

For publication

Derbyshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27 (H000)

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	29 November 2022
Cabinet portfolio:	Housing
Directorate:	Housing
For publication	

1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To advise Members of the development of a Derbyshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27.
- 1.2 To seek adoption of the Derbyshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the adoption of the Derbyshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27.

3.0 Reason for recommendations

- 3.1 Approval of the Derbyshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27 will ensure that the Council continues to deliver prevention, intervention and recovery to ensure people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping can access effective services and support.
- 3.2 By adopting this strategy, the Council will be able to meet the continuing challenges ahead including meeting the needs of those with multiple and complex needs, and the increases in the cost of living.
- 3.3 It is a legal requirement to have an agreed and published homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.

4.0 Report details

- 4.1 The Council adopted the current North Derbyshire Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-23 in June 2021.

- 4.2 The actions in this strategy alongside the impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic accelerated partnership working across the County and facilitated the delivery of a multitude of services to protect rough sleepers from harm.
- 4.3 The activity undertaken, and knowledge and experiences gained through the delivery of the existing strategy, has been incorporated into the development of the new proposed countywide Derbyshire strategy.
- 4.4 The proposed strategy has been developed by and in collaboration with HomelessLink, a national specialist homelessness consultant and support agency.

Current Demand

- 4.5 There has been a considerable increase in demand for homelessness services, largely caused by social and policy impacts of the pandemic. Repossessions / evictions were suspended in 2020 but this has now been lifted since March 2021, the result of which is a backlog of cases now reaching the homeless prevention service.
- 4.6 The increase in the cost of living has drastically impacted upon household income meaning a further increase in rent and mortgage arrears and subsequent evictions.
- 4.7 Newly proposed private rented sector legislation which removes 'no fault evictions' is already resulting in landlords seeking to evict private tenants before the legislation comes into force. This is currently the most common cause of homelessness enquiries within the service.
- 4.8 In addition to the increase in demand, the service is also experiencing a considerable increase in the complexities of each case including applications from families and households with multiple complex needs. These are inevitably more difficult to deal with and compound the problem caused by overall increased demand.
- 4.9 There are currently severe limitations on suitable accommodation options for the Homelessness Caseworkers to access in order to discharge the homelessness duty. This causes a bottleneck situation where households, including families, remain in temporary accommodation for longer periods of time.
- 4.10 The proposed strategy aims to address these issues and to mitigate the subsequent impact on customers.

Derbyshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27

- 4.11 The Derbyshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27 is attached as **Appendix 1**.

- 4.12 The countywide strategy, if adopted, will replace the Council's existing North Derbyshire Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-23.
- 4.13 The proposed strategy continues to be rooted in a partnership approach between the Council, other statutory services, the third sector and homeless people.
- 4.14 Through the co-ordinated approach to tackling homelessness and service delivery there have been improved outcomes for many people across Chesterfield with long and complex histories of homelessness.
- 4.15 Chesterfield Borough Council has an excellent reputation for its delivery of homelessness services, with a focus upon finding positive outcomes for our residents regardless of the complexities they may encounter.
- 4.16 The Homelessness Prevention Team have on occasions experienced difficulties linking vulnerable people into the services they need. Those with enduring multiple complex needs have often had difficulty engaging with drug, alcohol, and mental health services because often those services apply rigid rules that lead to people falling between the gaps.
- 4.17 There is evidence to show that services will often refuse to accept a referral for a customer if they need one problem addressing such as drug addiction before they can access a further service such as mental health). This leads to situations where people are often left without any support service at all.
- 4.18 The new county wide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has a core aim to break down these system blockages and asserts that a multi-disciplinary approach is needed to make systems work better and that services are flexibly designed around the needs of our customers.
- 4.19 The strategy has been developed through close collaboration between the Derbyshire Homelessness Officers Group (DHOG), Derbyshire County Council, Public Health, NHS, Police, Probation, and wide range of partner agencies including from the voluntary sector.
- 4.20 The strategy is ambitious in its vision to "working collaboratively across Derbyshire to prevent and reduce homelessness – making it everyone's responsibility.
- 4.21 The strategy will meet the vision and aims through the delivery of four clear priorities:
- Make homelessness everyone's responsibility through a system-wide approach
 - Prevent homelessness and respond through early intervention and personalised solutions
 - End rough sleeping and repeat homelessness
 - Develop sustainable supported and settled housing solutions
- 4.22 The Director of Public Health for Derbyshire is a signatory of the strategy which will sit under the sponsorship of the Derbyshire Health and Wellbeing Board. This represents a significant shift in how homelessness strategies are

implemented. With the strategy sitting within the wider health spectrum this will provide a real opportunity make “whole system” changes to transform housing and homelessness services for the people we serve.

- 4.23 The proposed countywide Derbyshire strategy will serve as the Council’s main Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy for five years.
- 4.24 The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) is now fully embedded, and this legislation has enabled councils to do much more for people facing homelessness. The Government is committed to ending rough sleeping by 2024 and this new Derbyshire wide strategy is fully in-keeping with the positive spirit of the homelessness legislation and the ambition of the Government’s target.
- 4.25 The Strategy refers to the new Domestic Abuse Act (2021) and contained within the list of priority actions are proposals to increase support and easier access to accommodation for abuse victims.

5.0 Alternative options

- 5.1 Not to approve the recommendation to implement the proposed Strategy. It should be noted that the Council would be in breach of its legal requirement to have a published strategy following expiry of the current strategy in 2023.
- 5.2 The Council develops its own Homelessness Strategy. This would result in the loss of the added support of the other district and borough councils and the influence and added value of Derbyshire County Council’s involvement.

6.0 Implications for consideration – Financial and value for money

- 6.1 The implementation of the Derbyshire Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27 will have no direct financial implications for the Council.
- 6.2 Most of the outcomes achieved together with the future commitments have been achieved in partnership with a range of stakeholders each adding considerable value in terms of existing staff resources, knowledge, and experience.
- 6.3 The recent strengthening of these partnerships has resulted in effective decision making and enabled services to become established and respond effectively to the pandemic and now the increase in the cost of living. The new Strategy aims to maintain this partnership structure and momentum.
- 6.4 The forecast demand for the Homelessness Team is considerable due to the pandemic and the increase in cost of living and pressures currently faced within the private rented sector.

7.0 Implications for consideration – Legal

- 7.1 The Derbyshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27 complies with the Council's legal requirement to have a published strategy detailing its activities to resolve rough sleeping.
- 7.2 The strategy is consistent with the aims and objectives of the national rough sleeping strategy 'Ending rough sleeping for good'.
- 7.3 The strategy will also enable the Council to deliver its statutory functions under homelessness legislation.

8.0 Implications for consideration – Human resources

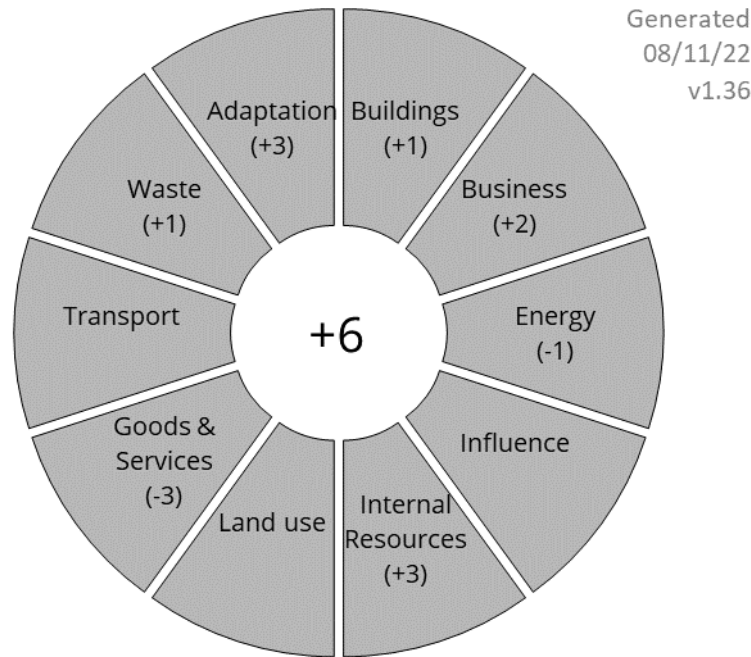
- 8.1 The effective implementation of the preventative services contained within the strategy will assist in alleviating the pressures facing the Council's Homelessness Prevention team by addressing this complex customer group and meeting their needs through cross sector partnership work.

9.0 Implications for consideration – Council Plan

- 9.1 The Derbyshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27 outlines why it is essential to provide a package of measures to enable vulnerable members of our community, without accommodation and suffering a range of multiple complex needs, to access services and to live safely and independently. The measures will have a positive effect on communities within the borough including the town centre environment.
- 9.2 The policy will be instrumental in delivering the following Council Plan objectives:
 - Vibrant town centres
 - Help our communities to improve their health and wellbeing
 - Reduce inequality and provide support to vulnerable people

10.0 Implications for consideration – Climate change

- 10.1 A Climate Change Impact Assessment has been completed. The resulting impact has been assessed as follows:



Chesterfield Borough Council has committed to being a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 (7 years and 1

- 10.2 It should be noted that the strategy's main aim is protecting vulnerable residents within the borough. However, there are clear climate change impacts achieved through the delivery of many of the actions and commitments.
- 10.3 The external investment brought into the area and the subsequent procurement and commissioning of partnership services each bring a direct impact upon climate change. Most specifically the plan to bring empty properties back into residential use.
- 10.4 A direct consequence of additional accommodation and support services is the corresponding increase in energy use, but this is mitigated by the social value added by the aims of the strategy.
- 10.5 The environmental impact of a reduction in littering and general waste within the town centre can be noted due to the reduction in rough sleeping in the area.

11.0 Implications for consideration – Equality and diversity

- 11.1** A preliminary equalities impact assessment has been conducted on the proposed Rough Sleeping Strategy and is attached in **Appendix 2**.

12.0 Implications for consideration – Risk management

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
The Council failing its legal duties to have a published strategy	M	H	Development of an effective strategy provides effective risk management and delivery of statutory and good practice performance requirements.	L	L
The Council fails to comply with legal duties to protect and support rough sleepers and homeless applicants	H	H	The strategy provides a framework for effective co-ordination and delivery of services and provision of accommodation options. This provides compliance with statutory duties but also protects the lives of some of the most vulnerable individuals in our communities.	M	L

Decision information

Key decision number	1141
Wards affected	All Wards

Document information

Report author
<p>Carl Griffiths Head of Statutory Housing Solutions Carl.griffiths@chesterfield.gov.uk</p>
Background documents
<p>These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.</p>
<i>NA</i>
Appendices to the report

Appendix 1	The Derbyshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-27
Appendix 2	Equalities impact assessment