
Report to: Cabinet **Date of Meeting:** 12 September 2013

Subject: Homelessness Strategy

Report of: Director of Built Environment **Wards Affected:** All

Is this a Key Decision? Yes **Is it included in the Forward Plan?** Yes

Exempt/Confidential No

Purpose/Summary

To seek Cabinet approval to the Council's proposed new Homelessness Strategy.

Recommendation(s)

- (1) The Council's Homelessness Strategy be approved;
- (2) The Cabinet Member Regeneration & Tourism be given delegated authority to finalise the governance arrangements, which will help deliver actions within the strategy.

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		X	
2	Jobs and Prosperity		X	
3	Environmental Sustainability		X	
4	Health and Well-Being	X		
5	Children and Young People	X		
6	Creating Safe Communities		X	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities	X		
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy		X	

Reasons for the Recommendation:

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires every Local Authority to publish a Homelessness Strategy at least every 5 years. The existing Strategy was published in July 2008.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no direct costs arising from the Strategy. Should any actions contained within the Strategy have resource implications, then implementation of those recommended actions will be the subject of future formal Council decision making processes.

(B) Capital Costs

There are no direct capital costs arising from the Strategy.

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Legal The Homelessness Act 2002 requires every Local Authority to carry out a homelessness review every 5 years, and to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on this review. The current Strategy expired at the end of July.
Human Resources There are no direct implications arising.
Equality 1. No Equality Implication <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains <input type="checkbox"/> An Equality Impact Assessment is set out in Appendix 2 to this report

Impact on Service Delivery:

The Homelessness Strategy underpins the Councils activities and decision making in relation to it's homelessness services.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Homelessness review process has involved significant consultation with agencies that provide homeless related services, and with homeless clients. A Homelessness Forum was established in December 2012, which has met on 5 occasions to oversee the review and consider issues arising. The consultants undertaking the review have also conducted surveys with agencies and clients, undertaken some individual interviews and attended group meetings. All of these methods have allowed them to collect views and information from a range of organisations and people.

The Head of Corporate Finance (FD2486) has been consulted and notes there are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD1791) have been consulted and has no comments on the report.

Are there any other options available for consideration?

The Homelessness Act 2002, makes it a legal requirement for every Local Authority to carry out a homelessness review every 5 years, and to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on this review. The only options relate to the agreed contents of a Strategy.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet.

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Background Papers:

None

The following documents can be accessed on the Council’s web site via these links:

Appendix 2 – Homelessness Strategy - Equality Impact Assessment

<http://modgov.sefton.gov.uk/moderngov/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD1613&ID=1613&RPID=7486272&sc h=doc&cat=13197&path=13158%2c13197>

Appendix 3 – Homelessness Strategy - Consultations Summary

<http://modgov.sefton.gov.uk/moderngov/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD1614&ID=1614&RPID=7486271&sc h=doc&cat=13197&path=13158%2c13197>

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002, requires every Local Authority to carry out a homelessness review in it's Borough every 5 years, to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on this review and to consult with other statutory and voluntary organisations. This is our third review and builds upon the work of the first two carried out in 2003 and 2008. On this occasion the review has been undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Housing Consultancy. The existing strategy expired on the 31st of July 2013, though the formal Review exercise was completed prior to this date.
- 1.2 The latest Homelessness Review report provides many conclusions and recommendations, which form the basis of the new Strategy, and proposed actions within it (Appendix 1). This strategy sets out the future actions that will be taken in Sefton to tackle homelessness.

2. Ongoing Governance arrangements to deliver the Strategy

- 2.1 The Review report contains a large number of conclusions and recommendations. The majority of these will need to be addressed on an ongoing basis over the 5 year lifetime of the strategy.

Delivery of the actions in this Homelessness Strategy will require the involvement of a number of parties and partners. As a pre-requisite to this it will be important to establish appropriate governance arrangements. The Review report, and the proposed Strategy identify that this needs to be an early action.

During the Homelessness Review exercise, and leading up to the production of this Strategy, a Homelessness Forum has been established. All partners are keen that this Forum should continue to meet at an operational (day-to-day) level. There will however, also be the requirement for the outcomes of the Forum to influence and/or reflect the larger strategic outcomes of, for instance, the Council's broad commissioning priorities.

The Council is currently establishing the overall structure of the Health & Wellbeing Board. Within the proposed structure of the Board, there is a Programmes Group (that is concerned with, amongst other things, Strategic level commissioning of housing related support services) and beneath that a layer, which will include 3 groups focussing on; Early Life (aged 0-19), Older People and the Wider Determinants of ill-health. It is within the Wider Determinants Group that it is felt the Homelessness Forum would be best placed and represented to feed into the Programmes Group.

Membership of the Homelessness Forum will be important. It is imperative that the forum include people with decision-making powers, commissioning responsibilities, and statutory responsibilities for tackling homelessness to ensure delivery of commitments and actions in this strategy.

The Council has a Housing Partnership Forum, and the Homelessness Forum could also be a sub-group of the Housing Partnership.

- 2.2 A key element of the Strategy is the Action Plan contained in it. The Action Plan is drawn from recommendations in the Review. It is intended that these actions will need to be completed during the lifetime of this strategy from 2013 – 2018. The Action Plan will be supplemented with an annual Delivery Plan, to be agreed within the proposed governance arrangements, which will be reviewed and revised throughout the delivery of the strategy.

The implementation of many actions within the finalised Strategy, particularly any with resource implications, would need to be referred to Cabinet, relevant Cabinet Member or other formal decision making body.

For example, in terms of the Council's services to support homeless people the Review recommends;

Action 6. Review and revise the current service offer for people sleeping rough

The nature of such services would need to be given greater consideration, and this will also need to be considered in the light of available resources and other commissioning priorities, eg through the Health & Well Being Boards commissioning Programmes Group, or the Council's VCF Sector review, which is underway.

3 Conclusion

- 3.1 The Council are legally required to undertake a Homelessness Review and produce a new Homelessness Strategy every 5 years. The latest Review has been concluded, with a large number of recommendations. Some key recommendations, which will need early consideration are addressed in the report above.
- 3.2 The process to undertake the Homelessness Review, and to produce the Homelessness Strategy has been the subject of significant consultations. The views from a variety of stakeholders were sought as part of this homelessness review, this included both commissioners and services providers from the public, third and private sectors. A mixture of consultation opportunities were made available to stakeholders, including workshops, surveys and interviews. The views from a broad range of service users were also sought as part of the homelessness review that informs this strategy. A series of interviews were held at a variety of locations throughout the borough including at services that offer community-based support as well as accommodation-based support. A workshop was also held with stakeholders to capture their ideas and opinions. Key stakeholders attended interviews to assist with the research for the review that informs this strategy. A Homelessness Forum was established in December 2012, which has met on 5 occasions to oversee the review and consider issues arising. A 'You said/ we did' report is set out in appendix 3, which outlines the principle issues that arose from the consultations, and our proposed response to those issues. This will be used to feedback to those who participated in the consultation exercises.