

**CABINET MEETING – 7 DECEMBER 2023**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I**

**Title of Report:**

Homelessness Action Plan

**Author(s):**

Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities

**Purpose of Report:**

The purpose of the report is to present Cabinet for consideration the Homelessness Action Plan developed to underpin the aims of the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 – 2028.

**Description of Decision:**

Cabinet is recommended to: -

1. Approve the Homelessness Action Plan to underpin the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 – 2028.
2. Approve the Governance and monitoring arrangements.
3. Approve the development of the Action Plan and the future work programme once the initial priority pathways have progressed.

**Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework?** Yes

**If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework**

**Suggested reason(s) for Decision:**

On 16th March 2023 Cabinet approved the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 – 2028, this strategy sets out the Council's strategic direction to; prevent homelessness, provide assistance and advice to those threatened with homelessness and enable move on to independent living to reduce instances of repeat homelessness.

To drive service improvement, partner collaboration and focus on tackling homelessness a clear SMART Action plan was identified as necessary to deliver changes across priority pathways. This will provide a clear framework of change and intervention across identified key priority pathways and the Council need to approve the Action Plan as a key document that will underpin its strategy.

**Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:**

No other option was considered as it is necessary to have a comprehensive Action Plan in place to drive service improvement activity across homelessness services.

**Impacts analysed;**

**Equality**  **Privacy**  **Sustainability**  **Crime and Disorder**

Summary of IIA findings

- The Action Plan is aligned to improving population health and reducing health inequalities for all affected with homelessness
- The activities and actions included in the Action Plan aims to improve services to all, and further ensure that all people can access the service and be supported into a home as required.
- The Action Plan focuses services to engage with all clients in the long term, to ensure they remain supported and can sustain a home
- The Action Plan provides an impact to all those homeless and at risk of homelessness, irrespective of age.
- There are some actions that are targeted towards young people who need additional support in order to sustain a tenancy in the long term

**Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? Yes/No**

**Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes/No**

**Is it included in the 28-day Notice of Decisions? Yes/No**

## HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN

### REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

#### 1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present Cabinet for consideration the Homelessness Action Plan developed to underpin the aims of the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 – 2028.

#### 2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to: -

1. Approve the Homelessness Action Plan to underpin the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 – 2028.
2. Approve the Governance and monitoring arrangements.
3. Approve the development of the Action Plan and the future work programme once the initial priority pathways have progressed.

#### 3.0 Background

- 3.1 On 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023 Cabinet approved the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 – 2028.
- 3.2 This new Strategy sets out the Council's strategic direction to; prevent homelessness, provide assistance and advice to those threatened with homelessness and enable move on to independent living to reduce instances of repeat homelessness. To deliver the strategy aims effectively the Council works in partnership across the city.
- 3.3 There was extensive consultation in the development of the strategy with partners and stakeholders. It was clear that partners were passionate to collaborate to tackle homelessness and work together to target the end of homelessness in the city.
- 3.4 Due to the many challenges and connected service interactions across homelessness activity and its required response it was recognised that to drive forward with reviewing and improving homeless pathway response more detailed work needed to take place to develop a collaborative Homelessness Action Plan to underpin the strategy aims and overall outcomes for those homeless or at risk of homelessness.

3.5 To undertake some detailed homelessness review activity two working groups were established: the cross-party Member Working Group and the Partners Working. The Working Groups representatives are listed within Appendix 1.

#### **4.0 Working Groups**

4.1 The working groups have been essential in the development of the Homelessness Action Plan and to ensure that Members and Partners have reviewed current city issues and challenges, identified initial areas of priority and created areas of action and solutions.

4.2 The Working Groups have met throughout the year with 11 meetings taking place;

##### **Member Working Group**

- 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023
- 15<sup>th</sup> February 2023
- 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023
- 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2023
- 7<sup>th</sup> August 2023
- 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023

##### **Partner Working Group**

- 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023
- 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023
- 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023
- 13<sup>th</sup> June 2023
- 24<sup>th</sup> July 2023

#### **4.3 Working Group activity**

4.3.1 The Working Groups undertook a wide range of activity, these included;

- General awareness building of homelessness in the city
- The Council's legislative responsibilities and duties
- Comprehensive homelessness data review
- Overview of the Council Housing Options Team – its structures and operational working
- The current challenges being faced in tackling and responding to homelessness.
- The achievements in delivery and service and what is being planned for the future.
- Homelessness Health Needs Assessment; its findings and recommendations
- External presentation from the University of Northumbria on a research Study on "Tackling Trauma, Ending Homelessness".
- Overview presentations from partners and service providers regards their insights into services in Sunderland and wider experiences of homelessness

#### **4.4 Pathway priorities**

4.4.1 Homelessness is a wide ranging and complex service area that responds to many types of case and referrals which engages with many services and partners. It became clear quickly that the Working Groups needed to establish priorities across key homelessness pathways so that work had a focus around the areas that were deemed in highest need of review.

4.4.2 Following discussions across both Working Groups it was agreed that the Pathways that would be reviewed and the initial 8 priority areas would be:

- Domestic Abuse
- Hospital admission and discharge
- Hard to Place Offenders
- Young people 18 – 25
- Rough sleeping
- Duty 2 Refer
- SWEP and winter provision
- Complex Needs / Mental Health

4.4.3 There were a wide range of other Pathways that the Working Groups identified, and it was recommended that these would form part of a future work programme. These included;

- LGBTQ+
- GP access and support
- Medical interventions
- Physical disability
- Families
- Single Men
- Single Woman
- Single Mothers
- UK Non-Nationals / No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)
- Outreach services

#### 4.5 Homelessness Service Directory

4.5.1 Through the Partner Working Group a range of partners came together, many for the first time. This was a huge step forward in relationship building and the broadening of discussions around joint and collaborative working.

4.5.2 Through discussions with partners it was recommended that we harness the developing relationship and contacts and develop a Homelessness Service Directory. This would be a simple directory of all partners and contact that were involved and are engaged in some form of delivering homelessness service and activity.

4.5.3 The Partner Working Group developed and agreed a Homelessness Service Directory. This Directory will be issued quarterly to all partners to review and update so that it remains current and up to date.

### **5.0 Homelessness Action Plan**

5.1 The proposed Homelessness Action Plan is attached within Appendix 2.

5.2 The Action Plan has 96 actions that cover all 8 pathways and the Health Needs Assessment recommendations.

- 5.3 Ten identified actions within the Domestic Abuse Pathway have been removed and transferred to the Domestic Abuse Violence against Women and Girls Executive Board associated action plan as it was felt more appropriate to place those actions in that area.
- 5.4 All actions will have a named Council lead to enable a focus and momentum with partners.

## **6.0 Governance and monitoring**

- 6.1 The overall governance framework for the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 – 2028 was presented and approved by Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023.
- 6.2 It is however important that we apply monitoring and review arrangements for the Homelessness Action Plan so that these feeds into the wider governance processes.
- 6.3 In terms of the operational monitoring arrangements the Homelessness Action Plan will be monitored, reviewed and updated on a monthly basis. The Senior Housing Manager will have the responsibility for this process.
- 6.4 The Homelessness Action Plan will be presented to Health, Housing and Communities Departmental management Team for review on a quarterly basis to ensure regular oversight and scrutiny.
- 6.5 Any significant issues resulting from the Homelessness Action Plan will be reported to Chief Officer Group as necessary.
- 6.6 From a strategic review position it is proposed that Action Plan is reviewed on a quarterly basis with the Portfolio Holder Dynamic City and Deputy Portfolio Holder.
- 6.7 An offer has been made to wider partners and their Boards to receive updates as required on the Strategy and Action Plan activity and progress.

## **7.0 Reasons for the Decision**

- 7.1 On 16th March Cabinet approved the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 – 2028, this strategy sets out the Council's strategic direction to; prevent homelessness, provide assistance and advice to those threatened with homelessness and enable move on to independent living to reduce instances of repeat homelessness.
- 7.2 To drive service improvement, partner collaboration and focus on tackling homelessness a clear SMART Action plan was identified as necessary to deliver changes across priority pathways. This will provide a clear framework of change and intervention across identified key priority pathways and the

Council need to approve the Action Plan as a key document that will underpin its strategy.

## **8.0 Alternative Options**

8.1 No other option was considered as it is necessary to have a comprehensive Action Plan in place to drive service improvement activity across homelessness services

## **9.0 Impact Analysis**

- (a) **Equalities** - An Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed.
- (b) **Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)** – there are no foreseen risks to the privacy of the public.
- (d) **Reduction of Crime and Disorder – Community Cohesion / Social Inclusion** – the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy and the Action Plan aim to ensure more inclusive arrangements within the city and its services for those homeless or at risk of homelessness.

## **10.0 Financial Implications**

10.1 There are no additional financial implications identified at this time within the Homelessness Action Plan, with delivery of the actions provided primarily through existing staff resources. However, additional financial implications may arise to respond to the needs of the service changes and wider service challenges. Where this is the case, these will be considered and reported to Cabinet for prior approval as these are identified.

## **11.0 Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations**

- (i) **Legal Implications** – The Council has a legal duty to deliver homelessness services outlined with the Homeless Reduction Act 2017
- (ii) **Procurement Implications** – no formal procurement implications have been identified as part of the Homelessness Action Plan however as the Action Plan develops some procurement activities maybe required. Any future procurement requirements will follow the Council's Corporate Procurement Rules
- (iii) **Policy Implications** – the actions within the Homelessness Action Plan will affect and influence wider Council and wider partner services and policies around delivery
- (iv) **Implications for Other Services** – The report highlights the implications and involvement of other services and partners that will be involved and play a part in the delivery of the Homelessness Action Plan

## **12.0 Appendices**

- Appendix 1 –Working Groups representatives
- Appendix 2 - Homelessness Action Plan
- Integrated Impact Assessment

## **13.0 Background papers**

- Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 – 2028
- <https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/media/30497/Homelessness-Reduction-and-Sleeping-Rough-Strategy-2023-28/pdf/HomelessnessStrategy2023-28.pdf?m=638285741121530000>



## **Appendix 1 – Working Group representation.**

### **Member Working Group** (Those involved through the year)

- Councillor Kevin Johnston (Chair)
- Cllr Alison Smith
- Cllr Allison Chisnall
- Cllr Sean Laws
- Cllr Linda Williams
- Cllr John Price
- Cllr Louise Farthing
- Cllr Dianne Snowdon
- Cllr Kelly Chequer
- Cllr Michael Dixon
- Cllr Pam Mann
- Cllr Tracy Dodds
- Cllr Paul Donaghy
- Cllr Michael Hartnack
- Cllr Fiona Miller
- Cllr Allen Curtis
- Cllr Julia K. Potts
- Cllr Iain Scott

### **Partner Working Group**

- Sunderland City Council
  - Housing Options
  - Housing Strategy
  - Vulnerable Groups
  - Housing Operations
  - Adult Social Care
  - Public Health
- Probation Service
- NHS
- ICB
- Wearside Women in Need
- Wear Recovery
- Together for Children
- Gentoo
- Oasis Community Housing
- Changing Lives
- The Salvation Army
- Thirteen
- Northumbria Police
- Centrepoint
- Homeless Action

