

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

**PUBLIC**

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Corporate Director Place</b>
<b>Date of Decision:</b>	<b>12 December 2017</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>BIRMINGHAM HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b> Yes	<b>Relevant Forward Plan Ref: 004342/2017</b>
<b>If not in the Forward Plan:</b> (please "X" box)	<b>Chief Executive approved</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>O&amp;S Chair approved</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Relevant Cabinet Member(s) or Relevant Executive Member:</b>	<b>Cllr Paulette Hamilton – Cabinet Member Health and Social Care</b> <b>Cllr Peter Griffiths – Cabinet Member Housing and Homes</b>
<b>Relevant O&amp;S Chair:</b>	<b>Cllr John Cotton– Health and Social Care</b> <b>Cllr Victoria Quinn – Housing and Homes</b>
<b>Wards affected:</b>	<b>All</b>

**1. Purpose of report:**

- 1.1 To consider the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017 for recommendation to City Council
- 1.2 Subject to approval at City Council to seek approval to develop and implement the Strategy through the Positive Pathway Model as detailed in the Strategy.

**2. Decision(s) recommended:**

That Cabinet:

- 2.1. Recommends the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017 as attached at Appendix 1 for consideration by the City Council on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018.
- 2.2 Subject to approval at City Council approves priority work to be undertaken in relation to the implementation of the Strategy through the development and implementation of an action plan centred upon the Positive Pathway model set out in the strategy.

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### **3. Consultation:**

#### **3.1 Internal**

The Cabinet Member for Children Families & Schools has been consulted on the contents of this report and supports the recommendations. Legal & Governance Department and the relevant Heads of City Finance (Place and Adult Social Care Health) have also been involved in the preparation of this report. A number of internal stakeholder meetings and briefings were carried out on the strategy during the public consultation phase which took place between 28<sup>th</sup> August and 5<sup>th</sup> October as listed below:-

22/08/17	Place Directorate Wider Directorate Management Team
31/08/17	Early Help Strategic Partnership
12/09/17	Birmingham Adult Safeguarding Board
28/09/17	Economy Directorate Management Team
03/10/17	Birmingham Health & Wellbeing Board

#### **3.2 External**

A public consultation on the draft strategy took place between 24<sup>th</sup> August and 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017, when 276 people gave their views. Alongside this a number of meetings and briefings were held with a range of stakeholder groups as listed below:-

30/08/17	Birmingham Social Housing Partnership Housing Needs Sub-Group
07/09/17	Birmingham Homelessness Forum
13/09/17	West & Central Community Safety Partnership
26/09/17	Birmingham Mind
28/09/17	Birmingham Social Housing Executive Board

The findings of the consultation are set out within Appendix 3 of this report, the feedback in summary has been very positive, particular points raised during the consultation include:

- The upstream, earlier interventions to avoid people from becoming homeless in the first place are considered to be important in reducing both the pressures on agencies as well as the negative impacts upon individuals and families.
- The recognition of homelessness through the life course and the implication for health and social care for people affected by homelessness.
- The role of the strategic partners within the City including health partners, police, judiciary in supporting people at risk of homelessness, that are homeless or as part of their recovery.

#### **4. Compliance Issues:**

##### **4.1 Are the recommended decisions consistent with the Council's policies, plans and strategies?**

4.1.1 This Homelessness Prevention Strategy supports the priority themes, as agreed by Cabinet on May 16th 2017 across all four priority areas:

- Children – a great place to grow up in: Make the best of our diversity and create a safe and secure city for our children and young people to learn and grow. The strategy recognises the negative implications of homelessness upon child health, disruption to their education and development. The strategy supports the Corporate Parenting commitments by recognising that children and young people that have a background of being in local authority care are more likely to present as homeless. The successful positive pathway approaches for both young people and care leavers has been adapted as the basis of this preventative strategy.
- Housing – a great place to live in: Provide housing in a range of types and tenures to meet the housing needs of all the current and future citizens of Birmingham. The fifth and final positive pathway domain within the strategy recognises the importance of sustainable, suitable and affordable housing solutions as part of preventing homelessness and supporting the recovery of people that are homeless.
- Jobs and Skills – a great place to succeed in: Build on our assets, talents, and capacity for enterprise and innovation to shape the market and harness opportunity. The strategy recognises the clear link between affordability and housing and people's employment aspirations and their housing choices and how this avoids people presenting as homeless or incidents of repeat homelessness.
- Health – a great place to grow old in: Help people become healthier and more independent with measurable improvement in physical activity and mental wellbeing. The strategy sets out the health implications of homelessness through

the life course, in particular avoiding people from becoming homeless and supporting the recovery of those that do become homeless.

4.1.2 As this strategy forms part of the Councils Policy Framework this will require approval at City Council on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

#### 4.2 Financial Implications

(How will decisions be carried out within existing finances and Resources?)

4.2.1 The Homelessness Prevention Strategy will allow the Council and all our Service Providers, Public/Private Partners to work together to ensure that the available public resources are spent in the most effective and efficient manner for the benefit of our service users.

4.2.2 The Council invests a significant level of resources (a net budget of £5m in 2017/18) to discharge its statutory obligations for Homelessness. This investment includes the provision of hostels, temporary accommodation (leased properties, bed and breakfast and council properties) and housing advisory services.

4.2.3 The strategy was developed within the existing approved budgets of the Council for 2017/18.

#### 4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 s1 (1), (3) and (4) places a duty on the Local Authority to carry out a homelessness review of their district and formulate and publish a homelessness strategy that should be reviewed every 5 years. The Homelessness Strategy forms part of the Council's Policy Framework and is the fourth strategy since this became a legal requirement to produce one.

4.3.2 The strategy has been aligned with the principles set out in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which comes into force April 2018 which introduces a new legal duty to prevent homelessness.

#### 4.4 Public Sector Equality Duty (see separate guidance note)

4.4.1 An initial impact assessment was undertaken in August 2017 at the time of going to public consultation.

4.4.2 At that time, no potential adverse impacts were identified however given the size of the affected community a full equality impact assessment was undertaken following 1 month of public consultation on the strategy and engagement with stakeholders which concluded on 5 October 2017 (Appendix 2).

4.4.3 The consultation findings have been used to update the initial EA in the form of a full impact assessment and are attached as Appendix 3.

## **5. Relevant background/chronology of key events:**

- 5.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities to carry out a review of all forms of homelessness in their district area and to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based upon the results of the review.
- 5.2 A Homelessness review was undertaken in 2016 and has informed the development of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+. In addition the Overview and Scrutiny Reports: Homelessness and Health and Homelessness (7<sup>th</sup> July 2015) Prevention and Rough Sleeping (13<sup>th</sup> June 2017) have helped shape recommendations in relation to the drafting of the Strategy
- 5.3 The Homelessness Review 2016 set out the context and challenges in relation to homelessness in Birmingham. The following key challenges are outlined within the strategy:-
- A lack of affordable housing options.
  - Increasing difficulties experienced by single people under-35 in securing affordable, independent accommodation.
  - Growing population meaning increased pressure on existing housing stock in terms of supply, affordability, suitability.
  - An estimated 20,000+ households per annum are either, homeless, at risk of becoming homeless or recovering from homelessness including 55 identified as sleeping rough in 2016.
  - Low household income and high rates of unemployment being a key driver of housing exclusion.
  - The Statutory homeless system offers the only clear pathway into permanent accommodation. This generates a level of avoidable demand on statutory services.
- 5.4 The Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy outlines the top three reasons for people presenting as homeless, as being the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy, family breakdown and domestic abuse. The strategy recognises that the causes behind homelessness are often complex and very person centred, impacting upon health and across the life course of individuals and families. Our traditional approach to tackling homelessness has been very housing focused and not fully providing households with the capacity and resilience to maintain their home in the long-term, thus breaking the cycle of homelessness.
- 5.5 The strategy therefore recognises that whilst anyone can become homeless. There are certain cohorts of population that are more likely to be at risk of homelessness. These include:

- Young people, particularly those with an in care background or leaving care.
- Adults leaving institutional settings including care settings or prison.
- People with mental health issues.
- People with physical, sensory or learning disabilities.
- People with a history of substance misuse.
- People with multiple needs considered to be complex.
- Families affected by domestic abuse.

5.6 The scope of the strategy has been aligned to new prevention duties set out in Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 that comes into force in April 2018 and covers individuals and families who are:-

- In housing need and considering their housing options.
- At risk of becoming homeless and in receipt of support to prevent or relieve homelessness.
- Deemed under law be homeless and in priority housing need.
- Deemed under law to be homeless but not in priority housing need.
- Street homeless.
- Recovering or transitioning out of homelessness in temporary or supported Housing.

5.7 In order to respond to the wider challenges the Strategy sets out a whole systems approach based on collaboration requirements with partners. This collaboration, development and implementation is being overseen by a multi - agency Homelessness Partnership Board. In particular around better co-ordination of responses, making the 'how' as equally important as the 'what'. The proposed approach based on the Positive Pathway Model, is derived from the successful model developed locally by St Basils for tackling youth homelessness in the city. Application of this approach for all ages will enable a consistent approach across the life course and radically change the way we respond to homelessness, shifting our emphasis over the course of the five year strategy from reactive crisis prevention to proactively addressing homelessness in all its forms.

5.8 The Positive Pathway Model is based upon developing quality accessible services across 5 domains; -

- a) Universal prevention - To ensure people are well informed about their housing options via a range of services including non-housing services.

- b) Targeted prevention - To prevent people at higher risk from becoming homeless.
- c) Crisis prevention and relief - To assist people as soon as possible if they do become homeless so that their homelessness can be relieved by securing sufficient accommodation and support.
- d) Homeless Recovery -- To support people to recover from their experience and stay out of homelessness.
- e) Sustainable housing options - To enable people to secure homes that they can afford and maintain.

5.9 The role of partners is a critical success factor of this strategy.

The Homelessness Partnership Board which is chaired by the local authority has shaped the development of the strategy. The Board has a diverse membership consisting of Elected Member, local authority including (soon to be) Children's Trust, housing providers, voluntary sector organisations and statutory agencies which provides the level of expertise required to oversee the development and implementation of the Positive Pathway. Progress will be reported through to Housing Birmingham who oversee the family of strategies supporting the Housing Strategy and the Health and Wellbeing Board

**6. Evaluation of alternative option(s):**

6.1 There are broadly two alternative options:

- 6.1.1 Option 1: Do nothing. As per 4.3.1, the Local Authority has a legal duty to undertake a review of homelessness and publish a new homelessness strategy at least once every five years. Doing nothing would contravene this legal duty.
- 6.1.2 Option 2: Develop a much narrower Homelessness Strategy which only deals with people that are homeless. This is not the best option as this will not help reduce demand much earlier upstream and will not be compliant with the proposed guidance set out for local authorities by DCLG to support the implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017.

**7. Reasons for Decision(s):**

- 7.1 In accepting the recommendations made in this report the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017 would ensure that the council has an up to date strategy in place for dealing with homelessness, as required by the Homelessness Act 2002.
- 7.2 In recommending the strategy to replace the 2012 Homelessness Strategy for consideration at City Council, will establish and set direction both strategically and

operationally required to fulfil its new duties to prevent homeless as set out the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

- 7.3 To help take forward the recommendations of Homelessness Partnership Board's work for implementation and delivery of multi-agency actions on homelessness based on the approach and vision set out in the strategy.

## Signatures

	<u>Date</u>
Cllr Paulette Hamilton Cabinet Member Health for Health & Social Care	.....
Cllr Peter Griffiths Cabinet Member for Housing and Homes	.....
Jacqui Kennedy Corporate Director for Place	.....

## List of Background Documents used to compile this Report:

1. Rough Sleeping and Prevention – Overview and Scrutiny Report 2017
2. Birmingham Homelessness Review 2016
3. Homeless Health – Overview and Scrutiny Report 2015

## List of Appendices accompanying this Report (if any):

1. Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+
2. Equality Assessment: Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+, EA002378
3. Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy Consultation Findings Report