



Haringey Council

Agenda item:

Cabinet

On 15 July 2008

Report Title: **Haringey's Homelessness Strategy 2008-11**

Forward Plan reference number (if applicable) **53**

Report of: **Director of Urban Environment**

Wards(s) affected: **All**

Report for: **Key Decision**

1. Purpose

1.1 To approve Haringey's Homelessness Strategy 2008-11.

2. Introduction by Cabinet Member

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 Haringey is committed to halving the number of households in temporary accommodation by March 2010. This strategy will play a significant part in helping us to achieve that target.

3. Recommendations

3.1 That Cabinet approve Haringey's Homelessness Strategy 2008-11; and

3.2 That Cabinet delegate, to the Cabinet Member for Housing, the authority to approve any minor amendments to the Strategy that he considers reasonable in the light of feedback received during consultation with stakeholders.

Report Authorised by: **Niall Bolger, Director of Urban Environment**

Contact Officer: Phil Harris, Assistant Director for Strategic and Community Housing

4. Chief Financial Officer Comments

- 4.1 The financial implications arising from the Homelessness Strategy are detailed in the body of the report at paragraph 8. One of the main thrusts of the Strategy is to achieve the Government's Homelessness targets and halve the use of Temporary Accommodation numbers by March 2010 as set out in the Temporary Accommodation Reduction Plan. The costs related to this can currently be contained within existing approved financial plans as indicated at paragraph 8 of the report.
- 4.2 However, there are some other improvement initiatives within the strategy that require additional resources and these can only be implemented once the costs in relation to these have been properly quantified and extra funding has been clearly identified either from external sources or as part of the Council's financial planning process.

5. Head of Legal Services Comments

- 5.1 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report, and makes the following comments.
- 5.2 The Homelessness Act 2002 (the Act) places a statutory obligation on all local authorities to undertake a review of homelessness, and produce a new homelessness strategy at least once every five years which takes account of results of the review. In the case of this Council, the new strategy has to be in place by 31st July 2008.
- 5.3 The Act prescribes that the strategy is to be designed so as to enable the Council to have in place measures which will:
- prevent homelessness in the borough
 - ensure that sufficient accommodation is available for people in the borough who may become homeless
 - provide advice and support to those who may become homeless or who are currently homeless and are in need of support to prevent them from becoming homeless again.
- 5.4 The Head of Legal Services advises that the draft strategy meets the requirements

set out in 5.3 above.

- 5.5 In view of time constraints, coupled with statutory requirement to consult on the strategy prior to it being adopted, the Head of Legal Services also supports the recommendation for Cabinet to give delegated authority to the Director of Urban Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to approve minor amendments to the strategy in light of feedback received.

6. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 6.1 The key documents and strategies used to support the development of the new Homelessness Strategy include the following:

- Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2016
- Local Area Agreement
- Housing Strategy (revised version) 2007-2008
- Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008
- Supporting People Strategy 2005 – 2010
- Safer Communities Strategy & Anti Social Behaviour Strategy
- Children and Young People Plan 2006 – 2009
- Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
- Diversity and Equality Framework
- London Housing Strategy 2007 -2010

7. Strategic Implications

- 7.1 Haringey's Homelessness Strategy supports the Sustainable Community Strategy and the delivery of the Local Area Agreement by helping to address some of the most pressing issues facing the borough, including child poverty, community safety, educational attainment, health inequalities, poor housing conditions, worklessness and the planned reduction in the use of temporary accommodation.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 Development of the Homelessness Strategy has been inclusive and there is widespread multi agency support for ensuring that it is implemented successfully. The appointment of Homelessness Champions, together with the endorsement of the Integrated Housing Board, will ensure the Strategy is owned by stakeholders.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The financial implications are described in paragraphs 4.1 – 4.6, above.

9. Legal Implications

9.1 Publication of Haringey's Homelessness Strategy 2008-11 by the end of July 2008 will ensure the Council's compliance with the Homelessness Act 2002. A failure to meet this deadline would leave the Council exposed to the risk of successful challenge by way of judicial review for breaching the statutory obligation to have a new strategy in place every five years.

10. Equalities Implications

10.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken in the course of the development of the new Homelessness Strategy.

11. Consultation

11.1 Development of the Strategy has been inclusive and involved extensive consultation with service users, service providers, housing staff and other stakeholders.

11.2 Postal and telephone surveys, focus groups, forums, conferences and workshops are just some of the methods that were used to capture ideas, views and feedback.

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

12. Background

12.1 Development of the Homelessness Strategy has afforded the opportunity for Haringey to review how effective it has been in tackling homelessness and to assess how well equipped it is to meet future needs.

12.2 Drawing on the findings of a review of homelessness, Haringey's new Homelessness Strategy emphasises the need for early intervention, homelessness prevention and partnership. It also seeks to reduce people's reliance on the homelessness legislation and social housing to meet their housing need.

12.3 Unlike most other local authorities, Haringey has chosen to produce a three year Homelessness Strategy. As well as ensuring that everyone focuses on the task in hand, the three year timescale reflects the fact that, in halving the Council's use of temporary accommodation by March 2010, the Strategy will transform not just the housing situation in Haringey but also the quality and effectiveness of partnerships.

Key strategic objectives

- 12.4 The Homelessness Strategy identifies nine key strategic objectives that meet local and national strategic priorities, and focus on service delivery and improvement.
- 12.5 Expressed as a set of stakeholder commitments, the nine key objectives describe Haringey's aspirations and how they will be achieved:
- (1) We will actively support and promote a partnership approach to preventing homelessness
 - (2) We will invest in early intervention and effective homelessness prevention
 - (3) We will increase the supply of affordable homes
 - (4) We will provide choice and encourage independence
 - (5) We will halve, by March 2010, the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation
 - (6) We will improve the quality and suitability of temporary accommodation
 - (7) We will work proactively to safeguard children and vulnerable adults
 - (8) We will improve customer service, involvement and satisfaction
 - (9) We will ensure that our policies and procedures are fair, transparent and widely understood

Implementation of the Homelessness Strategy

- 12.6 Responsibility for ensuring the successful and timely implementation of the Strategy will rest with the Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group which will comprise key stakeholders and will report directly to the Integrated Housing Board.
- 12.7 The primary mechanism for delivering the actions in the Action Plan will be the nine themed delivery groups:
- Communications
 - Partnership
 - Customer Experience
 - Children, Young People and Families

- Vulnerable Adults
- Homelessness Prevention and Tenancy Sustainment
- Housing Options
- Temporary Accommodation
- Training, Education and Skills

12.8 Each delivery group will have its own terms of reference and will be accountable for ensuring that those parts of the Action Plan that are allocated to them are implemented successfully and on time.

12.9 Complementing the work of the Council's own Service Improvement Groups, the delivery groups will produce a short delivery plan for each part of the Action Plan. Membership will reflect Haringey's multi agency approach to tackling homelessness.

A fresh approach

12.10 The new Homelessness Strategy demands a fresh approach to the way in which everyone in Haringey tackles and prevents homelessness.

12.11 With its emphasis on multi agency working, implementation of the Homelessness Strategy will ensure that all of the key issues are discussed and addressed.

12.12 To make a meaningful impact on the number of homeless people who are not in education, employment or training, homelessness services will be aligned with Jobcentre Plus, the employment advisers and the Haringey Guarantee.

12.13 The creation of a homeless households support service (comprising the network of people whose work involves regular contact with homeless people in temporary accommodation) will ensure that service users receive consistent messages and are kept fully informed about services, initiatives and their move-on options.

12.14 More than ever before, service users will be actively consulted and involved in designing, monitoring and improving the services provided for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

13. Conclusion

13.1 With its ambitious Action Plan, the Homelessness Strategy has the potential to completely transform Haringey's housing and homelessness services.

13.2 Given the impact that homelessness is having on the health, educational attainment, life chances and well-being of Haringey's residents, it is essential that everyone in the borough does everything they can to assist its implementation.

14. Use of Appendices / Tables / Photographs

14.1 Appendix: Draft Homelessness Strategy 2008-11