

REPORT OF CABINET

(Meeting held on 3 April 2019)

1. **PROPOSED HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019-2023: OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION (MINUTE NO 88)**

The Cabinet is recommending approval of the revised Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy. On 5 December 2018 (Cabinet Minute 54 refers), they had recommended the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to the Council for approval to be subject to a statutory consultation exercise. This consultation ran from 15 January to 20 February 2019. Details of the consultation are set out in Section 3 of the Report. In total 24 responses were received, including from the Council's Tenant Involvement Group. A summary of the responses received, together with the Council's responses, is attached as Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report.

The Cabinet was pleased to note that 83% of the respondents support each of the 4 strategic priorities in the Strategy. In response to the comments received two further actions have been added to Strategic Priority 2 to ensure the support needed by victims of domestic abuse and also households with complex needs is identified and provided. A further action has also been added to Strategic Priority 2 to recognise hidden homelessness within households and to work with voluntary agencies to help them access assistance. In addition, an action to support housing provision for refugees has been added to Strategic Priority 3, in accordance with the Homelessness Code of Guidance.

Members welcome the new Strategy document and particularly the practical outcomes that were now coming forward. In particular there is now a more the proactive approach to providing accommodation for homeless people in the District and Members particularly commended the recently opened accommodation at Pentagon Court at Blackfield. Further accommodation of this type will be provided during the coming year with a view to providing better quality, more appropriate accommodation at a lesser cost than Bed and Breakfast.

RECOMMENDED:

That the updated Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, as attached as Appendix 2 to Report Item 4 to the Cabinet, be approved.

2. **PROPOSED HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY - OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION (MINUTE NO 89)**

The Cabinet is recommending approval of an updated Housing Allocation Policy. On 5 December 2018 (Cabinet Minute 55 refers) they had recommended to the Council that a new draft Housing Allocation Policy should be published for statutory consultation. The consultation ran from 15 January 2019 until 20 February 2019 and further details are set out in section 3 of the Cabinet Report. This includes consultation with a number of specific groups, as set out in paragraph 3.1.2. Of the 250 responses received, 88.8% were from current Homeseach applicants. A summary of the responses received, together with the Council's responses is attached as Appendix 2 to the report. A link to the web page showing all responses received is provided in the report. The majority of the respondents have confirmed that they believe the allocation scheme should, in future, allocate this scarce resource on the basis of housing need and not only the time spent on the waiting list. There is increasing recognition that affordable housing is a scarce resource

and can no longer be regarded as a right. It must therefore be allocated to those in greatest need.

No changes to the policy are needed to response to the consultation exercise.

Following adoption of the new Policy, the procurement of a new IT system will be finalised, followed by a period of implementation, to include re-registration of all applicants and the re-assessment of their applications. This process will take several months. In the interim period allocations of housing will continue to existing housing register applicants only, with no new applications being accepted until applications are opened for the new register. Any urgent needs will be assessed and assisted separately.

The new allocation policy sits within the general Housing Strategy which contains a strong commitment to provide an additional 600 homes for local people by 2026. In addition, the Council would itself be operating a shared-ownership scheme to assist local people to move on from sequential short term tenancies into more secure accommodation. There is strong support for this work which is bringing tangible benefits for the people of the Forest.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) That the revised Housing Allocation Policy, as attached as Appendix 4 to Report Item 5 to the Cabinet, be approved for adoption; and**
- (b) The Executive Head of Governance and Regulation be authorised to sign off the re-registration period as complete and to activate the new allocation policy and housing register at the earliest opportunity.**

3. CREATIVE PEOPLE PLACES APPLICATION (MINUTE NO 90)

The Arts Council England has invited this Council to apply to the Creative People Places Fund, in competition with 4 other local authorities in the southwest region, to secure funding to promote greater involvement in art and culture within the local population. These aims are consonant with the Council's objectives around community engagement and empowerment. Up to £1.2 million, over a 4 year period, can be secured by a successful bid.

Although the Council could not be the lead applicant, it has set up the necessary consortium to deliver the bid and develop a programme of community engagement and cultural activity. The existing membership of the consortium is set out in paragraph 2.5 of the Report to the Cabinet. The bid has been submitted by "Energise Me", an Active Partnership, one of 43 nationally funded by Sports England and part of the strategy of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

If the initial bid is successful the consortium will be invited to an interview, leading to a decision by 7 August 2019. Implementation is in 2 phases, with the development of the programme taking about 6 months, followed by the implementation period.

The bid was submitted by the deadline on 21 March 2019. Should the bid be successful, this Council will need to consider whether it wishes to host the employment of the project lead officer to oversee the delivery of the programme, and the Cabinet has agreed that this option should be explored.

4. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT - 2018/19 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN (MINUTE NO 91)

The Cabinet has been advised of the provisional outturn on the 2018/19 budget.

The provisional outturn on the General Fund is £16.561 million, reflecting further net positive variations of £1.418 million and new budget requirements of £1.299 million since the December meeting of the Cabinet. Details of these variations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, together with paragraphs 3.7 - 3.9 of the report to the Cabinet. Once the final year end position has been established a review of the variations will be carried out to determine which will continue into the future but have not yet been reflected in the 2019/20 budget or Medium Term Financial Plan. In addition, the Council will also shortly be receiving a refund of £720,000 under the National Non-Domestic Rates appeals procedures in respect of the rateable value of 5 of the Council's car parks, covering the period 2010/11 to 2017/18. The refund will be placed into the capital programme reserve and used to support the delivery of the capital and maintenance programmes. There are also further rephasings, amounting to £275,000, relating to works to Fordingbridge car park and delays in coastal works. .

With respect to asset maintenance and replacement, new requirements totalling £409,000 have been identified, largely arising from the ICT work programme and works to implement smarter working. Rephasings of £491,000 are as a result of being unable to complete some projects within the current year.

Third party grants to the Marchwood Guides and Sandheath are also being rephased into 2019/2020.

The Capital programme outturn is projected to be £23.226 million, as a result of net budget adjustments of £664,000 and net rephasing of schemes to future years to the value of £2.568 million. Further details of these variations are set out in Tables 3 and 4 of the report.

The Cabinet has concurred with the Portfolio Holder's view that while these late rephasings are regrettable, it is preferable to ensure that the work is carried out at the most appropriate time for the delivery of the project

Variations to the Housing Revenue Account are set out in paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the report together with Table 5. The total variation was £170,000, as a result of the accumulation of various smaller sums, with no particular items of note. Any underspend against the budget will be transferred to the Acquisitions and Development Reserve, maintaining a balanced budget with a reserve of around £1 million.

**COUNCILLOR B RICKMAN
CHAIRMAN**