

	<u>Agenda Item: 8</u>
Report to:	Birmingham Health & Wellbeing Board
Date:	3 October 2017
TITLE:	DRAFT BIRMINGHAM HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY 2017+
Organisation	Birmingham City Council
Presenting Officer	Mike Walsh, Head of Service – Commissioning

Report Type:	Information
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1. Purpose:
To present the draft Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+

2. Implications: # Please indicate Y or N as appropriate]		
BHWB Strategy Priorities	Child Health	Y
	Vulnerable People	Y
	Systems Resilience	N
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment		N
Joint Commissioning and Service Integration		N
Maximising transfer of Public Health functions		N
Financial		N
Patient and Public Involvement		Y
Early Intervention		Y
Prevention		Y

3. Recommendations
The Board is recommended to:
3.1 Note the development of the draft Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+
3.2 Note how it relates to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities and ambitions.

4. Background

4.1 The Challenge for Birmingham

- 4.1.1 The Government recognises that the housing system is broken. Locally this is recognisable as a lack of affordable housing options, particularly for larger households, and increasing difficulties experienced by people under 35 to secure affordable, independent accommodation.
- 4.1.2 Deprivation and associated poverty / low incomes are key barriers for accessing and maintaining suitable, stable and financially sustainable accommodation. Access to employment is a key mechanism for preventing homelessness. The average household income in Birmingham is relatively low. Combined with relatively high rates of unemployment – this is a driver of housing exclusion.
- 4.1.3 The growing population in the city continues to put increasing pressure on our existing housing stock. Locally there are more than three times the rate of priority homeless households than the national average and double the rate of Core City neighbours.
- 4.1.4 The difficulties that people experience trying to find and secure suitable housing has a direct impact on their health and well-being. This places increased pressure on health services, particularly in General Practice and mental health services, as people struggle to navigate the housing system in the city. With an estimated 20,000 households in Birmingham each year who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or recovering from their experience – the health and wellbeing of the city is under threat.
- 4.1.5 Birmingham has a very high level of families who are homeless and/or in temporary accommodation. More than three quarters of applicants accepted as homeless and in priority need have children – either with a lone parent, or as dependants of a couple.
- 4.1.6 Traditionally the city's approach to recovery has been overly housing focussed, with an emphasis on securing accommodation and not enough attention given to prevent future homelessness by addressing the underlying cause of people's experience.
- 4.1.7 The street homelessness community are the most visible tip of the homelessness iceberg. The number of street homeless people has increased by 53% in the last year, and by 588% since 2012. The complexity of the inter-relationship between multiple needs and the circumstances leading people to sleep rough in the city makes it increasingly difficult for a single agency to address alone.

4.2 Key Drivers for a New Strategy

- 4.2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a legal requirement on Local Authorities to carry out a review of all forms of homelessness in their district and publish a Homelessness Strategy every five years.
- 4.2.2 The Birmingham Homelessness Review was undertaken in 2016 and provides part of the evidence base for developing the new Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+.

4.2.3 The Review noted the need to develop a new Strategy that makes best use of the assets we have in the city. It also highlighted the scale of the challenge and the budget pressures facing the Council as key drivers to fundamentally changing our approach to tackling homelessness in Birmingham.

4.2.4 In October 2016, a Homelessness Summit was held with key partners and stakeholders. Discussions here led to the development of and buy in for the vision for the new strategy (4.3).

4.2.5 Locally, Council Scrutiny Inquiries into Homeless Health (2015), and Rough Sleeping and Prevention (2017) set out key recommendations for addressing homelessness in the city.

4.2.6 Alongside this, the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 will place a legal duty on Local Authorities from 2018 to provide anyone threatened with or at risk of being homeless (within a 56 day period) to be provided with advice and support to prevent them becoming homeless.

4.3 Vision and priorities

4.3.1 The vision for the new Strategy is:

Birmingham is a city where everyone works together to eradicate homelessness.

4.3.2 To achieve this vision, the strategy sets out five key priorities:

- Ensure people are well informed about their housing options,
- Prevent people from becoming homeless,
- Assist people as soon as possible if they do become homeless so that their homelessness can be relieved by securing sufficient accommodation and support,
- Support people to recover from their experience and stay out of homelessness,
- Enable people to secure homes that they can afford and maintain,

4.4 The Approach: The Positive Pathway Model

4.4.1 The Positive Pathway is a whole systems approach built on collaboration, best practice and service integration. First developed by St Basil's and implemented locally with young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, the Positive Pathway has seen much success and is recognised nationally as a model of best practice.

4.4.2 By embedding the approach at the heart of this strategy, Birmingham will create a comprehensive and consistent approach to homelessness across the life course.

4.4.3 Our approach sets out five key areas that can be used flexibly to ensure that no matter what stage people enter the pathway; they will be supported as early and as effectively as possible. The five key areas are:

- *Universal Prevention* - A wide range of timely, accurate information and advice about housing options and financial issues that is available to everyone to prevent issues with housing occurring in the first place, and to ensure people understand the links between housing choice and their financial and employment circumstances.
- *Targeted Prevention* – Introduces early intervention through trauma informed practice to

understand trauma and how it may lead to homelessness either now or in the future. It focuses on identifying individuals and families who may be at risk of becoming homeless and offering them effective support as early as possible.

- *Crisis Prevention and Relief* - An integrated, co-ordinated response to commissioned accommodation and support where housing options and homelessness services come together with other services including health, education and family mediation etc to ensure the impact of the crisis is limited.
- *Homeless Recovery* - The provision of support to limit the impact of homelessness as well as prevent homelessness recurring. This involves working with people to reduce the risk of secondary trauma or re-traumatisation by encompassing psychologically informed environments; and focusing on improving the overall wellbeing of all adults and children in the household.
- *Sustainable Housing* - The provision of a range of safe, decent, affordable housing options, both shared and self-contained, in the private, social and third sectors. It concerns longer term strategic actions such as improving the supply of suitably affordable housing to make a difference to homelessness.

4.4.4 The Positive Pathway radically changes the way we respond to homelessness in Birmingham; shifting the balance from a reactive crisis prevention response to proactively addressing homelessness in all of its forms throughout a person or family's journey.

4.4.5 The Positive Pathway forms the basis for the Strategy Implementation Plan. The development of the model is being driven by the Homelessness Positive Pathway Programme Board; a multiagency partnership with representatives from across the Council, Health, Housing, Voluntary and Third Sectors.

4.5 Next Steps

4.5.1 The public consultation on the draft strategy is open from 24 August to 05 October 2017.

4.5.2 Approval of the Strategy will be sought at Cabinet in December 2017.

4.5.3 As there is a legal duty for the Local Authority to publish and implement a Homelessness Strategy, a recommendation will be sought from Cabinet for City Council to approve the adoption of the Strategy.

4.6 Further Information

4.6.1 For further information please contact Kalvinder Kohli, Head of Service, Directorate for Adult Social Care and Health at Kalvinder.kohli@birmingham.gov.uk

5. Compliance Issues

5.1 Strategy Implications

Priority 1 - Improving the Wellbeing of Children:

- Detect and Prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences

- All children in permanent housing
Priority 3 - Improving the Wellbeing of the Most Disadvantaged:
- Increasing employment/ meaningful activity and stable accommodation for those with mental health problems

5.2 Governance & Delivery

Housing Birmingham Partnership has delegated responsibility for the development of the Strategy to the Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Positive Pathway Programme Board.

The development of the strategy an associated Positive Pathway model is overseen by the Homelessness Positive Pathway Programme Board on a monthly basis.

5.3 Management Responsibility

The Member of the Board accountable for the CQC Review is Graeme Betts, Interim Corporate Director for Adult Social Care and Health.

The Manager responsible for day to day delivery is Kalvinder Kohli, Head of Service – Commissioning, Directorate for Adult Social Care and Health

6. Risk Analysis

A risk assessment cannot be undertaken until the Strategy has been approved by Cabinet.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+

Appendix 2 – Consultation Summary Document

Appendix 3 – Consultation Questionnaire

Signatures

**Chair of Health & Wellbeing Board
(Councillor Paulette Hamilton)**

Date:

The following people have been involved in the preparation of this board paper:

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