

DRAFT WEST KENT HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

Housing & Health Advisory Committee - 20 June 2017

Report of Chief Officer, Communities & Business

Status For Consideration

Key Decision No

Executive Summary: A draft West Kent Homelessness Strategy 2016-21 has been developed. Members are asked to approve the draft strategy for consultation with stakeholders and residents.

This report supports the Key Aims of providing the right support at the right time and reducing health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing for all.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Michelle Lowe

Contact Officer Hayley Brooks, Ext. 7272

Recommendation to Housing & Health Advisory Committee:

Members are asked approve the draft West Kent Homelessness Strategy for consultation with stakeholders and residents.

Reason for recommendation: The Council has a legal requirement to produce a Homelessness Strategy every five years. This Strategy delivers the homelessness priorities of this Council as part of the Sevenoaks District Housing Strategy.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Deregulation Act 2015 removed the need for local authorities to have a Housing Strategy. However, there is still a legal requirement for local authorities to have a Homelessness Strategy.
- 2 A joint West Kent Homelessness Strategy has been in place from 2011-2016 developed jointly by Sevenoaks District, Tonbridge & Malling Borough and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils. Many of the housing and homelessness issues facing local authorities are shared across West Kent and the three local authority areas have similarities in terms of housing stock and homelessness demand.
- 3 Under Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002, local authorities have a legal duty to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy every five years. With increasing numbers of households contacting the Council for homelessness

advice and assistance every year and an ongoing lack of affordable private and social rented houses, there is a need for a strategy that sets out objectives and actions to prevent homelessness.

- 4 This joint Strategy will help the three Councils work together to address and prevent homelessness, share good practice and pool resources where appropriate.
- 5 This Council has decided to deliver its own Sevenoaks District Housing Strategy which sets out the housing priorities for this District. The other two councils are delivering this Strategy as their Housing AND Homelessness Strategy and therefore it is recognised that some of the housing information provided within the Strategy and associated evidence data, may need to be amended for the purposes of Sevenoaks District.
- 6 The draft West Kent Homelessness Strategy is set out at Appendix A and the evidence data is set out at Appendix B.

Summary of the Strategy

- 7 The mission statement for the Strategy is to increase the availability of good quality affordable homes for purchase and rent whilst reducing homelessness and contributing to building the West Kent economy.
- 8 There are four key objectives for West Kent Housing Advice Teams to focus on over the next five years:
 - Improving the availability of accommodation for all and preventing homelessness;
 - Improving housing supply;
 - Improving housing standards;
 - Improving health and wellbeing.
- 9 Members are asked to approve the draft West Kent Homelessness Strategy for consultation with stakeholders and District residents before the final Strategy is brought to Members to adopt.

Key Implications

Financial

- 10 Any actions in the West Kent Homelessness Strategy will be delivered from existing Council housing budgets or sourced external funding.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

- 11 Under Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002, this Council has a legal duty to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy every five years. No other legal implications have been identified.

Equality Assessment

- 12 Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people. The results of this analysis are set out immediately below.
- 13 The strategy will provide assistance to all residents at risk of homelessness. The Equalities Impact Assessment is set out at Appendix C.

Resource (non financial)

- 14 Work and actions within the West Kent Homelessness Strategy will be delivered from existing resources.

Conclusions

- 15 A new West Kent Homelessness Strategy has been developed by the three West Kent Councils and Members are asked to agree the draft Strategy for consultation with stakeholders and District residents.

Appendices

Appendix A - Draft West Kent Homelessness Strategy

Appendix B - Draft West Kent Homelessness Strategy Evidence Data

Appendix C - Equalities Impact Assessment

Background Papers

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Chief Officer Communities & Business