

Report to Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Wellbeing

Subject: South Nottinghamshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy – Consultation on revised draft

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Wards Affected

Borough Wide

Purpose

To seek approval to consult on the revised draft of the South Nottinghamshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision, as this report is only seeking permission to consult on proposed changes. A further approval will be required following consultation, which is likely to be a key decision.

Recommendation(s)

To

Approve the consultation on the revised draft of the South Nottinghamshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

1 Background

South Nottinghamshire Homelessness Strategy 2017

- 1.1 The Council, along with Broxtowe and Rushcliffe prepared their second joint Homelessness Strategy in 2017. This was in response to the legislative requirements under the Homelessness Act 2002. Section 1(4) of this Act requires Local Authorities to undertake a review of homelessness and publish a new homelessness strategy within a period of 5 years beginning with the day on which their last homelessness

strategy was published.

- 1.2 The Homelessness Strategy sets out a pro-active approach to preventing homelessness working in partnership with neighbouring Councils and other key partners including those with a skills, education and training remit to ensure a holistic approach. This was written at a time of increasing pressure on homelessness services brought about by a number of factors including welfare reform, a reduction in the number and range of support services provided by partner agencies and pressures on the continued supply of social rented affordable housing. There was also significant change in the way that homelessness services would be delivered, as shown in the Homelessness Reduction Bill.
- 1.3 The strategy identified five priority areas which are monitored and delivered by the South Nottinghamshire Inter Agency Homelessness Forum:
 1. **Minimising demand** – to work with partners to reduce the demand for homelessness services through delivering interventions.
 2. **Reducing the extent of crisis presentations** – working in a more joined up way to identify those households at high risk of homelessness.
 3. **Delivering effective services at the point of contact** – ensuring that households will be able to access effective advice and assistance to prevent homelessness, either by enabling them to remain where they are or by facilitating a move into more appropriate accommodation.
 4. **Providing appropriate accommodation options** – ensuring that partners are able to facilitate access to appropriate accommodation to prevent and resolve homelessness, and that there are appropriate pathways into housing with support.
 5. **Moving people away from homelessness** - reducing incidences of repeat homelessness through enabling a range of options that will assist people in accessing education, training, employment or other appropriate support.
- 1.4 Since the adoption of the South Nottinghamshire Homelessness Strategy in 2017, there have been a number of significant achievements. Notably, this includes securing £1.1m of government funding for county wide projects, which includes a range of measures being introduced such as increased Call B4 Serve coverage, a dedicated social worker and homeless navigators to help people back into housing.

Legislation Changes

- 1.5 National governments have increasingly turned to Councils to prevent, reduce and relieve homelessness. The latest piece of legislation in this regard, (the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) places a duty on local authorities to provide anyone at risk of being homeless (within a 56-day period) with advice and support.
- 1.6 Furthermore, the publication of the national Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018 established a range of measures and proposals to reduce rough sleeping. This included:
- £100m of funding to support the key aim of the strategy, which is to end rough sleeping by 2027.
 - Proposal to improve accountability at the local level by potentially introducing local Homelessness Reduction Boards.
 - Proposal to strengthen the links between homelessness activity and health and wellbeing boards, including potentially having a homelessness representative on Boards.
 - Requiring local authorities to update their homelessness strategies and rebadge them as homelessness and rough sleeping strategies. This includes a requirement to publish strategies online and submit to MHCLG and to publish annual action plans.
 - Gedling took the lead on behalf of Nottinghamshire in bidding for Rough Sleeping monies, and was successful in achieving a countywide grant of £500,000. Gedling took the lead on behalf of the Nottinghamshire partners in bidding for Rough Sleeping monies and was successful in achieving a countywide grant of £500,000. A group has been created to project manage the delivery of this grant allocation.

Therefore, there is a need for the Council's Homelessness Strategy to be reviewed and updated accordingly to take due regard to the Rough Sleeping Strategy.

2 Proposal

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

- 2.1 Officers are proposing to review the previous strategy and develop a combined Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The updated strategy will seek to consolidate the work done to date and to refresh the

policy framework in which projects and work programmes are delivered in order to respond to the recent legislation changes (which stipulates that rough sleeping needs to be included within these existing strategies). This will allow Officers to progress with key projects that will continue to help address the threat of homelessness and rough sleeping within the Borough.

- 2.3 It is proposed to continue to work with Rushcliffe and Broxtowe again for a number of reasons. This partnership is already working well together and meets regular to discuss and work on combined projects and funding bids. Many of the housing providers and key stakeholders work across the south Nottinghamshire area (as the districts/boroughs have similar issues with being on the edge of the city and partly rural in nature).
- 2.4 The next stage in the process is to undertake a consultation with key stakeholders for a 4 week period. This will involve asking a series of targeted questions about the priorities and key work areas (see consultation paper in Appendix A). It is proposed to use an online survey method to undertake the consultation and consultees will be signposted to the website, via targeted emails or as part of a wider notification on the consultation. The length and type of consultation has been determined through dialogue with colleagues in MHCLG and is regarded as being appropriate for this instance.
- 2.3 Once a final document has been prepared this will be subject to Cabinet approval before being finalised. The deadline for this work is 31st December 2019.

3 Alternative Options

- 3.1 One option is to not progress with the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. However, this would mean that the recent legislation is not being adhered to.
- 3.2 The strategy could be produced on an individual authority basis, however, this would reduce the opportunities for joint working across the three authorities and may also have capacity implications. Furthermore, as many statutory and voluntary sector agencies work across the area it is often regarded as one housing area for the purposes of commissioning housing related support services. There is also a logic to this approach as all authorities adhere to the same legislation and are experiencing similar problems.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The preparation of the South Nottinghamshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be undertaken in partnership with Strategic

Housing teams in Broxtowe and Rushcliffe and will be contained within existing revenue budgets.

- 4.2 Once drafted and with a clear understanding of emerging actions and priority work areas, officers will consider any further financial implications as part of the adoption process, including the potential to secure external/government funding.

5 Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix 1: Consultation text for the online survey

6 Background Papers

- 6.1 None

7 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 To meet recent legislation changes and to ensure the prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping within the Borough in the long term.
- 7.2 To continue to demonstrate effective partnership working within a wide range of services which has significantly enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness of the service. This approach was complimented during a recent visit from the Senior Adviser in the Homelessness Advice and Support Team from MHCLG.