

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – 6 NOVEMBER 2018

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING

THE EAST HERTS HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2019-2024

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- **To present to Overview and Scrutiny for consideration and comment, a draft of the Council’s new Homelessness Strategy 2019-24 and to seek members’ endorsement to consult partners on this.**

<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY:</u> That:	
(A)	Members consider and comment on the draft Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024
(B)	Members endorse consultation on the draft Strategy with external partners and stakeholders prior to seeking approval of its adoption from Council.

1.0 Background

1.1 Under the Homelessness Act 2002 all local authorities are required to carry out a homeless review and to develop and publish a strategy based on the review every five years. East Herts published its first Homelessness Strategy in July 2003.

This is the fourth Strategy and is due to run from April 2019 to March 2024.

2.0 Report

- 2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 placed enhanced duties on local authorities to assist homeless and potentially homeless people. One of the key aims of the Act was to ensure that housing authorities take a comprehensive and strategic approach to managing and preventing homelessness in their districts.
- 2.2 The Council's last Homelessness Strategy was adopted and published in July 2013 and the Council and its partners have made significant progress on providing and improving services to those people that are homeless or potentially homeless. The Strategy includes a section on the achievements, by the Council and its partners to improve the Homeless Services provided, since the last Strategy was adopted.
- 2.3 A lot has changed both locally and nationally since the last Homelessness Strategy was adopted. The most significant recent changes that have an impact on the Council's work regarding homelessness have been the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 that came into force in April 2018 the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 primarily impacting on benefit eligibility. The Strategy provides more detail on the actual changes resulting from these two pieces of legislation which are likely to have a direct and indirect effect on homelessness.
- 2.4 A draft Strategy has been developed which is included at **Essential Reference Paper "B"**. The Strategy has four objectives around which the Delivery Plan will be developed with our partners. The Delivery Plan will shape the emphasis of the Housing Options Team's work for the next five years. These are:

- Objective 1 - Strong and effective partnership working;
- Objective 2 - Early targeted intervention and advice to prevent the loss of accommodation;
- Objective 3 - Effective action to relieve homelessness and sustain tenancies to prevent repeat homelessness;
- Objective 4 - Protect and increase the local housing options.

2.5 This draft Strategy, including any amendments sought by this Committee, will then be published for consultation for four weeks on the council's website. The document will be sent to our close partners, for example Registered Providers and CAB, requesting comment.

2.6 Following the consultation the Strategy will be amended to take into account the responses from our partners and a finalised draft of the Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024 will be produced.

2.7 A report is then due to be brought to Executive on 12 February 2019 for recommendation that the Homelessness Strategy 2019-24 be adopted by Council at its meeting on 5th March 2019.

2.8 A Delivery Plan will then be developed that will be included with the Homelessness Strategy. The Delivery Plan will be monitored by the Homelessness Strategy Group due to be set-up, consisting of internal and external partners impacted by homelessness in East herts and also by way of an annual report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

None

Contact Member: Councillor Jan Goodeve, Executive Member for Housing
Jan.goodeve@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Jonathan Geall, Head of Housing and Health
Neighbourhood Services - Ext No 1594
Jonathan.geall@eastherts.gov.uk

Claire Bennett, Service Manager – Housing
Services – Ext No 1603
Claire.bennett@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author: Claire Bennett, Service Manager – Housing
Services – Ext No 1603
Claire.bennett@eastherts.gov.uk