

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-26: Consultation

Cambridge City Council is developing a strategy for tackling homelessness and rough sleeping. Rough sleeping and begging are visible outcomes of homelessness. However, homelessness affects far more people than we see on the streets of our city. There are also individuals and families who do not have a settled home to call their own, and who are in precarious temporary accommodation. Many families are feeling the effects of COVID-19 on their livelihoods, and may be more at risk of homelessness now, as a result.

We want to consult people who live and work in the city about our strategy to deal with the problem, and about the actions we propose to take. We have designed a set of questions to gather your views on the key issues.

Please refer to our draft Homelessness Strategy 2021-26, and the Action Plan annexed to it, for further detail. These can be found on the Consultations page of Cambridge City Council's website.

* Required

1. I am responding to this survey: *

- as an individual
- on behalf of an organisation or business

2. I am responding as an individual who

- lives within Cambridge City
- works within Cambridge City
- works for Cambridge City Council
- lives outside, but near Cambridge City
-

Other

3. Please give the first part of your home and/or work postcode(s) within the City (for example Home CB1, Work CB2 etc)

4. I am responding on behalf of

an organisation or business operating within Cambridge City

a statutory organisation involved with homeless people

a voluntary organisation involved with homeless people

Other

5. Please give the first part of the postcode for the organisation that you are responding on behalf of (e.g. CB1, CB2 etc)

6. What do you consider are the three biggest issues that have resulted in an increase in homelessness in the City over the past few years? (don't worry if you can only think of one or two, your views are still welcome)

7. We've listed below our key priorities within the Strategy:

1. To support those at risk of homelessness to remain in their homes where possible;
2. To improve access to and range of permanent accommodation;
3. To minimise the use of emergency and temporary accommodation;
4. To improve access to and effectiveness of support services;
5. To prevent rough sleeping;
6. To break the cycle of chronic and repeat street homelessness.

If you think there should be additional priorities, please give your suggestions below (in later questions you have an opportunity to comment on the specific actions we are proposing, in order to achieve these ends):

Preventing homelessness

We already prevent homelessness in a lot of cases when people tell us they are likely to lose their home. Below are some additional actions that we are proposing, in order to try and increase the number of people we can help to remain in their homes. More detail can be found in the Strategy.

8. We want to support those at risk of homelessness to remain in their homes where possible, or to find a new home without an intervening period of homelessness. The specific actions we propose within our Action Plan, to improve our chances of achieving this, include:
1. To develop further our specialist support and advice to private tenants who are being evicted;
 2. To create a publicity campaign, to encourage those faced with homelessness to contact us at an earlier stage;
 3. To develop further our mediation role, when someone is asked to leave by family or friends;
 4. When someone has been asked to leave by family or friends, to explore incentives to allow them to remain long enough to achieve a managed move;
 5. To reconsider our work with young people, with a focus on the most vulnerable, in order to improve their understanding of housing availability and choices;
 6. To analyse the costs and benefits of setting up a 'private sector tenancy rescue scheme' - making loans or grants to tenants with arrears, to help them stay in their home;
 7. To work with partner housing associations to understand patterns and causes of evictions;
 8. To ensure the Council continues to understand the economic impact of COVID-19 on working, or formerly-working households.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
To what extent do you agree generally with this approach, as a way of supporting people to remain in their homes?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. If you would like to suggest other ways that we could help to keep people in their homes, please comment here:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for users to provide comments or suggestions.

Helping people to find suitable accommodation

Where homelessness cannot be avoided, we want to support people to access a range of long-term affordable accommodation options.

10. In order to achieve this objective, these are the main actions that we are proposing:

1. Launch a publicity campaign aimed at encouraging private landlords to offer accommodation to the Council's housing advice customers;
2. Consider further financial incentives for private landlords, including lump-sum advance rent payments;
3. Introduce further incentives to encourage homeless families to take up a private rented sector offer;
4. Seek to use low demand Council and housing association 3 bedroom properties for 2 single sharers, through Town Hall Lettings;
5. Seek suitable long-term empty homes, and empty commercial properties for conversion into housing for those in need

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

To what extent do you agree that this general approach is appropriate to improve access to more long-term affordable accommodation, to prevent homelessness?

11. If you have any comments or suggestions to make about how we might improve access to long-term affordable housing options, please make them here:

12. Temporary or emergency accommodation, although sometimes necessary, is not ideal for most people. It also tends to be expensive for the Council. The actions we are proposing, to try and minimise our use of temporary and emergency accommodation, are:

1. Seek to keep people in current accommodation for as long as possible;
2. Review demand for temporary accommodation provided by social and specialist providers every quarter, to ensure we are able to meet needs, and are keeping hotel placements to a minimum;
3. Reduce long-term occupation of temporary housing;
4. Use contacts made during the COVID-19 'Everyone In' effort, to source alternative emergency accommodation (including market purchase), especially for households whose high needs make standard provision unsuitable.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

To what extent do you agree that this general approach is appropriate to minimise the use of temporary and emergency accommodation:

13. Please add any other comments or suggestions, with a view to minimising use of temporary & emergency accommodation, here:

Minimising rough sleeping

The Council has had a long-term target of keeping the number of people seen sleeping rough in the city to less than 10, but has struggled to get close to this target. This issue has increased in prominence in recent years. Many who are seen sleeping rough have complex needs such as mental health issues, and/or drug and alcohol dependence. We want to improve support to rough sleepers to get them off the streets, and support them to want to (and to be able to) stay in safer, settled accommodation.

14. We want to improve access to, and effectiveness of the support services that are specific to rough sleepers. We are proposing the following actions:
1. Establish a working group with social services and health services, to agree a common approach to cases of complex mental and physical health needs amongst rough sleepers;
 2. Further develop and better integrate the vital work carried out by voluntary services in supporting rough sleepers and people with a street background;
 3. Review the scope and effectiveness of move-on advice and support offered within hostels.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
To what extent do you agree that this general approach would be successful in improving support services to rough sleepers?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Please add any other comments and suggestions, relating to improving support services to rough sleepers:

16. We want to reduce rough sleeping, and reduce some of the 'pull factors' that can encourage people to remain on the street, and not engage with housing and support services. We are proposing the following actions:
1. Review how we respond to begging and street-based anti-social behaviour, to inform an Enforcement Strategy;
 2. Set demanding targets for the average duration of a period of rough sleeping, and the average time to achieve an offer of a home;
 3. Look at how we deal with rough sleepers on the streets of Cambridge who have no connection with the City;
 4. Critically review the Housing First programme so far (purpose-built, custodian-assisted housing);
 5. Provide 17 modular homes for single homeless people.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
To what extent do you agree with these proposals, as ways of reducing rough sleeping?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. If you have other comments and suggestions on this topic, please give them here:

Ensuring fair housing outcomes for all Cambridge residents

The Council has a vision of 'One Cambridge Fair for All'. This vision is outlined on the Council's website here: <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/our-vision> (<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/our-vision>). Our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy seeks to reflect this vision.

18. We want to ensure we achieve balance in the focus of our homelessness activities. To meet this aim, we are proposing to:

1. Carry out a full review of the Council's Lettings Policy;
2. Review the City's housing offer to middle-income households who can't afford home ownership, but who earn above the threshold for achieving priority under the lettings policy.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
To what extent do you agree that these actions will ensure the required balance between the needs of the homeless community and other Cambridge residents?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. If you want to comment further, or add other suggestions that could meet this aim, please do so here:

More about you

We'd like to establish more about you, or the organisation on behalf of which you are responding

20. Are you responding:

- as an individual?
- as an organisation?

21. What age group do you fall into?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75 or over
- Prefer not to say

22. What term best describes your ethnicity?

- White British
- White Irish
- White Gypsy/Traveller
- White Other
- Mixed/multiple ethnic group
- Asian / Asian British
- Black / African / Caribbean / Black British
- Prefer not to say

Other

23. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

24. If you wish to provide your name and contact details, you can do so here (but this is not essential):

25. What is the role of your organisation please? You can give your organisation's name and contact details here (but this is not essential):

26. How did you hear about this consultation please?

Direct email

Council's website

Twitter

Facebook

Word of mouth

Other

27. We are extremely grateful for your input to the development of our strategy. Thank you for taking the time to comment. If you have any further comments that have not been covered by previous answers, please make them here:

What happens next

The results of the consultation will be used to review our draft Strategy. The Strategy will then need to be approved through our formal decision making process before it can be adopted.

We will publish details of how the consultation has been used to shape the final Strategy on the Council's website:

www.cambridge.gov.uk (<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk>).

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