

REPORT TO	ON
CABINET	21/6/2017

Jan 2017

TITLE	PORTFOLIO	AUTHOR	Agenda item No.
Homelessness Strategy	Corporate Support and Assets	Suzanne Ravenscroft	6

Is this report a KEY DECISION (i.e. more than £75,000 or impacting on more than 2 Borough wards?)	Yes
Is this report on the Cabinet Forward Plan ?	Yes
Is the request outside the policy and budgetary framework and therefore subject to confirmation at full Council?	No

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The Council has a statutory duty under the Homelessness Act 2002 to carry out review of homelessness in the borough and to publish a strategy. This report asks members to consider the findings of the review 2017 – 2020 and to approve the Review, Strategy and Action plan to be published and actioned. These documents replace the previous Prevention of Homelessness Review and Strategy 2012 -16

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 To approve the Review, strategy and action plan (appended to this report) for publication and action

2.2 To approve the use of those budgets identified in this report for the purpose of fulfilling the actions outlined at Appendix A – It is recognised that individual decisions around budget and procurement will be required for some of the actions as and when they are further developed

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The report relates to the following corporate priorities

Clean, green and safe		Strong and healthy communities	√
Strong South Ribble in the heart of prosperous Lancashire		Efficient, effective and exceptional council	

4. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

The Homelessness Act 2002 introduced a statutory duty on local authorities to formulate and publish local homelessness strategies. As part of this there is also a duty to review homelessness services, prevention programmes and initiatives to inform the strategic objectives.

The last review of homelessness services in South Ribble was undertaken in 2012 and a Homelessness Strategy produced to cover 2012 – 2016. National and local changes have made it timely to review the services and recommend a course of action for the next five years in relation to the delivery of homelessness services.

The previous strategy was developed in partnership with Chorley Council. The proposed strategy is a South Ribble Strategy, however there are a number of actions that involve working in partnership with our neighbouring authorities.

5. DETAILS AND REASONING

5.1 The Review – A review is required to explore the current situation, outline services that are available, provide information about homelessness trends and a summary of what was delivered as a result of the previous strategic action plan

5.2 Trends – Homelessness presentations have declined since 2012 as the service has continued to focus on the prevention of homelessness rather than crisis work. Rough Sleeping remains under 5 when the estimate or count is carried out and all sightings of rough sleepers are followed up by the Housing Options Team. The main causes of homelessness are parents, friends or family no longer able to accommodate, relationship breakdown and ending of assured shorthold tenancies. The main priority need is families with dependent children. Bed and Breakfast use has decreased significantly and is now seldom used

5.3 Future challenges – The review highlights a number of national and local changes that will affect homelessness and the work of the homelessness team over the coming years.

These include:

- Welfare reform
- Autumn Statement 2016
- The loss or reduction of services funded via Lancashire County Council Supporting People including supported housing and floating support
- The Homelessness Reduction Act has now become law and will come in to force in spring 2018. This increases the responsibilities and duties that councils have towards those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and changes the timescales and way in which those who are presenting as homeless are advised.

The strategy proposes that The Council delivers on the following objectives

- Sufficient accommodation is and will be available
- Preventing homelessness is a priority
- A satisfactory provision of information, advice, assistance and support

And sets out an action plan to deliver these priorities

5.4 Consultation – the strategy has been sent to the South Ribble Homeless Network, Lancashire local Authorities, South Ribble members, cabinet workshop and has been published on connect

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

There is no alternative option the publication of a homelessness review and strategy is a legal requirement

7. WIDER IMPLICATIONS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTATION

Financial Implications

The following budgets are available to finance the actions suggested in the strategy

Affordable Housing Commuted sums	£1.095m is available in total amounts for individual work on the strategy to be identified
Landlord Incentive Scheme	£63,000 – 2017/18 budget
Homelessness Prevention Grant	£56,000 annually confirmed to 2019/20
Flexible housing support grant	£41,000 this year (2017/18) £45,000 next year (2018/19)
New Burdens funding	Amount to be confirmed by Central Government
Capital Receipts	Up to £100,000 over 3 years administered via the Empty Homes contract with Methodist Action

7.1 Comments of Section 151 Officer

As set out above, the Council will receive government funding to support the prevention and relief of homelessness. At the time of writing this report, the amount of New Burdens government funding in relation to Homelessness reduction had not been announced.

In addition, it is proposed that eligible affordable housing commuted sums received from developers are identified to contribute to the extension the shared accommodation pilot with Registered Providers and/or private landlords.

A revenue budget of £63,000 is available in 2017/18 to fund the actions proposed in relation to the Landlord Incentive scheme. This pilot scheme was approved in the 2016/17 budget, with a total budget of £100,000 of which £37,000 was spent in 2016/17.

7.2 Comments of Monitoring Officer

It is a legal requirement for the Council to publish a Homelessness Review and Strategy. The Homelessness Reduction Act has become law and it is expected will come into force in the spring of 2018. The strategy will help to focus on the changes that will be required within the service to ensure that the housing options team is able to respond to the new challenges.

There will be a requirement for some of the actions to ensure that procurement regulations are adhered to

<p>Other implications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risk• Equality• HR	<p>There is a risk to the Council of legal challenge if the new provisions are not implemented by the Council.</p> <p>The strategy does not adversely affect any groups and seeks to improve services to the population of South Ribble as a whole</p> <p>There may be HR implications should additional staffing be required to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act. New burdens funding is yet to be announced</p>
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9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Appendix 1 Draft Homelessness strategy
- Appendix 2 Appendix A of the draft strategy – Action plan
- Appendix 3 Appendix B of the draft strategy– draft Homelessness review
- Appendix 4 Appendix C Glossary