

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 5 November 2015

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, People & Economy

**PORTFOLIO:** Physical Environment

**SUBJECT:** Halton Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 2018  
Annual Review

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To inform the Executive Board of the annual review of the Homelessness Strategy 2013/18, and to seek approval for the attached amended action plan for the period 2015/18.

**2.0 RECOMMENDED; That Executive Board agree the Homelessness Strategy 2013/18 annual review, and amended action plan. The consultation report outlines the content, findings, key challenges, objectives and priorities for the period 2015/18.**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 In accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002, the Local Authority conducted a full Strategic Review of Homelessness within the area and formulated a Homelessness Strategy plan over five year period for 2013/18.

3.2 As part of the Homelessness Strategy implementation, it was agreed that the Strategic Action Plan would be reviewed annually.

3.3 A consultation event was held in June 2015, to review the Strategic Action plan and which involved active engagement with all partner agencies, service providers and Members.

3.4 The review provided clear direction for preventing and addressing Homelessness within Halton and reflects the relevant factors known to effect future homelessness. It also highlights the identified actions completed during the last financial year and new tasks added to ensure the action plan remains current and reflects legislative and economic changes.

3.5 Furthermore, it was determined that the Council would be able to continue to reduce the length of stay for clients within temporary

accommodation and the associated costs. Additionally, the Council will strive to avoid future use of B&B accommodation.

3.6 Welfare Reform changes introduced as part of Localism Act 2011 will influence future changes within housing and homelessness. Benefit changes affecting single people and couples will have significant pressures on the Local Authority and Housing providers. It is anticipated that welfare reform and recent legislative changes will result in a future increase in the levels of homelessness across the district.

3.7 Halton is fully committed and focused upon Health Care and service provision for vulnerable homelessness clients. The action plan identifies that further integration between CCG, Public Health and Homelessness will enable the Authority to develop a holistic approach, thus offering a more flexible and accessible service to vulnerable clients and achieving positive and sustainable outcomes.

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Localism Act 2011 will have future policy implications and will impact upon future housing provision and allocation of accommodation.

4.2 The policy and action plan will reflect the priorities shown within the Authority's local strategic plans.

4.3 Upon considering the strategic action plan, weight was given to the fact that the Homelessness Strategy already promotes integration between Health, Social Care and Children's Services to prevent homelessness.

#### 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The financial implications of delivering the annual Strategic Review are outlined within the amended action plan for 2015/18.

#### 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### 6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Homelessness can have an adverse impact on the wellbeing of children and young people with educational attainment being affected by adverse residential mobility. The prevention focus of the Strategy will ensure that families with children are given priority and assisted swiftly to ensure minimal disruption. In addition, the Strategy recognises that homelessness amongst young people within Halton is a particular problem and therefore includes priorities to strengthen joint working to ensure the group is provided with the

most appropriate support by the relevant agencies.

## **6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

The lack of a settled home can adversely impact an individual's ability to find and sustain employment. The Strategy review will focus on homelessness prevention that allows people to remain in their homes wherever possible.

## **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

The Strategy Review places emphasis on the links between Health and homelessness and one of the objective aims is specifically focused on improving this area. Therefore, implications contained within the action plan will have positive implications for the health and wellbeing of those experiencing homelessness.

## **6.4 A Safer Halton**

Criminal activity can be both a cause and consequence of homelessness. It is also identified that homeless prisoners are more likely to re-offend following release than those who have settled accommodation. This is also a priority area to improve joint working with the Police and Probation services to address the growing housing need for offenders.

## **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

The presence of rough sleeping can have a negative impact upon the environment and the Strategy Review seeks to continue to ensure that this does not pose an issue for Halton.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The Department of Communities and Local Government Homelessness Grant funding makes an important contribution to the delivery of a range of homelessness services within Halton. The grant allocation for 2015/16 has been awarded with a slight reduction of approximately £2,000. If this grant continues to reduce or ceased completely, this would have an adverse effect upon service delivery and performance and further reduce the range of housing options available to clients to prevent homelessness.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The Strategy Review includes priorities targeted at providing support for those who are vulnerable or have complex needs and other marginalised groups such as young people and offenders.

9.0 **REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

Local Authorities are required to produce a strategy in accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002.

10.0 **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

No alternatives were considered as a strategy was required to establish the key challenges, objectives and priorities for tackling homelessness in Halton over the coming years.

11.0 **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

November 2015.

12.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Halton Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 2018 Executive Board 13/03/14	Municipal Building	Director of Adult Social Services