

Joint Report from the Cabinet Member Health and Social Care and the Cabinet Member Housing and Homes**TITLE: Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+****1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The attached “Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017: Working together to end homelessness” sets out a direction for the city’s approach to tackling and preventing homelessness. The new strategy has been developed with input from a wide range of stakeholders including Birmingham’s Homelessness Partnership Board, the Housing Birmingham Partnership, elected members, providers of homeless services across public, private and third sectors, as well as service users with experiences of being homeless.

2. Background and Key Issues

- 2.1 The Homelessness Strategy forms part of the Council’s Policy Framework. The Local Authority has a legal duty to undertake a Homelessness Review and publish a Homelessness Strategy every five years. This is Birmingham’s fourth strategy since it became a statutory requirement. The latest Homelessness Review (2016) identifies an estimated 20,000+ households affected within a wider homeless definition, and sets out the key challenges the city faces such as the lack of affordable housing options, low household income and high rates of unemployment which are driving housing exclusion.
- 2.2 The Homelessness Prevention Strategy is aligned with new prevention duties set out in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

3. Strategy Approach and Themes

- 3.1 The Strategy sets out a whole systems approach to work differently with partners in co-ordinating the delivery of services to prevent homelessness across the life course. This will be delivered through a Homelessness Positive Pathway that is being developed and will be implemented through the Birmingham Homelessness Partnership Board.
- 3.2 The strategy sets out a high level framework identifying systemic changes required to better respond to and prevent homelessness, alongside five key areas for action:-
- Universal prevention - ensure people are well informed about their housing options via a range of services including non-housing services
 - Early Targeted prevention - To prevent people at higher risk from becoming homeless
 - Crisis Prevention and Relief - To assist people as soon as possible if they do become homeless so that their homelessness can be relieved by securing sufficient accommodation and support
 - Homeless Recovery - To support people to recover from their experience and stay out of homelessness
 - Sustainable Housing - To enable people to secure homes that they can afford and maintain

Motion

That the draft Birmingham Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2017+ (Appendix 1) is approved as the City Council’s new Homelessness Strategy and that the Corporate Director of Place be authorised to publish and disseminate the document as appropriate.