

TO: EXECUTIVE
15 DECEMBER 2015

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY
Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Executive consideration of the Council's Homeless Strategy.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Executive agrees the Homelessness Strategy at Appendix A for wider consultation.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory duty to review homelessness in its areas and formulate a strategy. The Council has been working with a number of agencies who provide advice and support to homeless people to develop the homeless strategy at Appendix A.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 As the Council is required to have a homelessness strategy there is no alternative.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 Work has taken place with agencies over the last twelve months to develop a draft homelessness strategy. In addition the Council's Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Working Party have considered the strategy and contributed comments and suggestions.
- 5.2. It is recommended that the draft strategy is agreed to be subject to wider consultation. Pending any comments on the draft strategy it will be adopted.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The relevant legal provisions and issues are outlined and addressed within the main body of both the report and the strategy.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The Council allocates its financial resources through the budget process in the context of its medium term financial plan. Currently the medium term financial plan forecasts that the Council will need to make significant savings over the next few years. Over this period the Council will have to develop increased efficiency in

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service delivery whilst still responding to demographic changes, new legislation and the need to modernise services. This will require the reallocation of some of the Councils limited resources to key priorities.

In order to deliver these service changes the Council publishes a range of strategies and policies relating to many of its key services. A strategy or policy does not represent a financial commitment but, rather, sets the strategic direction of travel, subject to the level of resources that become available. These strategies also form the basis of the annual service plan which ensures that the development of the Councils services is consistent with its medium term objectives within the resource envelope that is agreed. The development of these strategies is, therefore, an important part of the Council's arrangements for helping it allocate its limited resources to maximum effect.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 Equality Impact Assessment attached as Appendix B

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 Failure to develop and implement an effective homelessness strategy will expose the Council to financial risk in terms of the cost of emergency accommodation. As homeless households are often vulnerable in other ways they draw on other Council services such as those provided by Adult Social Care and Children and Young People and Learning directorate services. Effective homeless prevention services can complement services provided to vulnerable people from a range of Council services and improve people life chances.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 The homeless forum which has met regularly to develop the draft strategy includes voluntary organisations such as Citizens Advice Bureau , Pilgrim Hearts, Berkshire Women's Aid. Registered providers of affordable housing have been involved as have a number of statutory service providers.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Regular working groups have taken place to develop the strategy.

Representations Received

- 7.3 Suggestions and comments from the Homeless Forum have been included in the draft strategy.

Background Papers

Contact for further information

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