



To: Executive Councillor for Housing : Catherine Smart  
Report by: Director of Community Services  
Relevant scrutiny committee: COMMUNITY SERVICES 15<sup>th</sup> January  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2008  
Wards affected: All

## **Cambridge City Council Homelessness Strategy 2009-2012 Key Decision**

### **1. Executive summary**

The purpose of this report is to present Cambridge City Council's new Homelessness Strategy 2009-2012 and to seek its approval and adoption by the Executive Councillor for Housing. This Strategy replaces and pulls together into one document what were formerly two separate strategies : The Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008 and the Single Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Strategy 2006-2009. The new overarching strategy will provide the framework and strategic direction for tackling homelessness and improving services in partnership with a wide range of partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors and, where possible, in consultation with service users.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

To approve and adopt the strategy and the key objectives contained within the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2009-2012 appendix .

### **3. Background**

Since 2003 the City Council has had two strategies that focus on homelessness issues. The Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008 and the Single Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Strategy 2006-2009. As both these strategies were ending in 2008/9 an opportunity has presented itself to consider the best way to structure and deliver key future homelessness initiatives in the City.

As Cambridge is rated as an "excellent" authority it is exempted from the legal duty to produce a new Homelessness Strategy. However, there are obvious benefits in having a document that clearly sets out the direction of travel the Council will take with its partners in addressing homelessness

across the City so it is seen as desirable to have strategy in place. Rather than continue with the old delivery model of two separate strategies, one focussing on rough sleepers and single homelessness, and the other on “statutory homelessness” (ie homeless families and other households that the Council have a statutory duty assist with accommodation) a decision was taken, in consultation with partners, to pull the two strategies together into an overarching Homelessness Strategy 2009-2012 that would cover both single homelessness and rough sleeping and “statutory homelessness”. This approach will minimise duplication of work where an agency or individual might have been expected to attend a number of meetings around similar objectives contained within the separate homelessness strategies.

Having one overarching strategy in place recognises that the causes of homelessness such as family breakdown, debt, domestic violence, eviction, ill health or loss of employment are applicable across all client types as indeed are the detrimental results of homelessness on the individual or household.

Following extensive consultation with partners and service users a new Homelessness Strategy has been produced and is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

The new strategy is built around 4 key themes :

- Temporary Accommodation
- Homelessness Prevention
- Access to longer term housing options
- Sustaining settled lifestyles & tackling social exclusion

Each theme identifies a number of key priorities under which are a number of objectives with clearly identified SMART targets and milestones aimed at delivering those key priorities. There is also an assessment within each identified objective whether there is an opportunity for service user involvement and issues around equality and/or diversity. The objective also identifies any risks and value for money aspects relevant to the delivery of that objective.

Consultation with key stakeholders and partners has been undertaken when deciding what the key priorities and objectives should be contained within the Action Plan. This process has included 4 consultation events which focussed on seeking the views of service users and homeless, or ex-homeless, individuals.

The Strategy proposes a new model for implementing the Action Plan and for future partnership working required to successfully deliver the key priorities and objectives. The proposed model consists of an Executive

Group and a Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group (similar to existing structures) along with 4 themed Task Groups each focussing on one of the key themes ~ temporary accommodation; homelessness prevention; longer term housing options or sustaining settled lifestyles.

The Task Groups will work to individual action plans and timescales and report progress through to the Implementation Group which will meet quarterly. The Executive Group will meet 6 monthly and review overall progress against the strategy Action Plan. A brief terms of reference for each of the groups is contained within the Strategy.

The Strategy also indicates the relevant linkages with other strategies and partnerships that need to be established and maintained to ensure effective and joined up delivery of the Action Plan. Many of these important linkages are already in place through the successful delivery of the existing homelessness strategies.

#### **4. Implications**

The successful delivery of the Strategy will help tackle disadvantage and social exclusion faced by vulnerable groups at risk of homeless. The Action Plan focuses on equality and diversity to ensure these factors are addressed in the delivery of key priorities and objectives.

Effectively tackling homelessness and rough sleeping will have community safety benefits as this may result in less street based anti-social behaviour.

Successful implementation of the Strategy will require taking advantage of funding opportunities that may present themselves in order, for example, to commission new services, and consideration of current spending priorities in this area and, where appropriate, a willingness to redirect resources to meet key priorities.

#### **5. Background papers**

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Feedback from consultation events

The Homelessness Strategy 2003~2008

The Single Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Strategy 2006~2009

#### **6. Appendices**

Appendix 1 : The Homelessness Strategy 2009~2012

#### **7. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

Author's Name: David Greening  
Author's Phone Number: 01223 457946  
Author's Email: [david.greening@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:david.greening@cambridge.gov.uk)