

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**HOUSING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING  
CABINET MEMBER**

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE HOMELESSNESS FORUM**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide an update on the setting up of a Homelessness Forum in North Lincolnshire.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 North Lincolnshire has a good track record in effective joint working across agencies including on preventing homelessness and providing advice and assistance to people with housing problems. The council has set up a number of multi-agency groups including:
- the Debt and Housing Advice Network – linking the work of agencies providing help to people with housing problems caused by financial difficulties;
  - the Hard to House group – the council working in partnership with other agencies to seek to meet the housing and support needs of people with problematic backgrounds;
  - the Housing and Support Working Group – a forum for support providers to share information and good practice.
- 2.2 Until recently, however, there was no networking opportunity for all the agencies working to meet the needs of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- 2.3 Therefore, the council invited people to an event in April to discuss setting up a Homelessness Forum. Over 50 people attended from a wide range of agencies including:
- Social landlords
  - Voluntary / third sector organisations
  - Support providers
  - Solicitors
  - Private landlords
  - People from several parts of the council

- 2.4 The event was very well-received. The morning included a presentation on the past, present and future of tackling homelessness in North Lincolnshire, a series of themed discussion groups, and discussions about the desirability and format of a Homelessness Forum.
- 2.5 The almost unanimous verdict was that the establishment of a Forum was a good idea for many reasons, but particularly improving services and outcomes for clients. Those attending felt that the main objectives of such a Forum should be:
- networking at practitioner level to achieve a more integrated approach and to avoid duplication
  - the sharing of news, information and good practice
  - improving mutual understanding of, and mapping, each organisation's roles, powers and constraints
  - practical problem-solving and understanding and removing barriers to service delivery
- 2.6 The first actual meeting of the Forum was held on 14 October and was, again, well-attended. The topics covered included:
- An update on recent news and events
  - a presentation about Homechoicelinks
  - information and discussion about the proposed changes to Local Housing Allowance
- 2.7 In future the Forum will meet quarterly. The intention is to include service-user representation now that the Forum is up and running. The intention is also to produce a quarterly newsletter for distribution to all relevant organisations and agencies.

### **3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 That the Cabinet Member notes the report for information.

### **4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 This report is for information only.

### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

- 5.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report. It is anticipated that the Homelessness Forum can be operated within existing resources.

### **6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

- 6.1 There are no statutory, environmental or risk implications arising from this report.

6.2 Improving liaison, co-ordination and networking between agencies involved in dealing with homelessness will benefit those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and others with serious housing problems, including minority and vulnerable households.

## **7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION**

7.1 As indicated, all relevant agencies have been consulted in the establishment of the Forum and will continue to be consulted about its future development. Service users will also be involved in and consulted about the future shaping of the Forum now that we are sure that the Forum will serve a useful purpose.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 That the Cabinet Member notes the content of this report.

SERVICE DIRECTOR NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report – N/a**