

COPELAND STRATEGY ON HOMELESSNESS

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Deputy Leader: Councillor George Clements

LEAD OFFICER: Fergus McMorrow. Director of Development

REPORT AUTHOR: Peter Deacon. Interim Housing Services Manager

Summary and Recommendation:

This report presents a new Homelessness Strategy and Delivery Plan

It is recommended that the Executive

1. Adopts the Strategy and Action Plan
2. Asks the Housing Strategic Panel to monitor progress on the Plan

1. INTRODUCTION

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 The previous policy was becoming out-of-date and the review was necessary to comply with legislative requirements under the Homelessness Act.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

1.2 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

1.3 The final two elements above require adoption by the Executive.

2. DETAILED CONSIDERATION

2.1 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.

2.2. 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.

2.3 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 in June and approved this final version on July 31st. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Children and Healthy Communities will consider it on August 7th. Any final comments will be reported verbally.

2.4 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)

3.1 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

4.1 Delivers priority objective in the Corporate Plan.

List of Background Documents:

Homelessness Review 2008
Homelessness Service Directory 2008

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	No legal comments

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