



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY CABINET BOARD

13th July 2023

**Report of the Interim Head of Housing and Communities – Chelé
Zandra Howard**

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Permission to Consult on the Draft Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan 2023-26

Purpose of the Report:

To inform members of the draft Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan 2023/24-2025/26 (“The Plan”) (Appendix 1) and seek approval to undertake a 90 day public consultation.

Executive Summary:

In order to ensure that Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (“The Council”) is best placed to respond to the challenges and demands for housing and homelessness services, it is requested that

Members give permission for Officers to undertake public consultation on the draft Plan.

Background:

Over the last few years, there has been a significant rise in the number of people presenting as homeless and a sharp decrease in access to affordable housing.

The links between access to sustainable affordable housing and homelessness mean that both issues need to be tackled together if we are to successfully prevent homelessness and create cohesive communities.

Our Plan sets out a clear statement of intent to take actions that ensure all people of Neath Port Talbot are able to quickly access quality housing that is affordable and that there are sufficient interventions to prevent and alleviate homelessness.

Nine strategic principles underpin the work that will be taken forward in this Plan, they are:

- **Plan** by working more strategically with the wider Council, RSLs, developers, private landlords and service providers in the way we utilise our available resources to implement sustainable housing and homelessness interventions in line with population needs.
- **Prepare** for Neath Port Talbot's future by making best use of our available resources to create sufficiency of housing to ensure thriving and prosperous communities in line with our anticipated needs.
- **Placemaking** principles to underpin our development plans so that we promote sustainable communities.

- **Preservation** of our future through minimising our environmental impact and maximising opportunities for decarbonisation and energy efficiency.
- **Partnership** working by building on our relationships with stakeholders to take forward a collaborative approach to addressing NPTs housing needs and ending homelessness.
- **Prevent** homelessness wherever possible and if it does happen, prevent recurrence through the development of targeted support services and suitable accommodation.
- **Personalised** responses to supporting those with housing needs by putting the person at the centre of our approach, thereby enabling people with complex and/or multiple needs to live in stable accommodation.
- **Positive** outcomes for people with social care needs, including young care leavers, through the development of specialist accommodation models that promote independence and reduce the need for more institutionalised care.
- **Provide** our workforce with the skills and resources to implement a new preventative way of working and providing people with the right interventions and accommodation so that they are able to fulfil their potential.

The priority areas for action are grouped into four areas, which are:

- Priority Area One - Implement a More Strategic Approach.
- Priority Area Two – Prevent Homelessness.
- Priority Area Three - Increase Access to Appropriate Affordable Housing.
- Priority Area Four - Support Those with Social Care Needs to Live Well in Their Communities.

Financial Impacts:

Taking forward some of the actions within this Plan will require financial investment, specific business cases will be developed to ensure that the Council achieves best value for money and that there is a sound financial case for any potential investment.

In the 2022/23 financial year, the Council was projected to overspend on homelessness services by £1.45 million, however a one off grant from Welsh Government meant that the actual overspend was £535,000.

This overspend was a direct result of the increased use of B&Bs to support people that had become homeless. Financial projections show that if we do not take action now to prevent people from becoming homeless and reduce the need for B&B placements, there will be an annual overspend to the current budget of £2,566,000 by the 2027/28 financial year.

Proposals within the Plan aim to prevent homelessness and reduce the use of B&B placements. As such it is assessed that the cost of implementing this Plan is less than if we do not take the necessary action to prevent homelessness and increase access to secure affordable housing.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016). The first stage impact assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment was required.

An overview of the Integrated Impact Assessment has been included below in summary form only and it is essential that Members read the

Integrated Impact Assessment, which is attached to the report at Appendix 2, for the purposes of the meeting.

The impact assessment identified that the Plan will have a positive impact on people that are experiencing or at risk of homelessness as well as those that require affordable housing or social care services, as it aims to proactively address the housing challenges impacting our communities.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

The issues of reduced access to affordable housing and the increasing number of households at risk or experiencing homelessness can be seen across Neath Port Talbot. This Plan will include supporting the development of affordable housing and social care housing in the valley areas.

Workforce Impacts:

Some actions proposed within this Plan will have an impact on the Council workforce, in particular the action to '*Strengthen the Housing Options Team*', these actions intend to provide a positive outcome for employees by providing them with the necessary resources and tools to undertake their roles.

Progressing actions that may impact on the workforce will be underpinned by a robust case for change and impact assessment. Implementation of actions will be sensitively and appropriately managed in line with HR policies and managers will work closely with employees and Trade Unions when implementing any changes.

Legal Impacts:

The Plan has no direct legal impacts, however implementation of a number of actions within this Plan are intended to support the Council in better discharging its statutory homelessness duties.

Risk Management Impacts:

Implementation of Proposal

The main risk associated with implementation of the Plan are the human and financial implications if these actions do not have the desired result of preventing homelessness and increasing access to affordable housing. However, the proposals within the Plan are all evidence based and independent reviews of interventions such as Housing First demonstrate positive impacts.

Non-Implementation of Plan

The biggest risk of not implementing this Plan is the inability to prevent the rising number of people becoming homeless and the increasing utilisation of B&Bs to support these households.

If demand rises in line with our 'do nothing' projections, there will be insufficient availability of B&Bs to temporarily house people. This may then lead to the Council potentially being unable to meet their statutory homelessness duties, as well as having to house more people outside of the area. In addition, rising numbers of households in B&Bs will lead to a significant overspend for the Council.

The human impact of not preventing homelessness and an over reliance on B&Bs, will have wider impacts for the Council. For example, the impact on schooling for those children in B&Bs being moved around the borough.

In addition, non-implementation of this Plan will reduce the Council's ability to encourage the development of affordable housing, which will

result in a negative impact for communities, as people will be unable to access appropriate accommodation for their needs.

Crime and Disorder Impacts:

Implementation of actions within the Plan such as establishing Housing First models, specialist complex care services and Triage Centres, alongside embedding placemaking approaches, is likely to have a positive impact on the Councils duty to reasonably prevent:

- a) Crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); and
- b) The misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area; and
- c) Re-offending the area

Consultation:

It is proposed that with Members' permission, a 90-day public consultation exercise is undertaken.

A consultation document, an easy read version of the plan, and a 'Plan on a Page' will be developed to support the consultation. In addition, all materials will be available in Welsh.

Recommendations:

Having had due regard to the integrated impact assessment, it is recommended that Members approve a 90 day public consultation period for the draft Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan 2023/24-2025/26, as detailed in Appendix 1.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To provide Neath Port Talbot residents with the opportunity to inform the development of the Strategy.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Draft Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan 2023/24-2025/26.

Appendix 2: Integrated Impact Assessment.

List of Background Papers:

Background Paper 1: Rapid Rehousing Plan -

<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/documents/s81738/RRH%20PLAN%20Sept%202022.pdf>

Background Paper 2: Housing Support Grant Strategy -

<https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/documents/s81638/Appendix%201%20-%20HSG%20Strategy.pdf>

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