

This item has been withdrawn

Scrutiny Committee – 30 July 2013

7. Countywide Homelessness Strategy

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Purpose of the report

To present the draft Countywide Homelessness Strategy following considerable development work from members of the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish group. Please note that the draft strategy will be circulated separately.

Action required

That Scrutiny Committee consider the revised draft Countywide Homelessness Strategy in advance of it being circulated to the other Somerset Scrutiny Committees for consideration.

Report

Scrutiny committee agreed early this year that the best way to consider the revised Countywide Homelessness Strategy was to set up a Task and Finish group that could work in collaboration with representatives from the other Somerset authorities to ensure the strategy:

- Provides a clear vision that will work for each authority
- Strives to make the most of all the Councils having a common approach.
- Is suitably ambitious
- Clearly identifies appropriate actions and responsible parties to effectively deliver what is required over the term of the strategy.

Task and Finish Group members: Carol Goodall, Graham Middleton, David Norris, Sue Steele, Colin Winder and Derek Yeomans

The group members agreed to aid and assist the policy development process and collectively set out the following ambitions:

To ensure the strategy:

- Is well informed (based on relevant and up to date evidence)
- Is accessible, uses plain English.
- Is both realistic and ambitious
- Will work in harmony with other existing policy and strategy for South Somerset and the Council Plan.
- Seeks to build on the strengths of the partners
- Has an appropriate Action plan to realise the Aims within the Strategy
- Has given due regard to equalities

- Addresses each authority's individual needs while looking to share knowledge, expertise and skill to deliver good practice and effective solutions.

At the time of writing this report members of the Task and Finish group have met on three occasions:

- 20th May 2013 The Group agreed ambitions and assessed the Aims of the Strategy and allocated areas of the strategy to review.
- 28th May 2013 The group discussed their findings and compared the Somerset approach and Strategy to other authorities.
- 24th June 2013 The group worked with the SSDC Housing and Welfare Manager to streamline the aims, reduce repetition in the strategy and review the statistical information in the strategy.

The recommendations of the Task and Finish group to the SSDC Housing and Welfare Manager and Homeless Managers across the County were:

- Re-organise the document so that it is succinct and tells a story, separating the supporting evidence for the rationale of the Strategy
- Remove duplication across the different aims and the supporting text, reducing the overall number of ambitions
- To simplify the English, making it more user friendly and accessible to those without Housing expertise
- Explain any technical terms in a glossary
- Only provide up-to-date and relevant statistics - replace some of the national statistics with local countywide statistics and reduce the period some of tables and graphs were illustrating.
- To use the same key for each graph so it is easier to identify each authority in isolation throughout the strategy

The group provided examples and suggestions for each of the recommendations.

The group are scheduled to meet again on Wednesday 24th July to discuss the outcome of the recommendations, and the draft strategy will be circulated separately following the meeting.
