

# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

7 May 2024

**CLlr Adam Brown – Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-27: Delivery Plan, Year 1</b>
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## List of Approvers

<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	Catherine Whitehead	16/04/2024
<b>Chief Finance Officer (S.151)</b>	Martin Henry	16/04/2024
<b>Other Director</b>	Jane Carr	
<b>Head of Communications</b>	Becky Hutson	16/04/2024

## List of Appendices

**Appendix A:** West Northamptonshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, 2024-2027: Delivery Plan

### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To seek approval of the West Northamptonshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2024-2027) Delivery Plan, Year 1.
- 1.2 To note that following the adoption of the West Northamptonshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2024-2027) in March 2024, the document has now been designed in a corporate format.

## **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 S 2. of the Homelessness Act 2002 sets out the duty on local authorities to:
- Carry out a homelessness review
  - Formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on that review.
  - The strategy must be published every 5 years, or sooner if circumstances change.
- 2.2 MHCLG's 2018 Ending Rough Sleeping Strategy required that by winter 2019 all local authorities must update their strategies and rebadge them as homelessness and rough sleeping strategies; ensure they were available online and that local authorities report progress in delivering these strategies and publish annual action plans.
- 2.3 DLUHC's 2022 strategy committed government to Ending Rough Sleeping for Good, through a focus on prevention, intervention, recovery and a transparent, joined up system.
- 2.4 The West Northamptonshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was developed to provide an aligned and harmonised approach to homelessness prevention, relief, and joint working across West Northants. This will help in meeting the emergency and longer-term housing needs of the most vulnerable of West Northamptonshire's residents whilst protecting finances by reducing demand for temporary accommodation by ensuring more effective homelessness prevention and greater opportunities and support to help those who become homelessness to move on to settled housing solutions.
- 2.5 Development of the strategy involved engagement with a wide range of key partner agencies and independently commissioned research which incorporated views of those with lived experience of homelessness.
- 2.6 In accordance with the Local Government (Structural Changes) Transitional Arrangements) (No.2) Regulation 2008, (regulation 12) (as amended coronavirus amendment regulation) West Northamptonshire Council required new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy by April 2024.
- 2.7 Cabinet approved the Strategy on March 12, 2024, on the basis that a robust Delivery Action Plan, aligned to the objectives and priorities set out in the strategy, would be produced with partners and presented to Cabinet in May 2024.

## **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- a) Approve the West Northamptonshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2024-2027): Delivery Plan, Year 1.

#### **4. Reason for Recommendations**

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- 4.1 To accord with legislation which requires that a local authority formulate and publish a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.
- 4.2 To accord with legislation which requires a harmonised Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The strategy was adopted by Cabinet in March 2024. The Delivery Plan provides the detail on how the objectives and priorities within the strategy will be delivered.

#### **5. Report Background**

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- 5.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy identified four key themes, these were aligned to the government's 2022 Ending Rough Sleeping for Good Strategy, which focusses on Prevention, Intervention, Recovery and a transparent, joined up system.
- 5.2 The four strategic themes are:
- Theme 1: Improve collaborative partnerships to make homelessness everyone's business
  - Theme 2: Early joined-up intervention and prevention of homelessness
  - Theme 3: Increase provision and access to suitable and sustainable settled housing solutions
  - Theme 4: Ensure that when rough sleeping occurs, it is rare, brief and non-recurring
- 5.3 To deliver these themes, the strategy set out associated objectives and priorities for each.
- 5.4 The delivery plan details the actions and measures needed to achieve each of themes, objectives and priorities, which are set out below.
- 5.5 While this is a three-year strategy (2024-2027), the Delivery Plan will be on a 12-month basis, to reflect the changing environment, both locally and nationally around homelessness and rough sleeping, thus allowing for the actions to be flexible and resilient.
- 5.6 This 12-month delivery plan is a 'live' document and will be reviewed regularly to identify existing and emerging risks to delivery, but also to ensure that it reflects changes within the homelessness and rough sleeping environment.
- 5.7 The progress of the Delivery Plan will be presented to Cabinet on an annual basis, and will be updated to reflect the following year key actions.
- 5.8 **Theme 1: Improve collaborative partnerships to make homelessness everyone's business**

##### **1.1 Strengthen collaborative working**

We will do this by working with a wide range of partners and organisations through:

- Providing strong governance and delivery of partnership projects
- Deliver a collaborative multi-agency homelessness approach that facilitates early interventions
- Explore joint-commissioning opportunities to improve & enhance the delivery of a range of homelessness services.
- Understand the barriers to accessing services so we can improve access for specific communities and localities.
- Share knowledge and experience and to understand each other's business
- Improve signposting to homelessness services and support
- Strengthening relationships with Registered Providers (RPs) who have a strong presence across the area and who deliver good quality housing, to improve sustainable move on options.
- Evidence what works and where gaps in needs and services remain.
- Securing support and investment across a range of council services and external partners to break down silos and pool resources to maximise the support available.

## **1.2 Embedding a person-centred approach**

We will do this by working with a wide range of partners and organisations through:

- Minimise the need for people to repeat information about traumatic experiences.
- Establish specialist multi-disciplinary and co-located teams
- Understand trauma informed approaches to develop service provision that supports better outcomes for customers.
- Include those with lived experience of homelessness or rough sleeping in the design and delivery of services.

## **5.7 Theme 2: Early identification, intervention and prevention of homelessness**

### **2.1 Increase our early intervention services**

We will do this by delivering, with a wide range of organisations and partners:

- Deliver accessible, high quality, up-to-date information and guidance, to help residents address their housing difficulties when these first arise
- Deliver a programme of awareness raising initiatives across community settings, including schools on tackling issues that may result in homelessness
- Deliver improved collection and analysis of data to identify households at risk of homelessness and inform service delivery

## **2.2 Provide effective homelessness prevention services**

We will do this by developing and delivering services that:

- Ensure that residents can access the right service from the right organisation at the right time
- Strengthen consistent provision, access to and promotion of housing, debt and money advice services across West Northants
- Encourage housing providers to identify and assist households at risk of homelessness at the earliest point possible
- Develop effective financial and other interventions and assistance to prevent homelessness
- Ensure new West Northants Housing Allocations Scheme is effective in preventing homelessness through access to settled homes

## **2.3 Reduce the instances of people facing repeated homelessness**

We will do this by delivering, with a wide range of organisations and partners, services that:

- Support households to make timely and accurate claims for financial support with their housing costs to create sustainable tenancies and avoid arrears
- Ensure those experiencing domestic abuse have appropriate support to remain in safe, settled accommodation, avoiding need for repeated moves
- Develop resident's skills and strengths to support them to build skills and confidence and develop resilience and self sufficiency
- Provide appropriate targeted support for people with more complex needs to help sustain tenancies

## **5.8 Theme 3: Increase provision and access to suitable and sustainable settled housing solutions**

### **3.1 Increase the supply of new affordable housing**

We will do this by:

- Increase the number of council homes
- Increase the supply of new social rented homes at a social rent level
- Explore the provision of modular homes and other innovative forms of accommodation
- Maximise grant funding opportunities and ensure continual engagement with Homes England and DLUHC.
- Utilise and make best use of Council land assets and resources

### **3.2 Reduce the number of households in and cost of temporary accommodation**

We will do this by:

- Ensuring value for money in the procurement of temporary accommodation.
- Reducing the number of households needing temporary accommodation
- Ensure that we have a sufficient supply of affordable temporary accommodation to meet demand and is of the right type, quality and in right location
- Provide effective support and advice to households living in temporary accommodation, to enable them to move onto settled, sustainable homes more quickly.
- Increase the supply of Council owned temporary accommodation

### **3.3 Improve access to good quality, affordable private rented accommodation**

We will do this by:

- Utilise our full range of statutory powers to tackle substandard private rented properties.
- Improve support and incentives available to the private rented sector into a single 'offer' for landlords

## **5.9 Theme 4: Ensure homelessness when it occurs is rare, brief and non-recurring**

### **4.1 Reduce prevalence of rough sleeping**

We will do this by working with partners to:

- Implement recommendations of safeguarding reviews to improve service delivery and design
- Embed an understanding of Multiple Exclusion Homelessness throughout the sector
- Deliver and improve support to reduce rough sleeping
- Assess the impact and outcome of the Rough Sleeping Initiatives funded projects
- Improve data collection and analysis across services to better understand outcomes

### **4.2 Co-produce a joined-up pathway which supports people with complex needs who experience homelessness**

We will work with a range of partners to:

- Develop a framework of supported accommodation provision and housing related support
- Develop a coordinated and joined-up approach bringing together a range of partners to deliver personalised support to enable long term recovery
- Secure support and investment across a range of services (Housing, Health, Adult Social Care)
- Embed co-production with people with lived experiences into new service delivery.

### **4.3 Help people settle into homes where they can thrive**

We will develop innovative services that:

- Develop and adopt housing-led principles throughout our support services, specialist housing provision and mainstream accommodation options.
- Deliver targeted support and services for women at risk of and experiencing homelessness.
- Improve access to rapid 'off-the-street' options for rough sleeping.

5.10 We can only achieve the actions set out in our delivery plan, through innovative and close work with our key partners. The Housing Partnership Board (HPB) will be a catalyst for strong strategic governance and leadership and the delivery of the strategy.

## **6 Issues and Choices**

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- 6.1 It is a legal requirement under s.2 Homelessness Act 2002, that Local Authorities conduct a homelessness review and formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on that review.
- 6.2 West Northamptonshire Council was required to have a harmonised Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy by April 2024. This was approved at March 2024 Cabinet
- 6.3 To ensure the priorities of the strategy are delivered, it is recommended that the delivery plan, which contains the actions and measures to achieve the priorities, be approved.

## **7 Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **7.1.1 Resources and Financial**

- 7.1.2 The approval of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy did not in itself incur any new revenue or capital liabilities for either the Housing Revenue Account or the general fund.
- 7.1.3 The implementation of and delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy requires significant investment of time and resource by existing council staff and its partners. The delivery plan contains actions that are likely to have a financial impact. If the financial impact cannot be covered within existing resources, business plans will be produced to determine if additional resources are required and how they will be funded.
- 7.1.4 The delivery plan will be an ever-evolving document and if additional resources are required in the future they may be considered as part of the normal budget setting process.
- 7.1.5 Throughout the lifetime of the strategy there will be some specific projects and developments where decisions will need to be made and the full revenue and capital implications will be made clear at the time. None of the projects or development will be able to proceed until the appropriate funding is agreed and in place.

### **7.2 Legal**

7.2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 sets out the legal duty on local housing authorities to formulate, adopt and publish a homelessness strategy, based on the results of a homelessness review for their area, at least once every five years. Authorities also have a duty to keep their strategy under continuous review and have a power to consult upon and modify it as and when they deem necessary.

7.2.2 A homelessness review is a review of:

- the current and predicted levels of homelessness in a local housing authority's area, and;



- the activities it carries out for the purposes of preventing homelessness and securing temporary accommodation and/or support for people who are or may become homeless or have been so and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.

7.2.3 A homelessness strategy is a strategy for:

- preventing homelessness in a local housing authority's area,
- securing that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people who are or may become homeless and
- securing satisfactory support for people who are or may become homeless or have been so and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.

7.2.4 The strategy must consider how the local housing and social services authorities (if different) and any other public authority, voluntary organisation or anyone else can meet the objectives of the strategy. It may include specific actions or objectives to be undertaken by the local housing and social services authorities, or, with its agreement, by any other public authority, voluntary organisation or anyone else.

7.2.5 In formulating or modifying a homelessness strategy, a local housing authority must have regard to its current allocation scheme and tenancy strategy. Homelessness and Equalities legislation requires that a local housing authority must consider the needs of all groups of people in its area who may be affected by homelessness.

7.2.6 Once the strategy has been adopted, it must be made available for public inspection without charge, and copies made available on payment of a reasonable charge.

### 7.3 Risk

7.3.1 There is a legal requirement before adopting a homelessness strategy the authority shall consult such public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons they consider appropriate. The council has taken a co-production approach to developing this first West Northants Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy through extensive engagement with internal and external stakeholders including statutory external partners and voluntary, community and faith sector organisations.

### 7.4 Consultation and Communications

7.4.1 The delivery plan and the associated actions was developed through the feedback and comments received through the consultation and engagement with partners during the drafting of the strategy, and regular discussions with internal teams and key partners.

### 7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

7.5.1 A presentation was provided to Children’s, Education and Housing Overview and Scrutiny on the 3rd April 2024. This provided an overview of the delivery plan and the key actions needed to deliver the West Northants Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

7.6 **Climate Impact**

None

7.7 **Community Impact**

7.7.1 An Equality Screening Assessment in respect of the Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy was completed as part of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

8 **Background Papers**

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8.7 West Northamptonshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2027