

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 April 2024



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Background



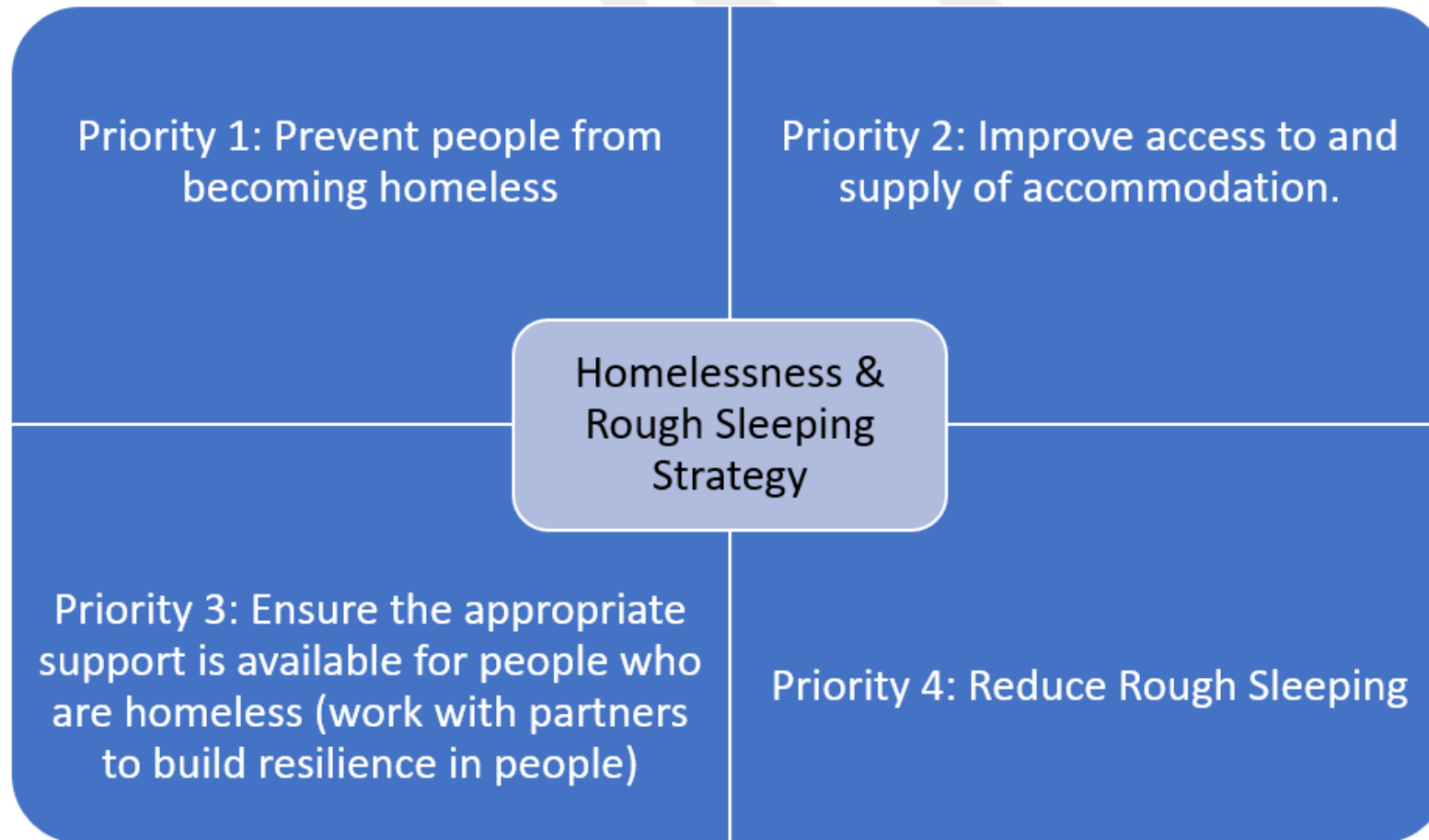
Background

- Statutory requirement to have a strategy in place
- In depth review of homelessness and rough sleeping carried out over a 3 year period
- Informal consultation on proposed priorities carried out December 2022 to March 2023 with a range of partners and members of the public
- Consultation on the draft strategy carried out between October and December 2023 with key partners, stakeholders and residents

Consultation Feedback



Priorities of the strategy



Consultation Summary

- Joint consultation with the Housing Strategy for seven weeks from 30 October 2023 to 18 December 2023
- Consultation was carried out with residents of County Durham and other key partners and stakeholders including;
 - 8 AAP's,
 - 24 Partnerships engaged with
 - 2 Online Events
 - Youth Council
 - 4 Registered Housing Provider meetings
- 52 respondents to the online survey
- 7 email responses from stakeholders and other DCC services including Public Health
- Use of social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter/X) to promote

Main messages from consultation

- Overwhelming support for the vision and the four priorities
- Strong emphasis on the importance of partnership working to successfully deliver the strategy and achieve the vision and priorities
- Prevention and early intervention of homelessness was prevalent in the feedback, particularly working with families and young people to mediate and prevent them from being asked to leave the family home and prevention of evictions.
- Ensure joint working with specialist support services to meet the needs of people with complex issues, for example mental health, finance, drug and alcohol addiction.
- A joined-up approach to assist those people living in poverty and prevent homelessness.
- Better access to affordable housing, including social housing and private rented, in particular for single people, younger people and larger families.
- Review of the Durham Key Options policy to allow fair access and outcomes for people.
- Strong links to health, housing and homelessness.
- Improved partnership working to reduce rough sleeping, in particular a focus on mental health support, including addiction and supported housing for people who require long-term support.

Response to OSC Feedback

General Comments

- A one-year delivery plan has been developed to ensure implementation of the strategy can commence once it is adopted in July 2024
- A light touch review will be carried out annually to address any policy or funding changes as well as taking into consideration any significant differences in demand to the service. The delivery plan will be updated accordingly following the annual review.
- The delivery of the strategy will be overseen by an internal housing project group, with accountability to the Homelessness Forum.

Response to OSC Feedback

Priority 1

- **Face to face contact** - The front-line teams will make an appointment to see clients in Customer Access Points (CAP) should they be unable to communicate via telephone or e-mail. Home visits will be arranged for those clients who have vulnerabilities and are unable to communicate digitally or come into a CAP.
- **Promotion of the support available** - The one-year delivery plan includes an action to update the webpages and to include relevant links to partner agencies. This work also includes working with key partners, including the family hubs to promote the services that the homeless team offers.
- **Support for young people** - Priority 1 in the strategy highlights the need to 'Develop creative approaches to working earlier with young people in schools, youth groups and young people within the care system to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place'. Delivery Plan includes actions to address this.

Response to OSC Feedback

Priority 1

Monitoring of people presenting because of the 'cost of living crisis'

- Data dashboards track the numbers of people that present as homeless or at risk of homeless due to loss of their property in the private rented sector.
- The Stop before you serve initiative supports tenants where a notice of eviction has been served and mediates with the landlord to prevent evictions.
- Two key workers work alongside the private sector team to identify cases at an early point in time that could lead to an eviction.

Priority 2

Work with RP's to provide accommodation for ex-offenders

- The one-year delivery plan includes an action to work with providers to explore potential initiatives that could support ex-offenders to access social housing, where they would otherwise be excluded from DKO.

Next steps



Next steps

Approval of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy including Twelve Month Delivery Plan

- REG MT – 16 May 2024
 - CMT – 12 June 2024
 - Cabinet – 10th July 2024
 - Full Council – July 2024
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- Establishment of a Homelessness Forum with partners and stakeholders
 - Development of a five-year delivery plan