

16. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY TO APPROVE THE COUNCIL'S NEW FIVE YEAR HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

The Housing Strategy and Systems Team Manager presented the report.

In response to a question about plans to bring in a charging policy for emergency accommodation, the Housing Strategy and Systems Team Manager advised that the policy was focused on recouping some costs towards bed and breakfast housing schemes, whilst remaining fair and equitable.

In response to a question about the data for the last 12 months, the Housing Strategy and Systems Team Manager advised that commentary and indicative data can be found in each relevant category. Mental Health issues were the largest single category.

A Member asked if the drop between 2019 and 2021 could be explained by Covid and national Government policy. The Housing Strategy and Systems Team Manager advised that this was the case, particularly the moratorium on evictions. The five year time span for data was hoped to somewhat negate the effect of such anomalies on the usefulness of the data. The Chair asked how much the organisation would save on temporary accommodation if we moved away from using bed and breakfast schemes.

The Housing Strategy and Systems Team Manager advised that government policy was designed to make bed and breakfast schemes for homeless people financially punitive for Local Authorities so to discourage their usage. In most models the organisation would have to pay for some support which could not be recouped. He proceeded to detail some of the issues with bed and breakfast schemes.

The Chair then asked if this was part of a wider strategy and the Housing Strategy and Systems Team Manager advised that yes, the organisation was trying to be more proactive, though accepting some people would always require emergency help.

The Portfolio Holder commended the workshop which had been organised. He added that five year trends were undesirable though national factors had to be considered.

It was moved by Councillor T Eynon, seconded by Councillor S Lambeth and

RESOLVED THAT:

The report be noted and the focus on improving the quality of and reducing the need for temporary accommodation be welcomed.