



York Housing Options and Homelessness Strategy 2011-13

A review of York Homelessness Strategy 2008-13

Updated 2011



Background

The current Homeless Strategy covers 2008 – 13 and no alterations will be made to the main document. The Key targets in the 2008/13 strategy were to;

- Keep rough sleeping as close to zero as possible
- Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010 to half the figure it was in 2004
- End the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for homeless families with children, except in short term emergencies.
- End the use of Bed and Breakfast for 16-17 year olds, except in an emergency by 2010.

and remain fundamentally the same.

Review of action plan

In line with the strategy, the action plan though was reviewed in 2010/11, resulting in the removal of completed actions and those that are no longer viable or priority. The new action plan has been developed following consultation with staff, stakeholders and customers and takes into account the changing political and financial environment and local needs and demographics.

Main achievements

The main achievements in 2008-11 have been

- Re-provision of Arc Light and Peasholme hostels
- Successful bid and provision of Teenage Parent Homeless Support Project (Project 92)

- Successful bid and provision of Family Intervention Project (Catalyst)
- Development of accredited training and multi-agency working
- Refurbishment of travellers sites
- Development of Gypsy and Travellers action plan
- Achieving Rough Sleeper Regional Champion status
- Introduction of Housing Options Service
- Achieving temporary accommodation target (March 2010)
- Expansion of MOPP into young people services
- Development of Single Access Point
- Development of YorHome (Social letting agency)
- Multi-agency contribution to quarterly statistics (P1E)
- Joined up approach to homeless and Supporting People strategies and service contracts
- Creation of Housing Options Service with emphasis on prevention and early intervention

Ongoing work

While not specifically mentioned in the Homeless Strategy Action Plan 2011-13 there remains a need for existing services to contribute to ever important prevention agenda through advice work and the provision of support and accommodation across the city. Agencies need to continue to work together, further developing and adapting services to meet the changing needs of customers and policy makers. In particular it is important that agencies such as Nightstop, Castlegate for Young People, Salvation Army (Early Intervention and Prevention team), CYC Housing Options Team and CAB Housing and Debt Project are able to contribute to early prevention work

While not specifically mentioned in the action plan 2011-13 as this is ongoing and established work there is a commitment from the Homeless Strategy Executive Group and CYC to retain

existing services – in particular those funded through the DCLG homelessness grant:

- Multi-agency work and training continues
- Retain Housing and Debt Project (currently provided by CAB)
- Retain emergency bed spaces for young people (currently provided by n Nightstop)
- Continue to provide assistance to rough sleepers to return to local area where appropriate (currently operated as Salvation Army travel warrant scheme)
- Additional support via CLG grant to provide supported accommodation and advice services within resettlement model - Salvation Army (Early Intervention and Prevention) and Peasholme Charity
- Retain a bond guarantee scheme in the city
- Continue to provide a severe weather procedure for rough sleepers November - March
- Delivery of Gypsy and Traveller action plan

Main changes

A significant change has been the renaming of the document as 'The Housing Options and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2011-13' in recognition that homelessness will be reduced primarily through prevention work and planned housing. Within the action plan itself, the main change is the redefining the partnership working in strategic aim 4. The aim is now 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'

There are some significant themes and goals within the action plan as a response to the current situation of rapidly changing policies, financial constraints and legislative changes including:

- The need to prepare for the potential impact as a result of the changes to the benefit system.
- The need to maximize the access to accommodation both through the Private Rented Sector and freeing up accommodation in the social sector through initiatives such as tackling subletting, encouraging downsizing thereby making family housing available.
- Developing the Housing options model to widen the information and advice available to specific groups such as those with disability and the elderly.
- Work to tackle the issues that are associated with homelessness such as Worklessness, incorporating advice around employment and training into the advice and assistance that is given
- Development of specialist young persons accommodation in order to eradicate use of B&B for young people
- Re-provision of Ordnance Lane hostel
- Introduction of sub regional choice based lettings
- Improve customer involvement
- Determine how to deliver the need for additional accommodation for travelling community
- Provision of mental health accommodation

In order to achieve these goals it is vital that the agencies across the city continue to work together, forging new links and embracing new ideas and initiatives to help reduce homelessness and prepare people for independent living