

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet Member for Prosperity

Date of the meeting: 13th September 2010
Report of: Director of Places
Subject/Title: Homelessness Strategy

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 granted new provisions and powers for local authorities' work on homelessness and prevention. It also imposed a duty upon local authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their area and formulate and publish a strategy for the future based on the results of that review, outlining how the council and their partners would work to prevent homelessness and ensure accommodation and support for those who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Homelessness team has developed Cheshire East's first draft Homelessness Strategy following an extensive review process and is now seeking approval of the strategy.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Prosperity approve the adoption of the Homelessness Strategy appended to this report.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 It is a statutory requirement that Local Authorities have a strategy in place to prevent and deal with homelessness.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All Wards

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 All Local Ward Members

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health -

- 6.1 N/A

7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

7.1 N/A

8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

8.1 For the financial year 2010/11 there are no financial implications as all costs can be met within existing resources and from funding allocated to the authority from The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for homelessness prevention work. For 2011/12 onwards, there is no further guarantee of any funding from DCLG so actions may need to be reconsidered in light of any reduction in funding levels.

9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

9.1 Under Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 there is a statutory duty upon Local Authorities formulate a homelessness strategy. Section 3 provides that the strategy must deal with preventing homelessness and also securing that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people in their district who are or may become homeless and for securing the satisfactory provision of support for people in their district who are or may become homeless or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.

9.2 Also under Section 1, the Council as a local housing authority and social services authority must take their homelessness strategy into account in the exercise of its functions.

9.3 Before adopting a homelessness strategy the Council must consult such public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons as they consider appropriate.

9.4 A new homelessness strategy must be published by the Council every five years.

9.5 A copy of the published strategy must be made available at the council's principal office for inspection and copies provided on request on payment of a charge if required.

10.0 Risk Management

10.1 The Audit Commission placed a 2010 deadline on the production of the Homelessness strategy; failure to produce a strategy will result in criticism from the Commission and this will impact on any future inspection.

11.0 Background and Options

- 11.1 Local authorities are required to undertake a homelessness review within their area and use the information to formulate a strategy. The homelessness review should look at levels and likely future levels of homelessness in their district, establish the activities which are carried out to prevent homelessness, establish accommodation needs of the homeless and support needs.
- 11.2 Cheshire East's Homelessness team carried out the review in 2009. Extensive consultation with statutory and voluntary agencies as well as service users took place to identify gaps in service and ways of improving access to services and this has been fed into the strategy and the actions attached to it.
- 11.3 The areas identified for action focus on five key areas: homeless prevention, processes, temporary accommodation, tenancy support and permanent housing.
- 11.4 The focus of the strategy is on working in partnership with internal and external partners to provide holistic services which provide value for money, take account of best practice and enhance the services to customers.
- 11.5 There are 48 actions set in the Homelessness Strategy which will be monitored quarterly by the Homeless Strategy Steering Group.
- 11.6 The Homelessness Strategy has completed the 12 week consultation period and further comments from Citizen's Advice, Children's Service and Domestic Violence services have been incorporated.

12.0 Overview of Year One and Term One Issues

- 12.1 Ensuring there is sufficient funding in place to deliver the actions to prevent homelessness as prevention measures can be up to 37 times cheaper than taking a homeless application.

13.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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