

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR YOUTH HOMELESSNESS TASK AND FINISH GROUP WORK

Introduction

The problem of Youth Homelessness was first mentioned at the CYP Panel meeting on the 28th Jan 08 when Councillors Nathan Hartley and David Spiers asked if the Children and Young People Panel could receive a report on Youth Homelessness. After looking at this report - 'Temporary Accommodation Review' conducted by what was the Housing and Community Safety Panel 2007, the CYP Panel agreed at their meeting on the 17th March 2008 that there were specific issues concerning Youth Homelessness which were not tackled by the previous review.

A final decision was made by the CYP Panel to setup a cross panel Task and Finish Group to look at this problem and report back to the Panel in July 08.

Task and Finish Group – role and methodology

A Task and Finish Group was set up by the Children and Young People Services Overview & Scrutiny Panel (O&S) to look at the problem of Youth Homelessness specifically within Norton-Radstock and the surrounding rural communities.

A Task and Finish Group may be established by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the purpose of conducting an in depth review of any Council service, policy or issue that affects the lives of the residents of B&NES. Matters requiring review by a task and finish group generally arise from issues which have been identified by one of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

Once the evidence has been considered through

- Research of currently available information and data
- Conversations/interviews with relevant officers/organisations

The Task and Finish Group produces a report containing details of the evidence gathered, their conclusions and subsequent recommendations.

The report is then submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel who in turn may refer the report to the Cabinet or any partner agencies affected, asking them to consider the recommendations arising from the investigation and how things could be improved.

Objective

The Task and Finish Group will investigate the extent of the youth homelessness problem in Norton-Radstock and surrounding rural communities and make recommendations about how the Council and/or other agencies can deal with this problem.

The work will also set out to support the Government targets set out in 2006 which outlined a new package of measures delivered through a Youth Homelessness scheme:

- *a commitment that by 2010, no 16 or 17 year olds should be placed in bed and breakfast accommodation by a local authority under the homelessness legislation, except in an emergency;*
- *improving access to homelessness mediation across the country (including*

family mediation for young people), so that there is a universal expectation of such services;

- *establishing supported lodgings schemes across the country, providing accommodation, advice and mediation services for young people who can no longer stay in the family home.*

Scope

To achieve the above objective the Task and Finish group will investigate the following areas:-

1. Establish the extent of the problem of youth homelessness.
2. To determine best practice in other local authorities
3. To contact voluntary organisations and other agencies who currently work with homeless people to determine what support they currently offer and what could be offered.
4. To make practical solutions for recommendations to any problems identified within the report.

Excluded from Task and Finish Group work

- people over the age of 25 years
- All wards outside of the Somer Valley

Outputs

To produce a report for the relevant O&S Panel (Children's Services and Safer, Stronger Communities) with recommendations which will be made available to the relevant Council Cabinet Member and/or other organisations to consider and make a response.

Constraints

- **Timescales.** Task and Finish Groups plan for 2-3 months, and aim to provide a concise and brief update of findings to a CYP Overview & Scrutiny Panel on the 21st July 2008
- **Budget.** The work must be managed within the budget available to the Panel, in consultation with the Panel Chair.
- **Process.** The investigation will be carried out in accordance with the Bath & North East Somerset Council Overview and Scrutiny processes.
- **Resource.** Project management resource is available from the Overview & Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services.

Task and Finish working group Team

Lead Task and Finish Group Councillor:	Cllr David Speirs
Task and Finish Group Members:	Cllr Nathan Hartley
	Cllr Eleanor Jackson
	Cllr Shirley Steel
	<i>Cllr Caroline Roberts</i>
Overview and Scrutiny Project Officer	Donna Vercoe

Expert advisors

B&NES Housing Officer	Zoe Curtis
Outside agencies (Off the Record)	Ian Tomlinson
(Norton Radstock College)	Barbara Chambers