

Worcestershire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

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| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Councillor Shirley Webb |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | Yes |
| Relevant Head of Service | Judith Willis Head of Community and Housing |
| Report Author | Amanda Delahunty Job Title: Strategic Housing and Enabling Manager Contact email:a.delahunty@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881269 |
| Wards Affected | No specific ward relevance |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted | N/A |
| Relevant Strategic Purpose(s) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work and Financial Independence• Living independent, active and healthy lives• Affordable and sustainable homes• Communities with are safe, well maintained and green |
| Non Key Decision | |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. | |

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Cabinet is requested to RESOLVE that: -

- 1) the draft Worcestershire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-25 and action plan at Appendix 1 be approved for public consultation.**
- 2) delegated authority be given to the Head of Community and Housing Services following consultation the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing to agree any changes that may be required following the consultation process.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all housing authorities to have a homelessness strategy in place which is based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their district. The current Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy comes to an end on the 31st December 2022.
- 2.2 This new Worcestershire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (Appendix 1) sets out how the Worcestershire local housing authorities

and Worcestershire County Council will work together to prevent and relieve homelessness.

- 2.3 It is intended that this Strategy will sit under the existing Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Plan.
- 2.4 In developing this Strategy a comprehensive assessment of the nature and extent of homelessness across the County was carried out by analysing homelessness data and taking account of the views of customers and partner organisations
- 2.5 A consultation event was held on 14th June 2022 chaired by Homelessness Link to consider housing from both a strategic and client-based perspective. This event included partners from a variety of statutory and voluntary organisations as well as delegates with lived homelessness experience.
- 2.6 Service users were also consulted and supported to complete a questionnaire to feedback on their experiences.
- 2.7 There continues to be a high demand for social and affordable housing that outstrips supply and the cost-of-living crisis will undoubtedly impact on an already challenging private sector market making access to private rented housing more difficult. It is also anticipated that there will be increasing demand from those fleeing wars creating a further impact on suitable housing options. This strategy sets out how we will continue to deliver services and respond to the changes that lie ahead.
- 2.8 The top four reasons for homelessness are:
end of Assured Shorthold Tenancies (AST); family and friends no longer willing to accommodate; other and relationship breakdown (non-violent). This is comparable throughout the county.

| | Prevention % | | | Relief % | | |
|--|--------------|-------|-------|----------|-------|-------|
| | 18/19 | 19/20 | 20/21 | 18/19 | 19/20 | 20/21 |
| End of AST | 33.6 | 33.2 | 23.1 | 10.2 | 13.8 | 6.8 |
| Family/Friends no longer willing to accommodate | 26.6 | 27.1 | 31.9 | 21.1 | 27.8 | 27.9 |
| Other | 15.7 | 15.7 | 15.7 | 16.9 | 17.1 | 18.6 |
| Relationship Breakdown (non-violent) | 7.2 | 9 | 12 | 16.1 | 14.5 | 15.6 |

- 2.9 This draft strategy is based around 3 priorities: Prevention, Intervention, and Recovery. This approach aligns with the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy.
1. Prevention: timely support before someone becomes homeless.
 2. Intervention: targeted support to get people off the streets.
 3. Recovery: the need for accommodation and support.
- 2.10 Across all the strategy themes it is a priority to ensure that the safeguarding of all adults including those who sleep rough is explicitly stated and addressed within service aims, learning from the Worcestershire Rough Sleeper Thematic Review and embedding the recommendations throughout the strategy and service delivery.
- 2.11 The action plan has been divided to reflect the three priorities of the strategy.
- 2.11 The strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis and this will include the review of current actions and identification of any new actions required for years two and three.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has a duty under the Homelessness Act 2002 to conduct a review of the nature and extent of homelessness in its District every 5 years and to develop a strategy setting out how services will be delivered in the future to tackle homelessness and the available resources to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- 4.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act came into force in April 2018, and places new legal duties on local housing authorities so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to early meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status, so long as they are eligible for assistance.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

5.1 The Strategy provides a framework for a range of services which support the following Council's strategic purposes:

- Work and Financial Independence
- Living independent, active and healthy lives
- Affordable and sustainable homes
- Communities with are safe, well maintained and green

Climate Change Implications

5.2 There are no direct climate change implications from the strategy itself but individual actions/services may have an impact.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.1 The strategy seeks to deliver a range of services for homeless households and draws on ways to improve the work of the Council in developing services and preparing links, pathways and referrals between services to prevent homelessness in the first place or minimise its impact when it happens. The design of services which tackle the root causes of homelessness such as poverty, health inequalities and adversity in childhood will include ensuring that providers have appropriate policies in place to make sure that there is no adverse impact on equalities groups.

Operational Implications

6.2 The delivery of the Worcestershire Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy actions will be overseen by the Strategic Housing Team.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 If the Strategy is not approved the Council will not be legally compliant. Furthermore, it is likely that more households who are threatened with homelessness, or who are in housing need, will have limited options for support to sustain their accommodation or find alternative suitable accommodation that meets their needs. If they have to make a homeless approach this could lead to the following negative outcomes:

- Increased B&B costs
- Increased rough sleeping in the District
- Impacts on physical and mental health, educational achievement, ability to work and similar through increased homelessness

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Worcestershire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

| Department | Name and Job Title | Date |
|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Portfolio Holder | Shirley Williams | 9 th August 2022 |
| Lead Director / Head of Service | Judith Willis | 10 th August 2022 |
| Financial Services | Peter Carpenter | 10 th August 2022 |
| Legal Services | Clare Flanagan Principal Solicitor | 5 August 2022 |
| Policy Team (if equalities implications apply) | Not applicable | |
| Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply) | Not applicable | |