

<b>Cabinet Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
<b>Report Title</b>	Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 – 2023
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Ben J Martin, Cabinet Member for Housing
<b>SMT Lead</b>	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing, Economy and Community Services.
<b>Head of Service</b>	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing, Economy and Community Services.
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing, Economy and Community Services.
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. To adopt the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2023

## **1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides the background to the development of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and seeks approval for the adoption of the Strategy.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory duty on the authority to carry out a homelessness review for the district and utilise the findings of the review to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy. It also needs to take into account the additional duties introduced through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 2.2 HQN Ltd were commissioned to carry out an independent homelessness review and develop a Strategy for the Council in late 2018. The review documents are shown in Appendix II - Detailed Analysis of Housing Issues in and Appendix III - Homelessness Review and form the evidence base for the Strategy development. The main challenges identified in the review are:
- London displacement with Swale being an attractive option that is more affordable;
  - The disparity between house prices and local incomes;
  - The inability of our local market to meet the housing needs of local people;
  - Lack of mobility in housing market;
  - Lack of direct access to social housing properties;

- The cost of the private rented sector in Swale compared to Local Housing Allowance rates;
- The availability of services to support people in sustaining their tenancies;
- The general lack of truly affordable housing;
- Prison discharge – with 3 prisons on the Isle of Sheppey, Swale has several ex-offenders that present as homeless even if few qualify.

2.3 The Strategy was developed focusing on the following four priorities:

- Preventing homelessness;
- Reducing the need for emergency and temporary accommodation;
- Delivering the right homes in the right places; and
- Improving conditions in existing homes.

2.4 A consultation exercise took place for 7 weeks, closing on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March. 26 responses were received as part of the consultation, although broadly supportive of the proposed priorities issues were raised regarding the quantity and affordability of housing, particularly for those in the local community who have low incomes.

2.5 The priorities for the new administration place a greater focus on housing and homelessness issues and the level of investment that they are prepared to direct towards tackling this issue. Therefore, as a result of the consultation responses and new administration focus the following priorities are proposed:

- Delivering affordable homes;
- Preventing homelessness;
- Reducing the need for emergency and temporary accommodation; and
- Improving conditions in existing homes.

2.6 The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been developed around these priorities and is shown in Appendix I.

### **3 Proposals**

3.1 To adopt the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 – 2023.

### **4 Alternative Options**

4.1 The alternative option would be to not adopt the Strategy, this is not recommended as the Strategy has been developed based upon the evidence and need from the Homelessness Review and has also been amended to reflect the new administrations priorities and investment following the consultation.

### **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

5.1 The Strategy went out to public consultation in May 2019 and the summary of the consultation responses are shown in Appendix IV

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Housing and homelessness forms links to the corporate priority for Delivering Quality of Life. It is also a priority of the current administration and its emerging corporate plan.
Financial, Resource and Property	The Housing Service is currently undergoing a reorganisation in order to align officer resource to deliver against these priorities. Additional investment in affordable housing is being investigated and an individual business case will be brought forward in relation to these proposals.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory duty on the authority to carry out a homelessness review for the district and utilising the findings of the review to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy. The additional duties introduced through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 also need to be taking into consideration in delivering this strategy.
Crime and Disorder	The clients of the housing service cover a wide range of individuals from victims of domestic abuse to offenders leaving prison. Therefore, positive interaction to address the individuals needs will have a positive impact on crime and disorder.
Environment and Sustainability	There are no additional environmental and sustainability issues identified as part of the adoption of this strategy.
Health and Wellbeing	The Council has a legal duty under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area. This includes people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. A range of services provided by the housing services directly addresses individual's health needs.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Due to the high demand on the Housing Options service and the statutory nature of this service, this is identified on the Corporate Risk register. The delivery of the housing strategy and the reorganisation of the service are mitigations to deal with this risk.
Equality and Diversity	A community impact assessment has been conducted and no adverse impacts have been identified on those with protective characteristics.
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no additional privacy and data protection implications identified through the adoption of the strategy. Any new partnership arrangements that deal with personal details will be dealt with in line with the Kent and Medway Information Sharing Protocol.

## **7 Appendices**

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I – Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 – 2023
- Appendix II – Detailed Analysis of Housing Issues in Swale
- Appendix III – Homelessness Review
- Appendix IV – Consultation Summary

## **8 Background Papers**

None.