

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMME STRATEGY 2022-26</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>27<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2022</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>

- 1. PURPOSE:**
  - 1.1 To approve and adopt the proposed Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-26 and associated documents, as required by Welsh Government.
  
- 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**
  - 2.1 To consider the findings of the Homeless Need Assessment (**See Appendix 1**) and the current related homeless risks and challenges.
  - 2.2 To approve and adopt the draft Housing Support Programme Strategy (**See Appendix 2**) and Action Plan (**See Appendix 3**).
  
- 3. KEY ISSUES:**
  - 3.1 The Council is required by Welsh Government to produce a Housing Support Programme Strategy by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The Strategy needs to be a four-year plan to cover the period April 2022 to March 2026, with a mid-point review after two years. (The draft Strategy was completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 and forwarded to Welsh Government. Welsh Government agreed that the Strategy could be formally adopted after the local elections).
  - 3.2 The Strategy combines the Local Authority's statutory duty to produce a Homelessness strategy and the strategic planning requirement to establish and maintain a Housing Support Grant programme. This is a key but appropriate change from previous arrangements because of the role of housing support in respect of homeless prevention.
  - 3.3 The document provides a single strategic view of the Council's approach to homelessness prevention, housing support service delivery, statutory homelessness functions (delivered by the Housing Options Team) funded through the revenue settlement and non-statutory preventative services funded through the Housing Support Grant programme.
  - 3.4 The Strategy effectively provides updates and replaces the Council's previous Homeless Strategy published in 2018 and the Homeless Transition Plan approved in 2021.
  - 3.5 To inform the Strategy the Council is required to undertake a local Homeless Needs Assessment. It identifies and sets out the key priorities for the Council and its partners. The findings from the Needs Assessment, informed through stakeholder engagement, illustrates:
    - The profile of homeless need and the requirements to meet this need has changed significantly over the last two years;
    - The need for a range of temporary, supported and permanent homeless accommodation has risen significantly, particularly in relation to young people,

single people and those experiencing mental health and substance misuse issues;

- There is an over reliance on B & B accommodation;
- A high proportion of those needing homeless assistance require medium to high housing support provision;
- Social housing turnover is inadequate, and the private rented sector has contracted, impacting detrimentally on low income and vulnerable households. This accommodation issue is creating challenges in moving people on to suitable permanent accommodation;
- Some homeless expenditure is not sustainable e.g. Bed and Breakfast. This is due to high costs and the inability to fully recover costs with housing benefit leading to a budget deficit situation;
- The importance of collaborative and partnership working to increase both the level of existing provision and new and innovative solutions; and
- The importance of supporting staff and appropriate staffing levels

3.6 The proposed strategic priorities to tackle and address the need identified are:

- **Priority One:** To identify those at risk of homelessness earlier and provide timely interventions to prevent homelessness occurring;
- **Priority Two:** To provide timely and effective support for vulnerable residents particularly for those with high and complex needs;
- **Priority Three:** To Increase access to a range of affordable and suitable housing solutions for homeless households, both temporary and permanent;
- **Priority Four:** To move to a Rapid Re-Housing Approach [as required by Welsh Government];
- **Priority Five:** To maximise and increase the availability and effectiveness of financial, staffing/workforce and collaborative resources available for tackling homelessness.

3.7 The Strategy and Action Plan will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team; People Scrutiny Committee; the Strategic Housing Partnership and the Children and Communities Grant & Housing Support Grant Executive Board.

3.8 In the run up to the local elections, the Council received explicit permission from Welsh Government for the Strategy to be approved and adopted retrospectively. Therefore, the pre-approved document was forwarded to Welsh Government by 31st March 2022 in order to meet the required timescales and a request is now being made for Cabinet to formally approve the Strategy, post-election.

#### 4. **EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**

4.1 There are no negative implications with this proposal. **See Appendix 4.**

#### 5. **OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

5.1 The following options are available:

Option	Benefit	Risk	Comment
<b>Option 1:</b> The <u>recommended option</u> is to agree the proposed Homeless Support Programme Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It sets out the Council's direction and priorities for meeting it's homeless responsibilities and meeting homeless</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no risks associated with the actual development of the proposed Strategy itself.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be resource implications associated with meeting the priorities of the Strategy and</li> </ul>

Option	Benefit	Risk	Comment
	<p>need in Monmouthshire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It enables the Council to create a strategic statement of intent.</li> <li>• It establishes a co-ordinated whole Authority approach</li> <li>• It raises awareness, understanding and importance of homeless need in Monmouthshire</li> <li>• It supports Welsh Government vision and policy to transition homeless services in Wales.</li> <li>• The Strategy supports and contributes to the Council's priorities of delivering additional affordable housing, providing additional homeless accommodation, and town centre regeneration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are, however, risks associated with the current homeless situation in Monmouthshire that the Council is seeking to address. For example, reducing and eliminating the unsustainable use of B &amp; B accommodation.</li> </ul>	<p>delivering individual actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk will be taken into account in respect of any decision making necessary in respect of any individual actions within the report. This would be outside of the consideration needed for this report.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Option 2:</b> Do nothing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no benefits to this option</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council would be in breach of its statutory duty to both have a Homeless Strategy in place and to review that Strategy</li> <li>• The Council would be vulnerable to reputational risk</li> </ul>	<p>This is not considered an option</p>

6.  
6.1

**REASONS:**

The Council has been requested by Welsh Government to establish a Housing Support Programme Strategy. The Strategy meets the Council's statutory obligation under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 to establish a Homeless Strategy. It effectively reviews the previous Strategy agreed in 2018.

## 7 **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no resource implications associated with approving the proposed Strategy. There are, however, resource implications associated with the implementation of the Strategy which are reflected in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

7.2 The following are funding sources that will be accessed by the Council subject to any necessary approvals:

### **Revenue Funding**

- Housing Options Team and Housing Support Grant Cost Centres;
- Welsh Government Covid-19 Hardship Grant 2021/22 (funded the pre-payment of B & B requirements for 2022/23);
- Welsh Government Housing Support Grant;
- Welsh Government Homeless Prevention Grant;
- Welsh Government National Leasing Scheme;
- Children's Services revenue funding (contributing to the Pobl Young People Supported Housing);
- Compass and Youth Support Grant;
- Discretionary Housing Payments;
- Property rental income

### **Capital**

- Social Housing Grant;
- Land Buildings Development Fund;
- Transitional Accommodation Fund;
- S106 Contributions;
- Potential MCC borrowing (subject to potential Cabinet approval)

## 8. **CONSULTEES:**

8.1 To inform the development of this Strategy, the Council has engaged with:

- Current homeless clients;
- Current housing support clients;
- Agencies directly delivering homeless services and agencies indirectly delivering or interfacing with homeless services around the themes of homeless prevention; health; young people and community safety

8.2 The draft Strategy has been consulted upon internally, to Welsh Government and to external stakeholders. **See Appendix 5**

8.3 The Cabinet Member for Active and Inclusive Communities requested that consideration be given to Housing Co-Operatives as a potential additional housing option for Monmouthshire. This has been added to the action plan.

9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS:** Welsh Government, Phase 2 Homeless and Housing Support Planning Guidance, 2021; Welsh Government Local Authority Housing Support Programme Strategy April 2022 - March 2026 Template; Welsh Government, Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans: Guidance for Local Authorities & Partners, 2021

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