

REPORT TO: Health Policy & Performance Board
DATE: 11th September 2012
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Communities
PORTFOLIO: Health and Adults
SUBJECT: Scrutiny Review of Homelessness Services
2011-2012
WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present Health PPB with the report on the Scrutiny Review of Homelessness Services 2011-2012.
- 1.2 The scrutiny group specifically requested that the report go to Executive Board, without first having been reviewed by Health PPB, in order to accompany another related report outlining plans for the reconfiguration of supported housing provision for the single homeless.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- i) **Members of the Policy & Performance Board note the contents of the report attached at Appendix 1.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The review was commissioned in order to assess the Council's statutory duties and preventative role in relation to homelessness and review the services provided with a particular focus on temporary accommodation services.
- 3.2 Councils have a range of duties to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness in 28 days, at the very least they are obliged to provide advice and assistance on housing options and some households are owed the main homelessness duty, which is the provision of settled accommodation. Local authorities are also expected to implement services to prevent homelessness.
- 3.3 To respond to the housing needs of those who are homeless, it is necessary to provide a range of temporary accommodation that can be accessed in emergencies until settled accommodation can be found. There are a number of temporary accommodation schemes operating in Halton.

3.4 It is good practice to periodically assess the effectiveness of services provided for those who are homeless and this review is part of that process. The results will also feed into the wider strategic review of homelessness and development of the borough's next Homelessness Strategy in 2012/13. This review is also quite timely considering the current climate of restricted mortgage availability and impending housing and welfare reforms, both of which will very likely lead to increased pressure on homelessness services.

3.5 The report attached at Appendix 1 details the findings of the review and the proposed recommendations. Members of the topic group have reviewed the draft report and gave their consent for it to be considered at Executive Board on 12th July 2012 alongside another related report outlining plans for the reconfiguration of supported housing provision for the single homeless.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The implications of pursuing any course of action arising out of the recommendations of the review will be highlighted as appropriate through the usual reporting channels.

5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 These are contained within Appendix 1.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Homelessness can have an adverse impact on the wellbeing of children and young people. Any improvements to services arising out of the recommendations of this review will help to alleviate the effects on this group.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None identified.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The links between health and homelessness are well documented. Again, any improvements to services arising out of the recommendations of this review will have a positive impact on the health of those concerned.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

Effective services for those facing homelessness help to ensure that rough sleeping in the borough is prevented.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 These will be managed as part of the project plan when the services are re-organised.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None identified.

9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Executive Board Report 12/07/12	Municipal Building	Strategic Director Communities