

North Somerset Council

REPORT TO THE ADULT SERVICES AND HOUSING POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 17 MARCH 2017

SUBJECT OF REPORT: NORTH SOMERSET DRAFT PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

TOWN OR PARISH: DISTRICT WIDE

OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING:

MARK HUGHES, HEAD OF HOUSING AND STRATEGY

KEY DECISION: YES

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Panel consider the Draft Preventing Homelessness Strategy (PHS) and provide their comments, prior to consideration of the Strategy for adoption by the Executive Member for Housing, Strategic Planning, Highways and Economic Development

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

In this report we have used three key abbreviations:

PHS	Preventing Homelessness Strategy (currently draft)
HMR	Homelessness Review (currently draft)
HS	Housing Strategy

This report presents the draft PHS 2017-22 at Annexe 1. The draft Homelessness Review and Housing Strategy are available as Background Papers. You can link to them on the internet via the links shown.

Draft Homelessness Review (please note the HMR is the second paper on the page this links to)¹: <http://consult.n-somerset.gov.uk/consult.ti/Hstrat/consultationHome>

Housing Strategy: <http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/26409-Housing-Strategy-FINAL.pdf>

The draft homelessness strategy has an emphasis on prevention, and groups the issues and actions under three broad, thematic headings: supply, support and prevention. The PHS shows links to other council plans and a summary of achievements from our current homelessness strategy.

Government guidance states that any homelessness strategy must be informed by a review of homelessness. This information is set out in the HMR, which provides the evidence base used to inform the PHS.

2. POLICY

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on housing authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their area and produce a strategy at least every five years to prevent homelessness. This PHS 2017-22 will replace the previous homelessness strategy for 2011-16. Periodic updating of the PHS will be carried out as necessary. The PHS is one of the delivery plans designed to help deliver our HS which in turn is designed to help deliver the council's Corporate Plan.

3. DETAILS

Main features of the PHS

The PHS includes the following:

- A section showing how it links to other council plans and strategies
- Key achievements from the last homelessness strategy (2011-16)
- A summary of findings from the Homelessness Review.
- A summary of the key issues and proposed actions
- Details of consultation undertaken to date
- An Action Plan.
- An appendix providing details of the Homelessness Reduction Bill.

Summary of key findings and actions

A summary of the key findings and of some of the key actions are provided in the table below. Full details of the actions can be found in Appendix 1 of the PHS.

¹ Please note that at the time of the dispatch of 'ASH Panel' papers the eConsult webpage will still be a draft webpage. We are hoping to formally launch the six week consultation around 8 March 2017, see **4. CONSULTATION** below.

Theme	Key Findings	Actions
Supply	<p>Difficulty of access to and insecurity of the private rented sector (PRS).</p> <p>Pressure on temporary accommodation (TA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase and maintain PRS supply (SY3 and SY5), • Explore idea of an ethical lettings agency (SY7), • Mitigate the housing effects of Hinkley Point development (SY5)
Support	<p>People with complex needs² (inc. rough sleepers)</p> <p>Care leavers and homeless 16/17 year olds</p> <p>Developing housing solutions for vulnerable and disabled people threatened with homelessness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish multi-agency panel to assist people with complex needs(ST3), • Partner with family support to assist young people (ST2), • Deliver housing actions arising from the analysis of the housing and support requirements of people with mental health needs (ST6), • Improve supported housing offer as contracts are recommissioned (ST1)
Prevention	<p>Early intervention (including further developing prevention services in the light of the Homeless Prevention Bill)</p> <p>Rough Sleeping</p> <p>Partnership working</p> <p>Services for care leavers and vulnerable young people</p> <p>Hospital discharge (arrangements for homeless people)</p> <p>Family homelessness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet obligations arising from Homeless Reduction Bill(P3), • Work towards achieving Gold Standard (P8), • Establish strategic partnership for rough sleepers/single homeless people (P2), • Partnership work with Social Impact Bond services(P6), • Further develop services for care leavers (P7), • Further improve hospital discharge (P1), • Explore the role of childrens centres to help to prevent family breakdown and homelessness (P5)

4. CONSULTATION

In producing the draft HMR the Housing and Homelessness Prevention Forum (HHPF) was the main body for external consultation. This Forum has representatives

² Complex needs includes combinations of mental health needs, addiction etc.

of external, partner agencies involved in tackling homelessness. We also consulted with staff who work in the council's Housing Advice Team (HAT), HomeChoice Team (HCT) as well as with a range of other council services.

The draft PHS (and the draft HMR) are currently subject to consultation via eConsult and a wide group of stakeholders have been alerted to the consultation. They will remain on eConsult for six weeks.

A summary of consultation undertaken and the responses are presented in the draft HMR and PHS (with more detail at Appendix 1 of the HMR). Comments arising from this round of consultation will be considered and the strategy revised as appropriate.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No specific resource implications. The actions will be delivered within existing budgetary provision. Any new initiatives that are undertaken to prevent and tackle homelessness will be subject to the usual business case analysis and resource availability.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

RISK	MITIGATION
Lack of evidence about homelessness and related issues to inform the strategy	Strong evidence base set out in the HMR has informed the strategy. Extensive consultation with stakeholders. We will continue to monitor trends and outcomes which will enable the strategy to be developed in response to changing needs
Increased demand exacerbated by welfare reform and changes in housing markets could overwhelm homelessness services	A clear HMR and PHS gives us a strategic understanding of the context in which we operate and helps us to effectively plan for the future

7. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

A full equality impact assessment (EIA) has been undertaken. What we know about the needs of a range of vulnerable groups (for example young people leaving care or people with mental health needs) is directly reflected in the actions in the PHS.

8. (OTHER) OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not to produce a strategy - this is not an option as we have statutory duty to produce a homelessness strategy. The review and consequent strategy are an opportunity to ensure we comprehensively examine our practices in this service area. Having done that, we have decided on a range of actions to improve how we assist homeless people and to prevent homelessness more effectively.

AUTHOR

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Annexe A – DRAFT Preventing Homelessness Strategy (PHS) 2017-22

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Links provided to: Draft North Somerset Homelessness Review 2016
Housing Strategy 2017-21