

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<i>Boston Borough Council - Cabinet</i>
<b>DATE:</b>	<i>Cabinet 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022</i>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<i>LINCOLNSHIRE HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY</i>
<b>PURPOSE:</b>	<i>To obtain approval of the new Lincolnshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2022-27.</i>
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	<i>Yes</i>
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<i>Cllr Griggs</i>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<i>Emily Spicer – Assistant Director – Wellbeing and Community Leadership</i>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<i>Jason Oxby</i>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<i>All</i>
<b>EXEMPT REPORT?</b>	<i>No</i>

## **SUMMARY**

*The Homelessness Act 2002 requires that all Local Authorities carry out a review of homelessness in their areas and formulate and publish a strategy at least every 5 years based on the findings of this review (appendix A).*

*The current strategy expires this year and therefore a revised strategy must be published.*

*The new draft strategy (appendix B) has been written following consultation with key stakeholders from across Lincolnshire which has helped to formulate the priorities for the next 5 years.*

*Cabinet is asked to approve the publication of the new strategy.*

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

*To approve and adopt the new Lincolnshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeper strategy.*

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

*The Council must have a current strategy to be compliant with legislation.*

*The strategy will provide the priorities for the next 5 years which Lincolnshire Councils and other organisations will work together to achieve.*

*There will be an action plan produced setting out how the priorities will be achieved, and this will be a working document which will be updated as and when required.*

*Any local issues specific to Boston borough should be covered by the priorities of the strategy. If this were not the case, these issues would be dealt with on a local level and updates provided to the Portfolio holder.*

*The other Lincolnshire District Councils agree with having a countywide strategy.*

## **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

*The Council could adopt its own strategy or a sub-regional strategy for SELCP.*

*Having individual council strategies or a sub-regional SELCP strategy has been discounted because a countywide strategy is seen as good practice and cost effective. Many of the priorities require Lincolnshire to work together to achieve better outcomes for our residents*

*Having a countywide strategy has also helped increase grant funding for countywide housing and homelessness initiatives. This is because it evidences the seven Lincolnshire Councils and where applicable Lincolnshire County Council can work together for the benefit of its residents.*

## **1. BACKGROUND**

1.1 *The Homelessness Act 2002 requires that all Local Authorities carry out a review of homelessness in their areas, formulate and publish a strategy based on the findings of this review, keep the strategy under review and consult with other local or public authorities and voluntary organisations before modifying or adopting a strategy.*

1.2 *The strategy should:*

- *Assess the levels of homelessness now, and the factors likely to impact on future levels of homelessness*
- *Ensure that there is sufficient accommodation available for people who are, or may become, homeless*
- *Provide services that help to prevent people becoming homeless*
- *Ensure that through effective partnerships, support services can be accessed for those people who are, or who may become homeless or to prevent them from becoming homeless again*
- *Promote a cultural change so that homelessness is viewed in a wider context than just lack of accommodation*

1.3 *This strategy is the fifth document that has been developed by all Lincolnshire Housing Authorities, in partnership with our stakeholders and has been formulated following our strategy review.*

1.4 *An extensive consultation with stakeholders collated the achievements of the last strategy and shaped the strategic direction of this document. A series of focus groups, one-to-one meetings and a survey collated vital feedback, which will enable this strategy to meet the aims of not only the seven district councils but our partners.*

1.5 *To allow us to form a collective and robust approach to homelessness, we have incorporated our Rough Sleeper Strategy into this this document as opposed to having a separate document.*

1.6 *This strategy informs of the current position and challenges for homelessness across the County, sets out the priorities and actions that together aims to prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping across the County.*

## **2. PRIORITIES**

2.1 *The strategy demonstrates that we are committed to the Governments vision that homelessness should be rare, brief and non-recurring*

2.2 *Building on the successes of the last strategy and taking account of new challenges the new priorities for the next 5 years will be:*

- **Prevent** – *identify those that are at risk of becoming homeless as early as possible and through the Duty to Refer to prevent homelessness or rough sleeping*
- **Protect** – *identifying the most vulnerable and ensuring individuals are safe from harm, and have access to the support and services to maintain their health and wellbeing*
- **Partnerships** – *strengthen and maintain relationships to bring together resources and knowledge to prevent and relieve homelessness*
- **Place** – *ensure accommodation is both available and suitable for those that need it and explore opportunities to increase the supply of accommodation*
- **Plan** – *take a proactive and joined up approach to tackling rough sleeping and homelessness and explore funding opportunities to ensure we meet the needs of all client groups*

2.3 *These priorities have been chosen to reflect the issues highlighted through the*

*consultation process with our stakeholders and the challenges we face going forward.*

### **3.0 Developing the strategy**

- 3.1 *A thorough consultation was completed throughout the development of the strategy. A review of the previous strategy provided a basis on which the new strategy could be formulated along with stakeholder comments from the consultation.*
- 3.2 *A series of focus groups and one-to-one meetings ensured the views of our stakeholders were captured in order to highlight the challenges we face together and ideas to resolve them.*
- 3.3 *Strategic leads were consulted on the final draft before going out to public consultation. A total of 22 responses were received to the consultation and a collective response from Lincolnshire County Council. The comments shaped the final version and further details can be found in the summary document at appendix C.*

### **4.0 Pathways**

- 4.1 *There are many people that can experience or be threatened with homelessness in their lifetime all of which will have different reasons and situations. Whilst each person receives a housing and support plan specific to their needs the strategy identifies the main groups of people to help and support:*

- *Single people*
- *Families*
- *Rough sleepers*
- *Those with complex and/or specific needs*
- *Care leavers and young people*
- *Prison Leavers*
- *People suffering from domestic abuse*
- *Armed forces community*
- *People with no recourse to public funds*

- 4.2 *Identifying the main barriers that these groups are facing allows us to produce tailored approaches to ensure our services offer a tailored and consistent approach across the county. These pathways are detailed in the strategy.*

### **5.0 Monitoring**

- 5.1 *The strategy will be reviewed annually by both the Strategic Leads group represented by all district's councils and the Lincolnshire Housing Partnerships Manager.*
- 5.2 *Each priority will have an action group responsible for the delivery of the ambitions and each will create a detailed implementation plan.*
- 5.3 *Representatives of the action groups will include the District Council's, Lincolnshire County Council, housing providers, voluntary sector, health professionals and any other relevant organisations who will work collaboratively.*

5.4 *The action groups will be coordinated by the Lincolnshire Homelessness Partnership group made up of all representatives, organisations and individuals involved in the remit of homelessness across the County.*

5.5 *Progress on the actions from the implementation plans will be reported to Lincolnshire Housing Health Co-ordination Group and Housing Health Care Delivery Group.*

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

6.1 *This new strategy clearly sets out the key priorities that must be achieved if we are to continue to prevent and relieve homelessness across Lincolnshire. This can only be achieved through a partnership approach including key organisations who can provide specialist services to those who otherwise are unable to access or manage a tenancy.*

6.2 *Some of this work is on-going and through the new strategy, action plans and engagement with these organisations, further progress can be made.*

6.3 *Further actions will be required throughout the term of the strategy to meet new and emerging issues which can result in homelessness such as the cost of living crisis. However, any new actions are likely to fall under one or more of the priorities*

6.4 *Adopting this new strategy will assist the Council to prevent and relieve homelessness as well as improve the partnership response which is essential if we are to overcome some of the core issues which result in people becoming homeless such as debt, addictions, and poor mental health.*

## **EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP**

*Adopting this new strategy will ensure the partnership Councils are acting legally and reduce the risk of a legal challenge from not having a current strategy.*

*Working in partnership with all seven Lincolnshire Housing Authorities increases the available resources and better enables all Councils to jointly have a stronger voice when discussing the provision of services which are required countywide. Such services that require financial input are also more likely to be affordable when sharing the costs across Lincolnshire or the partnership.*

*Preventing homelessness is also cost effective compared to the provision of emergency accommodation.*

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP**

*None*

## **CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

*People - We want Boston to be a place where people want to live, a place where they can thrive in their local communities, feel safe, secure, healthy and welcome*

## **STAFFING**

*Any actions from the strategy should be manageable within current staffing resources. If this were not the case, Senior Leadership team would be consulted.*

## **CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

*As set out in the report, the Homelessness Act 2002 Section 1 (1) requires all local authorities to complete a homelessness review and Section 1 (4) to have a Homelessness Strategy.*

*The Council could be at risk of a legal challenge if it doesn't have a current strategy. When making homelessness case decisions the Council has to take account of the Homelessness Strategy and failing to do so could result in a judicial review*

## **DATA PROTECTION**

*None*

## **FINANCIAL**

*No financial requirements in respect of adopting the new strategy*

*Each Local Authority currently contributes to the post of the Lincolnshire Housing Partnerships Manager.*

*Any financial commitments as a result of the new strategy/action plan would be met from Grant funding. If this were not possible, a further report seeking funding would be submitted for consideration.*

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

*Covered under legal implications*

## **STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES**

*An intensive consultation was carried out in three parts. Firstly, a survey was sent to all stakeholders to gather views on the successes of the last strategy and challenges for the future which shaped the review document. A series of focus groups followed with stakeholders to inform the priorities and actions for the new strategy and individual meetings with key partners to develop the strategy. A 6-week public consultation followed on the draft strategy for further comments to shape the final document.*

## **REPUTATION**

*There is a reputational risk if the Council doesn't have a current strategy. DLUHC will expect the Council to have a current strategy*

## **CONTRACTS**

*None*

## CRIME AND DISORDER

*There are no specific implications however it should be noted that the provision of suitable accommodation and support can help to reduce crime and disorder.*

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

*Protecting the most vulnerable from experiencing homelessness including tackling rough sleeping is a priority of the strategy. All people who are homeless are provided with a service and safeguarding procedures followed where applicable.*

## HEALTH AND WELL BEING

*The prevention of homelessness, provision of a decent home and referring people for support with health issues can have a positive effect on a household's health and wellbeing.*

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

*None*

## ACRONYMS

*(Use this section to explain any acronyms used in the body of the report. If none, insert the word 'none'.)*

### APPENDICES

*(If none then insert the word 'None' and delete the below text/boxes).*

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -

APPENDIX A	<i>Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy Review</i>
APPENDIX B	<i>Lincolnshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy</i>
APPENDIX C	<i>Summary of consultation responses</i>

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

*(If none then insert the working 'No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.' Also delete the below text/boxes.)*

Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
<i>Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2017-21</i>	<a href="#"><u>Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2017-2021.pdf (mybostonuk.com)</u></a>
<i>Lincolnshire Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-21</i>	<a href="#"><u>Lincolnshire Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2021.pdf (e-lindsey.gov.uk)</u></a>

<b>CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT</b>
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<i>None</i>
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<b>REPORT APPROVAL</b>	
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Report author:	Jason Oxby Service Manager – Housing and Support Solutions <a href="mailto:Jason.oxby@e-lindsey.gov.uk">Jason.oxby@e-lindsey.gov.uk</a> 01507 613120
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Signed off by:	John Leach Deputy Chief Executive <a href="mailto:John.Leach@boston.gov.uk">John.Leach@boston.gov.uk</a> 07818 118435
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Approved for publication:	Name of Councillor (if required)
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