

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

12 April 2016

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

Response to Referral from Council on Young People and Homelessness

Final Decision-Maker	Communities, Housing and the Environment Committee
Lead Head of Service	Head of Housing and Community Services
Lead Officer and Report Author	John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee agrees to explore the promotion of a seminar on housing and instructs the Head of Housing & Community Services to report back in June 2016 with proposals for the Committee to consider.
2. That the Committee considers sending a delegation to other local housing authority areas to explore and make recommendations about best practice in tackling homelessness.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Committee: Communities, Housing & Environment Committee	12 April 2016
Council	

Response to Referral from Council on Young People and Homelessness

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 On 2 March 2016 Council received a motion from Cllr Paul Harper, which was then referred by Council to the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee to consider and respond to. This report provides an update to the Committee and provides recommendations in response to the original motion.
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The motion received at Council is set out in Appendix A. and relates to how households, particularly young people, will be able to resolve their housing. At the time of the meeting some councillors were lobbied by interested members of the public on the same topic.
- 2.2 Council agreed that the matter should be referred to the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee to consider in more detail. The Chairmen of the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee offered to meet informally with the members of the public to better understand their concerns and to inform the discussion that would take place at the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee.
- 2.3 The informal meeting was open to Councillors to attend and took place on 29 March 2016. Members of the public (or interested groups) who attended provided a range of views and also indicated that they would be undertaking a visit to Manchester City Council, in order to learn about best practice services and alternative delivery models.
- 2.4 Having carefully considered each part of the original motion, the meeting concluded with the following suggestions could be debated by the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee:
- (a) The interest group will undertake a visit to Manchester to explore best practice and report their findings back to the Council's Housing Service.
 - (b) A Multi-Agency Housing Seminar, bringing together relevant stakeholders to raise awareness of services being delivered to homeless households and to find long term solutions to reducing homelessness.
 - (c) The interest group would lobby local businesses and other agencies to seek funding to enable the Multi-Agency Housing Seminar to take place.

- (d) The Council should be encouraged to look at what other Councils are doing; best practice was identified in Manchester, Liverpool, Brighton and Bristol.
- 2.5 Officers from the Housing & Community Service will support the interest group as they gather information about best practice and evaluate suggestions as they arise. The outcomes to be achieved from the Multi-Agency Housing Seminar and how this will be delivered are matters that will be developed with the interest group and stakeholders. A further report providing more detail around these proposals will be given to the Committee on 21 June 2016.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee could agree the requests contained within the original motion to Council, however, following discussion with members of the public and Councillors attending the informal meeting this option is not recommended as the majority of the requests are being addressed in the way set out in Appendix A.
 - 3.2 The Committee can agree that officers support the production of a Multi-Agency Housing Seminar to explore ways of tackling the issue of homelessness.
 - 3.3 The Committee can choose to not act on any part of the motion to Council, although to do so might mean that the Council inadvertently misses an opportunity to deliver services differently that would help reduce instances of homelessness.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is contained in paragraph 3.2, as this proposal may help to prevent homelessness, providing a better outcome for households who find themselves in this acute form of housing need and also help to reduce the financial burden on the Council that arises out of the provision of temporary accommodation.
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5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 An informal meeting was held with Councillors and members of the public on 29 March 2015 that helped to inform this report.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 The interest group has pledged to explore best practice elsewhere within the UK (however, it is noted that the statutory provisions regarding homelessness are different in Wales and Scotland) and to seek sponsorship for a Multi-Agency Housing Seminar, to be reported back to officers to enable a further report to the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee.
- 6.2 Councillors who are either members or substitutes for the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee may want to consider joining the interest group or organising their own fact finding visits.

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The outcomes of a Multi-Agency Housing Seminar could enable more households threatened with homelessness to avoid, which would support both key priorities as homelessness can detrimentally affect a person's well-being and financial situation.	Head of Housing & Community Service
Risk Management		
Financial	There is no dedicated budget that could support the production of a Multi-Agency Housing Seminar and this issue will be addressed in the June report should the interest group be unable to source sufficient sponsors.	
Staffing	Supporting a Multi-Agency Housing Seminar will have to come from existing staff resources, which might have an impact on the delivery of daily services.	Head of Housing & Community Service
Legal		
Equality Impact Needs Assessment		
Environmental/Sustainable Development		
Community Safety		
Human Rights Act		

Procurement		
Asset Management		

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Motion referred from Council 2 March 2016

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Maidstone Borough Council: Maidstone Housing Strategy 2016 - 2020