

REPORT TO:	HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD 22 January 2020
SUBJECT:	Consultation - Croydon Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy
LEAD OFFICER:	Julia Pitt, Director of Gateway Services
BOARD SPONSOR:	Rachel Flowers, Director of Public Health
WARDS:	All

CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:

[Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#)

The Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy will deliver on, and contribute to two of the outcomes the Council has committed to in the Corporate Plan 2018 -22:

Good decent homes for all – to develop our Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy and assist and enable our residents to secure accommodation, supporting vulnerable residents to increase resilience and independence.

Live long, happy and independent lives - improve and reduce differences in life expectancy between communities. The mean age at death of rough sleepers was 44 years for men, 42 years for women and 44 years for all persons between 2013 and 2017; in comparison, in the general population of England and Wales in 2017, the mean age at death was 76 years for men and 81 years for women (ONS). The strategy sets out how we will prevent and relieve rough sleeping and homelessness which will in turn, contribute to a reduction in associated health inequalities.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Any specific proposals requiring capital investment or with implications for the Council's revenue budgets will need to be reviewed and approved via the appropriate approval route ahead of implementation. It should be noted that Croydon Council has been successful in obtaining additional funding via the Rough Sleeping Initiative bidding process over the last two years and are awaiting the outcome of our bid for 2020/21.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

To note and comment on the draft priorities for a Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Croydon.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 Homelessness legislation requires housing authorities to publish a new homelessness strategy, based on the results of a further homelessness review,

within the period of 5 years beginning with the day on which their last homelessness strategy was published.

- 2.2 Following a review of homelessness in Croydon during late 2018, we have produced the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Croydon 2019-2022. This short-term strategy sets out our priorities for preventing homelessness over the next three years with a focus on six themes:
- Engagement and early intervention
 - Homelessness prevention
 - Sustainable accommodation
 - Support outcomes
 - Rough sleeping
 - Young people

For each theme we've highlighted what we want to achieve, how we are going to do it and how we will measure success, as well as an action plan for the direction and delivery of the strategy.

- 2.3 The strategy is attached to this report and its contents are set out in the detail of the report below.
- 2.4 Homelessness prevention and relief is relevant to the health of our residents. Homelessness has adverse health impacts on all affected. Starting life in temporary accommodation may impact on access to universal health care, for example immunisations, and temporary accommodation is associated with greater rates of infections and accidents. Homeless children are more likely to experience stress and anxiety, resulting in depression and behavioural issue. Homeless parents experience increased stress, depression and isolation. Homeless people demonstrate worse physical and emotional health status than the general population, including those who reside in areas of high deprivation. Chronic homelessness is characterised by tri-morbidity, meaning they are more likely to suffer from mental ill health, physical ill health and substance misuse, and at the same time less likely to access the health services they need. This leads to rates of mortality in the homeless population that are in high in both absolute and relative terms compared with the general population.

3. **DETAIL OF YOUR REPORT**

- 3.1 The content below summarises the contents of the Strategy:
- 3.2 **Deliver early intervention services across the borough:** We want more people to know about and use Croydon's public and voluntary sector services to help them avoid crisis, and to avoid being threatened with homelessness altogether. To provide support earlier we need to work in communities, delivering trusted services where they are needed most, based on local evidence and intelligence. We will build coordinated early identification networks and effective referral services linked to existing commissioned preventative services. More services in areas of high need will be delivered with

or by community projects. New adult social care customers will benefit from the Council's 'Gateway' service, which responds to a whole household's needs concerning income, employment, skills and training, as well as housing. The aim of this collaborative, holistic approach is to increase resilience and independence. We will train and share information with commissioned services and voluntary groups providing services to people in need, to build their capacity and improve collaboration.

- 3.3 **Prevent homelessness:** For those residents who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days, and for whom our statutory duty to prevent homelessness applies, we will continue to develop a more proactive, evidence-based prevention service. This will include more effective prevention of the three main causes of homelessness: the loss of private tenancies; exclusion by parents, relatives and friends; and domestic violence. We will promote housing advice and options services; work jointly with public authorities such as prisons, probation and health services; and extend the Gateway approach into more areas of high need through Community Connect/Food Stop projects to ensure that people at risk of homelessness approach the Council for advice as early as possible and understand how we can help them find alternative accommodation.
- 3.4 **End entrenched rough sleeping and end core homelessness by 2030.** We will employ an effective 'No First Night Out' approach to tackle rough sleeping early, establishing rapid rehousing pathways from the street and opening a short stay centre to assess complex needs and develop swift person-centred solutions for rough sleepers and individuals at immediate risk of street homelessness. We will extend the Housing First approach to get the most vulnerable people off the streets and into their own home with support. Other actions include joint work with Police and local businesses to arrange support and reduce anti-social behaviour associated with some rough sleepers and sleeping sites. We will work alongside voluntary and community services to provide solutions to street homelessness among European Economic Area nationals and other migrants with no access to welfare benefits, taking into account the implications of wider change, such as Brexit.
- 3.5 **End youth homelessness in Croydon:** This priority covers services for young people aged 16-25 without dependents. It will include improving joint work between housing and children's services on housing and support for young people and care leavers. We will co-design housing advice and information with young people; develop a youth homelessness prevention peer education programme and a young persons 'tenancy ready' programme; and identify young people at risk of tenancy failure through eviction or abandonment. We will develop alternative emergency accommodation for young people and end the use of B&B hotels.
- 3.6 **Ensure sufficient housing supply to meet the needs of homeless households:** This priority includes housing strategy actions to provide homes needed to discharge the Council's housing duty and provide housing options for moving on from supported accommodation. It will ensure sufficient supply for specific groups such as over-65s with complex needs and young people;

and enable the Council to reduce the use of B&B hotels with shared facilities as emergency accommodation.

- 3.7 **Support our residents through localised support services based on local need:** This will include support to enable vulnerable tenants to sustain their tenancies, reviewing the provision of health services for homeless households; and providing opportunities for volunteers to meet need in their local area.
- 3.8 **Enter into a collaborative partnership with Crisis to develop and implement a ten year strategy to end core homelessness in Croydon.** Ending core homelessness means: no one sleeping rough; no one forced to live in transient or dangerous accommodation such as tents or squats; no one living in emergency accommodation such as shelters and hostels without a plan for rapid rehousing into affordable, secure and decent accommodation; no one homeless as a result of leaving a state institution such as prison or the care system; and everyone at immediate risk of homelessness getting the help that prevents it happening. Working with Crisis, the national homelessness charity and campaigning organisation, we will test innovative and effective ways of reducing homelessness and rough-sleeping in the borough, and lobby for further funding and research towards this end.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been developed following significant input from community organisations, homelessness charities and housing providers in the borough, amongst other contributors through the participation in Croydon's Homelessness Review.
- 4.2 The Homelessness Review was made available on the Council's website for 3 months, and relevant organisations and partners were invited to review and provide feedback and a variety of focus groups were held. The document was also available for review by the general public.
- 4.3 **Future consultation on the draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy:** The Council proposes to publish the draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy for comment and feedback on our website for 6 weeks prior to final review and publication. During this period key local and national stakeholders will be invited to review and comment on the draft document, and where appropriate changes will be made to improve the strategy. Focus groups are planned with local housing providers and charities working with homeless households and rough sleepers, to ensure that the views of our key partners are reflected in the final strategy.

5. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 Any specific proposals requiring capital investment or with implications for the Council's revenue budgets will need to be reviewed and approved via the appropriate approval route ahead of implementation. Over the last four to five

years we have demonstrated that our approach makes a positive difference to our residents and have evidenced cost avoidance.

- 5.2 It should be noted that Croydon Council has been successful in obtaining additional funding via the MHCLG Rough Sleeping Initiative and Rapid Rehousing Fund bidding process over the last two financial years, securing an additional £1.65m to provide services to relieve and prevent future rough sleeping. We are awaiting the outcome of our funding proposal for 2020/21, to enable us to continue to develop/ maintain services for the street homeless population. In addition Croydon Council receives Homelessness Reduction Grant and the Flexible Homeless Support Grant to enable it to fulfil its statutory duties as laid out in the Homelessness Reduction Act. The Council's allocation for 2020/21 has recently been confirmed, totalling £6.65m.

5.3 **Revenue and Capital consequences of report recommendations**

This report sets out our strategy only. There are no immediate revenue or capital consequences.

5.4 **The effect of the decision**

No decision is required. This report requests that the Health and Wellbeing Board note and comment on the strategy.

5.5 **Risks**

There is a risk that the Council is unable to meet its statutory obligations in respect of homelessness when local authority budgets are under constraint due to central government reductions. This could have an impact on the Council's ability to provide early intervention/prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping.

There is a risk that if the level of funding from MHCLG and other government bodies reduced significantly, we would need to review what services we are able to provide while ensuring we maintain the statutory minimum.

There could be broader implications, with potential additional costs to health & social care owing to the high prevalence of chronic, terminal and mental health conditions, alcohol and substances use amongst the street homeless population.

5.6 **Options**

Do nothing: Producing a review of homelessness and a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy is a statutory requirement. This option is therefore rejected.

5.7 **Future savings/efficiencies**

N/A

Approved by: Felicia Wright on behalf of Director of Finance, Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group

6. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The Head of Litigation and Corporate Law comments on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance that there are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Approved by: Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation and Corporate Law on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance & Deputy Monitoring Officer

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 7.1 There are no direct implications for LBC workforce arising from this report.

Approved by: Sue Moorman, Director of Human Resources

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 An equality analysis has been carried out and has found that the proposals in the draft strategy will have no adverse impact on the Council's ability to meet any of the Public Sector Duties in the Equality Act 2010.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 9.1 No negative environmental impacts have been identified arising with the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 10.1 Reducing homelessness and rough sleeping has a positive impact on crime and disorder, and perceptions of public safety. People sleeping rough are more likely to be victims of crime and almost 17 times more likely to have been victims of violence (in the past year compared to the general public). Additionally, many people who rough sleep develop issues with drugs and alcohol (Crisis).

11. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 No data protection implications identified.

- 11.2 **WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?**

NO

11.3 HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN COMPLETED?

NO

Producing and publishing a strategy does not involve processing or sharing data.

CONTACT OFFICER: Julia Pitt, Director of Gateway Services, 07988 029073

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

Appendix 1: Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Croydon 2019 - 22

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None