

# ITEM 11 - APPENDIX F

## WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CORPORATE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 24 JUNE 2014

#### EXECUTIVE – 8 JULY 2014

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**Title:**

**HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY UPDATE**

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Keith Webster]  
[Wards Affected: All]

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**Summary and purpose:**

The Council adopted its Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018 in July 2013. This report updates the Executive on progress in achieving the targets set for the first year of the Homelessness Strategy, and highlights the areas to focus on in the year ahead.

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**How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:**

Value for Money – Waverley has adopted a spend to save approach in preventing homelessness

Affordable housing – Waverley's allocation scheme and the provision of affordable social housing help the Council in its work to prevent homelessness

Understanding Peoples' Needs – Waverley's housing options approach to preventing homelessness is based on understanding and responding to peoples' circumstances and needs

**Financial Implications:**

Waverley's Homelessness Strategy highlights the areas where future investment of resources can best help the Council and its partners assist households under threat of homelessness

**Legal Implications:**

Waverley has a statutory duty to assess homeless applications and to provide housing advice to its residents under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended)

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**Background**

1. The Council adopted its Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018 in July 2013. The Strategy contained a review of the services and resources currently available in the borough and surrounding areas to meet the needs of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, a strategy outlining the main themes

and challenges for the strategy period, and an action plan to identify the key actions that need to be taken to better meet these challenges.

2. This report contains an update on key performance and statistical data relating to housing advice and homelessness in Waverley during 2013-14 and an update on the progress in achieving the year one action plan targets.

### Key Performance and Statistical data for 2013-2014

3. 2013/14 has been the busiest year for new housing advice and homelessness enquiries.

07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
682	734	884	774	879	884

Apr - Jun 13	Jul - Sept 13	Oct - Dec 13	Jan - Mar 14	Total
234	256	176	281	947

4. Despite an increase in approaches, the Housing Options has continued to prevent homelessness for the majority of households and kept the numbers in temporary accommodation low, although there has been a slight increase this year, as shown in the table below. Waverley performs well in comparison to other boroughs and districts in Surrey who have more households in temporary accommodation as shown in [Annexe 1](#).

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
107	80	53	28	17	5	7	2	2	1

30 Jun 13	30 Sept 13	31 Dec 13	31 Mar 14
1	4	5	4

5. Waverley's success in preventing homelessness has been the result of adopting a wide range of housing options to offer to those threatened with homelessness. These include:

- security measures to enable victims of domestic abuse to safely remain in their homes
- referring households to specialist supported housing or emergency hostels
- helping households maximise their benefits and access specialist debt advice
- providing support to more vulnerable clients to enable them to successfully maintain their tenancies
- helping people secure suitable private rented accommodation with help from the Council's deposit bond scheme
- working in partnership with other agencies such as Social Services, Police, Citizens Advice Waverley, Three Counties Money Advice, South West Surrey Domestic Abuse Service etc.

## **Progress in meeting Year One Homelessness Strategy Action Plan targets**

6. Progress that has been made to meet the year one targets set out in the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan is contained in Annexe 2. Of the 33 targets, 25 have been achieved and 8 partially achieved, which demonstrates that good progress has been made.
7. Key achievements in 2013/14 include:
  - Prevented 542 people who were homeless or threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless by delivering by providing advice and assistance
  - Maintained low numbers of homeless households being placed in temporary accommodation (four households as at 31 March 2014), despite increase in households approaching as threatened with homelessness
  - Worked with Ethical Lettings, a social lettings agency, to help support households to find suitable private sector housing within LHA limits
  - Launched an online landlord resource centre to help support private landlords
  - Secured £22,000 additional funding from the DCLG to extend the level of help available to households who the Council do not have a statutory duty to house under its homelessness responsibilities
  - Supported 83 vulnerable households to maintain their tenancies in temporary accommodation, homelessness prevention units and private rented housing
  - Appointed an Easy Move Officer to support people to downsize to smaller accommodation and enable the best use to be made of the social rented stock
  - Secured planning permission to convert under-used temporary accommodation in Womersley to four permanent affordable homes
  - Increased the capacity of supported housing in the borough

## **Key actions for 2014/15**

10. The key actions for Year Two of the Homelessness Strategy are:
  - Achieve the Bronze Standard in 2014 and progress towards achieving the Gold Standard by 2016
  - Identify opportunities to use of the Homelessness Prevention Fund to deliver improved outcomes for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
  - Review the remaining provision of temporary accommodation in the borough
  - Use the outcome of the customer satisfaction survey to inform improvements customer service delivery
  - Monitor the impact of welfare reform introduced in 2014/15
  - Continue to deliver an excellent proactive homelessness prevention service

## **Conclusion**

11. Despite an increase in households threatened with homelessness, the Council has maintained its excellent performance in preventing homelessness in Waverley. It has done this by being innovative, working in partnership with other organisations and having a wide range of housing options to help those facing homelessness.

## **Observations from the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

12. The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered this report at its meeting on 24 June 2014 and agreed to congratulate Housing Service Officers on the excellent performance in preventing homelessness, especially when compared to the performance in other Surrey districts. The Committee was pleased to hear that this performance was a result of actions across different teams within Housing to support households threatened with homelessness, as well as close working with partner organisations including Citizens Advice Waverley.

## **Recommendation**

The Executive is asked to note the progress in meeting the year one targets of Waverley's Homelessness Strategy Action Plan, and agree any areas to highlight for future action.

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## **Background Papers**

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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## Annexe 1

## Number of households in temporary accommodation in Surrey

	30 Jun 11	30 Sep 11	31 Dec 11	31 Mar 12	30 Jun 12	30 Sep 12	31 Dec 12	31 Mar 13	30 Jun 13	30 Sep 13
<u>Elmbridge</u>	17	24	25	23	43	37	38	41	36	34
Epsom & Ewell	32	34	46	37	49	58	64	65	91	108
Guildford	11	14	19	27	22	22	21	25	25	28
Mole Valley	19	22	27	18	25	24	27	28	33	33
Reigate & Banstead	35	44	55	65	75	90	88	99	101	95
Runnymede	60	53	65	68	76	47	17	41	42	63
Spelthorne	6	7	10	24	26	33	32	47	57	73
Surrey Heath	48	49	48	48	51	52	55	59	67	59
Tandridge	19	15	18	15	20	22	21	17	22	23
<b>Waverley</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
Woking	32	33	32	30	28	31	35	38	30	28
<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b>281</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>548</b>