

REPORT TO: Housing & Safer Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 16 September 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director - Adults

PORTFOLIO: Health and Wellbeing

SUBJECT: Homelessness Working Party – Review of Homelessness Services and Recommendations

WARD(S) Borough-Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present a summary of recommendations relating to the Homelessness Working Party's review of Halton's Homelessness services.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

RECOMMENDED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and**
- 2) the Board approves the recommendations outlined in section 3.5 of this report.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 A Homelessness Working Party was established by Councillor Marie Wright to bring Officers and Members together in order to increase the understanding amongst Members regarding homelessness in the borough and make any necessary recommendations for change.

3.2 The Working Party has provided Members the opportunity to gain an understanding of Homelessness in Halton, the current service offer, pressures, data and how resources are mobilised to provide quality services that support some of the most vulnerable adults in the Borough.

3.3 Scope of the Review

- Councillors to visit services to understand current service provision in relation to homelessness
- Councillors to review the performance of current homelessness services, including the views from people who use services
- Councillors to review the remit of the Homelessness Forum, regularity of meetings and associated attendees
- Councillors to review current governance/reporting lines for homelessness data and regularity of reporting

- Councillors to review data on the number of empty homes in the Borough and plans around their use
- Councillors to review current numbers of rough sleepers within the borough and provision of services to support rough sleepers
- Councillors to review the monitoring arrangements for commissioned and grant-funded Homeless services
- Councillors to understand current homelessness service offer and gaps in services
- Councillors to review the funding position for homelessness services including budget, spend and variance

3.4 A separate **appendix** accompanies this report and contains an overview of the findings from the review.

3.5 **Recommendations**

Through considering the findings of the review, Members propose the following recommendations for action:

Recommendation	Recommendation Description
Governance	Propose a single reporting line for the scrutiny of homelessness performance, via the relevant Policy & Performance Board to enable Member oversight and Member direction of Homelessness in the borough.
Governance	Propose a 6-monthly cycle of reporting of homelessness data and service development activity to the relevant Policy & Performance Board.
Governance	Establish links with Halton BC's corporate Housing Strategy development work regarding understanding proposals for the use of empty homes within the borough.
Governance	Clarify governance and reporting lines for the following closely linked priorities which are currently separate to homelessness: Housing; Refugees & Asylum Seekers; Community Safety.
Governance	Establish greater contact with Halton Housing around repeated Homelessness issues and establish a regular flow of reporting to the relevant Policy and Performance Board especially around empty properties in the borough.

Homelessness Forum	Agree the remit and regularity of Homelessness Forum meetings and associated attendee list.
Service Offer	Understand any gaps in current homelessness services e.g. Grangeway Court Supported Accommodation for Families and consider options for increased provision.
Service Offer	Consider options for the development of the dedicated Rough Sleeper supported accommodation in the borough.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places duties on Local Authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness.

4.2 The delivery of Homelessness services within the borough aligns to the local Homelessness Strategy and associated Delivery Plan.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Financial implications have been identified, due to the reliance upon hotel usage in order to meet current levels of demand, which has a significant impact upon local budgets.

5.2 Any recommendations for improved service provision will require Councillors and Officers to understand more fully the resourcing and financial impacts of any proposals.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**

Homelessness services support many local people to access suitable housing to meet their housing needs, promote stability and offer wrap-around support to enable people to improve their health and wellbeing, resulting in greater independence.

6.2 **Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy**

Through Social Value initiatives, homelessness organisations invest in and give back to our local community, ensuring opportunities to build a strong sustainable local economy. This includes employment opportunities and apprenticeships.

6.3 **Supporting Children, Young People and Families**

There is dedicated homeless provision for families with children and

young people to enable children and young people to grow in a stable and settled environment.

There is a designated youth officer within the Housing Solutions Team, who works directly with young people, to address their needs and refer into the relevant services.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

Homelessness provision strengthens families and communities and provides support to people who are more likely to experience poverty, inequality and vulnerability.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

Homelessness services support people to play their part through the choices they make about their home, e.g. through recycling, opportunities such as gardening and general upkeep of public spaces within temporary accommodation settings, all of which can continue when people move on to their own home.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

Homeless provision helps prevent and tackle homelessness and rough sleeping within the borough.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Risk Analysis will be required in relation to any specific recommendations for change that are identified from this work.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Many of Halton's homelessness organisations exist to support vulnerable, diverse and disadvantaged cohorts of the community. These services are fully inclusive and offer equal access to all local people who find themselves homeless or at risk of homelessness.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no environmental or climate implications as a result of this report.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.