



PART A:	MATTERS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS
REPORT TO:	POLICY AND RESOURCES
DATE:	23rd NOVEMBER 2017
REPORT OF THE:	PRINCIPLE SPECIALIST (PEOPLE) KIM ROBERTSHAW
TITLE OF REPORT:	HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2015/20 ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 2016/17
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Members with the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan Annual Review for 2016/17.

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 proposals contained within the Action Plan support the Council's priority Sustainable Growth
- Minimising homelessness, improving the standard and availability of rented accommodation and supporting people to live independently
- 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 Council 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. A 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.
- 6.6 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which will be implemented in April 2018 has introduced the duty for local authorities to undertake prevention activity for all applicants where they are threatened with homelessness and eligible for assistance. This extends the statutory duty that currently begins 28 days before homelessness occurs, to preventing homelessness within 56 days, for anyone at risk of homelessness. This includes those who are not in priority need and those with no local connection. The Act also has an additional 56 day duty to relieve homelessness (assist in finding alternative accommodation) for anyone who is actually homeless.

- 6.7 Ryedale District Council currently complete substantial prevention work, however there was not a legal duty to do this. This measure will provide a clear legal framework and accountability for local authority prevention work, which includes significantly more contact with customers, support plans being created and many more decision stages. Currently there are two stages that a homelessness decision can be appealed on, but under the new act there are 12.
- 6.8 At this time we are completing a mapping exercise outlining the reasons customers are approaching the authority and at what stage of homelessness. This will enable us to monitor the implications of the changes and the impact it will have on the service. It will also ascertain extra resources needed to implement the new duty.
- 6.9 Extra Burdens funding will be made available to assist local authorities with the IT improvement required (amount to be confirmed) and the large increase in workload. It has been confirmed that the Council will receive £7k annually for the next 2 years.
- 6.10 Universal Credit was introduced into Ryedale as a 'full service' in June 2016. This seems to be a substantial area of difficulty for customers, with some falling into arrears and being unable to retain their current accommodation and others unable to access the private rental sector as universal credit is not yet in place.
- 6.11 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

6.12 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

- 6.13 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 similar number of clients approaching the housing options service directly on an annual basis with 645 during 2015/16 and 640 in 2016/17. 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.

- 6.14 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.

6.15 Homeless Statistics for 2015/16 and 2016/17:

	15/16	16/17
Number of applications received	37	23
Decisions made	36	20
Accepted	11	9
Preventions	203	207
Housed temporarily	10	17
Permanently rehoused	14	11
Average stay - B&B	8 wks	5 wks
Average stay - other temp ie ORC	25 wks	21 wks
Advice enquiry reason (percentage)	North Yorkshire Home Choice 23.4% Current accom unsuitable- 16.4% Relation break - partner - 13.8% Loss of Private rental - 12.4%	Current accom unsuitable - 17.7% Arrears, Social Housing - 14.7% North Yorkshire Home Choice - 14.2% Loss of Private rental - 11.7%
Prevention outcome	Assistance into social housing Assistance into supported. Accom Assistance into Private Rented Rent issues resolved	Assistance into social housing Assistance into supported. Accom Enable to remain in Private rented RS or SRS Rent issues resolved

- 6.16 There has been a substantial reduction in North Yorkshire Home Choice enquiry, this is through being dealt with at first contact through Customer advisors as well as encouraging clients to self-help and accessing the services through the website. There has been an increase in those requiring help for rent arrears in the social sector, this could be linked to the introduction of Universal credit in June 2016.

- 6.17 The highest outcome again has been assistance with social housing and supported accommodation. There has been a reduction in the assistance in accessing private rented accommodation and this will be reviewed in preparation of the Homeless Reduction Act.

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. However the new legislation has the potential to have a significant impact on the resource requirements needed to deliver the service and Officers are exploring funding options to cover any additional costs in the short term. This position will continue to be reviewed to enable a full assessment of the long term financial implications.

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.

c) Equality and Diversity

A full equalities impact assessment has been undertaken in respect of Ryedale Homelessness Strategy Review and Action Plan 2015-2020 which this Action Plan seeks to implement.

8.0 NEXT STEPS

8.1 Delivering the Homelessness 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. Specialist (People) and Customer Services (People) 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.

8.2 The new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (going live in April 2018) will prove one of the biggest challenges for the Council as mentioned and a member briefing will be given once the guidance has been released.

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Background Papers:

Ryedale Homelessness Strategy Review and Action Plan 2015-2020 Progress Update 2017

Background Papers are available for inspection at:

Housing Section, Ryedale House