

Report to: **Hub Committee**
Date: **8 June 2021**
Title: **Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 21/22**
Portfolio Area: **Housing – Cllr Ratcliffe**

Wards Affected: **All**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

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

Date next steps can be taken: NA

Author: **Sophie Cobbledick** Role: **Senior Housing Specialist**
Stephanie Rixon Role: **Senior Housing Specialist**

Contact: **01803 861441**
01822 813570
email: Sophie.cobbledick@swdevon.gov.uk
Stephanie.rixon@swdevon.gov.uk

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Hub Committee approves the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2021/22 be adopted with effect from the 1st April 2021.

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 2020/21 Action plan has been completed and summarised in appendix 3.
- 1.3. The draft 2021-22 Action plan is attached as appendix 4 and details the proposed actions for the Strategy's fifth and final 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 with our stakeholders and partners. Unfortunately, due to Covid 19 our annual forum could not take place in 2020 the action plan therefore relies on more informal consultation and some of the feedback that we received as part of our wider housing strategy consultation during the winter months

- 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 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. A good example of this is the use of temporary accommodation. As per the attached review we saw a significant decrease in the use of temporary accommodation during 20/21 but as we begin to emerge from Covid 19 restrictions we have already seen significant increases in this number.

3. Outcomes/outputs

- 3.1. The Executive are asked to approve the adoption of the 2021-2022 South Hams & West Devon Homeless Strategy Action Plan.
- 3.2. This strategy completes its 5 year life cycle in April 2022. A full review of homelessness and the actions achieved will be completed together with a new 5 year plan.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

- 4.1. 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 2022. We are not making any request for additional funding to deliver this strategy.
- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. 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 the adoption of the 2021-22 Action Plan.

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 (West Devon receives £174,628 for 21/22). 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 Rough Sleeping strategy 2019 -2022

Appendix 3 2020 – 2021 Homelessness Strategy review

Appendix 4 South Hams & West Devon Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2021-22

Background Papers:

None