

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	10 March 2021
Subject:	Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy - Strategy and Recovery Update for 2020/21		
Report Of:	Cabinet member for Communities and Neighbourhoods and Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	Yes	Budget/Policy Framework:	Yes
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Appendices:	1. Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025		
	2. Recovery Action Plan		
	3. Covid Response Summary Graphs		
	4. Rough Sleeping Action Plan		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the progress made towards the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in year one including the work on recovery from Covid-19.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** to note the contents of the report.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 There is a legal requirement for Local Authorities to have a 5-year Homelessness Strategy. The current Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was produced in 2020 and is a five-year strategy running until 2025. The strategy can be found in appendix 1.
- 3.2 To ensure continuous monitoring of progress annual action plans are created and worked towards with annual reviews of progress made against these plans. The action plan can be found in appendix 2. Please note that the action plan is a live document so there may have been further developments since the writing of this report.
- 3.3 The current strategy was intended to be adopted at full Council in March 2020 but instead was adopted by emergency decision by the Managing Director due to the Covid-19 pandemic hitting the UK and all meetings being cancelled due to the first national lockdown.

- 3.4 In light of the pandemic the year was action plan was designed to also monitor the recovery process and progress made towards service recovery. Key achievements are outlined below.
- 3.5 Despite the limitations caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, significant progress has been made on some key areas, setting foundations for further actions to be delivered in year 2.

Resources

- 3.6 To ensure successful delivery of the 5-year strategy progress has been made towards ensuring the right resource is in the right places to enable work in future years. This progress most notably includes the appointment of a Housing Projects and Strategy Team which includes a new Private Sector Engagement Officer.
- 3.7 At management level, our new Housing innovation manager is now in post and a new Countywide programme Manager, recruited and managed by the City Council and funded externally will be joining us in February as well as a number of externally funded support officers to manage the countywide project work.
- 3.8 An Innovative Housing Options Plus role was established as response to the hotel situation and review of role and development planning is in progress. Through this we have recognised the benefits of having Housing options reaching into the community.

Partnership

- 3.9 Gloucester have played a leading role in the housing response to the Covid-19 pandemic and as part of this Officers led a countywide partnership governance review. This work will see previous business as usual structures merge with the 'response' or 'cell' structure to ensure best practice from both can be realised without duplication.
- 3.10 During the Covid-19 response Officers from City Council have Chaired the Strategic Housing partnership, The Housing Partnership Oversight Group and the Operational Housing cell, leading and coordinating action, decision making and strategy across these groups.

Funding

- 3.11 Gloucester played a leading role in the submission of a £4.2m bid to MHCLG for funding to support the housing effort through Covid-19. This bid was successful to the sum of £3.8m and will realise 51 units of accommodation across the county with dedicated support attached, as well as some other projects.
- 3.12 Gloucester City have successfully applied for annual 'Cold Weather Funds' which will be used to support placements made during the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP).

Practice

- 3.13 Housing services have had to adjust significantly to home working, new technology and unprecedented demand as well as continuous changes to national guidance.

Accommodation

- 3.14 Current emergency accommodation owned by the City Council and managed by an external provider is currently out to tender for a new management contract to ensure best value and access for residents that need emergency housing.
- 3.15 Gloucester City have supported a registered provider to develop a scheme of 9 units in the City Centre suitable for families in need of temporary accommodation.
- 3.16 Gloucester City, as part of the countywide partnership, have invested in a leasing scheme run by a local service provider to provide accommodation for people with low support needs through the private sector.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

- 4.1 Housing in the City has a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of our communities. The Housing and Homelessness Strategy seeks to ensure we deliver our services on the basis of the needs of our residents and the action plan supports this approach.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 Responding to climate emergency is a cross cutting theme of the main strategy. Housing is a key part of our environment and the impact on our environment in terms of design, planning and delivery will be carefully considered.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 The action plan allows monitoring and review of progress towards the 5-year strategy and ensure delivery. We could decide not to write annual action plans, but this would reduce our ability to monitor progress and recognise issues.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 The recovery action plan was written with the support of partners from the local Housing system including registered housing providers, County Council officer's, VCS and members of the City Council staff. It represents both Gloucester City and our partners view on current priorities.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 8.1 A year 2 action plan is currently being scoped. It will include some of the outstanding or ongoing actions from the Year 1 plan, incorporate any further

recovery work and add in actions from the master strategy which will be required to ensure delivery within the 5-year period.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 This report provides an update on progress against the five-year strategy. There are no financial implications within this report. An action plan for year two of the strategy is currently being scoped, when this is reported, financial implications will be considered.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.)

10.0 Legal Implications

- 10.1 Whilst under S29 of the Deregulation Act 2015 the council is not required to have a housing strategy, it is required to have a Homelessness Strategy in place so that its duties under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and the Local Government Act 2003 can be met. The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to publish a strategy setting out how it will address homelessness (including rough sleeping) and the Localism Act 2011 places a duty on all local authorities to produce a tenancy strategy.

- 10.2 This report provides an update of progress made during the first year of the adopted Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation of this report.)

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 11.1 This action plan has been created to help manage the risk for the council. If this strategy is adopted and the Council fails to deliver on the outcomes identified, that will cause reputational damage for the Council and negative social impact for the City. An action plan detailing progress and performance measures ensures appropriate monitoring takes place throughout the duration- 2020-2025.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

- 12.1 This is an update report, so a PIA was not required.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

- 13.1 The design, planning, delivery, management and mix of accommodation across the City can have a significant impact on community safety. This action plan ensures we stick to the strategy and will help by informing our priorities and our approach to developing new communities and delivering on the City's Housing Needs.

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

- 14.1 None

Background Documents:

- 1. Draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025**
- 2. Recovery Action Plan (year 1)**
- 3. Covid response summary Graphs**

