

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

**MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE
21st JULY 2003**

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING SERVICES

**NAME OF WARD(S)
ALL**

REPORT TITLE: Homelessness Review & Strategy

Above

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Below

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For: Action / Information

Confidential Line

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Members with the Homelessness Strategy as set out under section 1(1) & section 1(3) of The Homelessness Act 2002 which requires the housing authority to formulate and publish a Homelessness Strategy, and seeks Members' approval of the draft Strategy at Appendix A, subject to minor amendments.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note that the Homelessness Review is completed and was published on the 5th of May 2003 a summary of which can be seen in the introduction section of the draft Homelessness Strategy at Appendix A. Members are asked to agree the direction of the Homelessness Strategy.
- 2.2 Members are asked to approve the draft Homelessness Strategy at Appendix A, and note that it is subject to minor editorial amendments prior to publication. The overall direction and long term vision within the Strategy will remain consistent.
- 2.3 Members are asked to delegate authority to the Director of Housing to finalise and publish the Strategy, incorporating minor amendments.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 Many of the concerns expressed by the homelessness review and workshops can be progressed through existing budgets. In the first year to establish communications and data collection techniques and to establish the Homeless Compact there will be a financial cost of £75k. This £75k will need to be in the form of a growth bid. To address the opportunities identified in full over a 5 year period will have a potential cost in the region of £2.5m.
- 3.2 We are working closely with our partners to identify alternative funding sources from the Lottery fund, the Grantfinder database the European Union and the Office of the

Deputy Prime Minister. We are also considering options that link in private business within the area.

3.3 The Homelessness Strategy action plans are being finalised and costed at the present time. The strategic long-term vision of a holistic service delivery environment with 100 varying bed-sized units attached, if completed over the five year term of the strategy, the Strategy will have a potential cost in the region of £10-15m.

3.4 It must be noted here that large parts of the action plans remain unfunded and the funds will need to be identified. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has advised that a significant amount of money will be available to fund Homelessness Strategies. However, we are not aware yet of any figures relating to funding from this source or as to how the funding arrangements will be drawn up. We believe that it will be done through a grant applications process.

4. Staffing Implications

4.1 An officer was appointed to assist in the delivery of our Homelessness Review and Strategy. This was funded by Central Government through the new 'priority need' order fund.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Homelessness Act came into force on the 31st of July 2002 and requires the Authority to conduct a review of homelessness within its boundaries on which to base its homelessness strategy for the area. The Homelessness Strategy must be available to the public by the 31st of July 2003 that is within 12 months of the Act coming into force. The Act says that the authority must consult other local or public authorities or voluntary organisations before adopting or modifying the strategy. The Act invokes a duty on the authority to produce a 5-year homelessness action plan that must be redrawn every 5 years after review and consultation.

5.2 Legal and Democratic Services will consider the consultant's recommendations for revision of assessment procedures and processes, referred to at Chapter 4 of the review report and in the strategy, prior to their implementation.

6. Detail

6.1 The timescales for the production of the review and strategy are outlined in the table that follows:

Process flow	Date
Steering group set up	May 2002
Researcher engaged	Jan 2003
Agency questionnaire	Sent February 2003
Service user questionnaire	February/ March 2003
Single homeless survey	February/March 2003
Primary care trust health survey	February/ March 2003

Desk research	January/ March 2003
Health service consultation	April 2003
Publication of Homelessness Review	May 2003
Post/ e-mail consultation	May 2003
Single homeless consultation	June 2003
Homelessness strategy workshops X 5. Four with external and LB Brent staff attending and one for LB Brent staff only	June 2003
Strategy development	June/July 2003
Strategy publication	30 July 2003

- 6.2 Those that attended the 5 workshops held in early June 2003 expressed a number of areas of concerns. The main areas of concern are outlined in the table below.

Workshops: number of times concerns mentioned	
	Mentions
Communication/ information	28
Support/ floating support	11
Advice service	11
Incentives	8
Joint training/ compact	7
Early intervention/ young people	7
Joint working/ protocols	6
Empty homes	4
Housing options package	4
Planning	4
HB issues	4
Move-on	3
People with disabilities	3
HRC environment	2

- 6.3 We will monitor the Homelessness Strategy through the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group on the following timescales:

July 2003 Homelessness Strategy 2003 – 2008 publication
April 2004 Annual review starts
July 2004 Annual review published (year 1)
September 2004 Annual Homelessness Conference
April 2005 Annual review starts

July 2005 Annual review published (year 2)
September 2005 Annual Homelessness Conference
April 2006 Annual review starts
July 2006 Annual review published (year 3)
September 2006 Annual Homelessness Conference
April 2007 Annual review starts
July 2007 Annual review published (year 4)
September 2007 Annual Homelessness Conference
April 2008 Annual review starts
July 2008 Annual Review published (year 5); Homelessness Strategy launch 2008 - 2013
September 2008 Annual Homelessness Conference

- 6.5 There are areas which have crossovers to different parts of the Strategy, such as raising cash incentives to landlords and homeseekers, which appears under prevention of homelessness, Part 2 and accommodation for homeless people, Part 3. The homelessness Strategy will be set out using the following headings.
- 6.6 The Homelessness strategy will be published in printed and bound format with appropriate graphics and illustrations. The strategy has been developed to be accessible to the communities of Brent as a whole and has therefore very little jargon, no acronyms and has been laid out in this format to ease accessibility.

7. Background Information

Reading and sources	
Another Country	Audit Commission 1999
Code of Guidance. Housing Act 1996 as updated	
Comparison of London boroughs	HACAS Chapman Hendy June 2002
Domestic Violence in Brent: Needs, Strengths and Gaps.	University of Bristol DV Research Group 2002
Homelessness Act 2002	HMSO
Homelessness Act Code of Guidance 2002	HMSO
Homelessness. Responding to the new agenda	Audit Commission 2003
Housing Act 1996 Pt V11	HMSO
More than a Roof.	DTLR 2002

Shelter Audit
Vantagepoint Audit
West London Housing Strategy
consultation
Executive Committee Report

Shelter March 2003
February 2003
March 2003
April 2003

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers and feedback information should contact:
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