

# COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OSC

## REPORT TO CABINET

9 APRIL 2019

### Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-21

Paul Johnston, Interim Executive Director of Place, together with Philip Soderquest, Head of Housing and Public Protection, presented the report to the Committee at their meeting on 27 March 2019.

Although the Committee supported the Strategy, members sought clarification and made comment on the following:

- the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme was a facility to private landlords whereby the Council underwrites the deposit to enable a homelessness person or family to access accommodation;
- when setting out statistics as a percentage, the actual numbers should be presented alongside to give context to them;
- in paragraph 1.10 of the Strategy, reference was made to 922 households contacting the homelessness and housing options service. Members felt that this figure should have been benchmarked against other similar authorities, so that they could understand whether this was a “good” or “poor” number;
- the terminology used in the Strategy should be consistent and legally correct. Officers should check whether such terms as “rough sleepers” or “households” were the most appropriate and used accordingly. Consideration should also be given to appending a glossary to the Strategy;
- although the Committee understood that the aims and objectives in paragraph 2.2 carried equal weight, they felt that the overriding priority should be to “ensure that no one has to sleep rough” assuming that is the correct phrase;
- also in that paragraph, the reference should be to residents with “more complex needs” who are also homeless, and
- with regard to “Priority 3 - Support people through Welfare Reform”, members were disappointed that this was needed, as bureaucracy should not be a barrier to preventing homelessness.

The Committee therefore **resolved** that, subject to the comments as set out above, the Cabinet be advised that the Committee supports the recommendation in the report.

**COUNCILLOR JEFF REID**

**CHAIRMAN**