

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY UPDATE

SUMMARY

- 1.1 Derby's first homelessness strategy was produced in 2003. Since its publication we have seen dramatic improvements in the city's response to homelessness. The number of homeless acceptances fell by over 75%, repeat homelessness has been eradicated almost entirely, while the effectiveness with which we respond to households, that do become homeless, has also improved.
- 1.2 There is still however much to do, against a backdrop of economic downturn, tightening of funding streams, and greater personal debt.
- 1.3 The response to these challenges is based on the same core principles as those which underpinned our previous strategy and achievements. Effective partnership working is key in the prevention of homelessness.
- 1.4 In order to ensure our actions continue to be up to date and successful a further Homeless Strategy and Action Plan was developed and produced in 2010 and covers the period through to 2014. This document provides a robust framework to achieve further reductions in the number of people who are threatened with homelessness while ensuring those who are homeless are helped into stable suitable accommodation.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the actions taken to achieve the objectives set out in the action plan.
- 2.2 To update on the recommendations from Community Commission's review of Homelessness Services in 2009.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Planning Housing and Leisure Board requested an update on the Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan.
- 3.2 Planning, Housing and Leisure Board requested an update on the recommendations made by the Community Commission following a review of homelessness services in the City in 2009.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 A review of the previous Homelessness Strategy was completed in 2010. The review provided a comprehensive understanding of homelessness in Derby.
- 4.2 The 2010 – 2014 Strategy sets out the vision, key objectives and detailed actions for increasing prevention measures, improving services and reducing homelessness in Derby over a five year period.
- 4.3 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to produce a Homelessness Strategy under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002. A strategy must include actions that...
- Prevent Homelessness.
 - Ensure there is sufficient accommodation available for people who are or may become homeless.
 - Ensure satisfactory support for people who are or may become homeless.
- 4.4 The strategy focuses on a number of factors that influence and impact on homelessness including...
- **Demographic Changes** – Total number of households in Derby is increasing while the average size of households is decreasing.
 - **Migration** – Derby has been subject to a net migration increase since 2003 with much of the increase being accounted for by inward migration. This has resulted in more demand on the housing stock and more pressure on Homelessness Advice Services.
 - **Economic and Financial context** – There are a broad number of factors in this category which impact directly and indirectly on the incidence of homelessness and resources available to address it such as:
 - The housing market – Increases in house prices, reduced accessibility to the owner occupied sector means there is more demand for social housing and the private rented sector.
 - A general lack of credit / mortgage availability – results in the owner occupied sector remaining an unaffordable option.
 - Problems in housing supply - downturn in new house building.
 - Recession – has a detrimental effect on personal income, job security and debt levels all of which can result in the loss of a home.
- 4.5 The key to addressing homelessness is to ensure that we continue to take a pro active, preventative approach to dealing with homelessness, the causes, and its impacts. The actions we are taking and have already taken following production of the Strategy and Action Plan are attached at Appendix two of this report.
- 4.6 An update on the Community Commission's recommendations following a review of homelessness services carried out in 2009 is attached at Appendix three.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Not applicable

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer	None
Financial officer	None
Human Resources officer	None
Service Director(s)	Brian Frisby
Other(s)	Lisa Callow (Author)

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Background papers:	None		
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Homelessness strategy action plan 2010 – 2014. Appendix 3 – Update on recommendations from community commissions review carried out in 2009.		

Appendix 1

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 There are no implications arising from this report

Legal

- 2.1 There are no implications arising from this report

Personnel

- 3.1 There are no implications arising from this report

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 There are no implications arising from this report

Health and Safety

- 5.1 There are no implications arising from this report

Environmental Sustainability

- 6.1 There are no implications arising from this report

Asset Management

- 7.1 There are no implications arising from this report

Risk Management

- 8.1 There are no implications arising from this report

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

9.1 There are no implications arising from this report

Appendix 2: ACTION PLAN

STRATEGIC PRIORITY A: CONTINUALLY IMPROVE MEASURES TO PREVENT AND REDUCE HOMELESSNESS

Action	Outcome	Lead officer or organisation	Resource implications	Target date
A1: Carry out rough sleeper Street Audits on a six weekly basis.	A more comprehensive knowledge of the extent and nature of rough sleeping in Derby.	Glyn Hawkes	Existing Resources	Sep 2010 – Carried out in November 2011.
A2: 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.	More effective and 'joined-up' action to help people off the streets.	Glyn Hawkes	Existing Resources	Mar 2012 – Achieved by March 2012.
A3: Develop a full time outreach team to address rough sleeping.	The establishment of a rough sleeping outreach team.	Glyn Hawkes	To be determined	Mar 2012 – voluntary outreach team in place. Bid being submitted to H/Link transition fund for funding.
A4: Complete the review of the allocations policy and implement necessary changes.	A revised allocations policy in place that is more effective at preventing and reducing homelessness.	Kim Morgan	Existing Resources	Dec 2010 – Review of the policy taken place. New policy partially implemented due to new legislation impending from the Localism Act 2012.

A5: Invite an elected member to be 'Homelessness Champion'. Implement as soon as practicable.	Have in place an elected member to be Homelessness Champion to drive forward the homelessness agenda.	Mark Menzies	Existing Resources	Oct 2010 Not Achieved.
Action	Outcome	Lead officer or organisation	Resource implications	Target date
A6: Meet the departmental targets for the number of people sleeping rough on a single night.	Rough sleeping to be reduced to as close to zero as possible.	Lisa Callow	Existing Resources	Target: reduce to zero by 2012-13 Not achieved more robust process in place for measuring RS. Economic climate increasing RS nationally.
A7: Meet the departmental targets for homelessness prevention.	Reduced homelessness levels through continued use of the Homelessness Prevention Fund and maximising the use of discretionary housing payments.	Lisa Callow	Existing Resources	Targets: 2011: 1300 2012: 1400 2013: 1500 Achieved ongoing and monitored via the business plan performance framework.
A8: Meet the departmental targets for the number of homeless households (per thousand households) where Council intervention resolved their situation.	Reduced levels of homelessness by resolving cases where households have become homeless.	Lisa Callow	Existing Resources	12 p.a. in 2010-11 Achieved.

A9: Meet the departmental targets for the number of homelessness acceptances.	Reduced overall levels of households becoming statutorily homelessness.	Lisa Callow	Existing Resources	Target: reduce year on year to 250 p.a. by 2012-13 Achieved to date we have seen a year on year reduction in homeless acceptances.
A10: Develop a 'reconnections' policy for those presenting as homeless with no local connection.	Reduced levels of stat homeless for persons without a local connection.	Matt Palmer	Existing Resources	Mar 2012 Achieved
A11: Make home visits in <i>all</i> cases where homelessness is threatened due to relationship breakdown and 'family eviction'.	Reduced levels of homelessness from what are currently our primary causes.	Trisha Thomas / Matt Palmer	Existing Resources	Dec 2010 Not achieved due to reduced resources, and the new ways of working not yet implemented.
Action	Outcome	Lead officer or organisation	Resource implications	Target date
A12: Offer a housing options interview for all those approaching HOC for the first time.	Increased efficiency in case appraisal and assessment.	Lisa Callow	Existing Resources	Dec 2011 As above.
<i>Further Research and Investigation</i> A13: Examine and evaluate the reason for and numbers of 'turn aways' at Milestone House in order to find an appropriate solution.	Reduced levels of turn-aways at SPE and other hostels.	Matt Palmer / Lisa Callow	TBC subject to the findings	Mar 2011 Achieved Cap Gemini research revealed that Derby had enough single homeless accommodation to meet need.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY B: SUPPORT VULNERABLE HOMELESS PEOPLE AND SPECIALIST NEEDS GROUPS

TO ACCESS SUITABLE AND STABLE ACCOMMODATION

B1: Secure continued funding for the DV worker.	Maintain provision of this important service.	Lisa Callow	To be determined	Mar 2011 Achieved through the restructure of service implemented in Jan 2012.
B2: Expand mediation services for landlord/tenant disputes and for where family and friends are no longer able/willing to accommodate.	Prevention measures improved for households threatened with homelessness.	Glyn Hawkes	To be determined	Mar 2012 Not achieved. No resources available to meet this objective. SP cuts imminent.
B3: Complete the preparation of a 'welcome pack' for foreign nationals and distribute widely.	Improve access to services and signposting to relevant support agencies.	Yasmin Fazil	Existing Resources	Oct 2010 Achieved.
Action	Outcome	Lead officer or organisation	Resource implications	Target date
B4: Report to the Gang and Licensing Authority all employers who have breached requirements to register migrant workers.	To help tackle homelessness caused by (wrongly) non-registered migrant workers being unable to access public funds.	Lisa Callow	Existing Resources	Dec 2010 Not Achieved due to reduced resources. NCO post deleted.

B5: 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.	Those becoming emergency homeless out of hours have greater ease of access to relevant & appropriate information.	Trisha Thomas	Existing Resources	Mar 2011 Partially achieved. HOAMS system development completed. Final testing taking place. Increased marketing of service via Your Derby.
B6: Develop six new properties to provide accommodation and training facilities for care leavers.	Provision of additional facilities for this client group.	Glynis Hawkes	Co-location Fund	Dec 2010 Achieved 6 properties brought on line for care leavers via the co location fund project.
B7: Meet the departmental targets for the number of households living in Temporary Accommodation.	Improved efficiency in the use & management of temporary accommodation.	Lisa Callow	Existing Resources	Target: reduce to 30 by 2012-13 Ongoing some concerns on ability to meet this target due to economic climate and an increase in homeless approaches.
B8: Meet the departmental targets for the number of people placed in bed and breakfast accommodation.	Improved efficiency in the use & management of temporary accommodation.	Lisa Callow	Existing Resources	Target: reduce to 2 by 2012-13 Not achieved some concerns in ability to meet this challenging target in these times of austerity. Indications are that use of B&B is increasing.

<i>Further Research and Investigation</i>				
B9: Explore the possibility of setting up a destitution fund or an alternative response to destitute migrants with no access to public funds.	A report detailing the different approaches at other LA's with recommendations for Derby.	Matt Palmer / Glyn Hawkes	Existing Resources	Report by July 2011 Not achieved to date resource issues.
Action	Outcome	Lead officer or organisation	Resource implications	Target date
B10: Investigate supported accommodation provision for persons with both care needs and alcohol miss-use issues.	Improved provision of supported accommodation for this client group.	Matt Palmer	Existing Resources	Mar 2014 Highlighted as an issue. Needs to be addressed as part of the Hsg Related support reductions and the new specifications for service.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY C: INTEGRATE HOUSING SUPPORT MORE CLOSELY WITH OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES IN ORDER TO TACKLE SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL EXCLUSION AND PROMOTE LONG TERM SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

C1: Increase financial support and advice to prevent homelessness caused by debt and financial issues. This will include increased referrals and signposting to the Derby CLAC, and direct support through the prevention fund, repossession fund, and mortgage rescue scheme.	Reduced levels of Homelessness through effective preventative action.	Trisha Thomas	Existing Resources	Mar 2011 Achieved Financial Inclusions officer in place working on prevention of homelessness via the MRS and repossessions funding.
C2: Meet the departmental targets for the number of number of single homeless people supported to access education, employment and training.	Reduced levels of homelessness due to measures to support financial and social inclusion.	Lisa Callow	Existing Resources	Target: increase to 80 by 2012-13 Achieved.

C3: Develop a written protocol outlining 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.	Reduced levels of homelessness due to improved integration of support services and consequent greater effectiveness in achieving thorough and sustainable outcomes.	Lisa Callow / Trisha Thomas	Existing Resources	Mar 2011 Partially achieved. A joint working protocol is in place for homeless 16/17 year olds including a pathway into services. Need to develop a pathway for other client groups.
Action	Outcome	Lead officer or organisation	Resource implications	Target date
C4: Agree protocol with benefits to fast-track HB for those threatened with homelessness.	Improved access to the private rented sector by avoiding the disincentive of delays with HB.	Lisa Callow	Existing Resources	Mar 2011 Not Achieved. HB will not agree to fast tracking of HB claims.
C5: Commence on-site GP support at Milestone House.	The provision of specialist medical support for service users with alcohol mis-use issues.	Matt Palmer	Existing resources	Oct 2010 Achieved. MSH has a surgery provided from site three times a week.

<i>Further Research and Investigation</i>				
C6: Examine and research the viability of adopting a system of online alerts to social housing providers regarding for example: benefit suspension, claim processing or problems obtaining information.	The enablement of earlier intervention in respect of rent arrears or other tenancy problems leading to a reduction in actions to evict tenants.	Matt Palmer	Research: Existing Resources Implementation: TBC	Dec 2010 Not achieved to date resource issues.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY D: FURTHER STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND THE CO-ORDINATION OF SERVICES SO THAT DERBY CAN MEET ITS OBJECTIVES WITH GREATER EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

D1: Work more closely with the CSP in provision of additional services for homeless persons with alcohol dependency.	Open six additional units of accommodation at Centenary house.	Glyn Hawkes	Existing budgets	Sep 2010 Achieved 6 units additional units opened at Centenary House.
Action	Outcome	Lead officer or organisation	Resource implications	Target date
D2: Continue to develop the PRS alongside partners... 1) Maintain £65,000 funding for the acquisition of units via the bond/rent in advance scheme. 2) Meet the property targets set by DASH for the Local Lettings Agency. (Targets are for across the HMA, not just for Derby city). 3) Assemble a landlord advice and info pack in order to forge greater links with private landlords.	Additional units of private sector accommodation accessed to meet the housing needs of vulnerable groups including those susceptible to homelessness.	1) Lisa Callow 2) Linda Selvey 3) Trisha Thomas	1) Existing budgets 2) Existing budgets 3) Existing budgets	1) Ongoing. 2) 25 units by Feb 2011; 100 units by Feb 2012. 3) Mar 2011. 4) Partially achieved funding underwritten has increased the use of the bond bank scheme. 5) Points 2, 3 are not achieved.

D3: Fully implement a cross boundary CBL.	Expanded access to and choice of social housing.	Kim Morgan	TBC	Mar 2012 Achieved choice based lettings scheme in place in south Derbyshire and Derby city. Common Allocations Policy agreed.
D4: Further develop access to information, advice and a holistic range of support services through HOAMS.	Improved availability and accessibility of assistance and support.	Matt Palmer	Existing budgets	Dec 2010 Partially achieved. System still hasn't gone live, some development and corporate ICT issues have prevented this.
D5: Develop a common exclusions policy signed up to by all providers.	Improved consistency and joined up working in respect of exclusions.	Matt Palmer / Stephe Astbury	Existing budgets	Dec 2010 Not achieved.
D6: Develop a complex case panel to coordinate a response to the needs of client groups with multiple and complex needs.	The provision of a coordinated response to the increasing numbers of clients in these groups.	Matt Palmer	Existing budgets	Mar 2011 Achieved and in place meets monthly.
D7: Negotiate with providers to put all 2nd stage accommodation through SPE.	Improved coordination for all single person and childless couple households.	Matt Palmer	Existing budgets	Mar 2013 Not achieved maybe influenced by housing related support reduction programme.

Action	Outcome	Lead officer or organisation	Resource implications	Target date
D8: Arrange training for the service providers in the new allocations policy.	To ensure consistency of approach and accuracy of information disseminated to service providers and service users.	Kim Morgan	Existing budgets	Mar 2011 Draft policy written, software changes agreed, and proposal to take new policy to December cabinet with a view to implementation in March 2013. Training for providers will be included as part of the implementation process.
<i>Further Research and Investigation</i> D9: Examine the feasibility of joining the Erewash credit union in a partnering arrangement.	To develop an additional facility to ease debt and therefore prevent maintain financial exclusion.	Trisha Thomas	TBC	Mar 2012 Not achieved In partnership with MCF loans. They are currently in discussion with derby loans about merging. No discussions have taken place with Erewash to date due to the above.

Appendix 3

Responses to Community Commission review of Homelessness Services in 2009 for PHL Board 18 September 2012

Background

In October and November 2009 the Community Commission (CC) conducted its own review of homelessness and homelessness services within the city. Its objective was to assess the current situation and appraise existing and recent actions taken to address the issue.

The review resulted in a number of observations, conclusions and recommendations. This report outlines the responses to the recommendations made by Community Commission.

Recommendation 1

a) Information needs to be more informative; simple and user friendly and based on an individual without any prior experience of the homelessness system.

b) to make information more widely available, locations could include public libraries, the use of the commercial advertising stands outside the council house, the urban map in Osnabruck Square and the Big Screen to give basic information and directions.

Response to Recommendation 1

Information has been made available on the advertising stands outside the council house. The Housing Options and Advice Service have been working on the design and development of a Housing Options Portal, which will interact with customers and provide advice and assistance if a customer is threatened with homelessness or is in housing need. The intention is, to enable the customer to access as much information as possible to equip them to self serve and reduce avoidable contact with the service.

The Housing Options Advice Management System (HOAMS) has been in development for some time, and is now in its final stages, currently it is undergoing testing by the corporate centre prior to going live. This system will enable customers to access relevant information and advice. If the customer is taken on by the service as a case, they will also be able to access their case notes over

the web 24/7. The system should increase efficiencies for the council and for customers. In addition to the HOAMS system the service has placed a two page advert relating to the services it offers in 'Your Derby'.

The Derby Homefinder website has been in operation since 2003, this website enables customers who have registered for social housing to place a bid on the property they are interested in. The system advertises all social homes for rent in the City. It enables customers to make one housing application and access all fourteen social landlords' properties which are available for renting. The Derby Homefinder website continues to be upgraded, to improve the customer experience, information, and access to housing. A mutual exchange module has now been added to the web site to enable customers interested in a mutual exchange to contact each other and facilitate the move. The mutual exchange web site also allows mutual exchanges with people looking to move in other parts of the country as well as Derby City. I anticipate the move to the council house in December will increase Housing Options and Advice Services visibility to customers.

Recommendation 2

The customer experience of Derby Direct needs

- a) monitoring to ensure recent improvements are sustained and**
- b) Built on, as already stressed people get more stressed if they cannot get through. The target should be a minimum of 97% calls answered.**

Response to Recommendation 2

a) This is in place and has been in place since the transfer.

Monitoring of performance is ongoing, monthly reports are received from Derby Direct detailing...

- the number of calls received.
- number responded to.
- number abandoned.
- number of requests for call backs.
- number of call backs made.

b) The goal should be to answer 100% of calls from customers who can't get the information they need through self serve options.

The DCC channel shift strategy, signed by cabinet in November 2011, makes it clear that we should meet the demands of Derby residents using the resources we have available and how, through active customer management, we will increase efficiency by resolving enquiries more quickly, reducing avoidable contacts and shifting enquiries from high cost to serve channels to a lower cost to serve channel.

Currently there are six options on the Housing Options line. Only one is a self serve option. It's important that Derby Direct and Housing Options continue to work together to identify more self serve options where possible so we can support those most vulnerable customers and those who cannot get the information / help they need through self service.

Recommendation 3

Derby should conduct its own annual survey, during the same exercise as that for the CLG, with a wider definition to capture the full picture and create a local indicator to track.

Response to Recommendation 3

In 2010/11 the government overhauled the rough sleeping count methodology and introduced a more comprehensive method of assessing the scale of rough sleeping across the country. New figures published on 17/2/2011 show a total of 1,768 rough sleepers. For the first time, robust estimates of rough sleepers have been included.

In November 2011 the council worked in partnership with the voluntary sector and independent assessors from Homeless link to establish the number of rough sleepers in the City. A series of counts were conducted through street audits over a six week period. These counts were conducted at different times of the day and night, and different days of the week. Information gathered was then cross referenced, with information from a number of agencies working with homeless people to ascertain who was, and wasn't, rough sleeping. The estimated figure that went into the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) from Derby was 21. This figure has been gathered through a robust process and is evidenced.

Individual support plans have been developed for every rough sleeper. A voluntary outreach team is now in place in the city and goes out in search of rough sleepers twice a week. An alcohol case worker has been appointed to deal with the street drinkers who are rough sleeping, and a complex needs caseworker is now in place through short term funding from a charitable organisation. The funding for the complex needs caseworker is due to end at the end of this year.

Funding has recently been made available, in 2012 from DCLG to tackle rough sleeping and single homelessness. This funding has been allocated in groupings and is to be used in the city and the county, requiring a collaborative approach to tackle these issues. Derby is the lead authority and has developed an action plan in conjunction with colleagues in the county.

Recommendation 4

To respond to emergency cases of homelessness Milestone House and those involving children and young people, Housing Options should publicly be accessible 24 hours 365 days per year.

Response to Recommendation 4

For the Housing Options Centre and Milestone House to be open 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year, there would need to be considerable investment in the staffing structure. This recommendation has not been actioned, due to ongoing budgetary issues, and the 'one Derby, one council' programme, which has required a reduction in resources (staffing structure) in order to reach our target savings. In any event, circumstances have changed, in that the service will be delivered from the new council house, and therefore will be open in line with the council opening times.

When Housing Options and the Single Point of Entry are closed, Careline the Council's out of hour's service, pick up homeless cases on our behalf. Where it is required, they will make placements into bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation ensuring we meet our statutory obligations. As far as I am aware this has never caused any negative issues.

Recommendation 5

A priority should be to have a money advisor for owner occupiers as a means of preventing homelessness, including representation at mortgage repossession hearings.

Response to recommendation 5

A Financial inclusions advisor is now in post within the housing options service. This post holder is a trained welfare rights worker, and as such can carry out financial health checks, and maximise people's income. This post holder is responsible for the implementation of the mortgage rescue scheme (MRS) and the prevention of evictions and repossessions initiative. This post has been very successful since it came into being. We have prevented 35 owner occupiers from losing their home through the MRS we have 10 cases which are ongoing with solicitors/conveyance, 18 cases failed due to various reasons such as, negative equity, property costing too much to bring up to a decent homes standard, or customers no longer wishing to participate in the MRS. We have a further 38 cases with applications in for consideration. We have prevented 81 customers from being evicted via this post.

In addition to the financial inclusions officer, Derbyshire Housing Aid provide a court desk service, which is currently funded via the community legal services commission and is available to any person attending court for an eviction or repossession case.

Recommendation 6

The council should consider adopting (or adapting) the Wakefield City Council's scheme of providing interest free loans between £2000 and £15,000 to home owners with mortgage arrears and repayable over three years to prevent homelessness.

Response to Recommendation 6

The Department of Communities and Local Government have made funding available to Local Authorities to prevent repossessions and evictions. In the first year Derby City were allocated £50,000 for this initiative. A partnership has been set up with MCF loans, which are a Community Development Finance Initiative (CDFI) to provide loans with no interest on our behalf, to prevent people who are eligible for assistance, under the scheme from repossessions and evictions. To date we have prevented 17 customers from becoming homeless through this route and have three further cases which are ongoing.

The partnership with MCF loans has proved to be successful; monies repaid are recycled for future use. DCLG have just provided further funding for this initiative and Derby City have received a pot of £105,000 for future use.

This partnership arrangement is also helping to prevent customers from purchasing high interest loans from irresponsible lenders such as loan sharks. In these times of austerity, it is vital that we work in partnership with organisations such as MCF loans to tackle financial exclusion and debt ensuring that customers can access responsible lending and lenders.

Recommendation 7

The council should consider adopting (or adapting) the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council system of online alerts to social housing providers regarding e.g. benefit suspension, problems obtaining information or claim processing as this enables earlier interventions and so reduces actions to evict tenants.

Response to Recommendation 7

No action has been taken to date on this recommendation. Recent discussions have been held with housing benefits, and it has been agreed that we will gather details on the system, and work with HB to assess whether there is a business case for this.

Recommendation 8

The council should adopt the following corporate priority: “To maximise the income of the poorest household and assist with personal indebtedness across the city”.

Response to recommendation 8

As detailed above the housing options service now has a financial inclusions advisor in place to advise customers who have debt problems. This post holder has good links with the community legal advice service (CLAC) and has protocols and referral mechanism in place to prioritise customers who are in danger of being made homeless.

Derby Advice in addition to the above work, ensures they include a benefits take up campaign as part of their annual work. Derby Advice generated an estimated £9.2 million of additional benefit income, in the city last year, and £7.2 million the year before. Research evidences that this money is usually spent locally, so benefits the customer’s quality of life, and the local economy. Derby Advice dealt with approximately £2.6 million of debt for customers, and had £661,964 amount of debt written off. The number of cases resolved by insolvency was 59. The number of enquiries to Derby Advice last year was 8,481. The money advice team received 162 referrals from the community legal advice centre (CLAC) and the welfare rights team received 611 referrals from the CLAC for advice and assistance.

Recommendation 9

The council should appoint from its members a Homelessness Champion.

Response to recommendation 9

This recommendation has not been actioned.

Recommendation 10

As the only solution to the turn away rate at Milestone House another unit of accommodation should be created.

Response to recommendation 10

The cap Gemini assessment of supported housing needs in the city for single homeless identified that there was adequate provision.

Recommendation 11

The council should engage with the LGA to make strong representations to central government seeking step improvements in Social Fund eligibility and processing.

Response to Recommendation 11

The welfare reforms will see the biggest changes in 60 years to the welfare state. One of the changes being brought in via the welfare reforms is, the abolition of the social fund, currently administered by the department for work and pensions (DWP), and a move to a local assistance scheme. This scheme will be locally administered, taking account of local needs and services provided to meet need. A project group is currently working on the specification for a local assistance scheme, and the eligibility criteria to access the scheme. A new local assistance scheme must be in place by April 2013. The council has a project plan and is currently on line to meet this deadline.

Recommendation 12

Starter Packs of basic household amenities/equipment should be available for loan in order to enable prompt moves from supported accommodation when an unfurnished tenancy is offered, and based on the presumption that the new tenant has nothing.

Response to Recommendation 12

The city has had a number of organisations that provide basic packages for people who move into unfurnished accommodation. However, due to financial issues, one such organisation Derby Furniture Project has recently gone out of business. An organisation in the Osmaston area, Happy Homes is providing a basic furniture pack for new tenants, at a cost of £105. The council has worked with DCLG to access funding and with two voluntary organisations, to set up social enterprise initiatives to restore furniture and to build flat packed furniture. A project at Boyer Street, managed by Derventio Housing Trust, provides work shops for homeless people to access, to enhance their life skills and to enable them to move into employment, education and training in the future. This organisation also provides furnishings for a low cost, to people in need.

Recommendation 13

A day time hot meal should be available at Milestone House and the Padley Centre.

Response to Recommendation 13

The Padley Centre is open every day and provides cheap meals, showers and laundry facilities for homeless people. There are a number of other homeless charitable organisations in the city, that also provide hot meals free of charge, such as Jakes New Life Christian Centre, Storehouse, St Alkmunds Church, Kedleston Road, Storehouse, St Augustine's Church, Upperdale Road. All of these organisations provide snacks, free hot meals at different times of the day and night.

Recommendation 14

Finance should be identified to support the street drinker's panel, in order to fund a part time case worker.

Response to Recommendation 14

A part time case worker was appointed via partnership funding from the community safety partnership, PCT and housing. Since the part time case worker came into post, this post has been established as part of the staffing structure within the substance misuse team, and has now become a full time position funded from existing resources.

Recommendation 15

The PCT should now act to employ a dedicated GP and nurse at Milestone House, in addition to the CPN, as previously envisaged.

Response to Recommendation 15

The PCT tendered out for a GP service to operate out of Milestone House three times a week. The Wilson Street surgery was successful in winning the tender and now provides a surgery three times a week from this site.

Recommendation 16

Social Housing Providers should be encouraged to explore the provision of long term support to residents, vulnerable for one of many reasons e.g. physical frailty or memory loss and, for those with alcohol problems to encourage them to engage in treatment programmes.

Response to Recommendation 16

Housing has worked alongside the substance misuse team to look at the alcohol services available to people with an alcohol reliance / Issue. A tender process took place in 2009/10, to reconfigure services within the city, to ensure that customers could access different levels of service from tier 1 to tier 4. This enables a pathway for customers to come into services at all levels from primary care through to specialist substance misuse, and residential rehabilitation. All social housing providers have been advised of the new services, and how to access them. Social housing providers do signpost and refer clients into substance misuse services where they are wishing to engage.

The Councils Carelink service provides assistive technology solutions to enable people to remain living independently. These services are marketed and social housing providers are in service level agreements with Carelink to provide assistive technology

solutions where this is possible. The advances in assistive technology mean that customers suffering with dementia, physical frailty, epilepsy etc can be offered this housing related support to enable them to remain living at home.

Contact

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