

# Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Corporate Director for People  
to  
**Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee**  
on  
30<sup>th</sup> January 2014

Agenda  
Item No.

**13**

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Commissioning and Housing

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## **The Southend-on-Sea Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2014-17 (Draft)**

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### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To outline the contents of the draft Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2014-2017 which reviews the current homelessness situation in Southend-on-Sea and sets out the Council and partners approach to tackling the issue.

### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 The Committee's views are sought on the Homelessness Prevention Strategy and Action Plan.
- 2.2 To endorse the Homelessness Prevention Strategy and Action Plan for final consultation with stakeholders.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 In accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002 the Council has a statutory duty to produce a Homelessness Strategy which sets out how homelessness will be prevented in the town.
- 3.2 The current Homelessness Prevention Strategy (2012-14) has come to the end of its applicability and as summarised in part 2 of the draft strategy all of the actions included within it have been achieved or will be included in the new strategy where it is an ongoing project.
- 3.4 The draft Southend-on-Sea Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2014-17 (**Appendix 1**) proposes 5 key aims to focus efforts on preventing & reducing homelessness and associated negative impacts in the town:
1. Prevent and avoid Homelessness
  2. Minimise rough sleeping
  3. Improve health and wellbeing outcomes for homeless people
  4. Encourage suitable provision of accommodation for those who are, or may become homeless
  5. Minimise youth and young person's homelessness

- 3.5 The Homelessness Prevention Strategy forms part of a wider strategic framework with the Housing Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 3.6 To deliver the strategic aims it is proposed that the Action Plan (**Appendix 2**) will be set out for an initial one year period to enable a more agile approach in light of a fast changing economic, political and legislative environment. This will enable a formal review of progress one year after adoption of the Strategy and production of a revised action plan to continue progress. It will also enable large projects to be broken down into parts over the lifespan of the strategy and fit in with the annual budget setting process at the Council and partner organisations.
- 3.7 Given the strong links between homelessness and health the Strategy and Action Plan are being reviewed by the Health and Wellbeing Board in order to gain buy-in on shared objectives from within the developing Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 3.8 There has been a consistent message from all agencies around requirement for a multi-agency panel that holds case conferences to address the needs of homeless people with a dual diagnosis or additional, complex needs e.g. our most entrenched rough sleepers. This proposal constitutes a major action within the Action Plan.

#### **4. Other Options**

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to produce a Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

#### **5. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 5.1 To fulfil the Council's statutory commitments as Homelessness Act 2002

#### **6. Corporate Implications**

##### **6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities**

- Enable well-planned quality housing and developments that meet the needs of Southend's residents and businesses
- Reduce inequalities and increase the life chances of people living in Southend
- Continue to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and adults

##### **6.2 Financial Implications**

Where there are actions from the Homelessness Prevention Strategy which identify a budgetary element/implications these will be highlighted within the Action Plan.

Targets from the action plan will be met using existing budgets where possible and where additional funding is required this is highlighted in the action plan.

If following further investigation additional funding is required to complete an action this would require authorisation through the Council's budget and policy setting process.

The Action plan will be refreshed annually to allow for a re-appraisal of resource requirements in line with annual budget setting process.

The Action plan highlights the intention to identify and apply for any external funding which becomes available as appropriate.

### **6.3 Legal Implications**

The Council has a statutory duty to develop and publish a homelessness strategy.

### **6.4 People Implications**

The strategy aims to improve the range and quality of housing and support options available to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

### **6.5 Property Implications**

None identified.

### **6.6 Consultation**

A consultation exercise was undertaken on the Aims and Actions for the strategy in order to capture key stakeholder views and help to ensure the Strategy is accepted by all delivery partners.

Consultation activity included a workshop event with stakeholders, attending associated forums with voluntary sector partners in addition to consultation via the Council's website and meetings with individual stakeholders to discuss actions.

All comments from the consultation were taken into account with some being incorporated into the Action Plan and some being incorporated in to the Strategy itself.

A final consultation meeting with stakeholders is planned in early February to receive final comments and finalise and agree ownership of actions.

The Strategy is being reviewed by the Health and Wellbeing Board on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2014 and comments from this meeting will be fed-in to the strategy.

### **6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications**

A full Equality Analysis will be completed prior to Cabinet submission.

### **6.8 Risk Assessment**

Failure to produce and implement the actions from a robust homelessness prevention strategy could have serious financial risks for the Council and partners and result in an increase in social problems in the town.

In order to ensure that the strategy is robust the strategy has been developed in partnership with and using intelligence from other agencies who deal with homelessness in Southend. The strategy is based on demonstrable evidence of

demand for homelessness services and a review of national economic and political trends which may effect demand in future.

#### **6.9 Value for Money**

The format for the Homelessness Prevention Strategy has been reviewed to ensure that bureaucratic burden is reduced to achieve Value for Money.

Targets from the action plan will be met using existing budgets and where additional funding is required this is highlighted within the action plan.

The strategy highlights opportunities for cost savings to be realised through partnership working and this will be further investigated as part of the action plan.

#### **6.10 Community Safety Implications**

A coordinated approach to tackling homeless will have a positive impact on community safety.

#### **6.11 Environmental Impact**

It is not considered that the strategy will have any notable Environmental Impact.

### **7. Background Papers**

N/A

### **8. Appendices**

**Appendix 1** The Southend-on-Sea Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2014-2017  
(Draft)

**Appendix 2** Action Plan (Draft)