

Item 7

REPORT TO CABINET

20th December 2007

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Housing Portfolio

Sedgefield Borough Housing Advice and Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2007 –2010

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Borough Council's first Homelessness Strategy covered the period 2003/4 – 2006/7 and was developed as a result of a new duty introduced in the Homelessness Act 2002. Since the adoption of this last Strategy, the Government has significantly changed its approach to the delivery of homelessness services with a greater focus on prevention and support.
- 1.2 The attached Sedgefield Borough Housing Advice and Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2007 –2010 has been developed to take account of the national, regional and local policy issues and priorities. The Strategy has established clear links to the Council's Housing Strategy, Corporate Plan and the Local Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy. The Strategy focuses on a range of issues but in particular building on the recent success achieved in delivering the prevention and support agenda, which have reduced the level of homelessness applications made to the Borough Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Sedgefield Borough Housing Advice and Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2007 –2010 is adopted.

3.0 Sedgefield Borough Housing Advice and Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2007 –2010

- 3.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 introduced a duty on all housing authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their area and produce a strategy to address the issues identified. The Strategy has been developed to take account of the key National, Regional and Local policy drivers. The strategy has taken account of local need using a range of data including homelessness returns and demand for housing.
- 3.2 The strategy takes a lead from the clear messages for homelessness services articulated through the Government's national approach in "*Sustainable Communities – Settled Homes, Changing Lives*".
- 3.3 To ensure a clear strategic fit with the Regional Housing Strategy's four objectives these have been adopted in developing the strategy with an emphasis on the fourth objective:-

- To **rejuvenate the housing stock** to meet 21st Century aspirations, replacing market failure with high quality housing in the right locations to help create successful, cohesive and sustainable communities.
 - To ensure the **type and mix of new housing provides choice**, supports economic growth and meets housing needs and demand. This will reflect the diversity of urban and rural communities and the needs for affordable, family and prestige housing.
 - To secure the **improvement and maintenance of existing housing** so that it meets required standards, investing in sustainable neighbourhoods.
 - To promote good management and targeted housing investment to address **specific community and social needs**, including an ageing population and the needs of minority communities; this will be integrated with the Supporting People programme and promote greater community involvement.
- 3.4 The Strategy takes account of the Council's ambitions articulated in the Corporate Plan and the vision for the Borough set out in the Local Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy. The Strategy has a clear link to the Housing Strategy for the Borough and the sub regional Housing Strategy, and this link will ensure progress is monitored.
- 3.5 The Strategy has been developed based on the key legal, policy changes and evidence-based assessments of need. This has seen the development of key priorities for action. Each priority is supported by a number of key actions set out in the strategy.
- 3.6 The delivery of the Strategy will be monitored through the Council's performance monitoring framework.

4. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The adoption of the Housing Advice and Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2007 –2010 has no direct resource implications.

5. **CONSULTATIONS**

- 5.1 Consultation has occurred with residents, partners and other stakeholders on the development of the Strategy. This has included specific consultation with the Local Strategic Partnership working group on Homelessness.

6. **OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 **Links to Corporate Objectives/Values**

The Community Strategy Outcomes include a Borough with Strong Communities where residents can access a good choice of high quality housing. The Council's ambitions, which mirror those in the Community Strategy outcomes and are articulated through the Corporate Plan and the Medium Term Financial Plan. Our ambitions include delivering a Borough with Strong Communities and the Housing Advice and

Homelessness Prevention Strategy has a direct contribution to delivering these ambitions.

6.2 Risk Management

The delivery of the discrete elements of the Strategy will be subject to appropriate risk management controls. Copies of the strategy will be available in other languages, in large print or on audio tape.

6.3 Health and Safety

There are no additional health and safety implications over and above those for existing staff of the Borough Council.

6.4 Equality and Diversity

Full account has been taken of the Borough Council's obligation to promote equity and diversity in the development of the Strategy.

6.5 Legal & Constitutional

No new implications have been identified.

7. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no overview and scrutiny implications.

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Background Papers:

Sustainable Communities Settled homes, changing lives – ODPM
Sedgefield Borough Homelessness Strategy 2003
Sedgefield Borough LSP Community Strategy
Sedgefield Borough Housing Strategy
Regional Housing Strategy
Sub Regional Housing Strategy

Examination by Statutory Officers

Yes

**Not
Applicable**

1. The report has been examined by the Councils
Head of the Paid Service or his representative

2. The content has been examined by the Councils
S.151 Officer or his representative

3. The content has been examined by the Council's
Monitoring Officer or his representative

4. The report has been approved by Management Team