

## CABINET MEETING – 16 MARCH 2023

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

**Title of Report:**

Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 – 2028

**Author(s):**

Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities

**Purpose of Report:**

To approve the adoption of the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 - 2028

**Description of Decision:**

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the adoption of the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 - 2028; and
2. Authorise the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder of Dynamic City to review this Strategy annually and make any minor amendments as deemed required.

**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:**

All local authorities must carry out a review of homelessness in their area and publish a homelessness strategy at least every five years under duties set out within the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

**Alternative options to be considered:**

**Not to have a Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy**

This has been considered and rejected as it is a requirement of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 for all local authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their area and publish a homelessness strategy at least every five years.

**Impacts analysed;**

Equality  Privacy  Sustainability  Crime and Disorder

Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? Yes/ <del>No</del>	
Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution?	Yes/ <del>No</del>
Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions?	Yes/ <del>No</del>

**HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION AND SLEEPING ROUGH STRATEGY 2023 – 2028**

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, HOUSING & COMMUNITIES**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To approve the adoption of the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 - 2028

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

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
  - 1. Approve the adoption of the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 - 2028; and
  - 2. Authorise the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder of Dynamic City to review this Strategy annually and make any minor amendments as deemed required.

**3. Introduction**

- 3.1 The Council adopted its first Homelessness Strategy in 2019 to meet a government requirement to have a strategy in place. Unfortunately, within a few months of the Strategy being launched with partners the Covid pandemic hit and changed dramatically the way in which we responded to homelessness and housing. This prevented the aims and priorities of the Strategy from being fully applied and implemented.
- 3.2 Despite the many challenges of Covid-19 the strength of our partnership working, innovations around rough sleeping and the focus on the connection between housing and health helped the Council effectively deliver and improve services for residents presenting as homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- 3.3 With a lot of details from the 2019 strategy still very much relevant and from learning through the Covid-19 pandemic period the process of reviewing the new Homelessness and Sleeping Rough Strategy has been a positive collaboration from partners and stakeholders in the development of the new Strategy now titled “The Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy for Sunderland 2023 – 2028”

- 3.4 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. The Council works in partnership across the city to achieve these aims.
- 3.5 The Homelessness Strategy for Sunderland does not stand alone and many priorities and actions within it, operate in tandem with existing strategies, plans and policies, such as the Housing Strategy.

#### **4.0 Strategic Context**

- 4.1 It is necessary to ensure that the Strategy is aligned to the wider strategic context nationally and locally. The Strategy must sit within a range of statutory requirements, policies, guidance and local needs. Some of these are outlined below

#### **4.2 National Context**

- 4.3 From April 2018 the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 placed a duty on local authorities to intervene at an earlier stage to prevent homelessness and to take reasonable steps to help those who become homeless to secure accommodation.

#### **4.4 Ending rough sleeping for good**

- 4.5 On 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022 the Government published a strategy to "End rough sleeping for good". The strategy is organised through four key themes – Prevention, Intervention, Recovery and a Transparent and Joined up System.

The strategy also sets out for the first time a clear definition of what the Government means by ending rough sleeping, which is that it is prevented wherever possible, and where it does occur it is rare, brief and non-recurrent.

#### **4.6 A Housing Strategy for Sunderland**

- 4.7 During the consultation process of the draft Housing Strategy for Sunderland 2023 – 2030, homelessness was raised as a priority issue which needed focus and attention. Although homelessness has featured in the previous Housing Strategy it has now been included in the draft document spanning all three strategic themes of: Grow, Improve and Support.
- 4.8 Particular emphasis and priority is made within the "Support" theme of the draft Housing Strategy where the Council and its partners aim to prevent homelessness across the city through early intervention.
- 4.9 The proposed Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy is not a standalone document and should be considered in conjunction with the Housing Strategy for Sunderland.

4.10 There will be joint governance structures developed to ensure that all housing and homelessness issues are reviewed and monitored.

4.11 Health Need Assessment

4.12 A Health Needs Assessment was conducted to support the drafting of the Housing Strategy for Sunderland 2023 - 2030 and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 - 2028. Understanding the health and support needs of our communities affected by homelessness is vital to a strategy that aims to help people in the city.

4.13 To gain the clearest picture of health needs amongst the target population in Sunderland, multiple methods were used to draw out priorities. These included:

- A review of best practice and national guidelines
- Analysis of Local Authority-held data
- Health questionnaires completed by the target population
- Interviews with service users and other key stakeholders

4.14 A total of 21 recommendations across eight themes were identified and form part of the initial the strategy's action plan. An executive summary of Health Needs Assessment is attached to the Strategy (Appendix 1).

4.15 Throughout the strategy there is a strong emphasis on the early intervention and prevention of homelessness. Preventing homelessness is more cost effective, but more importantly delivers far better outcomes for the individuals concerned. Homelessness is a complex area and we have sought to gain a better understanding of the reasons for homelessness in the city.

## **5.0 Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 - 2028**

5.1 The proposed Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy (attached at Appendix 2) will provide a whole City approach to achieving the four key priorities:

**Prevention:** Prevention of homelessness

- Promote an early intervention ethos across the homelessness system
- Research into and review data to improve delivery of homelessness prevention
- Understand the needs of those threatened by homelessness before crisis point

**Intervention:** Intervention when somebody is homeless

- Improved temporary accommodation and move on offer
- Delivery of the right support at the right time for vulnerable groups

**Recovery:** Move on and recovery to reduce instances of repeat homelessness

- Review of local delivery models to meet need
- Support to sustain tenancies

### **Partnerships**

- A partnership strategy
- Partnership led pathways

## **6.0 Governance**

- 6.1 It is vital that the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy remains current, relevant, and able to adapt to changes in the housing environment. To enable this, a strong governance arrangement will be put in place which will be aligned to the Housing Strategy and incorporate the delivery of the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy.
- 6.2 The delivery of the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy will be aligned with the overall governance arrangements of the Housing Strategy, its action plan and KPIs owned by members of the Housing Strategy Support Subgroup. The governance diagram is shown below.
- 6.3 The SupportSubgroup will report up to the Housing Strategy Review Group which is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Dynamic City. Operational groups will be established for task and finish projects as well as related work (e.g. Domestic Abuse Review Group) and will have a reporting relationship to the subgroup.

## 6.4 Governance structure



## 6.0 Reasons for the Decision

- 6.1 All local authorities must carry out a review of homelessness in their area and publish a homelessness strategy at least every five years under duties set out within the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

## 7.0 Alternative Options

### 7.1 Not to have a Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy

This has been considered and rejected as it is a requirement of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 for all local authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their area and publish a homelessness strategy at least every five years.

## 8.0 Impact Analysis

- (a) **Equalities** - An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the Housing Strategy 2023 – 2030 development, incorporating the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 – 2028 into this and is attached as part of Integrated Impact Assessment at Appendix 2.
- (b) **Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)** – there are no foreseen risks to the privacy of the public.

(c) **Sustainability** - Sunderland Strategy Objectives cross checked with decisions outcomes:

- **Dynamic City**  
The strategy links to economy and housing. Maximising housing growth throughout the City.
- **Healthy City**  
Improving health and wellbeing by eliminating poor housing standards and providing good quality housing for vulnerable people.
- **Vibrant City**  
Improving the environment by improving neighbourhoods and communities. Creating an inclusive housing market for vulnerable people.

(d) **Reduction of Crime and Disorder – Community Cohesion / Social Inclusion** - Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires local authorities to consider crime and disorder reduction and community safety when undertaking all of their duties and responsibilities. Having considered the Homelessness and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 - 2028 there should be a positive impact as the Strategy addresses creating stronger, safer communities this should reduce crime and disorder.

## 9. Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations

- (i) **Co-operative Values** – The Strategy is based on the Council's ethical and democratic values.
- (ii) **Financial Implications** – The Council's approved Capital Programme includes funding to support the costs of the delivery of the Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy with any additional requirements to be considered by Cabinet as necessary.
- (iii) **Risk Analysis – as seen in the Integrated Impact Assessment (attached)**
- (iv) **Legal Implications** – N/A, save as set out above
- (v) **Policy Implications** – These are outlined within this report.
- (vi) **Implications for Other Services** – the delivery of this strategy relies on the close working between internal services such as, Public Health, Environmental Health, Planning Compliance Anti Social Behaviour and Council Tax. It also relies on a close working relationship with external services, Registered Providers and Police.



All relevant officers either have been involved with the consultation of the strategy and required working relationships and working groups have been established.

- (vii) **The Public / External Bodies** – All relevant groups have been considered as above.
- (viii) **Compatibility with European Convention on Human Rights** – The Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy is compatible with the ECHR.
- (ix) **Procurement** – Any procurement will be undertaken in line with the Council's procurement policy. Also, any external provider who seek contracts will be required to adhere to the Council's equality policies.

- 10. Appendix 1 – Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023 – 2028.  
Appendix 2 – Integrated Impact Assessment

11. **Background Papers**

Sunderland's Housing Strategy 2017 – 2022

Sunderland's City Plan 2019 - 2030

