

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET – TUESDAY, 5 MARCH 2019

Title of report	HOMELESS PREVENTION AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY
Key Decision	a) Financial No b) Community Yes
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Purpose of report	To allow Cabnet to consider the draft Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024
Reason for decision	The Council has a statutory duty to produce a Homelessness Review and Strategy every five years. Recent guidance has extended this to include rough sleepers
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 will be delivered within existing budgets
Risk Management	None
Equalities Impact Screening	The Strategy has undergone an Equalities Impact Screening. An EIA is not required
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	None
Recommendations	<p>THAT CABINET:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. APPROVE THE HOMELESS PREVENTION AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2. GRANT DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND PROPERTY IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER TO UPDATE THE STRATEGY AS REQUIRED TO ADDRESS SIGNIFICANT LEGISLATIVE OR OTHER CHANGES 3. APPROVE THE INDICATIVE ACTION PLAN FOR YEAR ONE SUBJECT TO ANY MINOR ALTERATIONS REQUIRED TO ENSURE DELIVERABILITY 4. GRANT DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND PROPERTY IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

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 approved by Cabinet in December 2013 covering the period 2013-18 set out a central priority of "Better integration of services." This was then supported by six sub-priorities intended to demonstrate delivery of the Government's Gold Standard for Homelessness (which was subsequently withdrawn by Government.)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 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 and 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 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 10 December 2018 the Government released their Rough Sleeper Strategy Delivery Plan. 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 at Appendix 1 of this report.

2.0 CONSULTATION

2.1 The strategy development process provides 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 strategy was considered by Policy Development Group at its meeting of 6 February 2019. There were no recommendations for amendments to the strategy arising from the meeting. The draft minute of Policy Development Group are attached as Appendix 2.

- 2.6 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 2013, 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 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,
 - the Homelessness Trailblazer Coaching Service
 - an advice mobile phone “app” across City and County
 - a 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 the needs in the most effective manner. These changes are incorporated into the new strategy.

4.0 SUMMARY OF HOMELESSNESS REVIEW

- 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 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 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 have gone through to the full homeless duty.

5.0 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

5.1 The Homeless Prevention 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 aligns 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 within the draft strategy which will be subject to further discussion with partners prior to sign off.