

## HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2016 - 2021

REPORT OF: Tom Clark, Solicitor to the Council  
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Wards Affected: All  
Key Decision: No  
Report to: Council  
20 July 2016

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### Purpose of Report

1. To seek Council's adoption of a Homelessness Strategy 2016-21 following its endorsement by the Scrutiny Committee for Leisure and Community at its meeting on 6 July 2016.

### Recommendation

2. **Council is recommended to adopt the Homelessness Strategy 2016-21 at Appendix 1.**
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### Background

3. Under the Homelessness Act 2002, all local authorities are required to conduct a review of homelessness in their district and use this to inform a strategy for tackling homelessness which they must publish at intervals of no longer than five years.
4. Currently, the Council's plans for tackling homelessness are set out within the Housing Strategy, which was refreshed in 2012 and it is therefore timely that a new strategy is adopted.
5. The Homelessness Strategy deals with matters related to the prevention of homelessness, as issues around housing supply are outside its scope. Whilst prevention of homelessness is the focus of a homelessness strategy, an increased supply of affordable rented housing will be required in order to address a shortage in Mid Sussex.

### Homelessness Strategy 2016-21

6. The Homelessness Strategy is included at Appendix 1 of this report and sets out four strategic objectives, and actions for their achievement in preventing and dealing with homelessness in the District.
7. The strategic objectives identified in the Strategy are:
  - **Prevent homelessness wherever possible.**
  - **Tackle homelessness amongst specific vulnerable groups.**
  - **Engage with landlords to maximise access to private rented sector accommodation.**
  - **Minimise the use of temporary accommodation where possible**

8. An appendix to the Homelessness Strategy sets out a review of homelessness in Mid Sussex together with an assessment of likely future trends. The review assesses the extent of homelessness in the District, together with its causes and an analysis of those groups most affected. The review also considers the use of temporary accommodation by the Council, the availability of social housing, access to the private rented sector and the affordability of market housing. In addition, a full round-up of recent and imminent reforms to social housing and welfare benefits is considered in the context of implications for future homelessness in Mid Sussex.
9. The Strategy was considered by the Scrutiny Committee for Leisure and Community on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016 and was unanimously supported. Members noted that the supply of affordable housing needed to be increased.

### **Policy Context**

10. The delivery of the Homelessness Strategy will make a significant contribution to the priorities set out in the Sustainable Communities Strategy and Corporate Plan, and to the Council's aim to achieve Opportunity and Quality of Life for All.

### **Other Options Considered**

11. The report provides a new Homelessness Strategy which is designed to set out how the Council will meet its homelessness duties. No other practicable options were identified.

### **Financial Implications**

12. The actions set out in the Homelessness Strategy can be met from existing resources.

### **Risk Management Implications**

13. The Homelessness Strategy helps the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting its duties under the Homelessness Act 2002 and to avoid the risks associated with non-compliance.

### **Equalities and customer service implications**

14. An impact assessment has been completed for the Homelessness Strategy. Those assisted by the Council to prevent them becoming homeless include those on low incomes and some of the most vulnerable members of society.

### **Other material implications**

15. None.

### **Background Papers**

Homelessness Strategy Equality Impact Assessment.