



# Northumberland County Council

Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023

## **HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY FOR NORTHUMBERLAND 2022 – 2026 ACTION PLAN PROGRESSION**

**Report of Councillor(s)** Colin Horncastle, Cabinet Member for Looking After our Environment

**Responsible Officer(s):** Simon Neilson, Executive Director - Place and Regeneration

### **1. Link to Key Priorities of the Corporate Plan**

This report is relevant to the **People First** value and the **Driving Economic Growth and Tackling Inequalities** priorities included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2023 - 2026 which states:

*PEOPLE FIRST - We provide services to our people (residents, colleagues, members, partners, visitors and businesses) through lasting, genuine, relationships that make a positive difference to their lives and their communities. We listen and understand our people's needs and put them at the heart of our decision making.*

*DRIVING ECONOMIC GROWTH - We will deliver a mix of quality housing across the county to meet the needs of the community and our changing population.*

*TACKLING INEQUALITIES - All Adults Living Well, Regardless of Age, Background, Illness or Disability - Everyone should have the opportunity to have a good life and play a part in creating strong communities.*

### **2. Purpose of report**

The following report presents members with an update of the progression against the Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy for Northumberland 2022 – 2026 action plan.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the contents of the report and the updates regarding actions that have been taken to meet the priorities identified to supports our residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

### **4. Forward plan date and reason for urgency if applicable**

Report requested by the Communities and Place Scrutiny Committee as a follow up to a previous report, presented on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023, detailing the updated Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2022-2026. The Scrutiny Committee have requested an update outlining the progression against the priorities identified.

### **5. Background**

- 5.1 The Council's Homelessness Strategy for Northumberland 2022-2026 detailed 5 key strategic priorities for the delivery of homelessness and housing options support for Northumberland residents. Since that strategy was published in March 2023 an Action Plan has been developed to identify the key actions that need to be implemented to help us achieve the identified priorities.
- 5.2 This strategy supports the Council's priorities for the delivery of our statutory obligations to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness whilst also supporting the delivery of the Council's Corporate Priorities and the delivery of the principle within the Housing Strategy for Northumberland that having a decent home is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Northumberland.
- 5.3 The priorities within this strategy have been identified as follows;
- a) Priority 1 - Improve services and accommodation options for rough sleepers and single homeless people
  - b) Priority 2 - Provide early intervention, prevention, and relief of homelessness through effective partnership working
  - c) Priority 3 - Improve access to suitable, affordable, and quality permanent, temporary, and emergency accommodation across all sectors
  - d) Priority 4 - Link health, well-being, and housing together to improve the life chances and aspirations of those affected by homelessness
  - e) Priority 5 - Develop homelessness pathways for specific groups including victims of domestic abuse, young people, prison leavers and armed forces veterans
- 5.4 The Council's Homelessness and Housing Options Team have been working proactively with colleagues and external partners and stakeholders to progress the actions plan. So far to date we have
- a) Brought forward an additional 14 properties for temporary accommodation, which include accommodation for single homeless people with complex needs
  - b) Commissioned an outreach service to work with rough sleepers
  - c) Established a rough sleeper action group bringing together multiple agencies to support work with complex and/or high-risk rough sleepers

- d) Begun working with the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital to develop discharge protocols for homeless people
- e) Worked in partnership with external partners and council services to develop, staff training, policies and procedures to implement the duties of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021)

5.5 We will continue to ensure services are delivered with a focus on preventing homelessness and rough sleeping, through the implementation of the strategy and associated action plan, which identifies opportunities for effective use of existing resources as well as sourcing new, as well as prevention and relief activity and the supply of settled and temporary accommodation to help meet local needs.

## 6. Options open to the Council and reasons for the recommendations

6.1 The council's Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2022–2026 was adopted by Cabinet on 14th March 2023 and reflects the needs and demands for homelessness service and housing options advice and support across the county.

Five key priorities were identified within the strategy, namely

- Priority 1 - Improve services and accommodation options for rough sleepers and single homeless people
- Priority 2 - Provide early intervention, prevention, and relief of homelessness through effective partnership working
- Priority 3 - Improve access to suitable, affordable, and quality permanent, temporary, and emergency accommodation across all sectors
- Priority 4 - Link health, well-being, and housing together to improve the life chances and aspirations of those affected by homelessness
- Priority 5 - Develop homelessness pathways for specific groups including victims of domestic abuse, young people, prison leavers and armed forces veterans

6.2 Following adoption of the Strategy an action plan was developed reflecting the actions that were to be completed to deliver against each priority.

6.3 This action plan has been updated and is now presented to members for their information and comment.

## 7. Implications

<b>Policy</b>	Supports the delivery of the Corporate Plan and the priorities within the Homelessness Strategy for Northumberland 2022-2026
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Sustaining tenancies and reducing homelessness has a positive impact on the budget.

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<b>Legal</b>	The Homelessness service is a Statutory Service and is delivered in line with requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
<b>Procurement</b>	There are no direct implications arising from this report.
<b>Human resources</b>	There are no direct implications arising from this report.
<b>Property</b>	Details the council’s ambitions for homelessness & housing options services This is likely to lead to an increase in council-owned stock being used as temporary accommodation.
<b>The Equalities Act: is a full impact assessment required and attached?</b>	No - not required at this point An updated EIA will be completed as part of any specific actions identified to ensure that fair access to housing for all residents is considered.
<b>Risk assessment</b>	There are no direct implications arising from this report.
<b>Crime and disorder</b>	Rough sleepers are far more likely to be victims of crime, including violent assault, abuse and intimidation, compared to the general public. Homelessness is a major factor which influences criminal activity amongst, particularly young people facing housing insecurity and the inability to access suitable and stable housing can force them toward a cycle of homelessness and offending behaviours.
<b>Customer considerations</b>	Enables provision of suitable accommodation for all residents
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	There are no direct implications arising from this report.
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	Sustaining tenancies and reducing homelessness & rough sleeping will have a positive impact upon the health & wellbeing of residents.
<b>Wards</b>	(All Wards);

**8. Background papers**

[Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy for Northumberland 2022-2026](#)

**9. Links to other key reports already published**

Not applicable

**10. Author and Contact Details**

Julie Stewart, Strategic Housing Manager  
Email: [Julie.Stewart@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Julie.Stewart@northumberland.gov.uk)