



**WYCOMBE**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report For:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Cabinet 4 February 2019
Part:	Part 1 - Open

### SUMMARY

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>HOMELESSNESS, ROUGH SLEEPING, PRIVATE SECTOR AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY 2020 – 2022</b>
Cabinet Member: Officer Contact: Direct Dial: Email:	Councillor Mrs Julia Langley Brian Daly 01494 421601 Brian.daly@wycombe.gov.uk
Wards affected:	All
Reason for the Decision:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The Council is required under section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 to publish a Homelessness Strategy based upon a review of homelessness in the area every 5 years.</li><li>2. Strategies must be aimed at providing advice and assistance to prevent homelessness and address the needs of customers where homelessness cannot be prevented.</li><li>3. Wycombe District Council published its last homelessness review and Homelessness Strategy in 2013 with the Strategy being for the period 2014 to 2019.</li><li>4. There are currently no direct financial implications for the Council as existing resources only are required to implement the strategy with the exception of a number of additional grants obtained from MHCLG to fund county wide rough sleeping and homelessness schemes.</li></ol>
<b>Proposed Recommendation:</b>	<b>That the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping, Private Sector and Affordable Housing Strategy 2020 – 2022 be adopted.</b>
Sustainable Community Strategy/Council Priorities - Implications	<b>Risk:</b> Should the Council not have an agreed homelessness strategy in place, it will be in breach of the Homelessness Act 2002.  <b>Equalities:</b> attached EIA (Appendix B)  <b>Health &amp; Safety:</b> No health and safety implications.

Monitoring Officer/ S.151 Officer Comments	<p><b>Monitoring Officer:</b> There is a legal requirement under section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 to publish a Homelessness Strategy based upon a review of homelessness in the area every 5 years.</p> <p><b>S.151 Officer:</b> All costs can be met from existing budgets or from supplementary estimates matched by specific grants. Any requirements in excess of budget or approved grants will require additional member approvals and need to build into the annual budget setting and MTFS process.</p>
Consultees:	<p>Statutory consultation took place with the Public via the Council's website between 5<sup>th</sup> August and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019. This followed extensive consultation with the Council's partners and stakeholder agencies via the Housing Forums.</p> <p>Members were consulted via a Member Seminar in October 2019.</p>
Options:	Cabinet can choose to recommend or reject the strategies
Next Steps:	If Cabinet are minded to recommend the Strategy, a request to be made to Full Council to adopt.
Background Papers:	The 2020-2022 Strategy document and accompanying Action Plan.
Abbreviations:	<p><b>CBL - choice based lettings</b>  <b>LHA – Local Housing Allowance</b>  <b>RP – Registered Provider of Housing</b></p>

Appendices to this report are as follows:

Appendix A: Homelessness, Rough Sleeping, Private Sector and Affordable Housing Strategy 2020 – 2022 and Wycombe District Homelessness, Rough Sleeping, Private Sector and Affordable Housing Strategy: Action Plan 2020 – 2022

Appendix B: Equality Impact Assessment

## Detailed Report

### Executive Summary

1. This Strategy covers the period 2020-2022 and is published in line with the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002 and follows on from the successful 2014-2019 Homelessness Strategy.
2. This combined strategy defines how the Council will meet our obligations to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy, as well as including the related strategy areas of private sector and affordable housing.
3. The strategy comprises of an overall action plan with clear, defined actions and targets to ensure we are best placed to meet our aims of preventing homelessness and rough sleeping, enforcing standards in private sector housing as well as meeting the need for affordable housing in the district.
4. These actions will continue to be monitored by officers and the independently chaired housing forum (attended by the portfolio holding Cabinet Member) and forum subgroups, to ensure we meet our stated aims.

### Background to the 2020-2022 Strategy

5. The Council has a statutory obligation to produce a homelessness strategy as per the 2002 Homelessness Act. Central Government's 2018 rough sleeping strategy also places a requirement on local authorities to have a rough sleeping strategy in place.
6. The previous strategy was effective from January 2014 to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2019 and was subject to an independent review by Shelter in April 2019 in order to help inform the new strategy.
7. Following Shelter's review and recommendations, consultation was commenced with our stakeholder agencies via our housing (and homelessness) forums with a number of actions agreed by all for inclusion. These actions were subject to formal consultation with the public via the Council's website between 5<sup>th</sup> August and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019. A further presentation was made to Members via a seminar held on the 29<sup>th</sup> October, following the public consultation. The action plan is attached to this report.
8. A two-year strategy was devised, as the new Buckinghamshire Council is required to have a homelessness strategy in place by 2022.

### Review of the 2014-2019 Strategy

9. Shelter reviewed the Council's progress on the 2014-19 Homelessness Strategy in April 2019 and provided the following summary:  
*"Overall, the authority has been working proactively to address a number of key housing and homelessness challenges with a committed team. There is good awareness and understanding of those areas where continuous progress and resources are required in light of ongoing and new local homelessness demand, for the purposes of a developing a the next Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy"*
10. The overall aim of the previous strategy was to prevent homelessness in all forms, from rough sleeping through to homeless households in temporary accommodation. To meet this aim, a number of actions were devised and assessed by our stakeholders at the quarterly homelessness subgroup and bi annually at the housing forum. Of the 51 actions within the action plan, the final assessment showed 33 marked as completed/ 'green', 16 'amber' and 2 as red or uncompleted.
11. Overall, the strategy can be said to have met its broad aims of preventing and reducing homelessness as the number of households in B&B and temporary accommodation is at a much lower level than in 2013. Also, the number of rough sleepers has fallen by 33%

from 2018, although it is higher than the figure recorded in 2013 which is consistent with the increase in number of rough sleepers nationally.

### **2020-2022 Strategy**

12. The proposed 2020-2022 Strategy is split into 3 parts as follows:

- Part One. Strategic Objectives to minimise homelessness and rough sleeping through prevention and relief.
- Part Two. To ensure the provision of affordable housing for those in housing need.
- Part Three. To enhance the quality of housing in the District, including standards in the District, including standards in the private sector and use of available grants to improve health and well-being of residents.

13. Each part of the strategy contains an agreed number of actions which will be monitored regularly by the housing service and by our partners at the quarterly homelessness and the bi annual housing forums. Progress made against the action plan items will also be published regularly on the Council's website.

### **Unitary Position & Relevant Provisions in the Transitional Regulations**

14. With effect from 1 April 2020 all the statutory functions previously carried out by the District and the County Council are carried out by the new unitary council. Regulation 4 provides that anything which immediately before 1 April 2020, is in the process of being done by the Districts or BCC in the exercise of, or in connection with, a function that is exercised after 1 April 2020 by Buckinghamshire Council, shall have effect as if it was done by or in relation to Buckinghamshire Council.

15. Regulation 12 (1) (c) provides that where it is practicable to do so, in the period between the Buckinghamshire Structural Changes Order 2019 coming into force and the reorganisation date of 1 April 2020, the shadow authority shall:-

16. Carry out a homelessness review within the meaning of the Homelessness Act 2002 for the whole of its area based on the results of that review, formulate and publish a homelessness strategy within the meaning of the Act. Where a homelessness review/strategy has not been completed, formulated or prepared and published before 1 April 2020, the Buckinghamshire Council shall take such steps as are necessary to secure this is done as soon as practicable and not later than the 1 April 2022

17. Until the new Buckinghamshire Council homelessness strategy is in place, the strategies prepared and published by the AVDC, CDC, SBDC and WDC will be treated as if they had been prepared and published by Buckinghamshire for such part of its area that corresponds to the area covered by the respective former District Council.

### **Conclusion and Next Steps.**

18. If approved by Cabinet and full Council the strategy will be adopted and delivered in the area corresponding to the former Wycombe District, until a new strategy is developed and adopted by the new Buckinghamshire Council, no later than the 1 April 2022.