



Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report: (Suzanne Allen)

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Report of: Ajman Ali, Executive Director-Operational Services
Report to: *Housing Policy Committee*
Date of Decision: *15th December 2022*
Subject: *Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? (1212)				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				

Purpose of Report:

This Report seeks approval of the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28. The Report will outline the statutory framework under which the Council has developed the strategy and the rationale for taking this course of action.

Recommendations:

The Housing Policy Committee is recommended to:

- a) Approve the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28

Background Papers:

(Insert details of any background papers used in the compilation of the report.)

Lead Officer to complete:-	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: <i>Helen Damon</i>
	Legal: <i>Stephen Tonge</i>
	Equalities & Consultation: <i>Louise Nunn</i>
	Climate: <i>Jessica Rick</i>
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>
2	EMT member who approved submission: <i>Ajman Ali, Executive Director, Operational Services</i>
3	Committee Chair consulted: <i>Cllr Douglas Johnson</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.
	Lead Officer Name: <i>Suzanne Allen</i>
	Job Title: <i>Head of City Wide Housing Services</i>
Date: 5th December 2022	

1.	PROPOSAL
	<i>(Explain the proposal, current position and need for change, including any evidence considered, and indicate whether this is something the Council is legally required to do, or whether it is something it is choosing to do)</i>
1.1	The Sheffield Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2023-28, which is attached as an appendix to this report, sets out the vision, strategic direction and priorities for homelessness prevention and reduction in Sheffield over the next 5 years. It supports our corporate priorities and will form a key chapter of the new Housing Strategy. It also complements other Sheffield City Council partnership strategies and programmes of work that encourage independence and target help to the most vulnerable.
1.2	It is a legal requirement of the Homelessness Act 2002 for Local Authorities to publish a new Homelessness Strategy, based on the results of a further homelessness review every five years. Our current strategy expires in January 2023.
1.3	<p>We have co-produced this five-year citywide strategy with our partners and customers to ensure we have an effective and inclusive response to prevent homelessness, provide appropriate housing options, and give the support needed for independent living. We have support from customers, stakeholders, senior leadership, and Councillors who are committed to the importance of preventing homelessness and making Sheffield a fair city where everybody has somewhere to call home. We have worked with them over the last year within the Strategy Steering Group to ensure that it is a city-wide strategy which all partners can take ownership of.</p> <p>Work on a draft action plan with partners is ongoing to enable better collaboration and joined-up service provision. We will launch the strategy with the following committee sign-off and hold workshops on each theme to discuss the action plan, highlighting which actions their organisation can lead on and adding any additional relevant actions. We will then bring the action plan to a later committee for a further sign-off.</p>
1.4	<p>A review of homelessness in Sheffield has been undertaken to inform the Strategy and what the priorities should be. Since April 2018, Sheffield City Council has conducted 15,516 homeless assessments. In 2021/22 968 households were accepted as homeless, which is a significant increase from the figure of 396 in 2019/20</p> <p>The top 3 reasons for homelessness in Sheffield are:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family or friends no longer able to accommodate them • Domestic abuse • Private sector tenancy coming to an end
1.5	<p>The Strategy sets out our vision for everyone in Sheffield to have a place to call home. We will minimise homelessness by focusing on early prevention to help people keep their homes or move in a planned way.</p> <p>In a crisis, we will provide good quality housing advice and options so people can resolve their housing problems in a way that is resilient and long-lasting.</p> <p>We will aim to eliminate rough sleeping in the City by improving prevention and making sure everyone has access to suitable emergency housing and a permanent home with the support they need.</p> <p>The Strategy identifies two overarching themes which will inform all our priorities:</p> <p><u>Tackling Inequalities</u></p> <p><u>Supporting People Through The Cost of Living Crisis</u></p> <p>The five priorities that will make the most difference in addressing homelessness are:</p> <p><u>Proactively Preventing Homelessness</u></p> <p>Many people are already in crisis before they approach a homelessness service. Our evidence shows that we need to get better at helping people earlier on with the right advice, practical help, and support to keep their current home or move in a planned way.</p> <p>This priority will ensure that our advice is accurate and timely with a better range of housing options to prevent homelessness from occurring.</p> <p><u>Improving Services to Support Vulnerable Groups</u></p> <p>The homelessness strategy is legally required to secure the satisfactory provision of support for people in the district who are or may become homeless or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them from becoming homeless again.</p> <p>From our review, we know that there are some gaps in services that will make a real difference to residents to both prevent homelessness but also help them to successfully manage and maintain their homes. This includes specialist homelessness services and access to mainstream services that are more responsive and adaptive.</p> <p><u>Tackling Rough Sleeping</u></p>

	<p>We want to see an end to rough sleeping in the city. Although we have had relatively low numbers¹ we have seen an increase over the last year. We are very good at responding to a crisis and most people are helped into accommodation very quickly when they experience rough sleeping. We now need to put in place earlier interventions. We will be focussing on more effectively addressing entrenched rough sleeping which particularly affects people with complex needs and circumstances.</p> <p><u>Improving Housing Options and Support</u></p> <p>The homelessness strategy is legally required to ensure that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people in the district who are or may become homeless. We aim to help people keep their current home but sometimes a move is necessary. The strategy sets out the need to increase the range of housing options available to prevent homelessness and meet immediate and permanent housing duties.</p> <p><u>Strengthening Partnerships and Improving Systems</u></p> <p>We rely on strong collaboration between services to make sure people can access housing advice and other support they need. Over the lifetime of the previous strategy, we have strengthened our partnerships including the establishment of the Homelessness Prevention Forum and our Strategy Steering Group. We now need to build on this and tackle system-wide issues that are a barrier to homelessness prevention.</p>
2.	HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?
	<i>(Explain how this proposal will contribute to the ambitions within the Corporate Plan and what it will mean for people who live, work, learn in or visit the City. For example, does it increase or reduce inequalities and is the decision inclusive?; does it have an impact on climate change?; does it improve the customer experience?; is there an economic impact?)</i>
	Becoming homeless is one of the most traumatic events someone can experience. It is detrimental to their health and well-being and the longer someone is homeless the worse this gets ² . By preventing people from becoming homeless we are tackling inequality and improving people’s health outcomes.
2.1	Links to Sheffield Delivery Plan
2.1.1	<u>Tackling Inequalities and Supporting People Through the Cost of Living Crisis</u>

¹ In 2021’s annual headcount Sheffield had 18 rough sleepers. Other core cities of similar size include: Liverpool:20, Nottingham:23, Manchester:43, Bristol: 68

² [Homelessness: applying All Our Health - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/homelessness-applying-all-our-health)

	<p>A key goal of the Sheffield Delivery Plan is to tackle inequalities and support people through the cost-of-living crisis. The delivery plan includes dealing with homelessness as an urgent performance challenge.</p> <p>This strategy is critical to delivering on this by improving prevention, improving housing options and support to people who are at risk of or have experienced homelessness. It will widen the offer and pathway for rough sleepers and will focus on supporting people to sustain their tenancy to prevent repeat homelessness.</p>
2.1.2	<p><u>Our Council</u></p> <p>The strategy will support the Council’s overarching themes of tackling inequality and supporting people through the cost-of-living crisis. The strategy will enable key partners to put in place effective joint working and will inform commissioning plans.</p>
2.1.3	<p><u>Where We Go Next</u></p> <p>The Homelessness Prevention Strategy will form a key chapter in the city’s Housing Strategy which is currently being developed.</p>
3.	HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?
	<p>(Clearly indicate the degree and character of public engagement and participation which has been undertaken on the issue. <i>Refer to the Consultation Principles and Involvement Guide. Indicate whether the Council is required to consult on the proposal, and provide details of any consultation activities undertaken and their outcomes.</i>)</p>
3.1	<p>Paragraph 2.10 of the homelessness code of guidance requires consultation with public or local authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons as considered appropriate. It also states that it is good practice to consult with service users and specialist agencies that provide support to homeless people in the district.³ We have followed this guidance and consulted a wide range of customers and stakeholders, both internally and across the partnership. We have also sought advice and guidance from equalities officers within the Place portfolio which supported us to carry out consultation and engagement with customers for this strategy.</p>
	<p>Over the last year, we have run workshops, steering groups and consultation events. These are detailed in Appendix 4.</p>

³ [Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities - Chapter 2: Homelessness strategies and reviews - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities-chapter-2-homelessness-strategies-and-reviews)

	<p>This process allowed us to gather evidence on what should be prioritised in the strategy. We felt it was important to consult at the earliest opportunity and throughout to allow the strategy to be co-produced and for customers and stakeholders to fully engage with the process. We have also consulted on the draft strategy and comments have been incorporated into the version attached.</p> <p><u>Customer Consultation</u></p> <p>We have undertaken an online consultation at the outset to determine what should be prioritised to achieve earlier prevention, this had around 100 responses.</p> <p>We have also undertaken workshops with the Changing Futures co-production group and one with young people facilitated by the young persons charity Roundabout.</p> <p>Shelter also undertook a number of in-depth phone interviews for the consultation with people who have experienced homelessness exploring how we could have helped them earlier.</p> <p>Involving those with lived experience will be a continuous process throughout the implementation of the strategy and we will involve customers continually during the re-design of any services.</p> <p><u>Stakeholder</u></p> <p>Over the lifetime of the previous strategy, we have strengthened our partnerships including the establishment of the Homelessness Prevention Forum and our Strategy Steering Group. We have worked with them throughout the process of developing the new strategy in several online and in-person events over the last year. We have also worked with other Council Services, the Health and Wellbeing Board, Voluntary Action Sheffield, the Combined Welfare Reform group and Registered Providers in the City to inform the strategy.</p> <p>Our homelessness advisor from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has been involved throughout the process and has confirmed the draft strategy contains the all the main relevant areas.</p> <p>We have asked our key partners/stakeholders to sign up to the strategy and a full list of those organisations who have agreed to deliver the strategy with us will be included in the published version.</p>
4.	RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION
4.1	<u>Equality Implications</u>
4.1.1	The equality impacts have been fully considered in the appended Equalities Impact Assessment.
4.2	<u>Financial and Commercial Implications</u>

4.2.1	There are no direct financial or commercial implications for this strategy.
4.3	<u>Legal Implications</u>
4.3.1	<p>The Council is a Local Housing Authority and under the Homelessness Act 2002 (“the Act”) must have a Homelessness Strategy that must be updated every 5 years and informed by a review. The Act is augmented by the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities which is a Government maintained document.</p> <p>Under section 3(1) of the Act a homelessness strategy means a strategy for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. preventing homelessness in the district (more detail provided in the Code paragraphs 2.25-2.29); b. securing that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people in the district who are or may become homeless (Code paragraphs 2.30-2.56); and, c. securing the satisfactory provision of support for people in the district who are or may become homeless or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again. <p>The strategy needs to address issues found upon review and the above three themes.</p>
4.4	<u>Climate Implications</u>
4.4.1	<p>The Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy is a high-level plan, and as such a full CIA is not appropriate at this stage. Full detailed CIA’s will be conducted on specific projects delivered under the plan.</p> <p>The biggest potential impact is the need to increase accommodation levels, and this is closely linked to the overall stock increase programme. Scheme-specific CIA’s will be completed for any construction or refurbishment projects.</p> <p>Advice and signposting services have less significant impacts, mostly based around use of office space and staff and customer travel.</p> <p>As this strategy will have a city-wide approach and partners from across the city will help us to deliver the key actions set out through this document, we will seek contributions from other agencies and support them as providers to align with our ambition to be a Net Zero city by 2030. We will also aim to ensure good awareness amongst teams and external providers of wider sustainability action in the City, such as education and training opportunities which may support service users to reduce their climate impacts going forwards.</p>
4.4	<u>Other Implications</u>

	<i>(Refer to the decision making guidance and provide details of all relevant ⁴implications, e.g. human resources, property, public health).</i>
4.4.1	There are no significant implications to note at this point other than referenced within this report.
5.	ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED
5.1	It is a statutory requirement of the Homelessness Act 2002 to produce a Homelessness Prevention Strategy every five years. ⁵ The previous strategy came into effect on 03/01/2018 and a new strategy is therefore required. The option of not producing or delaying the development of a new strategy would be unlawful, we have therefore discounted this option.
6.	REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS
	<i>(Explain why this is the preferred option and outline the intended outcomes.)</i>
6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To address the increase in homelessness. • To have a strategic city-wide approach to homelessness prevention agreed by all of the key partners

⁴⁴ [Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities - Chapter 2: Homelessness strategies and reviews - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁵ [Homelessness Act 2002 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

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