

HOMELESSNESS CONSULTATION EVENT - OUTCOME

Report By: Change Manager - Homelessness

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To consider the outcomes of the homelessness consultation event held in October 2005 and the next steps.

Financial Implications

2. To be considered as part of the implementation of the review recommendations and within the transfer and reshape of homelessness and housing advice services from Herefordshire Housing Ltd to Herefordshire Council.

Background

3. The number of homelessness presentations and acceptances in Herefordshire has risen steadily since 2002, accompanied by a significant rise in spending on temporary accommodation.
4. Cabinet agreed a number of new financial and preventative measures to tackle homelessness in July 2005.
5. The Chairman of the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee requested that a homelessness consultation event be held in October 2005, to include representatives from relevant agencies across the county.
6. The event focussed on tackling the main causes of homelessness in Herefordshire and explored opportunities for closer working arrangements in the future.
7. Summary notes from the consultation event have been circulated separately to Members of the Committee. The findings will be reported on at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Cabinet Member (Social Care Adults and Health) be advised that:

- (a) the establishment of a Homelessness & Housing Advice Steering Group comprising officers and key stakeholders would assist in the monitoring and development of prevention-focussed Homelessness & Housing Advice Services in Herefordshire;**
- (b) the Committee should be kept informed of progress on developments in homelessness prevention services and the work of the Homelessness & Housing Advice Steering Group after services are transferred back in-house**
- (c) the Council should continue to develop a preventative and reconciliatory approach to homelessness in partnership with other agencies;**
- (d) agencies should be encouraged to continue to work together to share information and develop an 'early warning' approach to homelessness;**
- (e) mediation and sanctuary options should be considered with young people and victims of domestic violence whenever appropriate;**
- (f) agencies should be encouraged to work closely with schools to prevent youth homelessness; and**
- (g) further work is undertaken to develop further potential in the private sector housing market.**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Summary notes from the consultation event held on 17 October.