



CABINET: 14 March 2017

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
30 March 2017

Report of: Director of Leisure and Wellbeing

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor K Wright

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SUBJECT: HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2017-2022 (CONSULTATION DRAFT)

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To approve the draft Homelessness Strategy 2017-2022 for consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

2.1 That the draft Homelessness Strategy 2017-2022; attached as Appendix 1; be made available to the public and stakeholders for a period of consultation from 20 March 2017, for a period of 6 weeks.

2.2 That the Director of Leisure and Wellbeing, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, be authorised to make any minor changes to the strategy prior to consultation period.

2.3 That call in is not appropriate as the report will be submitted to the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 30 March 2017.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3.1 That following consideration of the report any agreed comments be submitted to the relevant Portfolio Holder.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 introduced a duty on local authorities to regularly review homelessness in their area and to produce a Homelessness Strategy.

In order to inform the Homelessness Strategy 2017-2022, a review of homelessness in West Lancashire was carried out in 2016.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The Homelessness Strategy 2017-2022, as attached at Appendix 1, provides an updated picture of homelessness in the Borough and outlines the key objectives that will be addressed.
- 4.2 The Action Plan contained in the report outlines the actions that will be taken to meet the key objectives in order to reduce the number of homeless households in the Borough.
- 4.3 The strategy also provides an update on the progress made since the Homelessness Strategy 2007-2012.

5.0 HOMELESSNESS REVIEW FINDINGS

- 5.1 The homelessness review found that despite homelessness presentations nationally increasing, in West Lancashire, the number has been in decline since 2011. However, whilst this is welcome, the percentage of people presenting as homeless who are owed the full re-housing duty has increased from 37% in 2014/15 to 57.8% in 2015/16.
- 5.2 Lone female parents aged 25-44 are more likely to present as homeless, reflecting the national trend whilst the main cause of homelessness has consistently been the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy, again reflecting the national trend.
- 5.3 The use of temporary accommodation is minimal compared to national figures; only 10 households were placed during 2015/16 which is a slight increase on 2014/15. No households were placed in Bed and Breakfast or hostel accommodation.
- 5.4 The number of households prevented from becoming homeless is on the increase with 29 prevention cases in 2015/16.

6.0 PROPOSED ACTIONS

- 6.1 The key objectives of the strategy are:

Objective 1: Enhance the depth and range of housing advice services to meet current and future challenges

Objective 2: Enhance the housing offer available to all homeless applicants in the Borough

Objective 3: Improving health and wellbeing

- 6.2 In order to meet the key objectives, an Action Plan has been devised that will focus on improving the depth and range of housing advice services to ensure more homeless cases are prevented.
- 6.3 A new homelessness prevention toolkit will be developed alongside an improved advice offer to those people who do not have a priority need for assistance. A private landlord working group will also be established to look at barriers in offering tenancies to homeless households and to find ways to reduce the number of evictions.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 As part of the process of updating the strategy, a period of public consultation is required to allow stakeholders and the public to provide feedback or suggested improvements. To facilitate this, a copy of the draft strategy will be circulated for consultation for a period of 6 weeks from the 20 March 2017.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 8.1 The actions contained in the strategy will help to improve the housing advice offer to all who are faced with homelessness which in turn will reduce the number of households becoming homeless. The strategy also links to the sustainable living key objective of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

9.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are some financial/ resource implications arising from this report in respect of certain actions however these will be met using existing resources including the homelessness prevention grant received from Government.

10.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 The actions referred to in this report are covered by the scheme of delegation to officers and any necessary changes have been made in the relevant risk registers.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders; therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report

Appendices

- A. Homelessness Strategy 2017-2022 (Consultation Draft)
- B. Equality Impact Assessment
- C. Minute of Cabinet 14 March 2017 (Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee only)