

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board  
**DATE:** 11 April 2019  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, People  
**PORTFOLIO:** Health and Wellbeing  
**SUBJECT:** Halton's Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024  
**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To present the draft Homelessness Strategy and Delivery Plan

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board**

- 1) **note the contents of the report and appendices; and**
- 2) **approve the Strategy Review and Action Plan in accordance with statutory requirement.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The draft Halton Homelessness Strategy covers the period 2019-2024, and supersedes the Halton Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018. Under the Homelessness Act 2002 it is a requirement for each local authority area to produce a 5 year strategy, reviewed annually.

3.2 The strategy highlights developments in the legislative and policy framework, in particular the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, since the previous strategy was implemented.

3.3 This local strategy follows the national approach of **protect** housing options, **prevent** homelessness, **resolve** homelessness when it is unavoidable and **avoid** repeat homelessness.

3.4 The strategy addresses the demands as a result of trends identified in homelessness presentations, acceptances and temporary accommodation. Over the last 5 years there has been an 88% increase in the number of people presenting as homeless (since 2013/14), as shown in the table below.

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
3.5 Statutory homelessness presentations	197	249	177	320	372
Statutory homelessness acceptances	46	42	20	36	24
Use of Bed & Breakfast	0	0	0	0	0
Homelessness Prevention	744	798	987	1,095	960
Advice and assistance	1781	1897	1887	1616	1920

3.6 Consultation took place with people who use services and key stakeholders to identify 'what good looks like', what works and what is yet to be done.

3.7 The strategic priorities for the council and partners to work towards were identified, in order to comply with legislative requirements and respond to local need, and are stated in the document. Actions that are described in the delivery plan include:

- **Protect**– attracting new landlords to the local market, working with landlords to increase and promote housing options, support for landlords in maintaining tenancies
- **Prevent** - Identifying people/households at risk of homelessness – Working with partners to identify those most vulnerable earlier, in particular asylum seekers and refugees, young people and those with mental, and other health, conditions
- **Resolve** – continue to work with stakeholders to develop a coordinated and seamless support offer.
- **Avoid** – A whole systems approach to tackling the determinants of homelessness, developing local initiatives to counteract the impact of benefit reforms and supporting people towards employment by accessing employment, learning and skills training opportunities. Working in partnership with health, social care, education, children's social care, police and probation services, voluntary sector agencies, registered social landlords and the private rental sector.

#### 4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The strategy is reflective of the legislative requirements, best practice and local policy framework. The Localism Act 2011 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 have policy implications and will

impact upon the shape of future housing provision and allocation of accommodation within the private rented sector.

4.2 The primary legislation listed below represents the recent history of the new powers arising from the Localism Act 2011. The policy will fully comply with the following legal requirements:

- Housing Act 1996
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Homelessness Code of Guidance 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Localism Act 2011
- Suitability of Accommodation Order 2012
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

## 5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The financial implications of delivering the Homelessness Strategy are outlined in the Action Plan.

## 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### 6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Homelessness can have an adverse impact on the wellbeing of children and young people with educational attainment being affected by adverse residential mobility. The prevention focus of the Strategy will ensure that families with children are assisted swiftly to ensure minimal disruption. In addition, the Strategy recognises that homelessness amongst young people in Halton is a particular problem and therefore includes priorities to strengthen joint working to ensure this group is provided with the most appropriate support by the relevant agencies.

### 6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

The lack of a settled home can adversely impact an individual's ability to find and sustain employment – the Strategy's focus on homelessness prevention allows people to remain in their homes wherever possible.

### 6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The Homelessness Strategy places emphasis on the links between health and homelessness and one of the strategy objectives is specifically focussed on this issue. Therefore, implementation of actions contained within the strategy will have positive implications for the health and wellbeing of those experiencing homelessness.

### 6.4 **A Safer Halton**

Criminal activity can be both a cause and consequence of homelessness and homeless prisoners are more likely to re-offend following release than those who have settled accommodation.

Therefore, the Strategy includes a priority to improve joint working with the police and probation service to address the growing housing need for offenders.

**6.5 Halton’s Urban Renewal**

The presence of rough sleeping can have a negative impact on the environment and the Strategy seeks to continue to ensure that this does not pose an issue for Halton.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 If the homelessness grant funding were to be reduced or ceased completely, it would adversely affect the ability of the Housing Solutions Team to offer a range of housing options and would impact upon performance and service delivery

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Halton Borough Council is an equal opportunities organisation. All housing support services are required to demonstrate that they embrace and comply with the Equality Act, and services are monitored to ensure this is the case.

**9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

9.1 It is a statutory requirement that all areas should develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy to cover a five-year period. This draft strategy meets that requirement.

**10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

10.1 There are no alternative options that have been considered. The draft strategy has been developed following consultation with key stakeholders and people who use services, and meets the requirements of national and local strategic priorities.

**11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

11.1 This draft Strategy will be implemented as from the date of final approval given by the Executive Board.

**12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Homelessness Strategy	Housing Solutions	Patricia Preston

