

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Community and Children's Services	– For decision 13 June 2014
Health and Wellbeing Board	– For information 30 May 2014
City of London Police Committee	– For information 23 May 2014
Port Health and Environmental Services Committee	– For information 13 May 2014
Subject:	Public
Homelessness Strategy 2014–2019	
Report of:	For Decision
Director of Community and Children's Services	
Summary	
<p>This report seeks approval from Members for the Homelessness Strategy 2014–2019.</p> <p>The Homelessness Act 2002 requires the City of London to review homelessness in its area and develop a local strategy every five years. This report introduces to Members the third City of London Homelessness Strategy developed in response to this legislative requirement.</p> <p>The strategy identifies five strategic priorities developed through consultation with Members, external and internal stakeholders, and users of homeless services in the City or supported by the City. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preventing homelessness • ending rough sleeping • increasing the supply of and access to accommodation • delivering outstanding integrated services • improving the health and wellbeing of homeless people. <p>For each priority the strategy identifies what will be done to address the key challenges of that priority. The nature and complexity of homelessness is such that delivery of this strategy will require the commitment, response and resources of a number of partner agencies and City of London services – including policing, health providers, environmental services, voluntary sector providers and a range of services within the Department of Community and Children's Services.</p> <p>A separate action plan will be developed to support the implementation of the approved Homelessness Strategy and monitor its progress. This action plan will be refreshed annually.</p>	

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- approve the Homelessness Strategy.

Main Report

Background

1. The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to review and renew their homelessness strategy every five years. The purpose of this strategy is to set out the City of London's priorities. These will govern a framework within which the City and its partners can deliver better outcomes for individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
2. The City of London's Homelessness Strategy 2014–2019 has been developed to replace the previous strategy approved by Grand Committee in 2008. It also replaces and incorporates the previous Rough Sleeping Strategy. The strategy sits alongside the Housing Strategy, Housing Allocations Policy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy in setting out the City of London's comprehensive response to homelessness.
3. The City's Homelessness Strategy will govern our approach for five years. However, in a period of emerging policies and economic change, it is vital that it remains responsive. For that reason it will be underpinned by a separate action plan that will be refreshed annually. This is currently being developed.

Current Position

4. The incidence of homelessness in the City of London is atypical in that there are relatively high levels of rough sleeping, but low levels of statutory homelessness (applications from families and individuals seeking local authority support under the provisions of the Housing Act 1996).
5. Across 2012–2013 284 people were recorded sleeping on the streets of the Square Mile of whom 112 (39 per cent) were seen rough sleeping for the first time. In the same year, the City took 37 applications from households who were homeless or at risk of homelessness and accepted a duty to house 20. A further 70 households were given housing advice to prevent or end homelessness.
6. Rough sleeping and wider homelessness are increasing across London. In 2012–2013 rough sleeping in the capital rose by 13 per cent: in the same period the City of London experienced an increase of 14 per cent.

7. There is a commitment at a national, regional and sub-regional level to tackle homelessness. This commitment is echoed in the City of London and articulated through its achievements, Homelessness Strategy and delivery of services.
8. Since the last Homelessness Strategy the City of London has increased opportunities to find homes in the private rented sector, helped families at risk of homelessness through its Troubled Families Project, supported innovative partnership projects to tackle rough sleeping such as pan-London Personalisation and the Lodge, and recommissioned independent advice for City residents and workers in need of support.

Proposals

9. A draft City of London Homelessness Strategy has been prepared for Members' consideration (see Appendix 1). It was developed through consultation with key stakeholders, including Members, teams across the Department of Community and Children's Services, Built Environment, the Community Safety Partnership, the City of London Police Service, health providers, voluntary sector services, neighbouring boroughs and those who have experienced homelessness and those who remain homeless in the City.
10. The strategy also draws on the successes, learning and changing environment that have been experienced within and beyond the City since the last strategy was produced. It highlights the five priorities:
 - preventing homelessness
 - ending rough sleeping
 - increasing supply of and access to accommodation
 - delivering outstanding integrated services
 - improving the health and wellbeing of homeless people.
11. Under each priority, the strategy states 'we will'. The 'we' does not refer to the City alone. It is instead a reference to the broad range of partners – City services, outreach services, health services, the City of London Police, businesses and others – who have a role in delivering better outcomes for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
12. Where the City is responsible, it will lead on the delivery of actions, and where partners are responsible, the City will work to co-ordinate and support delivery where necessary. The City will lead on monitoring the implementation of this strategy and reporting its progress.
13. The City will develop the action plan that supports this strategy and that delivers the commitments made under each priority. Many of the actions will replicate the commitments set out in the strategy but will provide greater detail of the lead, timescales and measurable outcomes. Further detailed actions will be a product of initial actions to review process and services. Others will respond to emerging trends or changes in resources or legislation.

14. The action plan will be refreshed annually. Its delivery will be monitored by the leadership team of the City's Department of Community and Children's Services, and reported to its Grand Committee.
15. The development of the strategy has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment which is attached as Appendix 2. Where target equality groups are over-represented in homelessness it is believed that the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy will benefit these groups positively. The City of London uses a range of specialist support agencies to meet the needs of equalities groups such as those from particular migrant communities or the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. It is acknowledged that the collection of monitoring information could be improved.

Corporate and Strategic Implications

16. The City's Corporate Strategy seeks a world class City which supports our communities through the appropriate provision of housing, and supports a safer and stronger City through supporting community cohesion. This Homelessness Strategy supports the delivery of that vision, the delivery of the Corporate Plan that underpins it, and the City's drive to deliver high-quality, accessible and responsive services benefiting its communities, neighbours, London and the nation.
17. The City's Homelessness Strategy sits alongside other Community and Children's Services strategies including the Housing Strategy, Housing Allocations Policy and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Other Implications

18. Homelessness is driven by a number of factors. Most of these are beyond the control of the City of London or any local authority. As such the demand and implications for services can be hard to predict.
19. Rough sleeping, in particular, requires the input of a range of partner organisations from within and outside the City. The co-operation of City of London Adult Social Care, the police, health, Built Environment and housing services is necessary for the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy. Therefore the strategy has implications for the resources of these teams and organisations, and calls upon them will need to be negotiated and agreed.
20. The Comptroller and City Solicitor has been consulted and has no additional comment. There are no additional financial or HR implications arising from this report.

Conclusion

21. The City of London Homelessness Strategy 2014–2019 sets out a five-year vision to deliver better outcomes for those who are homeless and those at risk of becoming so. Through broad consultation it has identified the City’s strategic priorities for tackling homelessness, the outcomes sought in relation to those priorities and the actions to deliver them. Its approval by Members will give direction to the range of partners necessary for its delivery and to secure its implementation.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Draft City of London Homelessness Strategy 2014–2019
- Appendix 2 – Equalities Impact Assessment

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