

Council 24 June 2019

Item 7a refers

Recommendation (2) from the Executive meeting of 8th April 2019

A STRATEGY FOR HOUSING AND THE PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING 2019 - 2024

The Executive considered the Strategy for Housing and the Prevention of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping 2019-2024 ('the Housing Strategy'), which combines a traditional five year Housing Strategy with a five year Homelessness Prevention Strategy and a five year Rough Sleeping Strategy. This approach recognises the complexities within homelessness and the link between homelessness and the supply of affordable homes.

The current Housing Strategy covers the period up to the adoption of the new Local Plan. The Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy is intended to be a core document setting out the Council's approach to meeting housing needs in the Harborough district to 2031. Increasing the supply of housing options, particularly affordable housing is a long-term issue. The current Homelessness Prevention Strategy requires updating to reflect current issues and to set out the Council's response to the extended statutory duties in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The Housing Strategy will be reviewed and performance monitored annually through the overview and scrutiny process.

The Communities Scrutiny Panel, on 28 September 2017, considered a report on the key housing issues as part of the development of this strategy. The key comments from scrutiny included;

- Promotion of new affordable home ownership properties, such as shared ownership units so that local residents are aware of all options.
- The importance of specialist housing in meeting the needs of people with disabilities and health issues.
- Endorsement of the work the Council has undertaken in preparation for the Homelessness Reduction Act. This includes investment in additional staffing and systems that will deliver channel shift and improve the customer experience in applying to join the Housing Register and bid for properties through Choice Based Lettings.
- Effective use of commuted sums to bring forward more affordable housing.
- That consideration be given to the Council purchasing additional properties to use as temporary accommodation – providing a higher quality and cheaper alternative to bed & breakfast.

A public consultation was held on the draft strategy between May and June 2018 and a consultation event with developers and Registered Providers on 27 September.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the Housing Strategy, set out in Appendix A to the report, be adopted.

The report to the Executive meeting on 8th April 2019 is attached.