



City of Westminster Cabinet Member Report

Decision Maker:	Cabinet Member for Housing Services
Date:	22 May 2020
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Westminster Homelessness Strategy 2019 - 24
Wards Affected:	All
Key Decision:	Yes
Financial Summary:	The Strategy and Action Plan can be delivered within existing capacity within the Housing Operations Directorate
Report of:	Director of Housing, Acting Director of Policy & Projects

1. Executive Summary

A new Homelessness Strategy 2019 - 2024 (Appendix B) is needed, not only to meet legal requirements, but to also ensure the council is doing everything possible to prevent and respond to homelessness in the city. The proposed Strategy was informed by a Review of Homelessness which identified some key areas for focus.

- 1.1 The Strategy is based around a ten point plan which was widely consulted on, receiving 180 responses. Most respondents gave feedback using the Smart Survey/questionnaire and each of the ten points received over 80% support amongst those using this method. Some adjustments were made to the final Strategy following the consultation and the completion of a full Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix D).
- 1.2 Overall the Strategy aims to do more to prevent homelessness by making residents, communities and organisations aware of the help and support on offer, rather than waiting for people to approach the council. It also focuses on tackling the main causes of homelessness in Westminster and its wider causes. There

are also proposals to improve services when homelessness cannot be prevented and an aim for council to become a leader in homelessness prevention.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Homelessness Strategy 2019 – 2024 in Appendix B is agreed.
- 2.2 That the Homelessness Strategy 2019 – 2024 Action Plan in Appendix C is agreed and that it is updated regularly.
- 2.3 That the Director responsible for Housing has the delegated authority to update the Action Plan in conjunction with the Cabinet Member responsible for Housing.

3. Reasons for Decision

- 3.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 require local authorities to have in place a Homelessness Strategy informed by the results of Homelessness Review. A new Homelessness Strategy is also needed to ensure that the council is doing everything possible to prevent and respond to homelessness in the city.

4. Background, including Policy Context

The 2002 Homelessness Act requires local authorities to prepare and update a Homelessness Strategy, however the council has not had a Strategy for some time as it was exempt from this requirement from 2009 as an ‘excellent authority’. The strategic approach to homelessness was however updated and reviewed regularly as part of the annual Supply and Allocation of Social Housing Report¹. A new homelessness policy framework² was also published in 2016 which is made up of:

- *A Private Rented Sector Offers Policy*

This sets out that an offer of a private rented tenancy may be made to any homeless household where the law allows. It aims to address the long waits homeless households experience in temporary accommodation for social housing, to improve outcomes for them and to reduce temporary accommodation costs.

- *An Accommodation Procurement Policy*

This Policy responds to the difficulties in procuring sufficient private rented housing for homeless households in Westminster and London. It includes an action plan for meeting demand, which is regularly updated. The Policy also

¹ www.westminster.gov.uk/housing-strategies

² www.westminster.gov.uk/housing-strategies

outlines procurement principles that will be followed for sourcing properties, both for temporary accommodation and for private rented sector offers.

- *An Accommodation Placement Policy*

This Policy sets out how households will be prioritised for properties, both for private rented sector offers and for temporary accommodation, in different locations. Its key principle is to ensure that health and welfare needs are taken into account when households are prioritised for housing in different locations.

4.1 *Rough Sleeping Strategy 2017 - 2022*

A Rough Sleeping Strategy³ was published in 2017 and which is being implemented. To develop the Strategy c.400 people and organisations were engaged with. As there is already a Strategy in place to address rough sleeping it is not covered in the Homelessness Strategy, other than to summarise it and to highlight key services for rough sleepers.

4.2 A separate strategy to address rough sleeping was considered necessary given it requires a different response to other forms of homelessness and because Westminster sees the highest number of rough sleepers on its streets, compared with other areas.

4.3 The Rough Sleeping Strategy 2017 – 2022 aims to reduce rough sleeping and address the harm it causes to individuals and communities. There are 3 priorities:

1. Where it is possible for us to do so, prevent people from rough sleeping in the first place.
2. When people do end up on the streets, provide a rapid response, support people to rebuild their lives and stay off the streets for good.
3. To protect communities from anti-social behaviour associated with rough sleeping and intervene to stop dangerous behaviour.

4.4 *Homelessness Review*

The Homeless Strategy 2019 – 2024 was informed by a Review of Homelessness⁴, which looked at, amongst other things, the national and regional policy context. It identifies how welfare reform has played in a role in increasing homelessness, looks at the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and identifies some national policy uncertainties which could affect future levels of homelessness and responses to it. The Review also identifies those most affected by homelessness, the main causes of it and sets out how the council responds to it currently.

³ www.westminster.gov.uk/housing-strategies

⁴ www.westminster.gov.uk/housing-strategies

4.5 The Review identifies a number of areas of focus for the Homelessness Strategy to respond to the challenges ahead, such as: rising demand; late approaches to the Housing Solutions Service (i.e. when people are actually homelessness, rather than when they are threatened with it); some lack of awareness of homelessness services; and the need to do more to prevent homelessness at a much earlier stage.

4.6 *Other council policies*

A range of other council policies were taken account of when developing the Homelessness Strategy such as the Housing Allocation Scheme⁵, the Tenancy Strategy and the Tenancy Policy⁶ and the Early Help Strategy 2019 – 22⁷ for families and children. The City Plan 2019 – 2040⁸ was considered which aims to increase affordable housing supply and also the City for All programme⁹ which aims for Westminster to be a City of Opportunity, where there are more affordable housing options and for it to have excellent local services.

4.7 *National and regional policy*

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's 'Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities 2018' was also taken into account when developing the Strategy¹⁰ and the Mayor's London Housing Strategy 2018¹¹.

5. Aims of the Policy/Summary

The proposed Homelessness Strategy is based around 3 themes and a ten point plan and the whole council will be involved in its delivery alongside stakeholders, including members of the community:

Preventing people from becoming homeless in the first place:

1. Reach more people at risk of homelessness at an earlier stage, by building a network of prevention and support, working with partners and communities.
2. Make our services more visible through targeted information campaigns.
3. Proactively offer personalised support to those at risk of homelessness where possible, from helping them negotiate with their landlord to offering employment and skills training so they can increase their income.
4. Do more to identify and address the main causes of homelessness in Westminster and also the wider causes, through research and outreach.

Improving our services and response when people become homeless:

5. Make our housing services more transparent, accountable and accessible.

⁵ www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/housing_allocation_scheme_march_2018.pdf

⁶ www.westminster.gov.uk/housing-strategies

⁷ www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/early_help_strategy_2019_2022.pdf

⁸ www.westminster.gov.uk/cityplan2040

⁹ www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/city_for_all_booklet_2018_9.pdf

¹⁰ www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities

¹¹ www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2018_lhs_london_housing_strategy.pdf

6. Better communicate what we can and can't offer.
7. Ensure a range of accommodation is available for the homeless households that we have a housing duty towards, when homelessness cannot be prevented.
8. Review how people access supported housing and ensure our supported housing meets needs, now, and in the future.

Meeting the challenges ahead and having a homelessness system fit for the future:

9. Become a leader in the field of homelessness prevention proposing solutions and bringing key decision makers together to share information and ideas.
 10. Make the case for homelessness services and prevention work to be fully funded, by leading the discussion with Government and others on how the welfare system can work better for low income residents in central London, while also utilising every other funding source available to us.
- 5.1 The proposed Homelessness Strategy is accompanied by an Action Plan which gives more information on how the ten point plan will be delivered. The Action Plan will be regularly monitored and evaluated and a review of it will be undertaken when it has been in operation for one year.

6. Financial Implications

The Action Plan will be delivered within existing capacity within the Housing Operations Directorate. Officers from a number of services within Housing Operations will be involved, specifically from the Homelessness, Housing Operations Management and Temporary Accommodation Client Teams. The overall budget for these specific areas is as follows:

Service area	2019/20 Net Budget (£m)
Homelessness	5.743
Housing Management	0.356
TA Client team	0.243
Total	6.342

- 6.1 Whilst no additional budgetary requirements have been identified at the outset Finance will work closely with project leads to review progress and identify any risks or opportunities as they arise. The council receives Flexible Housing Support Grant (FHSG) to use to relieve homelessness. It is projected that £7.4m will be carried forward to the 2020/21 financial year.

7. Legal Implications

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local housing authorities to review homelessness in their district and prepare and publish a homelessness strategy based on the review. As Westminster was deemed to be an excellent authority, it was exempt from this requirement. Analysis of housing needs and plans to prevent homelessness have instead been included in the Council's annual Supply and Allocation Reports. However, due to legislative changes, this

exemption no longer applies and the formulation of a homelessness strategy informed by a review of homelessness is now a statutory requirement for all councils.

- 7.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 requires local housing authorities to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness (when anyone is threatened with it within 56 days) and to “relieve” homelessness (through maintaining or securing accommodation) for eligible applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- 7.2 Under section 3(1) of the 2002 Act a ‘homelessness strategy’ means a strategy formulated by a local housing authority for: (a) preventing homelessness in their district; (b) securing that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people in their district who are or may become homeless; (c) securing the satisfactory provision of support for people in their district: (i) who are or may become homeless; or (ii) who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.
- 7.3 In formulating or modifying a homelessness strategy a local housing authority must have regard to: (a) its current allocation scheme under section 166A of the Housing Act 1996, (b) its current tenancy strategy under section 150 of the Localism Act 2011, and (c) in the case of a London borough council, the current London housing strategy.
- 7.4 The Homelessness Review informing the Strategy and referring to these considerations is referred to in this report.
- 7.5 The council is required to take its Homelessness Strategy into account in the exercise of its functions.
- 7.6 Under section 182 of the Housing Act 1996, local authorities must have regard to the Homelessness Code of Guidance for local authorities when exercising its functions relating to homelessness and prevention of homelessness.
- 7.7 The Rough Sleeping Strategy 2017 – 22 forms part of the council’s strategy for preventing homelessness in Westminster. It is referred to in the Homelessness Strategy and is set out in a separate document as the causes of rough sleeping are different and it requires a very different response to other forms of homelessness.
- 7.8 Section 3(8) of the 2002 Act requires the council to consult such public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons as they consider appropriate before formulating or modifying a homelessness strategy. The consultation that has taken place is set out at section 9 of the report.

- 7.9 Housing Authorities must keep their homelessness strategy under review. A copy of the Strategy must be available for inspection at the council's principal office, or a copy provided to member of public if asked for, and under the Code of Guidance the Council should publish the Strategy and review documents on their website.
- 7.10 The council is also under a general duty, pursuant to s11 Children Act 2004, to have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area. The duty under section 11 would suggest a strategy that seeks to prevent children from becoming homeless which is one of the things the Homelessness Strategy seeks to achieve. It is likely to be in the best interests of children to be housed close to where they were previously living. Unfortunately, this is not always possible but the council's Accommodation Placement Policy ensures that applicants are prioritised for accommodation in or close to Westminster on the basis of need.
- 7.11 As a public authority, the council must take account of the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and not act in a way which is incompatible with a Convention right. Under Article 8, any interference with the right to respect for a person's private and family life and home must be proportionate and Article 14 requires that there must be no unjustified discrimination within the scope of human rights on any grounds, such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, or other status.
- 7.12 When making a decision the council must also have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty in s149 Equality Act 2010. S149(1) provides that, in exercising its functions, a public authority must have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the 2010 Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. S149(3) provides that having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low. S149(4) provides that the steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities. Section 149(6) provides that compliance with the duties in section 149 may involve treating some persons more favourably than others. By s149(7)

the relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

- 7.13 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on the Strategy (see Appendix D) and a summary of the equalities implications is in Section 10.
- 7.14 The Strategy meets the overall requirements of section 3 of the Homelessness Act 2002 and the code of guidance chapter 2. The Strategy has been reviewed by Counsel.

8. Risk Management Implications

Table 1 below summarises how risk to the delivery of the Strategy will be mitigated.

Table 1: Risks and mitigations

	Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk
1.	The Strategy aims for more households to get advice and support earlier. This could place a strain on homelessness services at a time when long term national funding for them (through the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant for example), and for the council in general (through its overall annual settlement) is uncertain and could reduce	The provision of earlier advice and support is aimed at reducing the number of approaches from people when they are actually homeless. It is easier and cheaper to respond before people become homeless The Strategy makes the case for a fair and sustainable funding model for local government and council aims to work with Government in this area	Medium
2.	Homelessness can be a result of wider socio and economic factors which are beyond the council's control, so levels could rise, despite the actions in the Strategy	The Strategy includes actions to address the wider causes of homelessness as a result of debt etc. Homelessness approaches and causes will be kept under review	Medium
3.	A number of actions in the Strategy will be delivered by the Early Intervention Trailblazer Service, which works with people before they are likely to approach the Housing Solutions Service. Since national funding expired the council has funded the service itself in the short term but its long term funding is uncertain	This has been taken into account in the Action Plan. If funding weren't to continue it is expected some of the ways of working would be incorporated into the main Housing Solutions Service. The Strategy also includes an action to seek external funding for homelessness projects	Low
4.	Private rented housing is a response to homelessness and affordable options can be limited in Westminster and London for people in receipt of benefits, due to Local Housing Allowance levels for example. The Strategy aims to increase use of the private	The Strategy makes the case for reforms to the benefits system and wants to work with Government in this area	Medium

Risk	Mitigation	Residual Risk	
<p>rented sector which is likely to mean more households moving away from Westminster in the longer term</p> <p>The shortage of affordable private rented housing generally also means that the council may not be able to relieve homelessness for households it does not have a statutory rehousing duty towards</p>	<p>The aim of offering more settled private rented housing is to improve outcomes for homeless households so they spend less time in temporary accommodation</p> <p>The council currently tops up its allocation of Discretionary Housing Payment which helps to make private rented housing affordable, at least in the short term</p>		
5.	<p>Affordable housing is a response, amongst other measures, to homelessness and although the council has an ambitious target to deliver at least 1,850 new affordable homes by 2023, the delivery of these can depend on wider market factors beyond the council's control</p>	<p>Closely monitoring the housing market and schemes delivered through Section 106 agreements</p> <p>Continuing to strengthen relationships with developers and registered providers, by the council delivering schemes itself in some cases and by setting its own housing company to improve delivery</p>	Medium
6.	<p>The Strategy may not achieve its aim to have a different relationship with community and advice organisations and for them and other stakeholders to take a role in homelessness prevention. There were relatively few responses from community groups to the consultation, even though they were targeted</p>	<p>A resource is being dedicated to building up relationship with community groups</p>	Low
7.	<p>The Strategy involves a communications campaign about what the council can and can't offer, as people can have the expectation that they will be offered social housing, when supply is limited. This could result in people not approaching the service at an early stage when they are at risk of homelessness</p>	<p>The campaign will be positive in terms of what can be offered and the help and support available</p>	Low

9. Consultation

Ideas for the draft Strategy were discussed with some stakeholders before it was consulted on during July - September 2019. Links to the consultation were emailed to over 400 people and organisations and some hard copies were sent to key stakeholders. A summary leaflet was also widely distributed across the city and there was social media activity. Respondents were able feedback by using a Smart Survey, electronic questionnaire, hard copy questionnaire or by letter/email. They were asked to rank the extent to which they agreed with each

of the ten points and invited to make other comments about them and what may be missing from the draft Strategy.

- 9.1 A workshop on the Strategy was attended by interested residents, people directly affected by homelessness, registered providers, council officers and groups working with homeless households. It was also discussed at a Service Improvement Group meeting for homeless households living in temporary accommodation and at a resident engagement group meeting, attended by council tenants and leaseholders. Over 180 people and organisations commented on the draft Strategy and the majority of respondents (51%) were residents and thirty three of these had been directly affected by homelessness.

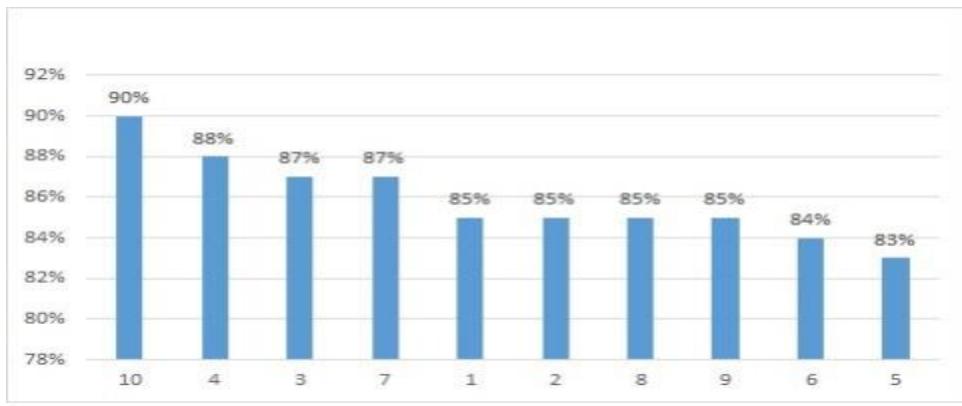
Table 2: Respondents to the Homelessness Strategy consultation

	No	Residents	Private landlord	Registered Providers	WCC staff member	Groups working with homeless households	Other Groups	Business Alliance	Health related	Other
Smart survey/feedback form	151*	93	5	9	15	24	13			13
Email/letter	16	6			1	3	1	2	2	1
Workshop	16	5		2		9				
Total	183	104	5	11	16	36	14	2	2	14
%*		51 %	2%	5%	8%	18%	7%	1%	1%	7%

* Some respondents ticked more than one box so the breakdown of respondents adds up to over 151 and the percentages are based on 204 responses

- 9.2 There was strong support for each of the ten points from those using the Smart Survey and questionnaire as chart 1 shows, with each receiving over 80% support. Point 10 was most supported and Point 5 the least. (See Section 5 for a description of each point).

Chart 1: Support for the ten points in the draft Homelessness Strategy



(Respondents who either strongly agreed or agreed with the proposals)

- 9.3 There was some criticism of the draft Strategy and suggestions on other areas it should cover which are summarised in table 3.

Table 3: Response to the draft Homelessness Strategy consultation

	Theme	Response
	<i>General</i>	
1.	Respondents often asked questions on how things would be done which indicates more detail is needed	No change , but there is more detail in the accompanying Action Plan
	<i>Services</i>	
2.	The Housing Solutions Service was criticised by a small number of respondents (mainly groups working with homeless households)	Change . The Strategy now includes an action to review Personal Housing Plans. Existing actions also help to ensure the service meets needs, such as by holding service user panels and setting up a Partnership Board which can hold it to account
	<i>Housing supply</i>	
3.	There was some criticism of the policy to offer homeless households private rented housing, but also support for offers being more tailored to where households are currently living	No change as this is already established policy which aims to improve outcomes for homeless households, through them being offered more settled accommodation more quickly
4.	There was some criticism that the Strategy lacks detail on the affordable housing targets and questions about whether the new homes will be affordable	Change . More information about affordable housing rent levels are now included in the Glossary and the Strategy now sets out how it intends to ensure intermediate housing is affordable to a range of households with different incomes
5.	There was a suggestion that empty properties could be used to accommodate homeless households	No change . The Homelessness Review sets out the difficulties of addressing empty properties in Westminster in that they generally don't meet the legal criteria for the council to

Theme	Response
	manage them and use them for housing those in need
<i>Causes of homelessness</i>	
6. There were suggestions that the council could take a stronger lobbying position on other welfare reforms	Change. Changes to the Overall Benefit Cap and Universal Credit are now proposed
7. Mental health was raised as a number of times, either as a cause of homelessness or because more services were needed. There were also comments that the Strategy needed to make greater links between poor health and homelessness generally	Change. Information about a wider range of services will be included where appropriate in the community training sessions and there is an aim to improve referrals from health services to homelessness services
9. There were some general comments that a more partnership approach could be taken and more could be done to address the causes of homelessness	Change. The Strategy now includes aims to review the way in which the council supports people with financial issues and to consider homelessness projects when it is seeking Social Value contributions from contractors. There is already emphasis in the Strategy on addressing the causes of homelessness and in delivering it in partnership
<i>Other</i>	
10. Rough sleeping and begging was raised a number of times. Some respondents asked if the council could do more and others thought it should be fully covered in the Homelessness Strategy	Change. The Strategy now includes a summary of what the council does to address rough sleeping (i.e. of the Rough Sleeping Strategy 2017 - 22)

10. Equalities implications

A full equalities impact assessment (EIA) has been carried out on the Strategy (see Appendix D). Households affected by homelessness have certain protected characteristics when compared with the Westminster population. In summary they are more likely to be: from the Black, Arab or Other ethnic groups; aged between 25 – 44; claiming benefits; and be in households with children. There are also higher numbers of lone parents living in temporary accommodation. The EIA does however note that homeless customers are changing in that more single people, particularly men, are now approaching services.

10.1 Overall the impact of the Strategy is largely positive on the above groups, however the EIA did identify some potentially negative impacts, such as:

- Improving digital access to the Housing Solutions Service could have a negative impact on those less able to use computers, such as the elderly. This is mitigated by ensuring people can still use traditional means and by working with service users to test out new approaches

- Better communicating what the council can and can't offer could result in some people not approaching services if the offer doesn't meet their expectation. This has been mitigated by ensuring positive messaging and by discussing the material used with service users
- As set out in the Equalities Impact Assessment on the council's City Plan 2019 – 2040¹², focusing on new developments providing more intermediate than social housing, could impact negatively on homeless households, as they are more likely to have low incomes and qualify for social housing. This is mitigated by prioritising homeless households for intermediate opportunities and by ensuring that new intermediate housing meets a range of needs, including those with lower incomes. Any potentially negative impacts have to be balanced against other policy objectives, such as the council's aim to create a less polarised and more balanced housing market in the city.
- Increasing the number of offers into settled private rented housing may result in more homeless households moving outside Westminster, given the cost of housing locally. This is mitigated by already having policies in place to ensure those with the highest health and welfare needs are prioritised for homes in Westminster and by the aim to appoint 'community connectors' to help people settle into new areas. Overall the aim is to improve outcomes for homeless households by providing them with more settled accommodation more quickly.

¹² www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/cityplan2040_equalities_impact_assessment.pdf

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Accommodation Procurement Policy for Homeless Households (Updated July 2018)
www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/accommodation_procurement_policy_for_homeless_households.final_updated_8.8.2018_1.pdf

Accommodation Placement Policy for Homelessness Households (Updated Sept 2016)
www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/accommodation_placement_policy_updated_final16.8.2019_1.pdf

City Plan 2019 – 2040
www.westminster.gov.uk/cityplan2040

Early Help Strategy 2019 – 22
www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/early_help_strategy_2019_2022.pdf

Equalities Impact Assessment Addendum to the Integrated Impact Assessment
November 2019
www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/cityplan2040_equalities_impact_assessment.pdf

Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities Updated April 2019
www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities

Housing Allocation Scheme March 2018
www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/housing_allocation_scheme_march_2018.pdf

London Housing Strategy 2018
www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2018_lhs_london_housing_strategy.pdf

Private Rented Sector Offers Policy
www.westminster.gov.uk/sites/default/files/prso_policy_final_4.1.2017_1.pdf

Rough Sleeping Strategy 2017 – 22 Westminster City Council
www.westminster.gov.uk/housing-strategies

Westminster City Council: Review of Homelessness 2019
The review
www.westminster.gov.uk/housing-strategies

Westminster City Council Tenancy Policy
www.westminster.gov.uk/housing-strategies

Westminster City Council Tenancy Strategy
www.westminster.gov.uk/housing-strategies

For completion by the **Cabinet Member for Housing Services**

Declaration of Interest

I have <no interest to declare / to declare an interest> in respect of this report

Signed: _____ Date: _____

NAME: **Councillor David Harvey, Cabinet Member for Housing Services**

State nature of interest if any

(N.B: *If you have an interest you should seek advice as to whether it is appropriate to make a decision in relation to this matter*)

For the reasons set out above, I agree the recommendations in the report entitled **Westminster Homelessness Strategy 2019 – 24** and reject any alternative options which are referred to but not recommended.

Signed

Councillor David Harvey, Cabinet Member for Housing Services

Date

If you have any additional comment which you would want actioned in connection with your decision you should discuss this with the report author and then set out your comment below before the report and this pro-forma is returned to the Secretariat for processing.

Additional comment:

If you do not wish to approve the recommendations, or wish to make an alternative decision, it is important that you consult the report author, the Director of Law, the Executive Director of Finance and Resources, and, if there are human resources

implications, the Director of People Services (or their representatives) so that (1) you can be made aware of any further relevant considerations that you should take into account before making the decision and (2) your reasons for the decision can be properly identified and recorded, as required by law.

Note to Cabinet Member: Your decision will now be published and copied to the Members of the relevant Policy & Scrutiny Committee. If the decision falls within the criteria for call-in, it will not be implemented until five working days have elapsed from publication to allow the Policy and Scrutiny Committee to decide whether it wishes to call the matter in.

Appendix A

Other Implications

1. Resources Implication

See the Financial Implications in Section 6 of the main report.

2. Business Plan Implications

Implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 was a focus of the Growth, Planning and Housing Business Plan during 2018/19.

3. Health and Wellbeing Impact Assessment including Health and Safety Implications

The Homelessness Review and Strategy identify that poor health, particularly poor mental health, can contribute to homelessness and the detrimental impact of homelessness on health and wellbeing. Given the Strategy includes actions to better prevent and respond to homelessness it will have a positive impact on health and wellbeing. In particular it aims to improve the response when someone at risk of homelessness has low to moderate mental health problems. It also aims to include information on health services, when appropriate, when training community groups and giving information on the services available for those at risk of homelessness.

4. Crime and Disorder Implications

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from the Strategy.

5. Impact on the Environment

There are no impacts on the environment arising from the Strategy.

6. Staffing Implications

Most of the actions in the Strategy can be completed by existing staff. As set out in Section 8 the funding for the Early Intervention Trailblazer Service is not long term. If the Service doesn't continue any outstanding actions, which were to be completed by them, will be completed within existing resources.

7. Human Rights Implications

See Section 7 on legal implications.

8. Energy Measure Implications

There are no energy measure implications arising from the Strategy.

9. Communications Implications

The Strategy involves communications campaigns to raise awareness of homelessness services and on what they can and can't offer. The Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan will be on the council's website and consultees will be alerted. A small number of hard copies will be distributed.