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Title of report: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 - 2030

Report : The current Ipswich Borough Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy comes to the end of its natural lifespan in 2024. The new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 – 2030 has been updated to reflect the priorities within the new Corporate Strategy, our achievements during the current strategy period and changes in legislation. The strategy outlines our priorities over the next five years, that have been determined through consultation and data analysis. There is statutory requirement for Local Authorities to complete a review of homelessness within their districts every five years and to have an up-to-date Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is currently in draft form and is set to be adopted in January 2025. There is public consultation being held 17th September – 15th October 2024.

The proposed priorities for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 – 2030 are;

1. Provide a high-quality advice service.
2. Focus on early prevention.
3. Working with our partners to end rough sleeping.
4. Facilitating access to suitable accommodation.
5. Building and maintaining partnerships that support residents.

What evidence/data is being used to support this equality analysis? Please select all that apply.: Findings from surveys, focus groups & consultations, Published data - e.g Census, State of Ipswich report

Service area: Housing Advice

Corporate Manager: Gavin Fisk

Corporate Manager email: Gavin.Fisk@ipswich.gov.uk

Links to supporting documents where available:

Please upload any supporting documents: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

What is proposed?: The adoption of the new Housing Strategy 2025 -2030 will set a clear and transparent direction for our work in relation to Homelessness and Rough Sleeping over the next 5 years

Why are the changes being introduced?: The current Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy comes to the end of its natural lifespan in 2024. There is statutory requirement for Local Authorities to complete a review of homelessness within their districts every five years and to have an up-to-date Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. There is therefore a need for the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 – 2030.

What evidence is being used to support this Equality Impact Assessment, and how is it being used?: ONS, Gov.UK, IHMS, CIVICA

How will this change be implemented?: The priorities and aims of this strategy are supported by a live action plan which details the specific work to be undertaken to achieve our vision.

Age: Positive

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: Analysis of data has confirmed that Ipswich continues to have a young age profile and an aging population, and this trend is set to continue. Additionally, data insight shows that the majority of homelessness applicants are in the 25 – 34 age group. Residents of different ages are likely to have different housing needs to prevent and relieve homelessness and rough sleeping. This has been a consideration for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and is addressed through a number of measures. This includes the development of an Ipswich pathway for supported housing which will benefit a large number of young applicants, a review of the move on process from supported housing, joint protocols with Suffolk County Council regarding homeless young people and a review of the support that is provided to Care Leavers.

Disability: Positive

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: According to the 2021 Census 7.3% of the population of Ipswich report having a disability that limits them a lot. In 2022/23 8% of households owed a prevention or relief duty had a support need relating to physical ill health and disability and the most common support need was a history of mental health problems (15%). The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy includes plans to increase accessibility of the Housing Advice service for all members of the community, making best use of resources and technology. The strategy sets out how we will continue to support applicants to access the disabled facilities grant for adaptations to private rented properties, and will ensure that those applicants who are in need of adapted properties through Gateway to Homechoice are awarded the relevant priority for rehousing. To support applicants who have mental health problems, we plan to continue the support provided by the Mental Health Practitioner within the Rough Sleeper Project.

Marriage & Civil Partnership: No impact

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: This Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is equal to all applicants seeking advice and/or assistance regarding homelessness and is not related to marital status.

Race: No impact

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is equal to all applicants seeking advice and/or assistance regarding homelessness and is not related to race.

Pregnancy & Maternity: Positive

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been designed to benefit all applicants seeking advice and/or assistance regarding homelessness, including those experiencing financial difficulties. It will therefore benefit those who are not working or working less due to pregnancy or maternity and therefore have reduced income. The strategy aims to assist those experiencing financial difficulty through facilitating access to money advice services and assisting with hardship and homelessness prevention funds to assist the applicant in resolving their housing situation. We intend to explore family mediation when a person is becoming homeless due to being put out by a parent, and therefore this will also benefit those in this situation who are pregnant.

Religion or Belief: No impact

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is equal to all applicants seeking advice and/or assistance regarding homelessness and is not related to religion or belief.

Gender Reassignment: Positive

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: National research has shown that individuals proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone a process to reassign their sex are often reluctant to disclose their gender identity to homelessness services. Studies have found that homelessness services can lack understanding of the sexuality or gender identity of service users, applicants may not identify with the categories being used and Homelessness Officers may not be aware of their specific needs. The strategy sets out our plans to review our data collection processes to make sure that we are capturing household characteristic data including regarding gender accurately, and to ensure our staff are trained to the highest standards to understand and support individuals in relation to their gender reassignment and homelessness or risk of homelessness.

Sex: Positive

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: Data analysis shows that of those owed a duty to prevent or relieve their homelessness around half have been single male households and prevention duties for single males have increased significantly. Furthermore, most residents rough sleeping are males. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out our plans to develop an Ipswich pathway for single applicants with support needs, which will also benefit single male households. Furthermore, we intend to investigate the provision of accommodation for single households within Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO's) which will benefit single male applicants. Research has shown that women are most likely to experience Domestic Abuse, and they will therefore benefit from our plans to review the effectiveness of the Domestic Abuse link worker provision.

Sexual Orientation: Positive

Please provide an explanation of this impact and actions to mitigate any adverse impact, or further promote positive impact.: Our data review found that the sexual identification of applicants is under recorded, as 54% of responses were recorded as not known. It was found that 26% identified as Heterosexual (46% response rate) and 1% as Homosexual, however the figure nationally is believed to be higher. This has been identified an area where recording processes need to be adjusted to ensure that this is captured accurately. Research as shown that LGBTIQ+ people are disproportionately more likely to be homeless or insecurely housed than someone who is not LGBTIQ+ and young people identifying as LGBTIQ+ are more likely to find themselves homeless than those who are non LGBTIQ. LGBTIQ+ individuals often face discrimination and can present with specific needs, which research suggests are sometimes not understood by Homelessness Officers. This can mean that the right support is not provided, causing their situation to deteriorate. Research has shown that the wording of demographic questions, being a victim of abuse following a previous disclosure, or personal reasons can lead to applicants' non-disclosure of their sexual orientation. The strategy sets out our plans to review our data collection processes to make sure that we are capturing household characteristic data including regarding sexual identification, sex and gender, as accurately as possible and to ensure our staff are trained to the highest standards to understand and support individuals from the LGBTIQ+ community.

I can confirm the report does meet Ipswich Borough Council's equality objectives: I can confirm the report does meet Ipswich Borough Council's equality objectives

The report helps us to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment & victimisation' in the following way(s): The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been written to address the needs of residents requiring homelessness advice services in Ipswich and is based on a comprehensive analysis of data. Consideration has been given to the needs of all communities within Ipswich.

The report helps us to 'advance equality of opportunity...' in the following way(s): Data analysis found that 25% of applicants had identified support needs, with the most common being a history of mental health problems. Of those engaged with the Rough Sleeping Project the most common support need was substance misuse. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy considers the support needs of different groups throughout including individuals experiencing mental health problems, people with disabilities, care leavers and rough sleepers.

The policy helps us to 'foster good relations...' in the following way(s): The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been designed to tackle homelessness in Ipswich by providing an effective service to the residents of Ipswich who require it. By providing an effective service we can foster positive outcomes and good relations.

The new provisions will be reviewed in the following way(s): The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy is supported by a live action plan which will be monitored regularly to review actions and ensure they are being carried out so that the aims, priorities and the vision are met.
