

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29th November 2011

PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORT:

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Brandon Clayton, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Local Environment and Health
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Heads of Service	Liz Tompkin, Head of Housing Services
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

The report provides a summary of the Council's Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer Initiative 2009 to 2011 (which was funded via grant totalling £180,000 provided by Communities and Local Government). The Housing Options Team was awarded the grant in recognition of 'good practice' introduced following the scrutiny report 'Preventing Homelessness' published in 2006.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that
the contents of the report are noted.

3. KEY ISSUES

Background

- 3.1.1 A presentation on the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer was recently delivered to the Corporate Management Team, who considered that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may be interested to see the positive outcomes for customers, as a result of changes made following the initial scrutiny review undertaken in 2006.
- 3.1.2 In 2006 a scrutiny review was undertaken by Members which looked at Homelessness Prevention. The findings highlighted that the Council needed to change its approach to Homelessness and ensure that a greater number of Council Officers were involved in Homelessness Prevention as opposed to Homelessness Investigation. In addition it recommended that greater use should be made of the Private Sector in housing homeless households and called for better use of discretionary housing benefit in the prevention of homelessness.
- 3.1.3 In response to the recommendations made by the former Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee the Council launched a new Housing Options Advice Service which opened in January 2007. As a

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29th November 2011

result of the changes to the way that the service was delivered significantly more people are now prevented from becoming homeless and the number of households in temporary accommodation has reduced. The number of vulnerable people who sustain their accommodation in the long term has also increased.

- 3.1.4 In 2008 the Council successfully applied for, and was awarded, a grant from the CLG to enhance the Housing Options Service by funding a number of key initiatives which are detailed in the Enhanced Housing Options Action Plan (attached as Appendix 1).

Financial Implications

- 3.2 There are no financial implications arising directly from the report, however, the report does refer to £180,000 of non-recurrent grant funding received by the CLG during 2009 and 2011.

Legal Implications

- 3.3 There are no legal implications to this report.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.4 There are no operational implications directly from the report but there were many from the Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer project (which will be outlined through the presentation).

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.5 The Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer has significantly changed the housing options available to customers in Redditch.
- 3.6 There are no direct recommendations on equalities and diversity but the enhancements to the Housing Options have focused on offering more assistance to some vulnerable groups.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are no risks arising directly from this report.

5. APPENDICES

Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer Action Plan 2009 to 2011

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

29th November 2011

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Preventing Homelessness, Final Report, Social Overview and Scrutiny
Committee, 2006.

AUTHORS OF REPORT

Name: Elise Hopkins, Housing Options Manager
E Mail: elise.hopkins@redditchbc.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 64252 ext. 3510