

Bath & North East Somerset Council	
MEETING:	Health and Wellbeing Board
MEETING DATE:	18 September 2013
TITLE:	Draft Homelessness Strategy 2014-2018
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	
<p>List of attachments to this report:</p> <p>Appendix 1: Draft Homelessness Strategy 2014 – 2018</p> <p>Appendix 2: Homelessness Review and Evidence Base</p> <p>Appendix 3: Homelessness Strategy Communications Plan</p>	

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 Following stakeholder engagement and a review of national policy Housing Services has drafted a new Homelessness Strategy that reflects national guidance and a review of the local evidence base and priorities. This draft Strategy is now being opened up to wider public participation and to seek input and endorsement from key stakeholders including the Health & Wellbeing Board.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

- 2.1 Comment on the draft Homelessness Strategy 2014-18 attached as Appendix 1;
- 2.2 Endorse the statement on page 5 of the draft Strategy: “The Health and Wellbeing Board will champion the homelessness agenda in Bath and North East Somerset.
- 2.3 Endorse the Homelessness Strategy Communications Plan 2013, attached as Appendix 3.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The resource implications of the proposed Homelessness Strategy will be considered prior to formal agreement by the Cabinet Member.

4 THE REPORT

Why we need a Homelessness Strategy

- 4.1 In the last three years nearly 300 families and single people in Bath and North East Somerset were homeless and had a priority need to be helped to find secure and settled accommodation by the Council. The scale of homelessness would be considerably worse without a programme of early interventions and support services provided by Housing Services and a host of third sector agencies for vulnerable and non-priority need homeless people.
- 4.2 The effect of homelessness and the impact of losing a home can ripple through a family affecting everyone within it for the worse and for some single people, can ultimately lead to rough sleeping or 'sofa surfing', moving from pillar to post with no settled home from which to rebuild a life. Homelessness is closely associated with youth, mental ill health and poor health, low income, social and educational deprivation. Having an effective homelessness prevention strategy makes a big difference to many vulnerable people.
- 4.3 Having a Homelessness Strategy means that we review our interventions, plan ahead and engage with our local Homelessness Partnership to tackle the main causes of homelessness and have appropriate support in place for everyone who needs it. The government expects us to have an up to date strategy and it is a statutory responsibility to have one in place.

Timescales

- 4.4 In line with other local authorities we produce a Homelessness Strategy every five years. The new strategy covers the period 2014-2018 and it is planned to have it accepted by the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing as a Single Member Decision in December 2013.

Summary of the Strategy

- 4.5 The Strategy is closely aligned with national guidance and identifies local priorities emerging from an evidence base of local homelessness and prevention services.
- 4.6 A review and Evidence Base of local homelessness characteristics was carried out in 2013. Twelve local priorities were extracted from local trends and performance for the three financial years from April 2010 to March 2013. Activities to directly address the local priorities are incorporated into the strategy's action plan.
- 4.7 National guidance was produced by the government in 2012 and urges local authorities to focus on widening responsibility for prevention activities to all services. It sets out ten local challenges and these are built into the strategy's

action plan so that by achieving them we will deliver an improved service and aim to achieve the government's Gold Standard Service target.

Why we need further Consultation

4.8 Consultation has been carried out with internal and external stakeholders via one to one discussions, round table meetings and a conference event. A Communications Plan shows timescales and full list of stakeholders.

4.9 The proposal is to launch an open public and consultation on the Council's website for six weeks from 25th September to 6th October. The purpose of the consultation is that the effectiveness of the five year Homelessness Strategy depends on partnerships with key stakeholders and continuing work to address the equalities impacts of homelessness. The Strategy will be finalised after this wider consultation has been completed and comments from the Health and Wellbeing Board and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel have been taken into consideration. The consultation will be aimed at:

- Key stakeholders who will be invited to comment on the Action Plan and make recommendations about their contribution to it.
- Equalities Groups and stakeholders who will be invited to comment on the Strategy, Local Priorities and Action Plan and make recommendations on new equalities impacts in addition to those already identified in the Bath and North East Somerset JSNA 2012 Equalities Summary.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has not been undertaken, since the Board is being asked to comment on the draft Strategy and to endorse plans for the next phase of consultation.

6 EQUALITIES

6.1 An EqIA has not been completed for at this stage. A full equalities assessment of the proposed Homelessness Strategy will be undertaken following the proposed open public consultation and before a decision to formally adopt the Strategy.

7.1 Cabinet Member; Other B&NES Services; Stakeholders/Partners (as summarised in Appendix 3); Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer

8 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

8.1 Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Young People; Human Rights; Other Legal Considerations

9 ADVICE SOUGHT

9.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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Background papers	Making Every Contact Count (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012) Bath and North East Somerset JSNA 2012 Equalities Summary
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	