

SUMMARY OF THE EMERGING HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY

Housing and Health Advisory Committee – 22 November 2022

Report of: Chief Officer People and Places

Status: For Decision

Also considered by:

- Cabinet - 8 December 2022

Key Decision: yes

Executive Summary: This report presents the Homelessness Review and a draft Sevenoaks District Council's emerging Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2023-2028 to go out for consultation

This report supports the Key Aim of: the Housing Strategy 2022-2027

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Kevin Maskell

Contact Officer(s): Alison Simmons, Head of Housing, Extension 7272

Recommendation to Housing and Health Advisory Committee:

To consider the outcome of the Homeless Review, the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and the proposed timetable for consultation and implementation and endorse recommendation (b) to Cabinet.

Recommendation to Cabinet:

- (a) To consider the outcome of the Homeless Review, the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and the proposed timetable for consultation and implementation
- (b) To approve the first draft of the emerging Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy for public consultation, subject to any required amendment

Reason for recommendation: The Council has a statutory duty under the Homelessness Act 2002, to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy. The Strategy must be renewed at least every 5 years.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Housing Strategy 2022-2027 contains 4 key themes of focus for the District Council's housing service over the next 5 years. These include Theme 3: Reducing homelessness and improving routes into permanent accommodation.

Recognising that homelessness is a growing problem in the Sevenoaks District, this section sets out a 'whole journey' approach to addressing the issue. It starts with the housing market challenges that lie behind the rising homeless figures and moves quickly into how the Council will strengthen its approach to 'prevention.' There are sections on 'relief' of homelessness and rough sleeping.

There is a very important section on improving routes into permanent accommodation that includes several actions to create better pathways for people to access appropriate accommodation in a timely way, so that no one spends longer than a defined period in Temporary Accommodation. There is an appeal to partners to work constructively with the Council to improve outcomes for people who do find themselves without a home.

- 2 The Council has a statutory duty under the Homelessness Act 2002, to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy. The Strategy must be renewed at least every 5 years.

The Strategy must set out the Council's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for securing sufficient accommodation and support are or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

Homelessness Review and draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy

- 3 The Homelessness Service Review (Appendix A attached) provides information on the needs of people who have approached the Council's housing service for help since the last Homelessness Strategy was adopted. It considers what we have achieved, what has changed and how this relates to the changing environment and Government Policy. This will inform our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy from 2023.
- 4 Following the completion of the review a draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy has been produced for consultation (Appendix B attached).

The objectives of the Strategy will cover:

PREVENTION	Quality housing needs and standards - services dedicated to effective advice, holistic and informed assessment.
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	<p>Preventative casework - working alongside partners, to stop those seeking help from becoming homeless.</p> <p>Targeted preventions for the most vulnerable groups through the provision of agreed pathways into support.</p> <p>Strategic activities that seek to identify issues that drive homelessness across the District and apply remedies to reduce it.</p>
INTERVENTION	<p>Tackling rough sleeping - continue supporting the County wide approach to reducing harm and addressing associated multiple, complex needs.</p> <p>Partnership working - maximise the effectiveness of joint working and pathways for at risk groups.</p> <p>Temporary housing - provide a good quality, safe, secure, value for money accommodation portfolio and reduce the use of emergency placements.</p>
SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS	<p>Re-housing establish a range of sustainable housing and move-on options for rough sleepers, vulnerable and homeless households.</p> <p>Support - deliver effective support services to help households maintain accommodation once housed.</p>

Next Steps

- 5 The draft timetable for reporting, public consultation and final approval for the implementation of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy is as follows:

Event	Date	Purpose
Housing and Health Advisory Committee	22 November 2022	Comments to Cabinet prior to public consultation on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and action plan
Cabinet	8 December 2022	Request for approval of the draft Homelessness

		and Rough Sleeper Strategy and action plan for public consultation
PUBLIC CONSULTATION PERIOD – 9 December 2022 to the 5 January 2023		
Housing and Health Advisory Committee	7 February 2023	Feedback from consultation and presentation of final draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and action plan for implementation
Cabinet	9 February 2023	Recommendation for approval of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and action plan for implementation
Full Council	21 February 2023	Approval of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and action plan for implementation

Other options Considered and/or rejected

There are no other options that could be considered as the Council has a statutory duty under the Homelessness Act 2002, to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy.

Key Implications

Resource (non financial)

There are no additional resource requirements arising from the approval of the Strategy.

Financial

All immediate activity summarised in the Strategy is accounted for within existing budgets. Any additional activity identified as part of the Strategy action plan will be considered for feasibility within the normal yearly budgeting activity.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

The Council has a range of statutory duties relating to housing, homelessness, and reviewing housing conditions. This Strategy will assist the Council in meeting those duties.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

However, a full equality impact assessment will accompany the final Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and action plan to consider any implications.

Net Zero Implications

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the District or supporting the resilience of the natural environment.

Conclusions

The Council has a statutory duty under the Homelessness Act 2002, to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy. This Strategy will assist the Council in meeting those duties.

Appendices

Appendix A - Homelessness Review

Appendix B - Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and action plan

Sarah Robson

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer – People and Places