Report to the Chief Executive

Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031

Officer Contact: Neil Consterdine – Director of Communities

Report Author: Moira Fields, Principal Homelessness Strategy Officer
E-Mail: moira.fields@oldham.gov.uk

30th November 2026

Reason for Decision

All Local Authorities are required to publish a new Homelessness Strategy as a minimum of every five years based on a review of homelessness in the district. Our current Strategy covers the period 2021-2026. This report seeks approval for the new Homelessness Strategy 2026-2031.

Executive Summary

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory requirement on local authorities to publish a Homelessness Strategy based on a Review of homelessness in their district. These strategies must be published at least every 5 years, with Oldham's most recent Strategy running from 2021-2026.

Oldham's new Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 has been developed in consultation with residents, stakeholders and Elected Members, and informed by a comprehensive Review of homelessness between 2021-2025. The Review particularly focuses on an in-depth analysis of customer groups presenting to the Housing Options service, their support needs and the reasons why they came to be homeless.

The Strategy Action Plan takes a pragmatic approach to tackling homelessness in Oldham, acknowledging that resources are finite, and the lasting impact homelessness has on our communities. Its focus is on making best use of what we have, demonstrating an effective business case for further investment and working in partnership to deliver the following priorities:

- Earlier identification and intervention to prevent homelessness
- Ensuring that when homelessness occurs it is rare, brief and non-recurring
- Improving access to affordable, safe and suitable accommodation
- Strengthening partnership working to end homelessness and rough sleeping

Recommendations

1. To note the contents of the Oldham Homelessness Review 2021-2025
2. To approve the contents of the Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031

Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031

1 Background

1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory duty on local authorities to carry out a homelessness review for their district and formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of the review. A further review, and new strategy, must be published within a period of 5 years.

1.2 Oldham's first Strategy was published in 2003. This is Oldham's seventh Strategy, and like its predecessor it once again focuses on homelessness prevention but also reflects our commitment to ending rough sleeping.

1.3 Rough Sleeping is cited in the title of this Strategy because it is acknowledged that due to a combination of factors instances of rough sleeping in Oldham have risen since 2021. Oldham Council wants its new strategy to acknowledge the visibility of homelessness and focus on both those in crisis / stuck in a 'revolving door' as well as looking to prevent homelessness in the future.

1.4 As with our wider Corporate Plan, the Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 will be delivered by working together in partnership. The Strategic Action Plan will be reviewed annually and monitored via the Oldham Homelessness Forum, a long-established multi-agency group, as well as the Oldham Strategic Housing Partnership.

2 Current Position

2.1 The Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 has been developed in consultation with residents, stakeholders and Elected Members, and informed by a comprehensive Review of homelessness between 2021-2025. The Review particularly focuses on an in-depth analysis of support needs and customer groups presenting to the Housing Options service.

2.2 Since the implementation of our last Homelessness Prevention and Reduction Strategy 2021-2026, Oldham Council officially declared a housing crisis in February 2024 after temporary accommodation numbers surged to unprecedented levels along with the use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation. By working closely with our Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) advisors to implement our Bed & Breakfast elimination plan and adopting a whole Council approach to tackling these issues we are now in a position where we have no households in bed and breakfast and the number of households in temporary accommodation has significantly reduced. Moving into the next strategic phase, Oldham Council is shifting its ambition from emergency reduction to long-term sustainability. The council's future focus will centre on maintaining a reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation and actively working to end the use of Bed & Breakfast units as temporary accommodation entirely.

2.3 There are significant financial, social and emotional costs associated with homelessness – the new Strategy therefore needs to focus on reversing this trend preventing homelessness where possible and where it does occur ensuring it is rare, brief and nonrecurring whilst also promoting long term sustainable recovery from the impact homelessness has on our residents.

2.6 The Strategy Action Plan takes a pragmatic approach to tackling homelessness in Oldham, acknowledging that resources are finite, and the lasting impact homelessness has on our communities. Its focus is on making best use of what we have, making an effective business case for further investment and working in partnership to deliver the following priorities:

- Earlier identification and intervention to prevent homelessness
- Ensuring that when homelessness occurs it is rare, brief and non-recurring
- Improving access to affordable, safe and suitable accommodation
- Strengthening partnership working to end homelessness and rough sleeping

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Approve the contents of the Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031

(Recommended: This will ensure that the Council is legally compliant in terms of the Homelessness Act 2002 and has a Homelessness Strategy that meets current support needs and groups in Oldham)

3.2 Retain the priorities from the previous Homelessness Strategy 2021-2026

(Not Recommended: These priorities were last consulted on in 2020 and no longer reflect current trends in homelessness)

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Approve the contents of the Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031

This will ensure that the Council is legally compliant in terms of the Homelessness Act 2002 and has a Homelessness Strategy that meets current support needs and groups in Oldham.

5 Consultation

5.1 Consultation has been an integral part of the development of the Homelessness Strategy and a detailed overview of responses can be found within the Homelessness Review document. This includes:

- Residents
- Stakeholders / partner organisations
- Elected Members

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The decision to formally approve the Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-31 will not in itself incur a financial cost. As the practicalities of implementing the strategy become known, additional reports/business cases will be required and at this point any financial implications will be commented on further in-depth.
Mike Roberts, Finance Manager

7 Legal Services Comments

7.1 Legal Services supports the recommendation to approve the Strategy, which assists the Council in meeting its statutory obligations under the Homelessness Act 2002 to review homelessness and publish a homelessness strategy. Any specific projects, funding arrangements, procurements or contractual arrangements arising from the Strategy will require separate consideration and approval as appropriate.

Pamela Nsofor - Solicitor

8 Procurement Implications

8.1 There are no procurement implications to agreeing to this Strategy paper, Procurement continue to support all procurement activity to support this strategy.
Angela Porter – Senior Category Manager Corporate & Environment.

9 Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People

9.1 Yes

10 Key Decision

10.1 Yes

11 Key Decision Reference

11.1 KDD-26-24

12 Background Papers

12.1 None

13 Appendices

13.1 Oldham Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031

13.2 Oldham Homelessness Review 2021-2025

Approved by the Chief Executive following consultation with the political group leaders who were in attendance as follows:- Councillors: Decision made under the authorisation contained in Section 9C (5) Delegations of Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) and Section 3.6 of Part 4 (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions.
Signed: Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive Dated:
Date of Leaders' Consultative meeting:
Summary of feedback from the political group leaders