

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

13 SEPTEMBER 2017

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBOURHOODS

THE HOMELESSNESS REVIEW 2017 & HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY
CONSULTATION

1.0 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To present to Members the Homelessness Review (2017) and the Towards a New Homelessness Strategy Consultation document and subject to Member approval undertake a period of consultation to help develop a new homelessness strategy.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 **Members note and approve the Homelessness Review (2017) attached as Appendix A.**
- 2.2 **Members note, comment and approve the Towards a New Homelessness Strategy consultation document, attached as Appendix B, to be released for consultation.**

KEY ISSUES

Homelessness Review (2017)

- 3.1 A Homelessness review is the first step in developing a new Homelessness Strategy. It is a comprehensive review of homelessness and homelessness prevention undertaken in accordance with our statutory duties as set out in the Homelessness Act (2002) and good practice as set out in the *Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities* (2006). The Homelessness Review for Melton (2017) is set out in Appendix A.
- 3.2 The Homelessness Review identified the following five key issues which are set out and summarised in the consultation document;
- An increasing private rented sector with falling levels of homeownership, particularly amongst the under 35's
 - A private rented sector that does not work for those with low to moderate incomes, particularly those who need housing with more than one bedroom such as families with children

- A growing and aging population with the need for more housing of all tenures to meet population growth, including a need to increase the supply of new affordable homes to meet local needs
 - A need to prepare for new responsibilities to prevent and relieve homelessness for all households as a result of the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) which is expected to come into force in April 2018
 - A need to improve the recording of homelessness cases to improve housing intelligence and improve service delivery
- 3.3 The 'Towards a New Homelessness Strategy Consultation' document suggests four strategic priorities for the new homelessness strategy;
1. Provide enough housing of all tenures to meet local housing needs, including the need for more affordable homes to rent;
 2. Help households to meet their own housing needs and aspirations
 3. Reduce crisis presentations and support the most vulnerable
 4. Delivery an efficient and effective homelessness service, which meets local needs
- 3.4 The next step is to undertake a consultation exercise before a final homelessness strategy is drawn up for Members' consideration.

4.0 **POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The new Homelessness Strategy will have links to the following Melton Corporate Plan priorities;
- Helping to provide homes and environments that meet local needs
 - Promoting equality of opportunity and encouraging strong, healthy and resilient neighbourhoods
 - Supporting the most vulnerable to overcome disadvantage in order to live independent lives
 - Tackling the root causes of offending to create safer communities
 - To effectively manage demand delivering well-respected and value for money customer focused services with pride and efficiency

5.0 **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct implications arising from the homelessness Strategy itself, activities and actions will be delivered through existing service areas, primarily the Homelessness Budget and monitored as part of the Council's regular monitoring process.

- 5.2 The requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act (to provide an enhanced advice and assistance service to all eligible households who are homeless or are threatened with homelessness within 56 days) is likely to have financial and administrative implications for all local housing authorities. The government has announced £61m of new burdens funding for local housing authorities to implement the Act, however there are concerns that this may not cover all additional costs and the new requirements may result in an additional financial burden. These can be assessed fully when draft guidance is released on how we will be expected to meet our new duties.
- 5.3 Member have already taken pro-active steps to help meet the additional burdens that the Act's introduction is likely to introduce. Members previously approved the re-direction of £30k per annum previously identified for the Foyer project to employ an additional housing officer who will help the Council implement the Act and expand homelessness advice and assistance services.
- 5.3 The Council has also secured funding to trial new ways to help extend homelessness services ahead of the Bill's implementation as part of a Leicester and Leicestershire wide Trailblazer scheme.
- 5.4 Members are asked elsewhere on the agenda not to raise the charges for temporary Bed & Breakfast charges, due to the vulnerability of the clients that use the service. This is further impacted by the limitations and impact of the Local Housing Allowance and Universal Credit, which will result in the Council effectively subsidising this service. However, the 'Towards a New Homelessness Strategy Consultation' document proposes actions to reduce homelessness and crisis presentations and the use of B&B and thus mitigate the financial impact.
- 5.5 However, officers as part of the next steps will be undertaking a comprehensive review of all homelessness charges and this will be presented to members at the same time as the final Homelessness Strategy.

6.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS**

- 6.1 Under the Homelessness Act (2002) it is a legal requirement for the Council to have a Homelessness Strategy based on a review of homelessness in its district and it must be reviewed every five years.

7.0 **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

- 7.1 No Direct Community Safety Issues arising from this report.

8.0 **EQUALITIES**

- 8.1 Equalities considerations were an integral part of the Homelessness Review on which the Homelessness Strategy Consultation has been developed.
- 8.2 A full Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken to support the development of the Homelessness Strategy.

9.0 RISKS

L I K E L I H O O D	A	Very High				
	B	High				
	C	Significant			1, 3	
	D	Low				
	E	Very Low		2, 4		
	F	Almost Impossible				
			Negligible 1	Marginal 2	Critical 3	Catastrophic 4
			IMPACT			

Risk No	Risk Description
1	Those in need cannot access suitable housing.
2	Unable to meet the implications of the Homelessness Prevention Act
3	Increase in People becoming homeless
4	Do not have an up to date Homelessness Strategy in place

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 No Direct climate change implications have been identified in this report

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 The homelessness review has drawn of other a number of sources of data and studies that have been produced in consultation with other organisations including people who have experienced homelessness, local letting agents and public sector officers. A series of interviews was also undertaken with partner organisations to support the develop the homelessness review.

11.2 Subject to Members approval, the Homelessness Strategy Consultation Document will be subject to a formal six week period of consultation

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All wards are affected.

Contact Officer: H Rai / N Butcher
Date: 29 August 2017
Appendices: Appendix A – Homelessness Review
Appendix B – Towards a New Homelessness Strategy Consultation
Background Papers: None
Reference: X/C'tees, Council & Sub-C'tees/CSA/2017-18