

**Extract from the draft minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 20 November 2019**

**401. Colchester's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2020 - 2025)**

The Assistant Director, Policy and Corporate, submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor Fox, Portfolio Holder for Housing, introduced the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025. This was built on the existing strategy, but also took account of the additional duties placed on the Council by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The Strategy had been developed in conjunction with partners and key stakeholders. The four key aims of the Strategy were:-

- Increasing access to accommodation and providing settled homes.
- Helping people to sustain their accommodation.
- Improving the health and wellbeing of people that experience homelessness.
- Improving communication and challenging the perception and culture of homelessness.

To address homelessness and rough sleeping the Council was committed to building Council housing, but despite the council's best efforts homelessness was rising. The Council had worked with Colchester Borough Homes to secure over £600,000 of funding to reduce rough sleeping and it had appointed a Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator and Outreach workers. As a result the Council was making progress in tackling rough sleeping.

Councillor Fox thanked officers and partners for their work in bringing forward this significant piece of work.

Councillor Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety paid tribute to the work of Colchester Borough Homes Outreach workers for their valuable work in tackling rough sleeping.

*RESOLVED* that the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Colchester for 2020 to 2025 be approved.

*RECOMMENDED to COUNCIL* that the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy be adopted as part of the Council's Policy Framework.

#### *REASONS*

The Council has a statutory responsibility to produce and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on a homelessness review every five years.

The new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Colchester takes account of national guidance and local priorities arising from the homelessness review and consultation responses. A corporate commitment to preventing homelessness is fundamental to achieving the main objectives of the Strategy.

#### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

To not adopt the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. However, it is a legal requirement to have a Homelessness Strategy and no alternatives exist to a review of homelessness and the development of a new strategy and delivery plan. The Council would not be fulfilling its legal duty if it did not produce a strategy.