

# REPORT TO CABINET

**REPORT OF: GOOD HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

**REPORT NO: HST41**

**DATE: 2 JULY 2012**

<b>TITLE:</b>	Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy 2012-2016	
<b>KEY DECISION</b>	Key Decision	
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER: NAME AND DESIGNATION:</b>	Councillor Terl Bryant Good Housing Portfolio Holder	
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Ian Richardson – Interim Head of Housing & Neighbourhoods 01476 406063 Email: <a href="mailto:i.richardson@southkesteven.gov.uk">i.richardson@southkesteven.gov.uk</a>	
<b>INITIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT:</b>	Carried out and Referred to in paragraph (7) below:	Full impact assessment Required:
<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	Carried out by West Lindsey District Council on behalf of the County Homelessness Strategy Group and attached at Appendix 3	No
<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT:</b>	This report is publicly available via the Your Council and Democracy link on the Council's website: <a href="http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk">www.southkesteven.gov.uk</a>	
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy Review <a href="http://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-strategy/homelessness-strategies?tab=downloads">http://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-strategy/homelessness-strategies?tab=downloads</a>  Presentation to SKDC Communities Policy Development Group 18 May 2012	

## 1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 That Cabinet adopt the Lincolnshire County Homeless Strategy 2012-16.

## **2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 2.2 To inform Cabinet of the background to, and content of, the Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy 2012-2016 and action plans; and to request its adoption to satisfy the statutory requirement placed on us under the Homelessness Act 2002.

## **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

- 3.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires that all local authorities carry out a review of homelessness in their areas and formulate and publish a strategy based on the findings. South Kesteven, along with the 6 other Lincolnshire districts, have done this collectively since 2003. This latest strategy will be the third one produced together.

- 3.2 In June 2008 Cabinet adopted the Countywide Homelessness Strategy for 2008-2012 in which the key aims were:

- To increase access to different types of good quality accommodation
- To prevent homelessness through early intervention and support services
- To work in partnership to ensure that we are getting services right

- 3.3 In the lifetime of the current strategy the district of South Kesteven has seen the direct benefit of:

- A continuous floating support service for 130 households funded by Supporting People
- The provision of a 6 bed direct access hostel for single homeless funded by Supporting People
- Foyer status for the Young Persons scheme in Grantham; enabling the provision of practical advice & support on housing matters, education, employment and training; helping to equip residents with the appropriate independent living skills in preparation for move-on at a later date

- 3.4 Countywide there have been additional services (accessible by SKDC customers) covering 'Nightstop', provision for Rough Sleepers, mother and baby units, supported housing, provision for youth homelessness and homelessness prevention schemes delivered through agencies such as Nacro, Probation Service, Addaction and Mental Health Services.

- 3.5 For customers of all Lincolnshire County Districts there has been a greater consistency in service delivery and access as a consequence of the 'joined up' approach provided by the Countywide strategy.

- 3.6 In late 2011 the Lincolnshire County Homeless Strategy Group (made up of the 7 districts along with a wide range of other stakeholders) carried out a review; to establish the extent of homelessness across the county; to

identify what is currently being done and by whom, and what levels of resources are available to tackle and prevent homelessness.

- 3.7 Having undertaken this review, there is now a clearer picture of homelessness and its associated problems which underpins a new 5 year homelessness strategy.
- 3.8 The full review document runs to 119 pages. The emerging themes for the new strategy which have been developed in partnership with the other stakeholders & service users and having regard for wider sub-regional and regional plans are:
  - Partnership Working
  - Prevention
  - Young People
  - Welfare and Policy Reform
  - Rough Sleeping
- 3.9 Detailed actions and deliverables relating to these themes are attached to this report in Appendices 1 & 2.
- 3.10 These themes were relevant and consistent for all the Lincolnshire districts; the reasons for homelessness are, with only a few exceptions, the same for all. There are differences in relation to volumes and size within the themes e.g. rough sleeping is more prevalent in Boston; SKDC have greater numbers of owner occupiers which results in more activity in mortgage repossession work; East Lindsey has increased demand from the travelling community; Lincoln has a greater number of prison leavers trying to access housing.
- 3.11 That said the themes are wide ranging and reflect the needs and requirements of each of the Districts.
- 3.12 The County Homelessness Group is well supported by Regional and Sub-Regional advisors and has received a number of accolades as a good practise model.
- 3.13 Communities and Local Government (CLG) funding totalling approximately £700k has also been secured; both to build on and develop County-wide services and deliver many of the actions within the strategy. For SKDC's part much will be embraced as part of a business as usual approach facilitating better and more consistent customer access & information plus a more effective use of resources.
- 3.14 The funding from CLG covers:
  - £70k for a Countywide Youth Homelessness Co-ordinator and funding towards the annual schools theatre tour

- £50k for an initial Rough Sleeping Service for Lincolnshire & Rutland. This service has recently received a further award of £247k covering 3 more years
- £15k for joint training on responsibilities towards homeless 16/17 year olds for district council housing and County Council children's services officers
- £259k for Lincolnshire & Rutland district councils to develop a range of initiatives for single homeless people; these are included in the strategy action plan and have been approved by CLG

3.15 The overall homelessness strategy does not commit SKDC to any further expenditure other than that it is already expending from its £106k annual Homelessness Prevention funding from CLG.

#### **4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 None. All local authorities are required by the Homelessness Act 2002 to produce a Homelessness Strategy.

#### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The strategy has been developed by the 7 Lincolnshire District Councils. The cost of employing an officer to co-ordinate the strategy is £3,800 per District per annum.

5.2 This, and any actions within the strategy, (with a cost for SKDC) will be funded by Homelessness prevention grant. Many actions will be dealt with through a business as usual approach for SKDC as Homelessness and Housing advice is a statutory function.

#### **6. RISK AND MITIGATION (INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY AND DATA QUALITY)**

6.1 None arising from this report. SKDC does, however, have open ended statutory obligations under homelessness legislation which must be met e.g. provision of emergency accommodation; discharge of homelessness duty.

#### **7. ISSUES ARISING FROM EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 An assessment has been undertaken by the County Homelessness Group to ensure proposed actions meet any legal obligations and are in line with Councils' Equality Policies. The report is attached at Appendix 3. There are no major changes proposed.

#### **8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 None specific to this strategy. Certain actions within the strategy relate to customers who may be prisoners, prison leavers or ex-offenders.

## **9. COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES**

- 9.1 It can be confirmed that SKDC is receiving a grant allocation of £106,470 for Preventing Homelessness for 2012/13. For information, Boston Borough Council is the administering authority for the allocation of £259,000 awarded to the County Group for Single Homelessness and Rough Sleepers service.

## **10. COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

- 10.1 Under the *Homelessness Act 2002* all housing authorities must have in place a homelessness strategy based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their district. The first strategy was required by July 2003 and it must be renewed at least every 5 years (unless this duty has been disapplied by the Local Authorities *Plans and Strategies (Disapplication) (England) Order 2005*). The social services authority must provide all reasonable assistance.
- 10.2 Department of Communities and Local Government Homelessness code of guidance states that the strategy must set out the local authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support are or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

## **11. APPENDICES**

- APPENDIX 1 Homelessness Strategy 2012-2016
- APPENDIX 2 Strategy Action Plan 2012/2016
- APPENDIX 3 Equality Impact Assessment