

Executive Decision Report

Homelessness Review & Strategy

Decision to be taken by: Assistant City Mayor - Housing

Decision to be taken on: 1 May 2018

Lead director: Chris Burgin



City Mayor

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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- Report version number: v1.1

1. Summary

- 1.1 There is a requirement in the Homelessness Act 2002 for housing authorities to:
 - Carry out a review of homelessness in their areas;
 - Formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on this review;
 - Keep the strategy under review
 - Consult other local or public authorities, or voluntary organisations before adopting or modifying the strategy.
- 1.2 In October we presented the draft review, strategy and proposals to the Executive. During November / December 2017 we consulted on the draft homelessness strategy including nine proposals. The new homelessness strategy sets out our vision and goals for preventing and addressing homelessness in Leicester.
- 1.3 We have reviewed the feedback received and have amended the review and strategy (details of revisions made are set out in section 3 of this report). We are seeking approval to publish the strategy and begin implementation of the new strategy.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To:
 - Approve the revised homelessness review and strategy for publication
 - Approve work starting to implement the homelessness strategy (including proposals).

3. Supporting information including options considered:

Homelessness review & strategy consultation

- 3.1 Following approval from Executive we consulted on the draft homelessness review, strategy and proposals during November / December 2017.
- 3.2 A full consultation exercise was completed which included an online consultation exercise, individual meetings with existing housing-division contracted homelessness service providers, a meeting of the Homelessness Reference Group, briefing of staff in the homelessness, prevention and support service and consulting with Housing Scrutiny Commission. A report of the consultation undertaken is shown at Appendix A.

Revisions following consultation

a) Review

3.3 The review document is the comprehensive evidence base that has helped inform the strategy, including the proposals made. The review document was available as part of the consultation exercise so respondents could understand what informed the strategy. Feedback was received from LPT's homeless mental health service (HMHS) that the review omitted to acknowledge mental health support provided to homeless people. The review (appendix B) has been amended to reflect the important role of HMHS. The Director of Housing & Head of Service Homelessness, Prevention & Support have also met with the service to discuss in more detail their feedback and future partnership working.

b) Proposals

3.4 The proposals made were generally well received therefore we are proposing that further work should commence on developing implementation plans. Some actions will start immediately whilst some other actions will be planned over the length of the strategy (5 years). The detailed feedback received will be used to inform the implementation plans.

3.5 The proposals were (shown in detail in appendix C):

1. Extend prevention support for singles and improve advice and information to all especially on-line
2. An amended eligibility criteria for the non-statutory groups to ensure accommodation based support is offered to those most in need.
3. Transition over the life of the strategy to reduce by half family temporary accommodation by increased relief of homelessness through arranging settled private / social lettings. Ensuring all temporary accommodation offered for families is self-contained
4. No change to numbers of specialist temporary accommodation units for offenders
5. Joint work with Children's Services to undertake analysis of the range and volume of supported accommodation required. Explore options for developing shared / semi-supported settled accommodation for young people
6. Over the life of the strategy increase the range of housing solutions for singles. Move from offering temporary solutions by increasing the numbers of settled solutions available to relieve homelessness. Work in partnership with other homeless agencies who offer support, especially where the council cannot.
7. Have available 75 units of contracted housing related support and a coaching / mentoring service for individuals with a low resilience to prevent

homelessness.

8. Bring together (outreach and revolving door) teams to improve and bolster the service offer for rough sleepers and move towards a 'transitions' service model with the overarching aim that that no one needs to sleep rough
9. Continue existing part funding of day centres. Tailored, structured support provided by 'transitions' services. Undertake an analysis of day services available to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness following changes to other homelessness services.

3.6 Considering feedback received as part of the consultation we propose to make the following changes:

- Amend eligibility criteria (see appendix D)
- Maintain current levels of contracted housing related support and work to improve awareness and increase referrals to this homelessness prevention support service. This will be continued to be monitored however if the number of referrals do not increase we would look to reduce the number of units procured

3.7 The key improvements that will be delivered over the course of the strategy are summarised in Appendix E.

c) Strategy

3.7 The key aims of the strategy were well supported however there were concerns about how these would be delivered and whether the strategy captured all the issues affecting homeless people in the city.

3.8 We believe it is beneficial to have a short strategy document (see appendix F) and therefore the strategy does not capture all the issues affecting homeless people in the city. We have highlighted what we believe are the main issues. The homelessness review document will be available for reference and is the comprehensive review of homelessness in the city.

3.9 We have however made some changes to the document to reflect some of the feedback received in the consultation. We have strengthened coverage of the work we do / will continue to with partners to prevent homelessness. The detail of a lot of the feedback is very useful and will be used when work starts to implement the strategy actions and proposals.

4. Details of Scrutiny

4.1 A full consultation exercise has been undertaken asking for feedback on the draft strategy, including proposals. There was a public consultation questionnaire on the Council's webpages and this was promoted to groups / individuals with an interest in homelessness.

- 4.2 A special Homelessness Reference Group, which is a partnership group of any stakeholders providing services for homeless people in the city, was held to discuss the proposed strategy and proposals.
- 4.3 We fed back to Housing Scrutiny Commission on the findings of the consultation and asked for their feedback; 15th January 2018.

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

The review and strategy is not a spending review and hence there are no specific savings targets. The strategy is however intrinsically linked to the pending implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act, which is expected to bring additional financial pressures. The actual financial implications will be driven by what is taken forward and will be profiled in more detail at that time.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, ext. 37 4081

5.2 Legal implications

Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 obliges a local housing authority to undertake a homelessness review in its area and to publish a homelessness strategy based on that review within 5 years of the publication of the previous strategy.

A homelessness strategy is defined as one formulated in order to:

- a) Prevent homelessness in an authority's area;
- b) Secure that accommodation is and will be available in that area for people who are or may become homeless; and
- c) Provide support for such people or those who have been homeless and need support to prevent it recurring.

In formulating or modifying its homelessness strategy, a local housing authority is required to have regard to its Housing Allocation Policy and its current Tenancy Strategy.

Jeremy Rainbow – Principal Lawyer (Litigation) - 371435

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

Housing accounted for a third of Leicester's carbon emissions in 2015 (the most recent figures available) and as the need for housing increases, and the pattern of provision changes, this will have implications for the city's carbon footprint.

Whilst the majority of the proposals in this report do not have significant implications for climate change, the Council should remain alert to any opportunities to improve the provision of well-insulated, efficiently-heated accommodation which offers affordable warmth and reduced carbon emissions. For example, the proposals to consider establishing a subsidiary housing company and to look at modular housing (Proposal 6, refer to Appendix C page 10, final bullet point) may provide such opportunities.

Duncan Bell, Senior Environmental Consultant. Ext. 37 2249

5.4 Equalities Implications

Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, when making decisions, the decision maker must be clear about any equalities implications of the course of action proposed. In doing so, it must consider the likely impact of those likely to be affected by the recommendation; their protected characteristics; and (where negative impacts are anticipated) the mitigating actions that can be taken to reduce or remove that negative impact. The consideration of equalities implications must influence decision making from an early stage.

The proposed consultation and the analysis of other data will provide an opportunity to identify potential equalities issues. In keeping with the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty these issues are as follows: elimination of discrimination – determination as to whether any particular group / protected characteristic will be adversely disadvantaged by the proposals. The second aim is the promotion of equality of opportunity. Consideration should be given as to how other broader changes, such as the impact of welfare reform and the impact of anticipated future council service cutbacks, would cumulatively affect opportunities for the people affected by the proposal. The final aim is fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The range of difference in people presenting as homeless can be significant and will include people from across all protected characteristics. Evidence from the review has been used to inform decision makers about those who may be deemed to be at greater risk and as the review and strategy have identified, would, therefore, require prioritisation. Thus far this has included families, young people and those with complex needs, including mental health needs.

An overarching equality impact assessment on the revised strategy has been carried out considering the evidence captured to date directly in relation to protected characteristics. The Equalities Impact Assessment and consultation findings can then be used to further inform the proposals.

Equality impacts of specific proposals further along in the process will also need to be considered, these in turn will need to be captured in equality impact assessments.

Surinder Singh Equalities Officer tel. 37 4148

5.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

None

6. Background information and other papers:

None

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A: Consultation feedback report

Appendix B: Homelessness Review

Appendix C: Homeless services proposals

Appendix D: Eligibility criteria to access accommodation based housing-related support

Appendix E: Homelessness strategy – What will change?

Appendix F: Homelessness Strategy 2018-2023

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a “key decision”?

Yes

10. If a key decision please explain reason

Significant effect on communities across the city