



Derby City Council

**Planning, Housing and Leisure Board  
19 February 2013**

**ITEM 7**

Report of the Strategic Director of Adults,  
Health and Housing

## **Homelessness Review**

### **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the available homeless provision in the city ahead of the Housing Related Support cuts to be implemented in April 2013.
- 1.2 It also informs Members about the recent successful Homelessness Transition Fund (HTF) bid submitted by Riverside ECHG to Homeless Link to tackle rough sleeping and single homelessness in Derby City and Derbyshire. It advises Members of the severe weather provision in place in the city in the winter months.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 To consider and comment on the potential impact of the reduced budgets on homelessness provision and partnership working in the city.
- 2.2 To note the information in this report relating to the successful HTF bid to Homeless Link.
- 2.3 To note the severe weather provision that is in place in the city for rough sleepers to access from 1 December 2012 to 31 March 2013.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 To ensure that the Board has given adequate consideration to the potential impact of budget cuts on available homeless provision for homeless people and partnership working in the city.
- 3.2 To ensure that the Board is fully informed of potential impacts the budget cuts are likely to have on Derby citizens and the impact this is likely to have on the Council's Housing Options Service to provide housing to meet need and demand from homeless households.
- 3.3 To ensure that the Board are fully informed of the good partnership work with Riverside ECHG to tackle rough sleeping and single homelessness.
- 3.4 To ensure that the Board is fully informed of available temporary provision through the winter months to prevent anyone from rough sleeping in the city throughout this

period.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 4.1 The council set the revenue budget for 2013 – 16 on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2013. This included further savings to be made from the housing related support expenditure. A consultation exercise is underway about the strategy to be used to deliver the savings and this is due to conclude on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2013. An evaluation of the responses received will be carried out and a final Cabinet report will be presented on the 13<sup>th</sup> March 2013 with recommendations about how the savings will be achieved.
- 4.2 If the proposals proceed as outlined in the consultation and the budget reduces accordingly, there will inevitably be a reduction in the available accommodation in the city to meet housing need, including accommodation provided for homeless households. The savings will see the current budget reduce from £6.675m to £3.675m in 2013 and £1.675m in 2014.
- 4.3 Currently the Housing Related Support budget funds short term accommodation and the number of short term units funded is 527 (approximately). Most housing related support schemes in the city are currently being decommissioned, and most contracts are due to end on 31 March 2013.
- 4.4 Extensions have been offered to approximately six providers from April through to October 2013. Negotiations with providers are ongoing regarding this extension to their contracts. If the extensions are agreed, from April onwards, to October 2013 there will be approximately 347 bed spaces provided to meet need and demand in the city. From October 2013, this will further reduce, to approximately 150 bed spaces including the beds available at Milestone House.
- 4.5 The Housing Options Service is currently reviewing its staffing structure, to put more resources into the front facing service. One of the proposals being consulted upon is to prioritise the housing related support expenditure on bolstering the Housing Options Service, through an increase in funding and staffing resources to meet increased customer demand. It is anticipated a new structure will be in place following a period of consultation with the unions, and staff by May 2013. The vision for the new structure is, to have a four tiered approach to housing advice and homelessness services. There will be a focus placed, on procuring accommodation in the private rented sector, and working in partnership with private sector landlords. This will increase access to the private sector and, will, at the same time, encourage improved housing standards and conditions. The Housing Options Service already works in partnership with private landlords through its bond bank scheme, and has been very successful in the last few years in placing homeless households and people in housing need in the private sector through this route. Housing Options is currently involved in reviewing the discretionary housing payment policy, and will encourage the council, to develop its policy to use this funding pot, in an innovative way to prevent homelessness. Incentives for private sector landlords to work in partnership with us in the future, will be critical to the success or failure we have in accessing more private sector provision to meet housing need.

- 4.6 It is a requirement for all Local Authorities to have a specific plan to address rough sleeping during periods of cold weather. Derby City Council's Severe Weather Provision started on 1 December 2012 and will run until 31 March 2013, inclusive of these dates.
- 4.7 The Department for Communities and Local Government requirement for the severe weather provision is when the weather forecast predicts three consecutive nights, or more, of a minimum temperature of zero degrees Celsius or below.
- 4.8 Derby City Council and partner agencies have agreed they will not be following the strict weather temperature predictions but will offer this provision for the whole of the severe weather period. The cover will also extend, depending on any inclement weather preceding or extending the agreed dates.

The provision available in Derby is:

- 4 emergency access places will be available in Centenary House
- 4 emergency access places will be available at Hartington House
- 1 couple or 1 emergency access place/s will be available at the Padley Hostel
- 4 emergency access places will be available at Milestone House

Each hostel allocates their spaces each evening at 9pm. When these spaces are full they will contact the other hostels and refer the person through to an available space. The total number of severe weather spaces Derby has is 13. Through this winter period, we have seen an increase in people accessing this service, and at times we have been accommodating up to 19 rough sleepers overnight.

- 4.9 Priority access will be given to rough sleepers local to Derby and if there are any vacancies after that they can be given to rough sleepers from the surrounding areas. When the provision is full, rough sleepers from the surrounding areas are given the emergency number **01773 728222 option 2** for out of office house. 'Call Derbyshire' **0845 6058058 option 2** or **01629 533190 option 2** during office hours who will put them in touch with their local area for their rough sleeper severe weather provision.

For the rough sleepers from the surrounding areas accessing Derby's provision a period of 5 days access will be allowed in order for them to contact their own areas so they can access that provision.

- 4.10 **Street Outreach Team – Homelessness Transition Fund bid**
- 4.11 Riverside English Churches Housing Group has been successful in the bid for a street outreach team to cover Derby City and the eight District Council areas across Derbyshire. The Street Outreach Team will meet the requirements of the No Second Night Out (Derby/Derbyshire) (NSNOD) for the 18 months duration of the funding period.

- 4.12 NSNO Derby/Derbyshire (NSNOD) will work with rough sleepers and homeless people, preventing new occurrences through improved identification of rough sleepers and ensuring local accountability.
- 4.13 NSNOD will promote and advertise to the public services, and to rough sleepers themselves the ways to help rough sleepers off the streets by contacting the service through the national website and 24/7 telephone line.
- 4.14 NSNOD will ensure each referral is efficiently/effectively passed on to the outreach teams for appropriate action and will provide feedback to anyone reporting a rough sleeper on action taken within 10 working days.
- 4.15 The NSNOD team will work with Derby City Single Point of Entry, Local Authorities Homeless Teams and partner agencies, day centres and volunteers to accommodate longer-term rough sleepers in a combined hub/accommodation units made available through this funding. NSNOD will find an immediate solution off the streets including reconnection, engagement with specialised services such as health, employment/training and access to accommodation providers.
- 4.16 The service will accept referrals 24 hours a day through a hub at Centenary House, Mount Street, Derby (24 hour hostel). Riverside ECHG will provide a number of sit up and emergency beds, solely used for NSNOD which include entrenched rough sleepers and bringing them into services where they can be accommodated in a sit-up bed.
- 4.17 NSNOD will enhance opportunities for ex-rough sleepers to progress towards training and work opportunities. The service will initially recruit 10 volunteers with another 10 over a six month period with experience of rough sleeping or homelessness. They will be trained and co-ordinated by a Volunteer Co-ordinator who will provide training on lone working, professional boundaries and mentoring as well as monitoring volunteer retention levels.

## OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 None

This report has been approved by the following officers:

<b>Legal officer</b> <b>Financial officer</b> <b>Human Resources officer</b> <b>Estates/Property officer</b> <b>Service Director(s)</b> <b>Other(s)</b>	Olu Idowu Tony Nash/Peter Shillcock Liz Moore N/A Brian Frisby Kirsty Everson
<b>For more information contact:</b> <b>Background papers:</b> <b>List of appendices:</b>	Lisa Callow 01332 256487 lisa.callow@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 - Implications

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial and Value for Money**

- 1.1 The current spend on housing related support services is £6.675m, this is to reduce to £3.675m in April 2013. Dependent on the outcome of the current budget consultation as detailed in Para 4.2 this may reduce further to £1.675m by April 2014. The current budget for spend on bed and breakfast accommodation is £61,490 per year.

**Legal**

- 2.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that free advice and information on homelessness assistance is available to any person in their district. There is a legal obligation on the authority to ensure that sufficient accommodation is (and will be) available for people who are (or may become) homeless, and for provision of support for people who are (or were, or may be) homeless. (Support can include help with a homeless person's drug or alcohol addiction, or mental health problems). Rough sleepers and those in temporary accommodation should be able to have access to, primary health care, to employment opportunities and to education.

**Personnel**

- 3.1 The review of the current Housing Options and Advice Services staff structure will be carried out in accordance with relevant council policies relating to restructuring and recruitment

**Equalities Impact**

- 4.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out for the new staff structure.

**Health and Safety**

- 5.1 None

**Environmental Sustainability**

- 6.1 None

**Property and Asset Management**

- 7.1 None

## **Risk Management**

8.1 None

## **Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

9.1 The new staff structure will provide improved customer service to meet increased demand.