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**Shared Homelessness Strategy 2026-2031**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Bill Hartnett
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services
Report Author	Job Title: Amanda Delahunty Housing Development and Enabling Manager Contact email: <a href="mailto:a.delahunty@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk">a.delahunty@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk</a>  Contact Tel: 01527 881269
Wards Affected	No specific ward relevance
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	Not Applicable
Relevant Priorities	Communities and Housing
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Executive Committee is requested to RECOMMEND to Council that: -**

**1) the draft Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 and action plan be approved for public consultation for six weeks starting 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026.**

**2) authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Community and Housing Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to agree any changes that may be required due to the outcomes of the consultation process.**

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all housing authorities to have a homelessness strategy in place which is based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their local authority area.

2.2 It is intended that this Strategy will sit under the existing Worcestershire Strategic Housing Board Plan.

- 2.3 In developing this strategy a comprehensive assessment of the nature and extent of homelessness across the local authority areas was carried out by analysing homelessness data and taking account of the views of customers and partner organisations. A consultation event was held on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025 with partners and stakeholders, to consider housing from both a strategic and client-based perspective. This event included partners from a variety of statutory and voluntary organisations.
- 2.4 Service users were also consulted and supported to complete a questionnaire. This provided them with an opportunity to feedback on their experiences including those in temporary accommodation, young people, rough sleepers and victims/survivors of domestic abuse.
- 2.5 The National Plan to End Homelessness, published by the Government October 2025, is a long-term strategy with the overarching vision that: Homelessness should be rare, brief and non-recurring and that people who do become homeless should receive support quickly and effectively. Local authorities are expected to move from crisis to prevention. A key requirement will involve greater collaboration across government departments. There are five pillars of the strategy –
1. Universal Prevention
  2. Targeted Prevention
  3. Preventing Crisis
  4. Emergency Response
  5. Recovery and Stability
- 2.6 This new Shared Homelessness Strategy, in partnership with Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Wychavon and Wyre Forest, builds on the success of our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-25, which emphasised prevention, intervention, recovery and joined-up systems, which are core themes echoed in the new National Plan.
- 2.7 The strategy sets out how the Council will invest in early intervention and support systems to stop homelessness before it happens. The Council will strengthen cross-service collaboration (health, jobcentres, criminal justice, social care) to identify risks early. A ‘duty to collaborate’ for key public services (planned through future legislation) will support this approach.
- 2.8 The local authorities will aim to eliminate unlawful use of B&Bs for families (beyond statutory short stays) and improve the quality of temporary accommodation and aim to halve long-term rough sleeping.

- 2.9 Local authorities are also expected to tackle the structural causes of homelessness by building more affordable and social homes and support the reform of the private rented sector working with landlords and tenants to help them to sustain their accommodation where at all possible. The new Crisis and Resilience Fund will be key to providing welfare support to those who have experienced an income shock or unexpected bill, such as boiler replacement.
- 2.10 The Government is providing nearly £3.5bn funding for homelessness prevention and rough sleeping services from 2026/27–2028/29.
- 2.11 Funding streams have been amalgamated into a new Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant.
- 2.12 Worcestershire has aligned its strategic approach to homelessness with these national priorities with a plan to shift from Crisis to Prevention. The strategy focuses resources upstream, supporting people earlier (before accommodation loss). The shared action plan has measurable targets based on the national outcomes framework.
- 2.13 Progress reporting is tied to funding conditions. This means expanding preventative services such as advice services, financial resilience support and co-ordinated multi-agency pathways that intervene before homelessness occurs.
- 2.14 The national plan emphasises coordination across services. At the local level, this reinforces: Multi-agency structures like housing partnerships, health and wellbeing boards, prison and probation and specialist support teams which already exist in Worcestershire.
- 2.15 The National Plan highlights that the Government expects closer collaboration between housing, health, social care, children’s services, prison and probation and voluntary sector partners. Better case-sharing, data exchanges and joint pathways, particularly for people with complex needs.
- 2.16 The shared strategy aspires towards this more integrated model to prevent gaps and reduce repeat homelessness.
- 2.17 The consolidation of funding into a single grant over a three-year period gives the local authority’s partners greater stability and flexibility to prioritise local needs (e.g., rough sleeping services, domestic abuse related housing support). There is a requirement to spend a minimum proportion on prevention and staffing. This allows improved local commissioning of support services, such as tailored housing support and landlord engagement schemes.

- 2.18 The outcomes framework metrics (e.g., rough sleeping rates, B&B usage, prevention success) will provide a basis for performance review. The local authorities will collect and monitor relevant homelessness data, publish regular progress reporting, and adjust strategies based on outcomes. Creating a more outcome-focused, transparent approach to homelessness planning at the local level.
- 2.19 The local authorities will work closely together and with regional NHS and public health partners.
- 2.20 Each of the local authorities will develop their own action plan which will sit under the overarching, shared action plan, by October 2026.

**3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

- 3.1 The delivery of the Shared Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy actions will be overseen by the Housing Strategy Team.

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The new Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant will provide funding to develop services to support the strategy and a report has already been taken to members to provide the detail on spending priorities for the next three years.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council has a duty under the Homelessness Act 2002 to conduct a review of the nature and extent of homelessness in its local authority district every 5 years and to develop a strategy setting out how services will be delivered in the future to tackle homelessness and the available resources to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- 5.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act came into force in April 2018, and places new legal duties on local housing authorities so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to early meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status, so long as they are eligible for assistance.

- 5.3 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires local authorities to collaborate with Tier One authorities to provide safe and supported accommodation for victims/survivors of domestic abuse.
- 5.4. The Renters Rights Act 2025 shifts the local authority role from discretionary enforcement to a mandatory duty to enforce landlord legislation. The abolition of Section 21 no fault evictions is likely to result in more tenancies being ending by Section 8 Notices for rent arrears and provides an opportunity for local authorities to work with landlords to, wherever possible, sustain tenancies. The Council has utilised Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse grant to provide a new service with Citizens Advice to support this work.

**6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

**Local Government Re-organisation**

- 6.1 LGR does not alter the statutory homelessness duties set out under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and Housing Act 1996, including prevention (s.195), relief (s.189B), interim accommodation (s.188) and the duty to provide free advice and information (s.179).
- 6.2 The Government's National Plan to End Homelessness sets out a cross-government expectation that homelessness cannot be reduced without multi-agency integration
- 6.3 Both the National Plan to End Homelessness and the Homelessness Code of Guidance stress the need for coordinated arrangements across the below areas,
- health
  - social care
  - children's services
  - criminal justice
  - and domestic abuse services

and it is considered that the most appropriate method is to have a shared strategy approach across as much of Worcestershire to ensure there is a coherent approach to our homelessness duties until the results of LGR are provided.

- 6.4 A single Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy must be produced for any new authority, and this strategy and action plan has been

produced so that it is able to be incorporated into either one or two unitary authorities until a new single strategy for the new area, based on a fresh homelessness review is completed as required by the Homelessness Code of Guidance

**Relevant Council Priority**

- 6.2 Community and Housing – The strategy provides a framework for a range of services which support this Council priority.

**Climate Change Implications**

- 6.3 There are no direct climate change implications from the strategy itself but individual actions/services may have an impact.

**Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.4 The strategy seeks to deliver a range of services for homeless households and draws on ways to improve the work of the Council in developing services and preparing links, pathways and referrals between services to prevent homelessness in the first place or minimise its impact when it happens.
- 6.5 The design of services which tackle the root causes of homelessness such as poverty, health inequalities and adversity in childhood will include ensuring that providers have appropriate policies and training in place to make sure that there is no adverse impact on equalities groups

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 If the strategy is not approved the Council will not be legally compliant. Furthermore, it is likely that more households who are threatened with homelessness, or who are in housing need, will have limited options for support to sustain their accommodation or find alternative suitable accommodation that meets their needs. If they have to make a homeless approach this could lead to the following negative outcomes:
- Increased B&B costs
  - Increased rough sleeping in the Borough.
  - Impacts on physical and mental health, educational achievement, ability to work and similar through increased homelessness

**8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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Appendix 1 – Shared Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan

**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name and Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Portfolio Holder	Bill Hartnett Portfolio Holder for Housing	24.2.26
Lead Director / Head of Service	Judith Willis Assistant Director Community and Housing Services	24.2.26
Financial Services	Julie Lorraine, Director of Finance	24.2.26
Legal and Democratic Services	Nicola Cummings – Principal Solicitor – Governance and Jess Bayley-Hill, Principal Democratic Services Officer	25.02.26
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Rebecca Green Policy Manager	N/A
Climate Change (if climate change implications apply)	Matthew Bough Strategic Housing & Business Support Manager	24.2.26