

Report Title: Cambridge City Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2021-2028) and accompanying Local Action Plan

To:

Cabinet – 7 July 2026

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

Director Approval: Director of Communities, Sam Scharf, confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Executive Councillor for decision.

1.	Recommendations
1.1	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet:</p> <p>Approves the introduction and implementation of the draft extended Cambridge City Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2021 – 2028) and accompanying Local Action Plan as set out in Annexes 1 and 2 of this report.</p>
2.	Purpose and reason for the report
2.1	This report details the background to the introduction of an extended Cambridge City

	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2021 -2028) and Local Action Plan to cover the period June 2026 – March 2028.
3.	Alternative options considered
3.1	The Homelessness Act 2002 establishes a duty on local authorities to carry out a homelessness review and to publish a Homelessness Strategy. Therefore, no alternative options have been considered.
4.	Background and key issues
4.1	<p>Local authorities are required by legislation to carry out a review of homelessness in their district and to publish a Homelessness Strategy based on the results of the review at least every 5 years. Additionally, local authorities should develop effective action plans, to help ensure that the objectives set out in their Homelessness Strategy are achieved.</p> <p>The City Council’s existing Homelessness Strategy expires in 2026 and, as result, commissioned management consultant PPL to carry out an up-to-date review of homelessness in the district to inform the direction of a new Homelessness Strategy and action plan.</p> <p>The findings from the review were presented to Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3rd February for consideration and comment. The full review can be found at annex 3.</p> <p>Under the second stage of the commissioned work, and having successfully concluded the review, PPL have produced an extended Homelessness Strategy and accompanying Local Action Plan and, once approved, will advise on the delivery of some of the actions.</p> <p>Whilst a Homelessness Strategy and action plan would typically be of 5 years in length, the City Council’s strategy and action plan have been framed within the context of Local Government Reorganisation, the transition to a new unitary authority in April 2028, and what can realistically be delivered in the preceding period. Consequently, we have</p>

	<p>commissioned PPL to extend our existing 2021 – 2026 strategy, but with an updated 2 year action plan, to take us through to March 2028.</p> <p>The new unitary authority, once in existence, will need to produce an updated strategy to reflect its geographical boundaries and responsibilities.</p> <p>In May 2026, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published guidance for developing Homelessness Strategies and action plans to ensure that Homelessness Strategies and actions plans developed by local authorities are aligned to the cross-government homelessness strategy, A National Plan to End Homelessness, published in December 2025. Our updated Homelessness Strategy and action plan has been drafted in line with the national guidance.</p>
5.	Corporate plan
5.1	<p>A decision to approve the introduction of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and accompanying action plan will support the City Council in its following key priorities, as set out in the Corporate plan 2022-27:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Tackling poverty and inequality and helping people in the greatest need -Building a new generation of council and affordable homes and reducing homelessness
6.	Consultation, engagement and communication
6.1	<p>The Homelessness review was completed following extensive consultation and engagement with key stakeholders. These stakeholders included City Council staff, housing providers, voluntary and community organisations and health partners.</p> <p>Additionally, the review included the findings from in-depth, research conversations with people in Cambridge who have lived experience of current or recent homelessness.</p> <p>Ongoing engagement will continue through the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group, the Cambridge Homelessness Charter and other partnership forums to support delivery</p>

	<p>and monitor outcomes.</p> <p>Additionally, people with lived experience of homelessness will provide insight and challenge to service review, design and implementation via the Cambridge Co-Production Group, ensuring a trauma informed delivery of services. This is an important element of Changing Futures Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, a programme lead by the County Council to improve outcomes for people facing multiple disadvantage and which the City Council is committed to.</p>
7.	<p>Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact</p>
7.1	<p>In broad terms, it is anticipated that delivery of the Action Plan priorities will result in earlier prevention of homelessness, improved access to accommodation, and a reduction in rough sleeping.</p> <p>Additionally, expected impacts include increased homelessness prevention and relief rates, reduced use of temporary accommodation, improved outcomes for people experiencing multiple disadvantage, and strengthened partnership delivery across the system.</p> <p>Metrics for the success of the strategy are in line with central government's Local Outcomes Framework for homelessness, covering prevention and relief of homelessness, a reduction in rough sleeping and minimising the use of temporary accommodation, including bed and breakfast, for families with children. Targets against these metrics have been set accordingly.</p>
8.	<p>Implications</p>
	<p>Relevant risks</p>

8.1	<p>Delivery of the Local Action Plan relies on effective partnership co-ordination, identified objectives keeping pace with homelessness demand and, in some cases, the availability of funding to progress actions.</p> <p>Mitigation includes performance monitoring against identified metrics, governance oversight of the Local Action Plan, identified funding sources and working closely with the Cambridge Homelessness Charter group as one of the key delivery mechanisms.</p>
	<p>Financial Implications</p>
8.2	<p>As the actions within the Homelessness Strategy are progressed, there may be identified financial costs associated with them. Where viable, we would anticipate funding initiatives with associated costs through our multi-year homelessness grant from central government and the City Council's Transformation Reinvestment Fund, for which spending approval was received for up to £170K over the life of the project covering the review, the strategy and support with delivery.</p> <p>The Local Action Plan includes a specific action around social investment by exploring the possible use of Greater Cambridge Impact Fund to support the delivery of additional high needs and 'step-down' accommodation.</p> <p>The strategy will provide an opportunity for the City Council to introduce more outcomes-based commissioning of services to support us in meeting its objectives.</p>
	<p>Legal Implications</p>
8.3	<p>The City Council has statutory duty to produce a Homelessness Strategy based on a review of homelessness in its district and to develop an action plan to take forward the objectives identified in the strategy.</p>

	<p>Additionally, the action plan reflects emerging national policy requirements, including strengthened expectations around partnership working e.g. the Duty to Refer and forthcoming Duty to Collaborate.</p> <p>There are no adverse legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report. They support the Council in discharging its statutory homelessness duties, reducing rough sleeping and policy commitments.</p>
	Equalities and socio-economic Implications
8.4	<p>The objectives within the Local Action Plan will support individuals with protected characteristics even if not directly targeted at them.</p> <p>Homelessness disproportionately impacts vulnerable groups. The Action Plan specifically targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • households facing financial shocks and debt • people experiencing multiple disadvantage • individuals at risk of rough sleeping <p>An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed.</p>
	Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications
8.5	No positive or negative impact identified as the services recommended for grant aid are broadly similar to those supported in former years.
	Procurement Implications
8.6	None.
	Community Safety Implications

8.7	Effective homelessness prevention and a reduction in rough sleeping will contribute to improved community safety and wellbeing across the city.
9.	Background documents Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
9.1	None
10.	Appendices
10.1	Appendix 1: Strategy 2028 Extension Appendix 2: Cambridge Local Homelessness Action Plan Appendix 3: Cambridge City Homeless Review
	If you have a query on the report please contact Simon Hunt, Strategic Housing Advice Lead. Tel: 01223 457932. Email: simon.hunt@cambridge.gov.uk