

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 15 April 2019

Report Title

Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-22

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Anne Marie Lubanski, Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

This report presents the new draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-22. The strategy has been developed in consultation with council staff, stakeholders and residents, and sets the key strategic priorities over the next three years.

Recommendations

1. That the proposed Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2022 be approved.
2. That the Strategy be reviewed annually to provide an update of progress against the six aims.

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix 1 Draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-22
- Appendix 2 Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy Action Plan
- Appendix 3 Feedback from the consultation
- Appendix 4 Equalities Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2014-2018

Housing Allocation Policy

Crisis's Plan "Everybody In: How to end homelessness in Great Britain

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 10 April 2019

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Rotherham's Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-22

1. Background

- 1.1. In 2012 the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2014-2018 was formally signed off and published in March 2014, this followed a thorough consultation process. The strategy was updated in November 2016 and progress has been good.
- 1.2 The Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2014-18 has provided the framework throughout the Council and its partner agencies to support and advise homeless households and those threatened with homelessness, with the aim of preventing homelessness wherever possible, moving people on to more settled accommodation as soon as possible, and to provide appropriate support.
- 1.3 The Council is justifiably proud of the success of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2014-2018 and some achievements include:
 - The Council is now spending £50m on new Council housing.
 - The Council are purchasing factory built temporary emergency single person housing which is expected to be on site during the late autumn.
 - The Homelessness team has been working with Children and Young Peoples Services and other partners to improve the 16/17 year old protocol.
 - A street outreach service has been procured to identify an accurate rough sleeper position in Rotherham.
 - The Homelessness team have employed a Resettlement Officer to work specifically with rough sleepers and an Employment Solutions Officer to support and help people get back into work.
 - A Homelessness Forum has been set up called "Side by Side" since March 2017.
 - The Housing Allocations Policy has been reviewed to ensure homeless households receive the highest priority.
 - Homelessness Advice Outreach services have been increased where necessary.
 - Tenancy Support Officers have been introduced to support people in temporary accommodation since November 2018.
 - The Housing Options team have continued to work closely with landlords and letting agents to increase housing options in the private rented sector.

- The Council has been successful in gaining funding to provide accommodation with support in the community for single people and families who could not access refuges.
 - The Homelessness team have increased temporary supported accommodation which is self-contained flats and houses from 29 units to 50. In addition, the provision of accommodation for people fleeing domestic abuse has increased by 2 fully furnished houses and 2 more houses are currently being set up.
 - The Homelessness team had set up a Winter Shelter in partnership with the Fire and Rescue Service to provide a safe and warm space for Rough Sleepers at one of the local fire stations. There is now a process in place if it is necessary to use the Winter Shelter in the future.
 - The Homelessness team have started to scope options to set up a Property Guardian Scheme which is expected to open in March 2019 and this will accommodate 2 rough sleepers.
 - In 2016/17 the Council worked closely with providers and stakeholder in the Side by Side co-production focus groups to deliver four pathways of support to vulnerable people who are at risk of homelessness or are homeless.
- 1.4 The new strategy covering April 2019 to March 2022 has been drafted and attached as Appendix 1. The strategy is based on a sound evidence base and meets the increased demand and legislative requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, it also reflects the views of people living and working in Rotherham.
- 1.5 The draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Strategy 2019-2022;
- has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders
 - recognises the key issues affecting homelessness
 - sets out how the Council will work in partnership to prevent homelessness
 - demonstrates alignment to other key strategies and plans
 - provides residents with a clear and accessible document setting out how the Council is striving to end homelessness in Rotherham
- 1.6 The draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2022 bring together in a single document, the key homelessness prevention aims and objectives from other key strategic plans, including the Housing Strategy and the Housing Allocation Policy.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 There have been changes in legislation since the last strategy but the Council continue the clear focus on early intervention to prevent homelessness and offer effective homelessness services, creating less disruption for people experiencing this difficult situation.

- 2.2 New legislation the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, is clearly recognised in terms of preventing or relieving homelessness for everyone, not just those in priority need. The impact is that the Council are able to help more people sooner and therefore preventing crisis situations.
- 2.3 Since April 2018, there has been an increase usage of temporary accommodation, some of the occupants have complex needs so the Council need to accommodate households longer to give more time to try and relieve their homelessness by seeking alternative accommodation with the appropriate support.
- 2.4 The Government continues to prioritise homelessness and this will also be supported through Rotherham's Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-22, together with Rotherham's Housing Strategy which has ambitions to develop new products and increase supply of affordable and social rented new homes.
- 2.5 Nationally, Crisis has written a plan to end homelessness. The plan called "Everybody In: How to end homelessness in Great Britain" details how to end homelessness in Great Britain. Rotherham's Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy has embedded solutions which are detailed in Crisis' plan.

These are to:

- Prevent homelessness
 - Offer rapid housing solutions
 - End rough sleeping
 - Making welfare work
- 2.6 There are 6 aims in the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-22:
 1. To support people with complex needs
 2. To prevent homelessness and offer rapid housing solutions to get people in urgent need rehoused quicker
 3. To increase support for young people to prevent homelessness
 4. To end rough sleeping and begging
 5. To improve access to tenancy support, employment and health support services
 6. To ensure there is sufficient decent emergency accommodation
 - 2.7 Some of the key actions to be delivered over the next three years are as follows;
 - Evaluate the impact of the changes to the Housing Allocation Policy for people at risk of homeless.
 - The ambition is to work with housing partners to extend the Housing First Model to enable more people to access the service by increasing the number of available units.

- Provide a digital web based service to help people find landlords who have available properties.
- Ensure “Early Help Assessments” are completed by housing to prevent families being evicted.
- Implement “Tenancy Health Checks” in Council homes to prevent problems from escalating and tenancies being jeopardised.
- Maintain decency of temporary accommodation and ensure accommodation meets the needs of the client group eg: those with a dog and or a disability

3 Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 The social, economic and political environment in relation to housing and homelessness issues changes quickly and Homelessness Strategies become dated, requiring regular review. It is important that the Council monitor external factors and continues to demonstrate an understanding of local issues. It is recommended that this Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy be finalised and published following approval by Cabinet and be reviewed annually.

4 Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 The strategy has been developed in consultation with a wide range of partners and stakeholders. Over the past 12 months, in preparation for the new Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy the Council has listened and acknowledged the views of people with lived experience of homelessness. To help shape the strategy the Council have held forums, worked with members, staff and volunteers from a range of local organisations, as well as officers across all directorates. Feedback from the consultation is detailed in Appendix 3.

5 Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 The draft Strategy has also be distributed back to those who have been involved in its development; this includes public health, directorates within the Council, Support Providers, Commissioning, RSLs, Strategic Housing Forum and the Side by Side Homelessness forum.
- 5.2 Once completed the draft strategy will be presented to Cabinet for a final decision in April 2019, and it will then be published on the Council’s website.
- 5.3 A progress report to monitor the impact of the policy changes will be presented back to Cabinet in 12 months’ time following implementation.

6 Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 The Council spends circa £1.6m per annum on Homelessness. This includes spend of circa £1m on Housing Related Support, which supports the overall strategy.

- 6.2 There are no direct procurement implications specific to this report. However where third party support is required to deliver against the new strategy, this must be procured in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.

7 Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 The Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-22 has been prepared in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This Act sets out two new duties, namely the Homelessness Prevention Duty and the Homelessness Relief Duty which the Council must comply with. The Strategy describes how the Council will comply with these duties.

8 Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 None

9 Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 The Children and Young Peoples Service have been consulted and had an input into the draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-22
- 9.2 Specific accommodation requirements for young people will form part of a Care and Support Accommodation Plan 2019.

10 Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 Consultation process – Consultation was broadly representative of Rotherham's diverse communities.
- 10.2 An equality impact assessment has been completed. See Appendix 4

11 Implications for Partners

- 11.1 The draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-22 includes projects that will be delivered in partnership with other Directorates particularly Adult Services and Children and Young People Services.
- 11.2 The Governance of this strategy will be via the Strategic Housing Partnership which includes representatives from Council services, housing associations, developers, support providers, health services, police voluntary and community organisations.
- 11.3 The Strategic Housing Partnership will receive quarterly progress updates against the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan and associated impact measures and other supportive evidence. Where there is little evidence of sufficient progress The Strategic Housing Partnership will hold relevant agencies to account and may request further remedial action plans.

12 Risks and Mitigation

- 12.1 There is a risk that some elements of the document will become out of date, though as national legislation and policy continues to change under the current Government. Where this happens the Council will include a note on the Council's website explaining any updates.

13 Accountable Officers

Anne Marie Lubanski, Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

Tom Bell, Assistant Director of Housing Services

Sandra Tolley, Head of Housing Options Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	29/03/19
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Graham Saxton	28/03/19
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Stuart Fletcher	28/03/19

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This report is published on the Council's [website](#).