

Report to: **Overview & Scrutiny Panel**
Date: **16th July 2020**
Title: **Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2020/21**
Portfolio Area: **Homes / Cllr H Bastone**

Wards Affected: **All**

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

Date next steps can be taken: NA

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Recommendation:

That the Overview & Scrutiny Panel RECOMMENDS that the Executive adopts the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2020-21 (as attached at Appendix 3) with effect from 1 April 2020

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 2019/20 Action plan has been completed and surmised in Appendix 2.
- 1.3. The draft 2020-21 Action plan is attached as Appendix 3 and details the proposed actions for the Strategy's third year.

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 we would normally consult on the content of the annual action plan as part of our annual Homelessness Forum. Unfortunately, due to Covid 19 our annual forum could not take place and our action plan has therefore been developed to take into account the changes brought about by the recent pandemic.

- 2.2. 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.
- 2.3. Members will appreciate the need to respond effectively to emerging trends and developments as a result of the Covid19 pandemic. The action plan has been structured to take into account the need for flexibility in the face of our communities changing needs.

3. Outcomes/outputs

- 3.1. Members are asked to recommend to the Executive the adoption of the 2020-2021 South Hams & West Devon Homeless Strategy Action Plan (as attached at Appendix 3).
- 3.2. 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 2020-21 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. 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.
- 4.3. The extension to the Homemaker contact and the increased costs attached to the provision of temporary housing as a result of Covid 19 have been met through grant received from central government.
- 4.4. Members will note that our financial advice service was contracted to Homemaker for 2018/19. The contract value is £40,000 over two years split equally between South Hams and West Devon. Following the successful delivery of the contract the tender has been extended for a further year. Additional funding has enabled us to expand the service to take into account the difficulties caused by the Covid19 pandemic.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. That Members recommend to the Executive the adoption of the 2020-21 Action Plan.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals	Details and proposed measures to address

	Y/N	
Legal/Governance	Y	It is a legal requirement of the 2002 Homeless Act to have a homeless strategy as set out in paragraphs 2.1 and 4.1 of the report
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	N	
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 contributed to the development of the strategy 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 2019/20 Action plan

Appendix 3 Draft South Hams & West Devon Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2020-21

Appendix 4 – Schools Report 19/20

Background Papers:

None