Cyngor Sir Powys / Powys County Council

Health, Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee
3rd October, 2018

REPORT AUTHOR: *Head of Housing*

SUBJECT: Powys Homelessness Review and Strategy

REPORT FOR: **Committee Briefing**

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1.   **Background**

1.1   Under Section 50 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, local authorities in Wales are required to review their homelessness prevention services and produce a strategy for the following four years, guided by an Action Plan.

1.2   The review of homelessness services in Powys involved discussion and liaison with colleagues within the County Council, such as Adult Social Care, Children's Services, the Youth Service, as well as with partners such as housing associations, Powys Teaching Health Board, Criminal Justice, and third sector support and advice services

1.3   The review has identified priorities for the Powys Homelessness Action Plan which are:

- **The Development of an IT solution to record and manage homelessness applications**
  - **The development of a partnership approach with SP funded agencies (Support People Fund), HMOO's (Housing Management and Options Officers), HPHOO's (Homelessness Prevention and Housing Options Officers), prevention hubs and community connectors**
- **To reflect the greater demand being placed on the private rented sector, allocating extra resources accordingly**
- **Develop intensive and assertive support services for those most difficult to house**
- **Explore the co-location of staff within Job Centre Plus to assist households through the transition on to Universal Credit**

1.4   Following confirmation from Welsh Government that Authorities could work on a regional basis to develop their Strategies (provided that each local authority developed its own Action Plan(s)), Powys joined with Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire to develop an over-arching regional Homelessness Strategy.

2.   **The review of homelessness and the development of a Homelessness Action Plan for Powys and a regional Homelessness Strategy**

2.1   Work on the review of homelessness services commenced in 2016/2017. A Project Board was established to identify workstreams, however the Board meetings were poorly attended by internal partners.

2.2   As part of the work of the review the Housing Service commissioned a "Mystery Shopper" exercise undertaken by Shelter Cymru in March 2017. This exercise allowed us to test how the service responded to persons presenting as homeless or threatened with homelessness. A copy of the report is attached at appendix 1.

2.3   To provide additional capacity for the Housing Service and to drive the review further forward, an independent consultant (Chris Price former Homelessness Advisor to the Welsh Local Government Association) was commissioned in early 2018, to lead the review process and the development of the local homelessness action plan.

2.4   A series of Homelessness Workshops have been carried out between late 2017 and June 2018, where internal and external partners have attended to learn more about homelessness issues in Powys and provide their views into the homelessness review – this has allowed partners voices and ideas to be taken account of during the production of the draft review. A copy of the review is attached at appendix 2.

2.5   An Action Plan for delivering the priorities identified during the Review process has been developed and this will enable a planned approach to developing and implementing the priorities from the Review. A copy of the Action Plan is attached at appendix 3.

2.6   The Regional Homelessness Strategy has been developed by Chris Price on behalf of the 4 mid and west Wales authorities. A copy of the draft strategy is attached at appendix 4.

3.   **Scrutiny Committee Comments and Observations**

3.1 The Housing Service will be taking the homelessness review, local action plan and regional homelessness strategy to Cabinet in November for approval and would wish to receive the comments of the Health Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee on each of the documents.

APPENDIX 1 -
Shelter Mystery Shop

Appendix 2 Powys
Homelessness Revie

Appendix 3 Powys
Action Plan v2.pdf

Appendix 4 Dyfed
Powys Draft Strategy