



**OUTCOME REPORT**

**REVIEW OF:**

**THE HOMELESSNESS AND  
ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2022 - 2027**

**STAGE 2 DETAILED CONSULTATION RESULTS**

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## INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the detailed (stage 2) consultation which informed Epping Forest District Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027 and was undertaken between 15 November 2021 and 24 December 2021. It forms part of a review of the Big 4 housing strategies and policies along with a review of the Allocations Scheme, the Tenancy Policy, and the overarching Housing Strategy.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review 2021-2022 and Strategy 2022-2027 were approved by Cabinet on 7 March 2022 along with a revised Allocations Scheme and Tenancy Policy. An overarching Housing Strategy was approved on 20 December 2022 for the period 2023-2027. It is now being published in alongside the revised Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027.

## APPROACH

The consultation for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027 was completed in two stages via a series of workshops, surveys, and one-to-one conversations.

Stage 1 gave everyone with an interest in homelessness and rough sleeping in the district the opportunity to influence the review and form the proposals for the strategy. The stage 1 consultation outcome report was published on 22 October 2021.

Stage 2 consultation invited the same stakeholders the opportunity to consider the draft strategy in detail. All stakeholders were asked how they could contribute towards delivering the strategy in partnership with the Council.

## **OUTCOME**

Detailed contributions were received from 67 stakeholders including 5 homeless or former homeless households who shared their lived experiences.

The five proposed priorities and associated themes were wholly supported. A wide range of practical and tangible proposals were made about how the priorities could be achieved through partnership working, and 17 organisations gave an in-principal commitment to collectively owning the Strategy and delivering the action plan.

## **STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION**

The consultation was coordinated across the review of all four strategies and policies to take account of the interdependencies between many of the proposals.

The consultation was split into two stages.

### Stage 1 Initial Consultation

An invitation to stakeholders to influence the review from the outset by suggesting key themes and priorities they would like to be included in the draft updates of any or all the 'Big Four' policies and strategies.

The stage 1 consultation opened on 21 June 2021 and closed on 6 September 2021. Five priorities and themes emerged, and the findings were published on 22 October 2021.

### Stage 1 Consultation Outcome

Five priorities and themes were identified:

#### **Working Together**

Theme - Make every contact count

#### **Preventing Homelessness**

Theme - Early intervention

#### **Building Resilience**

Theme - Positive mental health, positive activities, positive community

#### **Access to Suitable Accommodation and Support**

Theme - More than bricks and mortar

#### **Ending Rough Sleeping**

Theme - Proportionate prevention, intervention and recovery

### Stage 2 Detailed Consultation

Stakeholders were invited to give detailed consideration to the proposals within the draft strategy and consider how they or their organisation could contribute to delivering the strategy in partnership.

The stage 2 consultation opened on 15 November 2021 and closed on 24 December 2021.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The consultation was designed to give everyone with an interest in housing in the district the opportunity to contribute to the review.

The same audience was approached as for stage 1 via social media, a range of direct emails, bitesize briefing sessions and webinars, a stakeholder workshop, smaller meetings, and a survey.

The consultation was presented in a variety of formats including a survey in the form of an online workbook, a verbal presentation and PowerPoint slides.

325 stakeholders were invited to contribute to the survey including:

- Registered providers of social housing in the district
- The Clerks to the town councils and parish councils in the district
- The Community Safety Partnership and other statutory services
- Community groups including the Faith Covenant and the Tenant and Leaseholders Panel
- Essex County Council and the district, borough, and city councils in Essex
- Third sector partners with an active interest in Housing in the district
- All elected Members of the Council and Council staff

As well as a press release, the consultation and links to the survey (along with background reading material) were widely publicised on the Council's website, in the Residents newsletter, on Facebook, and at relevant forums including the Tenant and Leaseholders' Forum and Live Well, Be Well and Age Well groups.

The stage 2 consultation set out the proposals for the draft strategy including the five proposed priorities and themes that had been identified, agreed, and asked the following questions to all contributors.

### **Priorities and themes**

#### **Priority 1: Working together**

Theme: Make every contact count

#### **Priority 2: Preventing homelessness**

Theme: Early intervention

#### **Priority 3: Building resilience**

Theme: Positive mental health, positive activities, positive community

#### **Priority 4: Access to suitable housing and support**

Theme: More than bricks and mortar

#### **Priority 5: Ending rough sleeping**

Theme: Proportionate prevention, intervention and recovery

### **Questions**

Do you (or the organisation that you represent)

- support each priority?
- agree with the proposals for each priority?

Can you (or the organisation that you represent)

- suggest other ways you can contribute to achieving each priority?
- suggest other positive measurable outcomes for each priority?

## CONTRIBUTIONS

In total 67 people contributed to the stage 2 consultation. The majority of responses were provided during in-person meetings or Microsoft Teams meetings.

Contributors included:

- 9 Members of the Council
- 38 professional stakeholders
- representatives from the County Council
- 2 neighbouring local authorities
- 1 registered provider
- 6 resident groups/Tenant and Lessee Panel members
- 5 Town and Parish Council Members
- 5 residents with lived experiences

## FEEDBACK

### Overall feedback

The priorities and themes were approved by all contributors and were described as well thought out. One professional stakeholder said the proposals would not be cheap and another suggested that working with partner organisations who have access to funding and extra resources would help deliver the strategy.

### Responses to each priority

#### Priority 1: Working together

Theme: Make every contact count

#### Points that were raised during the consultation

- Maximise the use of technology
- Acknowledge that one agency cannot do it all
- The challenge is around rural communities; the Epping hub is better suited for urban settings, consider digital solutions/use of mobile vehicles/pop up hubs for rural communities
- Grow the use of volunteers; raise awareness of how to get into volunteering and hold recruitment drives
- Create seamless services between organisations
- Hold community events using local community spaces, for example at the church
- Utilise and grow the use of Community Champions across the district
- Promote the use of Frontline for referrals to partner organisations
- Use relationships with existing partners as a route to new partners
- Increase awareness of social prescribing and its benefits
- Use joint working protocols between organisations that are reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose

#### Actions to be included in the strategy

- *Make every contact count*

We will ensure that every contact counts by extending the initiative to become a whole-systems approach to homelessness prevention. We will continue to work with our partners to develop a skilled workforce that can provide the right support at the right time for residents.

➤ *Review duty to refer*

We will review the duty to refer arrangements we have in place to ensure that they are fit for purpose and encourage early intervention.

➤ *Develop a support service with NHS for people with substance misuse*

We will strengthen our support offered for people with substance misuse by working in partnership with the NHS to appoint a substance misuse worker.

➤ *Maximise opportunities for grant funding and shared resources*

We will continue to maximise access to available funds and work with partners on joint bids for grant funding to support the priorities in the strategy.

➤ *Promote social and economic mobility*

We will continue to work with other Essex Anchor Organisations to look at how our employment, procurement and workforce development practices can support local people.

## **Priority 2: Preventing homelessness**

Theme: Early intervention

### Points that were raised during the consultation

- Educate early through school initiatives
- Engage with the local community by sharing work carried out by partners
- Raise awareness through networking events
- Communicate housing register statistics to residents
- Empower people
- Run media campaigns
- Increase provision of grants to support access to the private rented sector
- Learn from those with lived experience and use the information to inform preventative services

### Actions to be included in the strategy

➤ *Accessible community information and advice*

We will continue to learn from lived experiences of our residents, the strategy will feature our findings from feedback we received from service users.

➤ *Digital exclusion*

We will ensure that the strategy aligns with the Council's Digital Strategy 2022-2025 which outlines guiding principles to improve digital solutions for the district. To improve digital access, we will work with Voluntary Action Epping Forest to ensure that residents in need can access either telephone or face-to-face support. We will continue to explore other opportunities with partners to support digital access.

➤ *Landlord incentives to provide settled accommodation*

We will continue to work with landlords in the private rented sector to prevent people from becoming homeless and to assist those with housing need into the sector.

➤ *Raising awareness of homelessness*

We will work with partner organisations to raise awareness of homelessness, whether this be through media campaigns or partnership initiatives. For example, we want to work with CHESS to educate young people on homelessness through school and college workshops.

### **Priority 3: Building resilience**

Theme: Positive mental health, positive activities, positive community

#### Points that were raised during the consultation

- Building resilience will help to relieve pressure on all services
- Early intervention to identify health conditions mobile screening e.g., moles, diabetes
- Explore introducing Good Neighbour Schemes
- Make use of corporate volunteering
- Work with the United In-Kind movement
- Provide information on local notice boards to keep residents informed
- Mind – Five ways to wellbeing: connect, be active, take notice, learn, give
- Community Champions
- Encourage intergenerational projects
- Support for digital access and awareness through hubs and accessing private sector schemes
- Increase physical activity in the district
- Use case studies to measure impact
- Community cafes and drop-in sessions for those in need of help and support

#### Actions to be included in the strategy

➤ *Developing our workforce*

We will explore ways to develop our workforce and their skills to meet the needs of our residents. For example, we will explore suitable training opportunities to ensure our staff members are able to communicate with people who may be affected by trauma or neurodiversity.

➤ *Promote opportunities to engage in health and wellbeing initiatives*

We will work with partner organisations through the Health and Wellbeing Board to promote community groups and services available in the district. Using Personalised Housing Plans, we will link service users to relevant groups or services that will support their needs.

➤ *Whole systems approach to assisting residents with mental health needs*

We will strengthen the support for homeless households with mental health needs through our partnership funding to appoint a Mental Health Navigator to work directly with those affected.

➤ *Meaningful participation and volunteering*

We will promote the use of available volunteering schemes to provide support to homeless households, along with encouraging people to consider volunteering themselves.

## **Priority 4: Access to suitable housing and support**

Theme: More than bricks and mortar

### Points that were raised during the consultation

- Helping the homeless or those at risk of homelessness to manage their current living situation is vital
- It is important to provide support along with housing
- Look into turning existing properties into acceptable temporary housing
- Ensure that the right type of temporary housing is used
- Consider individual needs such as location when placing into accommodation whether it be temporary, supported, or permanent accommodation
- Provide suitable pitch provision for Gypsies and Travellers

### Actions to be included in the strategy

- *Making best use of all available housing*  
We will continue to make best use of all available housing and will review our practices to ensure that they are effective. This includes considering individual needs when placing applicants into both council-owned stock and the private sector. We will continue to help people in family sized homes who no longer need that size of home to downsize into smaller accommodation, in turn making more family sized accommodation available.
- *Support for victims and survivors of domestic abuse*  
We will continue to support victims of domestic abuse, our Domestic Abuse Specialist will work with individuals to determine the level of support needed. We will work towards achieving the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation, the benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse.
- *Support for people with disabilities*  
We will use our already adapted housing to best advantage, wherever possible housing tenants who need that form of adaptation. We will also work with partners to access funds to help carry out adaptations where we can.
- *Our ageing population*  
We will review our housing for older people services to make sure that they are fit for the needs of our residents. To create dementia friendly communities, our staff will continue to receive training and our scheme practices will be updated.
- *Gypsies and travellers needs*  
We will continue to work with the Essex Countywide Traveller Unit to provide services for Gypsies and Travellers to ensure their needs are met.

## **Priority 5: Ending rough sleeping**

Theme: Proportionate prevention intervention and recovery

### Points that were raised during the consultation

- Rough sleeping outreach is provided by CHESS in partnership with EFDC, they work with clients to address the root cause of homelessness and provide opportunities to training and employment.



- Partnership working to tackle the issue of rough sleeping through initiatives such as the Rough Sleeper Initiative, should be continued and developed.
- It is a national problem, EFDC need to assess the impact of local and wider policies.

#### Actions to be included in the strategy

- *Collaborative working with neighbouring boroughs*  
We will continue to collaborate with neighbouring boroughs to create a co-ordinated approach to working with rough sleepers.
- *Expanding outreach service to include supporting former rough sleepers*  
We will collaborate with local outreach teams to provide longer term support to rough sleepers when it is needed, alongside the work with the mental health navigator and planned substance misuse navigator.
- *Understanding the impact of hidden homelessness*  
We will work with the Community Safety Team to ensure that rough sleepers are referred to the homelessness service. To raise awareness, we will launch a campaign about sofa surfing and early intervention measures for single homeless people.

## **OTHER FEEDBACK**

### **Affordability**

Affordability of current accommodation in private rented sector was raised by several contributors who asked whether this should attract additional priority.

### **Comments**

We will use our development programme to increase the amount of affordable housing in the district and, where possible, work with partners to help rough sleepers access affordable housing. We cannot influence the affordability of private sector housing which is led more by the market than by demand.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027 has been revised to take account of the stage 2 consultation feedback and approved by Cabinet on 7 March 2022.

**For further information please contact the Housing Strategy Team**  
**[HousingStrategy@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:HousingStrategy@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)**

## VERSION CONTROL LOG

Version	Date	Details	Author
01.00	25.08.2023	Publication on Website	Charlotte Wright

## **APPENDIX 1: ORGANISATIONS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE WORKSHOP**

- Adult Social Care (ECC)
- Changing Pathways
- Chelmsford City Council
- CHESS Homeless
- Children and Family Wellbeing Service (ECC)
- Community Hub (EFDC)
- Community Safety Partnership (EFDC)
- Cultural Forum (EDF)
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Disability and Autism Team (ECC)
- Epping Community Hub
- Epping Team Ministry
- Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust
- Harlow Council
- Health and Wellbeing Board (EDF)
- Housing Growth Lead (ECC)
- Peabody Outreach Support
- Tenant and Leaseholders Panel (EFDC)
- Voluntary Action Epping Forest
- West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group

## APPENDIX 2: ORGANISATIONS CONSULTED

- Ability Housing
- Active Essex
- Adult Social Care
- Age Well Action Group
- Alzheimer's Society
- B3 Housing
- Barnardo's
- Basildon Council
- Be Well Action Group
- Braintree Council
- British Red Cross
- Castlepoint Council
- Chamber of Commerce
- Changing Pathways
- Chelmsford Council
- CHESS Homeless
- Children's Social Care
- 16+ Accommodation Team – Essex County Council
- Churches Together in Epping and District
- Citizens Advice Bureau Epping Forest District
- City of London Corporation
- Colchester Council
- Community, Culture and Wellbeing – EFDC
- Community Safety Partnership
- Community Tree Network
- Creative Network
- Cultural Forum
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Disability and Autism Team - Essex County Council
- DLUHC – Rough Sleeping Advisor
- Epping Forest Foodbank
- Epping Forest Ministry
- Epping Forest ReUSE
- Epping Forest Tourism Group
- Epping Forest Youth Council
- Epping Team Ministry
- Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service
- Essex Developers Group
- Essex Fire & Rescue
- Essex Housing Officers Group
- Essex LGBTQ+ Alliance
- Essex LOC
- Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust
- Essex Police
- Estuary Housing
- Frontline
- Futures in Mind
- Genesis Housing
- Harlow Council
- Hastoe Group Housing
- Home Group Housing
- Housing Growth and Strategy - Essex County Council
- Independent Living - Essex County Council
- Kings Medical Centre
- London & Quadrant Housing
- Looked after children – NHS West Essex CCG
- Maldon Council
- MAPPA Crime & Public Protection
- Mental Health Navigator – NHS
- Mental Health - NHS West Essex CCG
- Mental Health Recovery and Accommodation
- MIND
- MOAT Housing
- Nacro
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Occupational Therapist - Essex County Council
- Older Peoples Services – Essex County Council
- Optometry - NHS England & NHS Improvement
- Orbit Housing
- Peabody Housing
- Peabody Outreach Support
- Phoenix Futures
- Places for People Housing
- Primary Care Commissioning – NHS West Essex CCG
- Probation Services

- Public Health – Essex County Council
- Red Balloon Foundation
- Relate
- Revenue and Benefits - EFDC
- Rochford Council
- Royal British Legion
- St Claire’s Hospice
- Safeguarding - EFDC
- Safeguarding - NHS West Essex CCG
- Safer Places
- Sanctuary Housing
- Start Well Action Group
- Strategic Commissioning and Policy - Essex County Council
- Tendring Council
- Transformation (Primary Care, Adult Mental Health & Vulnerable Adults) – NHS West Essex CCG
- United in Kind
- Uttlesford Council
- Voluntary Action Epping Forest
- Warm Works
- Wellbeing and Public Health – Essex County Council
- Youth and Community Commissioner - Essex County Council
- Zinc Arts