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## Cabinet Meeting

5<sup>th</sup> March 2013

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

#### Approval of the Homeless Strategy 2013-18

##### Summary

1. To agree the contents of the proposed homeless strategy and action plan and approve the strategy which will cover the period 2013-18.
2. To adopt the title of the strategy as 'A City Partnership to prevent homelessness' 2013-2018.

##### Background

3. The City of York Council has a duty under s.1 (4) of the Homelessness Act (2002) to publish a homeless strategy every five years. The first strategy was published in 2003 and again in 2008.
4. Key targets in the 2008-13 strategy were to;
  - Eradicate rough sleeping by 2012
    - The average was around 2, however this increased to 8 in December 2012.
  - Half the use of temporary accommodation by 2010 to 121.
    - Achieved in 2010, reduced to 79 in March 2010, however this has since increased.
  - End the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for families.
    - Achieved, now only used in emergencies and for no longer than 6 weeks
  - End the use of Bed and Breakfast for 16-17 year olds by 2010.
    - Achieved in 2012.

5. To achieve these targets there have been some significant improvements in services and multi-agency working.
6. Partnerships included joint working to develop Howe Hill as a facility for Young People, bringing together teams from across the council including the Pathway Team which relocated to Howe Hill for Young People, resulting in improved advice services for young people and an accredited training scheme.
7. Advice and prevention was enhanced by the establishment of a Housing Options Team, the introduction of North Yorkshire Home Choice common allocations policy, amalgamation of the youth homeless worker and YOT accommodation worker posts to provide a consistent service.
8. Access to quality accommodation has also been improved with the opening of new hostels: Arc Light and Peasholme Resettlement Centre, Howe Hill for Young People, extending Holgate Road. We have also developed YorHome a social lettings agency accessing the private rented sector as well as the introduction of a Single Access Point to provide gateway into supported housing.

### **Future Considerations**

9. The Localism Bill received Royal Assent in November 2011 and gives Local Authorities powers to make decisions locally regarding housing allocation, tenancy types, ability to discharge the statutory duty to house into the private sector. Councils can now utilise this flexibility to better manage their housing stock by adapting to meet local needs.
10. The Welfare Reform Act 2012 has made fundamental changes to the benefits system and housing providers and support services will need to adapt services to meet needs of customers.
11. The Fairness Commission in 2012 recommended that York address the city's housing and accommodation needs to support growth and improve affordability and one of the ten key fairness principles underpinning these recommendations is to support and empower the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.
12. The principles of the Government Strategy Vision to End Rough Sleeping: No Second Night Out Nationwide are that:
  - New rough sleepers should be identified and helped off the streets immediately so that they do not fall into a dangerous rough sleeping lifestyle.

- Members of the public should be able to play an active role by reporting and referring people sleeping rough.
  - Rough sleepers should be helped to access a place of safety where their needs can be quickly assessed and they can receive advice on their options.
  - They should be able to access emergency accommodation and other services, such as healthcare, if needed.
  - If people have come from another area or country and find themselves sleeping rough, the aim should be to reconnect them back to their local community unless there is a good reason why they cannot return. There, they will be able to access housing and recovery services and have support from family and friends.
13. Nationally rough sleeping has increased by 43%. In York, the number of rough sleepers found in the city and reported to Communities and Local Government as an official submission has increased from 2 in November 2011 to 8 in Dec 2012.
14. The current economic climate and the resulting negative impact on employment opportunities and the construction of new homes has seen an increase in the levels of debt by those needing our support.
15. The population in York is also changing the 2011 census shows an increase of just under 10% in the overall population and an increasingly older population but also increase in ethnic minorities / migrant workers.
16. Nationally statutory homelessness has increased by 42%. Homelessness in York has not increased dramatically however it does fluctuate year on year.

	<b>2005/6</b>	<b>2006/7</b>	<b>2007/8</b>	<b>2008/9</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>
Presentations	619	505	406	326	207	247	215
Total Accepted Homeless	433	213	258	208	130	183	151
% Acceptances to presentations	38%	42%	63%	63%	63%	74%	75%

17. The use of temporary accommodation has risen during 2012/13 and as of 31/12/12 was 99

<b>Accommodation type</b>	<b>31.03.09</b>	<b>31.3.10</b>	<b>31.03.11</b>	<b>31.3.12</b>
Bed & Breakfast (B&B) as of date	10	0	2	6
Total annual placements into B&B	176	60	45	92
B&B use as % of all temp accommodation	6%	0%	2%	2%
Of which – families with children/pregnant	4	0	1	2
<b>TOTALS in all temp accommodation as of date</b>	167	79	94	93
<b>Temp targets</b>	160	121	75	90

18. Prevention remains key to the work of housing advice agencies and sustaining key projects is critical to our success. Critical projects supporting the prevention agenda are:
- a. Housing advice
  - b. Housing support
  - c. Supported housing projects
  - d. Rough sleeper outreach work
  - e. Housing and Debt advice
  - f. Youth Homeless Workers
  - g. Nightstop / emergency accommodation for young people
  - h. YorHome (social lettings agency)

## **Consultation**

19. The development of the strategy and ultimately the monitoring of the action plan is overseen by a multi-agency Homeless Strategy Steering Group. The membership of this group reflects the fact that the issues of homelessness are far reaching and affect a wide range of services. Membership included The Primary Care Trust (PCT), North Yorkshire Probation Trust, Resettlement Services, Supporting People, Children's Services, DWP, Registered Social Landlords, the voluntary advice agencies (Keyhouse) and Housing Services. The group has fed comments into the consultation process.
20. A significant part of the review has been to consult with stakeholders and customers. Between June and October 2012 the City of York Council led a number of reviews aimed at increasing understanding and

knowledge of homelessness and homelessness services in York. The reviews took many different forms including stakeholder event, customer consultation and staff/agency consultation. Final comments from stakeholders were requested at the Homeless Forum on 30/1/13. Where appropriate these comments have been incorporated into the action plan.

21. Information from North Yorkshire Home Choice review and Tenancy Strategy consultation has also helped shape the strategy document.

## **Options**

22. Option 1 – To approve the proposed strategy and action plan.
23. Option 2 – To ask officers to amend the strategy and action plan.

## **Analysis**

24. The overarching aspiration of the strategy is to stem an increase in homelessness – though early intervention, prevention, the provision of comprehensive advice, support and the ability to offer a variety of housing options to people in need. It is important in the current economic climate when there is a potential risk of increased homelessness to ensure current services are maintained and where appropriate developing new initiatives to tackle issue.
25. Critical to continuing to delivering the aspirations is to continue to prepare people to live independently and manage their finances in light of the welfare benefit reforms, to prevent new rough sleepers sleeping rough for a second night and to work with entrenched rough sleepers to move them into accommodation and to ensure provision of suitable temporary and permanent accommodation.
26. Within the strategy there are five key strands (dividing advice and prevention as in previous action plan). These key aims are:
  - Early intervention with main focus on developing innovative links with external agencies to promote homeless prevention and focus on planned housing, in particular aiming at working with troubled families, the provision of support and diversionary activities to street drinkers and to reduce youth homelessness and re- offending rates.
  - Advice with main action points to ensure people have access to housing advice, have help to prepare for the forthcoming welfare benefit reforms, to ensure customers are central to housing work and

to advise customers of future changes to North Yorkshire Home Choice

- Accommodation the main focus is to increase supply of affordable housing, increase access to private rented sector, improve standards in temporary accommodation, minimise use of B&B, maximise use of Housing Association accommodation, ensure access to specialist supported housing and reduce inappropriate placements in temporary accommodation. Following the launch of the No Second Night Out initiative to tackle entrenched rough sleeping, to ensure emergency beds are available for those at risk of rough sleeping and to review the need for specialist women's services.
- Support with the main points being to improve joint assessment and care planning for vulnerable customers, increase tenancy sustainment, increase numbers of people with mental health issues or complex needs sustaining independent living, ensure support needs of BME groups are met.
- Partnership with the Local Authority providing a strong leadership on the homeless agenda, but ensuring that there is a greater role for partner agencies to be involved, increase information sharing and training and increase customer consultation. Partners are committed to achieving the ten challenges set out in the 'Gold Standard' approach which are highlighted in the strategy document.

## Implications

27. **Financial** – There are no direct financial implication from the report, however, to meet the aspirations of the strategy, as part of on going budget processes there will be a need to commit to retaining and developing services to help those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
28. **Human Resources (HR)** N/A
29. **Equalities** – This is a continuation of existing services and established partnership approach. The aim of the strategy in 2013-18 is to ensure that the services provided meet the needs of the most vulnerable – who are at risk of homelessness often as a result of domestic violence, sexual abuse, drug and alcohol dependency and mental health problems. Due to the economic situation and welfare benefit reforms it is anticipated that there will be a significant demand for these services in forthcoming years. Community Impact Assessments are carried out in respect of

individual service area delivery and policy review. CIAs will be carried out in respect of any potential changes in policy or service delivery

30. **Legal** – There is a legal requirement to publish a Homelessness Strategy. In determining whether or not to adopt the strategy the Cabinet must be mindful of its equalities obligations to have ‘due regard’ to the need to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality when making decisions and also its obligations to consider any crime and disorder implications of the decision.
31. **Crime and Disorder** – Concern that an increase in homelessness will lead to increase in crime and disorder, not only as a result of increased rough sleeping but also through financial difficulties and possible welfare benefit reforms if people are unable to manage their money.
32. **Information Technology (IT)** N/A.
33. **Property** No implications

### **Risk Management**

34. There are no significant risks directly associated with the adoption of the strategy. Failure to adopt a strategy will result in the council not meeting its statutory duty.

### **Recommendation**

35. Cabinet are asked to approve Option 1, to adopt the Homeless Strategy 2013 – 18 and action plan.

Reason: To ensure that the council meet legal requirements and to adopt a framework on which to develop services for customers that are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

## Contact Details

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	<b>Report Approved</b>	✓	<b>Date</b> 21 <sup>st</sup> Feb 2013
<b>Specialist Implications Officer(s)</b>			
None			
<b>Wards Affected:</b> List wards or tick box to indicate all			<b>All</b> ✓

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

### Annexes:

- Annex 1 - Homeless Strategy 'A City Partnership to prevent homelessness' 2013-18
- Annex 2 - Action Plan 2013-18