

This Report will be made public on 6 July 2020

Report Number **OS/20/06**

**To:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 14 July 2019  
**Status:** Key Decision  
**Responsible Officer:** Andy Blaszkowicz, Director- Housing and Operations  
**Cabinet Member:** Councillor David Godfrey, Cabinet Member for Housing, Transport and Special Projects & Councillor Jennifer Hollingsbee, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Communities

**SUBJECT:** Draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020/25

**SUMMARY:**

This report sets out details of the draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy for the district for the period 2020/25. It is proposed the draft strategy should be made available for an eight week consultation period.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- a) The Homelessness prevention Strategy is the Council's key tool for planning how the Council and its partners intend to respond to homelessness and related issues in the district.
- b) The Homelessness Act 2002, requires all local housing authorities to produce an effective homelessness strategy for their area.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. To receive and note report OS/20/06.
2. Overview and Scrutiny are invited to comment on the draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002, requires local authorities to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on a review of homelessness and related provision in their area.
- 1.2 The draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy for this district is set out in Appendix 1 of this report. Overview and Scrutiny Committee are invited to comment on this draft document. The document builds on past successes and existing partnerships across the district and with neighbouring authorities.
- 1.3 Officers have completed a detailed review of homelessness and related provision in the district, which forms the evidence base for the draft strategy. The review is set out in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 1.4 The proposed three key aims of the draft strategy are set out in section 7 of the draft strategy and are as follows:
  - To end Rough Sleeping
  - Early Intervention, Prevention & Support services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
  - Continued work to maximise access to affordable & suitable accommodation
- 1.5 The Strategy incorporates the development of new initiatives, such as a Housing First Project and Community-Led Housing Schemes as innovative ways to provide housing that incorporates different levels of support needed by the residents. It also includes a requirement to assess the need for a social enterprise to help employment prospects (of those who experience homelessness, particularly rough sleepers); and the need to implement a service specifically to assist individuals being discharged from other services (youth care provision, hospitals & prisons) to prevent them from becoming street homeless.
- 1.6 The draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020-2025 sets out an action plan of how the Council proposes to work with its partners to achieve its priorities and monitor progress.

## **2. The Proposed Way Forward**

- 2.1 It proposed that the draft strategy be made available for an eight week consultation period. Following this, the document will be presented to Cabinet, along with a summary of the consultation feedback for final approval.

## **3. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS**

- 3.1 **Legal (NE)** – The Homelessness Act 2002 and parts 6 and 7 of the Housing Act 1996, place a variety of obligations on the Council towards homeless people. These include, homelessness prevention, housing advice, the provision of temporary accommodation and the provision of permanent accommodation for homeless people

who are deemed to be owed a full duty under the legislation. These duties were further enhanced in 2018 through the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017. S1(1) of the Homelessness Act 2002, requires a Local Authority to review homelessness in its area and to produce a strategy under s1(3). Section 1(4) requires that the strategy is reviewed and updated every 5 years.

The Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020/25 describes how the Council will comply with its statutory duties. Failure to produce an up-to-date strategy will leave the Council open to legal challenge”.

3.2 **Finance (LH)** – There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

3.3 **Equality (AH)** – No equality or diversity issues have been identified during the preparation of the draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy. A further Equalities Impact assessment review will be completed following the proposed public consultation period.

#### **4. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officers prior to the meeting:

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The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

None

#### **Appendices**

1. Draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2020/25
2. Homelessness Prevention Strategy Review.