



Chester-le-Street
District Council

Report to:	Full Council
Date of Meeting:	26 th July 2007
Report from:	Head of Regeneration
Title of Report:	Homelessness Strategy
Agenda Item Number:	9

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Homelessness Strategy.

Section 1(1) of the Homelessness Act 2002 gave local Authorities the power to carry out a Homeless Review and to publish a Strategy on their findings. It was required for Local Authorities to publish a Strategy by 31 July 2003. Section 1(4) requires housing authorities to publish a new Strategy based on the results of a further review within 5 years.

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 Among the parties consulted on this proposal have been:

- Stakeholders at the Housing Strategy Group
- Corporate Management Team
- Executive Committee

3. CORPORATE PLAN AND PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The implementation of the Homelessness Strategy would make a contribution in particular to:

- Priority1, Customer excellence, providing an excellent Housing Options Service accessible by all the community.

- Priority 2, Working in Partnership to deliver the Community Strategy, engaging young people in the development of services in Chester-le-street for Young People threatened with Homelessness and to develop services for victims of Domestic abuse
- Priority 4, Regenerating the District, working with partners and customers to regenerate services amongst the diverse community who may be threatened with Homelessness.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications and Value for Money Statement

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Value for Money has been a key consideration in the development of the Strategy. The Housing Strategy Steering Group will work with the Housing Options Manager to oversee the Strategy and progress on the key actions.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys are obtained from all service users to identify any areas of the service that can be improved on. In addition, an Annual Service user Focus Day is held to get customer feedback on the current service.

Prevention work is a key issue in the Housing Options Service. The team are currently promoting the service in all areas and offering training to all agencies. It is hoped that as a result of this clients will contact the service earlier enough to prevent the Homelessness and therefore reduce the risk of going through the full Homelessness process.

4.2 Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However it is a legal requirement in line with the Homeless Act 2002 to have a published Homelessness Strategy.

4.3 Personnel

There are no personnel implications arising from this report.

4.4 Risk

The risks associated with not producing a Homelessness Strategy would be:

- Not complying with the Statutory Duty of the Homelessness Act 2002
- Failure to provide the Council with a planned process for the Housing Options Team
- The deliver of the Housing Options Service would decline therefore not providing and Excellent Housing Options Service that meets the needs of the Community.

A key risk in implementation of the Homelessness Strategy will be that of managing the increase in numbers that the service has dealt with recently. However, while this is impossible to control, it can be influenced through a strategic response that involves a continued significant investment in support and prevention work.

Implementation of the Strategy will be managed and monitored by the strategic housing team in the first instance, with involvement from the Programme Management Board, and the Regeneration & Housing OSP.

4.5 Diversity

This Strategy is critically important to the council in terms of equality and diversity. This strategy aims at preventing homelessness amongst all diverse groups or households, ensuring the service we provide meets the needs of the wider community.

4.6 Data Quality

Every care has been taken in the development of this Strategy to ensure that the information and data used in its preparation are accurate, timely and comprehensive. The council's Data Quality Policy has been complied with in producing this report.

5. BACKGROUND, POSITION STATEMENT AND OPTION APPRAISAL

- 5.1 Section 1(1) of the Homelessness Act 2002 gave local Authorities the power to carry out a Homeless Review and to publish a Strategy on their findings. It was required for Local Authorities to publish a Strategy by 31 July 2003. Section 1(4) requires housing authorities to publish a new Strategy based on the results of a further review within 5 years.

Chester-le- Street published the first strategy on time and have subsequently reviewed this and have produced the proposed Strategy

- 5.2 The Strategy identifies a number of issues that are key to the future development of the Housing Options Service.

Chester-le-Street District Council has identified four key objectives that will support and deliver our vision:

- Preventing homelessness and repeat homelessness in the district
- Reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation
- Improving Support Services for Homeless Households
- Implementing Service Improvements

The Strategy seeks to:

- Identifying the groups at risk from homelessness in Chester-le-Street
- Identifying the current and likely future levels of homelessness and its causes.
- Mapping the supply of homelessness provision in the District.
- Identifying gaps in provision then work with partners to develop services and increase provision

Chester-le-Street District Council will review and update the Strategy in the future by:

- Working with partners (both internal and external) to oversee the implementation of the strategy, ensure that it is reflected within: relevant local plans and strategies and to influence commissioning decisions about services designed for or received by homeless people.
- Review available resource and ensure it is designated to the most appropriate service area
- Review our progress against the Housing Options Team Plan and report the findings to the Homelessness Steering Group, Programme Management Board, Regeneration & Housing OSP, and to the quarterly performance clinics.
- Undertake a review of the strategy during 2009, and produce our next Homelessness Strategy by the end of 2009.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Council are recommended to approve the revised Homelessness Strategy.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS / DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO

7.1 Homelessness Strategy

AUTHOR NAME	Lynn Hall
DESIGNATION	
DATE OF REPORT	9 th July 2007
VERSION NUMBER	1
AUTHOR CONTACT	Lynn Hall 0191 3872239 lynnhall@chester-le-street.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank