

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Andrew Foot, Head of Housing
<b>Relevant Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Mrs Christine Wright, Cabinet Member for Housing
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	20 June 2018

## HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGIES

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To update the Board on the Council’s new Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategies and set out the approaches to the key issues of rough sleeping and supporting independent living for vulnerable people.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To confirm the Board’s support for joint work on the key housing issues set out in 5.6 and to consider how the necessary staff and financial resources can be made available.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 To ensure progress in meeting the needs of some of the most vulnerable residents in Blackpool through appropriate housing and support provision.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes

- 3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

### 4.0 Council Priority:

- 4.1 The relevant Council priorities are “The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool” and “Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”.

## **5.0 Background Information**

- 5.1 Addressing the quality and range of housing is Priority One in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016 – “Reduce the availability of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO’s) via the Blackpool Housing Company and other initiatives such as Selective Licensing to improve standards in the private rented sector. Create higher quality housing and mix of tenure by redeveloping Queen’s Park and developing new housing at Foxhall Village.”
- 5.2 It has been long documented that Blackpool’s unbalanced and poor quality housing stock is a major determinant of poor health in the town. The latest annual report from the Director of Public Health draws attention to the spatial correlation between HMOs and transience and lifestyle-related illnesses, and on the impact of high levels of homelessness.
- 5.3 The Council has recently approved a new Housing Strategy and a new Homelessness Prevention Strategy that re-frame a vision and plan for improving the town’s housing offer. There has been good progress in delivering key new housing developments like Queens Park and Foxhall Village, and in developing the work of Blackpool Housing Company but initiatives to improve conditions and management of private rented housing have only mitigated the issues rather than enabling significant change in the market. The new Strategy proposes a more ambitious approach to re-development, using Blackpool Housing Company and taking advantage of continuing low interest rates, improving housing market conditions, and new economic initiatives.
- 5.4 Services to prevent and respond to homelessness have managed to increase the number of cases where there is successful prevention work and slightly reduce the overall number of people ending up homeless, but there has at the same time been an upsurge in the number of individuals found rough sleeping and cases have typically become more complex. The total number of individuals found to have rough slept at least once rose from 160 in 2015/16 to 235 in 2017/18 – a large cohort of individuals who often have mental health and substance misuse issues that lead to cycles of moving between accommodation, squats, and the streets. New statutory responsibilities around homelessness came into effect in April 2018 and a Housing First model has been established in Blackpool from late 2017. The Strategy seeks to galvanise local agencies around the three principles of Preventing homelessness by intervening very quickly and effectively, Resolving homelessness rapidly and reducing time in temporary accommodation, and aiding Recovery through long term solutions that holistically address the issues that have led to homelessness and rough sleeping.
- 5.5 Along with the Housing Plan for an Ageing Population adopted in 2017, the Housing Strategy sets out a growing need to plan for appropriate new housing for older people and to provide assistance for older people to live independently in their own homes. An action plan is being progressed and quarterly monitoring arrangements

have been put in place, but a lot of the work is still at an early stage.

5.6 While the primary responsibility for addressing the housing issues rests with Blackpool Council as the strategic housing authority, much more can be achieved to address the health and wellbeing issues through effective joint working with health agencies. This joint working is poorly developed in Blackpool compared with many other areas. In particular the new Strategies show that there is a need to work together to:

- Better match the provision of support around mental health and substance misuse to support for rough sleepers
- Re-invest in assistance to vulnerable older people to enable them to stay safely in their own homes and avoid injury and unnecessary care and support
- Review how investing in a range of adapted accommodation for older people could reduce health and care costs
- Review how building more supported accommodation for people with long term support needs, such as learning disabilities and long term mental health conditions, could achieve better outcomes and reduce care costs
- Link support to people within deprived communities of inner Blackpool to wider services and investment to improve those areas and make them more attractive and sustainable

5.7 It has been difficult to progress new work on some of these issues, with all partners struggling to find sufficient capacity and expertise to initiate new approaches. The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to confirm support for joint work on the key housing issues set out in 5.6 and to consider how the necessary staff and financial resources can be made available.

5.8 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.9 **List of Appendices:**

None.

6.0 **Legal considerations:**

6.1 Councils have a range of legal responsibilities in dealing with homelessness, the most recent additions to which are contained within the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. All public authorities will have a new legal duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act to refer people thought to be homeless to the local authority; this new

duty is expected to be effective from October 2018.

**7.0 Human Resources considerations:**

7.1 None.

**8.0 Equalities considerations:**

8.1 The report seeks to improve the co-ordination of work to support vulnerable groups.

**9.0 Financial considerations:**

9.1 No specific issues arise from this report.

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 No specific risks although there is a general risk of failing to adequately co-ordinate public services to the detriment of vulnerable local residents.

**11.0 Ethical considerations:**

11.1 None.

**12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

12.1 Both the Housing Strategy and Homelessness Prevention Strategy have been subject to public consultation.

**13.0 Background papers:**

13.1 Housing Strategy and Homelessness Prevention Strategy.