

Report To:	EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD	Date:	14 MARCH 2019
Heading:	HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019-2024		
Portfolio Holder:	CABINET MEMBER (OUTWARD FOCUS), COUNCILLOR JOHN WILMOTT		
Ward/s:	ALL		
Key Decision:	YES		
Subject to Call-In:	YES		

Purpose of Report

To endorse the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24 and approve it for consultation with stakeholders and residents on the proposed objectives and actions.

Recommendation(s)

- **To endorse the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24**
- **To approve a consultation exercise with stakeholders and residents on the proposed objectives and actions**
- **Following the consultation, on the basis that only minor amendments are required, approve delegated authority to the Director of Housing and Assets in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder to finalise this Strategy.**

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

It is Ashfield District Council's vision that the residents of Ashfield have affordable and warm housing in a safe community that promotes their health and wellbeing. Preventing homelessness is key to achieving this vision and is identified as a priority in the Council's Corporate Plan.

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, every local housing authority is required to have a homelessness strategy in place which is based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their area. The strategy must be renewed at least every 5 years and must set out the authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support are, or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

This draft Strategy has been developed following extensive research, data analysis and stakeholder interviews. Approval is now sought to consult with stakeholders and residents on the proposed objectives and action plan that has emerged from this research before finalising the Strategy. This will include a consultation session open to all Councillors.

The aims of this Strategy are to:

- Prevent as many residents as possible from becoming homeless
- Ensure options are available to ensure no one has to sleep rough other than through personal choice
- Help as many residents as possible to move seamlessly from one home to another without the need for emergency or temporary accommodation
- Provide a high quality service that customers indicate satisfaction with.

The objectives of this Strategy are:

1. To improve the financial resilience amongst the population at risk of homelessness through a proactive and integrated local welfare benefits system
2. To increase the amount of social housing available to households at risk of, or experiencing homelessness and increase the sustainability of social housing tenancies by these households
3. To deliver the additional required supported housing and housing related support
4. To increase the amount of Private Rented Sector (PRS) housing available to households at risk of, or experiencing homelessness and increase the sustainability of PRS tenancies by these households
5. To ensure the support needs of households at risk of, or experiencing homelessness are appropriately met in order to reduce their risk of homelessness and the risk of homelessness increasing their support needs
6. To minimise rough sleeping and street activity and encourage the community to 'do their bit' to end homelessness
7. To achieve high customer satisfaction with the outcome and experience of the support provided by Ashfield District Council Housing Options
8. To ensure services are designed based on robust evidence and effectively monitored and evaluated.

The Council cannot achieve this vision on its own and a central theme to this Strategy is partnership working.

Alternative Options Considered

(with reasons why not adopted)

Not preparing a homelessness strategy – this was not considered as the Council is required by the Homelessness Act 2002 to have a homelessness strategy in place.

Not consulting with stakeholders and residents – this was not adopted as partnership working is essential to achieving the aims and objectives of this Strategy and it is important to have the support of stakeholders and residents and ensure that their views are included in every stage of the development of this Strategy.

Detailed Information

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is one of 4 strategies under development that underpin the Council’s Housing Strategy. These 4 strategies deal with the 4 key elements required to deliver the Council’s housing vision: *To ensure the population of Ashfield are living in or can access homes that are affordable, warm and within a safe community that promotes the health and wellbeing of residents.*

The Strategic Housing Framework is as follows:

<p>Corporate plan <i>Priorities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Health and wellbeing</i> - <i>Economic regeneration</i> - <i>Housing</i> - <i>Place and communities</i> - <i>Organisational improvement</i> 			
<p>Housing Strategy <i>Vision: To ensure the population of Ashfield are living in or can access homes that are affordable, warm and within a safe community that promotes the health and wellbeing of residents</i></p>			
<p>Homelessness Strategy <i>Ensuring the needs of homeless households are met</i></p>	<p>Private Sector Renewal Strategy <i>Improving standards in the private sector</i></p>	<p>Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy <i>Enabling and delivering supply of affordable housing to meet demand</i></p>	<p>ADC Asset Strategy <i>Ensuring decent standards in ADC housing stock</i></p>

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy can be summarised as follows (the full Strategy and Review document is attached):

Key Findings from the Homelessness Review

The Review considered data recorded by the Council’s Housing Options Team regarding the number of households accepted as statutorily homeless. These are the households that are considered homeless, priority need and not intentionally homeless.

The number of statutorily homeless households per 1,000 population in Ashfield (2.28) is below the average for England (2.41). This figure is much lower than Mansfield’s (4.04) but higher than Newark and Sherwood’s 1.70.

However, Ashfield has seen a significant increase in the number of statutorily homeless households over the last 10 years from 30 in 2008/09 to 123 in 2017/18. This increase in homelessness is

reflected in the fact that Ashfield has had the most significant increase in the number of homeless acceptances per 1,000 households over the last 10 years in Mid Nottinghamshire, from 0.61 to 2.28 in 2017/18.

It is important to note that the statutorily homeless cases represent only part of the picture, many more households are advised by the Housing Options who are not captured by this data. It is often the case that street homeless individuals, or rough sleepers, are not included in this data. The Council estimates that on any given night there are 5 people sleeping rough; in 2017-18 the Street Outreach Service provided by Framework Housing Association worked with 50 transient individuals in Ashfield who were rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.

The Review identified that there are around 700 households at risk of homelessness each year in Ashfield. It identified an increasing trend in the number of households accepted as statutorily homeless, from a low of 16 in 2011-12, to a high of 123 in 2017-18. Despite this, in 2017-18, Ashfield was below the average for England for households statutorily homeless per 1,000 population, 2.28 compared to 2.41 respectively.

Alongside the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, a new data collection requirement was also introduced, known as H-CLIC. Analysis of the H-CLIC data for April 2018 – September 2018 shows that in Ashfield, almost half of households seek assistance from the Council whilst they are threatened with homelessness, compared to around a third who do so when they are already experiencing homelessness. It is the objective of the Homeless Reduction Act that councils assist households at the earliest possible point in order to increase the opportunities to prevent their homelessness. Ashfield is currently performing well in this area, however, there is further work required to assist more households to prevent them becoming homeless.

Reasons for Homelessness and Risk of Homelessness

The H-CLIC data shows that the leading causes of homelessness in Ashfield (based on 263 cases between Apr 18 – Sep 18) are:

- Loss of tenancy or mortgage repossession (41%)
- Family or friends no longer able to accommodate (17%)
- Other (16%)

It is important to note that for those who are already experiencing homelessness, the second leading cause is domestic abuse. Whilst it is not usually appropriate to prevent homelessness in these cases, there is a role for the Council to play in preventing domestic abuse, this is a key priority of the Housing Strategy 2016-20.

112 young people aged under 26 sought help from the Council in the first six months 2018/2019. This represented 33% of all reported cases. 31% of all households seeking assistance when they are already experiencing homelessness were in this age group, suggesting there is more to be done to prevent young people from becoming homeless.

Assessment of need

A quantitative analysis formed part of the review. The analysis used an existing modelling tool, which provides a coherent methodology for estimating future levels of need - and for assessing the

balance of housing and support solutions required. The analysis suggested that the following approximate levels of service provision would be required going forward in Ashfield.

Type of Service Required 2019-20	Forecast Annual Demand	Current supply
Prevention of homelessness through advice, assistance and mediation etc.	59	<i>See below</i>
Tenancy sustainment / resettlement support	76	<i>See below</i>
Access to alternative affordable accommodation	306	<i>See below</i>
Housing First level support	14	0
Crisis Accommodation	30	30
Supported Housing	54	0
Refuge Accommodation	3	6

Access to Advice, Assistance and Mediation

Between April and October 2018, the Housing Options team advised 335 households, suggesting an annual capacity to advise around 650 households. During this same period, 8 households were assisted to remain in their existing accommodation by the Housing Options team. Around 30 others were assisted to move to alternative accommodation (though it is important to note that outcomes may not be achieved until the following quarter so this figure mainly reflects outcomes for the households advised in the first quarter of 2018/19). In addition to this, the Council's Tenancy Sustainment Officers assisted 78 households to secure existing or alternative accommodation and avoid homelessness.

The ability to prevent a household's homelessness is dependent on many external factors that are not within the control of the Housing Options Team and as such improvement in this area will require all partners adopting a preventative approach.

Tenancy Sustainment, Resettlement and Floating Support

Some social housing providers have Tenancy Sustainment Teams to provide support to new and existing tenants, including Ashfield District Council who successfully supported 159 households between Apr 18 – Dec 18.

Currently, there is no other tenancy support services to meet this need, for example for PRS tenants or social housing tenants whose landlord does not offer this service.

Access to alternative Affordable Housing

The Review has calculated that the annual housing need for people who have been homeless in Ashfield is 306. This includes private and social housing sector affordable housing. The Ashfield Affordable Housing Delivery Strategy has identified that there is a supply shortfall of 223 new affordable homes each year and has identified a number of actions to address this shortfall.

Objectives and measuring success

The following objectives and measures of success are proposed to respond to the Review findings:

1. ***To improve the financial resilience amongst the population at risk of homelessness through a proactive and integrated local welfare benefits system***
 - a. Monitor the prevention of homelessness by local welfare benefits services
 - b. Monitor the amount of DHP spent on the prevention of homelessness
 - c. Monitor the referrals made to Housing Options by DWP and other local welfare benefit partners
 - d. Review case studies of the customer experience of the local welfare benefits services
2. ***To increase the amount of social housing available to households at risk of, or experiencing homelessness and increase the sustainability of social housing tenancies by these households***
 - a. Number of additional social homes delivered
 - b. Additional tenancy sustainment support delivered
 - c. External funding secured
 - d. Number of social housing evictions
 - e. Number of households rehoused in social housing
3. ***To deliver the additional required supported housing and housing related support***
 - a. Number of additional supported housing schemes delivered
 - b. Additional housing related support delivered
 - c. External funding secured
 - d. Average length of stay in supported housing
 - e. Tenancy sustainment rates in move on accommodation
 - f. Number of households refused supported housing
 - g. Monitor trends in support needs
4. ***To increase the amount of PRS housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of PRS tenancies by homeless households/at risk households***
 - a. Monitor the number of homeless households accessing the PRS
 - b. Monitor the number of households prevented from becoming homeless from the PRS
5. ***To ensure the support needs of households at risk of, or experiencing homelessness are appropriately met in order to reduce their risk of homelessness and the risk of homelessness increasing their support needs***
 - a. Monitor the number of households prevented from becoming homeless from institutions
 - b. Monitor the number of households seeking housing advice and assistance following institutional discharge
 - c. Monitor the support needs of homeless households and the services they are accessing
 - d. Monitor the preventative programmes delivered and outcomes realised
 - e. Monitor the prevention of homelessness for those with support needs
6. ***To minimise rough sleeping and street activity and encourage the community to do their bit to end homelessness***
 - a. Monitor the number of rough sleepers
 - b. Monitor street activity
 - c. Monitor the welfare needs of rough sleepers and the services they are accessing
 - d. Monitor the prevention charter pledges and outcomes

7. ***High customer satisfaction with the outcome and experience of the support provided by ADC Housing Options***
 - a. Customer satisfaction rates
 - b. Homeless prevention rates
 - c. Duty to Refer numbers and outcomes
 - d. Monitor the number of pathways developed and the outcomes
 - e. Training courses delivered
 - f. Monitor the number of people with lived experience involved in the design and delivery of homelessness

8. ***Services are designed based on robust evidence and effectively monitored and evaluated***
 - a. Good practice examples identified
 - b. Remedial action taken against poor performance
 - c. Use of data in service design and decision making
 - d. High/improving performance

Future review

Ashfield District Council (in partnership with Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood District Councils) have asked Homeless Link to carry out a progress review later in 2019, in order to more fully assess the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This legislation came into force on 1 April 2018 and was in the process of being implemented when the Homelessness Review was carried out. The findings of this further review will be made available in due course.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The strategy supports the Council's housing vision to: "ensure the population of Ashfield are living in or can access homes that are affordable, warm and within a safe community that promotes the health and wellbeing of residents".

Legal:

It is required by the Homelessness Act 2002 that a homelessness strategy is put in place by each local authority which is based on a review of all forms of homelessness in the area. The strategy must be renewed at least every 5 years and must set out the authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support are or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

There are no legal implications to approving this strategy. Any legal implications applicable to the action plan will be addressed as each action is taken forward.

Finance:

There are no financial implications to approving this strategy. Any financial implications applicable to the action plan will be addressed as each action is taken forward.

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	Not applicable
General Fund – Capital Programme	Not applicable
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	Not applicable
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	Not applicable

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Delivery of the objectives in this strategy are not wholly within the control of the Council and are subject to resources such as external funding being secured	<p>This strategy has been developed in conjunction with partners and partnership working in a central theme as it is recognised the Council cannot deliver the aims of this strategy alone.</p> <p>There is a good foundation of partnership working in place already and the creation of a governance group made up of partners will further develop these relationships</p> <p>This strategy has clearly identified where external funding, additional resources or partnership working will be required to achieve the desired outcomes</p>

Human Resources:

There are no direct HR implications contained within this report.

Equalities:

This strategy has a positive impact on a range of households with protected characteristics as it seeks to ensure they do not experience homelessness. Those with protected characteristics can be more likely to experience homelessness, have support needs and find it more difficult to access suitable accommodation. These issues are discussed in the Review under the ‘Support Needs’ section.

Other Implications:

(if applicable)

Reason(s) for Urgency

(if applicable)

Reason(s) for Exemption

(if applicable)

Background Papers

(if applicable)

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