



PART A:	MATTERS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS
REPORT TO:	POLICY AND RESOURCES
DATE:	24th NOVEMBER 2016
REPORT OF THE:	HEAD OF PLANNING AND HOUSING GARY HOUSDEN
TITLE OF REPORT:	HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2015/20 ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 2015/16
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Members with the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan Annual Review for 2015/16.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that members note the update on the 2015/2020 Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 It is a requirement for the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan to be reviewed on an annual basis and for progress to be noted.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

- 4.1 There are no significant risks associated with this report

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT AND CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Council Plan as agreed by members includes the priority to meet housing need in the Ryedale District Council area.

- 5.2 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all housing authorities to produce a Homelessness Strategy based on a review of homelessness within their district. This must be reviewed every five years. The current strategy was developed in 2015. It is a requirement that the Action Plan is reviewed on an annual basis.

- 5.3 Ryedale's homelessness strategy is linked to the Council's Housing Strategy Action Plan 2015/2021. This strategy includes an objective on the prevention of homelessness. Ryedale's Homelessness Strategy Action Plan will ensure that proposals under that objective have been highlighted and will be developed and monitored at a local level. The Council will continue to work closely with the other local authorities across the LEP area on homelessness issues and share good practice in the implementation of its homelessness strategy.
- 5.3 The Ryedale Housing Forum, a group of local agencies and services with a large membership, helped to develop the strategy through a consultation process. Officers also consulted local organisations and stakeholders about their concerns and their ideas for the review of the Action Plan.
- 5.4 The Housing Services Department continues to undertake regular customer consultation in order to inform future service provision. This is done by face to face consultation, questionnaires after advice interviews and exit forms from all temporary accommodation.

REPORT

6.0 REPORT DETAILS

- 6.1 Ryedale's five year Homelessness strategy sets out the Council's aim to tackle homelessness across the district and details how the Council will provide housing options services for the residents of Ryedale.
- 6.2 The strategy recognises the important role that other partners and stakeholders have to play in employing skills and delivering sensitive and tailored solutions to some of the issues affecting our community.
- 6.3 In recognition of the fact that homelessness can be devastating, and is seldom a problem in isolation; the provision of accommodation without considering all contributory factors and then aiming to provide specialist support and assistance to address those problems, is not a solution. An holistic approach ensures that health, employment, income, social isolation, relationships and other issues which may affect individuals' ability to maintain their home are considered.
- 6.4 It is a fact that the prevention of homelessness is more cost-effective for authorities than dealing with its consequences, resources deployed on prevention of homelessness ultimately save on costs long-term and helps to alleviate the crisis for the client. To achieve this in the ongoing economic downturn, the emphasis must continue to be on partnership working, sharing resources and employing creative and innovative solutions
- 6.5 Local authorities and their partners have for some years worked under ongoing financial constraints. Therefore, working collaboratively - including early and positive intervention - is key to success, prevention considered to be better than the cure. The Homelessness Reduction Bill (2016/2017) is currently under consideration in Parliament and likely to become adopted legislation in 2017. This follows the model passed by the Welsh Assembly in 2014 and will place on authorities an extended duty to actively prevent homelessness.

- 6.6 This Action Plan fits into the overall aims and visions of Ryedale District Council's Housing Strategy Action Plan. This details the services and initiatives in place to achieve these goals and will highlight any gaps in service and future development needs.

Working with our partners across Ryedale, the Council aims to achieve the following:

- encourage people to seek assistance before they reach a homelessness crisis
- enable people to stay in their own homes whenever possible through appropriate advice, support, information and assistance
- work together to ensure an holistic approach to clients' difficulties
- identify suitable housing options for those who cannot remain in their current situation
- increase the availability of new affordable homes
- ensure that the Private Rental Sector plays a larger role in homelessness prevention

- 6.7 **This will be achieved by meeting 5 key objectives:**

1. Reduce homelessness through prevention
2. Reduce the use and improve the quality of temporary accommodation
3. Reduce the incidence of youth homelessness
4. Improve access to support services and advice to prevent homelessness and increase sustainability
5. Increase the supply of affordable housing

- 6.8 The Council has seen an increase in the number of those applying as homeless, and cases are becoming more complex with clients displaying multiple needs. There has been a reduced number of clients approaching the housing options service directly on an annual basis from 708 in 2014/15 to 645 during 2015/16. Clients are accessing services through the website as a result of improvements made to the content. Training has also been provided to external partnerships to support this channel.

- 6.9 The key performance indicators for all services are reported to members quarterly in the 'Delivering the Council Plan' performance report, including those for housing services and homeless preventions.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The following implications have been identified:

a) Financial

There are no additional financial implications beyond the existing budget provision arising from this report.

b) Legal

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires that all local authorities must have

adopted a Homelessness Strategy Action Plan which is reviewed on an annual basis.

8.0 NEXT STEPS

8.1 Delivering the Homeless Strategy

Whilst the provision of a housing options service is the Council's statutory duty, the actual delivery of the service relies on the support of many formal and informal partners. Housing Options will continue to work closely with these partners in order that the Council realises the ambitions of the Plan. Partnership working has become increasingly critical in the light of government funding cuts and the continuing need to demonstrate value for money whilst delivering a high quality service to improve the lives of those faced with homelessness.

- 8.3 The new Homelessness Reduction Bill which is currently progressing through Parliament will place a "duty to prevent" on authorities when it is enacted in 2017/18. When the bill is enacted we will know the likely implications which may result in the need for a Member briefing at that point.

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Background Papers:
Ryedale Homelessness Strategy Review and Action Plan 2015-2020 Progress Update