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**Decision Session - Executive Member for  
Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods**

**12 October 2015**

Report of the Assistant Director – Housing & Community Safety

**Update – Homeless Strategy Action Plan 2013-18**

**Summary**

1. This report sets out any significant national and local changes since the publication of the Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 ‘A City Partnership to prevent homelessness’
2. It is a legal requirement to have a homeless strategy. The current strategy 2013-18 was adopted in July 2013 with an action point to ‘Review Homeless Strategy Action Plan’ with July 15 being the proposed timescale.
3. In addition to the review, the council has recently undertaken an assessment of the homeless service as part of the national ‘Gold Standard’ challenge. This has identified a number of areas for improvement which are also addressed in this report.

**Recommendations**

4. The Executive Member is asked to:
  - a. Agree to and publish the report which contains national and local changes since the publication of the Homeless Strategy in 2013 and takes account of consultation findings.
  - b. Agree to adopt and publish the updated action plan which will run alongside the current Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 ‘A City Partnership to prevent homelessness’
  - c. Confirm Member commitment to the principle of preventing homelessness, tackling the causes of homelessness and ensuring that City of York provides an appropriate service to meet the statutory requirement under Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002.

Reason – The Homelessness Strategy is a legal requirement. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide advice, and information services to anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness. The local Authority has a duty to provide temporary accommodation to homeless households (criteria apply under Housing Act 1996). A review is necessary to incorporate current trends, legal changes, financial constraints and service requirements.

## **Background**

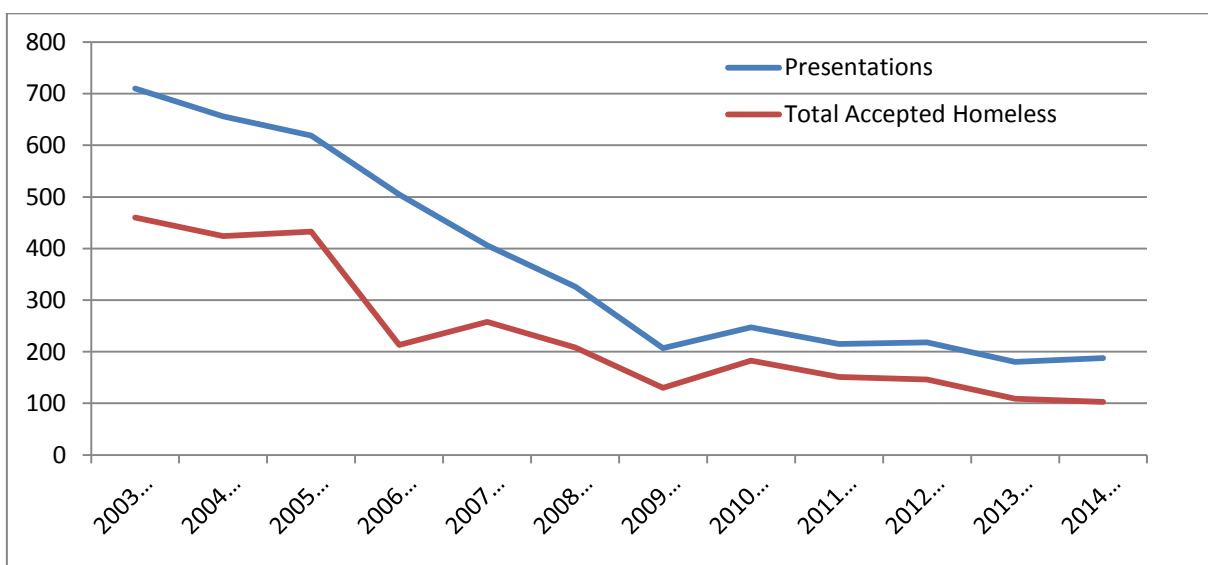
5. The City of York Council current Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 'A City Partnership to prevent homelessness' was published in July 2013.
6. Since 2013, 24 actions have been deleted (Appendix 1 page 3) as no longer relevant, 82 actions have been completed (Appendix 1 page 2) including:
  - Streamline move on in Young People services with reconfiguration of tier 1 and 2 and if possible identify larger premises for tier 2 young people.
  - Formalise emergency crash pad service provided by CYC and expand into other services as appropriate.
  - Review North Yorkshire Home Choice social housing allocations framework in light of legislative changes.
  - To explore and if possible implement MEAM approach for complex customers (Making Every Adult Matter)
  - Advertise move to West Offices, ensure agencies and customers know what is available, relevant leaflets, support, IT facilities

## **Current position**

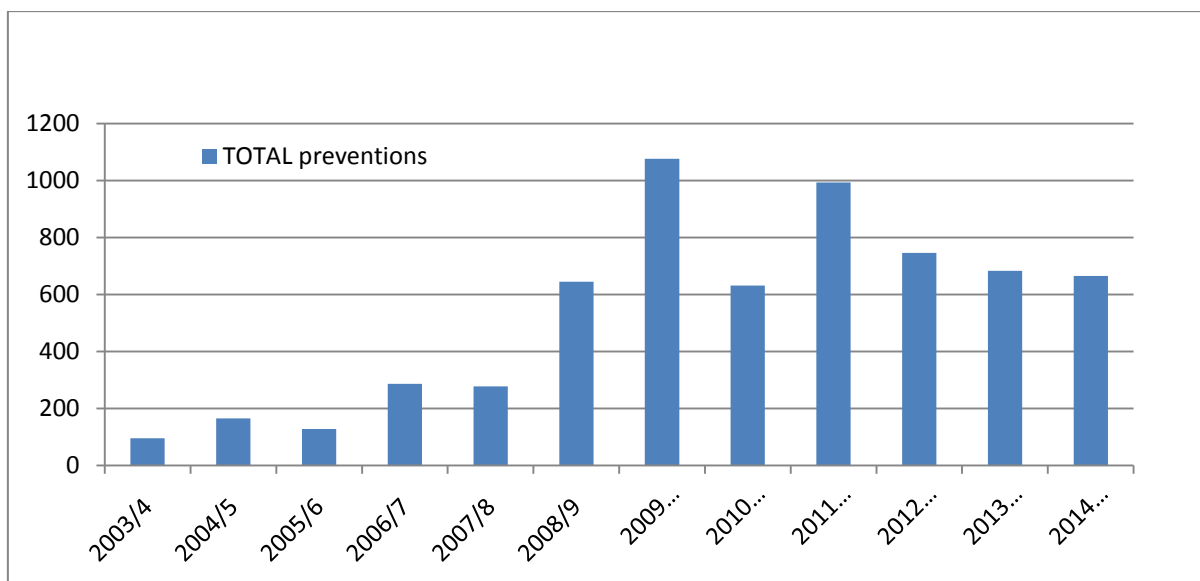
7. The homeless strategy ensures that CYC and partner agencies focus on homeless prevention and has contributed to the ongoing reduction in statutory homelessness through the provision and development of appropriate services, joint protocols, multi-agency working and targeted action.

8. The homeless strategy action plan identifies 5 strategic aims.
- **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.
  - **Strategic aim 2.** Ensure the provision of, and fair access to, accommodation sufficient to meet the identified housing needs
  - **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
  - **Strategic aim 4.** 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.
  - **Strategic Aim 5.** Deliver and develop early intervention strategies to tackle predicted trends in homelessness.
9. As a result of the homeless strategy, the action plan and focused work, statutory homeless has reduced in York and homeless prevention remains high.

Figure 1 - Homeless Presentations



**Figure 2 - Total Preventions**



10. Rough sleeping has increased and this action plan targets work to tackle this issue. Street counts are completed annually in November.

Nov 10	Nov 11	Nov 12	Nov 13	Nov 14
2	2	8	9	13

11. Funding for housing advice, debt services, accommodation and floating support services are predominantly through CYC General Fund and DCLG homeless prevention fund, supporting a range of services and CYC Adult social care commissioning (housing related support),

### **Targets and strategies**

12. Current targets are:

- To reduce the use of temporary accommodation is 5% year on year. Target for 2015-16 is 62
- Reduce statutory homelessness in the city 5% year on year. The target for 2015-16 is 100 acceptances
- 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 increase homeless prevention 5% year on year. The target for 2015-16 is 698

- Nationally, the overall target is to eradicate rough sleeping, so while the ultimate target is to reduce the number of rough sleepers to 0, within York the target is currently 2.
- To ensure the Homeless Strategy links to / works alongside other strategies in particular: Sub Regional Housing Strategy, Children's Plan, Domestic Abuse Strategy, Supported Housing Strategy, Tenancy Strategy and Private Sector Housing Strategy.

### **National and local changes**

13. There are a number of national and local changes which have occurred since the publication of the strategy in 2013 and the updated homeless strategy action plan sets out actions to tackle these changes, to meet targets and to improve services and the national budget in July 2015 proposed several initiatives that if progressed may impact significantly on homelessness and housing services in York (Appendix 2)

### **Ongoing commitment**

14. 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.
15. The Local Authority is committed to the provision of high quality housing advice to all those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Alongside the CYC Housing Options service there are currently a number of specialist advice services including the youth homeless workers for young people (16 and 17), single homeless (Salvation Army) and in conjunction with Adult Social Care (in response to Care Act 2014) older people (60+) specialist worker
16. Agencies are committed to working together through a range of forums, strategic groups, joint training and joint assessment systems.
17. The delivery of the updated homeless strategy action plan is dependent upon the commitment of agencies, in particular to:
  - The effective use of social housing stock, taking a pragmatic and strategic approach to re-designation

- 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
- Provision of prevention services, advice, accommodation and support through contract and commissioning arrangements
- Use of 'Spend to Save' money to prevent or relieve homelessness through initiatives such as mortgage rescue scheme, rent in advance and Bond Guarantee Scheme
- Partnership with Wakefield MBC and 'Breathing Space' mortgage rescue scheme
- Provide debt advice and provision of money management / financial literacy information
- Facilitating access to social housing through North Yorkshire Home Choice which prioritises those at risk of homelessness
- Assistance to remain in private rented accommodation through work to prevent illegal evictions, improve standards and assist with disabled adaptations (work with Housing Standards and Adaptations Team), negotiation with landlords, assistance to access Housing Benefit and support
- 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 (Ordnance Lane hostel) and identified need to upgrade Robinsons Court and Scarcroft Project. This follows on from the historic rebuild programme of Women's Aid, Arc Light and Peasholme Centre
- Work with partners in particular hospitals and prisons to ensure timely release into planned housing (via York and North Yorkshire Offender protocol, hospital discharge processes)

## Future commitment

18. The updated action plan introduces a number of new action points

- To analyse and explore possibility of identifying suitable resources to reduce rough sleeping / street drinking through the provision of a day centre / washing and shower facilities and support and diversionary activities
- To look to continue to fund / embed post of Older Persons Housing Specialist
- To review effectiveness and partnership working of No Second Night Out (NSNO) on an annual basis and if appropriate maintain service
- Review use of Family Intervention Tenancies, demoted tenancies, flexible tenancies, Housing First, Housing Plus (extra support).
- To look to embed Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) project into resettlement services
- To improve links with mental health services and access to services in light of new CCG contract with Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust (TEWV)
- To explore option to provide specialist support (mental health) in hostels
- To review multi-agency training programme around issues of homelessness, prevention, review external training programme, focused training, delivered by CYC and others (e.g. Estate managers around prevention)

## Options

19. Option 1 – To agree this report and adopt and publish the updated homeless strategy action plan.

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

## **Analysis**

20. 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 2018. The updated action plan takes account of national and local changes since 2013 and impact in York
21. 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.
22. The Local Authority is committed to the provision of high quality housing advice to all those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Alongside the CYC Housing Options service there are a number of specialist advice services including the youth homeless workers for young people (16 and 17), single homeless (Salvation Army) and in conjunction with Adult Social Care (in response to Care Act 2014) older people (60+) specialist worker
23. The ongoing commitment of City of York Council to retain the range of prevention tools and resources currently available
24. The updated action plan introduces a number of new action points which will address the needs of those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
25. 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. The following new partners will be invited to sit on the group:
  - Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)
  - City of York Council Adult Social Care
  - A representative of Youth Homeless Group
  - Tess, Esk, Wear Valley NHS Trust

## **Consultation**

26. The action plan was updated following a series of consultation events (with staff, stakeholders and customers) in June / July 2015.
27. The main issues raised at the events include need:



- To access mental health services and specialist accommodation,
- To tackle rough sleeping and anti-social behaviour and involve the public
- Have an effective 'toolkit' and pathway to assist people into housing
- Explore initiatives to best use stock
- Expand private rented sector for this customer group
- Ensure existing private rented sector is of high standard
- Ensure all agencies continue to work together on prevention agenda, offering a holistic approach to problem, providing specialist advice services (e.g. older people).
- Improve links with prisons and hospitals
- Preparing people for tenancies
- Prepare staff and tenants for future welfare benefit / housing sector changes

28. The Homeless Strategy Executive Group, Young Persons Homeless Group, Resettlement Strategy Group have all commented on the proposed action plan.

29. The Homeless Forum were consulted on the proposed action plan

### **Council Objectives**

30. This will provide intensive support for a very vulnerable group and should improve their health and educational and economic outcomes.

31. The Homeless Strategy action plan is closely link to a number of element of the draft council plan specifically around providing 'A focus on frontline services'

- Support services are available to those who need them
- Residents are encouraged and supported to live healthily
- Residents are protected from harm, with a low risk of crime

### **Implications**

32. The implications arising from this report are:

#### Financial

33. 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.

34. There are financial and socio-economic costs to the city if homelessness and planned housing services are not provided

Equalities Implications

35. An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed for the Homeless Strategy 2013-18.
36. 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

Legal Implications

37. 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.
38. 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**

39. There is a continued risk that due to current economic climate, failure to provide homeless prevention measures and to ensure appropriate support to the most vulnerable will result in an increase in homelessness, anti-social behaviour, costs to the health services and social services.

**Contact Details**

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**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

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Assistant Director Housing and Community  
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**Report  
Approved**

**Date** 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 2015

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

**All**

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

### Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Updated Homeless Strategy action plan
- Appendix 2 - National and Local Changes
- Appendix 3 - Community Impact Assessment

### Background papers

- Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 'A City Partnership to prevent homelessness'  
[https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/1948/homelessness\\_strategy\\_2013pdf](https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/1948/homelessness_strategy_2013pdf)

### Abbreviations

MEAM	Making Every Adult Matter
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
NSNO	No Second Night Out
TEWV	Tees, Esk and Wear Valley (NHS Trust)
CRC	Community Rehabilitation Company