

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP - WEDNESDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2019

Report Title	HOMELESS PREVENTION AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2018 - 2022
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Purpose of report	To Introduce PDG to the draft Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy and allow comment prior to consideration by Cabinet.
Council priorities	The Strategy addresses a number of elements of the Homes and Communities priority
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	This strategy sets out the priorities for the Homelessness Service and any additional resource requirements will be sought at the appropriate time
Link to relevant CAT	None
Risk Management	Having an approved up to date Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy will ensure we are discharging our statutory duties in a comprehensive manner, and minimise the risk of customers not receiving the services they need.
Equalities Impact Screening	The final strategy will undergo an Equalities Impact Screening Assessment.
Human Rights	None
Transformational Government	None
Comments of Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory.
Comments of Section 151 Officer	The report is satisfactory.

Comments of Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees	Partner Organisations Stakeholders Members General Public
Background papers	Rough Sleeper Strategy Delivery Plan
Recommendations	POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP MAKE COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT HOMELESS PREVENTION AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY FOR CONSIDERATION BY CABINET ON 6 MARCH 2019.

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a legal obligation on all Local Housing Authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their areas in consultation with local partners and stakeholders, and to develop a strategy for tackling and preventing homelessness. The last strategy was approved by Cabinet in December 2013 covering the period 2013-18 and set out a central priority of “Better integration of services”. This was then supported by six sub-priorities intended to demonstrate delivery of the Governments Gold Standard for Homelessness (which was subsequently withdrawn by Government).

1.2 These were:

- Preventing youth Homelessness
- Developing the Role of the Private Rented Sector
- Up-skilling homeless households
- Alternative temporary accommodation
- Support for those with Complex Issues
- Support for Domestic Abuse victims.

1.3 Since the adoption of the strategy there have been some significant changes nationally that have impacted upon homelessness and rough sleeping which have required us to reappraise our approach to services. These include but are not limited to,

- The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018
- Further roll out of welfare reform including Universal Credit locally
- The 1% rent reduction for Council house rents
- Changes to funding for affordable rented homes impacting on the deliverability of affordable housing
- A review of revenue funding for supported accommodation.

1.4 As we have now reached the end of the third quarter of working with the new legislation, badged by some as the biggest change in homelessness legislation for 40 years, it is a timely opportunity to review our existing services and identify our priorities for the future.

1.5 Furthermore on 10th December 2018 the Government released their Rough Sleeper Strategy Delivery Plan (see background papers). This included the requirement that by

winter 2019 “all local authorities (will) update their strategies and rebadge them as homelessness and rough sleeping strategies.” This strategy therefore responds to this requirement by providing additional focus on rough sleeping.

- 1.6 The draft Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

2.0 CONSULTATION

- 2.1 The strategy development process provided an opportunity for us to seek the views of a wide range of partners and stakeholders with an interest in services within North West Leicestershire.
- 2.2 In the development of this strategy we held a consultation event attended by 20 key partners where, through a range of activities we developed the proposed strategy priorities and identified emerging areas to focus our resources.
- 2.3 We enhanced this information with three surveys, a call for evidence from partners, a text survey to service users and a wider community consultation that was promoted across a range of platforms including the members bulletin.
- 2.4 We received 23 responses and these confirmed the priorities as identified at the workshop and reiterated the need for services for people with complex needs and the benefits of working together.
- 2.5 The feedback across these activities has been captured and has directly influenced the contents of the strategy and informed the development of the associated action plan.

3.0 DELIVERY SINCE THE LAST STRATEGY

- 3.1 Since the last strategy was approved in 2011, there have been a number of achievements in relation to homelessness. These included being the only Council in Leicestershire to achieve the Bronze standard in homelessness services, and over the summer we introduced a new CBL allocations policy, and software system.
- 3.2 Since the last strategy a number of partnership projects have come on line including
- A Countywide Rough Sleeper Outreach Service
 - Homelessness Trailblazer Coaching Service
 - An advice mobile phone “app” across City and County
 - Cold Weather Service across five districts in conjunction with Action Homeless Leicester.
- 3.3 Whilst there have been a number of service improvement over the lifetime of the strategy the landscape around Homelessness remains challenging and further service development is still required to ensure we are meeting needs in the most effective manner. These changes are incorporated into the proposed new strategy.

4.0 SUMMARY OF REVIEW PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

- 4.1 The Homelessness Review allows us to understand the nature and scale of Homelessness within the District before agreeing priorities for the coming years.
- 4.2 The Council’s three biggest causes of homelessness in the District continue to be

- End of Assured Shorthold Tenancy
- Relationship Breakdown
- Family and Friends asking people to leave

This reflects the national position.

4.3 We complete an annual rough sleeping estimate on one night, as a national statistical return, and we returned an estimate of 1 rough sleeper in the district and over the last year we have continued to investigate reports of rough sleeping on as soon as they are received. Whilst rough sleeping remains isolated in the district, the seriously negative impact sleeping rough can have on those concerned ensures that an appropriate response remains a priority for the service.

4.4 In the first nine months of the Homelessness Reduction Act we have assisted 78 households who were threatened with homelessness through the prevention duty and 71 households who were homeless through the relief duty. We have had successful outcomes in 79% of cases and only 6 cases have gone through to the full homeless duty.

5.0 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

5.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has identified five strategic priorities

- Putting the customer at the heart of everything we do
- Collaborative working
- Accessing the right support
- Increasing housing options
- Tackling rough sleeping and its causes/impacts

5.2 This closely align with the 3 priorities of the current housing strategy, Supply, Standards and Support. It also recognises that homelessness is often more complex than a singular housing issue and so collaborative working across disciplines/organisations and taking a person centred approach is crucial to successful outcomes.

6.0 INDICATIVE ACTION PLAN

6.1 In line with best practice the Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping strategy action plan will be an annually updated document, established in conjunction with partner organisations and with delivery monitored through the local Homelessness Prevention Forum.

6.2 An indicative year one action plan is included at Appendix 2 which will be subject to further discussion with partners prior to sign off.