

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

28th November 2023

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Report of Assistant Director – Wellbeing and Housing

This report is public

Purpose of report

To present to the Committee a new draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To consider and comment on the contents of the new drafted Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029 and recommend adoption by the Executive.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 As part of the Council's statutory duties regarding homelessness, the Council must review homelessness in the district area and produce a strategy to tackle the issue and support those affected every 5 years. The review shows homeless pressures and trends within Cherwell and the findings inform the strategy and action plan objectives. The new draft strategy, action plan and review of homelessness in Cherwell is within the appendices.
- 2.2 A public and stakeholder consultation is currently taking place on the new draft strategy and action plan. This is due to close in January, ahead of the Executive meeting in February.
- 2.3 The current strategy reflects a context where the Council and the Housing team was in a close partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and Social Care Commissioning in particular. A new Cherwell District Council focused strategy has therefore been produced.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 Appendix 1 of the report shows the draft strategy and action plan. The strategy outlines local and national contextual factors that influence homelessness and the Council's ability to prevent it. The strategy is split into 4 priority themes that structure the action plan in turn. The priorities are:
- 1) Identify the causes of homelessness, facilitating early interventions to ensure a pathway and reducing rough sleeping.
 - 2) Ensure that our service is accessible to all; engaging and assisting households who have difficulty receiving our services.
 - 3) Deliver long term housing solutions and help sustain tenancies for the most vulnerable, creating resilience.
 - 4) Improve access to quality and affordable accommodation across all sectors for homeless households.
- 3.2 Appendix 2 shows the Review of Homelessness within Cherwell. The review analyses trends and pressures on the service, both current and that have occurred in recent years, and helps shape the action plan objectives. This covers the types of homelessness approaches we receive, their household circumstances and what housing outcomes they receive. The review also looks at wider factors that can influence homelessness and our ability to prevent it, such as the affordability of housing.
- 3.3 Appendix 3 shows an Equality and Climate Impact Assessment that was undertaken in conjunction with the production of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- 3.4 Upon implementation of the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, an annual update report will be provided to Overview and Scrutiny to monitor progress on the approved action plan.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Council is committed to providing a quality housing options, advice and homelessness service in accordance with our statutory duties. The new drafted homelessness and rough sleeping strategy will provide a strategic framework to do this.
- 4.2 Having an up to date and reviewed homelessness strategy is part of the Council's statutory duties.

5.0 Consultation

Public and stakeholder consultation is a necessary part of implementation of the new strategy.

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

Not applicable

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications – Mandatory paragraph

- 7.1 The development and delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is done within existing budgets and resources. This report indicates no new pressures.

Comments checked by: Michael Furness, Assistant Director – Finance (Section 151 Officer), michael.furness@cherwell-dc.gov.uk, 01295 221845

Legal Implications – Mandatory paragraph

- 7.2 Having a regularly reviewed Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is a statutory requirement within legislation.

Comments checked by:

Risk Implications - Mandatory paragraph

- 7.3 All risks are managed as part of the operational risk register associated with the Housing Service and escalated as and when necessary.

Comments checked by: Shona Ware, Assistant Director – Customer Focus, shona.ware@cherwell.gov.uk, 01295 221652

Equalities and Inclusion Implications

- 7.4 An Equality and Climate Change Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is provided within Appendix 3 of this report.

Comments checked by: Shona Ware, Assistant Director – Customer Focus, shona.ware@cherwell.gov.uk, 01295 221652

8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision N/A

Financial Threshold Met: N/A

Community Impact Threshold Met: N/A

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy links to Business Plan priorities of

- Housing that meets your needs
- Healthy, resilient and engaged communities

Lead Councillor

Councillor Nicholas Mawer

Document Information

Appendix number and title

- Appendix 1 – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029
- Appendix 2 – Review of Homelessness
- Appendix 3 – Equality and Climate Change Impact Assessment

Background papers

None

Report Author and contact details

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