



To: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Date: 12 December 2018

Subject: Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24 Public Consultation

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To inform the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee of the consultation being carried out to develop the Housing & Homelessness Strategy for 2019-24 and to seek any further views or inputs into the Strategy and its supporting Action Plan.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Note the consultation measures being carried out as part of the development of the Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24;
- 2) Note representation made to the Committee by a group of Experts by Experience;
- 3) Having regard to recommendations 1 and 2, make comments on the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy (and its Action Plan) for consideration as part of the consultation process.

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 Under Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002, the Council is required to develop and publish a Strategy to prevent homelessness within its administrative area every five years.
- 3.2 The current Housing & Homelessness Strategy was adopted in 2013 and covers the period from 2013 to 2018.
- 3.3 The Council must therefore produce an up to date Homelessness Strategy from 2019, and have decided to again combine the Housing Strategy and the Homelessness Strategy into one document. 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.

4. Housing and Homelessness Strategy

- 4.1 The Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy covers the period 2019 to 2024. The draft strategy is now subject to a period of consultation to make sure it identifies the right priorities for the next five years, and the right actions planned to deliver those priorities.
- 4.2 At their meeting on 30th October 2018, the Cabinet approved officers to carry out a public consultation on the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy. The Cabinet papers are available here:

<http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=124&MId=11807&Ver=4>

- 4.3 The Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24 focusses on four main themes outlined below.
- 4.3.1 **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.
- 4.3.2 **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.
- 4.3.3 **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.
- 4.3.4 **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.
- 4.4 A Draft Action Plan has been published alongside the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy. 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, legislation or issues that emerge during the lifetime of the Strategy.
- 4.5 In terms of delivering housing, it is important to clarify that the City Council no longer owns any ‘council housing’ after the stock was transferred to Whitefriars Housing Group in 2000. However, we still have strategic housing duties, and duties towards people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. These strategic duties are reflected within the Strategy and its Action Plan. As such the city council continue to work proactively with developers and Registered Providers through its planning and property responsibilities to help support and facilitate the delivery of sustainable housing that meets the needs of Coventry people.
- 4.6 It is also important to note that the Councils homelessness duties have recently changed with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA). Although this officially came into effect from April 2018, the duty to Refer process has only recently commenced (in October 2018) adding further processes and changes to how the Council manage homelessness applications.
- 4.7 These recent changes will be reviewed over the summer of 2019 to gain a full understanding of how the HRA has impacted the delivery of Coventry services. This will inform an update of the Homelessness review (which helps inform the Strategy) and as a result may lead to a further update of the Strategy itself.

5. Engagement and Consultation throughout the development of the Draft Strategy:

- 5.1 Key stakeholders, partners, advice agencies and other Council services/departments have been engaged throughout the development of the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy, including through the Homelessness forum, the Frontline Network and an Experts by Experience Group (who will also make representations directly to SCRUCO at this meeting).
- 5.2 Following the Cabinet meeting on 30th October 2018, a period of public consultation of the Draft Housing & Homelessness Strategy has commenced.
- 5.3 The consultation runs for 6 weeks from 6th November 2018 to 18th December 2018. More information on the consultation process is available via the following link: <http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?ID=175>
This includes all consultation documents and dedicated survey Money form.
- 5.4 The purpose of the consultation is to ensure that we have identified the correct priorities for housing and homelessness issues faced by the city, and the correct actions to fulfil those priorities. Consultees are being asked whether the priorities are correct, and if there are any other priorities that should be included.
- 5.5 The results of the consultation will be reviewed and any necessary changes to the Draft Strategy and/or action plan will be made, before the Final Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2019-24 is presented to Cabinet and Council to be considered for approval in February 2019.
- 5.6 All stakeholders involved in the development of the draft, and representative organisations, groups and partnerships for affected groups, have been informed of the consultation and invited to comment. Notifications of the consultation were made through emails and letters to relevant council databases as well as relevant meetings, forums and media postings.
- 5.7 A Planning and Housing Policy Officer has attended the Experts by Experience group meeting to discuss the strategy and how they can participate in the consultation. The consultation was also highlighted at the Homelessness Forum meeting on 9th November and discussed at the Frontline Network meeting on 28th November.
- 5.8 At 30th November 2018, 74 responses have been received to the consultation. The majority of these have been received by individuals (79%) with the remainder from interested groups and organisations. So far the majority of responses show support for the principles and actions included in the draft Strategy. This is highlighted in the Table below:

Strategy Theme	% support for Principles	% support for Actions	Summary of key points raised
<i>Preventing homelessness and supporting homeless households</i>	97%	69%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council investment in housing stock. • Build more homes – especially affordable homes. • More emphasis on mental health. • More focus on families and supporting children. • Do more to reduce rough sleeping. • It will be essential to factor in the thoughts and views of those with lived experience. • Greater engagement with communities where emergency and temporary accommodation are utilised.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to ensure funding exists to deliver the actions. • No recognition for those with No Recourse to Public funds.
<i>New Housing Development</i>	94%	77%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to build more homes – especially affordable homes, older person’s homes, homes for those with disabilities and family homes. • Work with student accommodation providers and the universities to deliver affordable homes as part of those developments. • PRS is too expensive and needs to be carefully managed. • A review of housing needs. • Important that infrastructure keeps pace with new homes.
<i>Improving the use of existing homes</i>	95%	85%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options to purchase empty homes or provide grants to people to purchase / renovate them to live in. • Prosecute rogue / slum landlords. • Introducing greater licencing practices. • Ensure existing properties are safe and secure – especially in relation to cladding and fire safety.
<i>Support for people and communities</i>	90%	83%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for wider estate regeneration projects. • Greater support for communities wishing to develop Neighbourhood Plans. • Useful information around housing and homelessness and self-support services needs to be more widely available to local communities. • Support for downsizing.

There are also two questions around how the Strategy will support protected groups. In response to these questions, the key points include:

- It would helpful to make information more widely available in different languages and using different media outlets.
- It’s important that different groups work more collaboratively and avoid silo working.

5.9 A further verbal update will provided to the committee to inform members of any additional points raised between now and the meeting.

5.10 All responses will be summarised and included within an Appendix to the report seeking adoption of the Strategy in February 2019.”

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