

Executive

21 June 2018

Report of the Assistant Director – Housing & Community Safety

Homeless Strategy 2018-23 ‘Preventing Homelessness Together’ and action plan

Summary

1. It is a legal requirement to have a homeless strategy. The current strategy is until July 2018 and the Homelessness Strategy 2018-23 ‘Preventing Homelessness Together’ and action plan will replace it

Recommendations

2. The Executive is asked to:

Sign off the completed action plan 2013-18 and agree to adopt and publish the new Homelessness Strategy 2018-23 ‘Preventing Homelessness Together’ and action plan which outlines the national and local context affecting and contributing to homelessness and the actions that will be taken in York to address these issues.

- Reason – The Homelessness Strategy is a legal requirement. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places new duties on the Local Authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness and this strategy and action plan set out proposals to achieve this.

Background

3. There is a duty on all Local Authorities to provide an advice service to all homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. In addition the Local Authority has a duty to provide temporary accommodation for certain households in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by Homeless Reduction Act 2017).
4. The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 came into force on 3/4/18 and places duty on all Local Authorities to prevent homelessness to anyone at risk of homelessness within 56 days. This service is available to anyone within the district and will have an impact of future recording and statistics.

5. Historically (until 3/4/18) **Statutory homelessness** refers to those people who have made a homeless application to their local authority and have met the necessary criteria set out in Housing Act 1996 (Part 7) to be accepted as eligible for assistance (subject to immigration status), homeless, in priority need, unintentionally homeless and have a local connection. This group may include families, pregnant women and vulnerable single people.
6. **Non-statutory / non-priority homeless** tend to be single people or childless couples who are not assessed as being in priority need and were only entitled to 'advice and assistance' including support to access private rented accommodation, housing via North Yorkshire Home Choice ('waiting list') or supported housing.
7. **Rough sleepers** are people who are roofless / street homeless. This is a relatively small number of people when considering the wider population of York. The rough sleepers in York are known to the homeless service and they have been offered assistance with accommodation. Some of them refuse help others have been excluded from schemes because of their behaviour. There is a perception that people who beg are sleeping rough that is not always the case.
8. A robust strategy and action plan helped City of York Council in 2016 achieve 'Gold Standard' for homeless services
9. The Homeless Strategy action plan is monitored by Homeless Strategy Executive Group. A number of action points were deleted in 2015 action plan review. From 2015-18 there were 92 actions, of which over the 5 year action plan as superseded In the 2013-18 strategy and action plan 77% of the actions have been completed or on track, those that remain outstanding will be carried over to the 2018-23 strategy they including some longer term actions which require significant investment or are governed by legislation, such as the re-provision of Ordnance Lane, exploring the option of developing supported lodgings for adults, looking at use of family intervention tenancies, flexible tenancies, looking at alternative use of social housing (Houses in Multiple Occupation)
10. Important completed action points include (full details in appendix 1)
 - Reviewing and restructuring Housing Registrations to improve process and customer contact
 - Provision of dementia friendly accommodation (Glen Lodge)
 - Retender housing support contracts
 - Provision of a women only hostel
 - Set up Intensive Housing Management support scheme
 - Achieved Gold Standard for Housing Options services

- Improved multi-agency homeless training
- Reduction in use of B&B accommodation

Current position

11. As a result of the 2013-18 homeless strategy, action plan and focused work, statutory homeless has reduced in York and homeless prevention remains high.

12.

Figure 1 – Statutory Homeless Cases

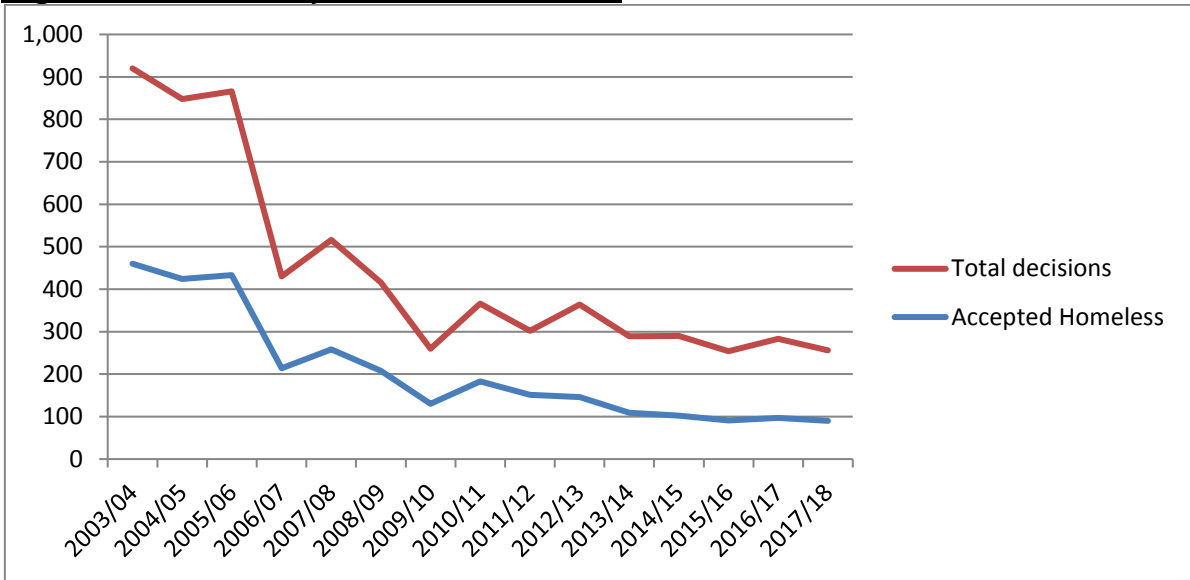
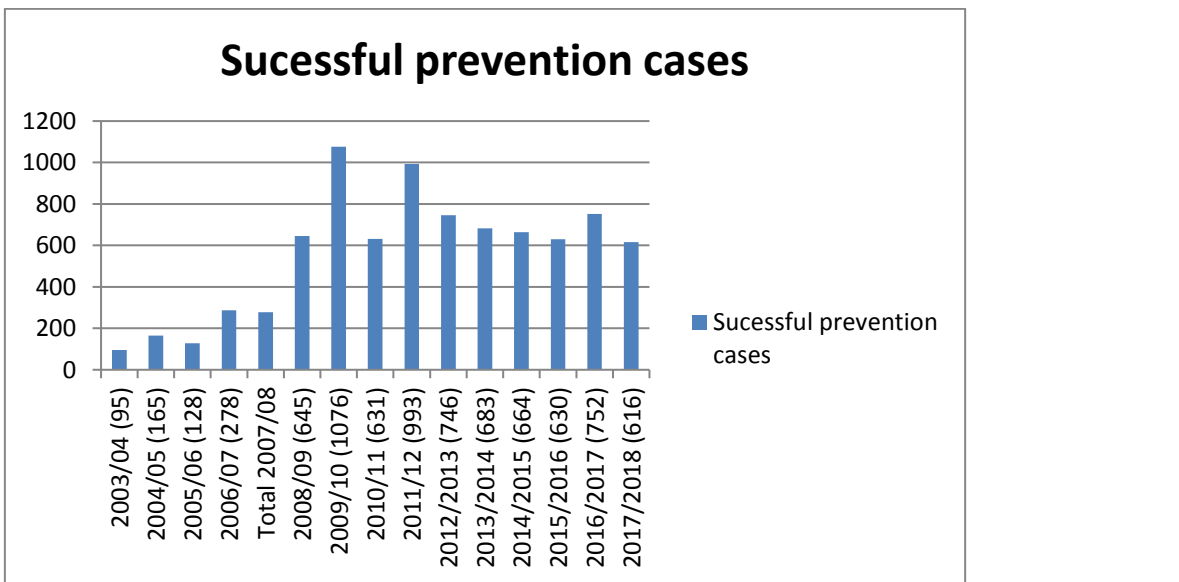
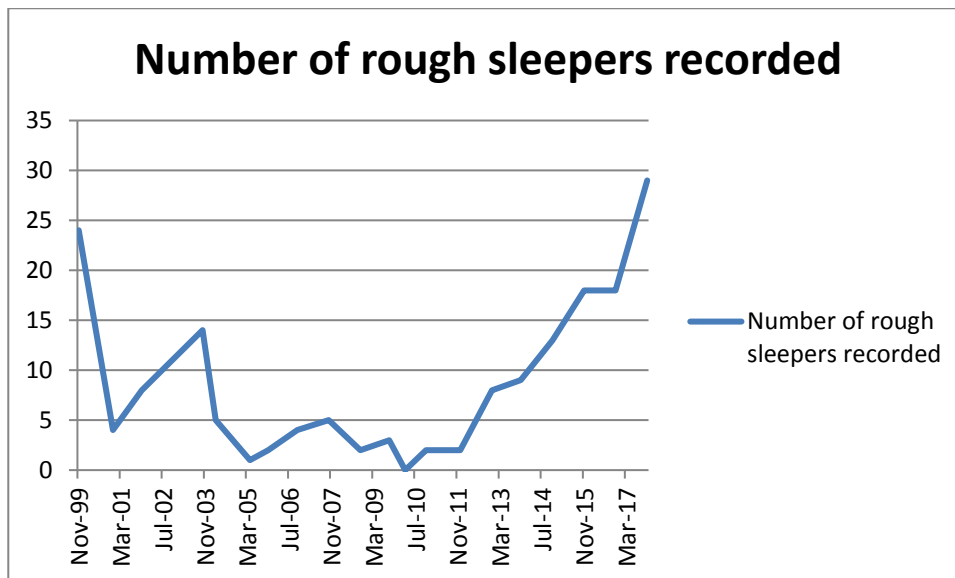


Figure 2 - Total Homeless Preventions



13. Despite considerable resources and a robust partnership approach, rough sleeping has increased in York.



Nov 10	Nov 11	Nov 12	Nov 13	Nov 14	Nov 15	Nov 16	Nov 17
2	2	8	9	13	18	18	29

14. There are a variety of resources in York providing services for people that are homeless:
- Advice via Housing Options Team and Salvation Army Early Intervention and Prevention Team
 - Resettlement hostels for single homeless including Union Terrace (formerly known as Arc Light, Robinson Court, Peasholme Centre, Howe Hill for Young People, Changing Lives Shared Housing, Safe and Sound Homes (SASH), Restore)
 - Additional emergency accommodation through resettlement services: No Second Night Out initiative, Severe weather provision and Nightstop
 - Additional support for rough sleepers with complex needs via Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM)
 - Temporary Accommodation (for statutory homeless) at Ordnance Lane, Howe Hill family block, Crombie House and Holgate Road (to be replaced in 2019 with James House)
15. The 2018-23 homeless strategy and action plan will focus on tackling rough sleeping and meeting the new duties under Homeless Reduction Act 2017 to prevent and relieve (help those at risk of homeless or who are homeless find alternative accommodation) through the provision and development of appropriate services, joint protocols, multi-agency working and targeted action.
16. The homeless strategy runs alongside and compliments the children's care strategy and link to mental health strategy

17. In light of the increase and concern about rough sleeping in York a strategic aim has been dedicated to this field of work
18. The homeless strategy action plan identifies 5 strategic aims.
 - To Reduce Rough Sleeping by 50% by 2022 and eliminating rough sleeping by 2027
 - To prevent homelessness by improving the information and services that we provide in particular around Homeless Reduction Act 2017
 - To ensure that there is accommodation available to people who are homeless
 - To ensure that there is support available to people that are homeless
 - To maintain and develop partnership working and strategic direction
19. Funding for housing advice, accommodation and housing support services are predominantly through CYC General Fund and Ministry Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and CYC Adult social care commissioning (housing related support).

Targets and strategies

20. Future targets are:
 - To reduce rough sleeping by 50% by 2022 and end rough sleeping by 2027 (national target)
 - To ensure use of temporary accommodation does not increase beyond capacity. James House will open in spring 2019 and will have 57 units and while the numbers in temporary accommodation as of 31.3/18 were low (49), we anticipate the impact of the new Homeless Reduction Act 2017 may see a rise in the need for temporary accommodation, albeit in theory for a shorter period of time.
 - To ensure statutory homelessness does not increase, as of 31/3/18 the total number of accepted homeless was 90. Again we envisage a larger footfall as a result of Homeless Reduction Act, but hopefully a corresponding increase of prevention / relief cases.
 - To increase preventions to 900 by 2023 (currently 616)
 - Ensure the use of Bed and Breakfast for families is only for emergencies and then for no longer than 6 weeks
 - Ensure no young people (16 and 17) are placed in B&B
 - To ensure the Homeless Strategy links to / works alongside other strategies in particular: Sub Regional Housing Strategy, Children's Plan, Children's Care Strategy Domestic Abuse Strategy, Supported Housing Strategy, Tenancy Strategy and Private Sector Housing Strategy and the Mental Health Strategy..

National and local changes

21. There are a number of national and local changes which have occurred since the strategy review in 2015 in particular
 - Homeless Reduction Act 2017
 - Introduction of Universal Credit and a series of welfare benefit reforms
 - Housing and Planning Act 2016 which sets out flexible tenancies (as of yet not introduced)
 - Right to Rent (Immigration Act 2014)
22. The Local Authority is committed to retaining quality statutory homeless services, ensuring there are a range of homeless prevention tools and a range of supported housing to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness move in a planned way.
23. There are obvious links to the provision of accommodation in York including access to the private rented sector and development opportunities for social housing and shared ownership.

Future commitment

24. The Local Authority is committed to tackling rough sleeping in York. York will be bidding for the MHCLG rough sleeper grant to help tackle this issue and has committed money from CYC budgets to provide additional resources (Private Rented Sector and Innovation bid to services emergency bed spaces)
25. Agencies are committed to working together through a range of forums, strategic groups, joint training and joint assessment systems.
26. The delivery of the homeless strategy and action plan 2018-23 is dependent upon the commitment of agencies, in particular to:
 - The effective use of social housing stock, using new models of working (Housing First) alongside traditional models (resettlement)
 - Where appropriate, the use of fixed term tenancies, family intervention tenancies, demoted tenancies and intermediate rents as tools to prevent homelessness and make effective use of stock
 - Effective partnership working in particular in providing additional emergency beds and supporting rough sleepers into accommodation

- Working with partner agencies to ensure those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness have adequate support to help them retain / find alternative accommodation
- Decision and if agreed implementation of new allocations policy
- Assistance people into private rented sector through YorHome (social lettings agency) and use of Bond Guarantee Scheme, rent in advance
- New build programme of affordable housing in the city
- Providing high standard supported housing (hostel) through a redevelopment project (James House) and identified need to upgrade supported housing buildings
- Work with statutory agencies to implement Duty to Refer (Homeless Reduction Act 2017)

Proposal

27. Option 1 – To sign off the 2013-18 action plan and agree this report and adopt and publish the homeless strategy and action plan 2018-23.

Option 2 – That further amendments are required to the report and the updated homeless strategy action plan before publication

Analysis

28. The development of the homeless strategy report review and action plan gives a framework for CYC Homeless Services and partner agencies to work together to improve services and tackle homelessness in York until 2023 and takes account of current and predicted trends and changes affecting the sector
29. The action plan will be reviewed regularly by Homeless Strategy Executive Group and republished in 2020. A Homeless Review and performance report is published annually
30. The Local Authority is committed to retaining quality statutory homeless services, ensuring there are a range of homeless prevention tools and a range of supported housing to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness move in a planned way.
31. The Local Authority is committed to the provision of high quality housing advice to all those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Staffing

has increased to meet the anticipated demands placed on Local Authorities in response to the Homeless Reduction Act 2017.

32. The Homeless Strategy Executive Group will continue to oversee the progress of the Homeless Strategy and updated action plan. Membership of this group is multi-disciplinary and includes
33. The following new partners will be invited to sit on the group:
 - City of York Council
 - Changing Lives representing York Resettlement Group
 - Safe and Sound Homes representing Youth Homeless Strategy Group
 - Citizens Advice York representing voluntary sector agencies
 - York Housing Association representing Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)
 - Department of Work and Pensions
 - National Probation Service
 - Community Rehabilitation Team
 - York health and wellbeing board
 - Clinical Commissioning Group
 - Tees, Esk, Wear Valley NHS Trust
 - York Children's Trust

Consultation

34. The strategy and action plan were developed as result of research, data and consultation events (with staff, stakeholders and customers) in 2017.
35. Comments were sought on the draft strategy and action plan from partner agencies via a series of forum and strategic meetings
36. The Health, Housing and Adult Social Care Policy and Scrutiny Committee called in the report on 23/4/18 and made comment
37. The Homeless Health Needs Assessment feeds into the strategy and action plan and was written following stakeholder and customer consultation

Council Objectives

38. The Homeless strategy is closely link to priorities within the Council Plan 2015-19:
 - A prosperous city for all where local businesses can thrive and residents have good quality jobs, housing and opportunities
 - A focus on frontline services to ensure all residents, particularly the least advantaged can access services and community facilities

Implications

39. The implications arising from this report are:

Financial

40. There are no direct implications as a result of this report. However, some elements of the action plan will be subject to funding. Any decision on funding will form part of the council's formal annual budget process.
41. There are financial and socio-economic costs to the city if homelessness and planned housing services are not provided

Equalities Implications

42. An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed for the Homeless Strategy 2018-23 (to be completed)
43. A community impact assessment has been completed for the review and concludes that the action plan address needs of vulnerable groups, in particular in the following interest groups: age, disability, gender, gender realignment, pregnancy and maternity, race and sexual orientation (to be completed)

Legal Implications

44. There is a legal requirement to have a homeless strategy and the provision of a homeless service is a statutory requirement under Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002.
45. That services adhere to national Guidance on "Provision of Accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who maybe homeless and/or require accommodation".
46. That the 2018-23 strategy and action plan and subsequent service delivery takes account of the statutory responsibilities placed on the Local Authority under Homeless s Reduction Act 2018.
- That the 2018-23 strategy and action plan and subsequent service delivery takes account of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Risk Management

47. The introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 places new responsibilities on Local Authorities.
48. The legislation increases the number of legal decisions and increases the risk of legal challenges and potential costs

- 49. We are uncertain what services will be required in the future and use of temporary accommodation may (or may not) increase
- 50. Staffing has been increased by 2 (1 Housing Options Worker and 1 Housing Options Support Worker) but we anticipate a 100% increase in workload which may not be sustainable. Previously reported at The Health, Housing and Adult Social Care Policy and Scrutiny Committee 13/9/17
- 51. There is uncertainty nationally around future funding of supported housing and a sustainable business model.
- 52. This strategy and action plan aims to pre-empt changes and mitigate / prepare for future environment
- 53. That there is significant public sympathy across the city in respect of the plight of people that are homeless which often manifests itself in negative publicity in particular via social media against the council despite the hard work and commitment of staff.

Contact Details

Author: **Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**
Becky Ward **Tom Brittain** Assistant Director Housing and
 Service Manager, Housing Community Safety
 Options and Support

Dept Name HHASC **Report** **Date** 16/5/18
 Tel No. 01904 554040 **Approved**

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all* **All**

For further information please contact the author of the report

Appendixes

- Appendix 1 - Updated Homeless Strategy action plan 2013-18
- Appendix 2 – Preventing Homeless Together – Homeless Strategy 2018-23
- Appendix 3 – Preventing Homeless Together Homeless Strategy Action plan 2018-23

Background papers
 One Planet assessment