

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE
14 JANUARY 2019

HOMELESSNESS REVIEW FINDINGS

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members on the current review of homelessness in Newark & Sherwood and outline the initial themes emerging from the review that will shape the new Homelessness Strategy 2019-23.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to conduct a review of homelessness and to produce a Homelessness Strategy, setting out how homelessness will be tackled in each area.
- 2.2 Newark & Sherwood District Council produced its first Homelessness Strategy in 2003 and subsequent strategies in 2008 and 2013. The partnership strategies have been used to drive forward a whole range of service improvements.
- 2.3 Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood District Councils successfully jointly commissioned a homelessness review and individual strategies in 2013 and therefore agreed to jointly commission a review and strategy covering the period 2019 – 2023. This will now cover Mid Notts and include Ashfield, because Ashfield and Mansfield District Councils became a shared service in 2015.
- 2.4 Historically, strategies have been based on comprehensive reviews of homelessness, in line with the Homelessness Act 2002 and associated guidance and best practice. This is still the case for this review and strategy but it will also need to consider the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 2.5 The review is required to set out the current and likely future levels of homelessness through the collation of available data, information and evidence; to measure the extent and nature of homelessness across the three areas and to highlight the potential response to homelessness individually, collectively and countywide where appropriate.
- 2.6 Through the Council's procurement process, Homeless Link was awarded the contract in June 2018 and has since been engaging a wide range of stakeholders, service providers and service users.
- 2.7 The homelessness review report will be available in January 2019, informing the strategy for which a launch event is planned to take place in March 2019. An additional review is also planned in another 12-18 months' time to consider gaps in provision and to take account of the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the resulting implications this may bring, following its commencement on 3 April 2018.

3.0 Homelessness Review Methodology and Emerging Themes

- 3.1 The methodology for the homelessness review includes:

- A literature review and desk top study;
- Intelligence from local providers, local authority officers and commissioners, across the housing, welfare benefits, social care, criminal justice, health and community safety sectors, through semi-structured interviews;
- Quantitative analysis to estimate future levels of need - and for modelling of the housing and support solutions required by people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness;
- Mapping of the current supply of commissioned and non-commissioned services, in comparison to the estimation of need as a result of the quantitative analysis;
- A survey of support needs, completed by providers, covering an extensive sample of accommodation based services, in order to gain a deeper understanding of service users' characteristics, pathways, support needs, engagement with services and move-on requirements;
- Service user engagement through interview, focus groups and surveys.

3.2 A Project Steering group comprising representatives from the three councils and wider key partners has been overseeing the review. In addition, regular discussion and presentations have been made to the joint homelessness interagency Forum during the course of the project.

Key Themes

3.3 A number of key themes are starting to emerge and will become the basis for the action plan linked to the strategy as detailed below:

Theme	Factors to consider
Reducing the Impact of Poverty on Homelessness	Financial Resilience (e.g. membership of Credit Unions) Support – budgeting and debt Discretionary Housing Payments Housing Benefit and Universal Credit Employment & Education
Responding to the Shortage of Social Housing	Working with partner RPs Working with other RPs Lettings/Allocation Policy HRA Housing Development
Responding to the Shortage of Supported Housing and Housing Related Support	Housing Benefit and Supported Housing “Floating Support” Working with NCC to influence the future of “commissioning” at county & local level Coherent “pathways”
Working with the Private Rented Sector	DHPs, bond schemes, deposits, rent in advance, utilities, CU client accounts – what is the best delivery mechanism? Sourcing property, moving in, sustainability/prevention Incentives for landlords and agents Social lettings partnerships Early intervention in/understanding the causes of evictions

Addressing the Causes and Consequences of Homelessness	Deprivation Adverse events such as trauma, relationship breakdown, violence (including DV) poverty, offending, bereavement Vulnerabilities including mental ill health, learning disability, substance misuse, poor physical health/disability, youth/care background, armed forces background Lack of support – families, care, networks etc
Reducing the Negative Impact of Homelessness on the Community (inc. Rough Sleeping)	Tackling issues such as Rough Sleeping, ASB, Street activity, Crime, Town centres & neighbourhoods Role of voluntary sector
Improving Customer Services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	Encourage and support new duty on public authorities, such as hospitals and prisons, requiring them to make a referral to the local housing authority if someone they're working with appears to be homeless or threatened with homelessness.
Improving the data available to all relevant agencies	Better data is needed to inform planning at all levels A wide range of agencies hold data (e.g. on care leavers, substance misuse, Hospital discharge, supported housing, temporary accommodation) and could report it into a central point to monitor/track performance

4.0 Equalities Implications

- 4.1 No equality implications have been identified; however, a full Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out when the five year strategy is produced.

5.0 Financial Implications – FIN18-19/248

- 5.1 The total cost of the homelessness review and subsequent strategy is £53,075 and is split equally for payment between the three authorities. The total cost to Newark & Sherwood District Council is £17,692 which will be funded from the Homelessness Reserve.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

That Members note the contents of the report and comment of the emerging themes from the Homelessness Review which will shape the new Homelessness Strategy 2019-2023.

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Leanne Monger, Business Manager – Housing & Safeguarding on ext 5545 or Cheska Asman, Homelessness Strategy Officer on 5643

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