

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

13 APRIL 2026

COUNCILLOR QUESTION NO. 1

Councillor R Singh to ask the Lead Councillor for Housing:

Homelessness Strategy

Can the Council confirm whether the new homelessness strategy includes sufficient emergency, instant-access beds to properly deliver the No Second Night Out (NSNO) commitment, particularly for residents who have been newly evicted?

Given NSNO is meant to ensure no one spends a second night on the streets, does the Council believe current and planned provision is genuinely meeting that standard, and if not, what immediate steps will be taken to address any shortfall?

REPLY by Councillor Yeo (Lead Councillor for Housing):

Thank you, Councillor Singh, for your question.

Our new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, supported by a detailed Action Plan, sets out a clear and strengthened emergency “off-the-streets” offer to support our No Second Night Out commitment. Importantly, the role of the strategy is not to specify a target number of beds, but to ensure we maintain a balanced, high-quality range of provision that meets the varied and often complex needs of individuals who are sleeping rough. This includes a deliberate balance across prevention, emergency responses, and sustainable long-term housing solutions, recognising that NSNO sits within a much wider system of accommodation and support.

By Summer 2026, our provision will have expanded to 18 instant-access bed spaces, a substantial uplift on the six baseline beds we currently fund. This will include a mix of short-stay and emergency units, additional direct-access rooms, and a dedicated placement for young people in crisis. Instant-access beds can be for people newly verified, or for people newly engaging with support wanting to come away from the streets. At least five of these new instant-access beds will be dedicated to Reading’s NSNO commitment, offering people newly identified as rough sleeping – including residents who have been newly evicted – an immediate place of safety, rather than spending a second night on the streets.

NSNO provision is resource-intensive as it requires beds to be available, even when demand fluctuates or individuals choose not to engage and occupy. Reading’s expansion of instant-access provision needs to be carefully staffed and managed and is balanced with investment in commissioning prevention and longer-term housing solutions.

It is important to address the practical reality of rough sleeping. Someone’s pathway off the streets can be far more complex than just providing a bed. Rough sleeping is often the acute end of housing insecurity – a visible symptom of deeper, underlying issues such as trauma, poor mental health, substance dependence, relationship breakdown, and long-term unmet support needs. Individuals’ journeys off the streets are rarely linear, and NSNO is one part of a wider, multi-agency response.

Between January and March, the FAITH Winter Shelter added up to 20 direct-access beds every night for a three-month period. These beds were immediate “off the streets” options, available to anyone sleeping rough, including people who had been newly evicted and required an NSNO offer. Despite this significant increase in provision during the coldest months, the shelter was well utilised, but not fully occupied. We see a similar pattern with SWEP, which is activated in the most severe weather and is persistently offered for people’s safety, but is still declined by some.

This demonstrates that whilst intervening at the earliest opportunity should help prevent entrenched rough sleeping – even when instant, safe accommodation is available; some individuals do not immediately accept.

In summary, the new strategy provides planned capacity to deliver Reading’s NSNO ambitions. We will significantly strengthen instant-access provision by Summer 2026 but the challenge is not resolved by simply increasing the number of instant-access beds. Our Action Plan makes it clear that addressing new, repeated and long-term rough sleeping requires coordinated support across housing, Adult Social Care, health services, and our voluntary and community sector partners – alongside persistent, trauma-informed outreach to build trust and encourage engagement over time. That is why our strategic approach combines emergency beds with assertive outreach, multi-agency support, and supported housing. This will ensure that people receive the help they need when they are ready to accept it, and ensure that a variety of short and longer-term housing options are available in preventing and alleviating rough sleeping in Reading.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

13 APRIL 2026

COUNCILLOR QUESTION NO. 2

Councillor R Singh to ask the Lead Councillor for Housing:

Rough Sleeping

The Council repeatedly highlights the role of the voluntary and faith sector in tackling rough sleeping. However, many local groups feel underutilised.

Can the Council set out specifically how it will expand and strengthen these partnerships, and what practical steps it will take to work with a wider range of charities and community organisations to deliver frontline support??

REPLY by Councillor Yeo (Lead Councillor for Housing):

Thank you, Councillor Singh, for your question.

The voluntary, community and faith sector plays a vital role in supporting people who are sleeping rough, and we are fully committed to strengthening these partnerships as a core part of our long-term approach. This commitment is embedded in our new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan, which sets out a clear expectation that partnership with VCFS organisations will underpin our prevention, early intervention, and support work across the town.

As part of day-to-day work, Council officers maintain strong relationships with a wide range of local partners. This includes our close collaboration with commissioned partners such as St Mungo's, Launchpad Reading, YMCA Reading, and The Salvation Army, as well as our ongoing annual funding to FAITH's Winter Shelter. These partnerships support day-to-day delivery of frontline services, ensure smooth referral pathways, and help us respond quickly to changes in need. We know that many community groups play a significant role in supporting residents, and our Strategy commits us to strengthening these links further by establishing a quarterly Homelessness Forum. This forum will bring together all partners involved in tackling homelessness and rough sleeping, including VCFS organisations, to drive coordinated action and deliver better support for people sleeping rough in Reading.

Alongside this ongoing work, this year, we have worked intensively with local groups around the Government's Ending Homelessness in Communities Fund, launched on 23rd February, with bids due by 31st March. This fund is a £37 million government programme supporting VCFS organisations – specifically our smaller, neighbourhood-based groups who are supporting and working directly with people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping. It also provides a valuable opportunity for local services who may feel underutilised, or who may be unsure where the gaps lie, to re-engage, understand local needs more clearly, and shape their support accordingly.

Despite the tight turnaround, we held an extremely well-attended in-person workshop on 11th March. Importantly, we secured the attendance of the Government's lead advisor for VCFS organisations, who facilitated the session. I attended the session myself, and it was clear there is a real appetite for closer collaboration.

At that workshop, Council officers who worked on developing Reading's new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan, outlined key gaps in local provision and areas where additional community-based support could have the greatest impact. VCFS organisations working with those rough sleeping, or at risk of it, were encouraged to attend. Since the workshop Council officers have met with several organisations to help shape their proposals. Officers have quickly provided letters of endorsement, helping VCFS partners submit strong bids that could fund essential services in Reading for the next three years.

The response from the sector regarding this Fund has been significant, and the relationships built through this process will continue – whether organisations are successful in this round of funding or not. The recent engagement has forged stronger connections, and we are committed to ensuring these do not dissipate after the funding window closes. Keeping this momentum is key, and our forthcoming Homelessness Forum will help ensure these connections are maintained and built upon.

Supporting the voluntary and faith sector is central to preventing and relieving rough sleeping in Reading. Through both our strategic commitments and our everyday partnerships we will continue to work closely with our community partners to deliver effective, coordinated support for people sleeping rough.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

13 APRIL 2026

COUNCILLOR QUESTION NO. 3

Councillor R Singh to ask the Lead Councillor for Education and Public Health:

Thames Valley School Satellite Provision Site

Following the Local Authority's decision to terminate the lease of a site used for satellite provision by Thames Valley School:

Can the Authority explain why no consultation has been carried out with affected families, despite the significant impact on children with EHCPs?

What consideration has been given to children who were placed at the school following SEND Tribunal decisions, and how their placements can lawfully be altered in this way?

Does the Authority accept that these changes may amount to a material alteration in provision requiring formal process, and if not, on what legal basis?

Will the Authority now pause these changes to avoid further disruption and potential unlawfulness?

REPLY by Councillor Eden (Lead Councillor for Education and Public Health):

I am pleased to clarify that the Local Authority has not terminated the lease of Hill Brow, the site used for satellite provision by Thames Valley School. There has been no decision regarding the termination of the lease, and no changes will be made to a child's place at Thames Valley School without consultation for those pupils at Hill Brow and any and all other pupils attending TVS impacted by any proposed change.

At a time of change regarding the SEND reforms, the LA is committed to continue the effective delivery of SEND provision and high quality of education to its SEND pupils. Therefore, the council will follow all relevant processes and work together with Parents. The relevant consultation information for any changes would be shared in the normal way and views will be considered as part of the process.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

13 APRIL 2026

COUNCILLOR QUESTION NO. 4

Councillor Thompson to ask the Leader of the Council:

Homes for Reading

Could we be updated on the situation concerning the closure of Homes for Reading? At the January Council meeting we heard that eighteen notices to quit issued by the Council to Homes for Reading tenants had not been complied with and had been referred to the Legal Service for the start of possession proceedings. What is the status of those proceedings? Are there any new cases of tenants failing to comply with eviction proceedings and have any of the outstanding cases been resolved?

REPLY by Councillor Terry (Leader of the Council):

As of 8 April 2026, 23 of the 101 Homes for Reading properties remained occupied.

The tenants of 16 of the 23 properties that remain occupied have been served with claims seeking possession of those properties. In respect of the remaining 7 properties, four of their tenants are still within their initial tenancy term and, accordingly, no notices seeking possession have been served on those tenants at this time. The remaining three have been served with s.21 notices that have just expired.

A total of 27 claims for possession have been issued to date, of which 11 have since been resolved. Of the remaining 16, Homes for Reading have obtained possession orders on six, with 10 awaiting a decision by the court.

The Council continues to support households who are living in Homes for Reading properties to move on and many of those households are engaging well with this support. Any elected member who is contacted by a Homes for Reading tenant seeking support and assistance is encouraged to advise those tenants to contact the Council's Housing Team, as specific resources have been allocated to Homes for Reading tenants to support their move.

Tenants can contact the Council's Housing Team either by email to housing.advice@reading.gov.uk or by telephone on 01189 372165. Tenants may also find some helpful information on the Council's website by visiting [At risk of losing your home - Reading Borough Council](#), where they can also complete an on-line enquiry.

Alternatively, the Homes for Reading Team can be contacted on homesforreading@reading.gov.uk.