
**Decision Session – Cabinet Member for
Health, Housing and Adult Social Services**

1 August 2012

Report of the Assistant Director Housing and Public Protection

Homeless Review 2011/12

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 2011/12. The primary focus is to report on prevention work, the trends of statutory homelessness, Youth Homeless Services and the work of the Resettlement Services and Housing Registrations Team 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 (reviewed in 2011) and the Resettlement and Youth Homeless Action Plans.
3. The Housing Department undertook a restructure in 2011 (ongoing) and responsibilities of services managers changed. The portfolio of the Service Manager Housing Options and Homeless now includes Housing Options, Resettlement Service (Peasholme Centre and Howe Hill for Young People), Housing Registrations, North Yorkshire Home Choice Co-ordinator and Single Access Point. The Supported Housing Service Manager, now has responsibility for sheltered housing, emergency temporary accommodation, traveller sites and YorHome.

4. 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 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

5. The Communities and Local Government (CLG) and City of York Council targets for 2011/12 were to:
 - Target for reducing temporary accommodation for 2011/12 was 90 actual 93; Much of this can be attributed to increasingly complex cases and effect of allocations policy which expects customers to make payments to any former arrears
 - Reduce the number of young people accepted as homeless (target 28, actual 22)
 - 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;
 - Target for number of prevention cases was 663 which was surpassed this year (993);
 - Following publication of 'No One Left Out: Communities Ending Rough Sleeping' by CLG target to eradicate rough sleeping by 2012. Target 0 rough sleepers, actual 2
 - Achieve housing performance targets within departmental service plan (reported elsewhere);

- Deliver actions points set out within Homelessness Strategy 2008-13, Resettlement and Youth Homeless Action plans within identified time scales;

Key Points

6. 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 increased, figures for 2011/12 have increased from 631 cases to 993. This is an excellent result, especially in light of national changes around benefit reforms.
 - There has been a decrease in York of the number of homeless acceptances to 151 (from 183). The national trend has seen an increase in homelessness in England and Wales;
 - While actual numbers of homeless acceptances has decreased, the Housing Options Team has seen an increase in demand for services – evidenced by increase in contacts at Customer Services Centre 3350 (76% increase) and prevention cases.
 - The number of rough sleepers has remained low throughout the year. The quarter 3 submission to government (based on CLG 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 remains high despite a reduction in homeless acceptances and the opening of Howe Hill for Young People. The target for 2011/12 was 90. The final number in temporary accommodation as of 31/3/12 was 93 which, when considered against in the context of the economic climate, it is still a significant achievement.

Service improvement during 2011-12

7. Throughout 2011/12 significant work has continued both internally and with partner agencies to improve the direct service to customers and the overall provision.

8. A number of service improvements were achieved in 2011-12:
- Development and publication of an Easy Read Tenancy Agreement in conjunction with Adult Social Care (Learning Difficulties team)
 - Development and publication of an Easy Read Housing Options Guide in conjunction with Adult Social Care (Learning Difficulties team)
 - Introduction of new sub regional choice based letting scheme – North Yorkshire Home Choice in July 2011. This was a substantial piece of work and involved many different teams, significant training and ongoing monitoring
 - Housing restructure at group and service manager level resulting in some internal changes
 - Developed a Supporting People web based Housing Options and supported housing directory
http://www.york.gov.uk/housing/Supported_and_sheltered_housing/Supporting_people/04directory/
 - Amalgamation of Housing Options Team to provide generic working
 - Lead authority for sub regional personalisation monies to tackle rough sleeping
 - CYC Resettlement Services and Salvation Army Early Intervention and Prevention Team involved in 'street drinking initiative during 6 week period in summer 2011
 - Amalgamation of Youth Education Programme (YEW) into Howe Hill (formerly Project 92)
 - Provision of education to young people in Howe Hill for Young People by York College
 - Establish working group to look at new government initiative 'No second night out' to tackle 'new' rough sleepers
 - Draft elderly persons housing options leaflet with Adult Social Care
 - Uploaded homeless statistical bulletin onto CYC website

- Worked with 'Restore (York) Ltd' to set up service which provides homes and support for people in York who would otherwise be homeless.
- Developed a new YorHome service level agreement taking account of new financial requirements regarding 'cooling off periods' and safety requirements.
- Opened Howe Hill for Young People on 23/1/12
- Funding agreed for and preparatory work carried out to develop a housing apprentice scheme
- CLG personalisation monies set up 'Through the Gate' scheme for prisoner release

Forthcoming projects - 2012/13

9. The following work is identified in the Housing Options and Homelessness Action plan 2011-13 and will be given priority within the team in 2012/13:
 - 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 2014
 - Continue to be lead Local Authority for sub regional work around rough sleeping and distribution of personalisation monies (Communities and Local Government funded)
 - Implement No Second Night Out initiatives and address re-emerging issue of increased rough sleeping
 - Joint working with North Yorkshire Police to tackle street drinking in York
 - Put systems / initiatives in place to tackle the potential impact as a result of the changes to the benefit system.
 - Provision of mental health accommodation

- First annual review of North Yorkshire Home Choice common allocations policy, taking account of Localism Act and forthcoming Allocation Code of Guidance
- Continued expansion of YorHome and development of an arms length delivery model
- Consult and publish Homelessness Strategy 2013-18
- Write Supported Housing Strategy due for completion April 2013
- Set up housing apprentice scheme
- Review multi-agency, specialist provision of Howe Hill for Young People
- CLG Homelessness Suitability of Accommodation consultation

Consultation

10. Joseph Rowntree Foundation have are carrying out extensive evaluation of the new North Yorkshire Home Choice scheme on behalf of the CBL Board
11. Consultation occurred throughout the year with staff, stakeholders and young people in respect of developing Howe Hill for Young People
12. National consultation in respect of Response to Communities and Local Government 'Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England' (submission 16/4/12)

Council Plan

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

Implications

Financial Implications

14. 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 pro-actively address homelessness.

Equalities Implications

15. 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

16. The provision of a homeless service is a statutory requirement under Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002.
17. 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

18. There is a continued risk that due to current economic climate and national agenda that homelessness will increase significantly. It is only through the ongoing concerted effort of staff and the resources channelled into homeless that we are keeping this at bay.
19. That any future local and national funding cuts will impact on services
20. 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

21. The Cabinet member for Health, Housing and Adult Social Services is asked to:
 - a. note the contents of the report
 - b. Agree the priorities for 2012/13 as set out in paragraph 9, 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

Author:

Becky Ward

Service Manager,
Homelessness
Dept Name CAN
Tel No. 01904 554040

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Steve Waddington

Assistant Director Housing and Public
Protection

**Report
Approved**



Date 8/6/12

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

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Appendix 1

Homeless Performance 2011-12

Background Papers:(provided upon request):

2008-13 Homelessness Strategy

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

Temporary Accommodation customer satisfaction survey

Housing Options customer satisfaction survey

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