

REPORT TO THE SAFER COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

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Area Affected:	County Borough Wide and the Gwent Region.
Suggested Scrutiny Activity:	<p>The Safer Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider the approach taken for developing the local homelessness review and regional homelessness strategy, and to feedback accordingly.• Review the progress that has been made in meeting the WAO recommendations for addressing homelessness.
Background:	<p>The introduction of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 placed a statutory duty on all local authorities in Wales to carry out a local homelessness review and formulate a homelessness strategy.</p> <p>As a result of this legislation, Welsh Government (WG) issued a Code of Guidance 'for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness'. Chapter 5 of this guidance provides more detailed information about the planning of homelessness services under Sections 50 to 52 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. The Guidance goes on to state that:</p> <p><i>The intention of this part of the legislation is to ensure that Local Authorities work systematically with partners to assess the nature and extent of homelessness in their areas and to plan service provision to prevent and relieve homelessness.</i></p> <p>Section 50 of the Code of Guidance states that local authorities must carry out a homelessness review of its areas and formulate and adopt a homelessness strategy to be in place by 31st December 2018.</p>
Key Points Made in the Report:	<p>Following publication of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, the Welsh Audit Office carried out a review of homelessness services in Wales, assessing whether local authorities and their partners were addressing homelessness demand through the development of appropriate and effective prevention approaches. The review concluded that more needs to be done by local authorities in Wales to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>This report reviews the approach that has been taken so far to develop a draft review and draft homelessness strategy and how effectively Torfaen is working towards meeting the recommendations of the WAO review.</p>
Key Areas for Investigation:	<p>Scrutiny Members are to identify opportunities for ensuring that the strategy effectively supports the prevention of homelessness locally and regionally, and ensure that the needs of households at risk of, or experiencing homelessness, are proactively and more suitably met through a range of service provision.</p> <p>Scrutiny Members to consider the progress made in meeting the WAO report recommendations and provide feedback.</p>