

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 18th March 2019
Report for: Decision
Report of: Executive Member for Communities and Housing

Report Title

Trafford Homelessness Strategy and Draft Action Plan 2019-2024

Summary

The Council has a statutory duty to produce a Homelessness Strategy. The previous Strategy expired in December 2018 and the new Homelessness Strategy (2019-2024) has been produced to identify the key priorities and the actions required to deliver them by the Council and other key stakeholders over the next 5 years.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Executive approves the Trafford Homelessness Strategy and Draft Action Plan 2019-2024 for publication.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Caroline Abbott, Housing Strategy & Growth Manager
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Appendix One: Trafford Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024

Appendix Two: Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024 Consultation Report

Appendix Three: Draft Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2019-2024

Background Papers: None

Implications:

<p>Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities</p>	<p>The priorities detailed within the Strategy meet the Council's Corporate Objectives of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building quality, affordable and social housing • Reducing health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing • Supporting our most vulnerable residents <p>In addition, the Strategy meets the Annual Delivery Plan and the Departmental Improvement Plan priorities and is complimentary to, and will play a key part in, delivering the Trafford Housing Strategy 2018-2023.</p>
<p>Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework</p>	<p>The Trafford Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024 is aligned with the priorities contained within the GM Strategy and the emerging GM Housing Strategy.</p>
<p>Financial</p>	<p>The Strategy identifies actions to deliver the vision and strategic homelessness priorities. The funding and cost implications of these actions will be evaluated on a case by case basis before decisions are made around the implementation and ongoing management.</p>
<p>Legal Implications:</p>	<p>The Council has a statutory duty to production a Homelessness Strategy.</p> <p>This Strategy is required to comply with the Council's obligations in the Homelessness Act 2002</p>
<p>Equality/Diversity Implications</p>	<p>None as a consequence of this report.</p>
<p>Sustainability Implications</p>	<p>None as a consequence of this report.</p>
<p>Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets</p>	<p>None as a consequence of this report.</p>
<p>Risk Management Implications</p>	<p>None as a consequence of this report.</p>
<p>Health & Wellbeing Implications</p>	<p>None as a consequence of this report.</p>
<p>Health and Safety Implications</p>	<p>None as a consequence of this report.</p>

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory duty to produce a Homelessness Strategy. The previous Strategy expired in December 2018 and the new Homelessness Strategy (2019-2024) has been produced to identify the key priorities and the actions required to deliver them by the Council and other key stakeholders over the next 5 years. A copy of the Final Draft Strategy is attached as Appendix 1.

2.0 Methodology

- 2.1 The Strategy identifies measures to deliver the Council's new Corporate Objectives of "Building Quality, Affordable and Social Housing", "Health and Wellbeing" and "Targeted Support". It complements the Trafford Housing Strategy 2018-2023, plays a key role in delivering the priorities set in the emerging GM Housing Strategy and the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 2.2 Production of the Draft Strategy has been undertaken in consultation with key stakeholders from the Trafford Homeless Champions Group, the Strategic Housing Partnership (SHP) and Stronger Communities Board (SCB). In addition, specific one to one discussions have taken place with colleagues in Housing Options Service Trafford (HOST), CCG, One Trafford Response, Children's and Families Directorate and Adult Services.

3.0 Achievements

- 3.1 A review of the previous Homelessness Strategy (2015-2018) and the homelessness service in Trafford (HOST) have been undertaken and a number of achievements are detailed within the Strategy. The achievements since 2014/15 include:
- 2,647 households were prevented from becoming homeless
 - 80,572 households received housing advice from HOST.
 - 20% reduction in the number of people on the Council's Housing Register.
 - 612 household or individuals were re-housed into Social Housing.
 - 515 households or individuals were-houses in the Private Sector.
 - 526 households were referred to supported accommodation projects.

4.0 Homelessness Review

- 4.1 A review of homelessness in Trafford including analysis of the data and an evaluation of the HOST service was undertaken as part of the production of the Strategy. A number of key findings are detailed below:
- The main causes of homelessness in Trafford since 2012/13 were: the termination of an assured short-hold tenancy/Private Rented Sector tenancy, the violent breakdown of a relationship involving a partner and parents no longer willing or able to accommodate.
 - The majority of households who were accepted as homeless and in priority need were lone parents with dependent children and this figure has increased slightly since 2015/16. The number of couples with dependent children has decreased during the same time period.

- Homelessness preventions increased significantly between 2013/14 and 2014/15 with an increase of 282. Preventions were highest during 2016/17 with 811 and have decreased by 157 since 2016/17.
- The number of people who made an application to HOST for homeless assistance has gradually reduced since 2012, although there was a slight increase between 2015/16 and 2016/17.
- The majority of people who were accepted as homeless and in priority need were aged 25-44. Those aged 60+ has remained low since 2012/13.

5.0 Vision and Priorities

5.1 The vision for the Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024 is:

“Working Together to End Homelessness in Trafford”

5.2 The strategic priorities are:

1. Prevent homelessness in Trafford.
2. Improve access to permanent affordable accommodation and supported homes, primarily through the increased supply of social housing.
3. Aim to eradicate the use of B&B and increase the provision of good quality Temporary Accommodation for homeless people in Trafford.
4. Work towards ending rough sleeping in Trafford.
5. Improve access to employment, education and training for homeless people in Trafford.
6. Improve health & wellbeing for homeless people in Trafford.

5.3 The Strategy identifies a range of actions to deliver the above vision and priorities.

6.0 Wider Corporate Linkages

6.1 The actions detailed meet the Council’s new Corporate Objectives of “Building Quality, Affordable and Social Housing”, “Health and Wellbeing” and “Targeted Support”. The Homelessness Strategy coupled with the Council’s Corporate Objectives, Trafford Housing Strategy 2018-2023 and the wider GM strategic priorities, forms a comprehensive and fully joined up approach to tackling homelessness in Trafford.

7.0 Consultation

7.1 Following completion of the Draft Strategy, the Council held a six week public consultation during December 2018 and January 2019. An on-line survey was created which posed questions relating to the proposed priorities and actions required to deliver them. A copy of the survey, draft Strategy and appendices were available on the Council’s website following a press release and publicity via social media.

7.2 In total, 260 responses were received to the on-line survey (see Appendix 2) with 97% being a personal view from residents and elected members. Overall respondents were very positive about the creation of the Strategy, the proposed priorities and actions identified. Respondents felt the following priorities were the most important:

1. Improve access to permanent affordable accommodation and supported homes, primarily through the increased supply of social housing.
2. Work towards ending rough sleeping in Trafford.
3. Improve access to employment, education and training for homeless people in Trafford.

7.3 After assessing all consultation responses and suggested additions, the Strategy has been amended to include the following actions within the relevant priority:

Priority 1: Prevent homelessness in Trafford

- Establish links and work in partnership with drug and alcohol services, health services, domestic abuse services and the VCSE sector to prevent homelessness.
- Explore options to provide financial and budgeting training for existing tenants to prevent homelessness.
- Ensure additional support with Universal Credit and related benefits is available so people are aware of the benefits, how they can apply and also how to appeal.
- Establish links with services for young people to support Trafford's young people and educate regarding the risks of homelessness.
- Continue to work in partnership with the After Care Team to provide a pathway for those homeless Care Leavers.

Priority 3: Aim to eradicate the use of B&B and increase the provision of good quality Temporary Accommodation for homeless people in Trafford

- Work in partnership with RPs and private landlords to increase the provision of temporary accommodation.
- Explore options to bring back empty properties for use as temporary accommodation.

Priority 4: Work towards ending rough sleeping in Trafford

- Explore options to provide 'a bed every night' throughout the year regardless of weather.
- Explore the opportunity to establish a 'pay forward scheme' with a local café or restaurant as an alternative to giving rough sleepers/beggars on the street.
- Explore the opportunity to establish a card service for rough sleepers to access money donated.
- Ensure Trafford utilise the Social Impact Board (SIB) and Housing First initiatives introduced at a Greater Manchester level.
- Work with sofa surfers to prevent rough sleeping.

Priority 5: Improve access to employment, education and training for homeless people in Trafford

- Explore options to provide training courses to homeless people on budgeting, cooking, nutrition and CV writing.
- Explore options to provide driving lessons and specific job related courses.

Priority 6: Improve health & wellbeing for homeless people in Trafford

- Improve access to mental health services for homeless people in Trafford.
- Develop a Mental Health Strategy for Trafford.
- Improve access to substance misuse services for homeless people in Trafford.
- Explore the opportunity to provide mindfulness and wellbeing courses for homeless people.
- Explore the opportunity of dedicated medical centre for homeless people.
- Improve access to health and GP services for homeless people.
- Explore options to introduce a mobile health/therapy clinic that can take services directly to where it is needed.

8.0 Action Plan

- 8.1 Following the public consultation, a Draft Action Plan (see Appendix 3) has been produced to identify all proposed actions to meet the strategic priorities of the Strategy. The Draft Action Plan provides an indication of timeframes and identifies key delivery partners for each action.
- 8.2 Once approved, the Homeless Champions Group will adopt the Action Plan as its delivery plan and will provide a co-ordination role in terms of delivery, monitoring progress and performance management.

9.0 Other Options

- 9.1 An option is not to adopt the Homelessness Strategy. The absence of an overarching Homelessness Strategy across Trafford will not provide the Council with the mechanism to tackle homelessness in the borough. In addition, it is a statutory requirement for each Local Authority to have a Strategy in place therefore the Council would be in breach of its statutory homelessness duty.

10.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 10.1 The Executive is asked to approve the Trafford Homelessness Strategy and Draft Action Plan 2019-2024 which sets the key homelessness priorities for the borough and the actions required to deliver them by the Council and other key partners. The overarching Homelessness Strategy will provide the mechanism to tackle homelessness in the borough and meet the Council’s Corporate Objectives, actions contained within the Trafford Housing Strategy 2018-2023 and wider GM priorities.

Key Decision: Yes

If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given? Yes

Finance Officer Clearance...PC.....

Legal Officer Clearance.....TR.....

CORPORATE DIRECTOR’S SIGNATURE



To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.