




**Haringey Council**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Cabinet on 20 March 2012</b>	<b>Item Number</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Haringey's Homelessness Strategy 2012-14</b>		
<b>Report authorised by:</b>	Mun Thong Phung, Director of Adult and Housing Services   Signed: pp Date: 8 March		
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Phil Harris, Deputy Director for Community Housing Services Tel: 0208 489 4338 E-mail: phil.harris@haringey.gov.uk		
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Key Decisions</b>

**1. Describe the issue under consideration**

- 1.1. Haringey's multi agency Homelessness Strategy 2012-2014 has been finalised with the Council's partners.
- 1.2. This report describes the way in which the new Homelessness Strategy has been developed, what it is seeking to achieve and how it will be implemented.

**2. Cabinet Member introduction**

- 2.1 Tackling homelessness is one of the biggest challenges facing Haringey.
- 2.2 This three year, multi agency Strategy sets out how the Council and its partners will work together to prevent homelessness, tackle the causes of homelessness and provide better outcomes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.



- 2.3 Since the production of Haringey's last Homelessness Strategy in 2008, the Council and its partners have made considerable progress in tackling and preventing homelessness and there are now 43% less homeless households living in temporary accommodation than there were in January 2008.
- 2.4 Haringey is now facing fresh and even bigger challenges, as rising unemployment and a severe shortage of affordable housing – together with the impact of the Government's welfare reforms – threaten to undo our achievements of the past few years by increasing homelessness and making it exceptionally difficult for many residents to find and keep affordable accommodation that meets their needs.
- 2.5 Despite these immense challenges, we must ensure a joined-up approach to the way in which we meet housing need, regenerate neighbourhoods and allocate social rented housing. Only by doing this will we achieve the Council's objectives of increasing tenure mix, building sustainable and cohesive communities, and tackling health inequalities, worklessness and neighbourhood-based disadvantage.
- 2.6 This new Homelessness Strategy builds on what we have achieved and learned during the past three years and calls on everyone with an interest in housing in the borough to work together to prevent homelessness, sustain tenancies, increase the supply of affordable housing, mitigate the negative impacts of the welfare reforms and improve the life chances of people who are homeless.
- 2.7 The inclusive way in which the Strategy has been developed has ensured that it is robust and that it has captured the views of stakeholders, including service users.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
  - (a) Note the findings of the review of housing need, the outcome of the Equalities Impact Assessment and the feedback received during the consultation on the Draft Homelessness Strategy;
  - (b) Agrees the strategic priorities set out in the Homelessness Strategy 2012-14 and approves the Strategy and Delivery Plan (see **Appendix A**); and

### **4. Other options considered**

- 4.1 As local authorities are only required to undertake a review of homelessness at least once every 5 years, consideration was given to producing a 5 year Homelessness Strategy. However, this option was rejected on the grounds that, at a time of so much change and uncertainty, targets that are set for a 3 year period will be more realistic and will encourage stakeholders to work together in pursuit of those targets.



## **5. Background information**

- 5.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory obligation on all local authorities to undertake a review of homelessness in their area and, based on the findings of this review, to develop and publish a strategy to tackle and prevent homelessness.
- 5.2 The requirement to publish a Homelessness Strategy was removed for 'Excellent' Authorities following the enactment of The Local Authorities' Plan and Strategies (Disapplication) (England) Order 2005.
- 5.3 This is Haringey's third Homelessness Strategy. It has been developed by the Council and its partners, all of whom are strongly committed to providing an effective, evidence based response to one of the borough's biggest problems.

### Review of housing need

- 5.4 The development of the Homelessness Strategy 2012-14 has afforded Haringey the opportunity to carry out a review to assess how effective it has been in tackling homelessness and how well equipped it is to meet future needs.
- 5.5 On completion, the review of housing need was included in the Draft Homelessness Strategy in order that, during the consultation process, service users and other stakeholders were provided with easy access to all the information that had been used to determine the priorities in the Draft Strategy. The review is now a separate document that will be available on the Council's website.
- 5.6 Drawing on the findings of the review, the new Homelessness Strategy reiterates the need for early intervention, homelessness prevention, partnership and viable housing options. It seeks to reduce people's reliance on the homelessness legislation and social housing to meet their housing need.

### Developing the Strategy

- 5.7 Haringey's multi agency partnership approach to the development and implementation of the Homelessness Strategy 2008-11 proved very successful and was praised by the Audit Commission in May 2010.
- 5.8 The new Homelessness Strategy has been developed in partnership with service users and other stakeholders. Work started at the end of 2010 (through the various Homelessness Strategy Delivery Groups that had been in existence for a couple of years) and this was continued by a multi agency Homelessness Strategy Steering Group that was established in May 2011.
- 5.9 During a series of meetings, members of the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group identified the issues that were important to them and their service users. They also considered the issues raised by the review of housing need.



- 5.10 Following these discussions and the public consultation, it was decided that the Homelessness Strategy 2012-14 would include five key objectives (designed to meet the agreed priorities), focus on service delivery and improvement and be delivered through a series of key actions in a three year Delivery Plan.
- 5.11 Expressed as a set of stakeholder commitments, the 5 key objectives describe Haringey's aspirations and how they will be achieved:

**(1) Preventing homelessness and sustaining tenancies**

We will work proactively to prevent homelessness by intervening early, championing the development of tenancy sustainment services, and providing high quality advice and support services.

We will continue with the successful multi agency approach that we adopted for our previous strategy, and we will look for new and even more innovative ways to prevent homelessness and help tenants to sustain their tenancies and remain in their homes.

**(2) Working in partnership**

We know we cannot tackle homelessness on our own. The last 3 years have shown us how much more we can achieve by working together.

We will actively encourage a way of working that involves a joint approach to problem solving and supports the pooling of resources, the co-location of services and the sharing of information and good practice.

**(3) Mitigating the negative impacts of the welfare reforms**

We will do everything we can to mitigate the negative impacts that changes to welfare benefits will bring.

We will do this by identifying those households whose homes will be put at risk by the reforms and by working with them to prevent homelessness. To achieve this, we will work proactively with private landlords and rental agents to increase the supply of affordable private rented housing.

**(4) Increasing the availability of affordable housing**

We will maximise the supply of good quality, affordable housing and make best use of the borough's social housing stock.

We will do this by removing barriers to the private rented sector, supporting the development of new affordable housing and by freeing up social rented family and adapted homes.



## **(5) Improving the life chances of homeless people**

We are constantly reminded of the huge impact that homelessness is having on the health, education attainment, life chances and well-being of some of Haringey's most vulnerable citizens.

We will work proactively to improve the life chances of homeless people by appointing homelessness champions for health, education, employment, social care, children's services and housing.

### Implementing the Strategy

- 5.12 The Homelessness Strategy Delivery Plan has been produced in consultation with stakeholders through a multi agency Homelessness Strategy Steering Group and public consultation. It is a live document that will be reviewed and developed over the life of the Strategy.
- 5.13 Key stakeholders were invited to a workshop in January 2012 with a view to finalising the content, wording and target dates in the Delivery Plan, and to commit to the delivery of specific actions.
- 5.14 A multi agency Homelessness Forum will be established in Haringey to ensure that the actions in the Delivery Plan are implemented and that they deliver the intended outcomes in a timely manner.
- 5.15 The Forum will undertake an annual review of the Homelessness Strategy in order to consider the progress made during the year, look forward to the priorities in future years and report the results to Cabinet.
- 5.16 Annual progress reports on the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy 2012-14 will be considered by the Council's Cabinet.

### Consultation

- 5.17 Development of the Strategy has been inclusive and involved extensive consultation with service users, service providers, housing staff and other stakeholders.
- 5.18 Public consultation was carried out between August and October 2011 to capture ideas, views and feedback. This included a half day consultation event, outreach sessions, postal and telephone surveys, focus groups, forums, conferences and workshops, and use of the Council's website.
- 5.19 There was overwhelming support for the priorities, with many respondents putting forward suggestions as to the actions that would help Haringey achieve its objectives. The full consultation report is attached (see **Appendix B**).



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- 5.20 Consultation with service users and other stakeholders will continue, to ensure the successful and timely implementation of the Homelessness Strategy 2012-14.

### **6. Comments of the Chief Finance Officer and financial implications**

- 6.1 The new Homelessness Strategy 2012-14 describes the way in which the Council and its partners are proposing to tackle homelessness during the next three years.
- 6.2 There are no new resources associated with this Strategy and all improvements and initiatives will be delivered within existing budgets.

### **7. Head of Legal Services and legal implications**

- 7.1 The legal requirement to publish the Homelessness Strategy is as set out in the body of this report and the Council has carried out the appropriate consultation and will produce an Equalities Impact Assessment before approval by Cabinet.

### **8. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments**

- 8.1. The Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached (see **Appendix C**).

### **9. Head of Procurement Comments**

- 9.1. Not applicable.

### **10. Policy Implications**

- 10.1. The Homelessness Strategy 2012-14 will help to address some of the most pressing issues facing Haringey, including child poverty, community safety, educational attainment, health inequalities, poor housing conditions, worklessness and the ongoing reduction in the use of temporary accommodation.
- 10.2. The Strategy provides the necessary framework and impetus for effective partnership working and the delivery of efficiently managed and co-ordinated services for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homelessness.
- 10.3. Development of the Homelessness Strategy has been inclusive and there is widespread multi agency support for ensuring that it is implemented successfully.
- 10.4. The Homelessness Strategy will help the Council meet its key strategic priorities:
- **A safer Haringey** – tackling domestic violence and safeguarding vulnerable children and adults
  - **A healthy, caring Haringey** – tackling health inequalities, promoting independent living, enabling people to remain independent, have choice



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and control over their lives, whilst protecting the vulnerable. Improving the quality of housing and addressing homelessness.

- **A thriving Haringey** – addressing child poverty, meeting housing need.
- **Delivering high quality, efficient services** – delivering customer focused, cost effective services that are responsive to people's needs, producing increased satisfaction reflected in a high performing organisation that delivers value for money.

## **11. Use of Appendices**

Appendix A – Haringey's Homelessness Strategy  
and Delivery Plan 2012-14

Appendix B – Consultation report

Appendix C – Equalities Impact Assessment

## **12. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

Haringey's Review of Housing Need 2011