

**Executive**

**15 July 2008**

**Report of the Director of Housing and Adult Social Services**

## **Approval of the Homeless Strategy 2008 to 2013**

### **Summary**

1. This report asks the Executive to note the review of the homeless strategy and approve the contents of the strategy that will cover the period between 2008 and 2013. The strategy is required to be submitted to Communities and Local Government by the end of July 2008. It has already been endorsed by the Executive Member for Housing and Adult Social Services.

### **Background**

2. 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.
3. Key targets in the 2003/08 strategy were to;
  - Minimise Rough Sleeping the average is around 4. At the last street count there were 2 Rough Sleepers
  - Halve the use of temporary accommodation by 2010 to 121. At the end of March 2008 there were 209 households in temporary accommodation.
  - End the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for families. At the end of March 2008 there were 4 families in B&B - none for more than six weeks
  - End the use of Bed and Breakfast for 16-17 year olds by 2010. At the end of March 2008 there were two 16/17 olds in B&B.
4. Beyond these targets there have been some significant achievements in the last five years.

Partnerships – Re-establishment of the landlord forum, protocols with children’s services and offender management, establishment of a registered social landlord forum and resettlement multi-agency training.

Advice and prevention – New allocations policy with the choice based lettings element and priority given to resettlement and potentially homeless, Training sessions for new tenants and increasing resources going into prevention work.

Accommodation – Refurbishment of Howe Hill and the travellers site, the opening of the new women's aid centre, increasing the section 106 quotas to 50% and the development of the new Arclight and Peasholme resettlement centres.

## **Consultation**

5. The development of the strategy and ultimately the monitoring of the action plan have been overseen by a Homeless Strategy Steering group. The membership of this group reflects the fact that the issues of homelessness are far reaching and effect a wide range of services. Membership includes The Primary Care Trust (PCT), The Probation service, resettlement services, Supporting People, Learning, Culture and Children Services, Registered Social Landlords, the voluntary advice agencies (HARP) and Housing Services. The Homeless Strategy Steering Group signed off the final draft on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008.
6. A significant part of the review has been to consult with stakeholders and customers. Between June 2007 and February 2008 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 external inspection, peer review; staff self-assessment and extensive service user consultation. The user consultation included individual users completing a user survey and running group discussions on what the services are like now and how they could be improved
7. The key findings of the consultation with customers/stakeholders are available on request.
8. Following the completion of the review of the strategy the draft documents have been shared with stakeholders and customers at events held in April 2008. The feedback from these sessions was that the strategy was well received, it had captured the main issues in a form that was concise and easy to read and the action plan was challenging.

## **Options**

Option one

9. To endorse the review of the homeless strategy.(See appendix A)

Option Two

10. To ask for amendments to the homeless strategy (Appendix A)

## Analysis

11. The overarching aspiration of the strategy is to eradicate the use of emergency accommodation and move away from a reactive approach to homelessness. Taking a planned route toward rehousing and independent living is key to reducing the need for temporary accommodation.
12. Within the strategy there are four key strands
  - **Partnershipworking** – Only through the development of partnerships and development of the shared objectives within this strategy will the city successfully achieve its targets. Critical to this has been to align the strategy with other relevant strategies. A full list of these are available on request. The National Indicator 156 to halve the number of households in temporary accommodation is now a key priority within the Local Area Agreement.
  - **Advice and information and prevention** – Prevention advice is key to planned housing and significant emphasis has been put in this area. A wide range of services contribute directly and indirectly to the prevention of homelessness, from those improving people's education and skills and identifying and supporting those at risk at an early stage, through to those ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing.
  - **Accommodation** – Improving the quality and redesigning the use of temporary accommodation to support a planned move on approach will be critical to the strategy over the next five years. Equally important is the need to satisfy the demand for accommodation. National Indicator 155 - Number of affordable Housing delivered - is also a key indicator within the local area agreement. The supply of accommodation is critical to achieving the target of halving the number in temporary accommodation. The annual level of casual vacancies in the council's own stock has reduced by 20% in the last twelve months. 2007/8 the level of new affordable housing generated is expected to be approximately 50 homes and over the next two year the target is 425 affordable homes.
  - **Support Services** – These will need to develop towards providing support that either sustains customers in their existing accommodation or provides them with the tools that will ensure they are able to sustain independent living.
13. Details of what is required over the next five years are contained within the action plan which is available on request.
14. To achieve the aims set out in the action plan there is a need for both members and stakeholder agencies to adopt new working practices, develop

forward thinking and dynamic policies and pro-actively address the future challenges

## **Corporate Priorities**

15. The Homeless strategy is closely linked to various strategies and priorities. In terms of the corporate priorities it is critical to the following priorities.
  - Increase peoples skills and knowledge and improve future employment prospects
  - Improve the economic prosperity of the people of York with a focus on minimizing income differentials
  - Improve the health and lifestyles of the people of York, particularly amongst groups whose levels of health are the poorest
  - Improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the City
  - Improve the quality and availability of decent affordable homes in the City
  - The Council will provide strong leadership for the city using partnerships to shape and deliver the Sustainable Community Strategy for the city

## **Financial Implications**

15. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, it may not be possible to deliver all the actions contained in the strategy within the existing resources allocated to homelessness services. The financial implications of delivering the strategy will therefore need to be kept under review and will be reported to the Executive Member for Housing and Adult Social Services.

## **Equalities Implications**

16. As part of the process of reviewing the homeless strategy an equalities impact assessment has been completed.

## **Legal Implications**

17. The Review and Strategy are legal requirements under the Homelessness Act 2002.

## **Risk Management**

18. The risk is that the council doesn't achieve its targets to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation. These target are set out in the action plan and are in the council's Local Area Agreement. Within the strategy and the action plan there are measures to ensure that the risks are mitigated.

19. 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

20. The Executive are asked to approve the strategy (Option 1) and its submission to Communities and Local Government Department by 31/7/2008

Reason : It is a legal requirement that the council has a Homeless Strategy

## Contact Details

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### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

**Steve Waddington**  
**Head of Housing Services**

**Report Approved**  **Date** 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008

Bill Hodson  
Director of Housing and Adult Social Services

**Report Approved**  **Date** 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008

### Specialist Implications Officer(s)

#### Finance

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

**All**

For further information please contact the author of the report

### Background Papers:

2003/08 homeless strategy

Action plan for Homeless Strategy 2008/2013

List of links to other strategies

Outcomes form consultation

## **Annexes**

### **Annex A - Draft Homeless strategy**