

Housing & Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting:	<i>31st July 2024</i>
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
Report of:	Heather Clarke, Director of Housing Needs
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Housing Services
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	This is a statutory strategy which has been development in line with Fairer Westminster, in particular commitments on reducing inequality.
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1. Executive Summary

1.1. This briefing provides an overview of the proposed Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (the Strategy) and includes:

- The scope and rationale of the Strategy, considering the recommendations of the Future of Westminster Commission Housing Review.
- Understanding of the priorities and challenges highlighted in the statutory review.
- Options in creating a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and how the changes may impact residents and applicants.
- The approach to the consultation and engagement programme.
- Initial feedback from residents and stakeholders who have participated in the programme of pre-statutory engagement and lived experience groups.
- Timetable and implementation of the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

- 1.2. Responding to the increasing demand of those in housing need is a challenge faced by local authorities across the country. London Councils has reported that one in 50 Londoners is currently homeless.
- 1.3. In Westminster, the pressure to support those in need is set against a difficult and demanding environment with a challenging and limited housing market and continued cost-of-living pressures for many residents.
- 1.4. Providing Housing Services that are responsive and empathetic is central to delivering on our Fairer Westminster commitments. This offer of improved services is underpinned by the development of a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- 1.5. Which will support communities to thrive, balance the needs of differing groups and identify any adverse impact on groups within protected characteristics. The Strategy will also build on the recommendations of the Future of Westminster Commission's Housing Review.
- 1.6. The engagement with residents, partners and those with lived experience has been comprehensive, involves community experience and embeds the voice and contribution of lived experience of homelessness and how we sustain relationships and engagement after and beyond the formal review process. The Strategy will promote the delivery of:
 - Improved early support
 - A central role for Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations
 - Practical and person-centered crisis interventions
 - re-housing and re-settlement
 - Re-modelling of the Housing Solutions Service (HSS)
 - An Integrated 'whole system' working
 - A 'Whole Council' strategy
- 1.7. To date, development of the strategy and engagement approach has been appraised by the Quality Improvement Board, alongside regular Cabinet Member briefings.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 2.1. This report is presented to Policy and Scrutiny for pre-consultation and pre-decision scrutiny.
- 2.2. The committee is requested to provide any views or steers on the following:
 - The understanding of the Westminster landscape, co- production, and Lived Experience engagement.
 - The development of the Strategy
 - Key aims and commitments.
 - Public Consultation

3. Background

- 3.1. As a local authority, we have a duty to carry out a review of homelessness, then formulate and publish a strategy based on that review. This process must take place at least once every five years.
- 3.2. The strategy will directly inform how we manage homelessness and rough sleeping in Westminster, helping us define where we want to get to and describing the policies and plans that will help us get there.
- 3.3. The Strategy as a statutory document, must outline how the Council will:
 - Prevent homelessness in Westminster.
 - Secure sufficient accommodation for people who are or may be homeless in Westminster.
 - Secure satisfactory support for people who are or may become homeless or need support to prevent them from becoming homeless again.
- 3.4. Our approach to developing the new strategy is based on evaluation of our current demand, understanding the experience of homelessness, and accessing services in Westminster through lived experience and co production with our partners.
- 3.5. We have used the following process and reviews to build our approach:
 - Westminster Homelessness Review outlined in **(Appendix A - Westminster Homelessness Review Draft Summary)**
 - Insight and co-design from people with lived experience of homelessness in Westminster.
 - Engagement with stakeholders across the city who are working to prevent and relieve homelessness.

Westminster Homelessness Review

- 3.6. The development of the Strategy has coincided with unprecedented demand for housing support services and a steady rise in the number of people identified as sleeping rough in Westminster.
- 3.7. The Council defines homelessness as:
 - Statutory homelessness: where people or households approach the local authority for help (see below for information on legal duties)
 - Hidden homeless: people or households that are not included in official statistics because for example they are staying with friends or family and are not approaching the local authority.

- Rough sleeping: which includes people bedding down on the streets.

Statutory and Hidden Homelessness

- 3.8. The Council, as with all local authorities, must operate in line with relevant homelessness legislation, which considers whether ‘duties’ are owed towards people experiencing homelessness. The legislation is complex and was significantly changed by the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 3.9. Whether a legal duty is ‘accepted,’ depends on whether certain factors apply and if a person or household is ‘eligible’ for them, as defined in law. This has created a complex process for those who need assistance.
- 3.10. Whilst homelessness currently affects around 5% of the Westminster population it is on the rise. There were 5,000 households who approached the council for advice and support in 2023/24, and homeless applications are anticipated to keep rising by a further 19% over the next two years.
- 3.11. Hidden homelessness means that many people are not accounted for in these figures, and rough sleeping count methodology often hides the experiences of women and people who are LGBTQIA+.
- 3.12. Housing in Westminster is some of the most expensive in London, with average property prices 18 times average incomes, alongside the highest proportion of private rented properties in England, 14% of households living in poverty and limited land opportunities for development.
- 3.13. The Council recognises that homelessness is a multifaceted area of service provision, and the proposed strategy must be accompanied by a re-shaping of front-line services. There will also be a focus on addressing entrenched rough sleeping which particularly affects people with complex needs and circumstances.

Rough Sleeping

- 3.14. Westminster’s Rough Sleeping challenges continue, with people who are displaced both nationally and internationally moving to the borough for support.
- 3.15. In November 2023 at the last national street count, 273 people were identified as sleeping rough on a single night in Westminster, with 2,050 people identified throughout 2022/23. This is 21% rise on the previous year and 20% of the London total.
- 3.16. We see a varied cohort of individuals on our streets, from those who are new to rough sleeping, or new to Westminster with no history of rough sleeping in London or those who have significant histories of rough sleeping alongside multiple complex needs.
- 3.17. Across Westminster we experience seasonal variations in activity, visibility, and impact of rough sleeping, this can be through either groups

of similar demographics or physical geographical locations. Some of more challenging current demands:

- Transient EEA national groups (including those who identify as ROMA) often without clear entitlement or eligible immigration status. Our Outreach service, along with the GLA Roma rough sleeping team, work with our specialist immigration services to provide advice and specialist reconnection services where appropriate.
 - Asylum seekers who have recently exited NASS accommodation. Westminster faces high demand from individuals leaving NASS hotels after receiving positive asylum decisions. Often, these new rough sleepers come from NASS hotels outside Westminster, limiting capacity for effective planning and transition, which typically after assessment move into the private rented sector with additional floating support as needed.
 - Rough sleepers who are UK/ROI or have eligible immigration status complex, high support needs and a long history of rough sleeping. These individuals often find it challenging to trust and engage with services, making it difficult for them to enter or maintain accommodation. Multi-agency teams, including health, mental health, drug and alcohol services, and specialist outreach services, provide bespoke support and move-on solutions.
 - Those from EEA or rest of world with complex, high support needs but often with no status or immigration issues. Low trust in services, particularly those related to immigration support. Joint efforts with outreach teams, drug, and alcohol support services, and using charitable partners offering services in a range of languages, focused on assisting individuals with no recourse to public funds to reconnect with support in their home countries.
- 3.18. Our services are tailored to reflect this broad spectrum of need and we work closely with our colleagues in Public Protection and Licensing to ensure we take a cohesive person led approach to engaging and responding to those who are rough sleeping and any associated activity, but also in how we offer support and response those in the community who are impacted by negative activity in their local area.
- 3.19. Work with Public Protection and Licensing is not only focused on our street-based response such as begging and ASB, community liaison and policy development, including domestic abuse and migration to support our response across all our delivery.
- 3.20. We coordinate activity and oversight through Monthly Neighbourhood Coordinator Meetings which are a multi-agency monthly meeting to discuss any issues in relation to the wards in Westminster geared towards problem solving together and developing an action plan.

- 3.21. We deliver joint targeted street-based interventions, this is a targeted response involving the Police and the council to deal with hotspots and persistent anti-social behaviour that is negatively impacting communities in Westminster.
- 3.22. In addition, there is a monthly Partnership and Operations Group, the provides an opportunity to share intelligence, problem solve together and for the Senior Leadership Police Team to provide information on special projects, updates on crime in wards of concern, highlight trends and patterns of crime and plan deployments together.

Support Across Our Services

- 3.23. Support is a key element to how we deliver across all our services. The offer of support can be varied and tailored to the specific needs of the cohort or service area and drives our ability to achieve and deliver positive outcomes.
- 3.24. Our range of support is from first contact with our services, throughout a household's journey through their resolution of homelessness and during resettlement and prevention of re-experiencing the loss of their home.
- 3.25. Advice and support are offered through our Housing Solutions Service, as part of our statutory process we offer:
- a Personalised Housing Plan with steps for households to follow and work together with us to find solutions to end their homelessness.
 - For those who are placed into temporary accommodation, we offer proactive contact and support to families that are placed in areas they are unfamiliar with to them acclimatise.
 - We offer additional contact for families with additional needs, such as household members with physical and health needs and children with SEN statements to ensure that they and in appropriate temporary accommodation or supported to transfer to alternative provision.
- 3.26. Westminster delivers comprehensive support services to help individuals experiencing rough sleeping find viable routes off the streets:
- St Mungo's operates the Street Outreach Service (SOS) daily, registering rough sleepers on the CHAIN database, conducting assessments, building trust, and collaborating with partner services for referrals and onward support.
 - A specialist outreach model, Compass focuses on strength-based and trauma-informed care to support rough sleepers with complex backgrounds and trauma, ensuring ongoing assistance until client's transition to other support teams.
 - The Assessment and Triage Pathway (A&T) provides initial accommodation for new rough sleepers with 120 beds, aiming to

prevent entrenchment and facilitating moves to various long-term housing options.

- 3.27. Specialist services include RAMFEL for immigration and entitlement support, BEAM for employment and training, and the Passage Modern Slavery service for potential victims of modern slavery. The Northwest London CCG commissions health services, including dedicated GPs, a nursing team, peer advocacy, and mental health support.
- 3.28. Public Health commissions bi-borough drug and alcohol services through CGL and Turning Point, offering outreach, one-on-one support, prescriptions, rehab referrals, and more. In emergencies.
- 3.29. Westminster also prioritises the safety of rough sleepers and those in supported housing, by providing emergency solutions and accommodation during severe weather or health crises.
- 3.30. We also offer a flexible Floating Support service open to Westminster residents of all tenures and those in temporary accommodation outside of the borough, its tailored to those who have identified areas of support, that if left unaddressed could lead to the loss of their home.
- 3.31. This service provides supportive interventions to close the gap on unmet need and look to build appropriate connections to statutory and community support services to improve households' potential and circumstances.
- 3.32. We also offer for single adults with identified support needs who need a higher level of support we have a range of supported accommodation options.
- 3.33. With over 900 bed spaces we can provide ongoing support to those with a history of rough sleeping, ongoing mental health conditions, young adults, and women specific services. This variety ensures people get the support they need to maintain and thrive in accommodation towards a future of independent living.

Building on Good Practice

- 3.34. Delivering the Council's homelessness response has and continues to be challenging but there has been a strong track record of delivering positive outcomes for families and single adults through our Housing Solutions Service in 2023/24:
 - 690 homeless preventions, a 6% increase on 2022/23. This has been supported by offering such things as:
 - Mediation with landlords and family members.
 - Assistance with stopping and challenging evictions.
 - Resolution of debt or arrears.
 - Supporting alternative housing provision e.g. through the private rented sector.

- In 2023/24, over 40% of our social housing lettings across all bed sizes, were allocated to households experiencing homelessness. This was made possible through the receipt of additional social housing supply for that year.
 - Maintained and delivered an inspection regime of over 500 inspections in our second stage temporary accommodation across London to ensure accommodation was good quality and repairs and management issues are dealt with competently and in a timely way.
 - Introduced and delivered a Temporary Accommodation Support Service for over 300 families in stage 1 temporary accommodation. Families were offered support and financial assistance to mitigate financial pressures, improve wellbeing, address physical and mental health challenges, transport access and support while settling children and young people into local schools, signposting to GP's and amenities in the area.
- 3.35. Westminster was awarded £21.5m from the national **Rough Sleeping Initiative** for 2022 – 2025 (funding from Government with the aim of ending rough sleeping by the end of the current Parliament). We have developed and expanded a comprehensive set of services to meet the needs of people at risk of rough sleeping, those currently doing so, and those in recovery.
- 3.36. Our work includes innovative collaboration between commissioners and front-line workers across homelessness and health services and with the Faith and Volunteer Sector, who support those who remain on the streets.
- 3.37. Successes of our RSI funding have been:
- Partnership with Camden Council at the St Giles Hotel to expand our Assessment and Triage Pathway, particularly for rough sleepers who need to resolve their homelessness through employment and the private rented sector.
 - The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol Response which delivered successful interventions during periods of extreme cold weather including with the Connection at St Martins and our faith and voluntary partners.
 - Preventing rough sleeping via The Passage's No Night Out Service which delivers rapid interventions before bedding down and met its yearly outcomes within six months.
 - Health beds integrated in our Rough Sleeping Pathway delivered using a multi-agency approach to complex case management which referred 82% of residents to mental health and/or substance misuse services and moved 86% on successfully to alternative accommodation.

- Targeted work to identify women rough sleeping through our strategic partnerships and Women’s Safe Space Respite Rooms which focuses on those with complex needs or no immigration status.
- Expansion of our Floating Support Service which works with individuals in the private rented sector who may be at risk of tenancy breakdown and a return to rough sleeping.

4. Co-Production and Lived Experience

- 4.1. In scoping and developing the strategy there has been significant and active community involvement and collaboration with our partners and service users. This includes internal cross-directorate workshops, key stakeholder and lived experience co-production sessions, policy roundtables and lived experience policy reviews.
- 4.2. In conducting this programme of engagement, the service has benefited from working with a wide range of experts outlined below:



- 4.3. There has been a real focus on co-production with people who have lived experience of homelessness in Westminster from different backgrounds, to understand their journey into homelessness, experiences of services, and priorities for change.
- 4.4. A lived experience co production programme was established for the purpose of developing the strategy, The activity and engagement was delivered by housing needs and the Westminster Homelessness Partnership.
- 4.5. The group was drawn from people who have in the past or are using Westminster homelessness services, from a range of other lived experience groups run by partner organisations including the Passage, Marylebone Project, Outside Project and others.
- 4.6. There was a broad range of representation, backgrounds and experiences including people who identified as LGBTQ+, women, migrants, global world majority, young people, and those with experience of public sector health services and support.

- 4.7. This emphasis on co-production has been embedded from the early scoping and research work that drew in learning from other Local Authorities and feedback from service users. This approach will carry through to the formal consultation process which will seek to actively engage with those with lived experience and those partners and stakeholders who understand the causes and impacts of homelessness at a local level.
- 4.8. There were clear indicators that the provision of safe, inclusive, and accessible spaces is vital for enabling all clients and service users to feel a sense of belonging and for their perspectives to be respected, while promoting a culture of curiosity on how Westminster will improve its homelessness & rough sleeping provision in the future.
- 4.9. A focus on building capacity in the voluntary sector to support, advise and refer via locally based connections to Housing Solutions Services through early referral and support within communities to keep people in their homes will be key.
- 4.10. Westminster has a good track record of support for people who leave the criminal justice system, people seeking asylum, people leaving care and the offer to young adults, however there is more to be achieved and to expand on with regards to our offer for Women, the LGBTQIA+ community and our Global Majority households.
- 4.11. A new approach to prevention means that the service has a community footprint, is accessible, and can provide practical help in a timely way, working together, sharing strategic decision making about the shape and outcomes of the future delivery models for our services in Westminster.
- 4.12. We have also worked closely with Westminster's Changing Futures programme, a 4-year joint funded programme by MHCLG and The National Lottery Fund which runs until March 2025.
- 4.13. The programme was created to improve the lives of people experiencing multiple disadvantages, with emphasis on evaluate the success of the project and to understand what lessons can be taken forward in any future work to support people with multiple disadvantages.
- 4.14. In Westminster alongside the wider work on complex need and multiple disadvantage, The Changing Futures Specialist Team was established to reduce inequality and promote inclusivity by providing comprehensive support to young people aged 18-25 who have faced various forms of disadvantage.
- 4.15. Their mission is to offer non-judgmental assistance, challenging individuals to enhance their self-esteem, life skills, and relationships to thrive independently as adults. The team aims to empower young people by addressing challenges such as homelessness, domestic violence, offending, substance misuse, and mental health issues.
- 4.16. Evaluation is currently being undertaken by the team, but indications are that of those who the team have worked with:

- a significant number of young people referred have had prior contact with family services in their younger childhood.
 - they had often been exposed to significant challenges and adversity during their upbringing, including trauma or adverse childhood experiences.
 - they saw high levels of referrals from Mental Health Services, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Community Mental Health teams and Early Intervention from Psychosis team.
- 4.17. the lack of stable and supportive family environments highlighted the continued need for support during the transition to adulthood and the risk that without intervention, these young people are more likely to become homeless adults and go on to develop more complex needs to cope with homelessness, addictions, or unhealthy relationships.
- 4.18. To ensure that we have ongoing cross sectional work between the delivery of our strategy, the learning from Changing Futures, and the work from our lived experience groups we are exploring the establishment as part our oversight and governance of a Lived Experience Advisory Board, which would bring together existing lived-experience co-production groups across the council and the community.

Strategic Development

- 4.19. The Strategy aims to meet the Fairer Westminster vision by proactively preventing homelessness and making clear progress towards ending rough sleeping in Westminster.
- 4.20. We have sought through the homelessness review and coproduction work to fully understand the challenge of homelessness in Westminster and how it is experienced by individuals so we can develop informed, targeted solutions, and continually improve the quality of the services we deliver.
- 4.21. Increasing homelessness prevention and reducing the need for placements in Temporary Accommodation is a key driver aligning our strategy approach with the effective financial management of the impact of increased demand.
- 4.22. Our work to date has identified that the council can most effectively reduce homelessness by increasing its focus on prevention. Enabling our approach to earlier and more effective prevention work, including utilising analytics so we can identify risk factors for homelessness and put in place effective pre-crisis intervention.
- 4.23. There are four key commitments the service will undertake to help achieve this aim:
- **Early prevention** We will ensure quality information, advice, and early support are available within communities to help keep people in their homes.

- **Crisis prevention** We will provide practical and person-centred advice and support when there is need to urgently prevent homelessness.
 - **Re-housing and Recovery** We will provide re-housing and recovery support within quality temporary and supported accommodation.
 - **Re-settlement** We will provide personalised and targeted re-settlement support.
- 4.24. The Strategy will define what 'good prevention' will look like. This will impact our ways of working, service design and delivery:
- Place based advice and support delivered with and in communities.
 - Targeted support for those at higher risk of homelessness, addressing inequalities and exclusion.
 - Empathetic and person-centred support from homelessness services, recognising the trauma of homelessness.
 - Honest conversations and practical help to access affordable housing.
 - Integrated commissioning so that services work around the person.
 - High quality services with skilled and supported staff, measured on their outcomes.
- 4.25. We are developing an indicator framework that will set out our progress and how we will measure it. We know that homelessness is a harmful experience, and whilst the Council does already take steps to prevent homelessness at each stage, different interventions will be needed.
- 4.26. from access to emergency housing and healthcare, to financial support and specialist advice. The services that we design need to meet the different needs people have at different stages of risk, and work to achieve structured outcomes to prevent homelessness.
- 4.27. Our measures of success will look at progress over time, towards seeing an increase in the number and impact of interventions that prevent people from reaching housing crisis. Ours aims are to:
- Detail the data required to give insight on progress towards measures of success
 - Establish standard presentation of this data for analysis and understanding
 - Support effective KPIs across commissioned and in-house services that provide intelligence on measures of success
- 4.28. The framework is being developed in partnership with the Centre for Homelessness Impact, through a short series of workshops focusing on the monitoring framework, indicators, data collection, analysis, and performance rating.
- 4.29. Centre for Homeless Impact will continue to advise and support us to refine, implement and set the monitoring framework, ensuring that it is

delivering aims of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy - to proactively prevent homelessness and make progress towards ending rough sleeping in Westminster.

- 4.30. Improvements in our prevention offer will require us to continue to further develop the specialist homelessness services, strengthen our partnership work and deal with system wide issues that are barriers to good outcomes.
- 4.31. We will continue to provide a strong safety net for people who do become homeless and make sure they have the support they need to move on to permanent and sustainable new homes.
- 4.32. The strategy will underpin the requirements for all services we commission and develop to be person-centred in the approach and deliver an empathy driven culture, as well as effectively using feedback to improve the experience of those who are accessing our services.
- 4.33. Integrated commissioning will support the delivery of the whole system change needed and will provide a robust, credible, and objective way of making decisions about the best and efficient allocation of our resources so that they have maximum positive impact on the lives of families and single people.
- 4.34. Insight gathered through conversations with service-users as part of our homelessness review and lived experience groups highlighted the differing ways that people may become homeless, as well as the varied ways they will experience it and the challenges they will face.
- 4.35. It is important that these conversations are not a one-off exercise and that we continue to take opportunities to listen to service-users and act on what they tell us, so we can develop interventions that work effectively to tackle the key issues.
- 4.36. The Strategy provides strategic alignment for the delivery of upcoming plans and strategies that will reshape the Housing Needs function:
 - Allocations Policy Review
 - Homelessness Accommodation Supply Strategy
 - Homelessness Commissioning Plan
 - Re-Shaping Housing Solutions Service
 - Temporary Accommodation Procurement Plan
- 4.37. Collaboration across the whole homelessness 'system' is a key deliverable with commitments to collaborate and proactively align work activities to ensure we are maximising resources and impact.
- 4.38. The public consultation is scheduled for early Autumn this is slightly delayed owing to the General Election. Following this there will be a period of analysis and recommendations for edits before the final Strategy goes forward to Cabinet in late 2024 for consideration.

5. Legal and Governance Implications

- 5.1. As a statutory document the Strategy and Homelessness Review meets the requirements of the Homelessness Code of Guidance and the requirements for Local Authorities to improve the health of citizens within the Health and Social Care Act 2012.
- 5.2. In addition to the Fairer Westminster Strategy, the following also have significant interdependencies:
 - Bi-borough Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2033
 - Children and Young People's Plan 2022-2024
 - Early Help Strategy 2021-2025
 - Private Rented Sector Strategy 2021-2025
 - Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2021-2026
- 5.3. Partnership collaboration, oversight and scrutiny is outlined within the Strategy and a dedicated Partnership Board has been established to develop this capability.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. There are general financial implications of the core Strategy commitments that will be fully appraised at point of implementation because of:
 - Increased early prevention activity
 - Increased support for homeless households.
- 6.2. The expected positive impacts are due to be modelled to provide estimates of financial impacts over time:
 - Reduction in the need for temporary accommodation placements.
 - Reduction in number of people reaching housing crisis and becoming homeless.
 - Reduction in people experiencing repeat homelessness.
- 6.3. The total net budget for Housing Needs service is £68.8m for the financial year 2024/25.
- 6.4. There are wider transformation programmes in progress such as the reshaping of the Housing Solutions Service, which our strategy will inform and influence our new approach and operating models, as set out in the background paper **Cabinet Report - Re-shaping of the Housing Solutions Service** to this report.
- 6.5. Quantifying predictive costs is challenging due to the complex factors around homelessness and their propensity for change, we currently estimate that every household diverted away from temporary accommodation avoids costs of approximately £26k per annum in current market conditions.

7. Carbon Impact

- 7.1 It is expected that the carbon impact of the Strategy will be zero.
- 7.2 Where the delivery of the Strategy requires new activity or services, carbon impact will be assessed accordingly.

8. Equalities Impact

- 8.1 An initial pre-Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out and identified groups disproportionately impacted by homelessness in Westminster. This has informed both the development of the strategy via targeted engagement, and the commitments within it.
- 8.2 The Quality Improvement Board is chaired by the Cabinet Member responsible for Equalities and Communities and enables scrutiny and support for corporate projects that will impact on residents.
- 8.3 We have engaged with the Board on two occasions and taken forward a series of actions to strengthen the development and delivery of the Strategy to promote equality and inclusion.
- 8.4 Their recommendations at both reviews have been to ensure that we maintain, good quality consistent contact with our lived experience groups, that the co-production also gives opportunity for co-authorship and ownership, and that the voice of those with experience homelessness is clear and defined throughout the strategy.
- 8.5 They also offered additional advice and connections to networks and third sector provides across London and the UK who could add additional context and learning especially around working with understanding and designing services for marginalised groups.
- 8.6 This has driven the Strategy commitments to ensure that there is representation in our services to the following groups:
 - Young adults
 - Women and Families
 - People with disabilities
 - People from Global Majority ethnicities, particularly Black, Arab, Asian, Roma, Gypsy, and Traveller
 - People who are LGBTQIA+
- 8.7 There are other people and groups who are particularly vulnerable to homelessness who will need different approaches. We know that these people can either be invisible to services or have limited access to public support.
- 8.8 Inequalities, we recognise that access to the housing market and support services are not equal across the city. Our priorities are intended to be

inclusive, but we will ensure we explicitly address equality issues in the action plan that will deliver the strategy.

- 8.9 The homelessness and support services must meet the diverse requirements of our residents. In doing this, we will recognise and address to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people, and our vulnerable communities, improving the health and well-being of our residents and strengthening our partnership approach to safeguarding.
- 8.10 The experience of those with Restricted Eligibility are also noted, with commitment to greater accessibility and targeted services that address drivers of homelessness such as language and employment support.
- 8.11 A full Equality Impact Assessment will be developed against the final version of the Strategy, post-consultation, and pre-Cabinet consideration.

9. Consultation and Engagement

- 9.1 The public consultation will provide the public and other stakeholders with the opportunity to review the draft Strategy and the Homelessness Review. Engagement will be tailored to each target group and accompanied by promotional materials to advertise the events and their purpose.
- 9.2 Particularly, through the consultation exercise we will seek to engage people through a range of methods, designed to also reach those who are experiencing homelessness or at risk.
- 9.3 We will utilise a range of engagement through social media content including visuals and videography, poster and flyers, library drop-ins, drop-ins at homelessness services and translation support.
- 9.4 The Westminster Homelessness Partnership Co-Production Group will be facilitating the homelessness service drop ins to engage their peers in the consultation.
- 9.5 Commonplace, the council's consultation portal will host the Consultation Survey and Supporting Documents. The survey will focus on:
- Capturing a small amount of demographic information
 - Establishing views on the best ways to tackle homelessness.
 - Establishing feedback on key commitments and actions
- 9.6 A range of in-person drops ins and engagement events will be programmed with service users and key stakeholders as well as general events open to residents.
- 9.7 To ensure that we can reach and focus on the most vulnerable and often excluded we are offering 1-1 sessions and support for those who are identified through our existing co production networks and those who express

an interest in completing the consultation through our partner services they are engaging with.

- 9.8 To enable this, we will provide support to complete the consultation at the drop-ins, advice to key workers who are assisting their service users, alongside translation services and access to a computer.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact Report Author
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APPENDICES:

Appendix A -Westminster Homelessness Review Draft Summary

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

[Cabinet Report - Re-shaping of the Housing Solutions Service](#)

[Future of Westminster Commission Housing Review](#)