

Decision by Portfolio Holder



Report reference: HPS-006-2019/20
Date of report: 14-August-2019

**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Housing and Property Services

Author: Russell Wallace (Ext) 4303

Democratic Services: J Leither

Subject: Essex Prisoner Protocol

Decision: To adopt the Essex Prisoner Protocol

ADVISORY NOTICE: <i>A Portfolio Holder may not take a decision on a matter on which he/she has declared a Pecuniary interest. A Portfolio Holder with a non-pecuniary interest must declare that interest when exercising delegated powers.</i>	
I have read and approve/ do not approve (delete as appropriate) the above decision: Comments/further action required: None	
Signed: Cllr H Whitbread	Date: 22 nd August 2019
<i>Non-pecuniary interest declared by Portfolio Holder/ conflict of non-pecuniary interest declared by any other consulted Cabinet Member:</i> None	<i>Dispensation granted by Standards Committee:</i> Yes/No or n/a N/A
Office use only: Call-in period begins: 23 rd August 2019	Expiry of Call-in period: 2 nd September 2019

**After completion, one copy of this pro forma should be returned to
Democratic Services IMMEDIATELY**

Reason for decision:

That the Housing Portfolio Holder adopts the Essex Prisoner Protocol that was considered by the Stronger Communities Select Committee on 2 July 2019. The Select Committee have recommended acceptance.

Options considered and rejected:

Not to adopt the Essex Prisoner Protocol and therefore not to benefit from the work undertaken by the Essex Rehabilitation Company and the good practice by other Essex Council's and key agencies.

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Background Report:

1. The Essex Prisoner Protocol, attached at appendix 1, was initiated by the Essex Community Rehabilitation Company, an organisation that works with people serving their sentence in the prison and the community. Their purpose is to reduce offending, the risk of harm, and to improve the quality of life of those under their supervision and care.
2. The intention of the Protocol is to reduce the number of Essex Adult Offenders who leave custody without suitable accommodation to move into and to reduce the number of offenders who have to sleep rough.
3. On average the Council's Homeless Team deal with 6 cases a year that leave custody with no accommodation. With each of these cases, attempts would be made to access accommodation that is suitable for their needs. Arrangements would also be made to reconnect offenders to areas where they have no connection with the Epping Forest District. Additionally, Senior Homeless staff Members already attend the Multi Agency Protection Panel Arrangements (MAPPA) where identified high risk offenders are discussed well in advance of their release date. The Council also works closely with Churches Homeless Emergency Support Scheme (CHESS) who provide outreach support for identified rough sleepers.
4. The Council's duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 requires the it provides an open approach to all referrals to the Homeless Service. The Council has open referral arrangements in place under the Duty to Refer provisions. Adopting this protocol will improve referrals and ensure that all identified prisoners leaving custody without accommodation can be dealt with. Additionally, offenders sleeping rough or occupying unsuitable accommodation will also receive the same level of service.
5. The Essex Housing Officer Group, as well as other partner Agencies have been consulted and equally seeking to adopt this Protocol.
6. The Stronger Communities Select Committee considered the Protocol and recommended its adoption on 2 July 2019.

Resource Implications:

Nil

Legal and Governance Implications:

Housing Act 1996 Pt VII as amended, Crime and Disorder Act 1988.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

Nil.

Consultation Undertaken:

This protocol has been consulted upon through the Essex Housing Officers Group after initial work undertaken by the Essex Community Rehabilitation Company.

The Stronger Communities Select Committee considered the Protocol and recommended its adoption.

Background Papers:

Stronger Communities Select Committee report and minutes of 2 July 2019

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management:

No material risks have been identified as a result of adopting this protocol.

Key Decision Reference (Y/N): N

Equality Analysis:

The Equality Act 2010 requires that the Public Sector Equality Duty is actively applied in decision-making. This means that the equality information provided to accompany this report is essential reading for all members involved in the consideration of this report. The equality information is provided as an Appendix to the report.

<p>Initialed as original copy by Portfolio Holder:</p>
