

ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SAFER ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY WORKING GROUP	
Meeting date	2 nd April 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	At its meeting on 20 November 2024 the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a working group to consider the BCP Council Safer Accommodation Strategy in response to a recommendation referred to the Committee from Ful Council. The group met three times during January and February 2025. The findings of the working group and the recommendations which the Working Group have formulated are summarised in the appendix to this report.
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>The Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the recommendations of the working group as set out in the appendix and agree that the recommendations be made to Cabinet.</p>
Reason for recommendations	To ensure that the recommendations and views of the working group are taken into consideration in the approval of the Safer Accommodation Strategy by the Cabinet.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regulatory Services - Cllr K Wilson
Corporate Director	Corporate Director for Wellbeing
Report Authors	Claire Johnston, Senior Democratic and Overview & Scrutiny Officer
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Recommendation/Decision

Background

1. The Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a recommendation from Council at its meeting on 20 November 2024. At this meeting the Committee was asked to consider the following recommendation which was proposed by Cllr D Farr and amended by Cllr P Canavan:

‘There has been no scrutiny of the decision to close Bournemouth’s only Women’s Refuge for those fleeing abusive relationships.

We ask that the decision be examined as part of a cross-party working group to be established to oversee the finalisation of the Safe Accommodation and Commissioning Strategy, reporting to the Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee in Spring 2025.’

2. At this meeting the Committee heard from the Proposer of both the original motion and the amendment to this motion and were also provided with a presentation on the issue from Officers. Following further consideration on the matter the Committee agreed to establish a working group. The Chair outlined the following three themes for the working group to look at, which would be expanded upon during the group’s first meeting these were as follows:
 - a. Levels of support provided through refuge/ housing provision for those fleeing domestic abuse - looking at this under previous, current and proposed future arrangements.
 - b. Examine the role of refuges and what they look like in a modern society.
 - c. Scrutinise the engagement and consultation plan that will be undertaken in developing the Safe Accommodation and Commissioning Strategy.
3. It was agreed that the group should be cross party and include members from across all scrutiny bodies if possible. Nominations for the group were sought from all political groups in the council. Final membership was agreed by the Chair of the Committee in consultation with the Vice Chair. The group members were:
 - Cllr L Northover (Lead Member)
 - Cllr P Canavan
 - Cllr D Farr
 - Cllr K Salmon

The Lead member was agreed by the Group at its initial meeting.

4. The Working group made data requests based on lines of enquiry established by the O&S committee. These data requests are set out in the background paper to this report ‘Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) – Safe Accommodation Strategy.’ The Group focused on the first enquiry lines outlined above at its initial meeting. There were a number of pieces of information which were considered by the Group both in advance of and during its first meeting. These are set out in the appendix to this report.
5. At its second meeting the Group focused on the engagement and consultation plan and the draft Safe Accommodation Strategy. The Group also considered the proposed timeline for the approval of the Strategy. The Group held its final meeting at the end of February and formed its recommendations and outlined its findings at

this meeting. These form the appendix to this report. Findings were shared with the Portfolio Holder and relevant officers in advance of publication.

6. The Committee is asked to consider and discuss the findings of the working group and make recommendations as it considers appropriate.

Options Appraisal

7. Findings have been set out by the Working Group. The Committee may choose to agree, amend or reject these findings.

Summary of financial implications

8. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Summary of legal implications

9. There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Summary of human resources implications

10. There are no human resources implications associated with this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

11. There are no sustainability impact implications associated with this report.

Summary of public health implications

12. There are no public health implications associated with this report.

Summary of equality implications

13. There are no equality implications associated with this report and no EIA was required as it provides information and recommendations by a working group which was part of the wider development of the Safe Accommodation Strategy

Summary of risk assessment

14. There are no risks associated with this report.

Background papers

- Minutes of the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 20 November 2024
- Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) – Safe Accommodation Strategy.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Safe Accommodation Strategy Working Group Findings