

Council



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018	
Report No:	COU/FH/15/010	
Report to and dates:	Cabinet	17 February 2015
	Council	27 February 2015
Portfolio holder:	Rona Burt Planning, Housing and Transport 01638 712309 rona.burt@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Simon Phelan Head of Housing 01638 719440 simon.phelan@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	<p>The Strategy sets out what the West Suffolk councils, along with their partners, will do over the next three years to address and prevent homelessness, ensuring that there is sufficient suitable temporary accommodation and support for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.</p> <p>The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all Councils to produce a Homelessness Strategy at least every five years.</p>	
Recommendation:	RECOMMENDED: That the West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018 as contained in Appendix A to COU/FH/15/010 be adopted.	
Key Decision: (Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p><i>The decision made as a result of this report will be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until seven working days have elapsed. This item is included on the Decisions Plan.</i></p>		

<p>Consultation:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders have been consulted as part of the Homelessness Review and their views have been incorporated in developing the draft strategy. The strategy has been subject to a six week stakeholder and public consultation from 10th December 2014, ending on 21st January 2015. Revisions to the Strategy as a result of the consultation process are detailed in 1.4 of the Key issues section at the end of this report
<p>Alternative option(s):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not to produce a strategy. However the Council would be in breach of its statutory requirements.
<p>Implications:</p>	
<p>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcomes of the strategy should result in overall savings to West Suffolk by: Eliminating the use of costly Bed & Breakfast. The Councils spent £220,000 in 2013/2014 on Bed & Breakfast. This figure is expected to reduce to £130,000 in 2014/2015. Increasing the numbers of successful homeless prevention cases, so reducing the need for costly homelessness assessments. Research from the homelessness charity, Shelter, indicates the cost to a Local Authority per homeless prevention case is £826 and the minimum cost of a homeless case is £2112.
<p>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not to produce a strategy would mean that the Council would be in breach of its statutory requirements.
<p>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality Impact Assessment attached.

Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Non-engagement of Partners	Medium	Development of multi-agency partnerships	Low
Insufficient Temporary Accommodation	Medium	Provide identified re-provision of temporary accommodation	Low
Ward(s) affected:		All	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		None	
Documents attached:		Appendix A - West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018 Appendix B - West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy - Equality Impact Assessment	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

1.1 This Strategy will support priorities set out in West Suffolk's Strategic Plan. In particular:

- Priority 2: Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active
- Priority 3: Homes for our communities

1.2 Councils are required to carry out a homelessness review of their area and produce a strategy to:

1. Address the causes of homelessness in the area.
2. Introduce initiatives to prevent homelessness wherever possible.
3. Provide sufficient temporary accommodation for those households that are or may become homeless.
4. Ensure that appropriate support is available for people who have previously experienced homelessness in order to prevent it happening again.

1.3 This is the first joint West Suffolk Homelessness Strategy. Previously Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council had their own.

1.4 Revisions made to the Strategy following Consultation.

1.4.1 In Section 5 (Providing sufficient temporary accommodation for those households that are or may become homeless), of the Strategy the line "*We will continue to monitor the need for temporary accommodation and influencing factors such as projected population growth and economic deprivation to ensure sufficient ongoing provision*" has been added to recognise that the location and type of accommodation may need to vary in the medium to long term.

1.4.2 In Section 5 the profile of proposed temporary accommodation has been revised to include an accommodation unit for larger families, previously not catered for in the Strategy. The profile has also been changed from specifying what type of accommodation should be provided eg: 2 bed flat, to the suitability of accommodation for the size of household to reflect that the accommodation could be any one of a number of property types, shared facilities, flat or house.

The total number of accommodation units remains the same at 46.

The following page shows the proposed provision of temporary accommodation profile before and after consultation.

Proposed Profile of Temporary Accommodation Provision

Before consultation

Area	A room with shared facilities	Studio/1 bed Flat	2 bed Flat	3 bed Flat
Brandon		6	2	
Newmarket			10	
Haverhill		3	7	
Mildenhall	3			
Bury St Edmunds	10		5	
Total	13	9	24	0

After consultation

Accommodation suitable for Household size	Single person/ couple	Family unit upto 4 people	Family unit, 5 or more people
<i>Brandon</i>	6	2	
<i>Newmarket</i>		10	
<i>Haverhill</i>	3	7	
<i>Mildenhall</i>	1	2	
<i>Bury St Edmunds</i>	7	7	1
Total	17	28	1