

## **HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

**11 MARCH 2019**

### **HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY 2019 - 2024**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To present the new Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2019 – 2024 for approval and outline its key themes which were informed by the homelessness review (the findings of which were previously reported to this Committee on 14 January 2019).

#### **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to conduct a review of homelessness and to produce a Homelessness Strategy, setting out how homelessness will be tackled in each area.
- 2.2 Newark & Sherwood District Council produced its first Homelessness Strategy in 2003 and subsequent strategies in 2008 and 2013. The partnership strategies have been used to drive forward a whole range of service improvements.
- 2.3 Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood District Councils successfully jointly commissioned a homelessness review and individual strategies in 2013 and therefore agreed to jointly commission a review and strategy covering the period 2019 – 2024 for Mid Notts (including Ashfield, because Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils became a shared service in 2015).
- 2.4 Historically, strategies have been based on comprehensive reviews of homelessness, in line with the Homelessness Act 2002 and associated guidance and best practice. This is still the case for this review and strategy but it will also need to consider the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 2.5 The review is required to set out the current and likely future levels of homelessness through the collation of available data, information and evidence; to measure the extent and nature of homelessness across the three areas and to highlight the potential response to homelessness individually, collectively and countywide, where appropriate.
- 2.6 An additional review is also planned to identify gaps in current provision and to take account of the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the resulting implications this may bring following its commencement on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2018.

#### **3.0 Key themes**

- 3.1 The new Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2019 – 2024 is attached at **Appendix A**. A number of key themes are included within the strategy and will become the basis for the action plan as detailed below:

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Objective</b>
Reduce the Impact of Poverty on Homelessness	To improve the financial resilience amongst the population at risk of homeless households through a proactive and integrated local welfare benefits system
Respond to the Shortage of Social Housing	To increase the amount of social housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of social housing tenancies by homeless households/at risk households
Supported Housing and Housing Related Support	To deliver the additional required supported housing and housing related support
Work with the Private Rented Sector (PRS)	To increase the amount of PRS housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of PRS tenancies by homeless households/at risk households
Address the Causes and Consequences of Homelessness	To ensure the support needs of homeless households and households at risk of homelessness are appropriately met in order to reduce their risk of homelessness and the risk of homelessness increasing their support needs
Reduce the Negative Impact of Homelessness on the Community (Inc. Rough Sleeping)	To end rough sleeping and street activity and encourage the community to do their bit to tackle and prevent homelessness
Improve Customer Services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	To achieve high customer satisfaction with the outcome and experience of the support provided by NSDC Housing Options and partners
Improve the data available to all relevant agencies	Services are designed based on robust evidence and effectively monitored and evaluated

3.2 The strategy and development of a live action plan will be created collaboratively with partners and led by the Council's Homelessness Strategy Officer. Governance will be through the joint Homeless Interagency Forum between Newark & Sherwood, Ashfield and Mansfield DC.

#### **4.0 Equalities Implications**

4.1 No equality implications have been identified through the completion of a full Equalities Impact Assessment.

#### **5.0 Financial Implications**

5.1 The total cost of the homelessness review and subsequent strategy is £53,075 and is split equally for payment between the three authorities. The total cost to Newark & Sherwood District Council is £17,692 which has been funded from the Homelessness Reserve.

#### **6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:**

- (a) the contents of the report be noted; and**
- (b) the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2019-2024 be approved.**

#### Background Papers

Newark and Sherwood Homelessness Review 2018

For further information please contact Cheska Asman, Homelessness Strategy & Safeguarding Officer on 5643 or Leanne Monger, Business Manager – Housing, Health & Community Relations on ext 5545.

Matthew Finch  
Director - Communities & Environment

# Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2019 - 2024

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Preventing homelessness is  
everyone's business



NEWARK &  
SHERWOOD  
DISTRICT COUNCIL



homeless link

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## NEWARK & SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL - HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY 2019-2024

### FOREWORD

We are pleased to introduce our new District Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024 and would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to the comprehensive Homelessness Review which has informed this strategy.

This is the Council's fourth Homelessness Strategy, our last strategy covered the period 2013-2018 and was extremely successful in its delivery. However, there are still challenging times ahead, particularly with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (the biggest change in homelessness legislation for many years) in addition to the Government's pledge to end rough sleeping by 2027.



The complex issues around homelessness affect us all and are of great importance to me and the Council. Preventing homelessness has been at the core of our service for many years and remains a priority. We have already remodelled features of our service to allow us to respond effectively to the new legislation.

We look forward to continuing our work with partners to deliver the priorities of this strategy given that their contributions are vital and are greatly appreciated. We are particularly keen to ensure that this strategy and action plan remains a live document that's monitored and reviewed by the Councils Homeless Inter-agency Forum.

A second homelessness review is already planned later in 2019 to fully assess the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, in partnership with Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils.

*Councillor Bruce Laughton*  
*Chairman – Homes & Communities Committee*

### INTRODUCTION

In 2018, Newark & Sherwood District Council decided to carry out a Homelessness Review and develop a local Homelessness Strategy, under the terms of the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The review and strategy follow on from the council's existing strategy document that covered the period 2013-2018.

The review was commissioned in partnership with Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils. Homeless Link were engaged to carry it out. Homeless Link was also commissioned to help the councils to produce their local homelessness strategies. This strategy sets out Newark & Sherwood District Council's response to the joint homelessness review which can be found at [link](#).

## VISION AND AIMS

It is Newark & Sherwood District Council's vision that the population should be living in, or can access, homes that are affordable, warm and within a safe community that promotes the health and wellbeing of residents.

Central to achieving this vision is ensuring that homelessness affects the smallest possible number of residents and where it does; there is help available to quickly resolve their situation so that it does not happen again.

This Strategy identifies a number of priority areas and actions that need to be taken to ensure this vision is achieved.

The aims of this Strategy are to:

- Prevent as many residents as possible from becoming homeless
- Ensure that if anyone has to sleep rough, it is brief and does not happen again
- Help as many residents as possible to move seamlessly from one home to another without the need for emergency or temporary accommodation
- Provide a good quality service that customers are highly satisfied with.

The objectives of this Strategy are:

- To improve financial resilience amongst the population at risk of homelessness, through a proactive and integrated local welfare benefits system
- To increase the amount of social housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of social housing tenancies
- To deliver additional supported housing and housing related support as required
- To increase the amount of PRS housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of PRS tenancies
- To ensure the support needs of homeless households and households at risk of homelessness are appropriately met, in order to reduce their risk of homelessness and the risk of homelessness increasing their support needs
- To end rough sleeping and street activity and encourage the community to do their bit to end homelessness
- To achieve high customer satisfaction with the outcome and experience of the support provided by Housing Options
- To ensure services are designed based on robust evidence and effectively monitored and evaluated.

The Council recognises that it cannot achieve this vision on its own and a central theme to this Strategy is partnership working.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Newark & Sherwood District Council would like to thank all the service users, providers and practitioners from across all sectors, who contributed to the Homelessness Review and the development of this strategy.

## **THE HOMELESSNESS REVIEW**

The Homelessness Review that underpins this strategy followed the methodology set out below:

- A call for evidence, aimed at harnessing the intelligence of local providers, local authority officers and commissioners, across the housing, welfare benefits, social care, criminal justice, health and community safety sectors, through semi-structured interviews
- Quantitative analysis, using an existing modelling tool which provides a coherent methodology for estimating future levels of need - and for modelling of the housing and support solutions required by people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Mapping of the current supply of commissioned and non-commissioned services, to enable comparison against the estimations of need produced by the quantitative analysis
- A survey of support needs, completed by providers, covering an extensive sample of accommodation based services, in order to gain a deeper understanding of service users' characteristics, pathways, support needs, engagement with services and move-on requirements
- Service user engagement through interview, focus groups and surveys
- A particular focus on the Private Rented Sector, by embedding the topic in all of the above and engaging with an industry body for lettings and management agents with members in the area

A Project Steering Board comprising representatives from the three councils involved oversaw the review. Regular presentations were made to (and discussions held with) the Joint Homelessness Interagency Forum during the course of the project.

The review also included a desk top study, looking at current national, regional and local policy. The national and regional policy context is set out in the review document. The local Newark & Sherwood policy context is set out below.

## **THE LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT**

### **Newark & Sherwood District Council's Strategic Priorities 2016-2020**

Preventing and reducing homelessness is of the utmost importance to Newark & Sherwood, as demonstrated by many of the aims and objectives set out in the Council's strategic priorities. These include:

- Provision and support of housing that meets the existing and emerging needs
- Maintenance of the high standard of the local housing stock
- Ensuring growth in the supply of housing across the district, having regard to the mix, type and density required



Specifically, the Council plan to:

- Develop or acquire more affordable housing
- Make maximum use of section 106 contributions, with the aim of securing 30% on all new housing development proposals and allocated housing sites
- Implement the Council's HRA development programme and work with Registered Providers to deliver 100% affordable housing schemes in the district.
- Reduce the number of empty homes
- Increase scope and choice, by recognising different models and definitions of affordable housing
- Develop a mixed provision of affordable homes, which includes starter homes serving the needs of younger people, families with young children and homes for older people
- Increase the availability of supported housing
- Establish a development company to act as a vehicle for new housing developments
- Develop lettings policies to maximise support for local people.

The Council recognises that delivering affordable housing will be a major contributor to reducing homelessness. So, these aims and objectives are reflected in the Local Housing Strategy. This aims to identify and address the unique challenges for the district of Newark and Sherwood. Its priorities are to:

- Deliver an increased supply and choice of affordable housing to meet local need and manage the impact of housing growth, to ensure there is a positive impact on both urban and rural communities
- Take action to improve the condition of existing homes, reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty along with raising standards of maintenance and management for the benefit of local residents
- Meet the local housing related needs of diverse communities through partnership working and targeted housing service provision.
- Enable the new housing required by the East Midlands Regional Plan and Newark New Growth Point initiative to be delivered, to secure the promotion of sustainable communities as part of a balanced approach to the future economy of Newark and Sherwood.

These aims and objectives are echoed in this Homelessness Strategy, which focusses on both prevention of homelessness - and on helping people who have nevertheless become homeless to find and sustain settled accommodation.

## **HOMELESSNESS IN NEWARK & SHERWOOD**

### **Progress since the 2013-2018 Strategy**

Since the last strategy was written, the Council has:

- successfully implemented a private rented sector access scheme, with both landlord and tenant support
- Effectively implemented the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 requirements, including the creation of new posts to ensure tenancy support and sustainment
- Ensured older people have access to housing support, to ensure suitable housing is maintained through the creation of an older person's worker
- Commissioned Sherwood and Newark Citizens Advice to deliver a debt service
- Enhanced partnership working between a range of agencies, including police, probation, DWP, social care, health, substance misuse, community, voluntary and faith groups
- Supported the creation of a complex needs worker, funding by the Community Safety Partnership to work and assist entrenched rough sleepers with issues such as substance misuse, mental health, domestic abuse
- Secured funding for a countywide Street Outreach Service for rough sleepers, delivered by Framework

These achievements provide a firm basis for our 2019-2024 strategy, which will be informed by the findings of the 2018 review.

### **Key Findings from the 2018 Homelessness Review**

The Homelessness Review found that in 2017/18:

- Newark & Sherwood had recorded 88 statutorily homeless people. This was less than half of the number in neighbouring Mansfield
- Of these, 26% were aged 16-24
- Newark & Sherwood had the lowest number of homeless people (1.7) per 1,000 of the population of the three districts included in the review
- This number of homeless people per 1,000 of the population was much lower than the average for the East Midlands (2.29) and England (2.41)
- Historically, Newark and Sherwood had a rising number of statutorily homeless people up to 2013/14, when numbers over all started to decline.

### ***Reasons for Homelessness and Risk of Homelessness***

As regards causes of homelessness, the picture in 2018/19 (based on data from the new H-CLIC recording system that, from April 2018 has underpinned implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) was as follows:

Cause	Homeless people	People threatened with homelessness
Loss of Tenancy or Mortgage Repossession	44	59
Family or friends no longer able to accommodate	33	16
Relationship break-up (non-violent)	38	13
Domestic abuse	18	9
Other	34	7
Not Known	0	2
Total	167	106

This and other relevant data was used in the quantitative analysis that formed part of the review. The analysis used an existing modelling tool, which provides a coherent methodology for estimating future levels of need - and for assessing the balance of housing and support solutions required. The analysis suggested that the following approximate levels of service provision would be required going forward.

Type of Service Required 2019-20	Newark & Sherwood
Prevention of homelessness through advice, assistance and mediation etc.	45
Tenancy sustainment / resettlement support	62
Access to alternative affordable accommodation	274
Housing First level support	10
Crisis Accommodation	33
Supported Housing	43
Refuge Accommodation	3

## THEMES AND PRIORITIES

In response to the above and to the other recommendations set out in the review, the council intend to work with partners to implement the following high level action plan. This action plan will be developed further, through the interagency forum or additional governance mechanisms as required. Timescales and partners will be identified as the plan is implemented over the five year period.

### Measuring success:

- Increased rates of prevention of homelessness by Newark & Sherwood and partners
- Reduced number of households seeking advice and assistance from Newark & Sherwood Housing Options?
- Reduced use of Newark & Sherwood temporary accommodation
- High customer satisfaction with the outcome and experience of the support provided by Newark & Sherwood Housing Options and partners
- Any rough sleeping is brief and non-recurrent

### Theme 1 - Reducing the Impact of Poverty on Homelessness

**Objective – To improve the financial resilience amongst the population at risk of homeless households through a proactive and integrated local welfare benefits system**

What we will do:

- Research how households at risk of homelessness can be proactively supported by NSDC and partners to improve their financial resilience to mitigate against adverse events that may cause homelessness (ending of a tenancy, relationship breakdown, bereavement, redundancy, large unexpected costs, etc) Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group

- Review the accessibility and take up of advice on money, debts and benefits provided by NSDC and partners by households at risk of homelessness. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Identify opportunities to integrate local welfare benefits services (such as NSDC C Housing Benefit, DWP, Citizens Advice) with the NSDC Housing Options team to proactively support households at risk of homelessness. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to develop sustainable pathways out of homelessness that minimise the levels of poverty experienced. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group

How we will measure success:

- Monitor the prevention of homelessness by local welfare benefits services
- Monitor the amount of DHP spent on the prevention of homelessness
- Monitor the referrals made to Housing Options by DWP and other local welfare benefit partners
- Review case studies of the customer experience of the local welfare benefits services
- Continue to support and monitor the debt service awarded to Citizens Advice

## **Theme 2 - Responding to the Shortage of Social Housing**

***Objective – To increase the amount of social housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of social housing tenancies by homeless households/at risk households***

What we will do:

- Deliver the relevant NSDC core strategy objectives
- Work with social housing partners to deliver the required additional tenancy sustainment support, using external funding where available
- Research the underlying causes of tenancy failure in social housing. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Identify the barriers to homeless households accessing social housing. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to reduce the number of evictions from social housing

How we will measure success:

- Number of additional social homes delivered
- Additional tenancy sustainment support delivered
- External funding secured
- Number of social housing evictions
- Number of households rehoused in social housing

### **Theme 3 - Supported Housing and Housing Related Support**

***Objective – To deliver the additional required supported housing and housing related support***

What we will do:

- Work with partners to deliver the required additional supported housing using external funding where available
- Work with partners to deliver the additional required housing related support using external funding where available
- Identify the barriers to sustainable move on from supported housing. Make recommendations to tackle these barriers to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Identify barriers to accessing supported housing by those households who need it. Make recommendations to tackle these barriers to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Conduct an annual review of support needs of supported housing residents and evaluate if these needs are appropriately met
- Create a governance structure that includes oversight of all supported housing and housing related support

How we will measure success:

- Number of additional supported housing schemes delivered
- Additional housing related support delivered
- External funding secured
- Average length of stay in supported housing
- Tenancy sustainment rates in move on accommodation
- Number of households refused supported housing
- Monitor trends in support needs

### **Theme 4 - Working with the Private Rented Sector (PRS)**

***Objective – To increase the amount of PRS housing available to homeless households and increase the sustainability of PRS tenancies by homeless households/at risk households***

What we will do:

- Work with partners and PRS landlords to remove the barriers to homeless households accessing the PRS, from, establishing any required products and services (subject to resource availability) using external funding where available
- Secure funding to introduce the Call Before You Serve scheme in the district
- Research the underlying causes of loss of a PRS tenancy. Make recommendations to address these causes to the appropriate strategy governance group

How we will measure success:

- Monitor the number of homeless households accessing the PRS
- Monitor the number of households prevented from becoming homeless from the PRS

## **Theme 5 - Addressing the Causes and Consequences of Homelessness**

***Objective – To ensure the support needs of homeless households and households at risk of homelessness are appropriately met in order to reduce their risk of homelessness and the risk of homelessness increasing their support needs***

What we will do:

- deliver the additional required supported housing and housing related support – see Theme 3
- Work with partners to ensure robust pathways to prevent homelessness upon discharge from an institution. Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Identify the barriers to homeless households accessing specialist support and treatment. Make recommendations to tackle these barriers to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to identify options to prevent the underlying causes of homelessness in the next generation (schools programme, family mediation/support, peer support, education/employment/training, perpetrator programmes, etc). Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to identify how households at risk of homelessness as a result of their support needs can be identified and proactively assisted as early as possible. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to provide joined up support to households with multiple and complex needs at risk of homelessness. Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Contribute to the development of Nottinghamshire County Council Youth Homelessness Strategy in 2020

How we will measure success:

- Monitor the number of households prevented from becoming homeless from institutions
- Monitor the number of households seeking housing advice and assistance following institutional discharge
- Monitor the support needs of homeless households and the services they are accessing
- Monitor the preventative programmes delivered and outcomes realised
- Monitor the prevention of homelessness for those with support needs

## **Theme 6 - Reducing the Impact of Homelessness on the Community**

***Objective – To end rough sleeping and street activity and encourage the community to do their bit to end homelessness***

What we will do:

- Ensure any rough sleeping is brief and non-recurrent
- Minimise and manage the negative impacts of street activity by rough sleepers, supported housing residents and others
- Work with partners to ensure the welfare needs of rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping are met (winter shelter, breakfast club, soup kitchen, outreach nurse, day centres, public support, community safety, etc). Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group

- Establish a Homeless Reduction Board as required by the MHCLG Rough Sleeping Strategy and Delivery Plan
- Create a community homeless prevention charter and encourage partners, public, businesses, etc to pledge to do their bit to end homelessness

How we will measure success:

- Monitor the number of rough sleepers
- Monitor street activity
- Monitor the welfare needs of rough sleepers and the services they are accessing
- Monitor the prevention charter pledges and outcomes

**Theme 7 - Improving Customer Services for People who are Homeless or at Risk of Homelessness**  
***Objective – High customer satisfaction with the outcome and experience of the support provided by NSDC Housing Options and partners***

What we will do:

- Regularly gather customer feedback and utilise this to continuously improve the service and its integration with our services. Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Research customer journeys into homelessness to identify early opportunities to prevent their homelessness and any barriers to doing so. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Conduct a 6/12 month review of the Duty to Refer operation and identify opportunities to enhance its contribution to preventing homelessness. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Conduct an annual review of NSDC staff and partner training needs, arrange required training. Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Tailored pathways – Work with partners to ensure there are clear pathways to resolving a household's homelessness for the key causes of homelessness, integrating services wherever possible (end of AST, fleeing violence, friends/family exclusion, etc). Provide regular updates to the appropriate strategy governance group
- Work with partners to identify how those with lived experience of homelessness can be included in the design and delivery of services. Make recommendations to the appropriate strategy governance group

How we will measure success:

- Customer satisfaction rates
- Homeless prevention rates
- Duty to Refer numbers and outcomes
- Monitor the number of pathways developed and the outcomes
- Training courses delivered
- Monitor the number of people with lived experience involved in the design and delivery of homelessness

## **Theme 8 – Improving the data available to relevant agencies**

*Objective – Services are designed based on robust evidence and effectively monitored and evaluated*

What we will do:

- Work with partners to develop a governance structure to oversee the delivery of this strategy
- The governance structure will agree the monitoring and outcomes data to be reported to them
- The governance structure will be responsible for identifying good performance and areas for improvement, ensuring any required remedial action is taken as appropriate
- The governance structure will regularly share the monitoring and outcomes data with all relevant partners

How we will measure success:

- Good practice examples identified
- Remedial action taken against poor performance
- Use of data in service design and decision making
- High/improving performance

### **FUTURE REVIEW**

Newark & Sherwood District Council (in partnership with Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils) have also asked Homeless Link to carry out a progress review later in 2019, in order to more fully assess the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This legislation came into force on 1 April 2018 and was in the process of being implemented when the Homelessness Review was carried out. The findings of this further review will be made available in due course.