



Report of the Chair

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 13 April 2021

Scrutiny of Homelessness Strategy

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| Purpose: | The Committee will have the opportunity to discuss progress with the Council's Homelessness Strategy since adoption by Cabinet in November 2018. |
| Content: | The report of the Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy & Service Transformation, Cllr Andrea Lewis, recently presented to Council, is attached showing progress made. The Cabinet Member and lead officer(s) have been invited to discuss progress with the Committee and address any questions arising. The Committee is also reminded of previous discussion and views contributed by Scrutiny to the development of the Homelessness Strategy during 2018 to facilitate any follow up as necessary. |
| Councillors are being asked to: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask questions, and make comments and recommendations as necessary. |
| Lead Councillor: | Councillor Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy & Service Transformation (Deputy Leader) |
| Lead Officer(s): | Mark Wade, Head of Housing & Public Health Jane Harries, Landlord & Community Housing Services Manager Steve Porter, Operations Manager – Community Housing Services |
| Report Author: | Brij Madahar, Scrutiny Team Leader Tel: 01792 637257 E-mail: brij.madahar@swansea.gov.uk |
| Legal Officer: | Debbie Smith |
| Finance Officer: | Paul Cridland |

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The work of Scrutiny has included a focus on the issue of Homelessness. During 2018, the work of a Homelessness Scrutiny Working Group and meetings of the Scrutiny Programme Committee contributed to the development of the Council's four-year Homelessness Strategy.

- 1.2 The Committee is interested in how the new Strategy, adopted by Cabinet in November 2018, has delivered improvement to services, advice and support, both in preventing homelessness and dealing with it where it exists. The Committee will recognise the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on homelessness in Swansea. At the Strategy's mid-point of implementation, the Committee can give views on the impact and difference made, and achievements against objectives and specific planned actions. It can also raise issues that the Council should consider in the delivery of the Strategy going forward.
- 1.3 The lead Cabinet Member, Cllr Andrea Lewis, and key officers delivering this work have been invited to address the Committee on progress and any questions arising. The Cabinet Member's recent report to Council is **attached** for discussion.

The Cabinet Member's report concludes that:

- the aims and objectives of the Strategy remain robust and fit for purpose. Good progress has been made across all five objectives, with high levels of homelessness prevention being maintained.
 - the pandemic has created significant challenges, led to significant changes in the way services have been delivered with increased demand for homelessness and support services. The Council has been able to adapt to changing priorities and challenges, and effective partnership working has helped to deliver the Strategy.
 - pressures on homelessness and support services are expected to rise, along with increased demand for affordable and secure, social housing. The Strategy ensures that the Council is in a strong position to deal with the forthcoming challenges.
- 1.4 Also appended to this covering report there is a reminder of previous discussion and views contributed by Scrutiny to the development of the Homelessness Strategy during 2018, which the Committee can follow up as required. The following letter correspondence between Scrutiny and the Cabinet Member is **attached**:
 - Letter from Homelessness Scrutiny Working Group and Cabinet Member Response (July 2018)
 - Consultation Response from Scrutiny Programme Committee – comments on Homelessness Strategy & Action Plan 2018-2022 consultation draft (Oct 2018)
 - Letter from Scrutiny Programme Committee – pre-decision scrutiny on Homelessness Strategy & Action Plan 2018-2022 (Nov 2018)

2. Legal Implications

- 2.1 There are no legal implications from this report.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications from this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A – Report of the Cabinet Member for Homes, Energy & Service Transformation: 'Homelessness Strategy Progress Report' (March 2021)

Appendix B – Letter from Homelessness Scrutiny Working Group and Cabinet Member Response (July 2018)

Appendix C – Consultation Response from Scrutiny Programme Committee – comments on Homelessness Strategy & Action Plan 2018-2022 consultation draft (Oct 2018)

Appendix D – Letter from Scrutiny Programme Committee – pre-decision scrutiny on Homelessness Strategy & Action Plan 2018-2022 (Nov 2018)