

Report to: **Overview & Scrutiny Panel**
Date: **5th September 2019**
Title: **Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 19/20**
Portfolio Area: **Homes / Cllr H Bastone**

Wards Affected: **all**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: At the Executive meeting to be held on 19 September 2019

Author: **Sophie Cobbledick** Role: **Housing Specialist**

Contact: **01803 861441** email: Sophie.cobbledick@swdevon.gov.uk

Recommendations:

That the Overview & Scrutiny Panel RECOMMEND to the Executive that the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2019/20 and the South Hams and West Devon Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-22 be adopted.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. Members will recall the adoption of the 2017-22 Homelessness Strategy. The document is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.2. The review of the 2018/19 Action plan has been completed and surmised in appendix 2.
- 1.3. The draft 2019-20 Action plan is attached as appendix 3 and details the proposed actions for the Strategy's third year.
- 1.4. The draft South Hams and West Devon Rough Sleeper Strategy is attached as appendix 4 and will form part of the overarching Homelessness Strategy 2017-22.

2. Background

- 2.1. It is a statutory requirement of the Homeless Act 2002 for each Local Authority to have a homeless strategy, which reviews homelessness and its causes locally, and the plan to tackle and prevent homelessness in their area. It is also a requirement that the Authority will consult with the public or Local Authorities, voluntary organisations or other as they consider appropriate. Whilst it is not a requirement to consult on the annual action plans it was felt that the input of partner agencies in the formation of the annual plan would be of benefit to us.
- 2.2. Following the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 it became a statutory requirement for all Local Authorities to produce a Rough Sleeper Strategy in addition to the Homelessness Strategy requirement. Local Authorities are required to have published their Rough Sleeper Strategy before December 2019.
- 2.3. The South Hams and West Devon Joint Homelessness Strategy was adopted in 2017 and included a requirement to produce an annual Action plan and the requirement to report to Members annually on progress against the previous year's action plan.

3. Outcomes/outputs

- 3.1. Members are asked to recommend to the Executive the adoption of the 2019-2020 South Hams & West Devon Homeless Strategy Action Plan.
- 3.2. Members are asked to recommend to the Executive the adoption of the 2019-22 South Hams & West Devon Rough Sleeper Strategy.
- 3.3. Officers will report back annually on progress against the Action Plan, which includes actions pertaining to the Rough Sleeper strategy, and to agree the actions for the following year.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

- 4.1. The introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 altered the legislative framework within which Local Authorities are required to perform. The formulation of the 2018-19 Action plan took into consideration the impact of the legislative changes. The review of our 2018-19 action plan has indicated that the approach taken by South Hams and West Devon has successfully delivered against the legislation changes. The 2019-20 action plan is designed to build upon these successes. The plans to tackle and prevent homelessness, as contained in the strategy, are designed to strengthen wherever possible the effective work of early intervention.
- 4.2. The introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 included a requirement for all local authorities to have produced a Rough Sleeper Strategy by December 2019. The South Hams and West Devon Rough Sleeper Strategy is intended to form part of the established Homelessness Strategy and has been produced in the form of an appendix to the master document. The actions relating to the Rough Sleeper Strategy are included in the 2019-20 Action plan.
- 4.3. Some of the actions may require funding. It is important to note that Local Authorities still receive a prevention of homeless grant from central Government. This is likely to remain at least until 2020. We are not making any request for additional funding to deliver this strategy.

- 4.4. Members will note that our current financial advice service is contracted to Homemaker. The service offers specialist tenancy sustainment services including high level debt resolution and income maximisation services. The contract value is £40,000 over two years split equally between South Hams and West Devon. The contract is due for re tender in 2020.
- 4.5. Members will note that the work relating to raising awareness of homelessness in schools is contracted to Young Devon. The contract value is £6,700 over two years and is split evenly between South Hams and West Devon.
- 4.6. Members will note additional support provided to local authorities by the Prison Navigator roles currently hosted by Exeter City Council. The two prison Navigator roles assist those who have been identified as at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping on release to access advice and assistance to prevent this.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. That Members recommend the adoption of the 2019-20 Action Plan and 2019-22 Rough Sleeper Strategy.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	It is a legal requirement of the 2002 Homeless Act to have a homeless strategy
Financial	Y	No additional funding is sought at this time. It is important to note that Local Authorities still receive a prevention of homeless grant from central Government. As most of the Actions are designed around homeless prevention and early intervention, the larger costs of temporary accommodation and rehousing will wherever possible be negated. This by far not only offers the best service for the customer but is the most efficient in terms of the Local Authority.
Risk	Y	It is a legal requirement for all Local Authorities to produce both a homeless strategy and a rough sleeper strategy. To not publish one or other would be unlawful.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	Y	The public consultation on the Strategy was reflective of the local demographic.
Safeguarding	Y	As the Homeless Strategy Action Plan concerns work with very vulnerable people and one of the

		priorities is around Health and Wellbeing, the corporate safeguarding policy will underpin the work of officers who regularly work with homeless households.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	Y	Devon & Cornwall Police have contributed to the development of the Action Plan and will remain significant partners during the delivery of relevant actions in the action plan.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	Y	The prime concern for the Strategy is around tackling and preventing homelessness which in turn is designed around improving the health and wellbeing of people living in the area.
Other implications		

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Homeless Strategy 2017-2022

Appendix 2 Review of 2018-19 Action plan

Appendix 3 Draft South Hams & West Devon Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2019/20

Appendix 4 Draft South Hams and West Devon Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-22

Background Papers:

None