

Report of the Assistant Director – Housing & Community Safety

## **Homeless Strategy Annual Review 2017/18**

### **Summary**

1. This report looks at the activity governed by the Housing Act 1996, the Homelessness Act 2002 and the City of York Council's Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018 in respect of the financial year 2017/18. The primary focus is to report on prevention work, the trends of statutory homelessness and rough sleepers.
2. The report identifies the new duties placed on the Local Authority under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017.
3. The report identifies targets and priorities for 2018/19.
4. The report incorporates the work and contribution of partner agencies in delivery of a comprehensive service to homeless households across York, many of whom are the most socially excluded people in society. Each agency contributes to this success and is a vital part of the jigsaw.

### **Background and overview of service**

5. 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.
6. The remit of the work carried out by the Homeless Service (which incorporates Housing Options, Housing Registrations, Resettlement and Temporary Accommodation) is set out in legislation and in the City's Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 '*A City Partnership to prevent homelessness*'. The current action plan identifies actions to tackle homelessness and develop services.

7. The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 states that the advice service must be designed to meet the needs of specific groups:
  - Care leavers
  - People released from prison or youth detention centres
  - Former members of the regular armed forces
  - Victims of domestic abuse
  - People leaving hospital
  - People suffering mental illness
  - Any other group identified by the Local Authority as being at particular risk of homelessness
8. Under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, the statutory duty placed on the Local Authority for anyone who is at risk of homeless within 56 days and eligible, is to help prevent homelessness. No account is taken of local connection, priority need or intentionality at this stage. All customers must have a personal housing plan.
9. If unsuccessful, the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 places a statutory duty to relieve homelessness (assist in finding alternative accommodation) for a further 56 days. Local connection criteria apply at this stage. No account is taken of priority need or intentionality at this stage. All customers must have a personal housing plan
10. The Local Authority cannot make a decision under s.193 (Main duty), s.191 (Intentionally Homeless) or s.192 (No Priority Need) until the 56 day relief duty has been met.
11. Historically, in York, homeless prevention services and statutory homelessness assessments are carried out by the council's Housing Options Team, based at West Offices. The Salvation Army, Early Intervention and Prevention Team provide specialist advice to single homeless (18+), the Youth Homeless Workers provide specialist advice to young people aged 16 and 17 that are homeless and the Specialist Housing adviser (frail elderly and physically disabled).
12. The Homeless Strategy 2013-18 sets out 5 strategic aims which have been amended in the Housing Options and Homeless Strategy Action Plan to:
  - a. **Strategic aim 1.** Ensure people who are at risk of homelessness are aware of and have access to the services they may need to prevent it.

- b. **Strategic aim 2.** Ensure the provision of, and fair access to, accommodation sufficient to meet the identified housing needs
  - c. **Strategic aim 3.** Ensure that people with housing related support needs have these fully assessed and have access to service required to sustain successful independent living and prevent homelessness
  - d. **Strategic aim 4.** Ensure that effective multi-agency and partnership working occurs across all services to prevent homelessness and provide appropriate accommodation and support to meet the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
  - e. **Strategic aim 5.** Deliver and develop early intervention strategies to tackle predicted trends in homelessness.
13. In the 2013-18 strategy and action plan 74%of the actions have been completed, only 2 have not started and a number of uncompleted actions will be carried over to the 2018-23 strategy
14. Important completed action points include (see appendix 1)
- Reviewing and restructuring Housing Registrations to improve process and customer contact
  - Provision of dementia friendly accommodation (Glen Lodge)
  - Re-tender 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

## **Targets**

15. The council's targets for the service are based upon The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) priorities and our local priorities as set out in the Homeless Strategy.

## Performance Targets – 2017/18

- A Local Authority has a statutory duty to give advice to anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness. In conjunction with partner agencies the focus is to prevent homelessness / re-house in a planned way. In 2017/18 there were 616 prevention cases and homeless acceptances (under Housing Act 1996) was 90 which is below the target of 100. Target achieved.
- The target for reducing the number of households placed in temporary accommodation for 2017/18 was 62. The actual outturn was 49. This is a significant achievement in light of ongoing housing and welfare benefit pressures.
- That B&B for families should only be used in emergencies and then for no more than 6 weeks. As of 31/3/18 there were no households in B&B. Target achieved
- To reduce rough sleepers to 18. This has not been met as in November 2017 the official submission was 29. A report was presented to Executive to look at ways of tackling this issue, resulting in the securing of additional resources for 2018/19.
- To achieve housing performance targets within the departmental service plan around voids and rent arrears. While rent arrears have reduced in Howe Hill and Peasholme, they have increased at Ordnance Lane, due to Universal Credit.
- Deliver action points set out within Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 'A City Partnership to prevent homelessness' action plan within identified time scales. Target achieved.

### **Key Points 2017/18**

16. The details of the activity and performance of the service are contained in appendix 1 and set out a comprehensive picture of the excellent services provided across York.
17. In light of the current economic situation and changes to services the key points of this report are:
  - The number of homeless preventions had stabilised after an exceptional return in 2016-17 (616 cases in 2017/18). Prevention remains a vital part of the work, contributes to the reduction in

statutory homelessness and have been integrated into statutory duties' placed on Local Authorities in Homeless Reduction Act 2017

- Statutory homelessness has decreased in York. There were 90 accepted homeless households in 2017/18, a reduction from 97 but service achieved target in 2017/18
- Housing Options remains busy with **2747** (contacts) of which **1092** are in depth interviews/cases. A previous report (Homeless Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens Money (second report on 22/11/17) anticipated an increase in footfall – nationally it is estimated a 25% increase. Current caseload is approximately 600 full investigation / cases per annum and a further 400 individual advice cases. This equates to 1250 full investigation cases.
- The Specialist Housing Adviser exceeded targets

	level 2 advice and information	level 3 casework
2017/18 (Target) Actual	(250) 321	(150) 151

- Despite ongoing work, commitment of agencies, continued resources and new flexible methods of working the number of rough sleepers in York has increased to 29(Nov 2017) and is an area of concern.

### **In Year Service Improvement**

18. A number of significant service improvements were achieved in 2017/18 (further details in appendix 1):
19. Throughout 2017/18 significant work has continued both internally and with partner agencies to improve the direct service to customers and the overall provision, in particular:
  - The severe weather provision was extended into March 2018 due to the extreme weather.
  - Work started on the new temporary accommodation (57 units) at James House. Completion date January 2019
  - Expansion of CYC resettlement hostels (additional 3 permanent beds)

- Agreement to employ 2 new workers (Housing Options Worker and Housing Options Support Worker) to meet demands of Homeless Reduction Act 2017
- The preparation / training / updating website and leaflets to prepare for Homeless Reduction Act 2017
- Agreement following motion at Executive Council on 23/1/18 to appoint a Private Sector Worker and tender for emergency bed provision to assist rough sleepers into accommodation
- Achieving the commitment to provide housing for 63 Syrian refugees via private rented sector
- Older Persons Worker – reconfigured to Specialist Housing Adviser and permanent funding confirmed
- Making Every Adult matter (MEAM) permanent funding confirmed
- Next Steps initiative – Peasholme Charity new project with funding from Nationwide Building Society and Police Commissioner
- Completion of 61 additional rented units including 27 units at Glen Lodge (Independent Living Community with care)

### **Forthcoming projects and priorities – 2018/19**

20. The following work is identified in the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2013-18 or in the forthcoming Homeless Strategy action plan 2018-23
- To adopt 2018-23 Homeless Strategy ‘Preventing Homelessness Together’ (due for sign off June 2018)
  - To embed and develop service to meet statutory duties under Homeless Reduction Act 2017
  - To make a decision about the allocation policy and delivery of housing registrations service (North Yorkshire Home Choice partnership to continue or York only approach to be adopted) (due for consideration June 2018)
  - To ensure new proposals under Universal Credit – supported housing payments are introduced
  - Review the use and consider investment /re-design opportunities of existing social housing stock to meet the needs of complex / vulnerable customers in particular to mitigate medium and long term impact of welfare benefit reform.

- To complete and relocate people living in current hostels under Homeless Reduction Act 2017 (relief duty) or Housing Act 1996 (full duty) to James House
- To reduce rough sleeping in York
- Agree targets for 2018/19

	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2017/18 target</b>	<b>Reason</b>
No of households in temporary accommodation	56 (actual 62)	62 (actual 49)	62	Do not know impact of Homeless Reduction Act
No of households accepted as priority need	100 (actual 97)	100 (actual 90)	100	Do not know impact of Homeless Reduction Act
No of rough sleepers	12 (actual 18)	18 (actual 29)	15	National target to reduce rough sleepers by 50% by 2022.
Not to use B&B for 16 or 17 year olds	0 (actual 0)	0 (actual 0)	0	
Not to use B&B for families, other than in emergencies and then for no longer than 6 weeks	0 (actual 0)	0 (actual 0)	0	

Statistical reporting will change on 3/4/18 due to Homeless Reduction Act 2017

### **Consultation**

21. Consultation has taken place with stakeholders, partners and customers regarding Homeless Strategy 2018-23.
22. Consultation has taken place with stakeholders, partners and public including statutory consultation period with registered Social Landlords in

respect of proposed allocations policy.

### **Options**

23. Option 1.

Note the contents of the report and agree the priorities and targets for 2018/19 as set out in paragraph 20.

24. Option 2

Note the contents of the report but recommend alternative priorities and targets for 2018/19.

### **Analysis**

25. The report and appendix identifies current strategic aims (documented in the homeless strategy ' A City Partnership to prevent homelessness' 2013-18).
26. The report and appendix identifies future targets and action in line with draft Homelessness Strategy 2018-23 'Preventing Homelessness Together' to identify the priorities for the forthcoming year.
27. The work and services provided by the Local Authority and partner agencies within the homeless sector are designed to both prevent homelessness and assist those who are homeless. The targets and priorities are practical actions to assist in meeting this target.

### **Council Objectives**

28. 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**

#### **Financial Implications**

29. There are no direct financial implications to this report, although there is evidence that by not investing in preventative measures there is a



greater cost to the city in the long-term through failure to meet targets and potential for an increase in homelessness.

30. York received £9,000 IT grant and £68,367 new burdens money over 3 years to implement the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 funding an additional Housing Options Worker and Housing Options Support Worker.

### **Equalities Implications**

31. A community impact assessment (CIA) has been completed for the housing options and homeless strategy and allocations policy. Individual CIAs will be completed for major pieces of work outlined in this report.

### **Legal Implications**

32. The provision of a homeless service is a statutory requirement under Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002. New statutory responsibilities to prevent homelessness have been placed on Local Authorities in new Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and a new Code of Guidance has been published.
33. Services must adhere to national Guidance on “Provision of Accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation”.
34. National good practice states that no young person 16 or 17 should be in B&B, that no family should be placed in B&B unless in an emergency and then for no more than 6 weeks.
35. There are financial risks via judicial challenge if the service does not meet its statutory duty and as a result of Ombudsmen complaints if CYC fails to act within its statutory duties regarding homelessness.

### **Risk Management**

36. There is a continued risk that due to current economic climate and changes at a national level, unless mitigation can be put in place to support the most vulnerable, we will see an increase in homelessness within the city. York has an increased number of people rough sleeping despite the commitment of agencies and work to reduce this is a priority. Shelter has predicted national increases in rough sleeping over the next decade.
37. The risk/s associated with the recommendation of this report are assessed at a net level below 16. The risks have been assessed as

moderate at 14, the strategy will be regularly monitored at the Homeless Strategy Steering Group.

### Recommendations

38. The Committee is asked to:
- a. Note the progress made by the service;
  - b. Agree the priorities and targets for 2018/19 as set out in paragraph 19.

**Reason** – To ensure the council continues to meet the statutory duties under Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and Homeless Reduction Act 2017) and supports the most vulnerable in society.

### Contact Details

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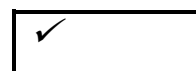
**Report  
Approved**



**Date** 10 May 2018

**Wards Affected:**

**All**



**For further information please contact the author of the report**

### Appendix 1

Homeless Review Appendix 1 2017/18

**Background Papers:** (provided upon request):

[2013-18 Homelessness Strategy](#) and completed action plan

## **Glossary:**

B&B – Bed and Breakfast

BGS – Bond Guarantee Scheme

CAY – Citizens Advice York

HHASC – Health, Housing and Adult Social Care (Directorate)

CBL – Choice Based Lettings (North Yorkshire Home Choice)

CIA – Community Impact Assessment

CRC – Community Rehabilitation Company

CYC – City of York Council

DCLG – Department Communities and Local Government (recently renamed MHCLG Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government)

IDAS – Independent Domestic Abuse Service

MEAM – Making Every Adult Matter

NPS – National Probation Service

NYHC – North Yorkshire Home Choice

RSL – Registered Social Landlord

SAP – Single Access Point

TEWV – Tees, Esk, Wear Valley NHS Trust

YOT – Youth Offending Team