

## **CABINET**

**21 FEBRUARY 2020**

### **REFERENCE REPORT FROM COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE OF 13 JANUARY 2020**

#### **A.1 HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY**

(Report prepared by Katie Sullivan)

##### **BACKGROUND**

At the meeting of the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 January 2020 (Minute 85 refers) the Committee had had before it the Council's draft Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 – 2024 and accompanying Briefing Note.

Councillor Paul Honeywood, Portfolio Holder for Housing, was welcomed to the meeting for this item.

At that meeting Members were informed that the draft Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024 had been approved by the Housing Portfolio Holder to go out to public consultation and that the consultation period had been running since 6 January 2020 and would run for six weeks. As part of the consultation process, it had been suggested that the draft strategy be presented to the Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Members were further informed that Section 1 Homelessness Act 2002 required the Council to carry out a review of homelessness in the District and to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based upon the conclusions in that review and predicted future levels of homelessness in the District. The Council was required to comply with the provisions of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011 and subsequently the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) in assessing, preventing and tackling homelessness in the District.

The Homelessness Reduction & Rough Sleeping Strategy had been drafted following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. That Act had initiated the most significant change to homelessness administration and legislation since the first homelessness legislation was passed in 1977. The strategy had been developed to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in the District at a time when homelessness was increasing locally and nationally with associated social and financial costs.

The strategy set out the national and local strategic setting for homelessness and the

causes and demographics of homelessness and rough sleeping in the District. It also set out the challenges the Council faced in tackling homelessness and rough sleeping locally and how homelessness was an issue that needed to be tackled in partnership with other agencies. The Council, as a community leader, could facilitate earlier prevention and better partnership working.

The strategy identified four key strategic priorities to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in the District as follows:

- Earlier Intervention and Education
- Better Partnership and Holistic Working
- Increasing the Supply of Suitable Accommodation
- Exploring New Ways to Prevent and Tackle Rough Sleeping.

Once the consultation period expired, the Council would produce an action plan to deliver the priorities identified in the strategy.

Following the information provided, Members were given the opportunity to ask questions which were responded to by Peter Russell (Executive Projects Manager (Housing)), Tim R Clarke (Head of Housing and Environmental Health) and Councillor Honeywood. Officers agreed to re-examine the section of the Strategy referencing the levels of deprivation in the area. A typographical error on page 27 of the report was also highlighted to officers.

#### **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS TO CABINET**

Following discussion, it was moved by Councillor Davidson, seconded by Councillor Davis and **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that the various housing delivery methods available to the Council be looked into and that a detailed presentation be provided to all Councillors by Housing Officers and the Portfolio Holder for Housing in order to discuss the range of options available.

Cabinet is now asked to consider the recommendation of the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

#### **PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S RESPONSE AND RECOMMENDATION**

##### **Response**

The response of the Housing Portfolio Holder to the recommendation of the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee is as follows:-

*"I would like to thank the members of the committee for considering the content of the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. If we are to have a positive impact on reducing the number of people threatened with homelessness we must*

*influence an increase in the number of truly affordable homes that are available in the district. To this end Cabinet has agreed in principle to a house building and acquisitions programme with the ambition to bring 200 additional homes into our own housing stock.*

*There are a number of ways in which the Council can finance and deliver these additional homes and a report on each proposed scheme will be brought to Cabinet for final approval. Given the complex nature of some delivery methods I do not see merit in providing a presentation to all Councillors at this stage, especially when some of these methods may well not prove to be viable for technical or legal reasons.*

*I, along with officers from the Housing and Finance teams, am considering which options are the most advantageous to the Council and our residents and it may well be that a combination of delivery methods are used to achieve the 200 home target. Once an option has been assessed as viable and robust I will provide full details to Cabinet for consideration.”*

**Recommendation to Cabinet**

That Cabinet notes the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s recommendation and endorses the Portfolio Holder’s response thereto.