
East Kent Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2014-19

To: **Cabinet – 02 April 2015**

Main Portfolio Area: **Housing and Planning Services**

By: **Cllr Richard Nicholson, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder
Housing and Planning Services**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: **All wards**

Summary: The council has a statutory duty to publish a Homeless Strategy. The existing strategy ran from 2008 to 2013 and now requires revision. Housing Services has been working jointly with East Kent councils to draft a homelessness prevention strategy. This report requests Cabinet to approve the draft.

For Decision

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 The Council has a statutory duty to publish a Homeless Strategy. The previous strategy covered the period 2008/9 – 2013/14.

1.1.1 The East Kent Homelessness Prevention Strategy is a joint response to homelessness across the districts of Thanet, Canterbury, Dover and Shepway.

1.1.2 As part of the overarching strategy, a profile for Thanet has been developed with an accompanying action plan. The draft strategy, district profile and action plan have been subject to public consultation and the results have helped to inform the final draft strategy.

2.0 The Current Situation

2.1 Under Sections 1 to 3 Homelessness Act 2002, local housing authorities have a duty to publish a homelessness strategy and to take the strategy into account in the discharge of its functions. The duty requires a review of the housing strategy at least every five years.

2.2 The previous strategy was developed as a joint East Kent strategy in partnership with Shepway, Dover and Canterbury councils and covered the period 2008/09 to 2013/14. While the Council has been relatively successful in its approach to homelessness prevention (see tables in appendix 1), we are now seeing an increased demand in this service area. As well as the wider social costs related to homelessness there are also direct costs to the Council and it is therefore important that the Council continues to work with local and strategic partners in developing a strong preventative approach to homelessness.

2.3 The strategy sets out overarching strategic objectives and priorities for the four councils but incorporates individual local authority action plans which aim to deliver outcomes linked to the priorities. This allows flexibility for local initiatives to be developed which address specific local issues. Profiles for each of the districts also provide the context within which the action plan has been developed.

2.4 This approach provides collective strength with regard to the development and sharing of best practice and facilitates joined up working arrangements with strategic partners such as Supporting People while allowing local flexibility.

3.0 **Consultation**

3.1 The draft strategy, district profile and action plan were published on our website for consultation for an eight week period, 22nd July – 19th September 2014. No comments to the content were received and the only other authority to receive comments was Canterbury, however this specifically related to their action plan.

4.0 **Options**

4.1 **To recommend the strategy, district profile and action plan** (as it is) to be adopted for the period 2014-19 – this will ensure that Thanet District Council's homeless approach is in line with that of the other authorities and allow the East Kent Homelessness Strategy to be approved in April 2015. It will allow the council to fulfil its statutory duty under s1 of the Homelessness Act 2002.

4.2 **To amend the strategy** – any amendments should be in line with legal requirements and help the council to fulfil its statutory duty. This may cause delay to the timetable (depending on the complexity of the change) as a new consultation may need to be carried out.

4.3 **Not to recommend approval or amend the strategy, action plan or district profile** - the Council would not be fulfilling its statutory duty under S1 of the Homelessness Act. Thanet would be out of step with the other participating authorities and this would impact on the overarching East Kent strategy being approved and adopted.

5.0 **Corporate Implications**

5.1 **Finance**

5.1.1 The EK Homeless Strategy itself has no financial implications. The consultation was carried out using the TDC web pages and links to the web page were emailed out to stakeholders.

5.1.2 The delivery of the action plane may have financial implications if projects are developed outside of the existing housing services programme of activity.

5.2 **Legal**

5.2.1 There are no additional legal implications which are not set out within this report.

5.3 **Corporate**

5.3.1 The Draft EK Homeless Strategy has strong links with the ethos and priorities of the Corporate Plan. In particular Priority 2 Tackling Disadvantage – "We will tackle

disadvantage across our district” and Priority 7 “We will plan for the right type and number of homes in the right place to create sustainable communities in the future.”

5.4 **Equity and Equalities**

5.4.1 Equity and equality are addressed within the strategy. The strategy does not negatively impact on any residents of the district and aims to improve and prevent homelessness situations.

6.0 **Recommendation**

6.1 That cabinet recommend the approval of the East Kent Homelessness Prevention Strategy to full council.

7.0 **Decision Making Process**

7.1 This is a key decision to go to Full Council. It is a key decision because the strategy is for the whole district and therefore affects all the wards.

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| Contact Officer: | Ashley Stacey, Strategic Housing Manager, |
| Reporting to: | Tanya Wenham, Head of Housing Services |

Annex List

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| Annex 1 | Draft EK Homeless Strategy 2014-2019 |
| Annex 2 | Thanet EK Homeless Strategy Action Plan 2014-19 |
| Annex 3 | Thanet DC District Profile |

Background Papers

| Title | Details of where to access copy |
|--------------|----------------------------------------|
| None | N/A |

Corporate Consultation Undertaken

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| Finance | Sarah Hill |
| Legal | Steven Boyle |
| Communications | Consultation –Hannah Thorpe |