Rough Strategy 2024-2030, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2030

Appendix 2 – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Consultation Report

Background Documents

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Evidence Base Document

Supporting Information

1 Information

- 1.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is the over-arching strategic document focusing on the activities to address homeless in Torbay. It sits within the Council's policy framework and provides the context for other plans policies and strategies, such as the Housing Strategy and the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy.
- 1.2 The report will replace the existing Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025. Since the development of the current Strategy, produced before the pandemic, there have been significant changes within the landscape of housing and homelessness. As such the document reflects the current needs within Torbay and housing market.
- 1.3 An evidence review was undertaken to support the development of the strategy and is contained within a sperate document. This allows the strategy to be more focused and succinct.

2 Options under consideration

- 2.1 As a result of consultation with the public, partners and stakeholders we have taken on a number of comments and suggestions and have amended the Strategy accordingly as outlined in section 5 of this report and in more detail in appendix 2.

- 2.3 It is therefore recommended that the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Torbay 2025=2030, be approved.

3 Financial opportunities and implications

- 3.1 The delivery of the strategy will have financial implications. However, any financial commitments would be subject to further approval based on robust business cases which include the identification of relevant sources of funding.

4 Legal Implications

- 4.1 The document is a legal requirement with the current strategy due to be renewed in early 2025.

5 Engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The draft strategy has been developed in partnership with other interested parties and organisations through a series of workshops and discussions. These have been themed around youth homelessness, rough sleeping, and general homelessness, to enable focused conversations.
- 5.2 The workshops have included representatives from the voluntary sector, statutory organisation and other organisations with 67 people attending. Conversations have also taken place with customers and pulled upon other engagement work that has been undertaken.
- 5.3 The draft Strategy went out to consultation from 11 July 2024 to 23 August 2024; for just over 6 weeks. A consultation feedback document has also been produced which details the responses and the changes in more detail, explaining the rationale, Appendix 2.
- 5.4 Generally, the comments received tend to echo that within the strategy. Amendments have however been made as follows (highlighted in **Bold**):
1. Amendment to Priority one objectives:
 - a. Change of wording to - Strengthen our **collective** partnership commitment to joint working on homelessness prevention across **all tenures of housing including the provision of support.**
 - b. Change of wording to - Put information sharing agreements and consent forms in place so that anyone approaching services **or voluntary sector organisations** (with their permission) need only tell their story once.
 - c. Change of wording to - Develop an upstream approach to income maximisation **including training and employment opportunities** to reduce the risk of homelessness occurring in the first place.
 2. Amendment to Priority two objectives:
 - a. Change of wording to - Collaboratively develop a Supported Housing Strategy to enable the commissioning of supported accommodation that is tolerant and

trauma informed environment so that we can support people **of all ages** and address the cause of homelessness.

b. Change of wording to - Never place any young person aged 16 or 17 in B&B except in an **exceptional circumstance** by ensuring there is sufficient accommodation for this age group.

c. Change of wording to - Never place a family in B&B except in **an exceptional circumstance**. If we do it will be for no longer than 6 weeks.

3. Amendment to Priority three objectives:

a. Change of wording to - Develop peer advocacy, employment, volunteering, and training **offers** to help improve **opportunities**.

b. Change of wording to - Work collaboratively to achieve the objectives of the Housing Strategy **to provide affordable accommodation in Torbay**.

c. Change of wording to - Raise the profile of homelessness ensuring that it is visible within the Council and embedded in other strategies. **Recognising the impact that rough sleeping can have on the wider community**.

5.4 The Strategy was also reviewed at the Adults Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board on the 8 August 2024, with the following resolution:

That the Cabinet be advised that the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board supports the Draft Homelessness Strategy 2024 – 2030 being included within the Council’s Policy Framework and that the Cabinet be recommended that a key data table with clear key performance indicators be included within the Action Plan, to measure performance of the Strategy and impact, including details of external influences.

6 Procurement Implications

6.1 It is not anticipated that the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy itself will require the purchasing or hiring of goods and/or services. Should the Council wish to hire goods, or services to facilitate its strategic objectives, then more specific reports detailing this will be presented.

7 Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

7.1 There are no significant climate change implications. Any climate change implications would be subject review as part of the development of the associated action plan. Any resulting considerations are likely to result from the provision of accommodation.

8 Associated risks

11.1 Homelessness is a priority for Torbay Council and as such the strategy provides the framework for further development and coordination to achieve its ambitions.

8.2 The document is a legal requirement with the current strategy due to be renewed in early 2025.

8.3 It is intended that the final document be presented to Full Council in December 2024. This will enable the review to be concluded within the 5 year timeframe.

9 Equality Impacts Assessment

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	<p>18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old.</p> <p>55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old.</p> <p>27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.</p> <p>Torbay experiences above the England average for people who are homeless above 45-year-old.</p>	<p>The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy recognises that people tend to experience increased fragility as they age, and that safe secure accommodation is vital to ensure wellbeing.</p> <p>Age can also impact on the extent of life skills to maintain a tenancy and differential impact of Housing Benefit on affordability.</p>	<p>Equality implications will be continuously reviewed through the delivery of the strategy. Specific actions have been considered addressing youth homelessness.</p>	<p>To be confirmed in the development of the associated action plan.</p>
Carers	<p>At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.</p>	<p>It also recognises that good quality and safe accommodation is vital to ensure wellbeing for people who are already facing additional pressures.</p>	<p>Equality implications will be continuously reviewed through the delivery of the strategy.</p>	<p>To be confirmed in the development of the associated action plan.</p>

Disability	In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness.	The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy recognises that people with disabilities and in particular learning disabilities face increased vulnerabilities when compared to the wider population. Safe secure, accessible accommodation is vital to ensure wellbeing when alleviating homelessness.	Equality implications will be continuously reviewed through the delivery of the strategy. Accessibility temporary accommodation for those with mobility issues will be included within the strategy.	To be confirmed in the development of the associated action plan.
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.	Limited information exists about the number of transgender people experiencing homelessness, national data however suggests that trans people are more likely to experience rough sleeping and homelessness and experience wider safety concerns.	Services will work in a person centred and trauma informed manner to ensure that individual needs are met	Not applicable.
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	There is no differential impact anticipated.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). Approx 11% of households that are homeless are single females	Pregnant women at risk of or experiencing homelessness that are not in appropriate or settled accommodation can face significantly greater health risks while unstably housed.	Services will work in a person centred and trauma informed manner to ensure that individual needs are met, and that appropriate accommodation is provided.	To be confirmed in the development of the associated action plan.

	with a child. A small proportion will be pregnant.			
Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the Southwest and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.	The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy recognises that people who are from black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds are more likely to experience financial hardship.	Services will work in a person centred and trauma informed manner to ensure that individual needs are met	Not applicable.
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	There is no differential impact anticipated.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male. Single males represent the highest general grouping of homeless applicants owed a relief duty at 54% and 22% for single females.	The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy recognises that families and households headed by females are more likely to experience financial hardship and be on lower income and thus, experience homelessness. Single females experiencing rough sleeping are also more vulnerable to wider exploitation.	Services will work in a person centred and trauma informed manner to ensure that individual needs are met.	To be confirmed in the development of the associated action plan.
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.	There is no differential impact.	Not applicable	Not applicable

Veterans	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay, 5.9 per cent of the population have previously serviced in the UK armed forces.	Veterans are recognised specifically within the Housing Act.	Services will work in a person centred and trauma informed manner to ensure that individual needs are met and meet the requirements within the concordat.	To be confirmed in the development of the associated action plan.
Additional considerations				
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)	32% of Torbay residents living in an area amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.	Approximately 27% of residents in Torbay live in private rented accommodation with loss of tenancy being the main reason for homelessness.	The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy recognises that socioeconomic factors are a key determinant in shaping an individual's housing situation and accessibility and therefore refers to the Housing Strategy.	To be confirmed in the development of the associated action plan.
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)	There is significant variation in health and wellbeing across the bay. In our most affluent areas residents can expect to live on average over eight years longer than those living in our more deprived communities.	The correlation between poor quality housing and health are well documented. A review of the evidence shows that Torbay has a higher than national average support for associated mental health assistance.	Services will work in a person centred and trauma informed manner to ensure that individual needs are met.	To be confirmed in the development of the associated action plan.
Human Rights impacts		The Council recognises that good quality housing and accommodation is vital to upholding human rights. Nobody should be criminalised for simply having nowhere to live.	Services will work in a person centred and trauma informed manner to ensure that individual needs are met.	To be confirmed in the development of the

				associated action plan.
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced children and young people.	Young people, care experienced and those in families can all become homeless.	Specific actions have been considered addressing homelessness experienced by care experienced and young people. The provision of family temporary accommodation has also been address.	To be confirmed in the development of the associated action plan.

10 Cumulative Council Impact

- 10.1 Housing is integral to wellbeing, health and the economy. Effectively addressing homelessness is therefore instrumental in mitigating the impacts on other service delivery and seen as a preventative tool.
- 10.2 The strategy requires an integrated and holist implementation across the organisation both internally and with partners.

11 Cumulative community impacts

- 11.1 The impact of homeless of our communities is significant. An effective strategy will have long last impacts.
- 11.2 The delivery also needs to be owned by external organisation both statutory and voluntary sector.