

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	4 December 2019
Subject:	Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy		
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. Draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy		
	2. Rough Sleeping Action Plan 2019		
	3. Consultation responses for Rough Sleeping Action Plan		
	4. Consultation Plan for Strategy		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 4.1 To seek approval from Cabinet for the draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 to go to public consultation.
- 4.2 To seek approval of Cabinet to adopt the Rough Sleeping Action Plan 2019 which has been consulted upon and will form an appendix of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy and will be updated annually.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet is asked to **NOTE**:

- (1) The engagement work carried out to create the draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the involvement of key stakeholders, including pre-consultation engagement.

2.2 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) The Draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy can go out to public consultation.
- (2) The Rough Sleeping Action Plan be adopted.

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 2015 and was a five-year strategy running until 2020. Since the inception of the current strategy, there have been many changes in the external environment as well as local changes. It is therefore timely to develop a new strategy to meet the current challenges and those we anticipate for the next 5 years.

- 3.2 The purpose of the strategy is to set out the Council's aims and objectives in relation to housing and to articulate a clear vision for the role that housing plays within the community. It recognises that the Council has a key leadership role in delivering the Strategy, but that partners and stakeholders are fundamentally important to its success.
- 3.3 Ark Consultancy have been appointed to assist in co-ordinating and facilitating the development of the strategy. This work is on-going, with the draft high-level Strategy that has been produced setting out the vision, themes, outcomes and actions. The key themes are increasing the supply of housing, making best use of existing stock and reducing homelessness, with an overarching outcome of contributing to the creation of successful and thriving communities.
- 3.4 The formation of the Strategy has been developed following consultation with both Council Members and Council staff, as well as some initial stakeholder input. The engagement has taken the form of one to one conversations with key staff and stakeholders, along with a series of workshops. These discussions have identified the challenges that are faced with in Gloucester in relation to housing and sought solutions and outcomes that will be the focus over the next five years.
- 3.5 The document is built on good evidence, with the high-level data being included within the Strategy. It is written in the context of the Council Plan, the Economic Growth Strategy, the Regeneration and Economic Growth Strategy and Gloucester City Plan. It also reflects the objectives of the Gloucestershire Joint Housing and Well Being Strategy 2019- 2030.
- 3.6 A pre-consultation has been carried out with a small number of stakeholders to ensure the document being consulted on is well formed and covers key areas.
- 3.7 The initial draft Strategy (found in appendix 1) forms the basis for wider consultation with stakeholders and the public. This engagement will take place, subject to approval of the Cabinet, in December/January. Following the consultation, a fuller Strategy will be developed which fully reflects the consultation and explores further the context and drivers for the themes and outcomes. As well as checking that the actions are the right ones. A communication and consultation plan is being developed.
- 3.8 The actions within the strategy give an overview of the workstreams and activities that need to be undertaken. More detailed SMART actions supported through appropriate budgetary provision will be developed through the Housing Service Plan. These will be linked to key performance indicators and the progress of the Strategy Action Plan will be reported annually to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.9 Throughout the life span of the Strategy it will be regularly reviewed in the light of economic, environmental and social change.

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. It also identifies quality and standards as a key theme which is known to have a significant impact on health.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 Responding to climate emergency is a cross cutting theme of the draft 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 current Housing and Homelessness Strategy is coming to an end and it is a statutory requirement under the Homelessness Act 2002 for us to have a Homelessness Strategy. We could consider only adopting a Homelessness strategy, but this would not take into account the broader impact of Housing challenges across the City. For this reason, it makes sense to develop a new Housing and Homelessness Strategy for the City for the next 5 years.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 In order to ensure an effective strategy that is relevant to a wide range of stakeholders, including our residents, a thorough and well-planned consultation is essential.
- 7.2 In order to satisfy the requirements of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), Gloucester City Council must have an adopted Rough Sleeping Action Plan by the end of 2019 and this must feed into the Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 8.1 Following the consultation a final draft of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy with the consideration and inclusion of consultation feedback, will come back to Cabinet in the new year for endorsement. As this is a framework policy, the strategy will be finally adopted at March 2020 Council.
- 8.2 On adoption of the Rough Sleeping Action Plan 2019, a final version will be sent to MHCLG. This will then be updated annually.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 Gloucester City Council received a Homelessness Prevention Grant to the value of £372K last year. This strategy will help to ensure that resources are targeted appropriately to meet our Housing needs and ensure efficient service delivery.
- 9.2 Temporary Accommodation cost the Council £1,259k last year which is a considerable cost. This strategy will help us to identify opportunities for both reduction in need and therefore save the Council revenue costs.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation 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 S3(8) of the Homelessness Act 2002 provides that the council shall consult with the public, other local authorities and other persons they think appropriate in relation to the draft strategy and take into account the outcome of that consultation prior to adoption.

10.3 Any strategy should be reviewed regularly.

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

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

11.1 There are no risks associated with consulting upon the draft strategy.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full 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 strategy 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:

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