

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD: 13<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

**TITLE:** Homelessness Strategy 13 November 2013

**REPORT OF:**

Clive Jones Assistant Director Family & Cohesion Services, Telford & Wrekin Council

**HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD PRIORITY SPONSOR:**

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER –** Cllr Charles Smith

**PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

The Homelessness Strategy (Annex A) provides a framework for directing the Council's activity in managing Homelessness in partnership with the voluntary sector and other local partners.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Board notes the draft Homelessness Strategy 2014-17, and endorses the contribution the strategy makes in reducing health inequalities. Board members are asked to circulate the draft with their respective organisations for consultation and feedback any comments should be sent to the Assistant Director Family & Cohesion Services by 29<sup>th</sup> November 2013

**3. IMPACT OF ACTION**

- Prevent homelessness in Telford and Wrekin
- Have appropriate housing pathways, including advice and support for homeless households in Telford and Wrekin
- Meet the Council's statutory duty to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers

#### **4. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priorities	
	Yes	Regenerating those neighbourhoods in need and work to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure people have access to suitable housing</li> <li>• Putting our children and young people first</li> <li>• Improving local people's prospects through education and skills training</li> <li>• Protecting and supporting our vulnerable children and adults</li> <li>• Improving the health and wellbeing of our communities and address health inequalities</li> </ul>
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	Protecting and supporting our vulnerable children and adults.
<b>TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE</b>	Following a period of consultation a final version of the strategy will be presented to the Council's cabinet for approval. Actions within the strategy will be delivered by the end of 2016.	
<b>FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council currently owns 17 houses and leases in 31 properties from the private sector which are used to accommodate homeless people in both the medium and short term. The Council owns supported accommodation hostels including a refuge, this reduces the demand for Bed &amp; Breakfast and the associated housing benefit subsidy loss.</li> </ul>
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	Yes	<p>In addition to the Statutory Powers in respect of homelessness and housing under the Housing Acts 1985 and 1996, the Council can utilise the general power of competence under the Localism Act 2011. The proposed actions must be in the social, economic or environmental interests of the Community.</p> <p>The ability to charge for the service to landlords derives from the Local Government Act 2003 and the Localism Act 2011, as it is a discretionary service the amount of the fee will be subject to the general rules for all discretionary fees.</p> <p>In charging a fee to Private Landlords, if providing a commercial service the Local Authority must set up a company to do so. If not on a commercial basis, the charge must not exceed the expense of provision of the service. The Private Landlord must agree to the charge as set out in the Localism Act 2011.</p> <p>The Local Authority has a duty to produce and publish a Homelessness Strategy under the Homelessness Act 2002. We understand funding for the Bond Scheme and the Prevention Scheme is not coming from a central government grant but from the service areas own budget. If it were to come from a grant any restrictions on the use of the funds would need to be adhered to.</p>
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Yes	Working co-operatively with our partners and the voluntary sector creates opportunities to enable us to provide a co-ordinated approach to delivering services, to effectively tackle and reduce the risk of homelessness in Telford and Wrekin.
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	No	Borough-wide impact

## **PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **1. INFORMATION**

#### **1.1 Review of homelessness in Telford & Wrekin**

In 2012, a comprehensive review of homelessness in Telford & Wrekin was undertaken by a small task force in order to:

- Assess the impact of national context, in particular the introduction of the Welfare Reform Bill, introduced in April 2013, on homelessness and service provision
- Understand the current scale and nature of homelessness on a local level and the likely increase in demand
- Review current service provision to prevent and tackle homelessness, in the context of national and local factors
- Assess future service needs and challenges
- Ensure more rapid assessment of individual homelessness cases and the delivery of initiatives to meet the Council's statutory duty to prevent and tackle homelessness

#### **1.2 Homeless Review**

The review identified a number of issues with the most significant being:

- An over reliance on Bed & Breakfast accommodation to meet the Council's statutory duty on homelessness. This had resulted in a budget pressure and was at the same time failing to address the longer term needs of people being accommodated
- An overreliance on officers within Family & Cohesion Services in delivering a fully integrated solution to homelessness. The review concluded that officers in a client facing role were not best placed to manage property related functions and that there was evidence that this is leading to the inefficient use of resources

#### **1.3 Revised Homelessness Strategy**

This has been developed which sets out how the Council will work with partners to **prevent and tackle statutory and non statutory homelessness**, including eliminating the need for rough sleeping.

#### **1.4 Public Health Responsibilities**

The Health and Wellbeing Board recognises the impact the strategy will have on the board's priorities and the wider links to public health priorities including:

- Improving the health and wellbeing of the local population

- Reduce health inequalities across the life course, including hard to reach groups and people at risk of becoming or are homeless

It is recommended that the Public Health Outcomes Framework is cross referenced and used to inform measure of success of the Homelessness Strategy.

Working co-operatively with our partners and the voluntary sector will create opportunities to enable us to provide a co-ordinated approach to delivering services, to effectively tackle and reduce the risk of homelessness in Telford and Wrekin.

## **2. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The Strategy is set against the backdrop of unprecedented change in public spending, welfare benefits and social housing which will increase pressure on homelessness services at a time when resources are facing cuts. To achieve this the council are proposing a more robust approach on how we manage council owned and leased temporary accommodation, ensuring capital investment is made to keep the current stock to a decent homes standard. This gives the council and partners the opportunity to be more creative in managing the challenges brought on by the changes in Welfare Reform.

Following Cabinet approval in September it was agreed that a further 60 day consultation programme be put in place, this will conclude at the end of November 2013 ensuring all internal and external partners have the opportunity to contribute to the Homelessness strategy.

This will include:

- Stay,
- LIFE,
- Maninplace and KIP
- Wellington YMCA
- West Mercia Police,
- Wrekin Housing Trust,
- Sanctuary House,
- Homeless Link
- Bromford Housing

## **3. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

None

## **4. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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