

## **Homelessness Review**

**Head of Service:** Tim Capper, Head of Democratic Services  
**Report Author:** Neil White, Scrutiny Support Officer

**Recommendation: that the Committee considers the Council's draft Homelessness Review and passes any comments on to the Executive.**

### **BACKGROUND**

Earlier this year with consultancy support, a review was commenced to look at the Council's approach to dealing with homelessness. The previous policy was becoming out-of-date and the review was necessary to comply with one of the Audit Commission's recommendations on the housing service.

The Council also has a statutory duty to complete and publish a review of homelessness in the borough and a homelessness strategy for the 5 years beginning in 2008. The duty arises from the Homelessness Act 2002, which amended the Housing Act 2006. The first mandatory homelessness strategies had to be published by 31/7/2003 which the council did and they must be renewed at least every 5 years. The Council needs to publish a review and strategy for 2008 to 2013 or be in breach of this legislation.

The work required has now been largely completed. It comprised four main elements;

- a) A review of the existing situation including an analysis of the statistics and the types of cases coming forward.
- b) The preparation of a directory of local service provision
- c) A revised Copeland Strategy on homelessness until 2013
- d) An Action Plan for the next 5 years

The Executive Portfolio Holder has requested that this committee considers the review and passes on any comments for the Executive to consider when it looks at this review at its meeting on 12 August 2008.

The Executive will be requested to adopt the Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan and to ask the Housing Strategic Panel to monitor progress on the Plan.

### **2. DETAILED CONSIDERATION**

Homelessness and its prevention are without doubt absolutely fundamental to the Council's housing responsibilities and to the welfare of the community at large. The new strategy (Appendix A) is a relatively concise document, which

explains the background, the scale and nature of the problem, and the key priorities (Sec. 6.4) to be addressed and it is not proposed to repeat those here.

What is fundamental is the Council's need to orchestrate the efforts of a range of other agencies locally to assist in dealing with this issue and the Action Plan (Appendix B) demonstrates their ability and willingness to contribute to this.

The Action Plan is a 5-year programme to make significant progress in improving preventative work, increasing performance monitoring and bringing on stream a range of new initiatives. A plan of this timescale will inevitably need to be reviewed and updated as circumstances change, but this is recommended as a clear starting point for the work to be done. In order to keep a check on this, it is recommended that Members on the Housing Strategic Panel receive progress updates at appropriate intervals.

Consultation on this strategy has followed a number of different routes;

- a) The draft was circulated to all Members of the Council
- b) Documents were placed on the Council's website for public consultation and publicized in `Copeland Matters`
- c) All key partners in this sphere were consulted
- d) The Housing Strategic Panel considered the draft of this strategy and will look at this final version on July 31<sup>st</sup>. Any final comments will be reported verbally.

As a result of the consultation it has been agreed to establish a new Homelessness Forum for Copeland where key partner agencies will meet regularly to ensure consultation and liaison are working effectively.

### **3. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)**

Staffing and service provision costs for dealing with homelessness are contained within the Council's base budget. Greater efficiency and effectiveness in dealing with these issues should produce savings which can be recycled to improve service provision

### **4. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN**

Delivers priority objective in the Corporate Plan.

#### **List of Background Documents:**

Homelessness Review 2008  
Homelessness Service Directory 2008

**List of Appendices**

Appendix “A” – New Homelessness strategy

Appendix “B” – Copeland Borough Council Homelessness Strategy Delivery Plan  
2008-2013

**CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES**

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed. This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	None directly
Impact on Sustainability	None directly
Impact on Rural Proofing	None directly
Health and Safety Implications	None directly
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	Impacts through the role in ensuring housing opportunities for all
Children and Young Persons Implications	Impacts in relation to young persons housing opportunities
Human Rights Act Implications	Possible implications through rights to housing
s.151 issues	
Legal issues	

Please say if this report will require the making of a Key Decision    NO