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# NOTICE OF MEETING

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## CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING

TUESDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 2018 AT 2.00 PM

## EXECUTIVE MEETING ROOM - THE GUILDHALL

Telephone enquiries to Joanne Wildsmith, Democratic Services Tel: 9283 4057  
Email: [joanne.wildsmith@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.wildsmith@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)

If any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting has access requirements, please notify the contact named above.

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## CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING

Councillor Darren Sanders (Liberal Democrat)

### Group Spokespersons

Councillor Tom Coles, Labour  
Councillor Luke Stubbs, Conservative

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(NB This Agenda should be retained for future reference with the minutes of this meeting.)

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## AGENDA

- 1 **Apologies for Absence**
- 2 **Declaration of Interests**
- 3 **Street Homeless and Rough Sleepers Partnership Strategy 2018 - 2020**  
(Pages 3 - 28)

The purpose of the report by the Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and

Building Services is to seek endorsement of the Cabinet Member for Housing of the Street Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Partnership Strategy 2018-2020.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (1) That the Street Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Partnership Strategy 2018 - 2020 is endorsed;**
- (2) That consultation commences on piloting the Accommodation First not Accommodation only model piloted in Portsmouth;**
- (3) That a Homelessness Working Group is implemented.**

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<b>Title of meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Housing</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> September 2018</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Street Homelessness &amp; Rough Sleeping Partnership Strategy 2018-2020</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>James Hill - Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services</b>
<b>Wards affected:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key decision:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Full Council decision:</b>	<b>Yes</b>

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## 1. Purpose of report

To seek endorsement of the Street Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Partnership Strategy 2018-2020

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Street Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Partnership Strategy 2018 - 2020 is endorsed
- 2.2 That consultation commences on piloting the Accommodation First not Accommodation only model piloted in Portsmouth
- 2.3 That a Homelessness Working Group is implemented

## 3. Background

- 3.1 The City of Portsmouth, like other Local Authority areas, has seen an increase in street homelessness and rough sleeping. The City is responding with supported housing provision, a homeless day service, a night bed service, community and voluntary sector support and there is a strong commitment from other services to provide positive outcomes for people who are sleeping on the streets. It should be noted that this inaugural Strategy is not a statutory requirement for the Local Authority and therefore Portsmouth City Council is not under any duty to produce one.
- 3.2 Rough sleeping counts and estimates are single one night snapshots of the number of people sleeping rough in local authority areas. The rough sleepers count in Portsmouth in 2017 identified 42 rough sleepers. This is a year on year increase.

- 3.3 In response to the increase of visibility of people sleeping on the streets and a need for the Local Authority to provide a co-ordinated response, a new temporary post was created - Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategic Programme Manager. The post is a fixed term post from December 2017 - March 2019.
- 3.4 A Street Homeless & Rough Sleeping Partnership Strategy is needed to provide clear direction and a co-ordinated approach to maximise the contribution of the community and voluntary sector and ensure that the 'right' support is in place to meet demand. It is, though, important to stress that it builds on learning from statutory and voluntary partners and is the start of a continuous dialogue between them and the Council, conducted on an equal footing.
- 3.5 Street homelessness is a complex issue and links to multiple services including housing, mental health, substance misuse and benefits and there is rarely a one size fits all approach to resolve homelessness. A tailored approach to an individual's needs and aspirations is needed to minimise the barriers identified in finding and sustaining accommodation.
- 3.6 This strategy has been developed by exploring
- 3.6.1 What is driving the increase in people sleeping on the streets
  - 3.6.2 How to co-ordinate the current response of the City Council and other stakeholders
  - 3.6.3 How to adjust our offer/services to provide a tailored approach
- 3.7 Some rough sleepers do not appear to want to engage with any offers of accommodation or support and the intention is to develop an approach which seeks to address the challenges of unwanted or criminal behaviour from or to individuals making that choice. That would form part of a balanced package of measures consistent with the 'Prevention, Intervention, Recovery' approach in the Government's 2018 Rough Sleeper Strategy.
- 3.8 The issues around rough sleeping are complex and are often outside the direct control of Portsmouth City Council and other local partners. Many of those within the rough sleeping community have needs relating to mental health and substance misuse. Research has shown that no single agency can effectively tackle street homelessness. The reason individuals become rough sleepers are not fully understood. There are, however, some key characteristics which include early childhood trauma.
- 3.9 The Street Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Partnership Strategy proposes a 'Accommodation First not Accommodation Only' programme. The model would focus on supporting individuals into affordable housing and also to provide consistent support to sustain any tenancy. The Accommodation First not Accommodation Only model builds on the provision of a Night Bed Service in the city which has been operational since December 2017. 45 beds are

available each evening for individuals who are experiencing rough sleeping. The Night Bed Service is complemented by the Portsmouth Homeless Day Service. Both services are commissioned by Portsmouth City Council. A personalised housing plan will be developed with each individual to assess their needs which might include employment, mental and physical health and debt advice, in addition to their housing need. Once settled accommodation has been secured, the intention would be to provide support in order to prevent street homelessness happening repeatedly. As this is a new model it has therefore not been consulted on widely. Consultation with statutory partners, other stakeholders and the voluntary sector will commence if the strategy is approved.

- 3.10 The Government is committed to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it altogether by 2027. A Rough Sleepers Initiative funding package has been launched. By the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Local Government.£30m will be available for Local Authorities over the period 2018 - 2020. Portsmouth City Council is the recipient of £384k for the period July 2018 - March 2019. Further funding is available for 2019/20.
- 3.11 A bid has been made for funding for 2019 -2020 for Rough Sleeping Initiative funding. At the time of writing this report, this outcome of the bid is not known.

#### **4. Governance & Accountability**

- 4.1 A Homeless Working Group should be implemented. The purpose of the Group should include:
- Monitoring and providing scrutiny for the implementation of the Action Plan arising from the strategy
  - Scrutinise any funding is being used in accordance with the conditions of any grants or public monies
  - Provide expertise, experience and guidance
- 4.2 Membership of the group is to be agreed, but could include:
- Cabinet Members with a responsibility for Housing, Environment &Community Safety and Health and Wellbeing
  - Representatives from the elected members of Portsmouth City Council
  - Voluntary Sector Partners
  - Statutory Partners e.g. Police, Health
  - Individuals with experience of rough sleeping

## **5. Reasons for recommendations**

- 5.1 A strategy is necessary to understand the needs of individuals who are rough sleeping and how to offer appropriate support using all of the resources available
- 5.2 The Accommodation First not Accommodation Only model seeks to support individuals into settled accommodation
- 5.3 A Homeless Working group is pivotal to the success of this work and to support collaborative working

## **6. Equality impact assessment**

- 6.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment will be completed once consultation has concluded. Consultation will be concluded by 31 December 2018.

## **7. Legal implications**

- 7.1 The report and attached draft strategy correctly outlines the current obligations under the Homelessness Act 2002 which imposes a duty on the local authority to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness. This duty is further reinforced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which enables the authority to engage with groups who fall outside of any priority status of the Housing Act 1996.
- 7.2 Whilst the new duty is imposed, if rough sleepers fail or deliberately do not engage the authority can serve an appropriate notice as it is recognised that some persons wish to remain homeless.
- 7.3 The current proposed strategy minimalises potential risk from Judicial Review.

## **8. Director of Finance's comments**

- 8.1 The City Council has received £384,000 from the Rough Sleepers Initiative Grant for 2018/19 from the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). This ring fenced grant has been awarded to support Initiatives that reduce the number of rough sleepers in the City. The Accommodation First not Accommodation Only' model described in this strategy is funded from this grant.
- 8.2 The Council have submitted a further bid to the (MHCLG) of £1m to further extend the Service for 2019/20, at the time of writing this report the Council is yet to receive notification as to whether it has been successful in this bid.
- 8.3 If the Council is unsuccessful, the Service would either have to reduce or cease unless an alternative source of funding is identified.

- 8.4 In the event that additional funding is unsuccessful, the Service would develop an "exit plan" in collaboration with statutory and voluntary partners to provide services within the available funding.

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Signed by:  
**James Hill - Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services**

**Appendices:**

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by Cabinet Member of Housing on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018

.....  
Signed by:  
**Councillor Sanders - Cabinet Member of Housing**

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**DRAFT**

**City of Portsmouth**

**'Street Homelessness and  
Rough Sleeping Partnership  
Strategy'**

**2018 – 2020**

## Introducing the Strategy - Cllr Darren Sanders

Thank you for taking the time and trouble to read this strategy, a first for this city.

More and more people sleep on the streets of this great city and many others. That is unacceptable in this day and age, yet the truth is that the reasons for this are many and complex, defying the traditional 'one size fits all' response the public sector has.

Whether it is the veteran who cannot cope after the horrors of battle or the child asked to leave their family home because their parents want their bedroom as an office, every person who sleeps rough is different. What unites them is the human cost of doing so, for instance dying on average 30 years younger than the rest of the population - a shocking waste of human life.

The last few years have seen major efforts to try and deal with it. We have seen a Winter Beds shelter that now lasts all-year-round. We have seen a Homelessness Working Group examining the issue in detail. This work has done a lot to try and deal with the issues. There are also many, many voluntary groups that do a fantastic job dealing directly with those who happen to sleep rough. Everyone involved with it must be applauded.

The situation we face now requires more comprehensive work, of which this strategy is the starting point. It has two overarching themes. The first is treating every person who happens to sleep rough as part of our community, not part of the problem; an individual, not a number.

The second is to accept that the Council's role is to enable others to do the job, rather than pretending it has all the answers. That is why this strategy is unusual. It is the start of a dialogue, albeit one based on listening to what we have been told. Dealing with such a complex matter requires a co-ordinated approach that means groups and individuals - including politicians - putting aside differences and working together on an equal footing to create a better life for this group of people.

There will be ideas in here some people will not like. For instance, it is not equating people who need our help with professional street beggars who prey on people's natural humanity. They must and will be dealt with; here is the wrong place to do it. That is not to say we will not tackle issues of antisocial behaviour, but doing so must form part of a balanced package of measures consistent with the 'Prevention, Intervention, Recovery' approach in the Government's 2018 Rough Sleeper Strategy.

Key suggestions include:

- **Accommodation First, not Accommodation Only.** This recognises that the increasingly diverse nature of the people who happen to sleep rough in our city requires support as well as accommodation, especially those who wish to 'move on' We wish to consult on this.
- **Changing services away from traditional public sector models to personalised plans** that focus on the needs of individuals and identify the most appropriate support for them

- **Improving the quality of accommodation**, including exploring 'safe houses', enabling those who wish to move on live in places that avoid substance misuse
- **Exploring an 'alternative giving campaign'** to encourage people to focus their generosity at groups that help people who happen to sleep rough, including exploring using the money given to enable individuals to improve their lives
- **Encourage the public sector and private companies to utilise or buy buildings to accommodate those who happen to sleep rough and explore providing employment opportunities for them**
- **Get the Council, other statutory partners and voluntary groups and people who happen to sleep rough to work together to deliver this approach** and encourage a 'City Conversation' to help develop it
- **Build on the Government's idea of navigators** - a concept first devised here in Portsmouth - beyond people who merely highlight services to ones who can develop the relationships that are so vital to getting many people who sleep rough to engage

This is not a complete list of the points in this document. They do, though, point to an approach that balances support, opportunity and hope to ensure no-one is left behind.

I would like to thank many people for putting together this strategy, in particular Sharon George for putting this all together over many months, the organisers behind and the many voluntary groups that attended a 'Project Bridge' session on this and those individuals who happen to sleep rough who have talked to us - sometimes without knowing who we are. You have helped shape the thinking in this initial strategy document. Thank you.

Cllr Darren Sanders  
Cabinet Member for Housing, Portsmouth City Council

## Introduction

Portsmouth, like many other Local Authority areas, has seen an increase in street homelessness and rough sleeping. There has been a significant increase in the number of homeless people congregating within the city, and often in areas where they are highly visible and potentially vulnerable in the City Centre, Central Southsea and areas within the night time economy.

The common perception is that those who happen to sleep rough are all beggars. Though some are, the truth is that most are not. Anyone can end up sleeping rough. Tackling it is complex and needs to take into account many factors. One response does not fit all. Every person who ends up on the streets has a story to tell as to why they are there. In every case the story is different, they are part of our community. Our response must reflect that reality.

Rough sleeping can damage a person's physical and mental health. Many experience issues with mental and physical health, and substance misuse problems as a result of the conditions in which they live.

This strategy - the first our city has produced - is the starting point in reversing that in a comprehensive way. It will offer a general approach, the context within which it operates, some pointers on what to do and what happens next.

## Context

In Portsmouth we believe that nobody should be sleeping on the streets and with appropriate support everybody can live a happier and healthier life.

The Council and other statutory bodies in our city do this within a context set out in law and Governmental strategy and policy.

### 1. The Law

There are a number of laws that cover street homelessness and rough sleeping. They matter because those who happen to do those things fall outside the groups councils must give priority to under the Housing Act 1996.

Generally, the Public Service Equality Duty (Equality) Act 2010 requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. However, local authorities are under no obligation to produce strategies like this.

There is also legislation that deals specifically with homelessness. The Homelessness Act 2002 introduced the power for Local Authorities to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness for those households that do not meet any of the categories for priority needs under the 1996 Act and where their homelessness would be unintentional. This is the case in Portsmouth.

The focus on preventing homelessness has been further cemented through the new Homelessness Reduction Act (2017), which began to be implemented in Portsmouth on 1 April 2018.

The new Act seeks to address some of the problems with the current Acts, particularly in relation to single homelessness, through earlier intervention, prevention, appropriate assessment of needs and the development of individualised plans. Key elements include:

- A change to the definition of a person who is 'threatened' with homelessness to people likely to become homeless within 56 days. Previously this was 28 days
- The local authority must take 'reasonable steps' to help such avoid becoming homeless. This includes providing free information and advice on preventing homelessness and securing accommodation if homeless or threatened with it
- Local authorities designing services that meet the needs of those at increased risk of becoming homeless, such as care leavers, those leaving prison, hospital or the armed forces, victims of domestic abuse, and those with mental health problems
- A duty on local authorities to assess eligible applicants who are or at risk of becoming homeless and agree the actions to be taken through the development of a personalised plan of action, irrespective of their priority need status.
- Local authorities taking reasonable steps to help all eligible applicants secure accommodation for at least six months.
- All applicants must cooperate with local authority attempts to comply with their duties. Local authorities can serve notice on applicants it considers have deliberately and unreasonably refused to cooperate.

Many people also, understandably, give money to beggars .Begging is illegal and we discourage it. However, doing that without offering an alternative outlet for people's generosity is wrong. This strategy will offer some of those alternatives.

## 2. Government Policy

The Government is committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminating it altogether by 2027. In March 2018 the Ministerial Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Reduction Taskforce was held setting out the need to work together across Government to reduce rough sleeping.

In August 2018, the Government announced its rough sleeping strategy. It established three aims: prevention, intervention and recovery. This has been backed by £100m over the next two years - Portsmouth City Council has received £384k of that for the period July 2018 - March 2019. PCC will bid for additional funding for 2019/2020. Key points of the strategy include:

- Helping key groups, such as care leavers with complex needs and those leaving prison
- Reviewing laws such as the Vagrancy Act to reduce discrimination against those who sleep rough
- Funding homelessness workers, bed spaces and 'navigators' to help people through the system
- Money for those with mental health and substance misuse issues who sleep rough
- A new supply of homes outside London for people who sleep rough and those who are ready to move on from hostels or refuges and might need additional support
- Flexible support funding to help over 5,000 people at risk of rough sleeping, over the next two years, to sustain their tenancies in homes across the housing sector.

Portsmouth's approach is similar in many ways and, later on, this strategy will explain how we want to seek what the Government has to offer.

### 3. The Local Position

The last few years has seen an increased focus on tackling street homelessness. The Council created a Homelessness Champion in former Cllr Paul Godier and a cross-party working group that produced a report to Cabinet in June 2017. Its recommendations have been or are being carried out. In addition, there was a workshop dealing with the issue of rough sleeping. The idea of a strategy on this matter is one of the products of that session.

In addition, the Council-commissioned winter bed provision for December 2016 - March 2017. 153 individuals used the service. The beds were commissioned again during the period December 2017-March 2018 and, due to the high demand, this was extended to an all year round 'Night Bed Service'.

45 beds are available each evening across two sites and are booked via Portsmouth's Homeless Day Service. The Day Service is open seven days a week and offers individuals who are experiencing rough sleeping a place to shower, do laundry and receive support and advice around their housing and health needs. Employment advice is also offered. Using the Day Service to book beds enabled conversations to fully understand people's needs and to be able to respond to them by working with the individual concerned.

### 4. The issues we face in Portsmouth

The last rough sleeping count, conducted in November 2017, showed there were 42 rough sleepers in Portsmouth. The successful bid for Government money to deal with rough sleeping put the figure at 50-60.

What is clear is that the number is going up, as is the case with many other places across the country.

Given that each person is different, there will be as many issues faced as there are people who happen to sleep rough. However, some general trends do emerge.

- a. Some do not engage with services This is the most challenging group and, for obvious reasons, the hardest to reach. There are, though, many reasons for this, such as: a sense that the level and quality of current services do not offer what they want; people who had substance misuse issues fearing that engaging means meeting people who will tempt them back into the old ways; losing a job - often in the unregulated economy - that pushes them back on the streets
- b. We need a distinct path for people who wish to 'move on'. This group of people want to leave the streets behind, but need relevant accommodation and assistance in getting jobs and help in resuming a conventional life.
- c. Services need co-ordination and work best when people who happen to sleep rough are involved in creating them. Too many groups in the city do great work, but in an un co-ordinated way. A coherent approach means statutory and voluntary groups working together and - following the example of places like Manchester - involving people who do or did sleep rough in the services on offer.
- d. Giving people an outlet for their common decency. Many people give money to beggars - professional and otherwise - when the law and experience show this is not the best way. Professional street beggars play on this. We want to harness people's desire to help in a way that, in the medium-and long-term, can help those on the streets break the cycle, perhaps through a central repository for funds to be devolved to homeless charities.

This is particularly true for adults with complex needs and those who misuse substances. A recent Public Health England report on this describes the correlation between the use of substances and begging. It is difficult to disaggregate these two things and further work is needed to understand this.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homeless-adults-with-complex-needs-evidence-review>

What is clearer is that the link between poor outcomes and adverse childhood experiences (especially exposure to domestic abuse/violence and substance use/mental health problems in a carer/parent) is very strong and we need to do work around that.

- e. We need to tackle the reasons why antisocial behaviour involving people who happen to sleep rough occurs. Many people who sleep rough face emotional and sometimes physical abuse. Those who do not also complain about issues such as street drinking by people they believe do. We need to look at the causes of this, as well as deal properly with the symptoms.

## **Our vision**

To deliver an ongoing reduction in rough sleeping and address the multiple harms it brings to individuals and communities through the rapid intervention to offer a route off the street, improving health, well-being and resilience and tackling street activity associated with rough sleeping.

## Our approach

As a city, we must do all we can to stop street homelessness and rough sleeping. This strategy outlines some ways in which this can be done. It works on some basic principles:

1. **Services for people who happen to sleep rough or are street homeless must be built around that person.** Too often people - especially those with mental health or substance misuse issues - fall through the cracks. Building relationships to ensure engagement is crucial.
2. **The Council cannot and should not do this alone.** It requires a partnership between it, other statutory bodies and the many voluntary groups who do such great work in helping people who happen to be street homeless.

The service on offer must be co-ordinated. There are a number of statutory and voluntary agencies but to date their services have largely been unconnected which leads to fragmentation and duplication of cost and effort. This strategy aims to provide a co-ordinated approach to rough sleeping and to ensure that all services work together to minimise duplication and maximise resource and expertise. To that end, some local authorities have introduced an accreditation scheme for voluntary homeless/rough sleeping charities and this should be considered in Portsmouth. We intend to work with 'Project Bridge', a joint partnership arrangement between Public Sector and Voluntary Sector services, to help us understand the need better. Better data sharing mechanisms will help co-ordination too.

3. **'Accommodation First, not Accommodation Only'.** Housing First is a specific, licensed approach - trialled in the United States - that gives people with complex needs who sleep rough a home. Support can be provided via 'assertive engagement', but is not inherent in the package. The Government is piloting this in three parts of England, just as parts of the United States are moving away from it.

Our approach is different in some ways. It meets the increasingly diverse nature of those who happen to sleep rough and reflects the approach of putting the individual, not the process, first. As it is different to Housing First, we must give it a different name. 'Accommodation First, not Accommodation Only' balances the need for a home - especially for people who wish to move on - with offering the ongoing tailored support so many need and want upfront, not as an add-on.



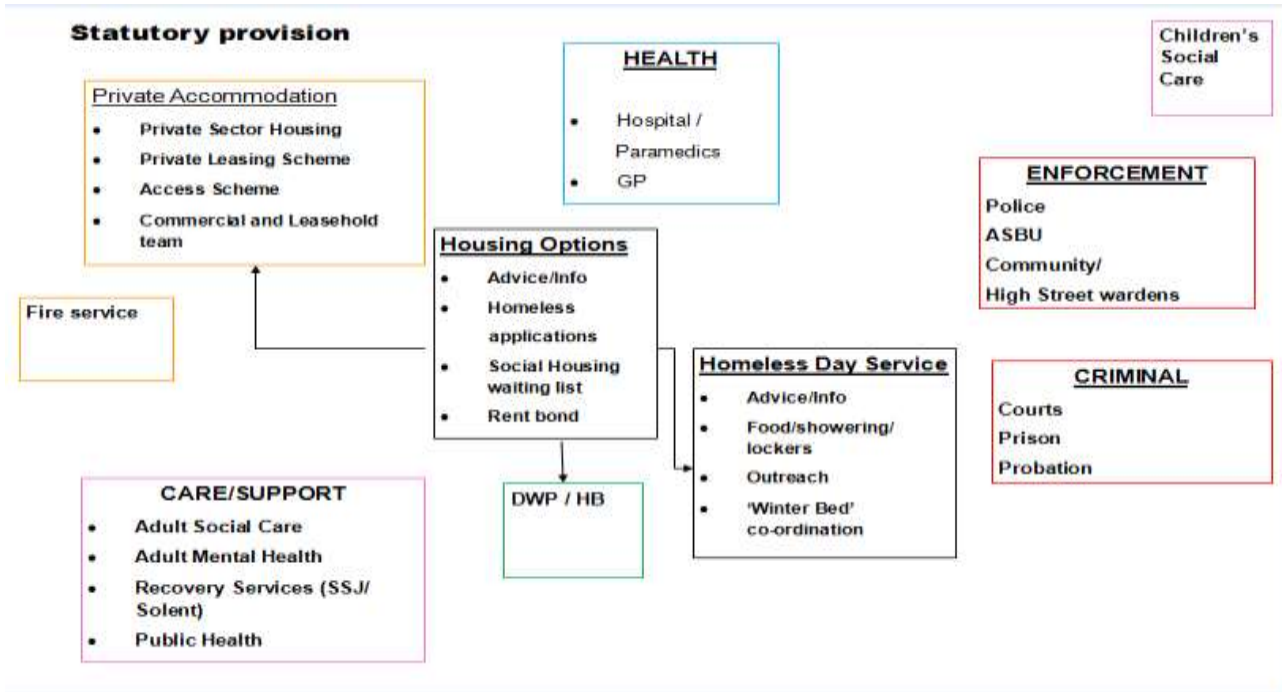
4. **We must help homeless veterans.** Every Local Authority including Portsmouth has an Armed Forces Covenant and signed Covenant pledges. We need to do all we can to make sure that members of the Armed Forces Community are taken into consideration in developing our plans.

### **Who are the services?**

In Portsmouth there are many partners with direct or indirect links to this issue. The list below highlights some of them: There is a need for all services to work together around the needs of each individual.

- Local Authority Property and Housing Services
- Public Health
- Adult Social Care
- Hampshire Constabulary
- Probation Services
- Commissioned homelessness support focussed services
- Children's Services
- Educational establishments
- Voluntary services including faith groups
- Safer Portsmouth Partnership
- Health & Wellbeing Board

Figure 1 (below) provides a visual of the existing relationships between these statutory services, in respect of rough sleeping:



## How will we achieve the Vision?

### a. Strategic objectives

Working together, we will:

- 1 • Raise awareness of the issues associated with rough sleeping in Portsmouth
- 2 • Reduce rough sleeping in Portsmouth
- 3 • Engage with and provide appropriate support to rough sleeping people in order to reduce their vulnerability in Portsmouth
- 4 • Identify anti-social behaviour and other risks relating to rough sleeping in Portsmouth

## Accommodation First Not Accommodation Only (Fig. 2 below)

In addition to our own learning, the proposed 'Accommodation First, Not Accommodation Only' model builds on some of the emerging learning from the evidence-based model, Housing First.

The principles of 'Accommodation First, Not Accommodation Only' are:

- Getting somewhere to live isn't the end of the support needed; for many residents it is the beginning
- Starting support with having somewhere to live offers the safety and stability needed to develop a support plan that will help address other issues/make changes
- Offering support that goes 'beyond the four walls' to help people, where needed, to positively engage within the community in which they reside

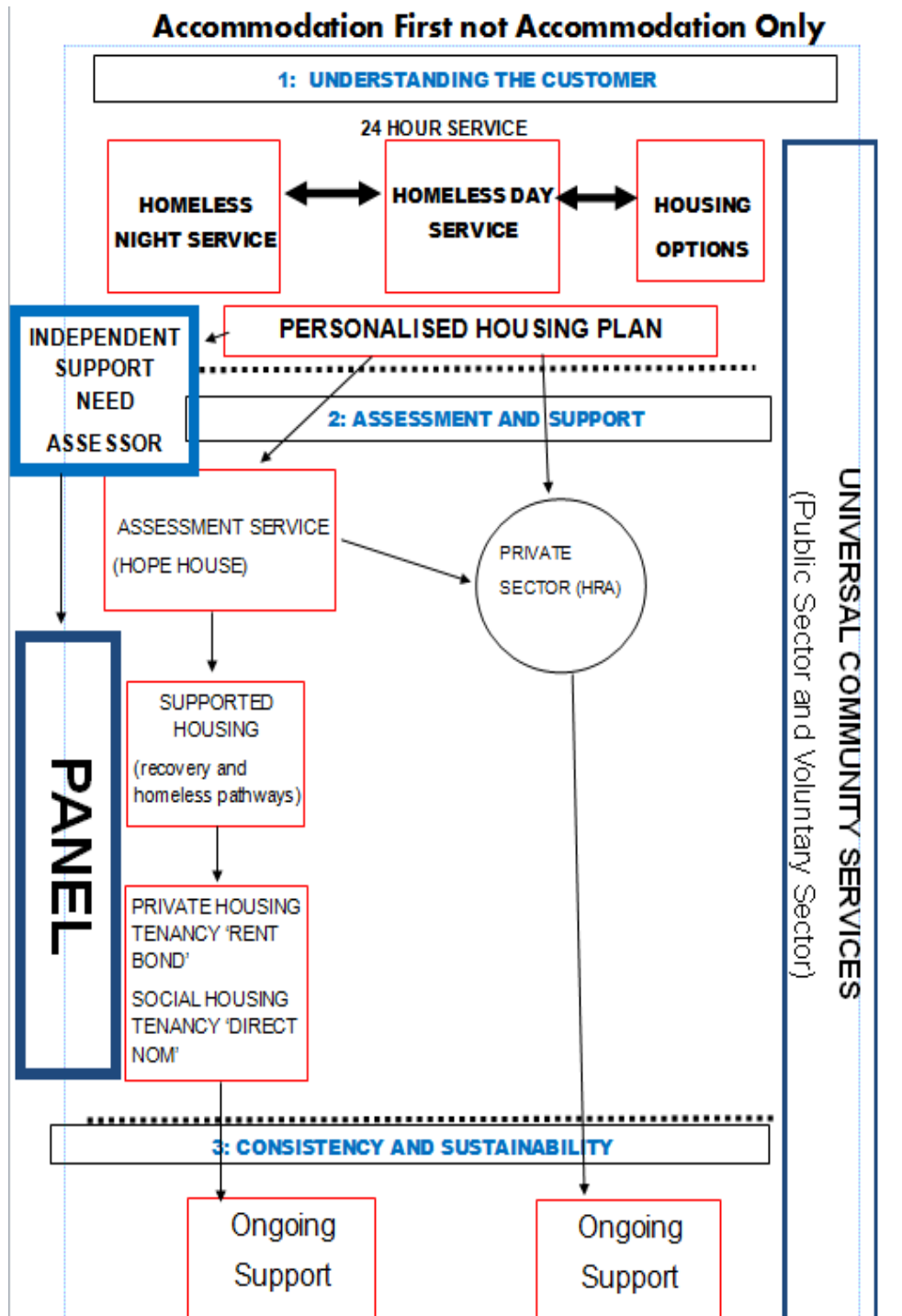


Figure 2 provides a visual representation of this model. It sets out the steps that matter to the individual in being supported to move from the streets and into settled accommodation.

The purpose of this model is also to recognise and reinforce how essential the co-ordination between this strategy, the Homelessness Reduction Act and the Adult Supported Housing Pathway is in offering an effective and sustainable framework to meet the needs of people facing the risk of or who end up sleeping on the streets. This model also, importantly, highlights that securing accommodation is, for some, just one aspect of a larger support network that may be required (additional support might include mental health needs, substance use, debt management, finding employment) to prevent individuals finding themselves struggling to sustain accommodation due to gaps in support available and facing the risk of repeating this process time and time again.

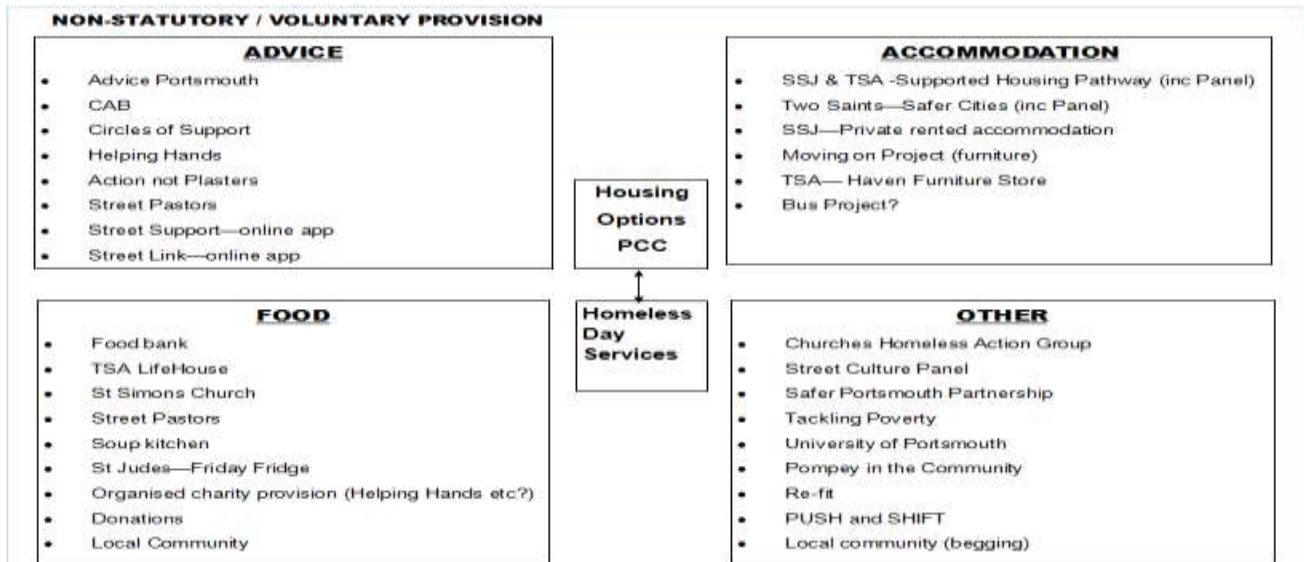
The role of the panel will be to understand where there are barriers to accessing 'move on' accommodation and to work with the private sector to support individuals into settled accommodation.

The Portsmouth Homeless Day Service, which offers Outreach, and Night Bed Service, would be used as an entry point into settled accommodation. Individuals would be invited to complete a personalised housing plan which would take into account any support needs. Once the needs have been identified the personalised housing plan would be used to engage with relevant services. Once the personalised housing plan has been established it will be the responsibility of the individual and the services to progress this into settled accommodation.

The connection between the Day Service, Night Service and the Council's Housing Options Department is pivotal to the success of this model. Following the successful transition into settled accommodation, support will continue for as long as is necessary via floating support or outreach.

Our implementation plan will align to each of the four strategic objectives and actions that will be considered by signatories to the strategy. The actions need to be owned either by a single agency, in partnership or between wider stakeholders.

We also need urgently to map what is currently being done to support people sleeping rough in Portsmouth. At present we do not fully understand the complex, diverse and uncoordinated support network that already exists in the city.



**Figure 3**

Figure 3 (above) depicts the emerging learning that has identified this as a network of support that sits beyond the local authority's advice and support function.

We would propose that consideration is given to the following in the further development of this strategy:

- Annual training for frontline professionals & partners, as well as ongoing Continuous Professional Development (awareness sessions, including the services available;
- Prevention of homelessness through PCC Housing identifying people & their needs through existing Personalised Housing Plans. Early support and intervention before evictions are implemented; incorporating advice around debt, money management & other common issues which can lead to tenancy action; benefits; etc.
- Increasing the availability of good quality, affordable, private rented accommodation. The administration is committed to encouraging private landlords to charge a Living Rent and expanding the rent deposit scheme. These could assist persons with the money required to find private sector housing.
- Increasing the availability and provision of temporary and shelter accommodation, including hostel space, ensuring it is plentiful and readily available in the interim whilst more long-term permanent accommodation is sought.
- Multi-agency / third sector engagement & drop-in clinics; effective outreach and engagement services in partnership with charity agencies such as Salvation Army and Society of St. James, which would include health & dental services, mental health, substance misuse, learning links to support education skills & assist employability.
- Targeted stakeholder action days / activity to identify & support the most vulnerable homeless people in Portsmouth. Due to the numbers involved, this would ensure partners & stakeholders focus on the most vulnerable / complex needs cohort, whilst

general engagement would also support the homeless & help us to develop the risk picture. Also, consider the implementation of a Vulnerable Person's Panel.

- Consider the creation of a dedicated Street Engagement Team. We should consider funding a team which could consist of police, community wardens, housing options and outreach services to work with the most vulnerable.
- Ensure effective partnership and information sharing takes place, we should consider creating a Stakeholder Action Group to meet on a bi-monthly basis. This would include key stakeholders: police, local authority, local councillor, CPS rep, local authority housing providers, housing options, community wardens, outreach services, substance misuse and Mental Health services along with representatives from the temporary and shelter accommodation providers. This would enable effective management of information sharing and accountability of partners in vulnerability management.
- Ensure that, where appropriate, proper work is done to tackle the causes and symptoms of antisocial behaviour involving people who happen to sleep rough. Examples could include: clamping down on the sale of 'super-strength' alcohol; navigating people to relevant services; providing more activities during the day. Dealing with professional street beggars is essential but, as these people are not homeless, this is not relevant to a strategy on street homelessness. This could be done through an 'ASB expert' who acts as a liaison between statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Additionally, we need to consider toilet provisions & additional street cleaning as well as needle exchanges in areas being frequented by rough sleepers in order to manage risk to those individuals as well as the residual public health risks to the general community.
- Raise awareness of how the public can support a strategy around 'Small change equals Big Change' programme to encourage practical alternatives to giving money to beggars
- Facilitate awareness raising sessions in schools, colleges and the University of Portsmouth so that students can understand the vulnerability of street homeless people.
- Consider the continuation of an all year 'night shelter'. The night beds have been operational since 6 December 2017 and have funding until 31 March 2019. The night beds should be part of the adult homeless pathway, should offer an option around 'move on' and should be able to pull on other services as required, to ensure that the needs of the individual are being met.
- Explore facilities for day time use by rough sleepers. Facilities to include practical support in addition to information, advice and guidance around housing and health needs. Currently the Portsmouth Homeless Day Service offers support to individuals who are rough sleepers and provides facilities to enable washing of clothes and

personal hygiene, support around health based needs and advice and support regarding housing. The opening hours are limited.

- Consider the development of a 'Rough Sleeper's Charter' where all interested parties give consensus to a set of principles. This could be facilitated via an annual 'City Conversation' of the type envisaged in the 2017 Homelessness Working group report.
- Research around homelessness and being part of the rough sleeping community should be considered. Individuals with experience of rough sleeping are a valuable asset in understanding the issues encountered by people who are street homeless.

Explore locker facilities in strategic positions around the city. This would enable anyone who needs to, to be able to safely store their belongings.

## What outcomes are we seeking to achieve?



## Governance & Accountability

This strategy sets out the overarching vision and strategic objectives for tackling street homelessness in Portsmouth. Successful delivery is dependent upon the statutory agencies, partners and other stakeholders delivering the agreed implementation plan at an operational level.

That means the city's elected representatives working across party, as well as with statutory and voluntary partners, to ensure the strategy's success.

The administration is committed to bringing back the Homelessness Working Group. Reporting to the Cabinet Member for Housing, this group will provide scrutiny, support and guidance for the Strategy and for partners to commit resources to support its aims. Membership to be agreed but could include:

- Cabinet members who have a responsibility for Housing, Environment & Community Safety and Health and Wellbeing
- Representatives from the elected members of Portsmouth City Council
- Voluntary Sector partners chosen on an annual rotating basis from the Big Conversation event
- Statutory partners including the Police, Adult Social Care and providers of services for people with mental and physical health issues
- Individuals who have experienced rough sleeping

## **Conclusion and next steps**

We accept that we have set ourselves challenging and ambitious objectives. However, we are committed to achieving the outcomes described in this strategy. The human cost of vulnerable people rough sleeping on our streets is not acceptable. As a city we think we have a responsibility to support these people and ensure that they are supported to find and sustain safe, settled accommodation.

This strategy sets out a model to achieve this, the Accommodation First, not Accommodation Only model is a start in understanding the circumstances of each individual via a personalised plan and then drawing on resources available to support the individual. We recognise that there is much to do and this work is complex. We also recognise that wider support from health care, mental health services and drug and alcohol services is pivotal to the success of supporting individuals.

We recognise that there are gaps in our knowledge and with our data and we need to improve our understanding of individuals who are experiencing rough sleeping and we will be continue to work with partners to address this.

We intend to refresh the strategy on an annual basis and report on progress made. We want to develop an implementation and delivery plan by the end of 2018.



## Appendix

### Draft Implementation Plan

In developing the draft implementation plan, the following proposals should be considered

**SO1**

#### • **Raise awareness of the issues associated with rough sleeping in Portsmouth**

- Develop a Communication Strategy using Social Media, PCC Flagship and other media channels to highlight the risk and vulnerabilities of people who are rough sleepers. This will enable the residents, businesses and others to find out how they can support the strategy.
- Learn from outcomes and recommended interventions from the Complex Case Review led by the Safer Portsmouth Partnership.
- Understand and source the type of accommodation that is required and work with partner agencies to identify opportunities, especially for those who wish to 'move on'.
- Work with health based services to understand the ongoing challenges of addiction and the impact of that.
- Concerns around finances should be addressed through advice agencies. However, thought needs to be given to budgeting
- The reasons for rough sleeping are complex and individual circumstances and decisions made by rough sleepers are not fully understood. Awareness raising needs to take place in City Schools and Colleges and with the University of Portsmouth.

- Residents of Portsmouth should be empowered to make an informed choice before giving money to people who live on the streets. The voluntary sector - including faith based groups - should be encouraged to donate to a central fund which could be divided amongst accredited voluntary organisations.
- Work with local businesses to understand the impact of rough sleepers on their businesses
- Host 'Conversation' events to build on the goodwill of Portsmouth residents and co-ordinate a collective response.

**SO2**

### • Reduce rough sleeping in Portsmouth

- Provision of Winter Bed/Night Bed scheme - Accommodation First, not Accommodation Only model providing advice and support when needed
- Portsmouth Homeless Day Service - Understand its purpose, need and demand from homeless people as well as its responsibility to the community. Consider extending the opening hours to align with the Homeless Night Service.
- Work with statutory and voluntary sector partners to utilise surplus buildings on the public estate or buy homes to provide better quality accommodation, especially for those who wish to 'move on'. People living in these homes would receive dedicated support of the type offered by the 'Hope Into Action' concept.
- Work with the public and private sectors to encourage job opportunities for people who wish to 'move on' from sleeping rough. Explore whether the alternative giving project could help subsidise wages or training

- Build up relationships with through a dedicated Street Homeless Support Team, building on the work of organisations in the voluntary sector. These would offer an enhanced relationship
- Day time activities - consider use of Community Centres and other public spaces. Work with providers and partners to encourage people to take part in daytime activities.
- Explore providing dedicated support and advice for key groups, such as veterans and people who have just left prison.

**SO3** • Engage with and provide appropriate support to rough sleeping people in order to reduce their vulnerability in Portsmouth

- Data Sharing - Gaining a full understanding of individuals and the cohort to enable more effective commissioning.
- Street Support App - This app seeks to keep individuals informed of all support available across the city.
- Accreditation of Voluntary Groups linking with City Priorities
- City Conversation - This concerns informing residents about the issue and seeking views and opinions of the whole community/public.
- Team around the provider(s) - This would ensure that the right resource is available when needed and promote effective multi-agency working.

## SO4

### • Identify anti-social behaviour and other risks relating to homeless people in Portsmouth

- We need a balanced approach to enforcing antisocial behaviour conducted to and by those who happen to sleep rough. This will be done through Operation Stark, Portsmouth's partnership approach to persistent begging and anti-social behaviour by homeless people including those with complex needs.
- Hampshire Constabulary's neighbourhood policing teams, Portsmouth City Council's community and high street wardens and other partners including the Crown Prosecution Service have agreed a joint approach in order to manage these incidents in a consistent and proportionate way.
- Hampshire Constabulary has also agreed to take the lead in initial enforcement and evidence gathering, with Portsmouth City Council taking the lead in subsequent enforcement through the civil courts.
- However, enforcement needs to run alongside active encouragement to people to engage with services. The PCC High Street Warden Service who have been operational since January 2018 have been engaging with rough sleepers and other partners to offer support to individuals who are sleeping rough. This service could act as navigators as well as enforcers.
- PCC is pivotal in the enforcement strategy, particularly in decisions to pursue offenders through the civil court. It will take all steps necessary to deal with any antisocial behaviour that arises, recognising that it is a symptom of wider issues, not the cause.