

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

Report of Deputy Chief Executive (People)

to
Cabinet

on

6th November 2018

Report prepared by: Sharon Houlden, Director of Adult
Services & Housing and Glyn Halksworth, Head of Housing &
Social Inclusion

Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee

Cabinet Member: Councillor Tony Cox

Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To introduce and gain approval for the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet endorses:

- a) The draft strategy and guides on any aspects requiring amendment prior to publication;
- b) The proposal for a dynamic and continuous approach to engagement and consultation in order to support ongoing development of the action plan and its implementation;
- c) The proposal that design work and ensuring this strategy works alongside other key priorities continues to develop following Cabinet; and
- d) Delegation of authority for the implementation and delivery of the strategy to Corporate Management Team, in conjunction with the portfolio holder and other Directors as required.

3. Background

- 3.1 On 9th January 2018 Cabinet agreed to the development of a Housing Vision and Housing Strategy for the Borough on the understanding that a collective vision for housing is critical to providing context and coherence for strategy and policy decisions.

3.2 Five strategic aims have emerged from the work, these being:

1. *Prioritise the supply of safe, genuinely affordable homes.*
2. *Regeneration and growth to create inclusive, healthy places to live and thrive.*
3. *Encourage good quality housing design, management and maintenance*
4. *Support people to live independently in their own homes and avoid homelessness*
5. *Any instance of homelessness to be brief and non-recurrent.*

3.3 The strategy will adopt a dynamic and continuous approach to data and evidence and includes a commitment to ongoing dialogue with a range of stakeholders including local residents, businesses and public services to make sure that what is delivered is what is needed. We will also commit to a better use of and understanding of data, including academic research data, to make sure that our strategy works and is effectively targeted.

3.4 Given the need to start delivering on the strategic aims with pace, current staffing resources have been supplemented with additional capacity on a temporary basis, funded from within existing resources. The need to enhance the housing capacity on a more permanent basis is under review; the outcome of which may result in a request for additional investment being included within the 2019/20 budget report.

4. Other Options

4.1 None

5. Reasons for Recommendations

5.1 The attached strategy integrates the need for a clear and ambitious direction for housing, homelessness and rough sleeping which operates wholly in line with the broader strategic work being pursued by the Council and its partners, such as Southend 2050, and which will support the economic vibrancy of the borough.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities

Simultaneously to the production of the council's new corporate housing strategy is the production of 'Southend 2050'; a consultation that will lead to the development of a new, over-arching vision for the town, where policies and strategies sitting beneath this (such as the Housing strategy) will be seen as vehicles for Southend 2050's delivery. Consultation from Southend 2050 is/will

continue to feed directly in to the development of new corporate housing strategy.

6.2 Financial Implications

The council's financial resources for direct intervention are limited and therefore we can only deliver on the commitments in the strategy through working alongside and in partnership with others.

Homelessness and rough sleeping, together with intervention in the private sector and supporting people to stay in their own homes fall to be met from the council's general fund, through a mixture of council tax and government grant funding. The gross spend currently stands at £4.958M as follows:

	Gross Expenditure	Grant Income	Other Income	Net Expenditure*
	£M	£M	£M	£M
Housing Needs & Homelessness	1.870	(0.939)	(0.225)	0.706
Private Sector Housing	0.619	(0.547)	(0.068)	0.004
Housing Strategy	0.224			0.224
Supporting People	2.245			2.245
	4.958	(1.486)	(0.293)	3.179

* some of the net expenditure is recharged to the HRA where it relates to the council's landlord function.

Of the grant income for housing needs and homelessness, there is uncertainty of whether the government will continue to fund as much in 2019/20, with £195,000 potentially at risk. Hopefully the local government settlement announcement later in the year will give clarity.

Where the council acts as a housing landlord, costs and associated income are accounted for through the housing revenue account. The council also maintains a capital programme funded through a combination of prudential borrowing, capital receipts and other internal resources, supplemented by external grants and developer contributions. The capital programme provides for limited new build council housing, together with the refurbishment and maintenance of the existing stock, plus disabled facilities grants aimed at keeping people in their own homes for longer, and a variety of initiatives to make the private sector stock more fit for purpose.

As the plans are developed to deliver further on the proposed strategic aims, through new and existing vehicles, the appropriate level of financial due diligence will be undertaken, to both understand the nature and extent of any required financial investment, financial risk and opportunities.

A key aim of the strategy must also be to take advantage of external funding bids/opportunities that meet the aims of the strategy.

There is a review currently underway to assess the capacity of the housing strategy team to deliver on the aims of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping. Should the conclusions of the review need additional investment, a request will be included within the 2019/20 budget report.

6.3 Legal Implications

The strategy and its actions must respond to the requirements of relevant legislation. The need for a Homelessness Prevention Strategy is specified by s.3(1) of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2022 and is re-stated by the national Rough Sleeper Strategy (August 2018).

6.4 People Implications

Housing and homelessness issues impact people's health, wellbeing and prosperity.

Housing development and regeneration are issues members of the public are likely to feel passionately about, hence the need for the development of the Housing strategy to be aligned with the Local plan.

There is a review currently underway to assess the capacity of the Housing and Social Inclusion team to deliver on the aims of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping; the conclusions of which will be brought to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

6.5 Property Implications

These will be assessed and made clear as the strategy implementation is taken forwards

6.6 Consultation

The strategy draws on consultation responses undertaken as part of the Southend 2050 programme. Other workshops have been held also. Further consultation will be undertaken in line with requirements for key aspects of the strategy.

6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

Equality Analyses will be undertaken in line with specific aims and actions proposed by this strategy and will guide further action planning and implementation.

6.8 Risk Assessment

Dynamic risk assessment will be undertaken as part of the implementation of all aspects of the strategy and will inform approaches and be subject to robust monitoring and management.

6.9 Value for Money

The corporate housing strategy will support the prevention of homelessness, material poverty and long term care and support needs, all of which incur great expense to the council, public sector partners, businesses and residents.

6.10 Community Safety Implications

The corporate housing strategy will encourage partnership working to encourage good quality housing management and maintenance, keeping people safe in their homes.

The strategy supports the reduction of homelessness and rough sleeping which may impact public perception of community safety and prevent rough sleepers from being at risk of severe weather, physical and verbal abuse.

6.11 Environmental Impact

These will be assessed and made clear as the strategy emerges.

7. Background Papers

None

8. Appendices

Draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 - 2028