



## Policy and Resources Committee 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019

### North Northamptonshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024

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#### Purpose of report

This report outlines the work being undertaken to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for North Northamptonshire and seeks approval for the draft document to go out to consultation in East Northamptonshire.

#### Attachment

Appendix 1: Draft North Northamptonshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Appendix 2: Consultation Event Workshop Notes

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment

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#### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018. It changed the emphasis in dealing with homelessness from crisis intervention to prevention. New duties were placed on local authorities and other public bodies including enhanced duties towards 'non-priority' homeless households (most of whom are single people or couples with no dependent children).
- 1.2 The Homelessness Code of Guidance produced by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in February 2018 (and updated in June 2018) placed a duty on all housing authorities to carry out a homelessness review and produce a homelessness strategy every 5 years.
- 1.3 The MHCLG Rough Sleeping Strategy (August 2018) and its Delivery Plan (December 2018) placed a duty on housing authorities to have a combined Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in place by Winter 2019. The Government is committed to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and to end it by 2027.
- 1.4 The East Northamptonshire Strategic Housing Plan adopted and published by this Council in July 2018 included a Housing Priority to Prevent and Reduce Homelessness. As part of this section we included an initial Homelessness Strategy which we committed to review once the Homelessness Reduction Act had been in place for a year.
- 1.5 Given the imminent move to a unitary authority in North Northamptonshire and the need for all 4 councils to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, it was considered expedient for this work to be undertaken jointly.

## **2.0 Developing the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy**

- 2.1 Officers from the 4 councils have therefore undertaken a comprehensive review of homelessness in North Northamptonshire and have produced a draft over-arching Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for North Northamptonshire which is attached at Appendix 1. The Strategy summarises the results of the homelessness review and sets out the Aims and Objectives of the Strategy (Section 7) to achieve the vision of 'Working collaboratively across North Northamptonshire to end homelessness.' Officers are now working on more detailed locally based Action Plans which will enable the respective teams to deliver actions in their authorities.
- 2.2 The East Northamptonshire Housing Forum, comprising representatives from registered housing providers and statutory and voluntary agencies, was consulted at an event on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019 to gain their views on what should be included in the East Northamptonshire Action Plan. Notes from the consultation event workshops are attached at Appendix 2. East Northamptonshire officers are working on producing the Action Plan in order to establish what can realistically be delivered within the resources available to both the council and its partners.
- 2.3 Due to the statutory requirement to have a strategy in place by Winter 2019, it was considered important to bring the draft document to this committee for approval to consult on it over the summer months. Work will continue during this time with a view to bringing the final document and the action plan to this Committee in the autumn for adoption.

## **3.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 3.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and only neutral or positive impacts have been identified. The positive impacts will be for:
- People with mental health conditions and/or drug and alcohol problems who are more likely to experience homelessness and rough sleeping
  - Pregnant women, single parents, families with children, older people and young people under 18 who are considered to be in priority need under the Homelessness Reduction Act
  - All homeless households who are more likely to experience socio-economic exclusion.

The initial Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 3 for information.

## **4.0 Privacy Impact Implications**

- 4.1 It is not considered that the over-arching Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will have any Privacy Impact implications. Statistics included in the Strategy are anonymous and cannot be traced to individuals. However, items on the Action Plan will need to be considered, particularly when sensitive information about individuals is involved.

## **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 It is a statutory obligation, under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and its Code of Guidance, for housing authorities to produce a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy by Winter 2019.

## 6.0 Risk Management

- 6.1 The Council's Risk Register includes the RM PLN 014 'Increase in Homeless Applications'. The Housing Services and Housing Options teams aim to keep increases in homeless applications to a minimum by placing the emphasis in their work on homelessness preventions. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will also assist with keeping homelessness to a minimum.
- 6.2 If no Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is put in place by the Winter, the council risks being in breach of its statutory duty.

## 7.0 Resource and Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no resource or financial implications arising directly from this report. The strategy is being produced using existing resources within the Housing Services Team. However, it is likely that actions agreed for the Action Plan will have resource implications which will need to be considered when it is brought to this Committee in the Autumn.
- 7.2 Significant additional resources have been allocated to the council by the Government for homelessness prevention over the past 3 financial years as follows:

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<b>Flexible Homelessness Support Grant - FHSG (ring fenced)</b>	£45,521	£48,403	£68,735
<b>New Burdens Funding (NBF)</b>	£15,056	£13,791	£17,784
<b>Additional FHSG</b>	These funds were allocated in March 2019 for use in 2019/20		£14,000
<b>Additional NBF</b>			£3,494
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£60,577</b>	<b>£62,194</b>	<b>£104,013</b>

- 7.3 Various sums have been allocated for use from this funding, such as the provision of an additional Homelessness Prevention Officer for Homes Direct and Homelessness Prevention Grants. A full breakdown of spend and commitments to date and current funds available will be brought to this Committee with the final Strategy and Action Plan in the autumn. Subject to Member agreement, it may be considered appropriate to allocate some of the remaining resources to delivering elements of the Action Plan.

## 8.0 Constitutional Implications

- 8.1 There are no constitutional implications associated with this report.

## 9.0 Implications for our Customers

- 9.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy together with the ENC Action Plan will provide better services and outcomes for our customers who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Where possible homelessness will be prevented, but where not possible, customers will be dealt with in a dignified way and, wherever possible, suitable accommodation will be provided, with support as necessary.

## 10.0 Corporate Outcomes


- 10.1 The Corporate Outcomes associated with the strategy are:

- Good Quality of Life – The prevention and relief of homelessness will improve the quality of life for people homeless or threatened with homelessness
- Good Value for Money – Resources available for homelessness will be allocated in a more targeted and strategic way
- Effective Partnership Working – Partnership working will be encouraged with housing providers and other statutory and voluntary agencies
- High Quality Service Delivery – Delivery of homelessness services will be more targeted and strategic.

## 11.0 Recommendation

- 11.1 The Committee is recommended to approve the Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for consultation.

*Reason – to ensure that the final strategy will be fit for purpose.*

<b>Legal</b>	Power: Homelessness Reduction Act 2017				
	Other considerations: Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018 MHCLG Rough Sleeping Strategy and Delivery Plan 2018				
<b>Background Papers:</b>					
<b>Person Report:</b>	<b>Originating</b>	Carol Conway, Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager ☎ 01832 742078 ✉ cconway@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk			
<b>Date: 01.07.19</b>					
<b>CFO</b>		<b>MO</b> 04/07/19		<b>CX</b> 04/07/19	