
Subject: DRAFT HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2020-2024

Meeting and Date: Cabinet – 11 January 2021

Report of: Louise Taylor, Head of Housing

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Derek Murphy, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health

Decision Type: Key Decision

Classification: Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: To seek Cabinet approval to consult on a new draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, as attached at Appendix 1.

Recommendation: To approve the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy attached at Appendix 1 for consultation.

1. Summary

There is a statutory requirement for the Council to publish an up to date homelessness and rough sleeping strategy and this report seeks Cabinet approval to undertake a consultation exercise in respect of the draft strategy attached at Appendix 1. The document builds on past successes and existing partnerships across the Dover District, sets priorities that reflect our commitment to continue developing existing initiatives and an action plan for their achievement.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Under Sections 1 to 3 Homelessness Act 2002 local housing authorities have a duty to publish a homelessness strategy and to take the strategy into account in the discharge of its functions. The duty requires a review of the housing strategy at least every five years.

2.2 The previous strategy was developed as a joint East Kent strategy in partnership with Shepway, Canterbury and Thanet councils and covered the period 2014 to 2019. While the Council has been relatively successful in its approach to homelessness prevention over recent years we are very aware that external pressures may result in increased demand in this service area. As well as the wider social costs related to homelessness there are also direct costs for the Council. It is therefore important that the Council continues to work with local and strategic partners in developing its approach to homelessness prevention especially given the budget pressures the Council is currently managing and the need to minimise expenditure on temporary accommodation and ensure that existing prevention services are financially sustainable.

2.3 The emphasis of the draft strategy is very much on homelessness prevention and the scope of the strategy and its key objectives were developed following early stage consultation with key stakeholders.

2.4 The strategy sets out overarching strategic objectives and priorities and incorporates an action plan which aims to deliver outcomes linked to the priorities.

3 Consultation

- 3.1 In view of the consultation already undertaken at the initial strategy scoping stage, it is proposed that the wider consultation on the document should be undertaken over a period of eight weeks so as to enable the final version of the strategy to be reported back to cabinet in March 2021.
- 3.2 All the feedback will be compiled and included as part of the report recommending approval of a final strategy document. A consultation plan showing how we intend to consult locally is attached at Appendix 2 to this report.
- 3.3 A draft Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed and is attached at Appendix 3. The assessment has not currently identified any negative impacts for the protected characteristic groups.
- 3.4 The draft EIA will be reviewed and amended as necessary following the consultation period.

4. Identification of Options

- 4.1 Option 1: Approve the draft strategy for consultation.
- 4.2 Option 2: Not approve the draft strategy for consultation

5 Evaluation of Options

- 5.1 Option 1 is the recommended option as it will enable the Council to work towards the adoption of a new strategy and fulfil its statutory duty.

6 Resource Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct budgetary implications arising from this report apart from potential printing and postage costs which will be kept to a minimum and can be met from existing budgets.
- 6.2 Care has also been taken to ensure that the actions set out in the draft action plan will not create any budgetary pressures. The emphasis on homelessness prevention is intended to contain and hopefully reduce costs related to emergency housing provision.

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

There should be no environmental or climate change implications as a consequence of this decision being taken.

Corporate Implications

- 6.1 Comment from the Director of Finance (linked to the MTFP) Accountancy have been consulted and have no further comment to make. (BW)
- 6.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Head of Governance has been consulted during the preparation of this report and has no further comment to make.
- 6.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out to identify and mitigate any negative impact upon the protected characteristic groups and will be revisited post consultation. The Equality Officer has

been consulted during the development of the report and has no further comments to make, other than to remind Members that in discharging their responsibilities they are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

6.4 Other Officers (as appropriate): None received

7 **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2024

Appendix 2 – Consultation Plan

Appendix 3 – Draft Equality Impact Assessment

8 **Background Papers**

None.

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