

# Draft homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025 to 2030

## Engagement and consultation report



**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**







# 1. Introduction

This report outlines the engagement and consultation activity which has informed the development of the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2025 to 2030. It summarises findings from the public consultation on a draft strategy and the council's initial response.

Under the Homelessness Act (2002) all local housing authorities must have a homelessness strategy based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their district. The strategy must be renewed every 5 years. The statutory *Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities* sets out how this process should be undertaken.<sup>1</sup> Section 2.10 of the guidance states that that 'Housing authorities must consult public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons as they consider appropriate before adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy. Housing authorities will also wish to consult with service users and specialist agencies that provide support to homeless people in the district.'

The first phase of the project was a review of homelessness in the city. Stakeholder and partner engagement began in October 2024 with the formation of a multi-agency project steering group. Early engagement included a call for evidence in December 2024, followed by workshop events to share evidence and map services and gaps.

In the second phase, between April and August 2025 we engaged with partners to develop proposed priorities and areas for focused action in the strategy. This process also led to the inclusion of a dedicated chapter on tackling homelessness in children, families and young people and 3 commitments to inform delivery.

Public consultation on a draft strategy ran for 7 weeks from 8 September to 26 October 2025. When the consultation closed, we had received 154 responses. Of these, 132 were from individuals and 22 were submitted on behalf of groups, networks and organisations. Most were submitted online through Your Voice, the council's consultation platform. There were 21 paper surveys submitted and a small number of email responses.

Section 2 of the report summarises the key themes and issues arising from public consultation on a draft strategy. We received many detailed responses and have therefore summarised and grouped feedback into themes.

Whilst there was broad support for the proposed priorities and areas for action, there were different, sometimes conflicting, views on some issues. These reflect the views

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2025, [Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities](#)

and opinions of those who responded to the consultation and do not represent the position or policies of the council. Respondents highlighted gaps and areas where they thought the strategy could be improved. Although we are not able to respond here to every point made, we will share the detailed feedback with relevant council officers and use this information to inform our action and service planning.

Section 2 also sets out the council's initial response to feedback and identifies how we plan to take forward key issues. Action as a result of feedback is likely to include one or more of the following: amendments to the strategy itself; inclusion of specific actions, deliverables and targets in the strategy delivery plan; feedback on work already underway; and discussion with elected members of the council on issues where the council does not have the power or the resources to act, but where it may wish to lobby central government.

Section 3 outlines the engagement and consultation process.

The report should be read alongside the [\*Review of homelessness in Brighton & Hove 2025\*](#). This summarises the evidence and feedback submitted by partners and stakeholders, including people with lived experience of homelessness, during the review.

Feedback from engagement and consultation has also informed the Equality Impact Assessment which will be published alongside a report to the council's cabinet for decision.

## 2. Key themes from the public consultation

The thematic analysis in this section is derived from 154 consultation responses, 487 comments, and 1,912 coded segments of the free text responses to consultation questions.

### 2.1 Overall levels of support for proposals

There were high levels of support from respondents across the proposed priorities, areas for focused action, the proposed children's chapter and 3 commitments. Levels of support for proposals ranged from 82.7% to 93.4% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with specific proposals). A breakdown can be found at Appendix 2.

The proposals in the draft strategy were developed collaboratively with our partners and other stakeholders, including people with lived experience of homelessness. When these were tested in the public consultation, levels of support were consistently high across the individual responses (n=132) and those submitted on behalf of groups or organisations (n=22) with slightly higher levels of support from groups and organisations. Groups and organisations showed 100% support for proposals on temporary accommodation and the children, families and young people chapter.

There were similar levels of support for our proposals between people who told us they had lived experience of homelessness or those who been at risk of homelessness, either currently or in the past (n=61) compared to those without lived experience (n=71). People with lived experience showed slightly higher levels of support for all proposals than those without. The most notable differences were stronger support for action to improve the supply and quality of temporary accommodation, supporting people to stay in their home or to find alternative accommodation, targeted prevention for rough sleepers, and integrated services for people with Multiple Compound Needs.

#### **Initial response**

There is very broad and strong support for proposals in the draft strategy across key stakeholders and members of the public. Based on feedback on the need to improve joined-up working between services we have amended priority 3 to recognise the need for greater collaboration and integration. The other proposed priorities, areas for action, inclusion of a children, families and young people chapter and the 3 commitments remain unchanged in the final strategy.

### 2.2 Prevention and early intervention

#### **Theme: Early intervention and risk detection**

While there was strong support for early intervention principles, consultees raised concerns about the capacity and effectiveness of current systems to identify people at risk before crises developed. Questions were posed about how early identification would work in practice, who would be responsible for flagging risks, and whether sufficient resources existed to respond effectively once risks were identified. There

was particular concern about reaching people who might not naturally engage with traditional services, and whether universal services like schools and healthcare providers had adequate training and capacity to recognise and respond to early warning signs of housing instability.

A critical tension was highlighted between the strategy's prevention ambitions and the reality of constrained resources. Consultees noted that while the consultation was seeking views on expanding prevention services, the council had previously cut funding to some prevention activity. There were concerns about whether prevention commitments could be delivered in practice. Respondents emphasised that prevention required upfront investment that would only show returns over time.

Respondents recommended building stronger connections between homelessness services and universal touchpoints where people might first show signs of housing difficulty. This included schools, Family Hubs, GP surgeries, DWP and community organisations. They called for clear training and protocols to help frontline staff in these settings recognise risk factors and know how to make appropriate referrals. Consultees emphasised that early identification systems would only be effective if backed by sufficient resources to provide timely, appropriate interventions when people were identified as at risk.

Consultees were clear that prevention represented one of the most critical investments the council could make and called for this to be stated explicitly in the strategy. They recommended that prevention funding should be protected and ideally increased, recognising that effective early intervention could reduce the much higher costs of crisis responses and temporary accommodation. There were calls for the strategy to acknowledge funding challenges openly while making a clear commitment to prioritising prevention resources despite broader budget pressures.

### **Initial response**

Prevention is at the core of the strategy. A shift upstream is signalled in the strategy and we recognise the key role of universal services in delivering this. We also acknowledge the significant challenge in making this shift. We have identified promising international and UK evidence-based practice and have initiated a test and learn project to develop a predictive risk model as a first step.

## **2.3 Temporary accommodation**

### **Theme: Quality and standards**

Many respondents expressed concerns about the quality and suitability of temporary accommodation. This included safety, both in terms of facilities and risk from other residents. Consultees reported problems with infestations, damp and mould, and broken fixtures that were not addressed. The impact on children was emphasised, with concerns that poor quality temporary accommodation was adversely affecting their wellbeing and development. There was frustration that the current system was not delivering environments where residents could thrive or maintain dignity.

To address their concerns, consultees recommended establishing minimum standards for all temporary accommodation, with particular attention to health and

safety requirements. They called for robust monitoring systems with clear enforcement mechanisms and consequences for providers failing to meet standards. Regular property inspections were proposed to ensure ongoing compliance, alongside timely repairs and maintenance protocols. Respondents emphasised the need for properties that were not just safe but conducive to wellbeing, recovery, and family life.

### **Initial response**

As well as aiming to reduce the overall number of people living in temporary accommodation, the strategy acknowledges that there will continue to be a need for such accommodation. The second priority set out in the strategy is to improve the quality of temporary accommodation and the experience of people living in temporary accommodation. From our review and feedback from consultees we believe that improving interim accommodation (formerly termed emergency accommodation) is a priority. In response to feedback we have added an action to develop and publish contractual standards for the interim accommodation that we purchase. The Renters' Rights Act extends protections already in place in social housing to private rented accommodation, including temporary and supported accommodation. This, alongside forthcoming regulations for supported housing, will give the council additional levers to drive up standards.

### **Theme: Out-of-area placements**

The use of out-of-area placements was also mentioned as a key issue, particularly regarding the impact on families with children. Consultees highlighted how these placements disrupted education continuity, separated families from established support networks, and created additional trauma for children already experiencing homelessness. Lack of transport connections for some, made it difficult to maintain schooling, healthcare, and links with friends and family. There was also lack of clarity about the reasons why some families and individuals were made out-of-area offers and what happened if people declined such offers.

Respondents advocated for minimising or eliminating out-of-area placements altogether. Where such placements were unavoidable, they called for them to be as close as possible to Brighton & Hove, preferably within neighbouring areas that would allow families to maintain key connections. Consultees recommended transparent criteria for when out-of-area placements might be used and clear support for families to maintain links with their established networks. Better tracking of placement locations, durations, and outcomes was proposed, alongside measures to understand and address the reasons families might refuse out of area temporary accommodation.

### **Initial response**

We have made a commitment in the strategy to minimise the use of out of area placements and B&B for families with children. It is likely that there will always be a need for some out of area placements, for example on safety grounds. Ongoing work to increase the supply of local good quality temporary accommodation will help us achieve the overall reduction we want to achieve.

### **Theme: Move-on pathways**

Consultees identified significant challenges around move-on from temporary accommodation into settled housing. The extended duration of stays in temporary accommodation was highlighted as problematic, with some respondents noting instances of families remaining in temporary settings for years. This was attributed to insufficient move-on pathways and limited availability of suitable permanent accommodation. There were concerns that the system was becoming stuck, with people unable to progress despite being ready to move on.

To improve pathways, respondents recommended clear timescales and expectations for temporary accommodation stays, coupled with dedicated support to help residents prepare for and transition to permanent housing. They emphasised the need for increased provision of affordable, suitable permanent accommodation that would create the capacity for people to move on. Better coordination between temporary and permanent housing services was seen as essential to creating smoother transitions and preventing people from becoming 'stuck' in temporary arrangements.

### **Initial response**

If we are to reduce the number of people living in temporary accommodation, we need to improve move-on. This is a core element of our approach in the strategy.

## **2.4 Support and service integration**

### **Theme: Multiple compound needs**

Respondents highlighted gaps in support for people with multiple compound needs, including those experiencing co-occurring mental health difficulties, substance use, and homelessness. Current services were described as fragmented, with poor coordination between different providers and unclear referral pathways. Consultees noted that people were often passed between services without receiving comprehensive, joined-up support. There was particular concern about long waiting times for mental health services and the challenges of accessing appropriate support for those with both mental health needs and housing instability.

To address these gaps, respondents called for integrated services that provide holistic support for people with multiple compound needs. This included co-located teams bringing together housing, health, and social care expertise, with shared assessment processes and coordinated care planning. Consultees recommended establishing a dedicated team focused specifically on people with multiple complex needs, with the skills and resources to provide intensive, sustained support. Better partnership working between statutory services, health providers, and voluntary sector organisations was seen as essential to creating truly integrated pathways.

### **Initial response**

Our third priority recognises the need for better collaboration and service integration. We believe that the ways of working between the NHS, social care, housing and the voluntary sector developed through the Changing Futures programme shows the way forward. We will take this work forward with our partners through the development of Integrated Community Teams and led by a new multiple compound needs partnership.

### **Theme: Trauma informed approaches**

There was widespread support for the need for services to adopt trauma-informed approaches, with many people experiencing homelessness having experienced significant trauma in their lives. However, consultees raised questions about whether staff had sufficient training and support to deliver it effectively. Concerns were expressed about services potentially re-traumatising people through inflexible rules, perceived judgemental attitudes, and failure to recognise people's trauma responses and how this impacted their behaviour.

Respondents recommended comprehensive training for all staff working with people experiencing homelessness to help them understand trauma and its impacts. They called for service design that recognised trauma responses rather than penalising them, with greater flexibility to accommodate people whose trauma might manifest in behaviours that services found challenging. Consultees emphasised the importance of building trust through consistency, transparency, and genuine person-centred approaches that gave people agency and choice in their support.

#### **Initial response**

We have committed to taking forward a trauma informed approach in the strategy and acknowledge that workforce capacity, capability and improving systems and processes are all part of this. We will continue to roll out staff training and to monitor the impact of changes on people's experience of using our services. Our commitment to working with people with lived experience of homelessness will help us design and deliver the improvements we want to see.

### **Theme: Health and social care integration**

Respondents identified significant challenges in achieving effective integration between housing, health, and social care services. Current arrangements were characterised as siloed, with different organisations working to different priorities, timescales, and eligibility criteria. This created barriers for people trying to navigate multiple systems simultaneously, particularly those with complex needs requiring support from several services. Consultees noted problems with information sharing, conflicting advice from different agencies, and gaps between services that people could fall through without adequate support.

To improve integration, consultees recommended establishing formal partnership structures with clear governance, shared objectives, and joint accountability for outcomes. This included developing integrated care pathways that followed people's journeys rather than organisational boundaries, with named workers coordinating support across different agencies. Respondents emphasised the need for better information sharing protocols that allowed relevant information to be shared appropriately while respecting privacy. There were calls for joint commissioning approaches that could fund integrated services more effectively than traditional separate contracts.

#### **Initial response**

We believe we have already made progress in improving joint and integrated working. The structural alignment of adult social care and housing services is one area where we are working towards greater integration. We are also collaborating with NHS commissioners and providers to make improvements in a number of areas

including mental health services, learning disability and autism, and drug and alcohol services. See also the response to Theme: Multiple compound needs above.

**Theme: The role of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector**

Consultees highlighted the vital role of voluntary and community sector organisations in the homelessness system but also revealed concerns about how these organisations were engaged and supported. Consultees noted that voluntary sector partners often had deep expertise and relationships with communities that statutory services struggled to reach, yet sometimes felt their contributions were undervalued or that partnerships were not genuinely collaborative. There were concerns about short-term funding that made it difficult for organisations to plan effectively or maintain specialist staff.

Respondents called for partnership approaches that recognised voluntary sector organisations as equal partners. This included involving them meaningfully in strategic planning and decision-making, not just service delivery. Consultees recommended longer-term funding arrangements that would allow organisations to develop sustainable services and retain skilled staff. There was emphasis on the need to recognise and draw on the distinctive strengths of different partners, including voluntary organisations' ability to provide flexible, person-centred support and reach communities that might be wary of statutory services.

**Initial response**

We have re-framed our partnership commitment to working as equals with all our partners and with people with lived experience. We realise that longer term financial stability would benefit not only the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector but the people they support. The strategy makes it clear, however, that the current financial position for the council is highly uncertain and that resources across the public sector are shrinking. This means that we must do things differently. In some cases it means we will need to reduce funding or to reprioritise how available funding is used. We will work with the sector to ensure that this is done fairly and transparently.

## **2.5 Children, families and young people**

**Theme: Impact of homelessness on children's wellbeing**

The consultation revealed significant concern about the impact of homelessness and temporary accommodation on children's wellbeing, development, and life chances. Respondents highlighted how poor-quality temporary accommodation, frequent moves, and out-of-area placements disrupted children's education, damaged their mental health, and limited their ability to maintain friendships and support networks. There was recognition that children were bearing the trauma of their families' housing crises, with potentially long-lasting effects on their development and future outcomes.

To protect children, consultees called for their needs to be central to all decisions about temporary accommodation placements and support. This included ensuring that temporary accommodation was of high quality, stable, and as close as possible to children's schools and established support networks. Respondents recommended prioritising families with children for move-on into permanent housing and ensuring

that children had access to appropriate support services to address any developmental or emotional difficulties arising from their housing situation. There were calls for better coordination between housing services and children's services to ensure holistic support for children experiencing homelessness.

### **Initial response**

The strategy addresses many of the points raised in the consultation. Partnership working, especially with children's and universal services will be critical for preventing homelessness and reducing the negative impact of homelessness on children if it does occur. Families with children are already a priority group for move on into settled housing, however, the lack of suitable family sized social and affordable housing means that waits are unacceptably long. Our housing strategy prioritises increasing the supply of affordable family sized homes. The need for a greater supply of affordable homes is also identified in our Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2023. Recommendations will feed through into the long-term City Plan which is currently under review. This will set new targets for housing supply.

### **Theme: The distinct needs of young people**

Consultees identified gaps in provision for young people experiencing homelessness independently of family units, including care leavers and young people experiencing family breakdown. Current services were seen as poorly resourced. There was concern that if prevention strategies focused heavily on family-based approaches they could neglect the significant cohort of young people operating outside family structures, for whom school-based prevention for example would not be relevant or sufficient.

Respondents called for tailored pathways specifically designed for vulnerable young people, recognising their distinct needs and experiences. This included increased staffing dedicated to young people's services, particularly for care leavers who required intensive support to sustain their tenancies. Consultees recommended better data collection and monitoring around youth homelessness, including specific measures for young people rough sleeping, young people in emergency accommodation, and care leavers in temporary accommodation. There was concern that Brighton & Hove as a city with many young adults, has particular challenges around youth homelessness that needed explicit acknowledgement in the strategy.

### **Initial response**

We have amended the strategy to better recognise the distinct needs of young people, especially those outside families. We have also included additional measures to track progress in relation to young people. We acknowledge that there is more to do in terms of improving data collection and monitoring youth homelessness in the city and will work with our partners in the Young Homeless Working Group to take this forward.

## **2.6 Equality, diversity and inclusion**

### **Theme: Specific groups and protected characteristics**

Respondents highlighted gaps in provision for various groups with protected characteristics or specific vulnerabilities. Concerns were raised about older people experiencing homelessness, who were seen as an under-acknowledged group with

distinct needs around health, mobility, and support. Similar gaps were identified for Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers, including van dwellers, who face challenges accessing appropriate accommodation and services.

Several consultees recommended that the strategy should explicitly address the needs of specific groups with protected characteristics, with action plans for cohorts currently under-served. This included ensuring that services were culturally appropriate and accessible, with staff training on equality issues and the particular challenges faced by different communities. Respondents called for better data collection disaggregated by protected characteristics to understand who was experiencing homelessness and whether services were reaching all communities equitably.

### **Initial response**

We acknowledge that there were gaps in the draft strategy in relation to homelessness in older people and gypsies, Roma and travellers (including people living in vans and other vehicles). There is an ongoing needs assessment into the accommodation needs of gypsy, Roma and traveller groups and we will take its findings into account in delivering the strategy. From our review and equality impact assessment there is an indication of several issues affecting older adults and we have now included a commitment in the strategy to better understand the needs of the increasing numbers of older adults seeking support and ensure that our services meet their needs.

### **Theme: Inclusive or separate provision for specific groups**

A significant area of differing opinion emerged around whether services should be inclusive or provide separate services for specific groups. Some consultees advocated for mainstream services to be designed inclusively from the outset, arguing that separate provision could be stigmatising or inadequate. Others contended that certain groups require specialist provision that recognised and responded to their specific experiences and needs, such as women-only services for survivors of domestic abuse or specialist provision for people from particular cultural or religious backgrounds. The consultation highlighted differing views on trans inclusion, with some respondents calling for trans-inclusive provision in single-sex services and others opposing this approach.

Rather than prescribing a single approach, respondents generally recommended that the strategy should support a range of provision models, recognising that different approaches might be appropriate for different services and groups. The emphasis should be on ensuring that all provision, whether mainstream or specialist, was of high quality, properly resourced, and genuinely met the needs of the people it served. Consultees called for ongoing dialogue with communities about what models of provision they found most helpful and responsive.

### **Initial response**

We support the principle of a range of provision models. We will work to ensure that all our services are inclusive but where we have a legal obligation or there is a clear case for separate provision, we will work to ensure that this is in place to meet relevant needs. We also commit to dialogue with our partners and with communities to develop appropriate models of provision.

## 2.7 Root causes of homelessness and systemic issues

### **Theme: Housing supply and affordability**

Many respondents draw attention to the fundamental challenge of a lack of affordable housing supply in the city. Consultees recognised that even the best prevention and support services could not fully address homelessness while the supply of genuinely affordable, suitable housing remains inadequate to meet need. The loss of social housing stock through Right to Buy was highlighted as having long-term consequences for housing availability, while new build rates are insufficient to replace lost stock or meet growing demand.

Respondents called for the strategy to clearly articulate the need for increased social and affordable housing supply. Consultees recommended that the council should use its voice to advocate at national level for policy changes including ending Right to Buy, increased investment in social housing, and introducing rent controls. Locally, they called for ambitious targets for new social housing development and creative use of all available tools to increase affordable supply, including use of council-owned land and partnerships with housing associations.

### **Initial response**

The need for more affordable homes in the city to meet the differing needs of our communities is acknowledged in the strategy. As part of a broader strategic framework, this issue is addressed in our housing strategy, [Homes for Everyone](#), agreed in 2024. This sets a target for the delivery of 2,000 additional affordable homes by 2029. Work is also underway to review and update the City Plan. This is the key document that will set long term housing goals for the city and the infrastructure to support additional homes. We also see the creation of a mayoral authority for Sussex and Brighton and the reorganisation of local government in the region as an opportunity to work together to deliver new homes.

### **Theme: The private rented sector**

The private rented sector was identified as both a potential pathway out of homelessness and a source of housing instability. Consultees raised concerns about the quality and affordability of private rented accommodation, with many properties unaffordable on housing benefit rates and some falling below acceptable standards. The Renters Reform Bill (now Act) was seen as creating both opportunities and challenges that the strategy needed to address.

Respondents recommend that the strategy should reflect the changing private rented sector landscape, considering how legislative reforms might improve conditions in the private rented sector and what new challenges they might create. They called for better recording and understanding of why people lost private rented tenancies, to inform more effective prevention. Consultees emphasised the need for services supporting people to access and sustain private rented tenancies, including navigation support, tenancy training, and mediation. There were calls for stronger enforcement against rogue landlords and clearer standards for privately rented accommodation used in homelessness pathways.

### **Initial response**

Our housing strategy sets out our overall policy position on working with the private rented sector. We want to work constructively with landlords and their networks to ensure that we have the good quality homes we need in the city. We are clear, however, that we will not tolerate rogue landlords. Recent legislation means that standards already in place in the social housing sector will be applied to the private rented sector. We will work with the sector to support implementation of the new legislation and, where necessary, take action to enforce it.

### **Theme: The benefits system**

The inadequacy of benefit levels, particularly in high-cost areas like Brighton & Hove, was identified as a fundamental driver of homelessness. Consultees highlighted that Universal Credit levels were insufficient to meet housing costs, with the benefit cap creating particular difficulties for families. The interaction between employment and benefits was also problematic, with young people in supported accommodation potentially losing Local Housing Allowance eligibility when gaining employment, pushing them into rent arrears. These structural issues in the benefits system were seen as creating ongoing flows into homelessness that local services struggled to respond to.

While recognising that benefits policy is set nationally, respondents called for the strategy to acknowledge these systemic issues explicitly and commit to advocacy at national level. Specific recommendations included campaigning for Brighton & Hove to have benefit caps aligned with London levels given similar housing costs, increasing Local Housing Allowance rates to cover actual rent levels, and reforming rules around employment and housing benefit eligibility. Consultees emphasised the need for better benefits advice and support locally to help people maximise their entitlements within the current system.

### **Initial response**

The benefits system impacts across our 3 priorities, with the consequences identified by respondents. A local level, we can work with our partners to support people at risk and those experiencing homelessness to maximise their income and mitigate some of the anomalies and disparities identified in the consultation. We will also discuss with elected members the council's role in lobbying for changes to national policy.

### **Theme: National policy**

Respondents acknowledged that homelessness is impacted by national policy decisions beyond local control, including housing policy, welfare reforms, and public spending constraints. The Renters Reform Act will reshape the private rented sector with implications for both prevention and housing supply. Central government funding for homelessness services is insufficient to meet need, while broader austerity policies have reduced services that helped prevent homelessness such as mental health and employment support.

Consultees recommended that the strategy should be clear about this national context and the limitations it creates for local action. Rather than assuming the strategy can solve problems that required national policy change, it should explicitly identify areas where national advocacy was needed. Respondents called for the council to use its voice at the national level to argue for regulated rents, increased social housing investment, adequate benefits levels, and sufficient funding for

homelessness services. The strategy should set out how the council will engage in these advocacy efforts alongside its local delivery commitments.

### **Initial response**

We welcome the reforms introduced by the Renters' Rights Act and will work to implement these locally. We will work with our neighbouring authorities and through our networks to lobby central government on the relevant policy issues including a fair funding settlement for local government, including funding for homelessness prevention and support services.

## **2.8 Delivery of the strategy**

### **Theme: Implementation and follow-through**

Some respondents were sceptical about the delivery of the strategy and called for the inclusion of more specific actions and deliverables. A few were also sceptical about the potential for real change or improvement, suggesting that past initiatives have not led to tangible impact from their perspective. Some asked for more clarity about how the strategy will be implemented and how progress will be tracked. The importance of using data to understand residents' needs and inform the delivery of the strategy was also mentioned.

### **Initial response**

This is intended to be a short, high-level document setting out our priorities and where we will focus our activity over the next 5 years. We will work with our partners to develop a more detailed delivery plan. This will include actions, milestones, key performance indicators and targets. This first year will reflect activity that is planned or in progress and where funding is secured. However, we will use the strategy to guide action and financial planning, including seeking additional funding, for subsequent years. We will update on our progress and refresh the delivery plan on an annual basis.

### **Theme: Financial challenges**

Some respondents argued that there is a fundamental tension between the strategy's ambitious vision and the reality of constrained resources. Consultees noted contradictions between stated ambitions and actual decisions, with some services being decommissioned while the strategy calls for better provision. This created scepticism about whether commitments could be delivered and concern that the strategy might be a wish-list rather than a realistic action plan. The role of central government underfunding was highlighted as a critical contextual factor that needed acknowledgement.

Respondents recommended that the strategy should be honest about funding challenges while making clear which actions were priorities for available resources. Rather than avoiding discussion of constraints, consultees wanted to see realistic assessment of what could be achieved with different funding scenarios and clear prioritisation of actions. They called for the strategy to make the case for investment in homelessness services, including the costs of not preventing homelessness and the returns from effective early intervention. There was emphasis on the need for joint funding and commissioning approaches that could make available resources work more effectively.

### **Initial response**

We believe that we have been open in the strategy about the financial challenges facing the council. There are similar pressures on many of our partners. The actions we deliver will be shaped by the strategy, but this will need to be done in the context of our statutory duties and our financial and other resources. We will seek to collaborate with other organisations to make the most of our collective resources to deliver improved outcomes for the city.

### **Theme: Workforce**

Staffing capacity emerged as a concern, with consultees stating that homelessness services were understaffed and that waiting times for support were too long. Specific gaps were identified in young people's services, with reportedly only one council officer supporting young people. Beyond numbers, respondents also raised questions about workforce skills and training, particularly around trauma-informed practice, equality and diversity, and working with complex needs. There was recognition that delivering the strategy's ambitions would require appropriately skilled and supported staff.

Consultees recommended increased staffing levels in key areas, particularly youth homelessness support and prevention work. They called for investment in workforce development including training in trauma-informed approaches, mental health awareness, and cultural competency. Respondents emphasised the importance of supporting staff wellbeing, recognising that homelessness work was demanding and that staff burnout could undermine service quality. There were suggestions for developing specialist teams focused on particular cohorts or needs, alongside development of staff in universal services to help them recognise and respond to homelessness risks.

### **Initial response**

The feedback and suggestions made by respondents broadly reflects our assessment. There have been significant developments, including the ongoing roll out of trauma, mental health and cultural competency training. We acknowledge that there is more to do and will take this forward in the delivery of the strategy. The scale of the challenge facing us means that we will need to develop new ways of working as we do this.

### **Theme: Monitoring and accountability**

Consultees highlighted gaps in current data collection and monitoring and also called for comprehensive and meaningful measures of progress. Existing proposed indicators were seen as missing key cohorts, particularly young people experiencing homelessness outside family units. There was concern that without robust monitoring, the strategy's commitments might not translate into real change and that gaps in provision might remain hidden. Respondents emphasised the importance of transparency in reporting progress.

Recommendations included developing a comprehensive set of performance indicators that covered all priority groups and measured both process and outcomes. Consultees called for specific measures around young people rough sleeping, young people in emergency accommodation, care leavers in temporary accommodation,

and length of stay in temporary accommodation. They recommended annual review of progress with evaluation and clear accountability mechanisms. Respondents emphasised the importance of disaggregating data by protected characteristics to understand whether services were reaching all communities equitably and to identify any disparities in outcomes.

### **Initial response**

We recognise that there is more need to improve data collection and monitoring progress. Our systems and processes need to be strengthened and more sophisticated data capture and use is still needed in the areas indicated by consultees. We have identified a number of specific areas in our review of homeless and Equality Impact Assessment where we think we can improve.

## **2.9 Other issues**

Beyond the themes above, consultees provided feedback on the wording of the strategy document itself. There were requests for greater clarity in terminology or a glossary of terms.

### **Initial response**

A number of changes have been made to the strategy document wording based on feedback. We have also included a glossary of terms as suggested by several respondents.

### 3. The engagement and consultation process

#### **The review of homelessness**

Our process of engagement began with the formation of a project steering group in autumn 2024, bringing together internal and external stakeholders. This was led by the Director of Housing People Services and comprised service leads from council housing services, adults' and children's services, public health, NHS, the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Network). Common Ambition helped bring the voices of people with lived experience into the work of the steering group.

Three multi-agency groups informed the work of the project steering group - covering data, engagement and consultation and a frontline services reference group.

Regular in person updates were provided to the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Cabinet Adviser for Homelessness.

In December 2024 we put out a call for data and evidence to inform our review of homelessness. Invitations to submit evidence was sent to a mailing list of 130 individuals and organisations. The review was also promoted through the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Network and Community Works mailing lists.

Organisations submitting evidence for the review were:

- Arch Healthcare
- Brighton & Hove City Council Encampments Team
- Changing Futures Sussex
- Clock Tower Sanctuary
- Common Ambition
- Justlife
- LGBTQ Switchboard
- Oasis Project
- Rise
- Safe Haven Sussex
- Sisters Salon
- Sussex Interpreting Service
- Sussex Nightstop
- University of Sussex Students' Union
- Voices in Exile
- YMCA Downslink Group

The evidence provided was a mixture of quantitative and qualitative information and included anonymised casework data, reports, research findings, case studies and presentations. A summary of the issues identified is set out in the [Review of homelessness in Brighton & Hove 2025](#).

We organised two stakeholder workshops in January and February 2025, the first to share and map data and evidence, the second to identify relevant services and resources. Around 40 participants, including frontline workers and people with lived experience of homelessness, took part in each workshop. We also held a separate event for NHS commissioners and providers in late January 2025. In March 2025 we held an online workshop for those unable to take part in earlier engagement activities.

Throughout the review and development of the strategy we regularly engaged with the strategic leads group of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Network of voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations.

We provided a hybrid in person and online briefing, open to all councillors, in early April where we presented initial findings from the review.

### **Developing the draft strategy for consultation**

The vision of 'A better Brighton & Hove for all' with 'homes for everyone' at its core was taken from the council plan 2023 to 2027. The housing strategy 2024 to 2029 has tackling homelessness and meeting housing need as one of 5 priorities.

Through engagement during, and following, the review of homelessness, three proposed priorities and areas for focused action for each, were developed and tested with our partners. We also presented review findings and tested proposals with council directorates and the corporate leadership team.

We held sessions with the City Leadership Board and the Violence Against Women and Girls Network, the West Area Health Forum, the Homeless Operational Forum, Young Homeless Working Group, and Safe Haven Sussex. A dedicated workshop was organised to engage with NHS colleagues. Proposals were taken for comment as they developed to the Common Ambition steering group of people with lived experience of homelessness and to the frontline services reference group.

By the end of August, we had a draft strategy ready to test through formal public consultation. We shared a pre-consultation draft with the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Network strategic leads group for comment in advance of the formal launch.

### **Formal consultation on the strategy**

The consultation on the draft strategy was launched on Your Voice, the council's consultation platform, on 8 September 2025. The project group reviewed progress fortnightly and considered potential changes to the consultation approach. This included reviewing responses received across the city's demographics. Based on these reviews the project group adjusted the consultation plan and included further targeted promotion to older people's organisations and to groups and individuals working with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The consultation closed on Sunday 26 October 2025.

### **Promoting the consultation**

Allowing for duplication between the different mailing lists, around 500 individuals, groups and organisations were invited to take part in the consultation. In addition, they were asked to promote the consultation to their members, service users, staff and volunteers. All were sent reminders during the consultation encouraging responses.

An invitation to take part was sent to:

- 130 individuals and organisations on a core stakeholder list
- 250 individuals, groups and organisations on the Migrant and Refugee Forum mailing list.
- 552 Third Sector groups and organisations on the Community Works mailing list
- 25 organisations in the Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Network

### **Other publicity**

The Wave (council staff intranet)

Social media

A range of e-newsletters produced by council services and our partners

100 posters were distributed for display in public buildings, including in housing offices and on service noticeboards.

Plasma screens in council buildings including libraries and family hubs

### **Face to face engagement**

Two in person public consultation events were held during the consultation period, the first at Hove Town Hall and the second at Brighton Town Hall. A series of drop in sessions were arranged at Whitehawk Family Hub, Hangleton Community Centre, JobCentre Plus, the Youth Hub and the Jubilee Library. A dedicated workshop on the children, families and young people chapter was also held.

During the consultation we presented the strategy at the Brighton & Hove Health and Care Partnership Executive Board, the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Community Safety Partnership, People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and at an event for registered providers of social housing. A session organised for the Combatting Drugs Partnership Board was deferred and held just after the close of consultation, but consultation material had been circulated in advance.

### **Accessibility**

The online survey was hosted on Your Voice, the council's consultation platform. The platform is compatible with international accessibility standards for web content. It also has the option for people to complete a survey in any of the 10 most spoken languages in Brighton & Hove.

Large print, hard copy surveys were available on request by email or phone. An offer to provide the survey in other formats was made on the portal. An Easy Read guide and survey were also made available as hard copy and for download from Your Voice.

## **Appendix 1 Consultation responses submitted on behalf of groups, networks and organisations**

- Arch Healthcare
- BHT Addiction Services
- BHT Sussex
- Brighton & Hove City Council - Adult Social Care Commissioning Team
- Brighton and Hove City Council Strategic Lead Commissioner Domestic Abuse and VAWG
- Brighton & Hove Hotel Association
- Brighton & Hove Older People's Council
- Brighton & Hove Speak Out
- Change Grow Live
- Headway Sussex
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Network
- Justlife
- NHS Sussex
- Pathways & Partnerships Housing Options team
- Phase One, BHT Sussex
- RISE
- Seaside Homes
- Sussex Nightstop
- The Clock Tower Sanctuary
- The Clocktower Sanctuary - young people's response
- Voices in Exile
- YMCA Downs Link Group

## Appendix 2 Levels of support for proposals

### Priority 1: Prevention

Question	Responses	Agree	Strongly Agree	Combined Support
<b>Do you agree with our proposed priority to 'increase our effectiveness in preventing homelessness and rough sleeping'?</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>125 (91.9%)</b>
Early identification of risk and early intervention	134	36	83	<b>119 (88.8%)</b>
Support people to stay in their homes or to find a new home	135	32	90	<b>122 (90.4%)</b>
Deliver targeted prevention for people at risk of rough sleeping	133	28	89	<b>117 (88.0%)</b>

### Priority 2: Temporary Accommodation

Question	Responses	Agree	Strongly Agree	Combined Support
<b>Do you agree with our proposed priority to 'improve temporary accommodation pathways and experiences'?</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>113 (87.6%)</b>
Improve move on from temporary accommodation into settled housing	138	29	92	<b>121 (87.7%)</b>
Support people living in temporary accommodation	139	31	96	<b>127 (91.4%)</b>
Improve the supply and quality of temporary accommodation	136	27	93	<b>120 (88.2%)</b>

### Priority 3: Support

Question	Responses	Agree	Strongly Agree	Combined Support
<b>Do you agree with our proposed priority to 'provide joined-up support with our partners to people who most need help'?</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>118 (92.2%)</b>
Target support for people who are most vulnerable	138	34	91	<b>125 (90.6%)</b>
Create integrated services for people with Multiple Compound Needs	136	25	103	<b>128 (94.1%)</b>

Support people experiencing rough sleeping access services and accommodation	138	22	103	<b>125 (90.6%)</b>
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## Chapter on Children, Families and Young People

Question	Responses	Agree	Strongly Agree	Combined Support
<b>Do you agree with our proposal to include a chapter on children, families and young people?</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>110 (92.4%)</b>
Increase early identification of children, families and young people at risk of homelessness through early help and universal services such as schools and Family Hubs	135	22	99	<b>121 (89.6%)</b>
Develop our family intervention and mediation services to prevent homelessness	133	27	86	<b>113 (85.0%)</b>
Deliver targeted prevention for young people at risk of rough sleeping	134	20	99	<b>119 (88.8%)</b>
Support children, families and young people maintain connections to services and support networks	133	26	95	<b>121 (91.0%)</b>
Improve standards for children and families living in temporary accommodation	132	18	102	<b>120 (90.9%)</b>
Minimise the use of bed and breakfast accommodation and out-of-area placements for families with children	133	14	96	<b>110 (82.7%)</b>
Develop tailored pathways for vulnerable young people that meet distinct needs and experiences	133	24	93	<b>117 (88.0%)</b>
Ensure that children, families and young people experiencing homelessness receive coordinated protection and support	131	18	101	<b>119 (90.8%)</b>
Support care experienced young people who have lived in care and other vulnerable young people to sustain their tenancies	132	19	104	<b>123 (93.2%)</b>
Strengthen our support offer for the most vulnerable children and young people	133	19	104	<b>123 (92.5%)</b>

## Fair and inclusive

Question	Responses	Agree	Strongly Agree	Combined Support
Develop holistic, person-centred and trauma informed services	144	26	101	<b>127 (88.2%)</b>
Champion equality, diversity and inclusion	145	28	93	<b>121 (83.4%)</b>
Challenge stigma, build trust and promote community integration and social connections	145	30	97	<b>127 (87.6%)</b>

## Partnership

Question	Responses	Agree	Strongly Agree	Combined Support
Work with people with lived experience to design services and policy	145	31	100	<b>131 (90.3%)</b>
Work with government, regional and local partners to tackle the root causes of homelessness	141	26	103	<b>129 (91.5%)</b>
Work with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to lever in additional resources and expertise to deliver the aims of the strategy	141	29	104	<b>133 (94.3%)</b>

## Resources

Question	Responses	Agree	Strongly Agree	Combined Support
Ensure our workforce has the knowledge and skills to do their very best	141	21	111	<b>132 (93.6%)</b>
Manage our financial resources and assets to ensure best value and financial sustainability	142	29	96	<b>125 (88.0%)</b>
Use our information to better understand need, deliver evidence-based solutions and drive innovation	141	29	97	<b>126 (89.4%)</b>