

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>14 September 2022</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Update for 2021/22</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Strategy</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
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<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>1. Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025</b>		
	<b>2. Recovery Action Plan</b>		

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the progress delivering the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in year two, 2021/22.

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the contents of the report and the progress made towards delivering the strategy be noted.

### 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 adopted 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 delivering the Strategy, annual action plans are created with annual reviews of progress made against these plans. The action plan can be found in Appendix 2.
- 3.3 Following year one where there was a key focus on service recovery, the first three quarters of 2021/22 saw a shift to addressing the key priorities within the Strategy.
- 3.4 Despite the continued impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, progress continues to be made in some key areas, and unexpected and significant challenges have arisen over the year, such as:
  - Resettlement of Afghan British Army Local Employed Staff and the subsequent broader resettlement programme

- Ceasing the use of Priory Place as temporary accommodation
- The Ukrainian refugee response
- The service impacts from the Council's cyber incident

### 3.5 The key achievements in 2021/22 have been:

#### 3.5.1 Developing a more robust regime for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)

- Implementing revised HMO licensing templates and process.
- Mapping HMO data to GIS system.
- Implementing a financial penalty procedure for HMOs.

#### 3.5.2 Deploying enforcement powers pro-actively to address issues with landlords who are providing poor quality accommodation.

- Rent Repayment Order process delivered, and our first application made to the First Tier Tribunal in respect of an unlicensed HMO
- Works in default process delivered and implemented where works not undertaken in compliance with legal notices
- Approximately £30,000 of financial penalties has been received as enforcement income in 2021/22 in cases where evidence has been gathered of serious offences
- Emergency Remedial Action taken in four cases where an imminent risk of serious harm to private tenants was found

#### 3.5.3 Putting a system in place for targeting poor quality properties that pose a high health and safety risk.

- Housing-focused enforcement policy drafted with the aim of seeking adoption during 2022/23.

#### 3.5.4 Proactively managing affordable warmth and energy efficiency initiatives.

- Working in partnership with Stroud District Council procured a project officer to support compliance action in respect of private landlord's obligations to meet minimum energy efficiency standards
- Working in partnership across Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire delivering a successful joint funding bid to continue to deliver the Warm and Well project which provides energy efficiency improvements to residents most vulnerable to fuel poverty

#### 3.5.5 Fully implementing the planning policies underpinning the Gloucester Plan and the Joint Core Strategy.

- A number of key decisions have delivered policy compliant levels of Affordable Housing at 20% with the second Winnycroft site being approved at 20% with the stated requirement to achieve additionality of a further 15%.

3.5.6 Public and private sector investment into housing and associated infrastructure projects is maximised.

- A significant number of homes were delivered through Homes England funding in 2021-22. The Guinness partnership's Quay's development a key component of this, as well as Gloucester City Homes infill sites that continue to use grant funding.
- Officers have successfully worked with a public landowner to maximise both investment into affordable housing and maximise the social value on two land disposals in the City.

3.5.7 Specialist housing is provided to meet the needs of those who require it, such as older people and those with disabilities.

- Housing strategy and operational officers worked in partnership with Sanctuary and a retained Occupational Therapist on an approach to match suitable applicants to accessible (Category M4(2) formerly known as Lifetime Homes) properties.
- Housing Project and Strategy Team co-produced processes for the advertisement, shortlisting and letting of wheelchair user homes.
- Housing strategy and operational officers worked successfully to prevent the homelessness of a family with two daughters in wheelchairs, identifying a new build property suitable for adaptation, ensuring the registered provider worked to provide the needed adaptations through a disabled facilities grant.
- Housing and Planning officers have worked on delivering a planning consent for a specialist housing scheme in Kingsway based on an affordable housing and service charge model that will meet the need for housing for those with mental health issues.

3.5.8 Explore with partners the opportunity to set up a fund to tackle the threat of potential homelessness, through for example a deposit scheme/rent in advance, whilst demonstrating cost effectiveness.

- The Private Sector Engagement Officer has led on improving engagement with private sector landlords, including through surveys to identify satisfaction with our approach.
- Links have been strengthened with the County Landlords Forum identifying key issues for landlords, and a Landlord Expo was delivered.

3.5.9 Response to homelessness is pro-active and person centred.

- Officers have worked to ensure pathways for homeless people are understood by all partners. A single homeless pathway task and finish group led by the Housing Projects and Strategy team completed and signed off a protocol to support movement through the pathway.

3.5.10 Put a clear programme in place to end the use of bed and breakfast as a form of emergency temporary accommodation

- The acquisition of Jubilee House for use as temporary accommodation

- Contracting a new provider to deliver temporary accommodation at Caridas House in addition to the management of Jubilee House has improved outcomes
- The number of families accommodated in bed and breakfast accommodation has been reduced significantly during 2021/22

#### 3.5.11 Continued partnership working to deliver positive homelessness outcomes for residents

- The successful partnership Rough Sleeping Initiative 2022-25 bid includes funding for Gloucester-specific projects
- The development of a countywide Ending Rough Sleeping Plan that sets out co-ordinated actions to be delivered across Gloucestershire
- The delivery of Next Steps Accommodation Project accommodation for people with rough sleeping histories has helped to reduce the number of people sleeping rough in Gloucestershire
- The successful re-procurement through the Housing Partnership Team of a number of countywide homelessness services including an improved rough sleeping outreach service that incorporates service and performance monitoring improvements
- Partnership work with the Probation Service to undertake upstream needs assessments of prison leavers has reduced the number of people who are released from prison without appropriate housing

#### 3.5.12 Work with partners to review the Homeseeker Plus Policy

- The Homeseeker Plus Policy was successfully reviewed and the revised policy implemented from April 2022

#### 3.5.13 Ensure that there is year-round severe weather provision for rough sleepers including those with no recourse to public funds

- During 2021/22 all rough sleepers have been made an offer of suitable accommodation regardless of their circumstances

### **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 implementation of a Housing Projects and Strategy Team who continue to support delivery of our ambitions.

3.7 Recruiting and retaining staff with appropriate skills, attitudes, behaviours, and experience is a challenge for all local authorities in the UK currently and a challenge the Management team are seeking to address.

### **Working in partnership**

3.9 Gloucester continues to work in partnership in many areas of the Strategy to deliver outcomes.

3.10 The City Council now jointly chairs the County Strategic Housing partnership, the Housing Partnership Oversight Group and is engaged in a number of other countywide groups leading and coordinating action, decision-making and strategy.

#### **4.0 Social Value Considerations**

4.1 The Councils Social Value Policy will be used in any procurements or contracting which meets the threshold.

4.2 Delivering good quality accommodation which is fit for purpose supports strong and resilient communities and the promotes the wellbeing of our residents. This aligns with the purpose of the Social Value Policy.

#### **5.0 Environmental Implications**

5.1 A number of considerations are made in developments to support the climate agenda and the council environmental aspirations. These are laid out in a number of policy documents and strategies such as the City Plan.

5.2 Environment also features in the measures delivered through the Social Value Policy enabling contractors and providers to demonstrate their impact when working with the Council.

#### **6.0 Alternative Options Considered**

6.1 None

#### **7.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

7.1 This report is for information only.

#### **8.0 Future Work and Conclusions**

8.1 A year 3 action plan is currently being scoped. It will include some of the outstanding or ongoing actions 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.

#### **10.0 Legal Implications**

10.1 None

#### **11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

11.1 None

**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 None

**14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications**

14.1 None

**Background Documents:**

- 1. Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025**
- 2. Action Plan (Year 2)**

