]Report to	Housing Advisory Board	
Date	06/01/2026	
Agenda No. & Title	Add agenda item no	Homeless Strategy Review
Purpose of the Report	Update the board of the current position of Bury Councils Homeless Strategy Review and share key finding. To also provide the key recommendations that have identified throughout this review and agree the priorities for the 2026 onwards strategy.	
Status	Discussion	
Author	Amanda Mullen	
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Appendices		
Background Documents	Homeless Strategy data review report	
Recommendation/s	For the board to agree the priorities recommended within this report	
Corporate Plan Objective	☐ Satisfied Tenants ☐ Quality Homes ☐ United Communities	
Risk Implications	Choose an item.	
Risk Controls and mitigations	N.A	
Assets and Liabilities	N.A	
Resource Implications	N.A	
Customer Impact	N.A	
EDI Implications	N.A	
Sustainability and Environmental Implications	N.A	

Privacy/Data Protection	
Colleague Impact	
Stakeholder Communications and Reputational Impact	
Next Steps	

Briefing Note

|	Bury Council
To:	Housing Advisory Board
From:	Amanda Mullen, Manager, Homelessness and Housing Options
Date:	12/12/2025
Report Subject:	Review of the Homeless Strategy 2022-2025

1. Introduction

1.1 Bury Council has a statutory obligation to maintain a homelessness strategy. The current strategy, implemented in 2022, expired in October 2025. Before developing a new strategy, a comprehensive review of the actions outlined in the existing strategy must be undertaken,

1.2 In February 2025, a project group comprising relevant professionals was established to review the current strategy and develop the strategy for 2026 onwards. The group conducted a comprehensive data audit on homelessness covering the period from April 2022 to March 2025, incorporating both internal and external service data and outcomes. This work was guided by six strategic priorities, known as the "6 Ps": Prevention, Property, Person, Promote, Partnership, and place

1.3 Alongside the comprehensive data audit, a communication plan was developed, and three stakeholder engagement events were arranged with our partner agencies to review the outcomes achieved under the current strategy and to co-produce the next strategy.

1.4 In addition to this work, the project actively engaged with individuals who had experienced homelessness through a customer survey and a series of community workshops. These activities ensured that their voices were heard, allowing their experiences to inform and shape the future priorities and actions Bury Council should pursue.

1.5 This report provides a summary of the data review undertaken over the past year, highlighting what has been achieved, areas where progress has fallen short, the changing demands of homelessness, and the future priorities identified through stakeholder feedback and data analysis.

2. Review findings

2.1 When reviewing the strategy's six priorities, the chart below illustrates the percentage of overall achievement within each area. Specific targets were set under each priority. For example, under *Prevention*, there was a strong commitment to developing a prison discharge pathway and hospital discharge meetings. Under *Property*, the focus was on commissioning accommodation for single individuals aged 18–35 in response to COVID-19 and the "Everyone In" initiative. Further details on outcomes achieved in these areas can be found in the background document, *Bury Homeless Strategy Review*.
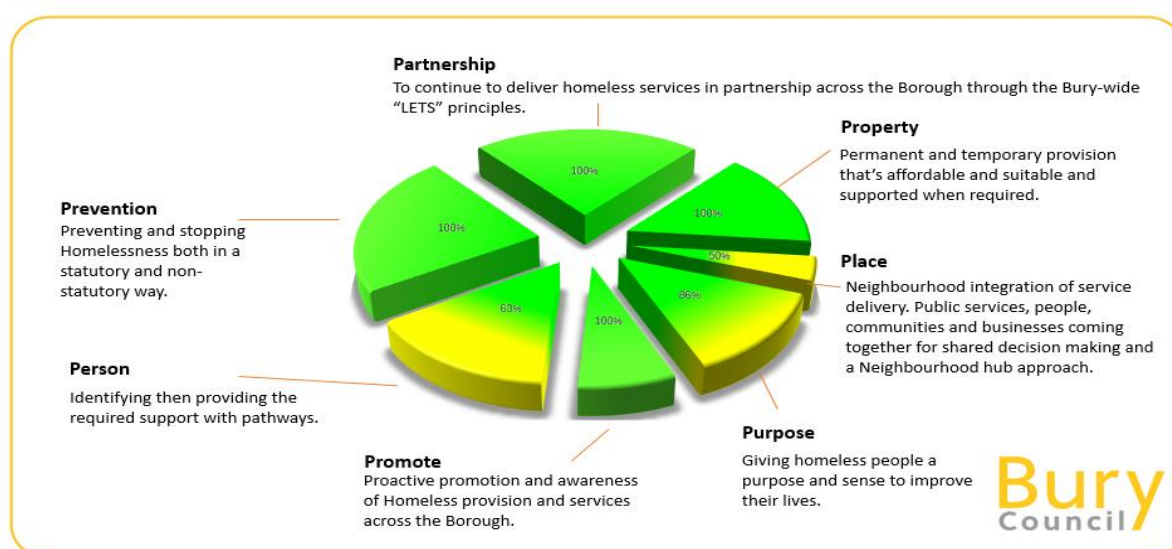
2.2 Although the review confirmed that many actions had been completed, we held a stakeholder engagement event with members of the Bury Homeless Partnership and the Homelessness and Housing Options Service to gather their views on the

strategy's effectiveness. A maturity assessment was used to analyse feedback from both events, which revealed that stakeholder perceptions of achievement differed from the earlier findings. This demonstrates that even when targets are met within a strategy, further work may still be required in those areas (see below).

What our Stakeholders believe has been achieved and what still needs to be done?

- We conducted a maturity assessment with the Bury Homeless Partnership and the Homeless and Housing Options Service. Members ranked each area "Getting Started, Making progress, Maturing or Matured". The Partnership has made significant progress in delivering the aims of the 2022–2025 strategy with all areas being ranked "making progress" or above

- The Maturity assessment established that the strategy had achieved the actions set out under Partnership, Place, Property and Purpose but identified a need to further invest in the promotion of homelessness services and ensuring that pathways and services are Person centred

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2.3 Following the stakeholder engagement events, we conducted a Lived Experience People Survey in Bury to gain a deeper understanding of the demographics, personal journeys, and service interactions of individuals and families who have experienced homelessness. This initiative was driven by a commitment to capture the voices of those directly affected and to inform future the future strategy design with real world insights. In addition to the survey, the service delivered face-to-face workshops with customers who had experienced homelessness. Below are the findings from those who have lived in experience.

Summary of the People Survey and Co-production Feedback

The survey and co-production feedback reveal that homelessness in Bury is driven by a complex interplay of factors; including relationship breakdowns, financial hardship, and systemic barriers. Many individuals reported that temporary housing solutions are often inadequate, and the journey toward stability is both emotionally and physically exhausting. Support services vary significantly across different demographics, underscoring the need for inclusive, trauma-informed approaches.

Co-production sessions highlighted gaps in life skills support and called for more robust pathways to independence. Digital exclusion was identified as a barrier to accessing housing, with suggestions for app-based solutions to improve accessibility. Concerns were also raised about the rigidity of rough sleeper verification processes, with a call for more collaborative approaches.

Service users consistently expressed a desire to be treated with respect and individuality, and to be actively involved in shaping solutions. Top priorities identified include increasing the availability of recovery housing, ensuring fairer access to housing, and repurposing empty buildings. Additional needs include the provision of mentors with lived experience, simplified systems, and greater recognition of non-housing-related challenges that impact homelessness

2.4 The section below highlights some of the key outcomes achieved throughout the 2022–2025 homelessness strategy, during which Bury Council commissioned support services and accommodation for individuals at risk, homeless, or rough sleeping. The review demonstrates that without these services, homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough would have been significantly worse.

Non-statutory Accommodation and Service Provision

- As part of Bury Council's Homelessness Strategy 2022–2025, key pledges were set out within its vision, including the commissioning of accommodation and support services to meet statutory requirements and prevent homelessness using local and regional grant funding. In addition to delivering these commitments, the Council successfully mobilised services beyond statutory and commissioned provision.

- These achievements were made possible through strong cross-departmental collaboration and partnership working with internal teams and external agencies. Without these efforts, homelessness and rough sleeping levels in the borough would have been significantly higher.

- This overview demonstrates the critical role these services have played and evidences the need to continue and strengthen this work moving forward. This is the Key findings and recommendations for this area.

- A Bed Every Night (ABEN)
- Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP/NSAP)
- Community Accommodation Tier 3 (CAS3)
- Housing First
- Bury Bridges Neighbourhood service
- Calico Floating Support and accommodation
- Accommodation for Ex-Offenders (AFEO)
- Safe Accommodation
- Young Persons accommodation

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3.1 Homelessness data 2022-2025

3.2 As part of the review, the project group conducted an in-depth analysis of homelessness data covering the period from April 2022 to March 2025. This work aimed to identify trends and increases in homelessness influenced by various environmental factors during that time, including the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery, the introduction of renter rights, rising rough sleeping, asylum and immigration pressures, and the national bed and breakfast accommodation crisis

3.3 The graphs below provide an overview of the rising demand for homelessness support, rough sleeping, and temporary accommodation placements. They also include future projections, illustrating the potential impact on the borough if demand continues to increase under a "do nothing" approach
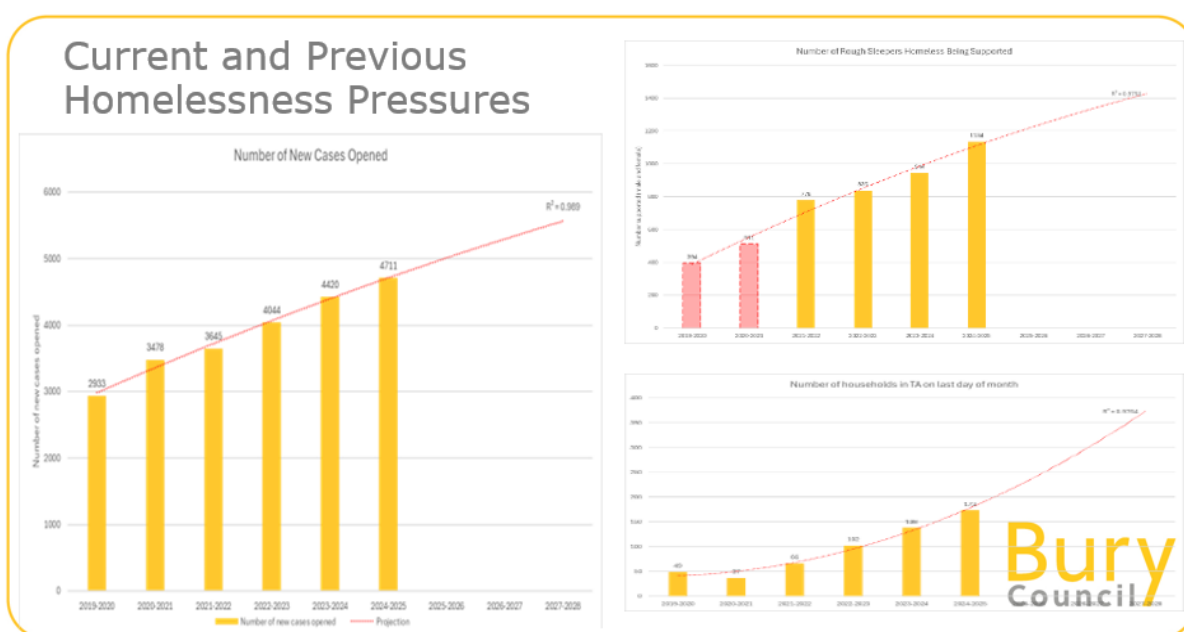
3.4 Demand for Bury Council's Homeless Advice Service rose sharply due to the cost-of-living crisis and changes in Private Rented legislation, while staffing remained static. This placed pressure on services and led to increased use of interim accommodation and rough sleeping. Although statutory homelessness cases slightly declined in 2024–2025 (cases opened by the service), data shows that more people contacted the Homeless Assessment Service for support. These customers contacted the service once but did not respond to follow-up communications from the Homelessness team, resulting in their cases being closed. Data shows an increase in cases being closed due to lack of contact, a trend also confirmed by the GMCA Stocktake Report. It has been projected that demand may rise to 5,600 contacts by 2027–2028: an 18.9% increase from 2024–2025, if homelessness

trends continue to be the same.

3.5 Following a significant rise in homelessness presentations, Bury Council expanded its supply of temporary accommodation in 2024–2025 by acquiring additional dispersed units. However, by 2023, existing accommodation could no longer meet growing demand. As a result, the use of bed and breakfast (B&B) placements peaked at 58; the highest recorded for the borough. This increase was linked to a rise in cases where a homelessness duty was owed, alongside limited staffing capacity to deliver early prevention work. Consequently, Bury was issued a B&B elimination plan by the MHCLG.

3.6 Bury Council as of September 2025 have 222 households in temporary accommodation (401 children)109 families in dispersed stock, 26 singles and 24 families in bed and breakfast accommodation. 56 families in pay nightly accommodation and 8 singles in council commissioned service.

3.7 It is forecasted that if there was a "do nothing attitude" and the council continue to place an average of 15 families in per month, with only 8 families leaving temporary accommodation per month on average, in three years the Council will need an additional 109 properties, on top of the current 110 dispersed and 8 commissioned.

3.8 Rough sleeping has risen significantly across the borough in recent years, with the highest numbers recorded in 2024. This mirrors regional and national trends, with the majority of those affected being males aged 30–45, including individuals recently granted leave to remain after leaving NASS accommodation. If current trends were to continue, rough sleeper supported by the team has been projected to increase to1452 in 2027-2028 compared to 1134 in 204-2025 this is a 28.4% increase.

3.9 Bury Council's Asylum and Immigration Service leads on Home Office programmes including Homes for Ukraine, Afghan Relocation, and dispersed accommodation. The team works with GM partners and Serco to support asylum seekers and ensure safe integration. Once individuals receive leave to remain, they become eligible for resettlement support, particularly those issued with a Notice to Quit (NTQ). In 2023–2024, NTQ cases rose due to fast-track asylum decisions and the government's plan to close contingency hotels placing additional pressure on local services, with further demand expected.

3.10 While Bury's Private Rented Service has had some success, it has not eased the pressure on homelessness prevention or move-on from temporary accommodation. Strengthening engagement with landlords is essential to improve access to housing options. Affordability remains a major barrier, with high upfront rent expectations limiting placements. Financial incentives are available, but uptake is low, though HMOs have helped single people. Looking ahead, the Renters Reform Bill may affect current schemes, creating further uncertainty and challenges in securing landlord participation.

4 Shaping the future Homeless strategy

4.3 The information below summarises the voices of our stakeholders and customers, captured through numerous face to face engagement events. These insights ensure that the key issues identified with homelessness in the borough and the recommendations provided are embedded within the future homelessness strategy

Summary of Staff and Stakeholder Feedback

Families:

Improve the quality and safety of temporary accommodation, prioritising family-friendly spaces with privacy and cooking facilities. Repurpose empty homes and explore new build agreements for social housing. Tailor support to individual family needs with wraparound services, mentoring, and life skills training. Assign one advocate per family to reduce stress and ensure continuity, especially in cases of domestic abuse. Strengthen early intervention by spotting warning signs like rent arrears or school issues and improve cross-agency communication. Reduce stigma around support services and increase public awareness through schools and translated materials. Integrate housing, health, education, and social care with single points of contact and shared systems.

Singles:

Build trust through consistent staffing, respectful communication, and expanded outreach especially with peer mentors who have lived experience. Improve access to basic amenities and reduce stigma by renaming foodbanks as community shops. Simplify service language, use explainer videos, and introduce digital tools like empathetic AI chatbots. Create clear pathways to stable housing with goal-setting, follow-up, and support for practical barriers like transport and banking. Strengthen service integration through cross-sector training, stable staffing, and designated crisis roles. Support people with complex needs through tailored plans, embedded mental health workers, and hub-style accommodation. Provide dual-purpose housing for domestic abuse and substance misuse, with a single advocate to reduce trauma. Ensure veterans and LGBTQ+ individuals are supported with dignity and inclusive practices.

Summary of Partnership and Stakeholder Engagement

Work with statutory and non-statutory partners to develop early prevention sign posting in hubs and schools

Improve the post homelessness offer to sustain tenancies and build independence

Further training for person-centred and trauma-informed training led by people with lived experience

Inclusive and accessible support for all homelessness customers

Increase supply of Housing and provide suitable temporary accommodation

Early prevention from homelessness

Raising awareness of homelessness to school, colleges and wider community

Key Issues Identified:

- Lack of Life Skills Support: Service users feel unprepared for independent living. Current systems are overwhelming and risk setting people up to fail. There is a strong need for more recovery accommodation where individuals can live and learn in a safe, supported environment.
- Digital Barriers to Housing Access: Many struggle to bid for properties due to limited internet access and mobile data. An app-based solution was suggested to guide users through the process.
- Rough Sleeper Verification: The current process is seen as too strict, often leaving individuals in unsafe situations just to be "seen" and verified.
- Respect and Individuality: Service users want to be treated as individuals, not as part of a one-size-fits-all approach. They value consultation and co-production and want services to listen to their lived experiences of addiction, substance misuse, and offending.

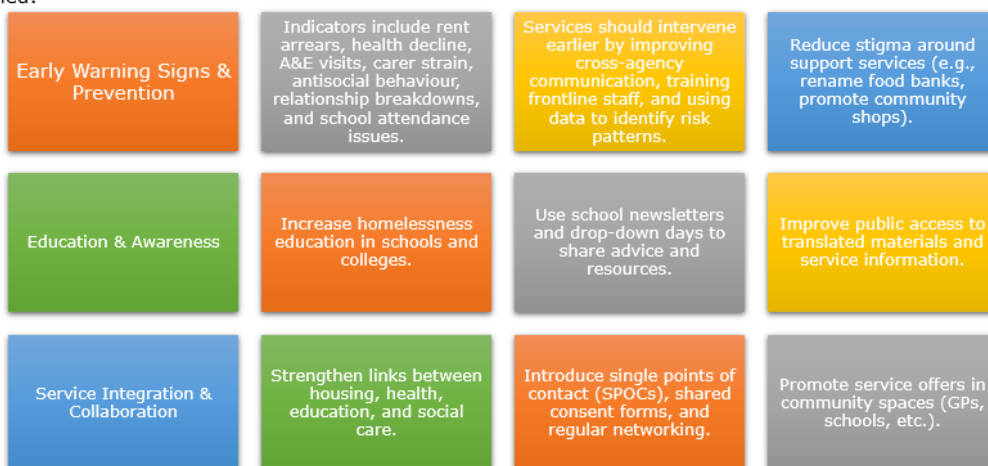### Top 3 Priorities Identified:

- More recovery houses.
- Fairer housing access e.g. first come, first served.
- Repurposing empty buildings for accommodation.

Additional Suggestions:

- Increase access to mentors and buddies with lived experience.
- Simplify processes current systems involve too many hoops to jump through.
- Recognise that while housing is a major barrier, it is not the only one.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Members of the Bury Homeless Parnership were provided with promoting questions that enabled conversation and debate about what is needed for the future of the strategy. Key cohorts were identified as important to include; young people, veterans, victims of domestic abuse, those with complex needs and refugees. Key areas of focus were identified:

Early Warning Signs & Prevention	Indicators include rent arrears, health decline, A&E visits, carer strain, antisocial behaviour, relationship breakdowns, and school attendance issues.	Services should intervene earlier by improving cross-agency communication, training frontline staff, and using data to identify risk patterns.	Reduce stigma around support services (e.g., rename food banks, promote community shops).
Education & Awareness	Increase homelessness education in schools and colleges.	Use school newsletters and drop-down days to share advice and resources.	Improve public access to translated materials and service information.
Service Integration & Collaboration	Strengthen links between housing, health, education, and social care.	Introduce single points of contact (SPOCs), shared consent forms, and regular networking.	Promote service offers in community spaces (GPs, schools, etc.).

Housing Solutions & Temporary Accommodation	Improve quality, safety, and transparency of temporary accommodation.	Prioritise family-friendly spaces with cooking facilities and privacy.	Explore use of empty homes, retirement properties, and new build agreements for social housing.
Family-Centred Support	Tailor services to individual family needs, avoiding stereotypes.	Provide wraparound support, peer mentoring, and life skills training.	Ensure transitional support when moving out of temporary housing.
Domestic Abuse & Stability	Assign a single advocate per family to reduce stress and improve continuity.	Create safe, stable housing options that empower recovery and independence.	

The diagram contains the following labelled boxes:

- Engagement & Trust Building
- Ensure consistency in staffing and service delivery.
- Expand outreach teams and peer mentor roles, especially those with lived experience.
- Foster trust through friendly, respectful communication and multiple chances to engage.
- Improve access to basic amenities (e.g., showers via leisure centres) and reduce stigma around foodbanks by renaming them as community shops.
- Accessibility & Communication
- Simplify language used in services (e.g., clarify terms like "relief duty").
- Create explainer videos and accessible signposting platforms.
- Introduce digital tools like an AI chatbot (e.g., "Bernard") to offer real-time, empathetic support.
- Pathways to Stable Housing
- Develop transitional pathways in supported accommodation with goal-setting and gradual independence.
- Improve tenancy sustainment through longer-term follow-up and wraparound support.
- Address practical barriers such as access to bank accounts, transport, and healthcare within accommodation settings.

5 Further works

5.1 Through this comprehensive review of the homelessness strategy incorporating key data analysis, stakeholder engagement, and co-production, we have identified emerging trends, existing gaps, and current pressures, which will inform the key objectives for Bury Homeless strategy 2026 onwards

5.2 The project group has also undertaken a literature reviews, including the new government homelessness and children in poverty strategy, Renters Right Act, Bury Councils Domestic abuse strategy as well as looking at regional and national homelessness data

5.3 As part of the strategic commitment to reduce inequalities and improving outcomes for vulnerable families, alongside this strategy, the Homelessness Accommodation Support Service has developed a three-year plan to reduce reliance on bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation. This aligns with the Ministry of Housing's B&B Elimination Plan, introduced in January 2025, and supports the Council's wider priorities around sustainable growth and improving lives.

5.4 It should also be noted that the new Bury Homelessness Strategy will align with the forthcoming Bury Council Housing Strategy, which is currently under review and being shaped for future implementation.

6 Key recommendations for Bury Homelessness strategy priorities for 2026 onwards

➢ Priority One, Strengthen our prevention offer

➢ Priority Two, Providing more suitable, safe accommodation and affordable accommodation.

➢ Priority Three, Reduce rough sleeping in the borough

➢ Priority Four, Improving support for a better quality of life

7 Next Steps

7.1 A further workshop will be held in February 2026, providing key services with the opportunity to review the strategy report and its recommendations. During this session, services will collaborate to agree pledges against each of the agreed priorities, ensuring that homelessness is recognised as a shared responsibility across all partners.

7.2 Once the workshop has concluded, the strategy will be formally drafted and shared with partners and senior leadership for review and approval. It will then be submitted to Cabinet for final sign-off.

7.3 Following sign-off, a working group will be established to lead the development of a three-year action plan, led by the Homelessness and Housing Options Service in partnership with internal and external stakeholders.