

<b>Key Decision Required</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>In the Forward Plan</b>	<b>No</b>
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## CABINET

23 JANUARY 2015

### REFERENCE FROM COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE OF 17 NOVEMBER 2014

#### **A.1 HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND IMPACT ON HOMELESSNESS**

(Report Prepared by Colin Sweeney)

#### **BACKGROUND**

At its meeting held on 17 November 2014, the Committee received a joint presentation by the Head of Public Health and Well-being Commissioning from Essex County Council and this Council's Housing Needs and Strategic Policy Manager, on health inequalities within Essex and Tendring, and considered, in particular, the role of Tendring District Council when dealing with people deemed homeless.

Mr Chris French, Head of Public Health and Well-being Commissioning at Essex County Council spoke on the "Homeless Health – Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2014" and gave a breakdown of the categories of 3,000 or so homeless people in Essex.

In particular, Mr French spoke on the key areas where support was available to homeless persons. These included symptoms of mental health and the high-level of sufferers amongst homeless people; drugs and alcohol use and misuse levels; smoking; muscular and joint-related pains; dental issues; skin and wound infections and problems with feet.

In conclusion, Mr French spoke in relation to the low number of homeless persons who were currently undertaking some form of training or education and those who were employed. It was noted that a high percentage of homeless persons in Essex (83%) were not able to trace any guidance around work or further training but that the Primary Care Trust had been working with Beacon House, a Christian Charity Group, which worked three days per week in Tendring, offering support and other services, which were available to assist homeless persons.

Mr Peter Russell, Tendring District Council's Housing Needs and Strategic Policy Manager, provided Members of the Committee with an outline of the Council's responsibilities towards homeless persons. He explained that local authorities were legally-bound to have a homeless strategy in place and that the Council was due to have a new one published soon.

Mr Russell went on to explain the questions that were asked of applicants for social housing and that, since 1 April 2014, 973 approaches had been made to the Council's Housing Department for accommodation. He added that the main causes of homelessness were the loss of private or other contractual accommodation, relationship breakdowns (which included domestic violence) and persons being asked to leave by a parent, friend or relative.

Mr Russell said that the number of known people sleeping rough in Tendring over recent years had been no more than five and that the Council had in place, a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol, whereby if the temperature dropped below zero degrees, the Council would try and source accommodation, whether homeless persons were eligible to take advantage of this or not.

In conclusion, Mr Russell said that Tendring District Council operated a Deposit Guarantee Scheme, which many other local authorities did not offer.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS TO CABINET**

Cabinet is now asked to consider the recommendation of the Community Leadership and Partnerships Committee and determine its response if any:

The Committee **RECOMMENDS** to **CABINET** that, the Council gives consideration as to how it could better assist in addressing problems that were facing the homeless of the District, with particular consideration being given to what resources were available to support this.

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

Comments will be provided directly at the meeting.