

**JOINT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY TRANSITION – HOUSING TASK GROUP  
12<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2009**

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**INTERIM HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY**

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**Purpose of the Report**

**To provide the task group with an opportunity to note the progress made in agreeing an interim homelessness strategy for the new council.**

**Executive Summary**

There is a requirement for a new Homelessness Strategy to be adopted by the new unitary authority by 1 April 2010. Failure to produce a strategy would leave the authority open to legal challenge and the associated costs.

Received guidance from Communities and Local Government (CLG) advised that in consideration that the five authorities within Wiltshire would attain a single status the requirement for a fully revised Homelessness Strategy is deferred until April 2010 rather than July 2008 and that action plans will be accepted as an interim measure.

The four districts approved the individual strategies in consideration of the guidance and these are considered to legitimately meet the requirements of the Act.

This report outlines the existing priorities identified by the four districts.

**Recommendations**

That the Wiltshire Housing Reference Partnership and Implementation Executive acknowledge:

- the current existing priorities as adopted by Council in the four district authorities
- that a reviewed strategy will be developed for Wiltshire ready for Cabinet approval in December 09

**Background**

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires housing authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their areas and formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on this review. Local authorities must regularly review their strategy and consult other local or public authorities, or voluntary organisations before adopting or modifying the strategy.

Under s.3(1) of the 2002 Act, a homelessness strategy means a strategy for:

- i) preventing homelessness in the district
- ii) securing that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people in the district who are or may become homeless
- iii) securing the satisfactory provision of support for people in the district who are or may become homeless or who have been homeless and need support to prevent them from becoming homeless

Homeless reviews must consider:

- i) the levels and likely future levels of homelessness in the district;
- ii) the activities and services provided which help to prevent homelessness, help to find accommodation for homeless and potentially homeless people, or provide support for them, including support to prevent them from becoming homeless again;
- iii) the resources available to the authority and to social services, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other agencies for providing these services.

The priorities identified by the districts for this interim strategy are:

- reduce the incidence of homelessness through prevention
- increase the supply of affordable housing and temporary accommodation
- improve homelessness and housing advice, administration and placements
- deliver high quality and a choice of services that meet individual needs
- create solutions for early intervention and prevention
- facilitate and enable partnership working to deliver holistic services