

Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee

10 March 2026



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: A strategy for Reading 2026 – 2031
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Melissa Wise – Executive Director for Communities and Adult Social Care
Report author	Verena Hutcheson – Rough Sleeping Initiatives Manager Emma Tytel – Rent Guarantee Scheme Manager
Lead Councillor	Cllr Matt Yeo
Council priority	Safeguard & support the health & wellbeing of Reading's adults & children
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That HNL Committee approve the publication of <i>Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: A strategy for Reading 2026 – 2031</i> and accompanying Action Plan; and2. That HNL Committee agree annual updates on delivery against the Strategy and accompanying Action Plan be brought back to the Committee for review.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report seeks approval for the *Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: A strategy for Reading 2026 – 2031*, along with its accompanying Action Plan. The draft Strategy sets out the Council's proposed approach to homelessness and rough sleeping over the next five years. It focuses on three key priorities:
- (1) intervene early in preventing homelessness and rough sleeping;
 - (2) break the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping when prevention has not been possible; and
 - (3) make sure everyone can access safe, settled, and affordable housing.
- 1.2. The Strategy has an accompanying Action Plan which outlines how the Strategy will be delivered (attached at Appendix 2).

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 The Council's response to homeless households is underpinned by Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. The Act provides the statutory framework for local authority action to prevent homelessness and provides assistance to people threatened with homelessness or actually homeless. The Housing Act 1996 was amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

- 2.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. The duties include:
- An enhanced prevention duty extending the period of being threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days, meaning that housing authorities are required to work with people to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage.
 - A new duty to support households for 56 days to relieve their homelessness by helping them to secure accommodation.
 - Provision of services to all those affected by homelessness, not just those who are defined as having a priority need under the Housing Act 1996.
- 2.2.1 National legislation sets limits on the support that can be offered to individuals who are not eligible for public funds. The Council works within these legal parameters while continuing to provide advice and proportionate assistance. Engagement with signposting and support for people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping remains voluntary.
- 2.3 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 amends Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 in relation to the support available to victims of domestic abuse. The Act extends priority need to all eligible victims of domestic abuse who are homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse. The 2021 Act brings in a new definition of domestic abuse which housing authorities must follow to assess whether an applicant is homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse.
- 2.4 Section 1(1) of the Homelessness Act 2002 gives housing authorities the power to carry out a homelessness review for their area and to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of that review. Section 1(4) requires housing authorities to publish a new homelessness strategy, based on the results of a further homelessness review, within the period of five years.
- 2.5 Under section 182(1) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) housing authorities are required to have regard to the accompanying statutory *Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities* in exercising their functions relating to homelessness and prevention of homelessness. The Code of Guidance stipulates under *Chapter 2: Homelessness strategies and reviews* that:
- 2.5.1 A review of homelessness and formulating a new strategy needs to consider the additional duties introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 2.5.2 A homelessness review should include: (a) the levels, and the likely future levels, of homelessness in their district; (b) the activities which are carried out in preventing homelessness, securing accommodation and providing support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; and (c) the resources available to the housing authority and related support services in undertaking prevention and relief of homelessness duties.
- 2.5.3 Housing authorities must consult public or local authorities, voluntary organisations, or other persons as they consider appropriate before adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy. They will also wish to consult with service users and specialist agencies that provide support to homeless people in the district.
- 2.5.4 For the strategy to be effective, housing authorities must ensure it is consistent with other local plans and developed with, and supported by, all relevant local authority departments and partners.
- 2.5.5 The strategy should link with other strategies and programmes that aim to address the wide range of factors that could contribute to homelessness in the local area including aspects of local health, justice, or economic policy.

- 2.5.6 Housing authorities should consider the benefits of cross-boundary co-operation and a coherent approach to tackling homelessness with neighbouring authorities.
- 2.5.7 The strategy is co-ordinated with the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and the review of homelessness informs and is informed by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
- 2.5.8 To be effective, the Council's homelessness strategy needs to be based on realistic assumptions and be developed and owned jointly with partners who will be responsible for its delivery where sections 1(5) and (6) of the Homelessness Act 2002 require housing and social services authorities to take the homelessness strategy into account when exercising their functions.
- 2.5.9 Section 3(4) of the Homelessness Act 2002 provides that a housing authority cannot include in a homelessness strategy any specific action expected to be taken by another body or organisation without their approval.
- 2.5.10 Housing authorities must keep their homelessness strategy under review and may modify it accordingly following appropriate consultation.
- 2.6 Local authorities are not required by legislation to have a rough sleeping strategy. However, if they are in receipt of grant funding from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to deliver services that relieve and prevent rough sleeping, it is considered best practice to have a relevant strategy and action plan. The MHCLG recommend that local authorities combine their strategies to align funding streams and priorities and reduce the potential for silos in strategic and operational decision making.
- 2.7 The *National Plan to End Homelessness*, a joint national homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, was published in England in December 2025 and outlines a cross-government strategy built on five pillars:
- *Universal prevention* – tackle root causes (e.g. build 1.5 million homes, reform the private rented sector, tackle poverty).
 - *Targeted prevention* – support those at higher risk, with duties on public services to identify and act regarding homelessness prevention (Duty to Collaborate).
 - *Preventing crisis* – provide early intervention to help people stay housed.
 - *Improving emergency responses* – phase out unlawful B&B use, enhance temporary accommodation quality.
 - *Recovery and preventing repeat homelessness* – ensure no one experiences homelessness more than once, halve long-term rough sleeping.

3. The Proposal

Current Position:

- 3.1. Reading's Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2020 – 2025 and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 – 2024 set clear priorities around early intervention, tackling repeat homelessness, and increasing access to suitable accommodation. The strategies were overseen through established governance structures and delivered a range of successes, including expanded supported accommodation, improved data insight, strengthened prevention pathways, and enhanced joint work with statutory and voluntary partners — while also highlighting ongoing challenges such as affordability pressures, rising demand, and increased use of temporary accommodation. As part of the development of the proposed new *Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: A strategy for Reading 2026 – 2031* (attached at Appendix 1), a detailed assessment of achievements to date was completed (attached at Appendix 3).

3.2. To inform the new Strategy, a comprehensive Needs Analysis, as set out in Appendix 4, was completed. The Needs Analysis shows continued population growth, increasing housing costs and sustained pressure on both temporary accommodation and homelessness prevention services. Below is a summary of key statistics:

3.2.1 Continued population growth

- Reading's population grew by 11.9% between 2011 and 2021 and reached 174,820 in 2022 – a faster rate of growth than both the South East (7.5%) and England overall (6.6%).
- The Borough has seen a rise in larger households, with 40.2% of households comprising three or more people, compared to 35.9% nationally, increasing demand for family-sized accommodation which is harder to source.

3.2.2 Rising housing costs and decreasing affordability

- Housing affordability in Reading has decreased significantly, with average house prices now exceeding ten times local earnings, well above affordability thresholds.
- The average private rent in Reading reached £1,543 per month in June 2025, representing a 9% annual increase and placing Reading among the most expensive private rental markets in the South East, with one of the fastest rates of rent growth.
- Private renters in Reading spend an average of 35.3% of their gross income on rent, and for many low-income households, around 70% of rent is not covered by Local Housing Allowance, leaving monthly shortfalls of £300 – £600 depending on property size.
- Only 16% of all dwellings in Reading are social or affordable housing, while demand continues to rise, limiting genuinely affordable options and increasing reliance on the private rented sector.

3.2.3 Sustained pressure on temporary accommodation and homelessness prevention services

- In Q4 2024/25, 397 households (62% of all households assessed) were owed a homelessness prevention or relief duty, indicating a sustained level of demand for early intervention and statutory homelessness support and services throughout the year. This is consistent with patterns seen across the South East and Reading's statistical nearest neighbour authorities.
- The private rented sector remains a key point of pressure, with the end of Assured Shorthold Tenancies accounting for 376 cases (around 36% of all homelessness prevention cases) in 2023/24, alongside a significant number of households seeking assistance after informal arrangements with family or friends could no longer be sustained.
- Demand for social housing continues to exceed available supply, with 4,675 households registered by July 2025 and 374 households (under 9%) housed during 2024/25, meaning move-on options remain limited for some households in temporary accommodation.

3.3. A comprehensive review of former strategies and the Needs Analysis reinforce that homelessness cannot be addressed in isolation or within single agency silos. The draft 2026 – 31 Strategy deliberately builds a narrative before introducing priorities to provide contextual explanation in support of combining Reading's homelessness and rough

sleeping strategies and ensuring that the priorities are justified, transparent, and rooted in context and review. The draft Strategy retains the core priorities of early prevention, breaking the cycle of homelessness, and improving access to suitable housing – all of which were strongly endorsed through consultation. Compared to the previous strategies the new Strategy and accompanying Action Plan (attached at Appendix 2) advance these priorities in several ways, including:

- **A broader system-wide approach**, designed to be transformational and aligned with direction from MHCLG advisers and the statutory *Homelessness Code of Guidance*.
- **A strengthened focus on dignity, equality and inclusion**, reflecting Reading's wider corporate commitments and best practice observed in other local authority strategies.
- **Close alignment with the *National Plan to End Homelessness***, including emphasis on shared responsibility across sectors, lived experience involvement, and the emerging Duty to Collaborate.
- **Full integration of homelessness and rough sleeping within a single strategic framework**, replacing the previous standalone Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- **Use of up-to-date evidence and national policy changes within the Strategy**, supported by the comprehensive Needs Analysis.
- **Enhanced governance, accountability and long-term planning**, ensuring clearer oversight and measurable progress over the life of the Strategy.

- 3.4. Full public and stakeholder consultation was undertaken throughout July and August 2025, as detailed in Section 6 below, to help shape the draft Strategy. The proposed priorities and principles based on the previous strategy learnings and Needs Analysis met with broad support, and consultation responses led to refinements of wording, provision of a rationale for each proposed priority and principle, and the addition of a glossary. Full details of the consultation and resulting changes are set out in Appendices 5 and 6. Further, non-statutory, consultation was conducted in December 2025 to gather insights from stakeholders and individuals with lived experience, which informed and shaped the Strategy's accompanying Action Plan.
- 3.5. The publication of the new *National Plan to End Homelessness* occurred during the consultation and drafting stages of the Strategy and Action Plan. The National Plan strongly reinforces the insights gathered from stakeholders, the public, and those with lived experience, confirming the relevance of our proposed approach. Only minor amendments were needed to align the Draft Strategy and Action Plan with the National Plan.
- 3.6. The finalised Strategy is a public-facing document that needs to be accessible – as endorsed by consultation feedback. The Draft Strategy has been professionally graphically designed to ensure readability, visual appeal, and compliance with corporate branding.
- 3.7. Delivery of the Strategy and accompanying Action Plan will be monitored through a dedicated tracking tool, with defined metrics drawn directly from the Action Plan outcomes. Progress will be reviewed annually by the Strategic Housing Board, and annual updates will be brought back to the HNL Committee to support Member scrutiny, transparency and continuous improvement.

Recommended Option

3.8 It is proposed that the draft *Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: A strategy for Reading 2026 – 31* is approved for publication and the accompanying Action Plan is adopted.

3.9 **Priorities for the Strategy** are detailed below:

3.9.1 Priority 1: Intervening Early to Prevent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

***Why:** By acting quickly to help people before they lose their home, we can reduce crisis, avoid long stays in emergency accommodation, with better outcomes for individuals and families.*

***How:** We will work closely with public services and community partners to help people at the first sign of housing instability, and we will find ways for those experiencing hidden homelessness to access services and support.*

3.9.2 Priority 2: Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

***Why:** Breaking the cycle helps people, especially children, stay healthy and builds safer, more welcoming communities. Listening and learning all the time helps us support people better and make sure everyone feels respected and understood. Helping with connected problems gives people a better chance to recover and stay stable long term.*

***How:** We will work with public sector and community groups to tackle root causes and reasons for repeat homelessness. We will provide advice and support in ways that our customers can access. We will ask for customer feedback and use this to improve all our services – including supported housing.*

3.9.3 Priority 3: Providing Access to Decent, Suitable and Sustainable Homes

***Why:** A home gives people the foundation they need to rebuild their lives, avoid crisis, and recover in the long term. By working creatively and in partnership we can help people access homes that meet our required standards and suit individual need.*

***How:** We will use new and existing social housing to meet homelessness needs in the best way. We will build stronger partnerships with landlords to increase housing supply. We will make sure everyone can get the right support to find, move into and keep a stable home. We will be creative, but open about the limits on housing choices – like costs, legislation, and what the market can offer – so people understand what is possible and avoid unnecessary frustration.*

3.10 Underpinning principles of the proposed new Strategy are:

3.10.1 Work together across services to give people better support

Strong partnerships between the Council, health services, probation, community groups, and national agencies like prisons and the Home Office help prevent homelessness and support recovery. By sharing information, coordinating referrals, and offering joined-up services we can make sure advice and support is tailored to each person's needs.

3.10.2 Work closely with charities, community groups, and faith organisations to support people facing homelessness

Local organisations play a vital role in preventing homelessness and helping people recover. We will agree shared values to align service objectives and activities – this will make sure everyone understands what each sector can and can't do. By improving coordination, facilitating access to funding, and learning from community-led models, we can make sure support is joined-up, inclusive, and reaches those who need it most.

3.10.3 Listen to people and use their experiences to shape services

People who've experienced homelessness know what works. By involving them from the start, improving communication and feedback, and making services easier to understand and access, we can build trust, reflect real customer journeys, and design services and support that truly meets people's needs.

3.10.4 Make sure everyone knows their role in preventing homelessness, so people get the help they need to stay housed

Homelessness isn't just a housing issue – it's linked to health, care, safety, and support. We will help other services and sectors understand, and act on, their role in preventing homelessness. A strategic approach will be adopted to ensure consistent outcomes for customers, reducing reliance on informal operational relationships. By joining up services like housing, social care, mental health, community safety, and education, and making everyone responsible for outcomes, we can offer better, more consistent support and stop people falling through gaps in provisions.

3.10.5 Find new and better ways to support people facing homelessness

We need to be creative and flexible in how we design services, using proven approaches and learning from what works elsewhere. We'll be ready to act quickly when funding or opportunities come up – always focusing on what's best for our customers. By working together across sectors, improving how we fund and commission services, and offering tailored housing and support options, we can make sure services and support meet people's needs in ways that make the best use of our funding.

3.10.6 Make sure everyone knows what help is available and how to get it

Services should be easy to find and understand – online and in person in the community. Clear, inclusive communication helps people access support, reduces stigma, and builds trust. By improving public awareness, tailoring services to different needs, and sharing success stories, we can make sure everyone can access the services they need.

3.10.7 Use data and insight to improve services and support

By understanding patterns and sharing information, we can better focus our efforts, target support, plan ahead, and make sure services work well for everyone. We'll use data and information responsibly and transparently – always being clear about how and why we are using it. We will use what we learn from people and services to focus on improving outcomes and making sure resources are used effectively where they'll make the biggest difference.

Other Options (considered but not recommended)

3.11 Not to have a rough sleeping strategy and/or not to combine the homelessness and rough sleeping strategies and/or not to have an accompanying action plan.

It is not a legislative requirement to have a rough sleeping strategy, nor is it required for a local authority to combine strategies. However, it is good practice for a local authority to be transparent and accountable regarding its strategic and operational direction for reducing rough sleeping. Combining Reading's homelessness and rough sleeping strategies provides cohesion across governance, strategy and action plans when preventing and relieving all homelessness and aligns with the approach adopted by the *National Plan to End Homelessness*. This combined approach offers overarching

efficiencies, especially where homelessness and rough sleeping responses require joint working with overlapping groups of partners.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

4.1. The Council Plan has established five priorities for the years 2025 – 28. These priorities are:

- Promote more equal communities in Reading
- Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
- Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint
- Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
- Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future

4.2. In delivering these priorities, we will be guided by the following set of principles:

- Putting residents first
- Building on strong foundations
- Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities
- Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents
- Being proudly ambitious for Reading

4.3. Full details of the Council Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website - [Council plan - Reading Borough Council](#). These priorities and the Council Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective, and economical.

4.4. This report's recommendation to agree the *Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: A strategy for Reading 2026 - 2031* and accompanying Action Plan will improve services for residents. It will support the Council Plan objectives of promoting more equal communities in Reading and safeguarding and supporting the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children by:

- Working with partners to prevent homelessness.
- Developing approaches to ensure that health and wellbeing is considered across all policy areas.
- Tackling social and economic inequalities in partnership with the voluntary and community sector.
- Supporting those who need social care services to live as independently as possible in their homes with improved wellbeing.
- Working with our partners in health and the voluntary sector to provide support solutions for adults with complex health and social care needs to improve outcomes.

4.5. The Strategy also embodies the Directorate of Communities and Adult Social Care's common purpose of '*supporting the life that matters to you*' by ensuring the Strategy and Action Plan are designed in the spirit of person- centred, preventative, and empowering approaches.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).

5.2. There are no environmental or climate implications arising from the report's recommendations.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. Full public and stakeholder consultation was undertaken throughout July and August 2025 to inform Reading's *Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: A strategy for Reading 2026 – 2031*. Formal consultation feedback is summarised in Appendices 5 and 6.
- 6.2. Survey questions included the opportunity to ask the public and stakeholders how well they think the Council is delivering existing services against the proposed priorities and enquired what residents and partners think the Council does well and how it could improve strategic direction and service delivery.
- 6.3. Non-statutory consultation was undertaken with stakeholders and individuals with lived experience throughout December 2025 to inform and shape the Strategy's accompanying Action Plan.
- 6.4. In summary, the following groups were consulted in the following ways:
 - Online survey via the Council's Consultation Hub (Go Vocal) as an open public consultation.
 - Use of social media and Council internal communications (Intranet and Team Reading Newsletter) to promote the on-line survey.
 - Cross-sector workshops with informed and experienced partners (attached at Appendix 5).
 - Utilising the newly established lived experience forum (Shared Voice) to encourage and obtain feedback from those with lived experience via the survey and at the workshops.
 - Attending multiple cross-sector partnership meetings to promote the survey.
- 6.5. Overarching feedback from consultation has shaped the Strategy and associated Action Plan which is summarised as follows:
 - 6.5.1 **General agreement with priorities and principles**
 - Support for a cohesive approach to integrate homelessness and rough sleeping strategies.
 - Agreement that proposed priorities are strong and appropriately high-level.
 - Broad support for the principles, pending the detail of an action plan.
 - 6.5.2 **Most significant day-to-day concerns for partners in tackling homelessness and rough sleeping include:**
 - Housing affordability.
 - Housing availability and standards (especially within the private rented sector).
 - Health inequalities contributing to rough sleeping and homelessness.
 - Support services and move-on from supported accommodation.
 - Funding and resources.
 - Early traumatic experiences contributing to rough sleeping and homelessness.
 - Safeguarding responses to complex needs.
 - 6.5.3 **Further feedback themes:**
 - Improve clarity and communication – including providing definitions, reducing jargon, using Plain English.
 - Ensure implementation and actions stem from the Strategy – translating priorities and principles into tangible, visible actions and real outcomes for customers.
 - Improve funding and commit to sustained resourcing.
 - Challenge systemic and national policy barriers.

- Integrate the homelessness and rough sleeping strategy with other strategies.
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) being at the strategy's core – including across language and delivery.
 - Ensure there is a collaborative strategic action plan – that is practical, realistic, and reflective of frontline challenges, as well as involving people with lived experience.
- 6.6 Consultation feedback has strongly influenced the final drafting of the Strategy and accompanying Action Plan.
- 6.6.1 A range of amendments were made to the strategy's priorities, including more emphasis on hidden homelessness, improving accessibility and person-centred language, further recognising cross sector roles and coordination, more emphasis upon respect and stability, and clarifying housing standards, partnerships, and realistic expectations; and
- 6.6.2 A range of amendments were made to the strategy's principles, including broadening partnership scope, sharpening the focus on prevention, recovery and lived experience, expanding innovation and responsiveness, enhancing inclusive communication and trust building, and clarifying the role of data, insight, and responsible information use.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 7.2 A full Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) can be found at Appendix 7. It concludes that agreeing and delivering the Strategy will not have a negative differential impact on people with protected characteristics, these being: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender), sexual orientation and care experienced young people and adults, other than to recognise and target the specific needs of groups identified as being at particularly heightened risk of homelessness and/or rough sleeping due to their demography, geography or health and well-being needs.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1. There are no other relevant issues.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. Under Section 1(4) of the Homelessness Act 2002, it is a legal requirement for the Council to review, formulate, consult on, and publish a homelessness strategy every five years. The housing authority can choose to do this more frequently if circumstances in the area have changed. Section 1(5) requires the housing authority to take their homelessness strategy into account in the exercise of their functions.
- 9.2. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's *Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities* states that an effective action plan should be developed to ensure that the objectives set out in the homelessness strategy are achieved.

- 9.3. The amended *Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities* published in February 2018, under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, states that additional duties introduced through the 2017 Act should be incorporated into a housing authority's homelessness strategy. This should include the involvement of all relevant partners for earlier identification and intervention to prevent homelessness and establishing effective partnerships and working arrangements with agencies to facilitate appropriate duty to refer referrals.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1. This report proposes the approval of a new *Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: A strategy for Reading 2026 - 2031* and accompanying Action Plan which, if agreed, will run parallel to legislation that outlines the Council's duties in preventing and relieving homelessness under the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 10.2. The cost of these statutory duties will be met by Reading Borough Council's General Fund, with funds contributed from central government under Housing grants provided including Homelessness Prevention Grant. For 2025/26 RBC is receiving Housing Grants totalling £5.790m and in 2026/27 £6.920m. The Strategy and accompanying Action Plan are developed to ensure the best use of Council resources, offering value for money, and managing and minimising costs associated with the use of emergency and temporary accommodation, where these costs are a key financial risk to the Council. The Strategy and corresponding Action Plan are consistent with the Council's likely available resources to manage homelessness and rough sleeping over their proposed period.

11. Timetable for Implementation

- 11.1. **10 March 2026:** Endorsement and agreement of Strategy and Action Plan publication at HNL Committee.
- 11.2. **March 2026:** Publication of Strategy and adoption of Action Plan.
- 11.3. **April 2027:** First annual Action Plan review published.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. There are none.

Appendices

- (1) **Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: A strategy for Reading 2026 – 2031** sets out Reading Borough Council's three strategic priorities in tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in Reading. These priorities are underpinned by core values and seven principles which describe the ways the local authority intends to deliver the Strategy across Housing Needs services.
- (2) **Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: An action plan for Reading 2026 – 2031** which sets out clear actions, responsibilities, and timelines for how the Council will deliver its homelessness and rough sleeping strategy over the next five years.
- (3) **Review of Reading's previous Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategies** which identifies lessons learned and informs the development of the new Strategy.
- (4) **Understanding Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in Reading: Strategic needs analysis** undertaken in July 2025 as required by the Homelessness Act 2002.

- (5) **Consultation Review and Outcomes** which summarises the public and stakeholder consultation exercise on proposed priorities and principles undertaken July – August 2025 as required by the Homelessness Act 2002.
- (6) **Online (Go Vocal) Consultation Responses Summary** which summarises the public and stakeholder consultation exercise on proposed priorities and principles undertaken July – August 2025 as required by the Homelessness Act 2002.
- (7) **Equality Impact Assessment: Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: A strategy for Reading 2026-31**