

Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 -2025

Full Council	9th July 2020
Report Author	Tim Willis, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Helen Whitehead, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods
Status	For Consideration
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	Policy Framework
Previously Considered by	Overview and Scrutiny Panel - 19 November 2019
Ward(s):	All

Executive Summary:

The report provides an overview of the draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy 2020-2025, which sets the vision for the Council's role in addressing housing supply, homelessness, standards, health and wellbeing.

The draft strategy is built around four key themes:

1. Increasing access to and supply of housing
2. Improving standards and safety in homes across all tenures
3. Enhancing the health and wellbeing of our residents and communities
4. Preventing homelessness and tackling rough sleeping

The draft strategy was previously considered by the council's Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 19 November 2019, and Cabinet on 16th December 2019.

It is proposed to adopt this final strategy following public consultation.

Recommendation(s):

Members of the Council are asked to:

1. Agree to adopt the draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025, attached at annex 1.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS									
Financial and Value for Money	There are no increased financial implications as a result of approving the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, however key elements of the strategy create budgetary pressures on the Council across revenue and capital resources in both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account. Some of these are as a result of Government policy and others are due to the Council's desire to improve housing supply for residents								
Legal	<p>Once adopted, this housing, homelessness and rough sleeping strategy will satisfy the requirements of Section 1(4) of the Homelessness Act 2002 for local housing authorities to review homelessness and publish updated homelessness strategies every five years.</p> <p>The final strategy will also be a material consideration in the consideration of future planning applications, alongside the requirements of the Council's Local Plan.</p>								
Corporate	The risks are minimal as the actions are aligned to agreed corporate priorities and whereby schemes would only be progressed once resources have been identified.								
Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty	<p>Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.</p> <p>Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="432 1379 1406 1641"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>An equalities impact assessment has previously been completed and considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 16 December 2019.</p>	Please indicate which aim is relevant to the report.		Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,		Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it	✓	Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.	✓
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CORPORATE PRIORITIES (tick those relevant) ✓	
Growth	✓
Environment	✓
Communities	✓

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The local housing, homelessness and rough sleeping strategy is the council's vision for housing in its area. It sets out policies, objectives and targets on how the authority intends to manage and deliver its strategic housing role. It provides an overarching framework against which the authority considers and formulates other policies on more specific housing issues. The current housing and homelessness strategy was adopted in 2014 and expired in December 2019.
- 1.2 Section 1(4) of the Homelessness Act 2002 requires authorities to publish a new homelessness strategy, based on the results of a homelessness review within the period of 5 years, beginning with the day on which our last homelessness strategy was published.
- 1.3 In conducting a review of homelessness and formulating a new strategy, housing authorities need to take into account the additional duties introduced through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Local Authorities are encouraged to involve all relevant partners in developing a strategy and in earlier identification and intervention to prevent homelessness, which is contained within this strategy.
- 1.4 The draft strategy, attached at annex 1, has a key role in helping to deliver the ambition that everyone should have access to an affordable, safe and well maintained home. It builds on the wider contribution that the Council and other housing providers and partners can make towards building mixed and sustainable communities and improving the health and wellbeing of residents.
- 1.5 The draft strategy is action focussed and sets out the priorities and actions for how the council and its partners aim to work collaboratively to meet the ambition set out in the emerging Local Plan. The strategy is also an opportunity to establish a new way of working to promote that the district is open for investment and innovation, and will proactively work with stakeholders to meet the housing challenge and accelerate housing delivery.
- 1.6 The housing challenges include increasing supply that local people can afford, improving standards across all sectors, promoting independent and sustainable accommodation for those that are vulnerable and preventing and responding to homelessness. The draft housing and homelessness strategy is built around four thematic priorities:
 - i) Increasing access to and supply of housing,*
 - ii) Improving standards and safety in homes across all tenures,*
 - iii) Supporting the health and well being of our residents and communities*
 - iv) Preventing homelessness and tackling rough sleeping*

2.0 Current Situation

- 2.1 The trends which informed the housing and homelessness strategy (2014), continue to drive the need for review and action in this new strategy. Population is increasing and housing demand, especially for affordable homes for those on low incomes, remains high. Housing costs have risen sharply when compared to median incomes and local housing allowance rates, creating an increasing affordability gap. This presents a real challenge for households seeking to buy or rent a home, and has

contributed to the increasing incidence and cost of homelessness. The high cost of home ownership has also resulted in a tenure shift and a significant increase in the number of people in privately rented accommodation.

- 2.2 The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy is also accompanied by an action plan which will set out how the key priorities will be delivered. It features a range of work streams including multi-agency and cross departmental initiatives such as tackling empty properties and preventing homelessness. The action plan will be updated annually so members, residents and stakeholders can see progress towards implementing the actions. This will also allow for any policy changes to be incorporated ensuring the strategy is kept current and relevant for the five year lifespan.
- 2.3 The Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government reported that the document should also include a rough sleeping strategy.
- 2.4 The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy was considered and scrutinised by the council's Overview and Scrutiny Panel (OSP) at its meeting on 19 November 2019. The recommendations made by OSP were incorporated into the consultation draft.
- 2.5 Cabinet considered the draft strategy on 16th December 2019 and approved that the document be published for public consultation .
- 2.6 The draft strategy was published for consultation on 13th January 2020. The consultation ran for 6 weeks, until 24th February 2020. The strategy was published on the council's website, and sent to key stakeholders and partners. Comments were invited by completing a google form, attached at Annex 2.
- 2.7 Relevant comments received are attached at Annex 3. Specific locations have been removed. Irrelevant, duplicated and unnecessary comments have not been included.
- 2.8 The council received 40 anonymous responses to the consultation. Of those that responded, 72% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with all four of our proposed priorities.

3.0 Finance

- 3.1 The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy has limited financial implications as it is intended that actions set out be delivered within existing budgets. However, to fully implement the strategy significant investment is required from all partners and external funding agencies. Any expenditure beyond that identified within existing budgets will need to be considered and approved separately.
- 3.2 The options have been reviewed in collaboration with the council's finance team to assess initial risks and ensure the proposals are affordable and deliverable within existing financial restrictions. There are a number of capital funding streams, including both HRA and General Fund which the Council could explore utilising to support the implementation of the options and accelerate housing delivery.

Contact Officer:	Ashley Jackson, Housing Strategy & Projects Manager
Reporting to:	Bob Porter, Head of Housing and Planning

Annex List

Annex 1	Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025
Annex 2	Consultation Questionnaire
Annex 3	Consultations Responses

Corporate Consultation

Finance	Clive Bowen, Finance Manager
Legal	Estelle Culligan, Head of Legal & Democratic Services