



Derby City Council

**COUNCIL CABINET**  
**21 January 2015**

Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing,  
Finance and Welfare

# ITEM 10

## Homelessness Strategy 2015-2019

### SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Order 2002) requires local authorities to develop and implement a homelessness strategy. This legal requirement is further reinforced by social, political and moral concerns, which make tackling homelessness a key priority in Derby.
- 1.2 Derby's current Homelessness Strategy expires in March 2015. This report sets out the key elements of the new strategy. It focuses on the vision, strategic priorities and specific actions which will be implemented over the next four year period.
- 1.3 The new strategy has been drafted over the period July to October 2014, concurrent with an on going consultation with service providers, members of the public, councillors and other council departments
- 1.4 It 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 people affected. Consequently, partners have agreed 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.*

The vision is aspirational and describes a situation we would like to achieve. However, resource limitations are likely to prevent it being fully achieved for the foreseeable future.

- 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 That Council Cabinet adopts the Homelessness Strategy 2015-2019.

### REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Tackling homelessness is a key priority in Derby. It is also a legal requirement that local authorities have an up to date homelessness strategy.



Derby City Council

## **COUNCIL CABINET JANUARY 2015**

Report of the Strategic Director of Adults, Health and Housing.

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

#### **Background**




- 4.1 The new Homelessness Strategy has been drafted over the period July to October 2014. There are two main elements to its development:
- a) 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](#).
  - b) The consultation process has been undertaken with a wide range of individuals and organisations. This has included two events with service providers, input from Members and senior council officers, 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. Equalities fora were also consulted and an equalities impact assessment (EIA) was undertaken. More detail on how the consultation feedback and the EIA have shaped the new strategy is provided in paragraphs 4.8 to 4.15

#### **Strategic Priorities of the new strategy**

- 4.2 The strategy contains 3 overarching themes, or strategic priorities, which will shape future actions. These all flow from the vision; while priorities B and C are also closely aligned with the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002 (see Appendix 1, 2.1). The priorities are as follows:

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

## Rationale

- 4.3  Priority A recognises and endorses how essential it is that all agencies work together to tackle and prevent homelessness. Many issues<sup>1</sup> can contribute to making people 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.
-  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.

## The Delivery Plan

Under each priority are a series of actions. A sample of these are provided below:

4.4 Priority A: 'Partnership working'

Action A1: Setting up a Homelessness Liaison Forum (HLF). This will comprise members from across agencies. The purpose is to oversee implementation of the strategy and where appropriate amend as circumstances change. It may also coordinate funding bids where collaborative working is a requirement

Action A5: Working towards achieving the Gold Standard. The very highest performance in homelessness service provision is set out by government in the 'Gold Standard'. Achieving this fully may not be possible given resource constraints, but we are committed to achieving at least 'Silver' and will investigate with partners the feasibility of achieving Gold.

4.5 Priority B: 'Prevention'

Action B1: Increase financial support and advice to prevent homelessness caused by debt and financial issues. One of the major causes of homelessness is the ending of a tenancy, often triggered by financial issues. Promoting financial inclusion is therefore a key action.

Action B3: Mitigate the impact of benefit sanctions by ensuring a process is in place to prevent housing benefit being suspended unnecessarily. This has been identified by partners as a relatively new but significant threat to people maintaining their homes.

4.6 Priority C: 'Suitable housing with support'

Action C3: Achieve sustainable funding for No Second Night Out (NSNO). This is a

---

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

key initiative for tackling rough sleeping but funding expires Autumn 2015.

Action C5: *Develop written procedures outlining the 'steps from homelessness to settled accommodation'*. These will 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.

- 4.7 The delivery plan in full is in Appendix 2. In the current financial climate, many of the actions must be considered aspirational and all are resource dependant.

### **Consultation findings – resultant changes to the strategy**

- 4.8 The key elements of the consultation are summarised briefly in 4.1 b) above. More detail can be found in Appendix 3
- 4.9 A further significant part of the consultation process concerned the recommendations made by the Council's Planning, Housing and Leisure Board (PHL), in its 'topic review' of homelessness in Autumn 2013. The review involved a thorough assessment of service provision and made 14 recommendations regarding future delivery. In formulating the new strategy these recommendations have been considered at length. Although not all can be enacted, and some are already in process, many are reflected in the delivery plan.
- 4.10 In particular, the following areas highlighted by the PHL report are all reflected in the delivery plan:
- a) Setting up of a Homelessness Liaison Forum (Action A1)
  - b) Closer working with health providers (C6)
  - c) Guide to services (A7)
  - d) Improving the referral process (B6)
  - e) Education, Employment, training (B10)
  - f) Floating support and similar services (B11)
  - g) Out reach sessions, welfare rights advice, money advice (B1, B4, C13)
- 4.11 Feedback from service users and members of the public concerned: improved access to information; the reduction or loss of services; more rough sleeping, antisocial behaviour and street drinking.
- 4.12 Many of these concerns were echoed by service providers who also highlighted (amongst other issues) the loss of floating support; a reduction in availability of suitable accommodation and new benefit sanctions. They also emphasised the importance of prevention as a key objective - strategic priority B was amended to focus on prevention as a direct result of this feedback.
- 4.13 The vast majority of these issues are reflected in the delivery plan. Due to resource constraints it is not possible to directly address all of these areas, but we have included actions to investigate how existing funds can be reconfigured or additional funds raised where no immediate action can be taken.

### **Equalities**

- 4.14 An equalities impact assessment was held on 31 October 2014, with officers and members of the equalities fora participating.
- 4.15 The main actions arising from this concern the wider promotion of information and services in a variety of formats, and the participation of forum members in the newly created Homeless Liaison Forum. This latter action gives scope for equalities issues to be taken into account as other actions in the delivery plan are implemented. Both of these actions are included in the delivery plan.

## OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None. Implementing a homelessness strategy is a legal requirement.

**This report has been approved by the following officers:**

<b>Legal officer</b>	Richard Burton
<b>Financial officer</b>	Toni Nash
<b>Human Resources officer</b>	Liz Moore
<b>Estates/Property officer</b>	Steve Sprason
<b>Service Director(s)</b>	Perveez Sadiq
<b>Other(s)</b>	Ian Fullagar

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Jeremy Mason 640329, jeremy.mason@derby.gov.uk
<b>Background papers:</b>	None
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 - Delivery Plan Appendix 3 - Consultation process and key elements Appendix 4 – The Homelessness Strategy (appended separately)

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
---------------------

**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. An equalities impact assessment was undertaken in October, the outcome of which has directly resulted in additions to the delivery plan.

**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).



## Homelessness Strategy 2015-19 Draft Delivery Plan

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

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
YOS	Youth Offending Service

### 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
<b>A1:</b> Establish a new Homeless Liaison Forum, (HLF) comprising members from across agencies.	TT	Purpose is to oversee implementation of the strategy and where appropriate amend as circumstances change.  Invite members from each Diversity Forum to nominate their own champion to attend the group.	Existing	April 2015 then 6-monthly
<b>A2:</b> Meet all departmental targets for... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approaches</li> <li>- Acceptances</li> <li>- Preventions</li> <li>- TA – (snap-shot)</li> <li>- B&amp;B – (snap-shot)</li> <li>- Rough sleepers (annually)</li> </ul>	TT	The 2015-16 targets will be available in February 2015. Progress against targets to be reported to the HLF	Existing / various	On going
<b>A3:</b> 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. Ensure that all pertinent phone numbers are available in a multi-lingual format.	TT/MP	Examples include: a) Display screens at CH b) National phone line for reporting rough sleepers c) Leaflets	Existing	April 2015

<b>A4:</b> Further develop online access to information, advice and a holistic range of support services.	JM/LD		Existing	April 2015
<b>A5:</b> 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
<b>A6:</b> HLF to encourage collaborative action amongst organisations to secure additional funding as and when opportunities arise.	All agencies	Organisations will make individual applications for funding and these may be commercially sensitive. However, funding is sometimes made available for partnerships only.	Existing	On going
<b>A7:</b> 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
<b>B1:</b> Increase financial support and advice to prevent homelessness caused by debt and financial issues.  This will include: a) Increased referrals and signposting to the	TT/MP	The Financial Inclusion Team deals with bond assurances/ applications and rent in advance. It also works closely with customers who are being repossessed and is promoting pre-paid rent accounts with	Existing	On going

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		Credit Unions.		
<b>B2:</b> Continue to promote the bond scheme, tying it in with other measures to promoted financial inclusion: a) Maintain £75,000 upper-limit for live active bonds. b) Carry out a financial assessment with all tenants that approach needing a bond	MP		Existing	On going
<b>B3:</b> Mitigate the impact of benefit sanctions/limits by ensuring process in place to prevent HB being suspended unnecessarily.	MP	DWP have confirmed that they are planning to make improvements to their automated processes so that where sanctions have been applied that do not affect HB entitlement, the claim will not be automatically suspended.	Existing	Autumn 2015 (approx.)
<b>B4:</b> 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:	Existing	From Feb 2015

		a) On line HB claim forms from April 2015 b) Risk Based Verification Assessment from April 2015.		
<b>B5:</b> Finalise the Information and Advice Strategy in order to coordinate advice and reduce duplication	DCC Service Transition Team		Existing	April 2015
<b>B6:</b> 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
<b>B7:</b> 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
<b>B8:</b> Arrange training for housing providers in the new allocations policy.	KM		Existing	June 2015
<b>B9:</b> Review Derby City's Joint Housing Protocol for 16/17 year olds.	Suanne Lim (YOS)	A review is needed following the reduction in Housing Related Supported funded projects and the introduction of the Housing	Existing	December 2014

Ensure adherence to the policy incorporating cross department training.	Various agencies	Framework for 16/17 year olds.		Jan 2015 and on going
<b>B10:</b> Promote EET for people living in supported housing		To be assessed by HLF	HLF	April 2015
<b>B11:</b> Investigate reinstating floating support or alternatives to it		To be assessed by HLF	HLF	From April 2015

**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
<b>C1:</b> 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
<b>C2:</b> Ensure services provided by NSNO are documented, agreed and auditable.	GH	Complete Service Level Agreement with NSNO.	Existing	April 2015

Action	Lead Officer/Org	Further Information	Resources	Timescales
<b>C3:</b> Achieve sustainable funding for NSNO	CM/MP	Funding currently in place until August 2015. Future possible options to explore and consider include: HRS funding, DCLG funding, Health funding, Police and Crime Commissioner funding	HLF	August 2015
<b>C4:</b> 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
<b>C5:</b> 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
<b>C6:</b> Work more closely with the Public Health and Commissioning in provision of effective services for homeless persons with drug and alcohol mis-use issues, to ensure more effective gate-posting for service users and better take-up of drug and alcohol services.	MP	Examples include: a) working with the street drinkers co-ordinator b) working with the complex needs worker c) encouraging homeless customers with a need to access drug & alcohol services	Existing	On going

<b>C7:</b> Ensuring that all vulnerable people have access to additional support via the Local Support Services Framework	All agencies	More detail from Kate Green	Existing	On going
<b>C8:</b> Continue to develop the PRS : - Investigate use of private sector leasing	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
<b>C9:</b> 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
<b>C10:</b> Develop a 'reconnections' policy for those presenting as homeless with no local connection.	MP	Development of policy is on-going.	Existing	July 2015
<b>C12:</b> Assess how severe weather provision is maintained via partnership working	HLF	To be assessed at next HLF	Existing	October 2015
<b>C13:</b> Review outreach worker times	HLF	HLF to assess and expand provision where possible	Existing	From April 2015



### Consultation process and key elements

#### 1. *Overview and purpose*

A broad-based consultation of stakeholders on the key issues surrounding preventing and tackling homelessness. The objectives were to:

- a) Disseminate information about changes in the extent of homelessness and the demand and resourcing of homelessness services since the last strategy (2010)
- b) Consult on the development of our strategic priorities for the period 2015-2019 and how these can be achieved
- c) Develop on an on-going basis the new draft strategy, concurrent with and being informed by the consultation process and findings. Once developed, circulate the new strategy for further comment and feedback.

#### 2. *Consultees*

- a) Members of the public
- b) Homeless people and those who had previously experienced homelessness
- c) Elected Members
- d) Overview & Scrutiny Board
- e) Housing associations and Derby Homes
- f) Charities & support providers including Derby City Mission
- g) Third sector and voluntary organisations
- h) Health providers
- i) Council departments including City and Neighbourhood Partnerships, Adult Social Care, Childrens and Young People, Resources

#### 3. *Timescale and Major Elements*

The consultation lasted for just over four months, from 1 July 2014 to 4 November 2014.

Major elements included:

- a) Consultation events with service provider stakeholders
- b) Consultation workshop and questionnaires with people who have experience of homelessness and homelessness services.
- c) Use of e-media such as council web site (Your City, Your Say), In Touch, Derby
- d) Press release
- e) Presentations at equalities forums
- f) Equalities Impact Assessment

Review of the consultation feedback was on going with the majority of it being completed by early November.

#### *4. Delivery*

Work was led by the Housing Strategy Team in close liaison with Housing Options & Advice. Support and assistance was provided from other teams, particularly Policy, Research & Engagement, Communications and Business Support.

**Appendix 4**

#### **The new Homelessness Strategy 2015 – 2019**

Provided separately.