



PART A:	MATTERS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS
REPORT TO:	POLICY AND RESOURCES
DATE:	15 NOVEMBER 2018
REPORT OF THE:	SPECIALIST SERVICE LEAD GARY HOUSDEN
TITLE OF REPORT:	HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2015/20 ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 2017/18
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present Members with the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan Annual Review for 2017/18.

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 effective practice in the implementation of its homelessness strategy.

5.3 The National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) delivered a presentation to the Ryedale Housing Forum in partnership with the Specialist People team on 13 September 2018. The Forum has a large membership and this event was attended by a group of local agencies and services.

This forum initially helped to develop Ryedale's homelessness strategy through a consultation process and feedback for the annual review was secured at this event. Local organisations, members, customers, members of the public and stakeholders were also consulted about their views and suggestions for the review of the Action Plan.

5.4 The Council continues to undertake regular customer consultation in order to inform future service provision. Customer consultation is undertaken through a number of methods including face to face consultation, questionnaires after advice interviews and exit forms for customers when they leave 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 partners and stakeholders have to play in employing skills and delivering sensitive and tailored solutions to some of the issues affecting Ryedale's 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 in itself a solution. Instead, a holistic approach is required to ensure 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 and resources deployed on prevention of homelessness ultimately save on costs long-term and help to alleviate the crisis for the customer. 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 worked under ongoing financial constraints for a number of years. Working collaboratively, for example by joint funding or joint protocols and processes, on early intervention and prevention is key to success.

6.6 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA 2017) which amended the Housing Act 1996 was implemented in April 2018 and brought about some key changes:

Assessments and personalised housing plans - Local authorities are under a duty to assess and provide meaningful assistance to **everyone** who is homeless or threatened with homelessness, regardless of any priority need. The assessment covers a household's circumstances, housing needs, accommodation needs and support. The applicant must be notified in writing of the outcome of the assessment and in most circumstances assessments will require at least one face to face interview. Following an assessment, agreement should be sought from the customer on the reasonable steps set out within the housing plan. This assessment process can take up to 1 ½ hours.

Prevention Duty - this introduced a duty for local authorities to undertake prevention activity for all customers who are threatened with homelessness and eligible for assistance. Under previous legislation someone would only have been deemed as threatened with homelessness if their approach was 28 days before the date of homelessness. This time frame has extended to within 56 days and supports an early intervention approach. This includes those who are not in priority need and those with no local connection.

Ryedale District Council previously operated within a prevention agenda, however there was not a legal duty to do this; For further information on this please review Annex 2, which shows the duties placed on the Local Authority prior to and after the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Relief Duty - the Act also has an additional 56-day duty to relieve homelessness (to assist a household in finding alternative accommodation) for anyone who is homeless.

Meeting Those Duties - The act also allows Local Authorities to meet their duties to prevent homelessness and relieve homelessness by offering a 6 month offer of accommodation in the private rented sector.

Duty to refer - requires specified public bodies to notify a local housing authority if they identify any person whom they believe is homeless or threatened with homelessness and came in to effect on 1 October 2018

- 6.7 The Homelessness Reduction Act has provided a clear legal framework and accountability for local authority prevention work, which includes significantly more contact with customers, the creation of personalised housing plans many more decision stages. Previously there were two stages at which a homelessness decision could be appealed; under the new Act however, there are twelve.
- 6.8 The Homelessness (Review Procedure etc.) Regulations 2018 were laid before Parliament on 22nd February 2018; these Regulations relate to the review procedures, the duty to refer for specified public bodies and the use of deliberate and unreasonable refusal to cooperate to end a local authority's duties.
- 6.9 New Burdens funding was made available to assist Local Authorities with the additional burdens of the Homelessness Reduction Act. Ryedale District Council will receive in total £22,293 during the first three years of implementation.

Alongside this, further one off New Burdens funding was provided to support with the IT improvement which was required and the large increase in workload. Ryedale District Council received £9,000 IT funding for Year 1 and used this funding to implement Housing Jigsaw.

- 6.10 Universal Credit was introduced into Ryedale as a 'full service' in June 2016. Universal Credit is thought to have a significant impact on both accessing accommodation and the causes of homelessness.
- 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 a 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 (PRS) 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 reviewed the ways in which clients can approach the service. Clients can self-refer through an online portal which can reduce an assessment by up to 30 minutes for each household.

The Duty to Refer also requires Local Authorities to set up a single point of contact which public authorities can use for submitting referrals and is available on the Authority's website. Ryedale are using ALERT, which is a portal to receive referrals and is available on the Council website and have a generic email address available as an alternative method of making a referral.

- 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. It should be noted that the format of this report will need to be amended inline with the new duties.

- 6.15 Homeless Statistics for 2016/17 and 2017/2018:

	16/17	17/18
Number of applications received	23	35
Decisions made	20	31

Accepted	9	10
Preventions	207	183
Housed temporarily	17	16
Permanently rehoused	11	17
Average stay - B&B	5 weeks	1 week
Average stay - other temp i.e. ORC	21 weeks	21 weeks
Advice enquiry reason (percentage)	Current accommodation unsuitable - 17.7% Arrears, Social Housing - 14.7% North Yorkshire Home Choice - 14.2% Loss of Private rental - 11.7%	Current accommodation unsuitable - 21.9% Relationship breakdown, partner - 19% North Yorkshire Home Choice - 14.2% Other- 11.8%
Prevention outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance into social housing • Assistance into supported accommodation • Enable to remain in Private rented • Rented Sector or Social Rented Sector Rent issues resolved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted into supported accommodation • Assisted into social housing • Providing other assistance that will enable app to remain in accomm in Private Rented Sector or Social Rented Sector • Resolving rent or service charge arrears in social or private sector

6.16 Data reporting requirements changed in April 2018 in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act. H-CLIC is used to report homelessness case data to MHCLG and reports data from homelessness applications taken on or after 3 April 2018. This is a significant change to P1e as recorded above, as cases were recorded as a prevention when an applicant “believed themselves” to be threatened with homelessness and this situation was prevented. Cases under H-CLIC are only reported once an application has been triggered. Furthermore, under P1e recordings Local Authorities were able to record prevention duties from partner agencies; under H-CLIC prevention activity must be attributed to a duty owed by the Local Authority. It should be noted that it will not be possible to compare statistics published prior to April 2018 with those published afterwards because there is such a significant difference in the duties and the data collected.

MHCLG are working towards a high level data report which will include; the number of households in temporary accommodation, prevention duties owed / discharged, relief duties owed / discharged alongside other key facts.

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 the 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 Ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act through statistical returns and case level monitoring.

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Background Papers:

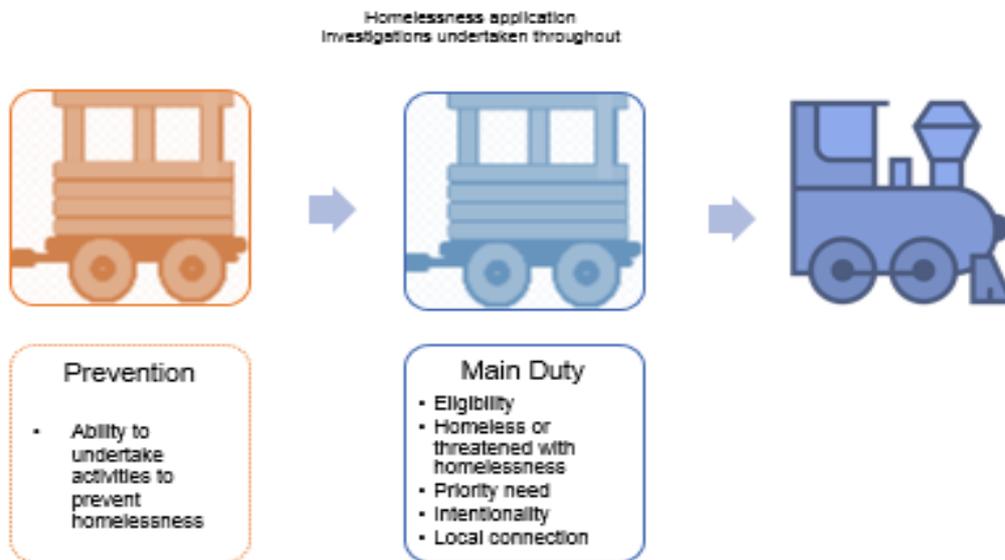
Ryedale Homelessness Strategy Review and Action Plan 2015-2020 Progress Update 2018

Background Papers are available for inspection at:
Specialist People Team, Ryedale House

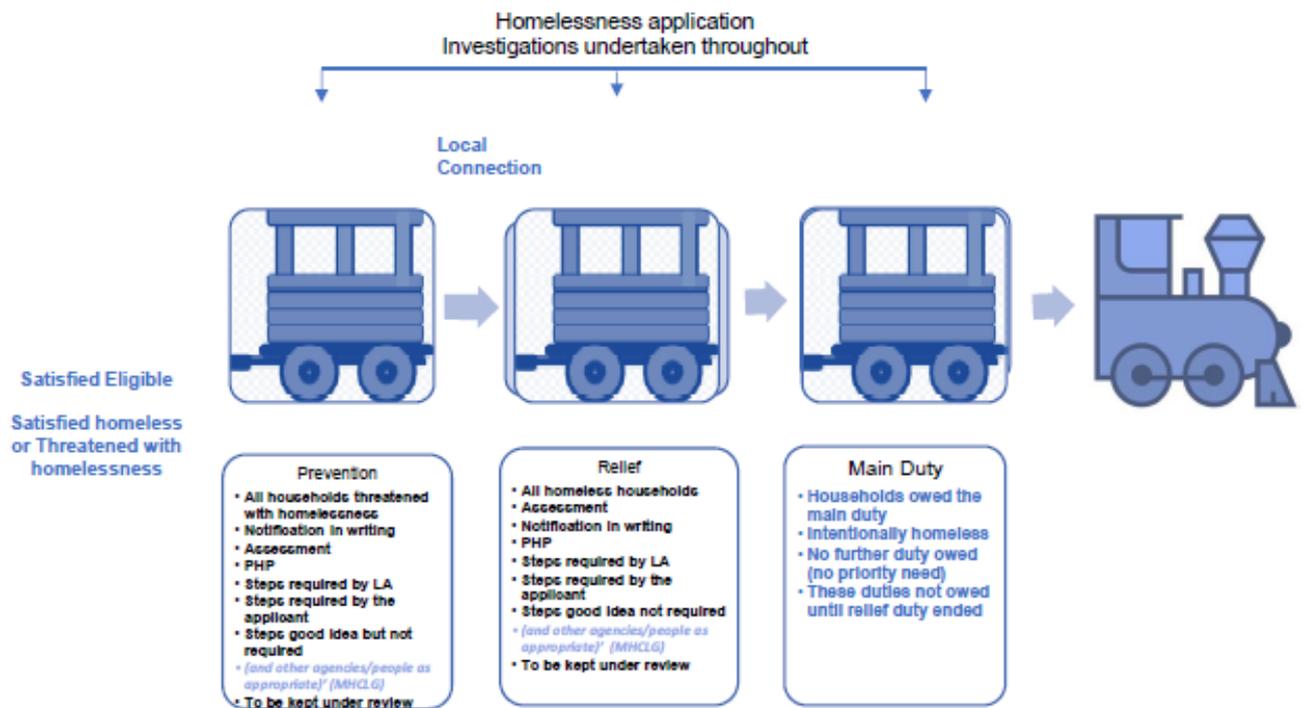
Appendix 1

The below diagrams visualise the duties places on housing options team before the 3rd April 2018 and post

Housing Act 1996 (as amended)



Homelessness Reduction Act 2017



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Section 188 /199A(2)/200(1) Interim accommodation provided
Section 1 Localism Act 2011 Discretionary power to accommodate
Section 193(2) Temporary accommodation provided if main duty owed