

Report on the Draft Homelessness Strategy

SUMMARY

- 1.1 Derby's new Homelessness Strategy is due to be adopted by Council early in 2015. This report sets out the key elements of the draft strategy and provides a further opportunity for scrutiny members to comment and feedback.
- 1.2 The report focuses on the vision, strategic priorities and specific actions which will be implemented over the next four year period.
- 1.3 In 2013, the Council's Planning, Housing and Leisure Board (PHL), carried out a 'topic review' of homelessness. The review involved a thorough assessment of service provision and made 14 recommendations regarding future delivery. This report demonstrates how the recommendations of the topic review have been taken into account in the new strategy. It does this by reference to the delivery plan, pinpointing those actions which result from, or have synergy with the topic review recommendations.
- 1.4 The strategy has been developed in the context of shrinking resources and increasing demand for services. These factors impact on what can realistically be achieved in the years ahead. Nevertheless, the aspiration remains to prevent homelessness wherever possible, but where it does occur, provide suitable accommodation for the affected people. Consequently, partners have agreed on the following vision statement:

Our vision is for a Derby where the Council and its partners work together effectively to ensure that homelessness is prevented wherever possible, and to enable those who do become homeless to have access to housing that is sustainable and suitable for their needs.
- 1.5 A more detailed discussion of the strategic priorities and actions which derive from this vision is found in section 4.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the update to the Board and make any comments and recommendations in relation to the new strategy.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To ensure that Board members are kept updated on the development of the new

Homelessness Strategy and have opportunity to have an input into the process.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 Background

The new [Homelessness Strategy](#) has been drafted over the period July to October 2014. There are two main elements to its development:



- The conducting of a 'Homelessness Review', which is a comprehensive analysis of the levels of homelessness, actions currently being taken to tackle homelessness, and the resources available. The review can be accessed in full [here](#).
- The consultation process, which has been undertaken with a wide range of individuals and organisations. This has included two events with service providers, input from Members, face to face discussions with single homeless people at Milestone House, and a postal questionnaire to families who had previously been at risk of homelessness or actually homeless. More details on the consultation can be found [here](#).

4.2 Strategic Priorities of the new strategy

The strategy contains 3 over arching themes, or strategic priorities, which will shape future actions. The wording of these has changed from the themes outlined in the interim report to COLB. The revised wording flows more fluently from the vision. The priorities are also more closely aligned with the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002 (see Appendix 1, 2.1) and are as follows:

Strategic Priority A	Create and Maintain a City Wide Framework to Promote Effective Partnership Working by all Agencies
Strategic Priority B	Maintain and Improve Measures to Prevent Homelessness
Strategic Priority C	Help Homeless People Back into Suitable Housing and Provide Support to make this Sustainable

4.3 Rationale

-  Priority A recognises and endorses how essential it is that all agencies work together to tackle and prevent homelessness. Many issues¹ can contribute to making households homeless and it is not possible for the Council to meet all of those needs in isolation. Consequently, homelessness services are delivered by a range of providers and partnership working is crucial to achieving many of the objectives of the new strategy.
-  Priority B emphasises that despite diminishing resources, prevention is always preferable to a reaction at 'crisis point' and remains a key objective.

¹ Such as relationship breakdown, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol mis-use, mental health, violence and financial problems.

- ✚ Priority C recognises that prevention is not possible in all cases, but providing suitable settled accommodation, with on-going support, is essential to turn around the lives of homeless people and prevent them becoming homeless again.

4.4 Under each priority are a series of actions. These are tabulated in Appendix 3

Synergy between the recommendations of the PHL homelessness topic review and the actions in the new strategy.

- 4.5 The PHL Board topic review report made 14 recommendations regarding future service delivery. One of the most over-arching of these was the setting up of a homeless liaison forum to oversee implementation and coordinate action. Service providers were very receptive to this proposal and it forms the basis of strategic priority A and action A1 in the delivery plan.
- 4.6 The PHL Board 14 recommendations are provided in appendix 2. The new strategy delivery plan is in appendix 3. The table below shows how the PHL Board recommendations have fed into the delivery plan.

PHL Rec. No.	Strategy Action Ref	Subject Area
1	A1	Setting up a Homelessness Liaison Forum (HLF)
2	C6	Closer working with health providers
3	A4	Website Improvements
4	A7	Guide to services
5	Completed	Info screen close to council house main entrance.
6	B6	Improving the referral process
7	A6	'Expanding the Single Point of Entry Service'
8	C13	Outreach worker provision
9	In process	Severe weather provision – winter 2013-14
10	C12	Severe weather provision – on going
11	A6	Increasing 'wet' facility provision
12	B10	Education, Employment, training (EET)
13	B11	Floating support and similar services
14	B1,B4,C14	Out reach sessions, welfare rights advice, money advice

4.7 *Notes to the table:*

The vast majority of PHL board recommendations are reflected in the delivery plan. Not all can be actioned immediately, but where possible we have included actions to investigate further how they can be met. Specific details are as follows:

- a) Recommendations 1,2,3,4, 6, and 14 have corresponding specific actions in the delivery plan.
- b) Recommendations 5 and 9 have already been completed/ are currently in process.
- c) Recommendations 7 and 11 relate to expanding the Single Point of Entry Service and increasing 'wet' facility provision. They cannot be implemented at present due to resource limits. That said, the HLF will monitor the availability of additional funding to be able to address these issues.(Action A6)

d) Recommendations 8, 10, 12, and 13 are subject to further review and discussion by the HLF. These include areas such as improving the referral process, severe weather provision, outreach sessions and floating support.

4.8 The delivery plan contains a number of further actions. These relate to issues such as performance monitoring and statutory requirements; the bond scheme, mitigating the impacts of new benefit sanctions and welfare reform; changes to the allocations policy; joint protocols with children services and other procedures and protocols.

4.9 The new strategy is due to be adopted by cabinet in January 2015.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 None.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Richard Burton Toni Nash Liz Moore Perveez Sadiq, Director of Business Intelligence and Sector Development Ian Fullagar, Head of Strategic Housing Nick O'Reilly, Director of ICT Ann Webster, Equality and Diversity Lead Andy Hills, Climate Change Manager Richard Boneham, Head of Governance & Assurance
For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Jeremy Mason jeremy.mason@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 - Planning, Housing and Leisure Board Recommendations Appendix 3 – Delivery Plan

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 None arising directly from this report. Should any future actions arising out of the finalised strategy result in a recommendation to incur additional costs, a separate report will be presented which will detail the costs and funding arrangements.

Legal

- 2.1 Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities to formulate a homelessness strategy, which is defined by s.3(1) as a strategy for—
(a) preventing homelessness in the district;
(b) securing that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people in the district who are or may become homeless;
(c) securing the satisfactory provision of support for people in the district—
(i) who are or may become homeless; or
(ii) who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.”
- 2.2 There is a duty under s.1(4) to publish a new homelessness strategy within the period of five years beginning with the day on which their last homelessness strategy was published. And, under s.3(8) before adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy, the authority must consult such public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons as they consider appropriate.

Personnel

- 3.1 None arising directly from this report.

IT

- 4.1 The need for working closer with partners includes how we use websites and information systems to provide common information and support to the homeless. Where this requires secure sharing of data between partners, then the details will be subject to further investigation and agreement with the Information Systems department to ensure compliance with relevant information security regulations.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 The strategy is intended to support all people and families who are or at risk of homelessness and will address particular issues affecting people with protected characteristics. Following the consultation period, an equality impact assessment will be completed before the strategy is formally approved.

Health and Safety

- 6.1 None arising directly from this report.

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 None arising directly from this report.

Property and Asset Management

- 8.1 TBC.

Risk Management

- 9.1 None directly arising from this report, but any risks will need to be considered in subsequent phases of proposal/ implementation of the strategy.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 10.1 Reduce homelessness and increase the housing supply.
Fewer homelessness acceptances and a reduction in the number of households living in temporary accommodation. (Derby City Council Plan 2014/15).

Appendix 2

Recommendations of the Planning, Housing and Leisure Board

Recommendation 1

A homeless liaison group should be created and led by the council, bringing together key partners in the city.

Recommendation 2

The health services should be asked to contribute more funding and support towards the provision of some homelessness services through engagement with the homeless liaison group.

Recommendation 3

The Council's web site should be developed in partnership with service providers to give a range of information on services and assistance that is available to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Recommendation 4

The Council should work in partnership with service providers across the city to develop and produce a guide to the services and assistance available to rough sleepers, people living in supported accommodation and people at risk of imminent homelessness.

Recommendation 5

Homelessness signposting information should be displayed overnight on an externally facing screen close to the main entrance of the council house.

Recommendation 6

The Council's single point of entry team should work with Riverside ECHG to adapt the referral procedure to ensure that people are being referred to the right accommodation first time.

Recommendation 7

Derby City Councils housing and advice service manager should investigate the options to extend the provision of the single point of entry assessment service and access to relevant existing assessment data for authorised “out of hours” staff involved in placing individuals in supported accommodation.

Recommendation 8

The outreach worker times should be extended to increase the potential number of rough sleepers identified by outreach workers.

Recommendation 9

Severe weather provision should continue to be provided in Derby in addition to the NSNO initiative and should be in place from December 1st until March 31. The provision should also be extended to include the months of November and April if temperatures are particularly cold.

Recommendation 10

The provision of sit up beds in homeless service provider accommodation (and associated health and safety risk assessments) should be reviewed with a view to increasing the number of beds available during the severe weather provision.

Recommendation 11

The councils housing and advice services should work with service providers in the city to review the number of “wet” facilities available and potential shortfall, and assess any opportunities to increase the number of “wet” facilities available.

Recommendation 12

Derby City Council should work in partnership with education providers, local businesses and homeless partners to investigate the potential for developing new EET (education, employment and training) scheme for individuals living in supported housing.

Recommendation 13

Derby City Council should work in partnership with homelessness service providers and the relevant health authorities’ partners to investigate the options for increasing floating support to individuals who have recently moved on from supported accommodation into new tenancies.

Recommendation 14

Derby City Council’s Housing and Advice services should work in partnership with partners and service providers to arrange for regular outreach sessions at key

locations and times to help support the homeless, or those at risk of becoming homeless with welfare rights advice and form- filling and money advice where appropriate.

Homelessness Strategy Draft Delivery Plan 2014

Key to officers: GH: Glynis Hawkes; KM: Kim Morgan; JM: Jeremy Mason; TT: Trisha Thomas; MP: Matt Palmer; LD: Laura Dennis; CM: Clare Mehrbani; RM: Rachel Morris

Key to abbreviations

DWP	Department of Work and Pensions
DIAP	Derby Integrated Advice Partnership
EET	Education Employment and Training
HLF	Homeless Liaison Forum
HTF	Homeless Transition Fund
NSNO	No Second Night Out
PSL	Private Sector Leasing
TA	Temporary Accommodation

STRATEGIC PRIORITY A: CREATE AND MAINTAIN A CITY WIDE FRAMEWORK TO PROMOTE EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP WORKING BY ALL AGENCIES

Action	Lead Officer/Org	Further Information	Resources	Timescales
A1: Establish a new Homelessness Liaison Forum, (HLF) comprising members from across agencies.	TT	Purpose is to oversee implementation of the strategy and where appropriate amend as circumstances change.	Existing	April 2015 then 6-monthly
Action	Lead Officer/Org	Further Information	Resources	Timescales
A2: Meet all departmental targets for... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approaches - Acceptances - Preventions - TA – (snap-shot) - B&B – (snap-shot) - Rough sleepers (annually) 	TT	The 2015-16 targets will be available in February 2015. Progress against targets to be reported to the HLF	Existing / various	On going
A3: Improve clarity of and access to pertinent information and sign posting – particularly for those emergency cases where persons become homeless 'out of hours' and have no previous experience of the system.	TT/MP	Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Display screens at CH b) National phone line for reporting rough sleepers 	Existing	April 2015
A4: Further develop online access to information, advice and a holistic range of support services	JM/LD	Clarify once customer surveys completed	Existing	April 2015

A5: Work towards achieving the Gold Standard	MP	Achieve 'Silver' by April 2015. HLF to review feasibility and timescale for achieving gold at next meeting	Existing	April 2015 and on going
A6: HLF to encourage collaborative action amongst partners to secure additional funding as and when opportunities arise.	All agencies	Agencies will make individual applications for funding and these may be commercially sensitive. However, funding is often made available for partnerships only.	Existing	On going
A7: Develop an online directory of all homelessness services in Derby.	LD		Existing	April 2015

STRATEGIC PRIORITY B: MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE MEASURES TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

Action	Lead Officer/Org	Further Information	Resources	Timescales
B1: Increase financial support and advice to prevent homelessness caused by debt and financial issues. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Increased referrals and signposting to the Derby DIAP b) Direct support through the homeless prevention fund and repossession fund. c) Continued use of the Credit Unions, maximising take-up of their services 	TT/MP	The Financial Inclusion Team deals with bond assurances/ applications and rent in advance. Also work closely with customers who are being repossessed. Financial Inclusion team is promoting pre-paid rent accounts with Credit Unions.	Existing	On going
B2: Continue to promote the bond scheme, tying it in with other measures to promoted financial inclusion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Maintain £75,000 upper-limit for live active bonds. 	MP		Existing	On going

b) Carry out a financial assessment with all tenants that approach needing a bond				
B3: Mitigate the impact of benefit sanctions/limits by ensuring process in place to prevent HB being suspended incorrectly.	MP	Take advice from DWP (Chris Hodges)	Existing	TBC
B4: Ensure staff are familiar with the new HB forms and online completion process.	TT	Resources dept. is developing new procedures which will simplify and speed up processing: a) On line HB claim forms from February 2015 b) Risk Based Verification Assessment from February 2015.	Existing	TBC
B5: Finalise the Information and Advice Strategy in order to coordinate advice and reduce duplication	DCC Service Transition Team		Existing	April 2015
Action	Lead Officer/Org	Further Information	Resources	Timescales
B6: Improve clarity of the referral process for those at risk of homelessness.	All agencies	Specific actions to be agreed at HLF, April 2015	Existing	From April 2015
B7: Complete the review of the allocations policy and implement necessary changes	KM	Proposed changes affecting homelessness are: a) Create a new need for applicants who have completed a pre-tenancy course b) Award additional priority to applicants at risk of becoming statutorily homeless within 3 months.	Existing	April 2015
B8: Arrange training for housing providers in the new allocations policy.	KM		Existing	June 2015

B9: Review the joint protocols with Children's and Young Peoples Services and implement changes / new procedures as soon as practicable. New housing framework (16/17 year olds) procurement.	TT Various agencies	More detail pending	Existing	TBC
B10: Promote EET for people living in supported housing.		To be assessed by HLF	TBC	April 2015
B11: Investigate reinstating floating support or alternatives to it		To be assessed by HLF	TBC	TBC

STRATEGIC PRIORITY C: HELP HOMELESS PEOPLE BACK INTO SUITABLE HOUSING AND PROVIDE SUPPORT TO MAKE THIS SUSTAINABLE

Action	Lead Officer/Org	Further Information	Resources	Timescales
C1: Carry out rough sleeper Street Audits on a six weekly basis and the annual rough sleeper count	NSNO	NSNO to check streets daily. Will respond to referrals from other agencies and national phone-line. NSNO will audit and report to DCC the levels of rough sleepers	Homeless Transition Funding (HTF)	On going

Action	Lead Officer/Org	Further Information	Resources	Timescales
C2: Ensure services provided by NSNO are documented, agreed and auditable.	GH	Complete SLA with NSNO.	Existing	April 2015
C3: Achieve sustainable funding for NSNO	MP	More detail pending.	TBC	
C4: Continue to provide individual plans for each rough sleeper which identifies exactly what each agency needs to do and what the individual themselves need to do to address the issues.	NSNO	Carried out by NSNO team	HTF	On going
C5: Develop and maintain written procedures including the 'steps from homelessness to settled accommodation'. To include an assessment of the full range of support needs of the household, along with a specification of which agency will deliver on them and at what stage in the process.	TT/MP/KM	Procedures are being reviewed and written as part of the Gold Standard – these are in relation to all aspects of service.	Existing	To review and update annually from April 2015
Action	Lead Officer/Org	Further Information	Resources	Timescales
C6: Work more closely with the Public Health and Commissioning in provision of effective services for homeless persons with drug and alcohol mis-use issues.	MP	More detail pending.	Existing	TBC
C7: Ensuring that all vulnerable people have access to additional support via the Local Support Services Framework	All agencies	More detail pending	Existing	On going

C8: Continue to develop the PRS : - Investigate use of private sector leasing (PSL)	JM	PSL is a process where the council or its partner takes a long term lease on a privately owned property and then sublets to those in housing need	Existing	On going
C9: Continue with Case Managers Reference Group	RM	Formerly the 'complex case panel' which assesses people with multiple and complex needs. RM to report on future of this group.	Existing	On going
C10: Develop a 'reconnections' policy for those presenting as homeless with no local connection.	MP	Development of policy is on-going.	Existing	TBC
C12: Assess how severe weather provision is maintained via partnership working.	TBC	To be assessed at next HLF	TBC	TBC
C13: Review outreach worker times		HLF to assess and expand provision where possible	TBC	TBC