



COUNCIL CABINET
Date March 2020

ITEM 12

Report sponsor: Rachel North,
Strategic Director, Communities and Place
Report author: Jeremy Mason,
Principal Housing Strategy Officer

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025

Purpose

- 1.1 To seek cabinet approval for the adoption of the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025.

Recommendation

- 2.1 To agree to the adoption of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025.

Reason

- 3.1 The current strategy expires in March 2020. In order to comply with our statutory obligations under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and to ensure we continue to be effective in tackling homelessness in Derby, it is essential to have a new strategy in place.

Supporting information

- 4.1 Homelessness is a complex and multi-faceted issue, and the problems and causes of homelessness are frequently much more far-reaching than simply 'bricks and mortar' issues. Relationship breakdown, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol mis-use, poor mental health, violence and financial problems can all contribute to making people homeless. Similarly, many people that are at risk of homelessness have multiple needs that extend beyond the basic need for a home.
- 4.2 It is not possible for the Council to meet all of those needs in isolation. But partnership working in the homelessness sector is strong in Derby and we are very grateful for the critical role our partners play in assisting us in this challenge. It is with confidence that we can say that we provide a level of service in Derby such that the people known to be rough sleeping here have all been offered accommodation and support. Furthermore, anyone new to the streets will in the vast majority of cases be seen that day by our outreach services. The number of cases where homelessness was prevented or relieved in 2018-19 rose to just over 1200, the highest number in over 5 years.

- 4.3 However, there is still much to do to tailor services to the needs of these often vulnerable, complex and chaotic members of our community and to address their fears and anxieties to encourage them to engage with the services that are on offer.
- 4.4 As well as the moral and social concerns which motivate our action, we also have statutory obligations. The Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Order 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, requires local authorities to develop and implement a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.
- 4.5 The Homelessness Reduction Act in particular introduced radical changes to the way in which we deliver services to homeless people. The Act now significantly expands the existing duty to homeless people and is much wider in its scope to support homelessness prevention.
- 4.6 This new strategy is informed by this new, wider-ranging legislation and by an extensive review of the scope of homelessness and service provision in Derby. It is also informed by a comprehensive consultation process, of which more details can be found in 5.1 and 5.2 below.
- 4.7 The strategy adopts the 'priority themes' set out in related government guidance¹, which provide an all-encompassing framework for delivery. These comprise:
- i) Preventing homelessness
 - ii) Ensuring a sufficient supply of accommodation
 - iii) Supporting homeless households or those at risk of homelessness.
- 4.8 The strategy contains a detailed action plan to address these priority themes (attached separately). Example actions under these 3 themes respectively concern:
- i) Strengthening measures to prevent eviction/loss of home through intervention with private landlords and mediation with family and friends;
 - ii) Improving the supply of accommodation types particularly needed by homeless people such as temporary accommodation and smaller sized apartments;
 - iii) Development of 'life skills' or 'tenancy ready' type courses to help people maintain their independence following relief from homelessness.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 Stakeholder engagement with service providers and elected members was conducted in July-September 2019. Public Consultation on the draft strategy commenced in October 2019 and concluded in January 2020. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken in November 2019.

Changes to the strategy following public/stakeholder engagement and EIA

- 5.2 Consultation with people with lived experience of homelessness gave rise to actions on tackling inactivity and boredom by developing a programme of positive activities and training opportunities. It also resulted in actions to develop access to mental

¹ Detail at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-2-homelessness-strategies-and-reviews>

health services and rehab services.

- 5.3 Consultation with local Councillors fed back the need to include services for people leaving armed forces. Councillors also shared their experience on ADHA and autism and how recent evidence suggests ADHD and autism may be overrepresented in prison and homelessness populations. As a result we included an action on developing our training and understanding in this area. Finally Councillors also identified the need for services to improve the sustainability of supported accommodation.
- 5.4 Consultation events with partners and statutory services gave rise to a full range of actions across the priorities in our action plan. Again these groups strongly identified the need for positive activities, employment and training opportunities. Life skills training was identified as a need along with specialised supported accommodation for a variety different groups such as offenders and women at risk.
- 5.5 There were a number of proposals made in the EIA which have also informed the action plan. These include improving the availability, presentation and accessibility of information relating to homelessness services, in particular for older and disabled people. There were also proposals to address the needs of people experiencing domestic violence, and these are reflected in the action plan.

Other options

- 6.1 The current strategy will soon be out of date and needs to be replaced, to comply with our statutory obligations under the Homelessness Reduction Act. As such, the Council does not have any other options.

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 The strategy contains a detailed action plan which commits to a wide range of actions. Many of these are in place to fulfil our statutory obligations and will continue to be met from existing funding streams. Where additional actions are proposed which may incur further costs in the future, a separate report will be presented which will detail the costs and funding arrangements.

Legal implications

- 8.1 The proposed strategy addresses the Council's statutory obligations in respect of The Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Other significant implications

- 9.1 The strategy is intended to provide a framework covering our actions in relation to homeless people in Derby and how we will provide services and accommodation to meet their needs. It supports the Council Plan 2019-23 themes of: *A City of Health and Happiness* and *A Council focussed on the things that matter*.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal	Olu Idowu	21-1-20
Finance	Amanda Fletcher	28-1-20
Service Director(s)	Ian Fullagar	21-1-20
Report sponsor	Rachel North	18-2-20
Other(s)	Clare Mehrbani	15-1-20
Background papers:		
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025, attached separately.	
	Appendix 2 – The Action Plan, attached separately.	