

Record of Cabinet portfolio holder decision

Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Decision made by	Councillor Elizabeth Gillespie
Key decision?	Yes
Date of decision (same as date form signed)	19 / 08 / 2015
Name and job title of officer requesting the decision	Phil Ealey Housing Needs Manager
Officer contact details	Tel: 01235 547623 Email: phil.ealey@southandvale.gov.uk
Decision	<p>To publish the new joint Homelessness Strategy 2015-2020 following public consultation and endorsement at cabinet briefing.</p> <p>A report on the consultation outcomes on the draft homelessness strategy was presented at cabinet briefing on 18 August 2015.</p> <p>Background</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Councils have a statutory duty under the Homelessness Act 2002 to publish a Homelessness Strategy every five years. The Councils' previous Homelessness Strategy expired in 2013 and it is a legal requirement for the council to have a strategy. This strategy aims to address housing need by successfully tackling homelessness over the next five years. 2. The five objectives of the homelessness strategy are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving partnership working to prevent homelessness • Minimising the use of temporary accommodation • Further developing our homelessness prevention service

- Improving access to suitable private rented accommodation
- Provide community outreach to address homelessness.

Consultation outcome

3. A consultation on the homelessness strategy was undertaken by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils for a period of four weeks between 6 June and 14 July 2015.
4. We asked members of the public and interested stakeholder groups to comment on the draft strategy by responding to an online survey. We promoted the consultation on both councils' websites, through the local press, and with direct invitations to respond to stakeholders.
5. A total of 39 responses were received, 29 from individuals and 10 from organisations.
6. There was majority support for the overall aims and objectives of the draft homelessness strategy. 24 respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the aims and objectives of the Homelessness Strategy. Three respondents disagreed, and only one strongly disagreed, stating that there is insufficient provision of accommodation for young people.
7. Seven respondents commented on the good principles stated in the strategy.
8. Seven respondents stressed the importance of partnership working to tackle homelessness. Our response, as detailed in the consultation summary report, is that partnership working is an objective of the strategy and that the action plan details 14 actions to work with our partner agencies to prevent homelessness.
9. Six respondents registered concern about the affordability of accommodation, particularly in the private rented sector which can lead to homelessness. Our response draws attention to actions in the strategy to address this concern. These include the work of our in-house private lettings team to secure affordable tenancies with private landlords. A review of the incentives offered to private landlords is also an action within the strategy.

10. Four respondents suggested that the supply of affordable homes should be increased to help meet demand. Our response was that the homelessness strategy includes providing information to support housing development.
11. Two respondents commented that they would like to see specific targets in the action plan to allow for evaluation of the strategy. Our response provides clarification of the performance indicators we already use to evaluate the success of our homelessness service. These indicators include the percentage of successful prevention cases; the number of households in temporary accommodation and the average length of stay in "bed and breakfast" accommodation.
12. Two respondents stated that the number of houses in multiple occupation (HMO's) should be increased. Our response was that the strategy includes approaching private landlords to increase the supply of HMO's.
13. Two respondents commented that there should be more housing available particularly for young people. Our response was that South and Vale were the only districts in Oxfordshire to increase their provision of supported housing following re-commissioning of services by Oxfordshire County Council.
14. The consultation summary provides a response to all comments received. There have been no amendments to the draft strategy following consultation, however the Housing Needs Manager will be contacting certain respondents to discuss specific issues raised.

Equality Impact Check

15. The equality impact check concluded that the homelessness strategy will not have a negative impact or discriminate against any persons or groups.
16. The strategy contains actions that help meet the needs of specific groups including disabled households, vulnerable households and ethnic minority groups.

	<p>Conclusion and next steps</p> <p>17. The Homelessness Strategy 2015-2020 provides a framework to successfully tackle homelessness in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse over the next five years.</p> <p>18. The aims and objectives of the strategy have received majority support following a four week public consultation period. The full report on consultation outcomes will be published on the council's websites.</p> <p>19. The equality impact check concluded that the homelessness strategy does not discriminate or have a negative impact on equality issues.</p> <p>20. The strategy should be approved by the Development and Housing portfolio holder.</p>
Reasons for decision	The Council has a statutory duty under the Homelessness Act 2002 to publish a Homelessness Strategy every five years. The council's previous strategy expired in 2013.
Alternative options rejected	It is a statutory requirement to publish a Homelessness Strategy
Legal implications	The Council is under a statutory obligation under section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 to publish a Strategy every five years.
Financial implications	None
Other implications	None
Background papers considered	Joint Homelessness Strategy 2015-2020

Declarations/conflict of interest? Declaration of other councillor/officer consulted by the Cabinet member?	None			
List consultees		Name	Outcome	Date
	Ward councillors	n/a	n/a	
	Legal	Pat Connell	Decision agreed	
	Finance	Julie Bartlett	Decision agreed	
	Human resources	n/a	n/a	
	Sustainability	n/a	n/a	
	Diversity and equality	Cheryl Reeves	Decision agreed	05/06/2015
	Communications	n/a	n/a	
	Strategic Management Board	Anna Robinson	Decision agreed	19/08/2015
Confidential decision? If so, under which exempt category?	No			
Call-in waived by Scrutiny Committee chairman?	No			
Has this been discussed by Cabinet members?	Yes			
Cabinet portfolio holder's signature To confirm the decision as set out in this notice.	Signature <u>Elizabeth Gillespie</u> Date <u>19th August 2015.</u>			

ONCE SIGNED, THIS FORM MUST BE HANDED TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES IMMEDIATELY.

For Democratic Services office use only		
Form received	Date:	Time:
Date published to all councillors	Date:	
Call-in deadline	Date:	Time:

Guidance notes

1. This form must be completed by the lead officer who becomes the contact officer. The lead officer is responsible for ensuring that the necessary internal consultees have signed it off. The lead officer must then seek the Cabinet portfolio holder's agreement and signature.
2. Once satisfied with the decision, the Cabinet portfolio holder must sign and date the form and return it to the lead officer who should send it to Democratic Services immediately to allow the call-in period to commence. Democratic Services staff are located on the ground floor north wing (C block) of the Crowmarsh Gifford offices. Tel. 01235 540307 or extension 7307.
Email: democratic.services@southandvale.gov.uk
3. Democratic Services will then publish the decision to the website (unless it is confidential) and send it to all councillors to commence the call-in period (five clear working days). The decision cannot be implemented until the call-in period expires. The call-in procedure can be found in the council's constitution, part 4, under the Scrutiny Committee procedure rules.
4. Before implementing the decision, the lead officer is responsible for checking with Democratic Services that the decision has not been called in.
5. If the decision has been called in, Democratic Services will notify the lead officer and decision-maker. This call-in puts the decision on hold.
6. Democratic Services will liaise with the Scrutiny Committee chairman over the date of the call-in debate. The Cabinet portfolio holder will be requested to attend the Scrutiny Committee meeting to answer the committee's questions.
7. The Scrutiny Committee may:
 - refer the decision back to the Cabinet portfolio holder for reconsideration or
 - refer the matter to Council with an alternative set of proposals (where the final decision rests with full Council) or
 - accept the Cabinet portfolio holder's decision, in which case it can be implemented immediately.