

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **HOUSING COMMITTEE – 26 MARCH 2003**

#### **HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY UPDATE**

##### **Report by the Director of Homes and Technical Services**

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval of the Homelessness Strategy, and the Action Plan.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** As required by Part 1, Section 1 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, every local authority is required to prepare and submit to the Scottish Ministers a strategy for preventing and alleviating homelessness in its area.
- 2.2** Since enactment of the Act in July 2001, the Scottish Executive has issued a number of guidance papers and regulations to facilitate the development of local homeless strategies. In addition specific funds have been made available to local authorities to assist that process.
- 2.3** In 2001 East Ayrshire commissioned consultants to carry out an assessment of homelessness. This was jointly funded by the Council, Communities Scotland and Ayrshire and Arran NHS Health Board.
- 2.4** A key element of that assessment was that service users were consulted on current provision and priorities for improvement, as were partner providers in the statutory and voluntary sectors.
- 2.5** One of the outcomes of that assessment was the recognition that previous services and methods of delivery required to be changed and appropriate changes were approved by this Committee at its meeting on 11 September 2002. In summary these were :
- Establish a range of furnished temporary accommodation;
  - Reconfigure the two existing hostels to provide accommodation and support for clients with complex needs; and
  - Develop extended tenancy support across the whole area.
- 2.6** In parallel with these improvements to service delivery, work has continued, in partnership with the consultants, to develop a strategy in line with the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the various guidance produced by the Scottish Executive.

**2.7** The draft Strategy and associated Action Plan have now been completed and are attached as Appendices 1 and 2. Due to the timescale for submission of the strategy to the Scottish Executive i.e. 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003, this draft has been made available to partner organisations and other interested groups in both the statutory and voluntary sectors.

**2.8** As extensive consultation has taken place during the research phase it is not anticipated that there will require to be any fundamental changes to either the strategy or its associated Implementation Action Plan, flowing from this external consultation.

### **3.0 HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY**

**3.1** As indicated at 2.3, research has been undertaken on homelessness within East Ayrshire and that evidence, along with evidence from across the UK, has informed the production of the Strategy by the Department.

**3.2** In addition regard has been taken of the various plans and policy documents that impinge on this area of work in East Ayrshire, namely

- East Ayrshire Community Plan
- Domestic Abuse Strategy
- Children's Service Plan
- Health and Homelessness Action Plan
- Supporting People Strategy

**3.3** The Strategy addresses a number of the main findings of the research but, at the same time, acknowledges that a holistic and multi agency approach is required if homelessness is to be reduced.

**3.4** The Implementation Action Plan translates the various findings and recommendations, contained within the Strategy, into clearly identifiable actions. These actions have set against them

- The priority
- Who has the lead role
- What task is to be undertaken
- The timescale
- The measurable outcome

**3.5** In taking this approach the Department will be able to monitor and evaluate the various actions and their outcomes. This should provide a sound basis for future policy development.

### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**4.1** The Scottish Executive has made separate funding available for homelessness until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004. In addition appropriate budgetary provision has been identified by the Council for the same period. Consequently while there are no immediate financial implications the matter will require to be kept under review.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICAIONS**

**5.1** There are no additional legal implications beyond those highlighted at section 2.

## **6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**6.1** Committee is asked to:

- i. Note the contents of the report;
- ii. Agree the Strategy and Action Plan, including any amendments made by the Committee;
- iii. Agree that any minor amendments required from external consultation be included; and
- iv. Agree that the finalised Strategy and Implementation Action Plan be issued to the Scottish Executive by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003.

**James Lavery**  
**Director of Homes and Technical Services**  
**March 2003**

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Housing Committee of 30 January 2002 (Homelessness Strategy)  
Housing Committee of 11 September 2002 (Homelessness Strategy Update)

For further information please contact Nicola Thom, Homelessness Manager, on 01563 576986.

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