

Name of meeting: Council
Date: 20th March 2019
Title of report: Draft Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 - 2023

Purpose of report

Article 4 of the Council's constitution requires Housing Strategies to be approved by full Council. The draft Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 – 2023 is part of the overarching Housing Strategy for Kirklees and as such requires full Council approval.

The draft Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 – 2023 sets out the challenges and issues around preventing and tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in Kirklees, what we and our partners will do in response, and the outcomes we will achieve.

This report seeks formal approval of Kirklees Council's draft Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 – 2023.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Yes – the Strategy is applicable across all wards
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	Decision of Council on 20 th March 2019
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Karl Battersby – 28.2.19
Is it also signed off by the Service Director (Finance)?	Eamonn Croston – 4.3.19
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Julie Muscroft – 8.3.19
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Cathy Scott

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: None

Public or private: Public

GDPR has been considered when preparing this report and there are no implications

1. **Summary**

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 fundamentally changed the way Local Authorities work to support homeless people in their areas which gives new prevention and relief duties, towards more people.

In August 2018 the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published its Rough Sleeping Strategy which stated that government is committed to halving rough sleeping by 2023 and ending it by 2027.

Local housing authorities are required to carry out a review of homelessness in their area and to produce a strategy which sets out how they will prevent and reduce homelessness, and provide support to people affected by it. It is expected that these strategies will be reviewed every 5 years and that they are now rebadged as homelessness and rough sleeping strategies. It is expected that local authorities will have reviewed and updated their strategies by winter 2019 (paragraph 71 of the Governments Rough Sleeping Strategy - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733421/Rough-Sleeping-Strategy_WEB.pdf)

This report will have been considered by the meeting of Cabinet on 19th March 2019 and seeks approval of the draft Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 – 2023.

2. **Information required to take a decision**

- 2.1 The draft Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 – 23 sets out the principles for how we will achieve change. This includes a joint development of the strategy, working with our partners including people affected by homelessness and rough sleeping to do so, our continued focus on prevention and how we will progress and review the strategy's action plan.
- 2.2 The strategy gives an overview of the picture of housing and homelessness at a national, regional and local level. It describes relevant legislative and policy development, and gives some key facts and figures and trend data at a local level to inform the evidence base to our strategic intention, and set the scene.
- 2.3 The strategy identifies what the challenges and issues are, both now and looking ahead, what we will do in response and what outcomes we will achieve.
- 2.4 It takes a collaborative and enabling approach. It is recognised that the Council cannot achieve its ambitions and outcomes on its own; and that preventing homelessness requires the support, input and resources of a cross section of partners. This is set out in the strategy and will be further reflected particularly as we continue our engagement with partners to develop and agree the action plan.
- 2.5 The strategy builds on and has direct links to the Kirklees Housing Strategy 2018 – 2023 which was approved by Council in September 2018.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

The draft Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy 2018 – 23 is centred on working with people affected by homelessness, enabling and empowering them to develop the skills, resilience and improvements in their health and wellbeing that they need to move on to a more settled, happy and stable situation. It recognises people's strengths and capacities for change, as well as identifying how their support needs can best be met.

3.2 Working with Partners

A collaborative approach has been taken in developing the strategy. This means that the strategy is informed from a range of partners' perspectives, particularly members of the Kirklees Homelessness Forum. Forum partners include representatives from Health, other Council services such as Social Care, Job Centre Plus and providers. The strategy also takes account of what people have told us who have lived experience of homelessness.

3.3 Place Based Working

The strategy recognises that Kirklees is a diverse community and that in addressing issues of homelessness and rough sleeping, a Place Based approach is needed. This includes consideration of people's local support networks, and where and how they access services.

3.4 Improving outcomes for children

The strategy's focus on early intervention and prevention of homelessness will lead to improved outcomes for all households who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness, including households with children, and young people.

3.5 Other (e.g. Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

The strategy is being developed to align with the Council's legal obligations including under housing legislation.

In recognition of the significant changes associated with the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, MHCLG awarded 'New Burdens Funding' to local authorities to support the planning and implementation of the new requirements. The new burdens funding allocated to Kirklees for the 3 year period from 2017-18 to 2019 -20 of just over £280k is being used to fund temporary additional staff in the Housing Solutions Services.

Further, MHCLG have provided local authorities with Flexible Homelessness Support Grants to help prevent and deal with homelessness. The £1,143,415 grant allocation for Kirklees over the 3 years 2017-18 to 2019-20 is being used to prevent homelessness and support the provision of temporary accommodation.

There are also a number of "short-term" (i.e. one year only) specific Government grant initiatives that the Council is bidding into for 2019-20, including an MHCLG Rapid Rehousing Pathway funding pot. Although the Council's bid to this was unsuccessful, we will be submitting a further bid to the next round which Government has indicated will be available at some point

during 2019 / 20. In addition, the Housing Service has submitted a bid for £193,250 in a bid to the Rough Sleeper Initiative.

The Council's ambition for housing growth and meeting future housing supply demands for the District's residents over the next 5 years and beyond, including targeted support to vulnerable residents, is also reflected in the Council's recently approved budget plans (capital) over the 2018-24 period.

The Council currently administers housing benefit payments on Government's behalf, and reclaims these payments through subsidy grant. Government aims to disincentivise Councils not to use certain types of temporary accommodation e.g. bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation, through reduced or in some instances, zero subsidy grant. The impact of this is acknowledged to be a growing financial pressure on Councils like Kirklees that currently, may still have to use B&B as part of a range of temporary accommodation measures to deal with the increasing numbers of people with complex needs, presenting themselves as statutorily homeless in the District.

The recently approved Council budget 2019-22 acknowledged the level of current uncertainty on the national Government funding landscape for Councils beyond 2019/20' in particular those with demand led statutory pressures like Kirklees. Nor is the funding landscape likely to become clearer until the 2019 Spending Review later in the year. The range of ad hoc government grants underpinning current Council support for their Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping do not extend beyond 2019/20, and the potential withdrawal of some or all of this funding nationally from 2020/21 is acknowledged to represent a significant future revenue budget risk/pressure for the Council.

In line with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out and published. It is clear that the strategy has been drafted to reduce inequality and in doing so to promote and discharge the PSED. The strategy for example recognises the need to take steps to meet the needs of those with protected characteristics (e.g. including people with mental health needs) and also the need to take steps to meet the needs of others who may not have protected characteristics (such as ex- offenders, people with drug and / or alcohol dependencies and others who are generally described as being "socially excluded") but who face prejudice when it comes to housing.

4. Consultees and their opinions

- 4.1 The strategy has been developed in consultation with stakeholders including people with lived experience of homelessness and rough sleeping and specialist and supported housing forums such as the Kirklees Preventing Homelessness Forum. Engagement has also taken place with internal council services and with Public Health colleagues.
- 4.2 The strategy has been shared with Senior Officers at Executive Team and with the Leadership Management Team.
- 4.3 Member Consultation has taken place with the Portfolio Holder and with the Economy & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel.

- 4.4 Feedback from consultation has helped to inform and shape the strategy.
- 4.5 Cabinet are being asked to recommend the draft Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for approval by Council, at its meeting on 19th March 2019.

5 Next steps and timelines

- 5.1 As part of the Policy Framework for Kirklees Council, the Council's Housing Strategy requires formal approval by Council. The draft Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is part of the overarching Housing Strategy for Kirklees.

Subject to Council approval, the strategy will be publicly available via the Council's website.

- 5.2 Officers will work with key partners to develop and implement detailed action plans which will support achievement of the outcomes outlined in the strategy.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

6.1 Recommendations

To recommend approval of the draft Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 – 2023 to Council, in line with policy framework requirements.

It is further recommended that the Service Director of Growth and Housing ensures that detailed strategy action plans are developed as set out at 5.2.

6.2 Reasons

Under Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 the Council must produce a Homelessness Strategy and review it every 5 years. Government policy as set out in the MHCLG Rough Sleeping Strategy published August 2018 requires councils to produce a Rough Sleeping strategy by 2019, together with strategy action plans. The Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 – 23 will meet the Council's new reduction and relief duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Councils must also have regard to the Secretary of State's Homelessness Code under section 182 of the Housing Act, 1996.

Article 4 of the Constitution requires Housing Strategies to be approved by Council.

7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

The Cabinet portfolio holder, Councillor Cathy Scott recommends that approval be given to the draft Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 – 2023

8. Contact officer

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9. **Background Papers and History of Decisions**

Cabinet recommended the draft Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 – 2023 for approval on 19th March 2019.

Appendix: Draft Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 - 2023

10. **Service Director responsible**

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