

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

31st October 2017

HOMELESSNESS SHORT SHARP REVIEW – COVERING REPORT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mark Shurmer, Portfolio holder for Housing
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Councillor Shurmer was interviewed as part of the review, though was not consulted on the group's final recommendations.
Relevant Director	Sue Hanley, Deputy Chief Executive
Ward(s) Affected	No specific ward relevance.
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report provides an overview of the findings of the Homelessness Short Sharp Review. More detailed information about the evidence basis for the group's recommendations can be found in the group's final report attached at Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that

- 1) **Redditch Borough Council should take part in any opportunity to deliver Housing First in properties in the Borough. This should include applying to participate in any Housing First pilot schemes operated by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA);**
(Recommendation 2 in the group's final report)
- 2) **the Leader of the Council should write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Rt. Hon. David Gauke MP, urging him to end the freeze on Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates; and**
(Recommendation 4 in the group's final report)
- 3) **The Council's Communications and Arts and Events teams should notify the CAB of any forthcoming events in Redditch which they could attend to promote their services and heighten awareness of their services in the Borough.**
(Recommendation 5 in the group's final report)

The Committee is asked to **NOTE** the following recommendation from the group to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that

- 4) **Swanswell should be invited to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to deliver a presentation outlining the services they provide to residents in Redditch.**
(Recommendation 3 in the group's final report)

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The Committee is asked to NOTE the following recommendation that was previously agreed by the Executive committee at a meeting on 12th July 2017 that

- 5) The draft Redditch Borough Council Housing Allocations Policy be adopted by the Council.
(Recommendation 1 in the group's final report)**

3. KEY ISSUES

Background

- 3.1 In March 2017 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a proposal from Councillor Joe Baker to undertake a review of homelessness in the Borough. The Committee agreed to launch this review after the elections in May and June 2017.
- 3.2 Following the appointment of Councillor Baker to the Executive Committee Councillor Wood-Ford was appointed to Chair the Task Group. Councillors Natalie Brookes, Anita Clayton, Pattie Hill and Antonia Pulsford were also appointed to this group.
- 3.3 Over the course of two-and-a-half months the group gathered evidence from a variety of sources including Council officers, representatives of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations that provide support to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and written documentation. The recommendations detailed in the group's final report are based on the evidence that was gathered.
- 3.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the group's report at a meeting on 7th September 2017 and endorsed all of the proposals.
- 3.5 The group's first recommendation, in respect of the Housing Allocations Policy, was proposed following pre-scrutiny of the draft policy in July 2017. As the Executive Committee has already approved this recommendation, and the policy was adopted by Council on 24th July 2017, Members are only asked to note this recommendation at this stage.
- 3.6 The group's third recommendation proposed that Swanswell, which provides support and advice to people struggling with substance abuse, should be invited to attend a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to deliver a presentation on the subject of the services they provide. As Overview and Scrutiny is a Member-led process and the Committee can determine the content of their work programme the Executive Committee is not required to make any decision in respect of this proposal. Instead Members are asked to note that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has endorsed this proposal and will be sending an invitation through to Swanswell in due course.

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- 3.7 When considering the group's report the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was very supportive of the group's fourth recommendation. To help encourage the government to remove the freeze on the LHA Members agreed to request that both the Leader of the Council and the MP for Redditch, Rachael Maclean, be asked to write to the Government about this matter.

Financial Implications

- 3.8 All the financial implications arising from the group's recommendations are detailed in the final report.

Legal Implications

- 3.9 All the legal implications arising from the group's proposals are detailed in the final report.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.10 This review has been a very intense exercise. A total of 14 meetings were held by the group in a period of two-and-a-half months. This occurred during one of the busiest holiday periods which made it difficult to arrange meetings that both Members and officers/external witnesses could attend. In this context the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been asked to consider whether a Short Sharp Review is an appropriate exercise to launch during this period of the year in the future.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.8 The group has proposed numerous actions which are designed to enhance services for vulnerable people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

No specific risks have been identified.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Homelessness Short Sharp Review group's final report and appendices.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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