

Cabinet

July 19th 2011

Report of the Cabinet Member for Health, Housing and Adult Social Services

Homeless Review 2010/11

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 2008-13 in respect of the financial year 2010/11. The primary focus is to report on prevention work, the trends of statutory homelessness and the work of the Resettlement Services and Youth Homeless Services to outline service developments throughout the year and future targets.

Background

2. There is a duty on all Local Authorities to provide an advice service to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness in addition to the provision of accommodation for certain households in accordance with Housing Act 1996. The remit of the work is set out in legislation and in the Homelessness Strategy 2008-13 and the Resettlement and Youth Homeless Action Plans. The management of the official travellers sites is also part of this services brief.
3. The Homeless Strategy 2008-13 sets out 4 strategic aims which have been amended in the Housing Options and Homeless Strategy Action Plan 2011-13 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 the effective co-ordination of all service providers, across all sectors whose activities contribute to preventing homelessness and meeting the accommodation and support needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Following the consultation this strategic aim has been changed to *'Ensure the 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.'*

Current and Ongoing Targets

4. The Communities and Local Government (CLG) and City of York Council targets for 2010/11 were to:
- Reduce use of temporary accommodation by 5% by 2011 – from 79 to 75;
 - Ensure the use of Bed and Breakfast for families and young people (16 and 17) is only for emergencies and then for no longer than 6 weeks;
 - Increase homeless prevention by 5% from 1076 to 1130;
 - Following publication of 'No One Left Out: Communities Ending Rough Sleeping' by CLG target to eradicate rough sleeping by 2012;
 - Achieve housing performance targets;
 - Deliver actions points set out within Homelessness Strategy 2008-13, Resettlement and Youth Homeless Action plans within identified time scales;
 - Contribute to achieving the Local Area Agreement targets;

Key Points

5. The details of the activity and performance of the service are contained in appendix 1. In light the current economic situation and changes to services the key points of this report are:
- The number of homeless preventions (i.e. existing accommodation sustained or alternative accommodation secured) has reduced, figures for 2010 /11 have reduced from 1076 cases

to 631. Significant increases in homeless preventions were achieved in 2009/10 and very challenging targets were set to increase the number of homeless preventions in 2010/11 which were always going to be difficult to achieve in the current economic climate. In addition to this the reluctance of private landlords and lettings agencies to work with our customer groups has also impact on our performance, although it should be noted that there are a small but valuable number who continue to work with us;

- There has been an increase in number of homeless acceptances to 183 (from 130). This trend is constant throughout England and Wales;
- The number of rough sleepers has remained low throughout the year. The quarter 3 submission to government (based on new assessment criteria) was 2. Those that remain street homeless are encouraged to work with Salvation Army Early Intervention and Prevention team to resolve their situation;
- The number of households in temporary accommodation has increased due to a very difficult and demanding year. The target originally set in 2009/10 was 110 and following tremendous success in it was reduced to 75. The final number in temporary accommodation as of 31/3/11 was 94 which, when considered against in the context of the economic climate, is still a significant achievement.

Service improvement - 2010-11

6. A number of service improvements were achieved in 2010/11:

- Relocation of Housing Options service to Library Square;
- Confirmation of the continuation of Family Intervention Programme (Catalyst Project);
- Transfer of Bond Guarantee Scheme to CYC;
- Continuation of YorHome (social lettings agency) with 50 properties managed as at 31/3/11;
- Expansion of Single Access Point (supported housing gateway scheme) into resettlement services and retention of services in 2011/12;

- Continuation of multi-agency 'Accredited training' – now 59 'qualified' staff providing housing advice across partner agencies;
- Project 92 (Teenage Parent Housing Support Project) met the DCFS targets of working intensively with 30 teenage parents each year, plus a further 70 vulnerable young people at risk of becoming a teenage parent in the hostels. Project 92 has intensively engaged 67 teenage parents and their babies/ children and 143 vulnerable young people and plus 25 parents who have occasional contact (attending activities);
- Joint working with Housing Benefit to tackle Housing Benefit and Welfare benefit changes introduced in April 2011.
- Agreement to upgrade electricity on Gypsy and Traveller sites;
- Launch of Gypsy and Traveller newsletter;
- Review of Homeless Strategy Action Plan 2011-13;
- Review young peoples joint protocol in light of recent court ruling G v LB Southwark and Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) & CLG Guidance on "Provision of Accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who maybe homeless and/or require accommodation";
- Successful provision of emergency accommodation during severe weather on December / January – providing emergency accommodation for 17 people during this period;
- Provision of an pro-active responsive service alongside Adult Social Care and Housing Estate Management / Repairs Team to tackle the flooding in December 2010 (resulting from burst water pipes)
- Improved inter-departmental working with Social Services in light of complex eligibility (immigration) cases and referrals under National Assistance Act 1948;
- In principle agreement to develop a young persons 'Places of Change' hostel – temporarily at Howe Hill and to continue funding 2 Youth Education Workers in 2011/12;
- Establishment of resettlement panel

Forthcoming projects - 2011/12

7. The following work is identified in the Housing Options and Homelessness Action plan 2011-13 and will be given priority within the team in 2011/12:

- Develop Howe Hill hostel as a young people Places of Change Project on a temporary basis, proposed introduction late 2011;
- Streamlining the Housing Options Team to a generic service;
- Work to tackle the issues that are associated with homelessness such as Worklessness, incorporating advice around employment and training into the advice and assistance;
- Developing the Housing Options model to widen the information and advice available to specific groups such as those with disability and the elderly;
- Re-provision of Ordnance Lane – target date 2013
- Completion of electricity upgrade to travellers sites
- Work with City Strategy colleagues to ensure the Local Development framework (LDF) takes account of housing need of travellers & show people;
- Introduction of sub-regional 'North Yorkshire Home Choice' choice based lettings scheme;
- Lead Local Authority for sub regional work around rough sleeping (Communities and Local Government funded)
- The need to prepare for the potential impact as a result of the changes to the benefit system.
- Provision of mental health accommodation
- Continued expansion of YorHome and development of an arms length delivery model

Consultation

8. During 2010/11 there has been significant consultation as part of the Homeless Strategy Review and concluded in the publication of the Housing Options and Homeless Strategy Action Plan 2011-13. This involved both stakeholders and customers.

Council Objectives

8. The Homeless strategy is closely link to a number of strategies and priorities with the new Council Plan.

Implications

Financial Implications

9. 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 trough failure to met targets and pro-actively address homelessness.

Equalities Implications

10. An equalities impact assessment has been completed for the housing options and homeless strategy to ensure that equalities and diversity are at the forefront of the service.

Legal Implications

11. The provision of a homeless service is a statutory requirement under Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002. 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”.

Risk Management

12. The risk is that due to current economic climate that homelessness continues to increase, putting significant stains on the homeless and HB services.
13. That short term funded projects are not refunded (YorHome, Single Access Point) or that services provided by external agencies are reduced due to funding cuts
14. 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

15. The Cabinet is asked to:
 - a. note the contents of the report

- b. Agree the priorities for 2011/12 as set out in paragraph 50, the targets and the forthcoming plan.

Reason – To ensure the council continues to meet its statutory responsibilities and supports the most vulnerable in society.

Contact Details

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**Report
Approved**



Date 26/5/11

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

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:(provided upon request):

2008-13 Homelessness Strategy

2011-13 Housing Options and Homeless Strategy Action Plan (Review)

Glossary:

B&B - Bed and Breakfast

BGS - Bond Guarantee Scheme

CAB - Citizens Advice Bureau

CBL - Choice Based Lettings

CLG - Communities and Local Government (now Department Communities and Local Government)

CYC - City of York Council

RSL - Registered Social Landlord

SP - Supporting People

YOT - Youth Offending Team