

# Allerdale Borough Council

**Executive – 20 April 2022**

## **Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027**

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<b>Portfolio holder</b>	Councillor Marion Fitzgerald - Policy, Governance and People Resources Portfolio
<b>Report from</b>	Sharon Sewell – Chief Officer (Place and Governance)
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards
<b>Is this a key decision</b>	Yes

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### **1.0 The reason for the decision**

- 1.1 A new Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been developed in line with the council's statutory requirement to prepare a new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy every five years. The draft strategy is presented here for consideration by Executive.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Executive approve the draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy as presented at Appendix A.

### **3.0 Background and Introduction**

- 3.1 The 2002 Homelessness Act requires local authorities to conduct a review of homelessness and develop a homelessness strategy at least every five years. The purpose of the strategy is the prevention of homelessness, to secure sufficient accommodation for people who are or may become homeless and to secure the provision of support for those who are or may become homeless so they do not become homeless again.
- 3.2 The Strategy responds to the changing environment in which homelessness and rough sleeping support services are now delivered and has been shaped by national policy, a review of data, current services, customer feedback and partner views. A peer review by the Local Government Association also helped to identify areas for improvement to build into the strategy.
- 3.3 The review of homelessness considered information from a range of sources to determine:

- Current government policy and legislation including additional duties introduced
- Key achievements and changes in the homelessness service
- An up to date understanding of homelessness and housing needs in Allerdale
- Current and future levels of homelessness and rough sleeping trends
- Levels of support and accommodation needed to meet needs of people in the district who are or may become homeless in the future
- Links with other strategies and programmes that aim to address the wide range of factors that could contribute to homelessness in the local area
- An understanding of partner agency activities
- The resources available to the Council to prevent and tackle homelessness

A summary of key findings is provided as Appendix B.

- 3.4 Initial consultation with partners and stakeholders as part of the review helped to identify areas for improvement.
- 3.5 This Strategy is being proposed for the five year period 2022-2027. However, the Strategy has been developed in the context of local government reorganisation in Cumbria so it is likely that the transition to the new Cumberland Council will necessitate earlier review. Cumbrian local authorities already have a good track record of collaborating on strategic approaches to housing and homelessness, successfully securing funding and delivering together. The priorities identified within this strategy align closely with those in both the Copeland and Carlisle homelessness strategies meaning that the councils are already moving in the same direction.

#### **4.0 Content**

- 4.1 The draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been developed based on the review findings and further conversations and consultation with statutory and voluntary partners. It has also taken into account views of service users. This has helped us to target our actions to focus on the needs of our area.
- 4.2 The draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy details how the Council and its partners can seek to optimise opportunities to prevent and relieve homelessness including rough sleeping throughout the district to provide the right accommodation and support for those facing homelessness and builds on the achievements made in the last few years.
- 4.3 The draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out four strategic priorities:
- Reduce levels of hidden homelessness and rough sleeping
  - Prioritise prevention
  - Make sure there is appropriate support in place
  - Make sure there are suitable accommodation options available
- 4.4 The Strategy also sets out two principles important to any approach to addressing homelessness that underpin the actions identified in the Strategy:

- Person-centred approaches – recognising the need to focus on the person rather than on processes. Listening to those with lived experience is an important part of this.
- Working together (partnership approach) – recognising that no single agency can effectively prevent and reduce homelessness.

4.5 Partnership working remains at the core of our strategic approach and multi-agency approaches will be key to achieving many of the objectives set out in the Strategy. The Strategy fully recognises the important role, skills and expertise that other partners and stakeholders have in delivering sensitive and tailored solutions to one of the most complex issues within our communities. We actively participate in many partnership approaches and forums all of which contribute to the homeless agenda, but we will always consider ways to improve relationships and approaches.

4.6 The draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy was shared more widely for consultation with elected members, statutory and voluntary statutory and voluntary agencies with an interest in homelessness issues in February 2022.

4.7 The draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027 can be viewed in full at appendix A.

## **5.0 Delivery arrangements**

5.1 The Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be underpinned by a more detailed action plan that will set out more detailed delivery activity. Progress will be reported to Executive.

## **6.0 Implications and Impact**

### **6.1 Contribution to Council Strategy Priorities, Outputs and Outcomes**

The development of a Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy directly supports the Council Strategy theme of Resilient Communities and the objective 'preventing homelessness'.

### **6.2 Finance/Resource implications**

It is envisioned this Strategy will be delivered within existing resources however, there are a number of factors that may impact on delivery over the coming years including:

- opportunities to secure external funding to continue to deliver specialist projects concerning domestic abuse and rough sleeping
- the full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic nationally and locally
- the rising costs of living currently being seen nationally driven to a large extent by rapidly increasing fuel bills.

Any emerging issues that would require additional resources will be subject to the usual Council decision making processes.

### 6.3 Legal and governance implications

Local authorities have a statutory duty to conduct a review of homelessness, to develop a homelessness strategy and to update that strategy every five years under the Homelessness Act 2002.

### 6.4 Risk analysis

A scored and mitigated risk log

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Controls required</b>	<b>Mitigated score</b>
The Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy does not focus on the right things	Council effort is misdirected and there is a missed opportunity to support communities	Ensure that the strategy reflects the evidence	Low
The Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy tries to cover too much and is not focussed enough	Limited council resources are spread too thinly and the strategy is not delivered	Ensure that the strategy focuses on some key elements that the council can act upon.	Medium
The Strategy is not approved	The Council will not be compliant with legislation which could lead to Government funding being reduced.	Approve the draft Strategy	Low
Relevant partners do not engage to deliver the identified actions.	This could result in some of the actions not being carried out which would then impact on the ability to meet the identified priorities.	Continue to engage with partners strategically through the Cumbria Homelessness Forum, and locally through other groups, forums and informal working arrangements.	Medium

### 6.5 Increasing satisfaction and service

The Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy recognises the need for person centred approaches and identifies an action to ensure that the voices of service users are heard by ensuring active reflection on those that have been through the service to provide feedback.

### 6.6 Equality impacts

An equality impact assessment has been undertaken and has not identified any negative impacts relating to the approaches set out in this strategy. The Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix C.

## 6.7 Health and Safety impacts

There are health and safety implications associated with the provision of the homelessness service and temporary accommodation. The team have appropriate risk assessments in place and undertake appropriate training to manage those implications.

## 6.8 Health, wellbeing and community safety impacts

The Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy is expected to have positive impacts on health, wellbeing and community safety issues.

The Strategy will have a positive impact on health and wellbeing by ensuring support is available to people with additional needs such as drug and alcohol. It will help to address wider social issues such as poverty and deals with specific community safety issues such as domestic abuse.

## 6.9 Environmental/sustainability impacts

The Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy is considered to have limited environmental/sustainability implications. Limiting the use of B&Bs as temporary accommodation may reduce the use of single use plastics as takeaway meals are more likely to be consumed in these circumstances.

## 6.10 Other significant implications

None

## Appendices attached to this report

Appendix number	Title of appendix
Appendix A	Draft Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy
Appendix B	Summary of homelessness review findings
Appendix C	Equality Impact Assessment

## Background documents available

Name of background document	Where it is available

## Report author(s) and contact officer(s):

*Holly Cosgrove*

*Housing Options Manager*

[holly.cosgrove@allerdale.gov.uk](mailto:holly.cosgrove@allerdale.gov.uk)

01900 878655

*Alex FitzGerald*

*Strategic Advisor - Corporate*

[alex.fitzgerald@allerdale.gov.uk](mailto:alex.fitzgerald@allerdale.gov.uk)

01900 516662