

**Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee
12 December 2018**

**Statement by the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for
Adults and Health**

As part of the documentation to the Members of the Committee, we think it is appropriate to make a statement regarding homelessness.

No one wants to see people sleeping rough, particularly during the winter period. Homelessness is a complex issue and we know that it can happen to anyone. We, like everyone else, want to see the eradication of homelessness and therefore fully support the Government's recently published strategy as a good way forward.

The Government has rightly recognised that homelessness must be addressed, and has set ambitious targets to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it in its entirety by 2027. We know that no one group will be able to achieve this on their own; it needs collective agreement to work together to really make a difference for our homeless on the streets of West Sussex. We applaud the formation of the Coalition as a good way forward and are exceedingly grateful to all the charities for the work they are doing and we are committed to work with them to achieve a reduction in, and the eventual eradication of, rough sleeping.

However to make headway we need a homelessness strategy for West Sussex, as advised by the Government. At present, with the exception of Adur and Worthing, new homelessness strategies have yet to be prepared by district and borough councils. We believe that a county-wide approach will be particularly important as housing and homelessness services are provided by district and borough councils whilst other key services, such as social services, are delivered at county level. We at West Sussex County Council are very willing to help prepare and support a county-wide homelessness strategy; however we are cognisant that this is for the housing authorities to lead. With a strategy in place we will be able to move forward by working together for those who need our help at a critical time in their lives.

The County Council recognises and respects that it is for district and borough councils to take the lead in undertaking homelessness reviews and developing homelessness strategies, as housing authorities, now that the Homelessness Reduction Act is in place. However, as the Social Services Authority, we are keen to play our part in working with our districts and boroughs to develop a consistent, pan-West Sussex approach to preventing and tackling homelessness. We look forward to working collaboratively with districts and boroughs to improve outcomes for our residents.

**Louise Goldsmith, Leader
Amanda Jupp, Cabinet Member for Adults and Health**