

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>DELIVERY REVIEW OF THE COUNTY HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	<b>HOUSING AND INVESTMENT</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>ANITA CLEUGH - HOUSING INVESTMENT &amp; STRATEGY MANAGER</b>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To seek approval to extend Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy for a further 12 months in order to allow time for review.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy Group (LCHSG) consists of members from each of the local authority area in Lincolnshire together with other statutory and voluntary organisations. This partnership has been recognised as an example of best practice which has enabled the successful development of three previous countywide Homelessness Strategies and provided access to additional funding to support service provision across the county.
- 2.2 The current Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy was approved by Executive in December 2017 and covered the period up to the end of 2021. The strategy has an action plan to underpin the priorities and is led by the Strategic Leads of the seven local authorities across the county, (Boston, Lincoln, East Lindsey, South Kesteven, North Kesteven, South Holland and West Lindsey).
- 2.3 Previously the Lincolnshire Homelessness Prevention Programme Manager hosted by West Lindsey District Council had responsibility for co-ordinating the partnership and monitoring of the strategy. This later passed to the County Homelessness Partnerships Manager hosted at City of Lincoln Council (CoLC) whilst options for the post were explored.
- 2.4 In May 2021, the District Housing Network (DHN) approved appointment of a Lincs Housing Partnerships role to take on the duties of the previous postholder, including a wider remit linking in with DHN priorities relating to Housing, Health and Social Care. The postholder is now in post and will be responsible for reviewing the strategy and the wider implementation plan.
- 2.5 The strategy was due to be reviewed in 2021, however Covid-19 presented many challenges and workstreams were re-prioritised. The focus on ensuring the 'Everyone In' campaign and vulnerable people were able to access accommodation and advice throughout the pandemic was prioritised. The recruitment process to the new post also created further delays.

2.6 A copy of the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2017-2021 can be found in **Appendix One**

### **3. Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy Review**

3.1 A review of the existing strategy will take place to update progress on previous highlighted priorities and shape workstreams to fit within pandemic recovery plans. This will be carried out by all seven local authority areas in the county.

3.2 The purpose of the review is to:

- establish the current level of homelessness across the county,
- project its likely growth (or decline) in future years,
- identify what is currently being done and by whom,
- identify what level of resources are available to prevent and tackle homelessness in the future
- identify gaps and what needs to be done to ensure a robust response to homelessness.

3.3 A refresh of the strategy document will also be carried out at this point.

3.4 Whilst there are many benefits to a joint strategy to address the common themes and challenges across Lincolnshire, it is also important that we maintain a local perspective for those issues specific to City of Lincoln and which may require a local solution. We will therefore continue to work with our partners to identify local issues and shape services at a district level.

### **4. Strategic Priorities**

#### **4.1 Let's reduce inequality**

Delivery of the Lincolnshire Homeless Strategy will have a positive impact on this strategic priority by working to support the most disadvantaged groups within our community.

#### **4.2 Let's deliver quality housing**

Working with partners to maximise the availability of affordable housing across the city will reduce homelessness and rough sleeping.

### **5. Organisational Impacts**

#### **5.1 Finance**

No finance implications.

#### **5.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules**

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 Department of Levelling up, Homes & Communities have confirmed extending the current strategy is an acceptable approach given recent challenges.

### **5.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

An Equality Impact Assessment was previously produced which identified this Strategy would not have a detrimental impact on any group, rather the Strategy would positively impact disadvantaged groups. A further Equality Impact Assessment will be produced when the Strategy is reviewed.

### **5.4 Human Resources**

It is anticipated that commitment to review the strategy and action plan can be met within existing resources. Each Local Authority currently contributes to the post of Lincs Housing Partnerships Manager, which is hosted by North Kesteven District Council on behalf of the 7 Lincolnshire Authorities.

### **5.5 Land, Property and Accommodation**

All dwellings will form part of the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

### **5.6 Significant Community Impact**

No Significant community impact.

## **6. Risk Implications**

### **6.1 i. Options Explored**

- a) Extend the current County Homelessness Strategy
- b) Develop a City of Lincoln Homelessness Strategy

### **6.2 ii. Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach**

The preferred approach is (a) as there is no associated risk. Whilst CoLC could develop its own individual homelessness strategy which would take additional time to develop, there is an established and effective partnership in place with positive outcomes achieved to date.

**7. Recommendation**

7.1 It is recommended that the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy be extended for a further 12 months to allow time for review.

**Is this a key decision?** Yes

**Do the exempt information categories apply?** No

**Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?** No

**How many appendices does the report contain?** One

**List of Background Papers:** None

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