

Report to Council

Subject: Joint Homelessness Strategy
Date: 13 February 2013
Author: Service Manager, Housing & Localities

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To recommend that Council approves and adopts the Joint Homeless Strategy, which was endorsed by Cabinet in January 2013.

2. Background

- 2.1 All local housing authorities in England are required by the Homelessness Act 2002 to publish a homelessness strategy every five years. Gedling's last homelessness strategy was published in July 2008, meaning it is due for renewal in 2013. The proposed strategy takes into account the views of partners, the latest best practice from across the country, and the recommendations and expectations as set out in the national homelessness document *Making Every Contact Count*, published in August 2012.
- 2.2 For reasons discussed in the strategy itself (available on the Council's website), the Council has pursued a joint strategy with Broxtowe and Rushcliffe borough councils. This will complement a new South Notts Interagency Homelessness Forum, which will improve partnership working across the three councils' areas, and will be the body which monitors progress on the action plan resulting from the strategy.
- 2.3 Consultation on the strategy commenced with an event on 3 October 2012, which was attended by around 80 people, including customer-facing staff, representatives from statutory and voluntary sector partner agencies, parish councils and members of all three councils. This led to a strategy that proposed outcomes and areas for action (see appendix 1). In the following period of consultation, which ran from 13 November 2012 to 10 December 2012, consultees were asked whether they agreed with these outcomes and areas for action, and what specific and measurable actions they could take to put them into practice. Unfortunately, at this stage, insufficient proposals for specific actions have been received. Therefore, the next stage following adoption of the strategy will be to generate an action plan through the interagency forum. It is proposed that this is an action plan that can be completed within one year, given the requirement set out in *Making Every Contact Count* to review the strategy every year, and the likelihood of needing to react to changing circumstances as changes introduced in 2013, such as welfare reform and discharging homelessness duty to the private sector, take effect.

- 2.4 The draft Homelessness Strategy was sent to all members of the Policy Review Scrutiny Group, in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules for policies that have been developed in partnership.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 It is proposed that Council approves and adopts the strategy. This will ensure the Council meets its obligations under Sections 1 to 4 of the Homelessness Act 2002, and to promote and focus effective partnership working to prevent homelessness, provide help at the point of homelessness and support the move away from homelessness.
- 3.2 The proposed strategy, and the review of homelessness which it contains, satisfy the statutory obligations and are based on best practice and extensive research and consultation. Following adoption of the strategy, the Service Manager, Housing & Localities, the Housing Strategy & Development Officer and the Housing Needs Manager will work with partners in the South Notts Interagency Homelessness Forum to generate the first action plan to implement the strategy, to cover the 2013-14 year. Further action plans will be generated in future years to respond to changing circumstances.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 Any expenditure as a result of implementing the strategy in 2013-14 can be met from existing resources. Should further resources be identified as required for future years, any development bids would be subject to the normal Budget processes.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 To recommend that Council approves and adopts the Joint Homeless Strategy

Background papers

Equality Impact Assessment

Appendices

Appendix 1 – proposed outcomes and areas for action in the homelessness strategy.

Appendix 2 - Homelessness Review and Homelessness Strategy 2013

To view the appendices, please refer to the Cabinet agenda of the 10th January 2013 on the Council's website.