

REPORT TO	DATE OF MEETING
Cabinet	21 st March 2012

Report template revised June 2008



SUBJECT	PORTFOLIO	AUTHOR	ITEM
Chorley and South Ribble Prevention of Homelessness Strategy and Review 2012 - 2016	Cllr Cliff Hughes	Jane Maguire	8

SUMMARY AND LINK TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This reports links to the corporate priorities of a Strong South Ribble in the heart of a prosperous Central Lancashire.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council, in order to progress the Chorley and South Ribble Council Homelessness Strategy and Review through to implementation;

- Note the contents of the draft Strategy and Review
- Gives approval for wider consultation with stakeholders and partners
- Delegates to the Director of Planning and Housing in consultation with Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Housing power to amend the draft Strategy and Review in the light of any representations made and to then implement.

DETAILS AND REASONING

Background

The Homelessness Act 2002 introduced a statutory duty on local authorities to formulate and publish local homelessness strategies. As part of this there is also a duty to review homelessness services, prevention programmes and initiatives to inform the strategic objectives.

The last review of homelessness services in South Ribble was undertaken in 2008 and a Homelessness Strategy produced to cover 2008 – 2011. National and local changes have made it timely to review the services and recommend a course of action for the next five years in relation to the delivery of homelessness services.

South Ribble and Chorley Councils currently work collaboratively on a number of housing initiatives and share best practise on housing matters. There are similarities in issues faced and therefore to build on this approach, make best use of resources, and pool expertise colleagues at both councils have worked collaboratively to produce a shared document.

The Review

A review is required to explore the current situation, outline the services that are available, provide information about homelessness, any trends and a summary of what was delivered as a result of the previous strategic action plan.

The main aims of the 2008 strategy have been achieved during the period of the strategy:

- There has been a reduction in those in temporary accommodation and a reduction in the use of bed and breakfast.
- Housing services have delivered a successful prevention and proactive homelessness service.

Trends

Homelessness presentations and acceptances have reduced since 2008, with a slight upturn experienced in 2010/11. Rough sleeper numbers which have been zero have been monitored and remained under 5.

Optimum numbers of successful prevention work took place during 2009/2010, and there is a continuing trend of prevention work taking priority rather than crisis work.

The 2 main causes of homelessness are parents/friends/relatives no longer available to accommodate, and relationship breakdown (non violent) with the main priority need being families with dependant children.

Strategic Action Plan

A summary of the main actions that have been successfully delivered are contained in the strategy, alongside those actions that we did not deliver, but have been prioritised in the new strategy.

The review outcomes have been used to identify the key priorities of the new strategy which sets out what we are going to do and the outcomes we want to achieve. The action plan is a single plan with actions that we are working together on and distinguishes specific local actions for Chorley and South Ribble.

Future challenges that the Strategy addresses

The challenges to preventing homelessness need to continue to ensure that people have access to the housing they need and prevent housing crises.

The strategy proposes that both councils deliver on the following key strategic objectives:

- 1) The provision of a high quality Housing Options service which meets the needs of all our customers
- 2) To ensure we deliver effective, timely prevention of homelessness for all cases which are preventable
- 3) To proactively target youth homelessness across South Ribble and Chorley to deliver reductions over the medium term.
- 4) To minimise the impact of welfare reform on homelessness within the boroughs.
- 5) To increase the supply of private rented properties available to those in housing need
- 6) To ensure positive outcomes following the introduction of a new social tenancy standard.

These objectives have been reached taking account of the current trends, the Localism Act and national changes and initial consultation with the partners and stakeholders at the Chorley and South Ribble Homeless Network meeting.

Consultation

Whilst there has been initial discussions with partners on the main themes of the strategy it is proposed that a consultation period of 8 weeks will be carried out with all key partners, customers and stakeholders, and an equality impact assessment undertaken. Following this work the feedback will be considered and any necessary changes made prior to the strategy being formally implemented.

Conclusion

On approval of the strategy and review a further consultation exercise will be carried out to ensure that all partners are actively involved in the key actions which will drive service improvement for the next five years.

WIDER IMPLICATIONS

In the preparation of this report, consideration has been given to the impact of its proposals in all the areas listed below, and the table shows any implications in respect of each of these.

FINANCIAL	Optimising options and prevention work can result in reducing costs for funding temporary accommodation.
LEGAL	The strategy ensures that changes will be implemented as a result of the reforms in the Localism Act, and ensures that the authority carries out a review to inform the strategy as required under the Homelessness act 2002.
RISK	

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- P1E figures
- Notes from Homelessness network June 2011
- 2008 Homelessness strategy and review