

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 11 MARCH 2020

43. Swindon Borough Council's Homeless Prevention and Reduction Strategy

The Director of Housing submitted a report (a) seeking the Board's approval of Swindon Borough Council's Homeless Prevention and Reduction Strategy 2020-2024 and (b) recommending that Swindon Borough Council's Cabinet adopt and implement it. In introducing the report the Head of Housing drew Members' attention to:

- The strategy's demonstration to a commitment across the partnership to ensure that everyone in Swindon lives a healthy, safe, fulfilling and independent life and is supported by thriving and connected communities.
- The development of the strategy, which was a statutory requirement, through on-going work by the Board and Council through a number of policies and strategies and a consultation process.
- The four key priorities set out within the strategy of preventing homelessness, securing stable accommodation, partnership working and individual responses.
- A summary of key points with each of the priority areas, as identified within the report.
- That homelessness was not only reflected in not having a home but included an individual having multiple disadvantages and was only often a phase for a household.
- Work to improve relationships with private landlords to stabilise tenancies within the private rental sector.
- Work to support individuals to adapt when moving from institutional establishments into social housing through partnership working.
- An increase in workload arising from the strategy due to intensive work to support tenants maintain tenancies and to prevent evictions

Following the presentation by the Head of Housing the Board discussed:

- Its support for the work in preparing the strategy and the principles underpinning it.
- The lack of specific reference to former armed forces personnel or the LGBT community; although it was noted both of these groups were enshrined in legislation and that the Council had an Armed Services Covenant.
- The loss of Council houses under Right to Buy Legislation and the inability of the Council, through financial constraints, to replace these on a one to one basis leading to increased pressure for social housing.
- The differences between affordable and social housing and whether an

increase in affordable housing might limit the ability of the low paid workers to maintain a tenancy.

- The increase risk to exposure to crime for those individuals who did not have access to secure accommodation.
- The benefits of setting out in more detail within the report on the positive work undertaken in respect of Care Leavers, families institutionalised people and vulnerable and homeless people and the Youth Offending Team to prevent homelessness and support tenancies.
- The positive feedback received in respect of the work and strength of the Housing Panel Board.
- The importance and role of the private rental sector in the local housing market and the current working relationship with private landlords and work to continue to maintain and improve this.
- That officers had received informal feedback from the private sector to the consultation undertaken on the strategy.

Resolved – (1) That, subject to the inclusion of the comments made by this Board, Swindon Borough Council's Homeless Prevention and Reduction Strategy 2020-2024 be approved.

(2) That Swindon Borough Council's Cabinet be recommended to adopt the Homeless Prevention and Reduction Strategy 2020-2024.