

Draft Homelessness Strategy 2016 – 2021

Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 9 December 2015

Author:	Head of Housing and Community Safety
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report provides the Health and Wellbeing Board with an opportunity to comment on the draft Homelessness Strategy for Swindon 2016 to 2021.
- 1.2 The Homelessness Strategy is a statutory requirement as set out in Schedule 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002.

2. Recommendations

The Board is recommended to:

- 2.1 Comment on the draft Homelessness Strategy attached at Appendix 1 to the report and note the priorities it sets out.
- 2.2 Endorse the Strategy recommending that it is approved by Cabinet and the Governing Body of the Clinical Commissioning Group.
- 2.3 Recommend Cabinet amend the Allocations Policy to offer a proportion of social housing voids in a targeted way to homeless households as set out in Priority 4 of the Draft Strategy.

3. Detail

- 3.1 The draft Homelessness Strategy aims to meet one of the actions of the Housing Strategy 2015, for Swindon to achieve the Government's Gold Standard for homelessness service as set out in 2013.
- 3.2 The Homelessness Service already operates in line with the standards set out, and once the Homelessness Strategy is adopted the Council can then be audited to verify its compliance.
- 3.3 Swindon's Homelessness Service has improved substantially, with the number of households in temporary accommodation having reduced from nearly 1000 in 2004/5 to below 300 now. There is still space for improvements in specific areas and these are covered within the priorities set out within the Draft Strategy.
- 3.4 Since the service already meets the best practice guidance as set out in the Department of Communities and Local Government's *Making Every Contact Count; A Joint Approach to Preventing Homelessness* (August 2012) the

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from James Graham, 01793 464474, jgraham@swindon.gov.uk.

Draft Homelessness Strategy 2016 – 2021

Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 9 December 2015

Strategy aims to target specific critical aspects of delivery that are problematic. The priorities for action are:

- 3.4.1 Ensuring victims of Domestic Abuse are appropriately housed
- 3.4.2 Improving partnership working to support homeless people with complex needs
- 3.4.3 Preventing homelessness for people with care needs
- 3.4.4 Ensure we make best use of our social housing to minimise homelessness
- 3.5 The Homelessness Strategy sets out a short list of actions to target the priorities. In the past Homelessness Strategies have set out substantial numbers of actions, which have become undeliverable as circumstances change so this Strategy aims to deliver a smaller list which can be updated if necessary.
- 3.6 In order to ensure the Strategy is delivered, and Homelessness in Swindon continues to be effective the Homelessness Forum will be re-established.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Since a Homelessness Strategy is a statutory requirement the alternative option is to change the content and priorities contained.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The Homelessness Strategy should provide a steer for Supported Housing procurement, which will be reported on separately as part of the normal budget setting procedure.
- 5.2 The Strategy is key to delivering Homelessness Services within identified budgets. There are no additional financial implications from the proposals in the Strategy.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.3 The service operates in line with primary legislation and up to date good practice guidance, so there are no legal or human rights implications from this Strategy.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.4 None.

Draft Homelessness Strategy 2016 – 2021

Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 9 December 2015

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 A Diversity Impact Assessment has been carried out by the author of the report, and is available on request. Findings from the Diversity Impact Assessment have been incorporated into the Strategy itself. It is important to note that the shortage of affordable housing is a particular difficulty, as well as the support services people need to live independently. People at risk of social exclusion often need to develop skills to ensure that they can successfully maintain a home. The services commissioned and delivered by the Council such as the Outreach Service for those sleeping rough as well as the work of the Housing Options Team take account of these particular vulnerabilities. The action plan will be developed to improve service delivery where resources allow.

Risk Management

- 5.6 There are no additional risks identified from this Strategy.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The four priorities for action have been developed in consultation with homelessness services in Swindon, service user groups, equality group representatives and Council stakeholders and Public Health colleagues, as part of the development of this strategy. These agencies will remain involved in developing the action plan. The Action Plan will be developed with the re-established Homelessness Forum
- 6.2 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - Draft Homelessness Strategy 2016 - 2021
- 8.2 Appendix 2 - Evidence Base for the Homelessness Strategy