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

**17 July 2017**

Report of the Assistant Director – Housing & Community Safety

**Homeless Review 2016/17**

**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 2013-2018 in respect of the financial year 2016/17. The primary focus is to report on prevention work, the trends of statutory homelessness and rough sleepers.
2. The report identifies targets and priorities for 2017/18.
3. The report incorporates the work and contribution of partner agencies in delivery of a comprehensive service to homeless households across York, many of whom are the most socially excluded people in society. Each agency contributes to this success and is a vital part of the jigsaw.
4. During 2016-17 there were a number of significant successes within the service, including achieving the national 'Gold Standard' challenge (National Practitioner Support Service), increasing the homeless prevention work across the city and providing accommodation and support in the private rented sector for Syrian refugees.

**Recommendations**

5. The Executive Member is asked to:
  - a. Note the progress made by the service;
  - b. Agree the priorities and targets for 2017/18 as set out in paragraph 16.

Reason – To ensure the council continues to meet its current and new statutory responsibilities (under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017) and supports the most vulnerable in society.

## Background and overview of service

6. There is a duty on all Local Authorities to provide an advice service to all homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. In addition the Local Authority has a duty to provide temporary accommodation for certain households in accordance with the Housing Act 1996.
7. The remit of the work carried out by the Homeless Service (which incorporates Housing Options, Housing Registrations, Resettlement and Temporary Accommodation) is set out in legislation and in the City's Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 '*A City Partnership to prevent homelessness*'. The current action plan identifies actions to tackle homelessness and develop services.
8. **Statutory homelessness** refers to those people who have made a homeless application to their local authority and have met the necessary criteria set out in legislation to be accepted as eligible for assistance (subject to immigration status), homeless, in priority need, unintentionally homeless and have a local connection. This group may include families, pregnant women and vulnerable single people.
9. **Non-statutory / non-priority homeless** tend to be single people or childless couples who are not assessed as being in priority need and are only entitled to 'advice and assistance' including support to access private rented accommodation, housing via North Yorkshire Home Choice ('waiting list') or supported housing.
10. **Rough sleepers** are people who are roofless / street homeless. This is a relatively small number of people when considering the wider population of York.
11. In York, homeless prevention services and statutory homelessness assessments are carried out by the council's Housing Options Team, based at West Offices. The Salvation Army, Early Intervention and Prevention Team provide specialist advice to single homeless (18+), the Youth Homeless Workers provide specialist advice to young people aged 16 and 17 that are homeless and the Older Persons Specialist provides housing advice for 60+ age group.
12. The Homeless Strategy 2013-18 sets out 5 strategic aims which have been amended in the Housing Options and Homeless Strategy Action Plan 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 that 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.
- e. **Strategic Aim 5.** Deliver and develop early intervention strategies to tackle predicted trends in homelessness.

## Targets

13. The council's targets for the service are based upon The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) priorities and our local priorities as set out in the Homeless Strategy.

### Performance Targets – 2016/17

- A Local Authority has a statutory duty to give advice to anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness. In conjunction with partner agencies the focus is to prevent homelessness / re-house in a planned way. In 2016-17 there were 752 prevention cases and homeless acceptances (under Housing Act 1996) was 97 which is below the target of 100. Target achieved.
- The target for reducing the number of households placed in temporary accommodation for 2016/17 was 56. The actual outturn was 62, which was the same as 2015-16. This is a significant achievement in light of ongoing housing and welfare benefit pressures.
- That B&B for families should only be used in emergencies and then for no more than 6 weeks. As of 31/3/17 there were only 2 households in B&B and these were not families or young people (16 and 17). Target achieved
- To reduce rough sleepers to 12. This has not been met as in November 2016 the official submission was 18. This is same as 15/16 and remains a significant concern.

- Achieve housing performance targets within departmental service plan around voids and rent arrears. While rent arrears have reduced in Howe Hill and Ordnance Lane, they have increased at Peasholme but not significantly in monetary terms. High level of voids 3.93 weeks are a direct consequence of the uncertainty about the replacement of Ordnance Lane hostel.
- Deliver action points set out within the Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 'A City Partnership to prevent homelessness' action plan within identified time scales. Target achieved
- (Gold Standard Challenge) Not to use B&B for 16 or 17 year olds. Target achieved
- (Gold Standard Challenge) Not to use B&B for families, other than in emergencies and then for no longer than 6 weeks. Target achieved

#### Priorities for 2016/17

- To continue to work to achieve the 10 'Gold Standard challenges' as set out by DCLG. Achieved Gold Standard 7<sup>th</sup> December 2016 (3<sup>rd</sup> Local Authority in country). Completed
- To develop services / processes to mitigate effects of welfare benefit reforms on homeless families and individuals. Ongoing in light of continued welfare reforms.
- Review the effectiveness of the information sharing / transfer of complex homeless and resettlement cases into social housing. Robust risk / information sharing process introduced. Completed
- In light of the Housing and Planning Act, review the use of alternative tenancies e.g. Family Intervention Tenancies and Fixed Term Tenancies (CYC). Ongoing, awaiting government guidance.
- Review the use and consider investment /re-design opportunities of existing social housing stock to meet needs of complex / vulnerable customers in particular to mitigate medium and long term impact of welfare benefit reform. Ongoing
- Review Nightstop services in lieu of reduced demand. Incorporated into Supported Housing contract. Completed
- To continued to explore / work with TEWV to provide appropriate housing / housing support / hospital discharge process for people with mental health issues. Completed

- Ordnance Lane re-provision. Ongoing, contract for new hostel building signed April 2017.
- To complete review of Housing Registrations Service and implement proposed changes to service and policy. Stage 1 and 2 Completed
- To prioritise reduction of rough sleeping, street drinking and begging (in conjunction with Community Safety Hub) and explore need for day facilities and night shelter in light of rising numbers of rough sleepers and associated street drinking and begging. Ongoing
- To work with Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) to improve prison release system if housing is required. Completed (but limited impact)
- To work with new provider of Housing Related Support contract (following retender by Adult Social Care). Completed
- To work with Adult Social Care on review of mental health housing. Ongoing
- Work with CYC Housing in relation to restructure and new operating model. Ongoing
- To work in conjunction with CYC Childrens Social Care new operating model. (Local Area Teams) Completed
- To support the extension of MEAM Project (Arc Light lead agency). Ongoing, extended until 30/9/17.
- To secure funding for Older Persons Specialist. Ongoing, extended until 30/9/17.
- To secure funding for mental health hostel workers if pilot successful. Ongoing, extended until 30/9/17.
- To review IDAS 24 hour helpline and support IDAS in any funding applications. New arrangements agreed. Completed

### **Key Points 2016/17**

14. The details of the activity and performance of the service are contained in appendix 1. In light of the current economic situation and changes to services the key points of this report are:

- An increase in homeless preventions (752 cases in 2016/17). Prevention remains a vital part of the work and contributes to the reduction in statutory homelessness and will be integrated into forthcoming statutory duties' placed on Local Authorities in Homeless Reduction Bill.
- Statutory homelessness has increased but service achieved target in 2016/17) . The figure was 91 in 2015/16. This is a 6.6% increase and is not dissimilar to national trends (4.6%).
- Housing Options remains busy with 2958 (contacts) of which 1127 are in depth interviews/cases. This is a reduction and can be attributed to the pro-active approach taken by Housing Registrations who now offer personal telephone interviews / appointments with all applicants wishing to register on North Yorkshire Home Choice.
- The complexity of immigration law, homeless applications and supported housing referrals via Single Access Point result in staff requiring more detailed knowledge, skills and time to deal with individual cases.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation has increased in line with the increase in statutory homeless applications.
- The Older Persons Housing Specialist exceeded targets

	level 2 advice and information	level 3 casework
2016/17 (Target) Actual	(250) 307	(150) 180

- Despite ongoing work, commitment of agencies, continued resources and new flexible methods of working the number of rough sleepers in York has not reduced but remained at 18 (Nov 2016). National trends however show an increase of 16%.

### **In Year Service Improvement**

15. Throughout 2016/17 significant work has continued both internally and with partner agencies to improve the direct service to customers and the overall provision.
16. A number of significant service improvements were achieved in 2016/17 (further details in appendix 1):

- CYC Homeless Services achieved Gold Standard (National Practitioner Support Service 'Gold Standard' challenge) and was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Local Authority in the country to do so. This is a fantastic achievement and shows how dedicated to improving services staff are.
- The Older Persons Housing Specialist has been extremely successful and funding has been identified until 30/9/17 but short term funding is not an ideal situation.
- MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter) pilot extended 30/9/17 but short term funding again is not an ideal situation.
- The contractor appointed to develop and build the new hostel at Ordnance Lane (statutory homeless hostel) went into administration. Significant work has taken place to mitigate this and a new building has been identified, procured and is being developed to provide new hostel provision.
- Working with Youth Offending Team to provide PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act) beds for 16 and 17 year olds as a young person who is officially "detained" in police custody **must never** spend the night in a police cell. The police have a legal responsibility to contact a representative of the Local Authority for emergency PACE bed provision. The young person remains in custody.
- Working with Adult Commissioning regarding contract re-commissioning for Community Wellbeing Support Contracts, Family Support contract, Older Persons contract and Supported Lodgings contract.
- Hostel and supported housing provision for young people was extended to cover 16-25 age range.
- Developing an additional 2 respite rooms in sheltered schemes to assist early discharge from hospital, decants when major adaptation's are required in an individuals home or people that are homeless and need temporary accommodation (3 now in total).
- Developing a Mental Capacity / Power of Attorney leaflet.
- Improving Single Access Point process, including streamlining referral form, consent statement and eligibility criteria.
- Involved in DCLG consultation around Homeless Reduction Bill and supported housing funding.

- Transferred and expanded move on flats – now available to all customers group rather than just young people in homeless services.
- Completion of 53 properties for social rent in York plus 20 intermediate rent.
- Working with Syrian Refugees.
- Decision October 2016 to explore withdrawing from NYHC and from Choice Based Lettings (ongoing work).
- Developed a property booklet setting out actual lettings data for customers to make informed decisions about their housing options.

### **Forthcoming projects and priorities – 2017/18**

17. The following work is identified in the Homelessness Strategy Action plan 2013-18 or has emerged over past 12 months and will be given priority during 2017/18:

- To research and develop 2018-23 Homeless Strategy (due for sign off July 2018).
- To amend procedures, working practice, service and staffing to address new statutory requirements in Homeless Reduction Act 2017 to prevent homelessness and relieve homelessness. This is a significant change to current duties.
- To tender the Single Homeless Early Intervention and Prevention Service (due for completion August 2018) taking account of Homeless Reduction Act 2017.
- To consult and agree on the allocation policy and delivery of housing registrations service (North Yorkshire Home Choice or internal).
- To develop services / processes to mitigate effects of welfare benefit reforms on homeless (Universal Credit full roll out due in July 2017, withdrawal of housing costs for 18-21 year olds, address shortfall in supported housing rents – awaiting Government directive).
- In light of Housing and Planning Act, review the use of alternative tenancies e.g. Family Intervention Tenancies and Fixed Term Tenancies (CYC).
- Review the use and consider investment /re-design opportunities of existing social housing stock to meet needs of complex / vulnerable



customers in particular to mitigate medium and long term impact of welfare benefit reform.

- Ordnance Lane re-provision.
- To review CYC Housing Resettlement Service.
- To prioritise reduction of rough sleeping, street drinking and begging (in conjunction with Community Safety Unit) and explore need for day facilities and night shelter in light of rising numbers of rough sleepers and associated street drinking and begging.
- To work with Adult Social Care on review of mental health housing and support.
- To work with Childrens Social Care to identify support / housing / residential pathway for young people with complex needs.
- To work with Adult Social Care to identify support / housing / residential pathway for people with complex needs.
- To work with Tees, Esk, Wear Valley NHS Trust to improve joint working / service delivery for people that are homeless / at risk of homelessness with mental health issues.
- To develop relationships with Changing Lives (Substance contract) to benefit people that are homeless and homeless services as part of outcome based approach.
- To support the extension of MEAM Project (Arc Light lead agency).
- To secure sustainable funding for Older Persons Specialist.
- To secure sustainable funding for Mental Health Hostel Workers.
- To explore introducing a reporting system for Homeless Strategy Executive group into Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Deliver to the new standards set out in the homeless reduction Act 2017.
- Agree targets for 2017/18.

	<b>2016/17 target</b>	<b>2016/17 actual</b>	<b>2017/18 target</b>	<b>Reason</b>
No of households in temp accom	56	62	62	Retained at this level as we acknowledge in current financial climate / welfare benefit reforms that vulnerable people will continue to be affected by homelessness but the services will strive to work in a planned / preventative approach
No of households accepted as priority need	100	97	100	
No of rough sleepers	12	18	18	While there is an aspiration to reduce rough sleeping in York to 0, a realistic target based on current situation where some rough sleepers current refuse offers of assistance is 18. Ongoing work will take place with Community Safety Hub to tackle this ongoing issue
Not to use B&B for 16 or 17 year olds	0	0	0	
Not to use B&B for families, other than in	0	0	0	

emergencies and then for no longer than 6 weeks				
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Statistical reporting may change during 2017-18 due to new DCLG p1e framework and Homeless Reduction Act 2017.

### **Consultation**

18. Consultation has taken place with stakeholders and partners regarding Homeless Strategy Action Plan review, Housing Registrations service review. Significant consultation with staff, stakeholders and customers will take place in 2017/18 around allocations policy and Homeless Strategy 2018-23.

### **Options**

19. Option 1

Note the contents of the report and agreed the priorities and targets for 2017/18 as set out in paragraph 17.

20. Option 2

Note the contents of the report but recommend alternative priorities and targets for 2017/18.

### **Analysis**

21. The report and appendix identifies current strategic aims (documented in the homeless strategy ' A City Partnership to prevent homelessness' 2013-18) and provides detailed statistics and analysis of the information, to determine the priorities for the forthcoming year.

### **Council Plan**

22. The Homeless strategy is closely link to priorities within the Council Plan 2015-19:

- A prosperous city for all where local businesses can thrive and residents have good quality jobs, housing and opportunities.
- A focus on frontline services to ensure all residents, particularly the least advantaged can access services and community facilities.

## **Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

23. 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 potential for an increase in homelessness.
24. There is an expectation that new burdens money will be made available to implement the Homeless Reduction Act 2017.

### **Equalities Implications**

25. A community impact assessment (CIA) has been completed for the housing options and homeless strategy. Individual CIAs will be completed for major pieces of work outlined in this report.

### **Legal Implications**

26. The provision of a homeless service is a statutory requirement under Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002. Additional statutory responsibilities to prevent homelessness have been placed on Local Authorities in new Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and new Code of Guidance and possibly a Code of Practice will be published shortly.
27. 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”.
28. National good practice states that no young person 16 or 17 should be in B&B, that no family should be placed in B&B unless in an emergency and then for no more than 6 weeks.
29. There are financial risks via judicial challenge if the service does not meet its statutory duty and as a result of Ombudsmen complaints if CYC fails to act within its statutory duties regarding homelessness.

### **Risk Management**

30. There is a continued risk that due to current economic climate and changes at a national level, unless mitigation can be put in place to support the most vulnerable, we will see an increase in homelessness within the city. York has a number of people rough sleeping despite the commitment of agencies. It is only through the ongoing concerted effort of staff and the resources channelled into homeless that we are able to maintain the current levels.

31. Changes to funding formulas and allocations may impact on the council's ability to deliver critical services in the future. We understand there will be new burdens money for implementation of the Homeless Reduction Bill but this is not confirmed yet.
32. 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.

## Contact Details

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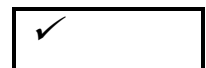
Report  
Approved



Date 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017

### Wards Affected:

All



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

### Appendix 1

Homeless Review 2016-17

**Background Papers:**(provided upon request):

[2013-18 Homelessness Strategy](#)

Homeless Reduction Act 2017

**Abbreviations:**

B&B - Bed and Breakfast

BGS - Bond Guarantee Scheme

CAY - Citizens Advice York

HHASS – Health, Housing and Adult Social Care (Directorate)

CBL - Choice Based Lettings (North Yorkshire Home Choice)

CIA – Community Impact Assessment

CRC – Community Rehabilitation Company

CYC - City of York Council

DCLG - Department Communities and Local Government

IDAS – Independent Domestic Abuse Service

MEAM – Making Every Adult Matter

NYHC - North Yorkshire Home Choice

RSL - Registered Social Landlord

SAP – Single Access Point

TEWV - Tees, Esk, Wear Valley NHS Trust

YOT - Youth Offending Team