

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Customer and Advice Services (Introduced by the Executive Member for Customer and Advice Services)	Executive Cabinet	10 December 2015

CHORLEY PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY AND REVIEW 2016-2019

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of the report is to set out the legal responsibility placed on the Council to carry out a review of homelessness in the borough and to publish a strategy, to provide an overview of the draft strategy and to seek approval for the consultation with partners and customers.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. It is recommended that the draft Chorley Prevention of Homelessness Strategy and Review 2016-2019 is approved for consultation purposes.
3. It is recommended that any minor changes to the Strategy following consultation are approved via an Executive Member Decision prior to publication.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

4. The Homelessness Act 2002 introduced a statutory duty on local authorities to formulate and publish local homelessness strategies. The review reflected a strong performance over the period of the previous strategy. Since 2012, homelessness presentations have reduced, homelessness preventions have increased and temporary accommodation use overall is on a downward trend as well as the elimination of 'bed and breakfast use.
5. The strategy seeks to sustain the high level of performance highlighted in the review despite the challenges faced via continued welfare reform, the possible reduction in new social housing, and further significant spending cuts to Local Authorities at all levels affecting related services.
6. With regard to the review, and expected future challenges, the following priorities were devised for the strategy along with appropriate measures to achieve them:
 - Priority 1: Working with all partners to ensure the offer of support, advice and assistance in Chorley best meets the needs of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness;
 - Priority 2: Ensure that housing supply best meets housing need;
 - Priority 3: Enhance the depth and range of Housing Options services to meet current and future challenges;

- Priority 4: Employment, training and education related to homelessness.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Key Decision? Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Reason Please bold as appropriate	1, a change in service provision that impacts upon the service revenue budget by £100,000 or more	2, a contract worth £100,000 or more
	3, a new or unprogrammed capital scheme of £100,000 or more	4, Significant impact in environmental, social or physical terms in two or more wards

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

7. The publication of a Prevention of Homelessness Strategy is a statutory requirement and the previous strategy is in need of a refresh, alongside a renewed programme of prevention measures and interventions to improve performance and meet the Councils corporate objectives.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

8. Due to the statutory nature of the Prevention of Homelessness Strategy no other options could be considered.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

9. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	X	A strong local economy	X
Clean, safe and healthy communities	X	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	X

THE REVIEW

10. The previous Prevention of Homelessness Strategy and Review was published in 2013 and is due for renewal in 2016. The Homelessness Act 2002 introduced a statutory duty on local authorities to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy following a review of homelessness. Over the period of the previous strategy there have been significant decreases in households presenting as homeless along with those accepted as statutory homeless with a duty to house. There was dramatic increase in the number of advice cases and the number of preventions. Temporary accommodation use is in a downward trend overall, and there has been no 'bed and breakfast' use since 2012/13.
11. The number of homelessness preventions rose dramatically from 214 in 2011/12 to 808 in 2014/15, and this was mirrored by the drop in statutory homeless households from 37 in 2011/12 to 1 in 2014/15. The numbers of households in temporary accommodation has dropped from an average quarterly figure of 18.5 in 2011/12 to 8.25 in 2014/15.

12. The Housing Options team's focus on preventions appears to be successful in both helping households remain in existing accommodation and obtain new accommodation. Discretionary Housing Payments and Select Move respectively are the most common prevention methods. The vast majority of the actions from the previous strategy were completed and the success factors from the previous strategy were demonstrably met which were as follows:
- Improving our service for customers;
 - Reducing the use of temporary accommodation;
 - Increasing the prevention of homelessness.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

13. As the review demonstrated strong performance in the reduction and prevention of homelessness, the focus of the strategy is to maintain this high performance even with significant future challenges such as:
- increases in housing options customers through continued welfare reform;
 - threats to new Social Housing supply due to rent changes and 'Starter Homes';
 - cuts in Local Authority funding both at District and County level.
14. From the review and with regard to future challenges the strategy set out the following strategic objectives:
- Priority 1: Working with all partners to ensure the offer of support, advice and assistance in Chorley best meets the needs of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness;
 - Priority 2: Ensure that housing supply best meets housing need;
 - Priority 3: Enhance the depth and range of Housing Options services to meet current and future challenges;
 - Priority 4: Employment, training and education related to homelessness.
15. Under each of the priorities a range of actions and several measures are listed in the action plan that are conducive to achieving and monitoring delivery against the priorities. Overall, whilst recognising the good performance related to homelessness and housing advice in the past 3 years, the Council is also acutely cognisant of the difficult future challenges, and the overall aim is to keep the Council's performance at a high level.
16. The success of the strategy and its action plan will be broadly measured against the following success factors:
1. Keeping the number of preventions consistently high – Target of 150 plus per quarter;
 2. Ensuring the number of households in Temporary Accommodation remains low, and 'Bed and Breakfast' continues to be eliminated – Target a maximum of 13 at any one time in Temporary Accommodation and nil 'Bed and Breakfast' (subject to risk).
 3. The numbers of statutory homeless households remain low – Target of no more than 10 per year.

CONSULTATION

17. If the recommendations are accepted then the draft strategy will be circulated amongst all partners and stakeholders, internal and external, be available via the website for the consultation period from 21st December 2015 to 21st February 2016 inclusive. Following consultation if minor material changes are necessary the Strategy and Review can be subject to an Executive Member Decision before it can be published. Should any major changes be required this will be brought back to Executive Cabinet for approval before publication.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

18. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	X	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	X	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	X
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

19. In the main the actions identified in appendix A will be funded from existing resources. On occasion a key action may identify an improvement to the service at an additional cost. This may be a one off cost funded by in-year budget savings or the cost may be ongoing and therefore require an increase in the base budget. Should the latter be the case a report to Executive Cabinet outlining cost and outcomes will be produced.
20. Additional costs not part of the base budget are the Employability Officer post costing £33k per annum, funding is due to finish on the 31st March 2016. In addition the funding for the 16/17 year old drop in centre project, £15k per annum, has been requested as an investment growth item in 16/17 budget setting process.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

21. The proposed strategy document discharges the Council's obligations under the legislation.

LESLEY-ANN FENTON
DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER AND ADVICE SERVICES

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Mick Coogan	5552	12/11/21015	***

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Draft Prevention of Homelessness Strategy and Review 2016/19	12/11/2015	***	***