

REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 13 APRIL 2010

SUBJECT: DRAFT HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the Homelessness Strategy 2010 - 2015 for approval.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to homelessness.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee:-

- (i) **agrees the Homelessness Strategy 2010-2015; and**
- (ii) **notes that annual review reports will be presented to Committee.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The draft Homelessness Strategy was presented to Communities Committee on 1 December 2009 (paragraph 5 of the Minute refers). The Committee agreed that the consultation period for the draft Homelessness Strategy would end on 31 January 2010 and that the final strategy would be presented to Committee in April 2010.
- 3.2 The consultation period for the Homelessness Strategy was extended to 19 February 2010 to coincide with the consultation on the Interim Local Housing Strategy 2010-2013.
- 3.3 Comments received from the consultation process have now been considered and the draft Strategy amended as appropriate.

4. THE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2010-2015

- 4.1 A copy of the Homelessness Strategy 2010 – 2015 has been placed in the Members Library. An Executive Summary of the Strategy is attached as **APPENDIX I** to this report.
- 4.2 The Council is committed to improvements already identified within the Scottish Housing Regulator improvement Plan and the Temporary Accommodation Strategy. The actions within the Improvement Plan and the Temporary Accommodation Action Plan are not duplicated within the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.

4.3 The overall aim of the Strategy is to prevent homelessness where possible, but when it does arise, to ensure that appropriate assistance and support is provided.

4.4 In order to achieve the overall aim of the Strategy, the following objectives have been identified:

- Prevention
- Provision of accommodation (temporary and permanent)
- Support and sustainable solutions.

4.5 The Homelessness Strategy Action Plan is attached as **APPENDIX II** and further enhances the objectives under the following headings :

- Maximise the opportunities to prevent homelessness
- Develop suitable accommodation for a range of housing needs
- Design services which will reduce repeat homelessness
- Increase opportunities to access support

4.6 The achievements of the Action Plan will be reviewed annually and reported to Committee.

5. CURRENT ISSUES

5.1 A report to the Communities Committee on 11 August 2009 identified the difficulties the Council have towards meeting the abolition of priority need by 21 December 2012 (paragraph 11 of the minute refers). The Committee agreed that a meeting should be sought with the Housing Minister to discuss the difficulties in more detail.

5.2 At the meeting with the Housing Minister on 11 November 2010, the Minister identified measures that North Ayrshire Council had used to successfully prevent homelessness. It was agreed that Officers should visit North Ayrshire Council to identify areas of good practice in prevention that could be applied in Moray.

5.3 A visit has since been made to North Ayrshire Council to investigate some of their good practice and Officers are currently examining how these could be utilised in Moray. A further report will be presented to the Committee in June 2010.

6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan

The Single Outcome Agreement and Service Improvement Plan both have priorities regarding the shortage of affordable housing and tackling homelessness. The Homelessness Strategy has been developed to assist with these priorities.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, the grant previously received from the Scottish Executive to assist in the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy has had its "ring fencing" removed and is now part of the Council's overall Revenue Support grant settlement received from the Scottish Government.

(d) Consultations

Consultations have taken place with the Director of Community Services, Chief Housing Officer, Housing Programmes Manager, Head of Financial Services, Head of Children and Families, Head of Community Care, Community Planning and Development Manager, Senior Area Housing Manager and managers within the Housing Service, who agree with the contents of this report.

The amended Homelessness Strategy 2010-2015 and Action Plan have been considered by members of the Homelessness Strategy Group at the meeting on 18 March 2010.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 This report asks the Committee to agree the final Homelessness Strategy 2010-2015 and to note that an annual review of progress will be presented to the Committee.

Author of Report:	June Shennan, Homelessness Strategy and Development Manager
Background Papers:	Held on file by June Shennan
Ref:	