

## MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>TO:</b> Council	<b>REPORT NUMBER:</b> <b>MC/18/53</b>
<b>FROM:</b> Councillor Jill Wilshaw, Cabinet Member for Housing	<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b> 18 March 2019
<b>OFFICER:</b> Heather Sparrow, Corporate Manager – Housing Solutions	<b>KEY DECISION REF NO.</b> CNL21

### HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY (2019 – 2024)

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To approve the adoption of the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2019-2024) and associated action plan.

#### 2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Council must publish a review of homelessness every five years and a strategy to meet the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002. The Joint five-year Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy also considers the requirements of the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

#### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2019-2024), attached as Appendix A and associated action plan, attached as Appendix B be approved for implementation.
- 3.2 That the Assistant Director for Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, be delegated the authority to make future minor amendments and updates to the strategy and action plan, where required and appropriate.

#### REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure Mid Suffolk District Council meets its legal duty to publish a Joint Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

To ensure that Mid Suffolk District Council meets its statutory obligations under the Homelessness Act 2002 to review homelessness within its District and publish the results of that review and a strategy for tackling homelessness and rough sleeping over the next five years.

#### 4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 A review has been conducted on the previous Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018. It highlights some of the key achievements in the service over that period.

- 4.2 The key achievements in Mid Suffolk include preventing homelessness in over 700 cases relieving homelessness in over 170 cases. Successful funding bids to tackle rough sleeping and improve services for those experiencing domestic abuse.

The Council has started building much needed homes for the first time, increasing our stock by 27 homes. The Council has also acquired 43 homes through Right to Buy receipts.

- 4.3 The Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy's vision for 2019-2024 is to end rough sleeping in our District, work with clients as early as possible to prevent homelessness occurring, further reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation, support households to secure accommodation in the private sector and ensure every person contacting our service, receives the same level of in-depth advice and assistance to resolve their housing crisis.

- 4.4 Following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, there has been a significant rise in the demand for services. Every person or household who is eligible and either homeless or at risk of homelessness within 56 days, is owed either a prevention or relief duty, irrelevant of whether they meet the 'priority need' threshold.

- 4.5 From April – December 2018, the team took 293 Homeless Applications (in Mid Suffolk), compared to 77 in 2017/18.

- 4.6 From April – December 2018, the team prevented homelessness in 78 cases and relieved homelessness (helped someone to secure accommodation who was already homeless) in 25 cases. This is a significant achievement and when comparing 'like for like' figures with the previous year, shows a significant improvement. Officers currently have around 45 cases each that they are continuing to work on to prevent or relieve homelessness.

- 4.7 In 2017/18, 60 households were accepted as being homeless in Mid Suffolk and being owed a main housing duty. In the first three quarters of 2018/19, this had significantly reduced to 9, which is another indication of how high performing the team are.

- 4.8 We want to aspire to prevent and relieve homelessness in even more instances and further reduce the number of applicants being accepted under a main housing duty and this strategy will enable us to do that.

- 4.9 The Housing Solutions Services is ambitious in its aims for the next five years and this strategy sets out some of the key areas we need to be focussing on to further improve the lives of residents within the District.

## **5. LINKS TO JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN**

- 5.1 Make best use of existing housing assets

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications to the final production and launching of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy other than nominal costs which will be within existing budget provision. Naturally there will be financial implications of the pledges and actions within the strategy and each will be considered individually as part of each business case or project document.

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 It is a statutory requirement to publish a Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government monitors which Councils have published a strategy and will contact us if we fail to publish a such a strategy during 2019/20.

## 8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Without a revised and adopted Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy, it is unlikely the Councils will reduce homelessness and higher numbers of Babergh and Mid Suffolk residents may be at increased risk. This will impact most on our vulnerable residents and children.	Highly unlikely (1)	Disaster (4)	Dedicated officer resources support the production and inclusion of a reviewed Homelessness Reduction & Rough Sleeping Strategy in accordance with new duties and guidance of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, as part of the comprehensive Housing Strategy development process.

## 9. CONSULTATIONS

Please note that all consultation work was carried out jointly with the Homes and Housing strategy.

- 9.1 April 2018: Housing market stakeholder event to determine areas of strategic focus and begin work on action plans.
- 9.2 June 2018: Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councillors workshop event to comment on and refine work so far.
- 9.3 June 2018: Babergh and Mid Suffolk Town and Parish Councils alerted in advance of the consultation period during September / October.
- 9.4 July 2018: Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee: to comment on the process and endorse the approach.
- 9.5 September 2018: Babergh and Mid Suffolk Cabinets approved the draft Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy and agreed for it to be consulted on alongside the Homes and Housing Strategy. Subsequently, a 30-day consultation that began on the 27<sup>th</sup> October until 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018 took place.

Promotion included web pages, an email banner that all staff used and articles on Social media. During the consultation period copies of the draft strategy were sent to all key stakeholders including; Local Borough and District Councils, Third Sector organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureaux. With a request to complete a survey and capture views.

- 9.6 October 2018: An event was held in Endeavour House Atrium whereby stakeholders could speak to officers regarding the content of the consultation.
- 9.7 November 2018: Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councillors workshop to consider consultation feedback and offer final amendments to the strategy and associated action plans.
- 9.8 March 2019: Strategy and action plans to Full Council to request adoption.

## **10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS**

- 10.1 Some of the protected grounds may be affected as a result of the recommendations in this report, so a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out and is attached at Appendix (C). The EQIA has been approved by the officer with responsibility for Equality.

## **11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no environmental implications as a result of the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

## **12. APPENDICES**

Title	Location
(a) Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy	Attached
(b) Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Action Plan	Attached
(c) Equality Impact Assessment	Attached