

17 May 2013

Mr Andy Day
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**West Berkshire Council Liberal
Democrat Group**
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Dear Andy

Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2012 - 2017 – Call In

In accordance with Paragraph 6.4.5 of the Council's Constitution, I hereby give notice that the undersigned wish to call in the Executive decision in relation to **the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2012 - 2017** as agreed by the Executive on 9 May 2013.

The Executive Summary for this item as printed in the agenda papers for the Executive meeting on 9 May states: "A whole day's scrutiny into homelessness by the Overview & Scrutiny Management Commission was also held in November 2011, the findings of which have also been incorporated into the documents where appropriate." However, the only one of 12 subsequent recommendations from the OSMC that has been included in this strategy is number 9, and that is because this was largely already contained in the strategy. It is now too late to implement several other recommendations. It is surely bizarre that a whole day of officer and councillor time was spent hearing evidence from many agencies and homeless individuals to then ignore so many recommendations.

Therefore the reasons for the call in are as follows:

- A** The majority of recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission in the meeting of 11 December 2013 have been ignored, in particular:
1. "The Executive Member for Housing should work with other local agencies to agree an accepted methodology for the counting of rough sleepers. A report outlining the production process and count should be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission within 6 months of agreement."
 4. "The Executive Member for Housing should consider the production, either as part of the Homelessness Strategy or separately, of a 'reconnection' policy, to ensure that homeless people who have no local connection to West Berkshire are able to sustainably relocate to those places outside of the district with which they do have a link."
 5. "The Executive Member for Strategic Support should ensure that time is made available at a District Parish Conference for Housing officers to explain to

Councillors the content of, and rationale for, the Homelessness Strategy when agreed.”

6. “At the next revision of the Council’s Service Level Agreement with the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Executive Member for Strategic Support should consider the offer by SHELTER to assist with housing advice, so as to ensure that the document contains the requirement for the Bureau to provide a dedicated housing advisor.”
7. “Performance monitoring reports received from the Citizens Advice Bureau relating to homelessness (including all financial advice), which are sent to the Executive Member for Strategic Support should be routinely made available to the Executive Member for Housing and his Shadow.”
8. “The Executive Member for Housing should work, through the Local Government Association, the Government and especially the Valuation Office Agency, to achieve transparency of the factors and values taken into consideration by VOA when setting the Local Housing Allowance and, if possible, an appeal mechanism.”
10. “The Executive Member for Housing should ask Newbury Town Council to consider the provision of lockers to allow rough sleepers to store their possessions (for example sleeping bags) securely during the day.”
11. “The Executive Member for Housing should ask the Volunteer Centre West Berkshire to establish closer links with Loose Ends to ensure that any shortages of volunteers and other resources to enable them to provide a better service to their clients are met urgently and effectively.”
12. “Further investigation should be undertaken into the reasons why West Berkshire seems to have a very large proportion of young families facing homelessness whose friends and extended family are unwilling or unable to provide them with temporary housing/accommodation.”

B There is a lack of evidence in the review or strategy that the actions in the Action Plan have sufficient resources assigned to them, including the resources of partner agencies, to achieve what it sets out to do. For example:

- 1 What Council resources go into the homelessness forum?
- 2 Do other agencies attend?
- 3 How often does it meet?
- 4 Do other agencies send reps to meetings this council hosts that relate to homelessness?

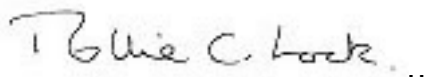
Yours sincerely

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Councillor Jeff Brooks


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Councillor Mollie Lock

3.  ..Councillor Keith Woodhams

4... Councillor Tony Vickers

5.  ...Councillor Roger Hunneman