

BARNSELEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is not a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES TO CABINET ON 17th OCTOBER 2018

Homeless Prevention Strategy 2018-2023

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To approve the Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-2023 and annual action plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **To approve the strategy and action plan,**
- 2.2 **To ensure that the homelessness data and action plan is reviewed every year and progress is reported into the Housing and Energy Board.**

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a requirement on Local Authorities to undertake a review of homelessness and publish a Homeless Strategy at least every five years. The associated Code of Guidance sets out the requirements to be included in the strategy document.
- 3.2 The refresh of the strategy is timely in the light of the new legislation, the Homeless Reduction Act 2017. This Act places new duties on the Local Authority and has a strong focus on the prevention of homelessness and partnership working. The main provisions of the Act commenced in April 2018 with a new Duty to Refer starting in October 2018.
- 3.3 A review of a number of data sources was collected and analysed to inform the strategy and a draft circulated to key partners and stakeholders for consultation and feedback. The results of the data review indicated that over the last few years the service has been moving in the right direction; in that homeless acceptances (i.e. those we have reason to believe are homeless, priority need, unintentionally homeless and have a local connection), have been reducing and preventions increasing. However 2017/18 has seen a steep rise in the number of homeless acceptances and placements in temporary accommodation. Reflecting the fact that homelessness in Barnsley is increasing and it's becoming more challenging to successfully prevent homelessness. The biggest group presenting are single males between the ages of 25-44, often with a range of complex needs. The number of families accessing the service has also started to increase.

- 3.4 In order to facilitate a multi-agency response to homelessness in Barnsley we have recently established a multi-agency partnership forum – The Homeless Alliance. This group will be involved in developing, influencing and the strategy and having oversight for the implementation of the actions plan. The group will also lead on a number of key actions. The Housing and Energy Board will have strategic oversight of the document.
- 3.5 It is important that the strategy is owned at a corporate level by all parts of the council as homelessness has key strategic and operational links to other areas particularly Housing, Social Care, Health, Early Help and Community Safety. Alongside this, partners, stakeholders and the community all have a role to play in implementing the strategy and supporting the reduction of homelessness in the borough. A commitment to end homelessness must be shared by all partners.
- 3.6 The government has recently published its national Rough Sleeping Strategy which outlines their commitment to end rough sleeping by 2027. Their strategy is based around three core objectives: Prevention, Intervention and Recovery. There is an expectation within this that all local authorities update their strategies, publish them online and submit them to the MHCLG (Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government). They also expect that annual action plans will be published and progress reported.

4. PROPOSAL AND JUSTIFICATION

- 4.1 Homelessness is high on the national agenda, hence the publication of the national Rough Sleeping Strategy and the establishment of a Rough Sleeping and Homeless Reduction Taskforce. The Homeless Reduction Act is seeking to ensure that prevention and partnership working is firmly embedded in working practices and that more people are offered quality advice and assistance to prevent homelessness.
- 4.2 Homelessness can be caused by many factors some structural such as lack of affordable housing supply, welfare reforms, insecure or no employment, raising cost of living and some causes are personal such as relationship breakdown, domestic violence, substance misuse, health issues, etc. This is why this strategy cannot stand alone it needs to have clear strategic links to wider council strategies, especially the Housing Strategy, Health and Well Being, Early Help and Employment and Skills. The focus needs to be on tackling the causes of homelessness not just dealing with the consequences.
- 4.3 The strategy seeks to set out a collaborative approach to tackling homelessness in Barnsley over the next five years. An early help approach has been shown to prevent homelessness and must be the foundation of this strategy. The best way to end homelessness is to stop it happening in the first place. The key to this is early identification and intervention to try and stop people losing their homes in the first instance.
- 4.4 The strategy vision is:

Working in partnership to end homelessness in Barnsley

There are five strategic priorities contained in the strategy:

- **Priority One - To maximise homeless prevention options, activities and outcomes** – act faster to prevent people losing their homes, early identification of problems and the provision of high quality advice and assistance will ensure people have the best chance of staying in their home.
- **Priority Two – Supporting those with complex needs** - providing those with complex problems, including rough sleepers, with the right accommodation and support to build their resilience and sustain independent living.
- **Priority Three - Reduce the demand for temporary accommodation and eliminate the use of B&B** - effective action to relieve homelessness through robust pathways and to ensure that suitable accommodation can be secured at the point of crisis.
- **Priority Four – Protect and increase local housing options** - enable people to secure homes they can afford, working in partnership to make best use of existing resources, improve access to available housing options in private and social rented sector, increase supply, promote active move on from supported housing and identify and address gaps in provision.
- **Priority Five – Maximise and maintain partnership working**, working better together in a co-ordinated way to prevent homelessness and build resilience; strong relationships, common assessment and referral processes, information sharing, co-location and jointly delivered services will lead to better outcomes for the homeless.

5. CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

- 5.1 There are no alternative approaches as we have a statutory duty to produce a Homeless Strategy for the borough

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE/SERVICE USERS

- 6.1 The development of the strategy and action plan in response to emerging needs, policy change and new legislation will benefit customers as there is a need to intervene earlier in homeless cases and provide advice and support. It will also benefit the public as the aim of the strategy is to raise awareness of the types and causes of homelessness and how they can help and support people who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None arising directly from this report, however specific projects and actions may have financial implications, but would be subject to future reports if required.

8. EMPLOYEE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 As a result of the implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act the Housing Options team has secured extra resources to employ additional staff to manage the demand. This was resourced through the governments Homeless Reduction new

burdens funding, which is available for three years and a contribution from the councils revenue account. Staff recruitment is nearing completion.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and associated Code of Guidance now governs the way that the Housing Options Team operates.

The Homelessness Act 2002 Section 1 (1) places the duty on the local Authority to produce a Homeless Strategy at least every five years.

10. CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 As part of the strategy action plan the use of digital media and digital interactions with the service will be explored and where appropriate implemented. For example the new homelessness case management system has a digital customer portal.

11. COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The strategy will need to be promoted and published and in addition a number of the actions contained in the plan will require the support and assistance of corporate communications.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 Communities DMT
Executive Director Place
Executive Director People
Executive Director Core
SMT (Senior Management Team)
Homeless Alliance
Registered Providers in the borough

13. THE CORPORATE PLAN AND THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

- 13.1 The data collection for the strategy is used to inform the council's performance management framework and the required performance returns for government.

14. PROMOTING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

- 14.1 The strategy aims to be inclusive to all sections of the community and ensure that everyone is aware and can access the support and advice available for those who are homeless. An EIA for the strategy has been completed.

15. TACKLING THE IMPACT OF POVERTY

- 15.1 An underlying cause of homelessness can be poverty; the inability to afford daily living costs including rent can lead to the risk of homelessness. The work of the strategy and action plan will align with the work and the partners on the Anti-Poverty Delivery Group.

16. TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES

16.1 Homelessness impacts negatively on health both; physical and mental health. Supporting people to remain in their home or ensuring they do not end up on the streets is critical to tackling health inequalities.

17. REDUCTION OF CRIME AND DISORDER

17.1 There are complex links between homelessness and re offending where each can be a cause and result of the other. The strategy seeks to highlight these issues and collectively consider solutions to support this group. The ultimate aim is to reduce or minimise offending and anti-social behavior.

18. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

18.1 There is a risk that not implementing some of the work in the strategy could lead to an increase in homelessness and spending on temporary accommodation.

19. HEALTH, SAFETY AND EMERGENCY RESILIENCE ISSUES

19.1 None arising directly from this report

20. COMPATIBILITY WITH THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

20.1 None arising directly from this report

21. CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY

21.1 None arising directly from this report

22. GLOSSARY

23. LIST OF APPENDICES


Appendix 1: Homeless Prevention Strategy 2018-23.

24. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Homeless Review data and statistics

If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email governance@barnsley.gov.uk so that appropriate arrangements can be made

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<p>Financial Implications/Consultation</p>  <p>.....</p> <p><i>(To be signed by senior Financial Services officer where no financial implications)</i></p>
