

STRATEGIC HOUSING BOARD

10 July 2019

CABINET

25 July 2019

DRAFT HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019-2023

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local housing authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their district at least every five years. The aim of the review is to inform, develop and publish a Homeless Strategy.
- 1.2 A review of homelessness was carried out in 2017 and a new Homeless Strategy 2018-2023 was adopted by the General Assembly of the Council on 19 March 2018.
- 1.3 This report presents an update to the above Strategy, in light of new legislation and operational methods, including a requirement for the Council to publish a strategy for tackling rough sleeping.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the Strategic Housing Board note the contents of this report and recommend accordingly to Cabinet.
- 2.2. That Cabinet approve the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019, attached at Appendix A to this report.

3. Background and Discussion

- 3.1. Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 places a duty on local housing authorities to provide advice and assistance to homeless people and people threatened with homelessness in their district. The Housing Solutions team within the Housing Service carries out this duty.
- 3.2. In order that a strategic approach is taken towards the Council's delivery of homelessness advice and assistance, the Housing Service undertakes a review of homelessness and then produces a Homelessness Strategy every five years in line with the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002. (A copy of the full Homelessness (Review report is available to view on line at <https://www.dartford.gov.uk/by-category/housing2/housing-strategy-and-policy-documents> and is available on request).
- 3.3. In 2018, the Government announced new measures for tackling rough sleeping nationwide and legislated that local authorities must prepare and publish a strategy to combat rough sleeping in their area by December 2019. During the last rough sleeper count in 2018 it was estimated that there were 12 people sleeping rough across the borough.

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- 3.4. It is recognised that rough sleeping can have a distressing and detrimental impact on people and although rough sleeping is comparatively low in the Borough (when compared with other local authorities), the Council's aim will be to reduce the levels of rough sleeping in the borough as far as possible.
- 3.5. A new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2023 has been developed. The aim of the Strategy is to *"proactively prevent homelessness and rough sleeping through strong partnership working, and to provide an inclusive and accessible service to all"*.

To make this aim a reality, the Strategy contains five strategic objectives:

- **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ONE - PREVENTION & RELIEF**
To prevent and relieve homelessness and rough sleeping wherever possible in line with the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA 2017) and the Government's National Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018.
- **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE TWO – ACCOMMODATION**
To provide a range of accommodation for homeless households, making innovative use of solutions in the private sector.
- **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE THREE - PARTNERSHIP WORKING**
To work with local organisations to provide a coordinated approach to tackling and preventing homelessness.
- **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE FOUR – MONITORING**
To keep up to date with homelessness trends, customer satisfaction, Government policy, legislation and good practice.

- 3.6. This Strategy 2019-2023 contains a list of achievements from actions referred to in the Strategy 2018-2023 and sets out new actions to be delivered up to 2021

- 3.7. Monitoring and review of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
Progress being made to deliver the Strategy 2019-2023 will to be monitored by the multi-agency Dartford Homeless Strategy and Rough Sleeper Implementation Group (HSIG), which was formed under the last strategy. The aim of this group is for partner organisations to come together to drive the implementation of the Strategy 2019-2023. The HSIG is open to representatives from Health, Kent County Council Social Care, Kent Supporting People, Kent Probation, registered housing providers, and voluntary agencies.

- 3.8. In terms of review, a report detailing progress of delivery will be presented to the HSIG on a regular basis, to ensure that its actions remain relevant and to consider new and emerging issues that need to be tackled.

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4. Relationship to the Corporate Plan
This report relates to the Corporate Plan aim 'To facilitate quality, choice and diversity in the housing market, to create strong and self-reliant communities and deliver high quality services to service users'.
5. Financial, legal, staffing and other administrative implications and risk assessment

Financial Implications	Various budgets are in place to support the Council's Homeless Service and Strategy including a homelessness prevention budget of £107,000. Government funding has moved towards a prevention focus but the service continues to be under financial pressure as spending on temporary accommodation continues to be in excess of the available budget.
Legal Implications	It is a requirement of the Homelessness Act 2002 (section 1) for local housing authorities to develop and publish a homelessness strategy.
Staffing Implications	None
Administrative Implications	None
Risk Assessment	No uncertainties and/or constraints

6. Details of Exempt Information Category
Not applicable
7. Appendices
Appendix A – Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023

BACKGROUND PAPERS

<u>Documents consulted</u>	<u>Date / File Ref</u>	<u>Report Authors</u>	<u>Section and Directorate</u>	<u>Exempt Information Category</u>
Homelessness Review 2017	N/A	Jackie Pye x3683	Housing Services Strategic	N/A