

COUNTY COUNCIL

9TH JANUARY, 2019

SUBJECT : REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

Purpose:

The strategy document outlines key themes and priorities in relation to how Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Powys will prevent and tackle homelessness over the coming years.

Executive Board Recommendations:

- To approve the Regional Homelessness Strategy.

REASONS:

- Local Authorities in Wales are required to produce a homelessness strategy in accordance with Housing (Wales) Act 2014;
- Executive Board previously agreed to develop a regional strategy with Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys;
- We have carried out a review of homelessness in Carmarthenshire by undertaking an analysis of key data and by consulting key stakeholders; and
- The strategy document outlines a regional direction of travel which identifies key priorities.

Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted: YES - Community Scrutiny – 23rd November, 2018

EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Scrutiny Committee recommendations / comments:

- Community Scrutiny Committee recommended to Executive Board that the report be accepted.

Exec Board Decision Required -Yes – 17th December, 2018

Council Decision Required -Yes – 9th January, 2019

Executive Board Member Portfolio Holder:

Cllr. Linda Evans(Housing Portfolio Holder)

Directorate Communities Name of Head of Service: Jonathan Morgan Report Author: Jonathan Willis	Designations: Acting Head of Homes and Safer Communities. Advice and Tenancy Support Manager	Tel Nos. 01267 228960 01554 899232 E Mail Addresses: jmorgan@carmarthenshire.gov.uk jnwillis@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COUNTY COUNCIL

DATE: 9TH JANUARY, 2019

SUBJECT:

REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

Purpose

The strategy document outlines key themes and priorities in relation to how Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Powys will prevent and tackle homelessness over the coming years.

The themes and priorities have been developed from a review of homelessness services undertaken by each local authority across the region.

For each theme, detailed actions will be developed for Carmarthenshire. The strategy gives examples of what these actions will look like, with a more detailed action plan to follow early in 2019.

Context

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 introduced new responsibilities on local authorities to prevent homelessness. In Carmarthenshire, we undertook a service review prior to the new legislation coming into force. Key changes involved the re-alignment of our Housing Options Service that involves creating a single point of contact for service users seeking housing advice. The team pooled a range of expertise and the team now has a range of specialist advisors and partners whose aim it is to tackle the root cause of any particular housing problem presented.

Partnership working has been key to meeting these new duties and providing a better service. Key partners who are co-located with our housing teams are:

- The Wallich, who provide mediation services;
- Shelter, who provide money advice and general advocacy;
- Care and Repair, who support older people install adaptations and help with other home improvements; and
- Pobl, who provide financial support to access the private rented sector.

What are the key themes identified across the region?

It is recognised that each local authority area will be different but some key themes with regard to homelessness have been identified across the region. These are:

- *The number of households triggering homelessness duties has generally increased, since the introduction of the recent Housing Act;*
- *Increasing pressures on Housing Options “emergency response”;*
- *People approaching Council homelessness services with ever more complex needs;*

- *Less affordable options for single people, (especially those under 35);*
- *Challenges of the introduction of Universal Credit; and*
- *All services are facing on-going financial challenges which means we must think differently.*

What are the key priorities?

The strategy identifies seven key priorities that are supported by a range of high level actions. These priorities are:

1. *Continuing to evolve and harness community-based services to assist in the prevention of homelessness;*
2. *By utilising intelligence, exploring how we can focus support to households in those localities which are producing the highest proportion of homelessness cases in order to prevent it;*
3. *Utilising IT systems and technology to prevent homelessness by ensuring systems are in place which flag up issues early to trigger help and advice as early as possible;*
4. *In partnership with key agencies, exploring how a multi-agency case management approach can evolve to meet the needs of households who revolve around the homeless system and place demands on a variety of services;*
5. *In partnership with local stakeholders and other statutory services, exploring whether a 'Housing First' approach can be developed to support those with the most complex needs;*
6. *Each authority, with their Housing Association and private landlord partners, developing affordable and sustainable housing options for single people; and*
7. *Each authority developing close partnership working with DWP/Job Centre+ to mitigate any impact the introduction of Universal Credit may have on household's ability to retain their tenancies.*

Recommendations:

- To approve the Regional Homelessness Strategy.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?	YES- Regional Strategy
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IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: Jonathan Morgan

Acting Head of Homes and Safer Communities

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	YES	YES	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

The strategy will complement the preventative agenda outlined in “The Carmarthenshire We Want”.

2. Legal

Section 50 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to carry out a homeless review and formulate a homeless strategy.

The Welsh Government Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness Chapter 5 sets out how local authorities plan homeless services.

4. Finance

Any further re-alignment of resources will be fully considered as part of the development of the detailed action plan.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Jonathan Morgan

Acting Head of Homes and Safer Communities

1. Scrutiny Committee – Members of the Community Scrutiny Committee were consulted on the 23rd November, 2018.

2. Local Member(s)

Local Members were consulted as part of the homelessness review via a member's seminar.

3. Community / Town Council

Will be consulted as part of the development of the proposed action plan.

4. Relevant Partners

Relevant partners were consulted as part of the homelessness review.

5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

Relevant staff have been fully involved throughout the process

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Review of Homelessness in Carmarthenshire		<u>\\ntcarmcc\cfp\Housing\Public Docs</u>