

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET – 17 SEPTEMBER 2019

Recommendation from the Cabinet Housing Panel on 13 August 2019:-

HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019-2024

Report of the Corporate Director (Housing and Communities) on the new draft Strategy for 2019-2024 which was produced, informed by a recent review of homelessness in the Borough and engagement with all key stakeholders and had been considered by the Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 12 June 2019 (Minute 9 refers).

The Homelessness Act 2002 required all housing authorities to carry out a 'Review of Homelessness' in their area and formulate a strategy based on the results of the review. Although, the statutory obligation to formulate a Housing Strategy was removed under the terms of the De-regulation Act 2015, the Council had a number of statutory housing functions and as such it was appropriate to set out its plans and priorities for doing this in order to demonstrate how needs were assessed, determine local priorities and plan for the delivery of good quality affordable housing.

The review of homelessness identified a number of key issues that had influenced the priorities in the Strategy and would impact on how homeless and housing services were delivered over the next five years.

The new draft Strategy set out the challenges these issues represented and the Council's short, medium and longer term plans to address those challenges.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also required housing authorities to provide homelessness service to all those affected, not just those who had 'priority need'.

As a strategic housing authority the Council was required by statute to carry out a review of homelessness in its area and to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of the review.

The strategy must set out the authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness ensuring that sufficient accommodation and support were or would be available for people who became homeless or who were at risk of becoming homeless.

The final draft Strategy was approved at the Cabinet meeting on 9 July (Minute 20.2 refers) and recommended to the Council meeting on 22 July 2019 for adoption.

The item had been withdrawn from the Agenda for the Council meeting for further consideration by the Panel and report back (Minute 19.4 refers).

Following further consideration it was

RESOLVED:
(unanimous)

That the Cabinet be recommended to approve the final draft of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy for 2019-2024 and recommend it to the Council for adoption.