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Cabinet

30 October 2018

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities - Councillor Ruane

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Deputy Chief Executive, Place

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24 Public Consultation

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**Is this a key decision?**

**No**

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**Executive Summary:**

The Council is required to have an up to date Strategy to prevent homelessness. The current Housing & Homelessness Strategy covers the period from 2013 to 2018. Following engagement with key stakeholders, a draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy for 2019-24 has been produced. This report is requesting permission from Cabinet to carry out public consultation on this draft strategy.

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve a period of public consultation with the local community and key stakeholders on the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24, as attached at Appendix 1.
2. Instruct officers to produce a Final Housing & Homelessness Strategy following this consultation, for approval and adoption by Cabinet and Council.

**List of Appendices included:**

*Appendix 1: Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24*

*Appendix 2: Draft Action Plan*

*Appendix 3: Equality and Consultation Analysis (ECA) Part 1*

**Background papers:**

Coventry Homelessness Review 2018

(to be published as part of the public consultation, if consultation is approved)

**Other useful documents**

Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (2018) Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – Available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities>

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

## **Report title:** Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24 Public Consultation

### **1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 The Council is required to develop and publish a Strategy to prevent homelessness in the district every five years, under Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002. A Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy for 2019-24 has been developed (and is attached as appendix 1).
- 1.2 The Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy have been combined into one document. Activities to prevent homelessness are dependent on the availability of additional housing, an improvement in the management and quality of existing housing, and the advice and support available to people who need it to successfully maintain their home. This approach means that the Homelessness Strategy can be read as 'part of the bigger picture' within Coventry's wider Housing Strategy and is not seen in isolation from the range of other housing factors that influence homelessness.
- 1.3 The Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24 focusses on four main themes: Preventing homelessness and supporting homeless households; New housing development; Improving the use of existing homes; and Support for people and communities.
- 1.4 *Preventing homelessness and supporting homeless households* - This theme will be the Homelessness Strategy for the city and will embed the principles of preventing homelessness and providing effective support if people do become homeless, through adoption of the pathways model. To achieve this, actions will be put in place to increase effective partnership working both within the Council and with relevant partners, improve the information and advice available, and include support for people to sustain tenancies and build resilience to avoid the future risk of homelessness. This will include a review of the Coventry Homefinder policy and the re-commissioning of homeless and ex-offender accommodation and floating support services.
- 1.5 *New Housing Development* – this theme will focus on ensuring that the growth needs of the city are met with an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures. To achieve this, actions will be put in place to develop the relevant supplementary planning documents (SPDs), to work collaboratively with developers, Registered Providers (housing associations) and Homes England to ensure that affordable housing needs are met, and improve the design and diversity of new housing development.
- 1.6 *Improving the use of existing homes* – this theme will focus on the city's existing housing stock and ensure it is used in the most effective and efficient way to meet the needs of local people. To achieve this, actions will be put in place to reduce the number of empty homes, improve the standard and management of rented housing, including exploring options for discretionary licensing, and improve the quality of existing homes through energy efficiency measures etc.
- 1.7 *Support for people and communities* – this theme will focus on ensuring that the city's housing is fit for an aging population, people that need support to live independently are able to access it, and support for communities to influence housing in their area through Neighbourhood Plans and regeneration. To achieve this, actions will be put in place to assess the need for supported housing, administer disabled facilities grants (DFGs), and support communities that want to prepare a neighbourhood plan.
- 1.8 The Draft Action Plan is published alongside the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy at appendix 2 to this report. Once approved, the action plan will be regularly reviewed and

updated to ensure that actions are being progressed and respond to any changes in trends or issues that emerge during the lifetime of the Strategy.

- 1.9 It is proposed that a public consultation is now carried out on this Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy with the local community and key stakeholders. This report therefore requests permission from Cabinet to carry out this public consultation.

## **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 Option 1 (recommended): to carry out a public consultation on the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24 as attached at Appendix 1, and then taking into account all responses and making amendments as necessary, to produce a final Strategy to be approved by Cabinet and Council in early 2019.
- 2.2 Option 2: to publish and approve a new Housing & Homelessness Strategy without carrying out any public consultation. This is not recommended. Housing and homelessness issues are complex and tackling homelessness requires a partnership approach. Members of the public, key stakeholders and organisations interested in housing and homelessness should have the opportunity to formally input into the development of the final Strategy. Statutory guidance (in the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities) states that relevant stakeholders must be consulted before adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy.
- 2.3 Option 3: not to publish a new Housing & Homelessness Strategy. This is not recommended, as it is a legislative requirement under Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 for the Local Authority to carry out a review of homelessness and publish a homelessness strategy every five years.

## **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 During the development of the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy, discussions have been held with many of the key stakeholders around formulating the themes, priorities and actions that have been identified and included in the Draft. This has included relevant internal and external stakeholders and means the strategy has been developed on a cross-directorate basis and with input from the Councils key partners. Discussion has also been had at existing forums and workshops including the city's new Homelessness Forum.
- 3.2 This report now seeks approval to conduct a wider, public consultation on the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy to ensure that members of the public, who have concerns or are affected by the issues around housing & homelessness, are able to input into the final Strategy, as well as any stakeholders or organisations who have an interest in the issues and proposed solutions.

## **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1 If approved, the public consultation will be carried out over a period of six weeks from 6<sup>th</sup> November to 18<sup>th</sup> December 2018.
- 4.2 Responses will then be taken into account and necessary amendments made, with a final Strategy being presented to Cabinet and Council for approval in early 2019.

## **5. Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services**

### **5.1 Financial implications**

The recommendations in this report will not incur any additional financial implications and will be managed within existing resources.

Elements of the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy and the Draft Action Plan may have financial implications. These will be subject to further Cabinet and Council reports as appropriate or subject to individual business case reports as necessary.

## **5.2 Legal implications**

The Homelessness Act 2002 introduced the requirement for Local Authorities to carry out a Homelessness Review and develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy. Paragraph 2.24 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (2018) clarifies that this means a strategy for:

- a) Preventing homelessness in the district
- b) Securing that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people in the district who are or may become homeless
- c) Securing the satisfactory provision of support for people in the district who are or may become homeless or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.

The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (2018) clarifies that this should now include the additional duties introduced through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The Code also states that “Housing authorities must consult public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons as they consider appropriate before adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy. Housing authorities will also wish to consult with service users and specialist agencies that provide support to homeless people in the district.” (Para 2.10)

Coventry City Council has decided to combine the Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy into one document, which is permissible under paragraph 2.9 of the Code.

Failure to have an updated Homelessness Strategy may impact the Council’s ability to defend challenges to decision made under the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. In accordance with s1(4) of the 2002 Act the Council must ensure that the new homelessness strategy is published within the period of five years beginning with the day on which the last homelessness strategy was published; failure to do so would mean that the council has not complied with its legal obligation.

## **6. Other implications**

### **6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan ([www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/))?**

The Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24 will contribute to meeting the priorities in the Corporate Plan, specifically:

- Globally Connected – increasing the supply choice and quality of housing
- Globally Connected – reducing the impact of poverty
- Locally Committed – Protecting our most vulnerable people (including preventing homelessness and helping people who do become homeless)
- Locally Connected – Improve health and wellbeing
- Locally Connected – Reducing health inequalities.

### **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

There are no specific risks from the decision to approve a public consultation on the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24. A decision not to go ahead with the consultation would carry risks as described in the options.

### **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

There is no impact on the organisation from the decision to approve a public consultation on the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24.

### **6.4 Equalities / EIA**

An Equalities and Consultation Analysis (ECA) Part 1 has been carried out during the development of the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24. This will be updated for the Final Housing & Homelessness Strategy following the public consultation (Part 2).

In 2017/18 there were 557 households accepted as statutorily homeless. The majority (69%) of statutory homeless households had a dependent child or children and 50% were female lone parents. 63% of statutory homeless households were White, 17% were Black and 7% were Asian. 26% were under 25, 72% were aged between 25 and 64, and only 2% were aged 65 or over.

The implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 in April 2018 means that the Council now has additional duties to prevent homelessness and to help to secure accommodation for all eligible households, regardless of whether they are in a 'priority need' category. This will increase the help given to single people and those without dependent children, especially single men, who have previously not been in a 'priority need' category.

### **6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

There is no impact on the environment from the decision to approve a public consultation on the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24.

The Draft Strategy document itself includes priorities to improve the energy efficiency of existing and new dwellings and promotion of sustainable development principles.

### **6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

Partner organisations may wish to comment on the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24 as part of the public consultation.

Within the Draft Strategy itself, the role of partner organisations and the importance of collaborative working is highlighted.

### **Report author(s):**

#### **Name and job title:**

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Finance: Phil Helm	Finance Manager	Place	29/08/2018	03/09/2018
Legal: Oluremi Aremu	Major Projects Lead Lawyer	Place	29/08/2018	06/08/2018
Director: Richard Moon (on behalf of Martin Yardley – Deputy Chief Executive: Place)	Director – Project Management & Property Services	Place	06/09/2018	07/09/2018
Members: Councillor Ed Ruane	Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities	Coventry City Council	05/09/2018	08/10/2018

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[www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings)

## Appendices