

REPORT TO:	HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM:9
DATE OF MEETING:	28th JANUARY 2021	CATEGORY: (See Notes) DELEGATED or RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR SERVICE DELIVERY	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	PAUL WHITTINGHAM Paul.whittingham@southderbys.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE: (HCS01)

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Committee approves the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan for public consultation.
- 1.2 That the final version of the Strategy is presented to the Committee for ratification after the public consultation period.

2.0 Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 The report informs the Committee of the completion of the strategic review of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Services which was commissioned by the Council and approved at the Housing and Community Services Committee meeting on 30 January 2020.
- 2.2 The report proposes the commencement of public consultation on the draft Strategy and Action Plan.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Council is required to publish a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. A Strategy Statement was approved by the Committee on 30 January 2020 and a comprehensive strategic review was commissioned with the Homeless Link consultancy.
- 3.2 The review has been completed and has identified several key themes that have been carried into the draft Strategy and Action Plan which are attached at Appendices A and B to the report.

3.3 The draft Strategy and Action Plan are now ready for public consultation which it is proposed runs for a period of six weeks from the date of this meeting. The consultation will be carried out via the Council's website with the opportunity for individual telephone consultation where required.

4.0 **Detail**

4.1 A comprehensive strategic review of the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was commissioned after the expiry of the previous Strategy. Homeless Link was appointed to complete this work.

4.2 **Methodology:** The homelessness review included:

- An analysis of the past, current and future levels of homelessness
- An audit of the services aimed at preventing, accommodating, and supporting people who are or may become homeless
- A review of the resources available within the District
- A review of data from a wide range of sources, including homelessness statistics local, regional, and national data,
- Consultation with stakeholders, other providers, customers and staff.

4.3 **Executive Summary.** The review document is comprehensive and detailed. An Executive Summary of the review findings is attached at Appendix C. This contains an overview of;

- Demand
- Profile of Homelessness
- Reasons for Homelessness
- The Prevention and relief of Homelessness
- Main Homelessness Duty Decisions
- Temporary Accommodation
- Rough Sleeping
- Council Services
- Other Agency Services
- COVID-19
- Settled and Supported Accommodation
- Social Housing
- The Private Rented Sector
- The needs of specific client groups
- Stakeholder and Customer views
- Resources
- Future Levels of Homelessness.

4.4 **Key Findings**

4.5 There are several key statistical findings from the review which are outlined in the executive summary.

- a. 638 approaches to the Housing Solutions Service in 2019/20
- b. 318 homeless assessments in 2019/20
- c. Domestic Abuse was the main cause of homelessness
- d. 64% of people had a support need
- e. Mental health is the most prevalent support need
- f. 56% of homeless households are families with children

- g. 64% of people had their homelessness successfully prevented
- h. 64% of people had their homelessness successfully relieved
- i. Most clients were helped by accessing social housing
- j. 152% increase in annual temporary accommodation placements over the last three years
- k. 816 households on the Housing Register
- l. 44% of people on the Housing Register need one-bedroom accommodation

4.6 These statistics lead to a series of further outcomes which are carried forward into the draft Strategy and Action plan documents. These include:

- More effectively managing demand and a focus on cases where there is a threat of homelessness.
- The need to raise awareness with customers and partner agencies to encourage clients to access the service earlier for homeless prevention to be maximised.
- The need to provide a range of prevention tools targeted at the main causes of homelessness.
- The need for an increased focus on helping people to maintain their existing accommodation.
- The need to make better use of the private rented sector for preventing and relieving homelessness.
- A more detailed operational review of the Housing Solutions Service to understand what resources are needed to manage demand and how improved customer outcomes can be achieved.
- Work is needed to ensure that homelessness is not seen as the route to access social housing
- Learn from how services have been delivered through the pandemic to inform how services can better meet demand using technology and telephone assessments
- Place a greater focus on prevention and early intervention including those that enable clients to keep their existing accommodation, targeted at these main causes:
 - **Domestic Abuse** - Timely access to a range of options, including emergency provision and support, floating support, planned moves, acting as a landlord against perpetrators and target hardening
 - **Loss of Private Rented Accommodation** - ensure that there is a much more targeted approach to preventing people losing their home in the private rented sector.
 - **Family/Friends Evicting** - provide a more targeted and proactive response for households who are being asked to leave by family or friends.

- **Non-violent Relationship Breakdown** - Provide access to mediation and relationship counselling services
- Update the website to increase the amount of “self-help” information and advice available to customers
- Provide sufficient resources in place to manage any increase in demand.
- Provide adequate prevention funding in place to cover private rent arrears linked to lost earnings due to Covid-19
- Increase the availability of specialist income and money advice teams
- Put in place a local publicity campaign to ensure that tenants, landlords and homeowners are aware of the assistance available
- Develop supported housing provision for clients with multiple and complex needs, Housing First could be part of this solution.
- Given the very high demand for one-bedroom accommodation on the Housing Register the number of new one-bedroom properties being developed needs to increase if demand is to be met, or existing stock needs to be redesignated.
- Develop a greater range of options and provision for single people specifically for people under the age of 35.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications within this report. Homelessness services are funded through the General Fund with support from central government Homeless Prevention Funding. This has recently been increased by around £40,000 to £206,311. The Housing and Community Services Committee meeting on 1 October agreed to increase the budget for permanent dedicated resource for managing homelessness within the Housing Team as part of the Housing Service Review.
- 5.2 Any further project proposals that require funding, identified through the implementation of the Strategy will be reported to the Housing and Community Services Committee at a future date.

6.0 Corporate Implications

Employment Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct employment implications within this report.

Legal Implications

- 6.2 There are no direct legal implications contained within this report.

Corporate Plan Implications

- 6.3 This report will make a direct contribution to the Council's Corporate Plan objective for Supporting and safeguarding the most vulnerable, through:
- a. With partners encourage independent living and keep residents healthy and happy in their homes.
 - b. Promote health and wellbeing across the District.

Risk Impact

- 6.4 This report contributes directly to mitigating the risk identified in the Service Delivery Risk Register: SD7 - Insufficient supply of affordable homes to meet Council needs relating to allocations and homelessness.

7.0 Community Impact

Consultation

- 7.1 Consultation with stakeholder groups has already been carried out through the South Derbyshire Homelessness Conference, the Derbyshire Homeless Officer Group, other housing providers and the Housing staff team. Further public consultation will follow after which the final version of the Strategy and Action Plan will be reported to the Committee.

Equality and Diversity Impact

- 7.2 The review has considered all aspects of homelessness including homelessness amongst excluded and or protected groups.

Social Value Impact

- 7.3 Identifying causes and actions to resolve homelessness and rough sleeping will positively impact on the social value of Council Services for the people of South Derbyshire.

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.4 There are no direct issues regarding environmental sustainability within this report.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 The review of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in South Derbyshire has provided a clear evidence-based picture of housing needs in the District.
- 8.2 The draft Strategy and Action Plan provide the Council with a clear pathway towards improving services to meet current and future challenges.

9.0 Background Papers

