

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

19 July 2010

Joint Report of Director of Health and Housing and Cabinet Member for Housing

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 WEST KENT HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY: TOWARDS 2010 (2007) – PROGRESS UPDATE

Summary

In February 2010 the Strategic Housing Advisory Board endorsed for the purposes of consultation a reviewed action plan for the period July 2010-2011. Key partners and stakeholders have now been consulted, and this report presents an updated draft for final approval and implementation. It also:

- summarises progress made towards achieving the objectives set out in the original action plan 2007-2010;**
- and presents the draft timetable for the full review of the West Kent Homelessness Strategy which is due in July 2011.**

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The *West Kent Homelessness Strategy: Towards 2010* was developed in partnership with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Sevenoaks District Council, and was endorsed for adoption by Members in July 2007.

1.1.2 Members will recall that the strategy was developed to cover a three-year period, and so it would therefore have been due for a full review in July 2010. However, in July 2009 approval was given to deferring the review for one year, and proceeding instead with a refresh of the action plan.

1.2 Action Plan 2010-2011

1.2.1 Consultation on the draft action plan took place during March and April 2010 when it was made available on the web sites of each of the three authorities. Other than a few minor amendments, the action plan is unchanged and a copy is attached at **[Annex 1]**.

1.3 Action Plan 2007-2010

- 1.3.1 Progress against each objective in the action plan is summarised at **[Annex 2]**.
- 1.3.2 It should be noted that during 2008, due to the very detailed nature of the action plan, ten objectives were prioritised over and above the remaining 25. These were objectives one, three, four, six, 13, 18, 24, 25, 26 and 27. For ease of reference they are also annotated at **[Annex 2]** with an asterisk.
- 1.3.3 In terms of performance, of significant note is:
- the reduction in the number of households accepted as homeless (objective one);
 - the development and implementation of the Porchlight Schools Programme (objective three);
 - the reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation (objective 13);
 - the review of the allocations policy (objective 13);
 - the implementation of choice-based lettings and the Vulnerable Persons Strategy (objective 18); and
 - the review of the deposit bond scheme (objective 24).

1.4 Review of West Kent Homelessness Strategy

- 1.4.1 The Strategy will be reviewed in accordance with the following timescale:
- November 2010: draft strategy to Strategic Housing Advisory Board for endorsement for the purpose of consultation
 - December 2010 – February 2011: consultation with key partners, and stakeholders
 - June 2011: draft strategy to Strategic Housing Advisory Board for approval, and thereafter to Cabinet and Council.

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 The *Homelessness Act 2002* places a statutory duty on all local authorities to publish a homelessness strategy. This duty is disapplied by the *Local Authorities Plans and Strategies (Disapplication) (England) Order 2005* to local authorities that are rated as excellent. The three West Kent authorities are all rated as excellent, and as such need not publish a homelessness strategy. However, none consider the absence of a homelessness strategy to represent good practice.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.6.1 None immediate and largely within existing resources and approved budgets.

1.7 Risk Assessment

1.7.1 Failure to update the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan will compromise the Council's ability to effectively tackle homelessness.

1.8 Recommendations

1.8.1 **CABINET** is **RECOMMENDED** to:

1.8.2 **APPROVE** the West Kent Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2010-2011

1.8.3 **NOTE** the progress made in respect of the West Kent Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2007-2010

1.8.4 **NOTE** the draft timetable for the review of the West Kent Homelessness Strategy.

The Director of Health and Housing confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

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Nil

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