

**Wards Affected:**

All

**ITEM 10****CABINET****6 MARCH 2018****ROUGH SLEEPING REDUCTION STRATEGY 2018-2021**

Responsible Cabinet Member: Councillor Long (Cabinet member for Adult Social Care and Housing)

Report Sponsor: Duncan Sharkey Corporate Director Place

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**Executive Summary:**

The Council Plan 2016-2020 highlights tackling homelessness as a priority.

The primary focus of the administration is to ensure the long-term wellbeing of our citizens. Through this Strategy we intend to ensure a coordinated approach to preventing homelessness and make sure appropriate support and good quality, affordable and permanent housing is available to those in need so that no-one should spend a single night on the streets.

In September 2017, Cabinet approved the draft Rough Sleeping Reduction Strategy for public consultation. The 12 week consultation closed on 24 December 2017. There was a high level of support for the priorities identified in the draft strategy and the feedback has been considered in the completion of the final strategy.

The Council has already been working extensively with partners in the voluntary sector to reduce homelessness and to assess gaps in existing provision. This strategy will coordinate this work alongside the revised statutory responsibilities from April 2018 to progress partnership working and deliver a person centred approach to significantly reduce the number of rough sleepers in Milton Keynes by 2021.

**Councillor Nigel Long**  
**Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Housing**

1. **Recommendation(s)**
  - 1.1 That Milton Keynes Council's Rough Sleeping Reduction Strategy 2018-2021 be approved.
  - 1.2 That a Delivery Plan be developed to set out how the Council would deliver this strategy in partnership with other agencies be noted.
  - 1.3 That a new Homelessness Strategy be developed following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018, setting out Council's approach to preventing homelessness of all types, be noted.

## 2. Issues

- 2.1 The number of people sleeping rough in Milton Keynes has increased in recent years. In 2013 the number of people verified as sleeping rough was 8. At the time of the last rough sleepers count in November 2017 this had risen to 48 (however, it is recognised that there could be over 100 people rough sleeping at any one time).
- 2.2 In 2016, the Council approved the setting up of the Milton Keynes Homelessness Partnership, which brought together representatives from the Council and the voluntary sector to identify gaps in service delivery and contribute towards developing solutions.
- 2.3 At its meeting of 12 September 2017, Cabinet approved the draft Rough Sleeping Reduction Strategy for public consultation. The consultation closed on 24 December 2017. A total of 102 responses were received, with 18 (18%) response from organisations and 84 responses (82%) from members of the public.
- 2.4 A summary of the responses is shown below (a full analysis of the responses is given at Annex B).
- (a) 98% of respondents agreed that the Council needed a strategy.
  - (b) 85% agreed with priority 1 (Work in partnership to prevent people sleeping rough in the first place).
  - (c) 87% agreed with priority 2 (Provide a joined up response when people do end up on the streets).
  - (d) 87% agreed with priority 3 (Provide a sustainable outreach service for those with complex /multiple needs).
  - (e) 84% agreed with priority 4 (Enable the provision of sustainable housing solutions).
  - (f) 80% agreed with priority 5 (Tackle anti-social behaviour and crime to keep MK safe).
- 2.5 Given the broad level of support for the priorities identified in the draft strategy, it is proposed that they are adopted as the Council's strategic approach. A copy of the analysis of responses to consultation is attached at Annex B.
- 2.6 Some common themes emerged from the comments made by respondents, such as the need to clarify certain words and phrases (for example 'work with' and 'joined up' for the strategy); the need to be person centred and to ensure that appropriate support is given to individuals and families and the need to set targets. These, and other comments, will be clarified and added as part of the development of the Delivery Plan that will set out how the Council will achieve this strategy. This will include developing the pathways to support and housing.

- 2.7 Supporting people through a housing first model and ensuring they get the support they need to find and maintain permanent accommodation is front and centre of the Council's approach. By adopting this approach, we hope to reduce the number of people sleeping rough by 2021. The Council will consider the use of appropriate legislation once reasonable avenues of support and engagement or have been attempted unless urgent action is required in order to tackle anti-social behaviour for example begging.
- 2.8 The proposal to pursue a public space protection order will not be taken forward as the Council is adopting a person centred approach, in line with the principles set out in Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This requires us to develop 'personal housing plans' for everyone who presents to the Council as homeless or threatened with homelessness, and requires considering the needs of individuals rather than seeking to adopt a blanket approach.
- 2.9 In recognition of the need to provide a person centred approach, it is proposed that the Council's vision is "to work with individuals and families to support them to secure good quality, affordable and permanent housing and to ensure that no-one needs to spend a single night on the streets".
- 2.10 The Council has already begun to implement measures to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping. In October 2017, Cabinet approved an extra £871,000 per year to increase resources to tackle homelessness. The Housing Service is undergoing a significant restructure to ensure that it has the right skill set to enable it to prevent homelessness and support people secure and maintain permanent accommodation. In December 2017, the Leader of the Council announced the provision of additional bed spaces to complement the Winter Night Shelter provision. Full Council recently approved the budget for 2018/19 that includes an additional £400,000 per year to work up options and solutions for reducing street homelessness across the borough.
- 2.11 The Council will develop a new Homelessness Strategy following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018 that will set out how it intends to prevent anyone from becoming homeless in Milton Keynes and what it will do to secure accommodation for those who do become homeless.

### 3. **Options**

- 3.1 As there is no statutory requirement on a local authority to produce a specific rough sleeper strategy and the Council could therefore choose not to develop one. However, having a strategy is considered both best practice and necessary to articulate how the council will meet the challenges and support people to secure long term permanent accommodation. Therefore, it is recommended that the strategy is adopted and implemented.

### 4. **Implications**

#### 4.1 Policy

The Rough Sleeping Reduction Strategy addresses the three key objectives of the Council Plan – A Healthy City, An Affordable City and A City of Opportunity.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.3 £200k in one-off funding has been provided in the current financial year to support the work of the Homelessness Partnership to reduce street homelessness.

4.4 In addition to this, £400k has been approved for the 2018/19 budget as referred to in 2.10.

4.5 The risk of people coming to Milton Keynes to sleep rough to access improved services and accommodation needs to be considered. In order to mitigate this risk a local connection criteria will need to be applied and reconnection services put in place as set out in the strategy.

4.6 However, the strategy mitigates the current reputational risks arising from our current lack of provision for reducing street homelessness and the increasing visibility of rough sleeping.

Y	Capital	Y	Revenue	N	Accommodation
N	IT	Y	Medium Term Plan	Y	Asset Management

4.4 Carbon and Energy Management

4.5 N/A

4.5 Legal

4.6 The strategy will guide the Council's approach to rough sleeping. Local authorities need to act in accordance with approved plans and policies.

4.6 Other Implications

The Rough Sleeping Reduction Strategy has positive implications for equalities and diversity as it seeks to address issues around deprivation and the need for supported housing for the most vulnerable people living in the borough.

Y	Equalities/Diversity	Y	Sustainability	N	Human Rights
N	E-Government	Y	Stakeholders	N	Crime and Disorder

Background Papers: N/A

Annexes: Annex A – Final Rough Sleeping Reduction Strategy  
Annex B – Summary of Responses from the Consultation