



Derby City Council

**COUNCIL CABINET**  
**22 January 2014**

**ITEM 7b**

Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Advice

**Homelessness services**

**SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Addressing homelessness is a key priority for the Council, while ensuring that 'Derby's homeless are treated with dignity and respect' is an explicit manifesto commitment of the administration.
- 1.2 Key housing policies of central government, such as the Bedroom Tax and wider welfare reform, are causing real hardship to local people who are finding it increasingly hard to afford the roof over their heads. These policies are directly increasing the pressure on homelessness services. This pressure is happening at the same time as brutal cuts to local government which have forced a squeeze on discretionary areas of expenditure such as housing-related support services. The council is striving hard to help mitigate the impact of these changes on our most vulnerable citizens.
- 1.3 The Planning, Housing and Leisure Board (PHL) has also taken a keen interest in this area. It organised a thorough review of service provision over the summer, and produced a detailed report on the review findings in the autumn. The report contains 14 recommendations regarding service delivery.
- 1.4 This report summarises current and future improvements to the provision of homelessness services. It sets out how the Council intends to achieve the 'Gold Standard', which is the government's highest standard for service delivery. It also sets out a detailed response to the recommendations of the PHL board. As will be seen, many of these recommendations have synergy with Gold Standard requirements
- 1.5 Building on our Gold Standard objectives, coupled with the input from the PHL Commission, the paper concludes with a number of recommendations for how to continue to improve homelessness services in Derby. In so doing it provides a consolidated basis for further action.

**RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 To note the achievements of the Housing Options service and partner agencies in tackling homelessness in Derby.

- 2.2 To note the response to the Planning, Housing and Leisure Scrutiny Commission's recommendations.
- 2.3 To approve the recommendations set out in section 4.36

<b>REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION</b>
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- 3.1 To inform Cabinet of the progress being made in supporting and developing services to homeless people.
- 3.2 To provide a response to the PHL Commission's recommendations.
- 3.3 To make recommendations to Cabinet of further service improvements.



Derby City Council

## COUNCIL CABINET

Date

Report of the Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Housing

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### 4.1 Context

Homelessness service delivery takes place within the constraints of the financial, political and legal framework and this framework has been undergoing significant change in recent years. Welfare reform and budget reductions within the Housing Related Support (HRS) programme are resulting in significant challenges to housing options and homelessness prevention services.

#### 4.2 The Welfare Reform Act has brought about such changes as:

- a) An under-occupancy charge
- b) Loss of Council tax assistance
- c) The introduction of 'Local Assistance'
- d) Benefits cap
- e) The impending introduction of Universal Credit
- f) DWP sanctions

#### 4.3 These challenges have been further compounded by the on-going financial pressures that the Council is faced with. Financial pressures have seen the Housing Related Support programme budget reduced from £9.44 million in 2012-13 to £3.675 million in 2013-14 and £1.7 million in 2014/15.

#### 4.4 A number of changes in the policy/legal framework have resulted from the Localism Act 2011. The most recent change directly impacting on homelessness services provision is the publication of new government guidance and the introduction of the 'Gold Standard'.

#### 4.5 **The Gold Standard**

In 2012 the national government commissioned a new service called the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) to look at what additional activities could and should be carried out by Local Authority Housing departments to tackle and prevent homelessness. The NPSS service compiled a series of ten 'local challenges'<sup>1</sup> which are to:

1. Adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services
2. Actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs
3. Offer a Housing Options prevention service, including written advice, to all clients
4. Adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative
5. Have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support
6. Develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both clients and landlords
7. Actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme
8. Have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs
9. Not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation
10. Not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks

In order to attain the Gold Standard a local authority has to meet all ten of these challenges satisfactorily.

#### 4.6 *Achieving the Gold Standard in Derby*

Derby City Council, along with colleagues representing the eight District Councils in Derbyshire and Nottingham City Council, have made a 'pledge' to achieving the Gold Standard and to fulfil all ten of these challenges. To date, 307 out of the 326 Local Authorities in England have made this 'pledge' indicating that the Gold standard has been embraced by the majority.

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<sup>1</sup> These are set out in the report: *Making Every Contact Count: A Joint Approach to the Prevention of Homelessness*.

4.7 The Gold Standard Challenge operates by way of a peer review scheme designed to help local authorities deliver more efficient and cost effective homelessness prevention services. By meeting the ten challenges and achieving the Gold Standard, Derby City Council will be demonstrating that we have comprehensive prevention services in place for all customers, for both the statutorily and non-statutorily homeless.

4.8 *The Ten Challenges*

Each of the ten local challenges has been considered by the Housing Options service. There is a good evidence to suggest the service is performing well against each challenge, though there is still considerable work to be completed if we are to fulfil all ten completely and attain the Gold Standard. The NPSS states that they will work with authorities to develop a continuous improvement action plan for any Authorities that do not achieve Gold standard<sup>2</sup>.

The evidence for our progress against each of the challenges is as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> There is a Bronze standard award for Authorities that achieve between 1 and 4 of the ten challenges and a Silver standard award for those that achieve between 5 and 9 of the challenges.

4.9

**Challenge 1: Adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services**

There is a young person's joint housing protocol which provides an agreement between Housing and Children's services when a young person aged 16 or 17 becomes homeless.

The Ordinary Lives project developed by colleagues in the Learning Disability team is supported by Housing Options but also provides support for housing for these customers who may otherwise present as homeless, triggering a statutory duty for housing.

Colleagues in Public Health have worked closely with Housing to assist some of the more vulnerable customers who present at our services. This has seen the development of a street drinkers' co-ordinator who works with housing to assist street drinkers from a life on the streets. The complex needs worker which was funded as a pilot project has been mainstream-funded by public health to work alongside the street drinkers' co-ordinator with customers who have complex issues including substance misuse, offending, learning disabilities and mental health problems.

Derby Advice provides a valuable resource that assists customers who have financial problems and/or welfare benefits problems. This has been particularly beneficial to housing in the prevention of homelessness whilst also bringing in additional monies for residents of the city that will often be spent locally.

The Welfare Reform Board is a collaborative approach within the Council to tackle issues by which Derby City residents are affected and which may also have an adverse effect on the local authority. Housing services are a lead member of this board and chair the sub group with responsibility for exempt and temporary accommodation.

Derby City Council is a panel member for the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) which manages the risks for high risk serious offenders across Derbyshire, including the city. Similarly, Housing Options are also core panel members of a multi-agency panel for victims of domestic violence and abuse known as MARAC.

4.10 Other examples include the Children, Families and Learners board, Priority Families project, Empty Homes work, Decent and Safe Homes (DASH), Tenancy Sustainment, and councillor involvement in the Homeless Prevention Fund.

**Challenge 2: Actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs**

As discussed above the street drinkers and complex needs workers are funded through Public Health. A monthly panel convenes to provide direction to these workers as well as ensuring agencies are all working together. This also includes the promotion of education, training and employment.

The Housing Options service is also an active member of Homeless Link and works closely with this central government affiliated charity and its partners. Much of the work Homeless Link is undertaking centres around education, employment and training which is seen as a key element to breaking the cycle of repeat homelessness.

The No Second Night Out service operated by Riverside ECHG is another example of close partnership working with support being provided to customers who find themselves in a situation of being street homeless.

Derbyshire Homeless Officers Group (DHOG) meets monthly and comprises service managers from each of the nine local authorities within Derbyshire including Derby City. The single homeless funding the group received has provided an opportunity for work across the county to address support, education, training and employment. This group is chaired by Derby City Council which affords us a greater degree of influence in steering the direction of travel.

Direct Housing Advice (DHA) work closely with DCC providing a weekly surgery within the Council House to support customers who have debt issues and are threatened with repossession or illegal evictions. In addition to this DHA also provide a court desk service for these customers who may not have sought advice and assistance before a court hearing.

Derventio Housing Trust provides practical skills training for homeless customers at their Boyer Street complex, workshops and some therapeutic sessions.

The YMCA has a training kitchen on their campus which is utilised to develop skills for customers that will assist them to progress in a catering career. In addition to this the YMCA have developed a maintenance team which provides an opportunity for residents of the campus and other trainees to gain practical experience.

The Priority Families' scheme has seconded an employment advisor to work with this group.

4.12

**Challenge 3: Offer a Housing Options prevention service, including written advice, to all clients**

Housing Options provide a preventive homelessness service which includes some written advice. However written advice is not always possible to deliver at present. This situation is the same in the county and is a piece of work that is to be considered by the group as part of an approach to provide standard consistent advice across the whole of Derbyshire. There is a group currently working on providing a standard suite of letters, forms and advice templates that will be adopted across Derbyshire. This is a large piece of work and will take several months to complete.

4.13

**Challenge 4: Adopt a *No Second Night Out* model or an effective local alternative**

A No Second Night Out model has been adopted across Derbyshire and is run by Riverside English Churches Housing Group. This was funded through an allocation of money from the “Homeless Transition Fund” administered by Homeless Link. The objectives of the Derby/Derbyshire No Second Night Out (NSNO) project are:

- To ensure that new rough sleepers can be identified and helped off the street immediately.
- Rough sleepers can go to a place of safety, where their needs can be assessed and they can get help,
- Rough sleepers are able to get emergency accommodation and other services they need.
- Rough sleepers from outside an area can be reconnected with their community, where they can be near family and friends, and can get housing support
- In addition to this the NSNO service has made several re-connections back to the continent and the country of origin.

4.14

**Challenge 5: Have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support**

Derby City Council has a series of pathways that are developed and used by Housing Options and its partners. These include a Care leaver’s pathway, a Young Persons Housing Pathway, and a Hospital Discharge Protocol which has been enhanced by the successful bid for a hospital discharge worker by Derventio Housing Trust. In addition there is the First contact service and the customer pathway for adult social care.

Senior Housing Advisors within Housing Options are currently working on a series of pathways that will fit with a self-service model within Housing Options. This will need to be developed ahead of any re-structure being implemented.

4.5

**Challenge 6: Develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both clients and landlords**

Derby City Council Housing Options service has a successful bond assurance scheme in place which is key to preventing homelessness and ensuring an alternative is available for those customers who have previously failed in social housing tenancies. In the last financial year 2012/13, we have provided 161 bonds with a total value of £78,949.00. There have been 22 claims that have been paid out against the 161 bonds issued with a total cost of £9,231.

The success of Derby City Council's bond scheme has led to the development of a county wide bond assurance scheme which has been funded through a proportion of the £377k single homeless funding. This scheme has only just been launched and so there are no figures available yet that demonstrate the success and impact this had had for this customer group.

There is a private rented sector policy currently being developed which will enable Housing Options to discharge our homeless duty in the private rented sector. This will utilise the bond assurance scheme where a deposit is required and the customer is unable to provide their own.

Erewash Credit Union has been working closely with DCC Housing Options to develop rent paying accounts for customers in the private rented sector. This will mean that rents are paid directly to landlords rather than the customer and will provide re-assurances to private landlords that they will receive their rents. This facility is likely to be available around April 2014 once the IT systems have been developed.

DCC Housing Options have been considering the possibilities and opportunity of expanding the services of Derby Homefinder to include private landlords. Further research and feasibility studies need to be carried out before any consultation with the Homefinder partners and possible launch of such a service.

4.16

**Challenge 7: Actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme**

The Mortgage Rescue Scheme (MRS) is run by the Financial Inclusion Officer who delivers money advice as well as welfare benefits advice to customers. Derby City Council has performed particularly well with the MRS and are the second best performing local authority in the East Midlands. To date there have been 51 successful MRS applications with a further 24 pending cases.

The scheme has dealt with over 245 cases of which 170 have been eligible for MRS assistance. The prevention work that has been run concurrently with MRS has meant that the customer has been assisted with alternative solutions in the majority of cases. Some of these cases have become eligible for mortgage interest payment through the Department of Work and Pensions while others have found employment.

There have been some customers who have not met the criteria for the MRS scheme and some where the applications have been unsuccessful due to a variety of reasons. These include cases declined by the Registered Provider because of affordability issues for the customer, those where one of the partners on a joint mortgage has refused to give consent and cases where there has been negative equity in the property

In total there has been £195,586.69 of additional benefits gained for the customer. The total amount of money saved through MRS and write off that has been negotiated with the lender equates to £726,866.00.

The MRS scheme is due to finish in or around April 2014 when the money that has been made available is exhausted unless central government commits further funds, though there has not been any indication that this will be the case.

4.17

**Challenge 8: Have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs**

Derby City Council's Homeless Strategy was written to cover the period 2010 until 2014. Like all Local Authorities, Derby has been forced to make some challenging decisions in order to produce a balanced budget. The Housing Related Support programme, along with voluntary sector funding and changes to legal aid that affect customers with housing complications, have seen a step change in service delivered.

A recent review of the homeless strategy has concluded that the document is no longer fit for purpose and requires a re-refresh. This has been discussed with Housing Strategy officers and has been scheduled to commence in 2014.

4.18

**Challenge 9: Not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation**

This target has not been achieved even with the previous provision of Crash Pads. The de-commissioning of Crash Pads is likely to mean that this target will not be achieved in the near future.

The new service specifications that have recently been tendered include 25 bed spaces for young people aged 16 to 18 years old. Within this service specification there has been a requirement for the provider to develop a Nightstop service. This will mitigate against the requirement to place some young people in bed and breakfast but it is highly unlikely that it will totally eliminate the use of bed and breakfast.

4.19

**Challenge 10: Not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks**

Whilst this is a challenging goal to achieve, the Housing Options service has succeeded in the majority of cases with this target. There have been some exceptions to this which have been complex cases and it is likely that there will be future exceptional cases that mean this target will not be achieved in its entirety.

There is a clear focus within the Housing Options service to move customers out of bed and breakfast into temporary accommodation provision. Furthermore, these customers placed in temporary accommodation are then assisted to move into their own permanent settled accommodation at the earliest opportunity. This approach has seen a good throughput ensuring available provision for customers thus reducing the need to use bed and breakfast for extended periods.

4.20 *Peer review*

An integral part of the process to achieve the Gold Standard is to conduct a peer review. This will be undertaken along with other Nottingham and Derbyshire Local Authorities following guidance provided by the National Practitioner Support Service (NPPS)

A decision on when Derby should be reviewed will be made in the near future.

4.21 **Planning, Housing and Leisure Board report and recommendations**

The PHL report on Homelessness, published 10th September 2013, provides a timely response to the challenges posed by the budgetary cuts and welfare reform changes discussed above. Within the PHL report, there is a series of recommendations for consideration and implementation where practicable. A number of these recommendations relate to actions that are already taking place, or cannot be implemented for other reasons such as resource constraints. Nevertheless the report and its recommendations make a valuable contribution to the debate.

Each recommendation is responded to in detail below:

4.22 Recommendation 1

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

Although not led by the Council, the Hostel Liaison Group (HLG) is an established forum that fulfils this function. Establishing an additional group would largely duplicate the work of HLG and any added value would be minimal. The Housing Options service is an integral member of this group and will ensure the group is galvanised and remains active.

4.23 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.

Health services in the city are already working closely with Housing, providing a full time community psychiatric nurse on site at Milestone House and GP surgery three days a week at Milestone House. In addition to this, public health has funded a street drinkers' co-ordinator and a complex needs worker who both work closely alongside the Single Point of Entry service.

*See also the response to recommendation 13 for a further example of the use of health funding.*

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4.24 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.

The Housing Options service has already developed a self-service website for customers which is also compatible with mobile devices. The content contained within this website contains information from and about service providers. Partners are encouraged to provide information on services which will always be considered for the Council's website. Information contained within Derby City Council's website should also be formulated within clear pathways that complement the Council's customer journey.

4.25 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.

There is a guide already in existence that is available in the size of a credit card which expands, so easily carried around. This guide is currently being reviewed and updated following changes that have occurred as services have been de-commissioned. An updated guide was available in time for the commencement of the severe weather provision on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013.

4.26 Recommendation 5

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

This recommendation has been actioned and externally facing screens contain information on homelessness services including Milestone House and Careline who operate the out-of-hours service.

#### 4.27 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.

There is limited capacity within the supported accommodation provision in the city and often there are no vacancies available to refer chaotic customers into. Consequently, ensuring that chaotic customers are placed in the right accommodation 'first time' is not always possible.

However, the No Second Night Out model as described in 4.13 (see Gold Standard Challenge 4) that has been adopted across Derbyshire does provide an effective response to the rough sleeper problem.

The single point of entry service works closely with the No Second Night Out (NSNO) Service with the senior housing advisor at the single point of entry team chairing monthly NSNO meetings. In addition to this, the NSNO team liaises on a daily basis with the single point of entry team and support staff at Milestone House.

#### 4.28 Recommendation 7

Derby City Council's 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.

The Planning Housing & Leisure board would like to see extended opening hours of the single point of entry service. This is not possible with an increased demand already placed on the service from customers which has seen a 453% increase in homeless acceptances over the last 12 months at the single point of entry. This is against a backdrop of a 22% reduction in staffing as vacancies have been frozen as part of managing the Council's overall financial position.

The Single Point of Entry service liaises with Careline, informing them by 5pm each day of any potential homeless customers that may contact them. Careline have been given access to the Housing Options IT systems to abstract and record information on any homeless customer who seeks assistance from the out of hours service.

#### 4.29 Recommendation 8

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

The NSNO service is commissioned by Homeless Link and Riverside ECHG provides a contracted service on Homeless Link's behalf across the whole county meeting the NSNO requirement within the Gold Standard. Derby City Council therefore cannot enforce any amendments to these hours of operation. The service operates across the whole of the county making it unrealistic to provide outreach across the entire geographical area.

The project is intelligence-led and relies on members of the public as well as other agencies and services passing on information regarding rough sleepers and has been effective. This information can be either phoned through to Riverside's Customer Service Centre team or sent electronically via our referral form or phoned through direct to a hub at Centenary House (Riverside ECHG hostel) – all these can be accessed 24hours a day 7 days a week. The NSNO team respond to a referral within 48hrs. Once the client has been assessed the NSNO team offer a Sit-Up service for 72 hours whilst the individual's options are investigated. On many occasions, solutions can be found within 24 hours of the client presenting as homeless, demonstrating how effective the early interventions of the NSNO team are.

#### 4.30 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 1<sup>st</sup> until March 31. The provision should also be extended to include the months of November and April if temperatures are particularly cold.

The severe weather provision for the stated period has already been formulated. Services include the voluntary churches night shelter (35 bed spaces) who will take referrals from NSNO alongside their own referrals and direct access. The more chaotic and problematic rough sleepers will not fit the remit of the churches night shelter and these customers will be accommodated at Milestone House, Padley and Centenary with a provision of 10 bed spaces. The severe weather hostel provision may extend if necessary to meet the needs of rough sleepers to include November and April should there be an extended cold period. It is not possible enforce the extension on a provision that is provided on a 'good will' basis.

#### 4.31 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.

Any requirement to increase the capacity of severe weather provision bed spaces will need to be assessed separately by each of the three hostels. The health and well being of any rough sleepers needs to be considered alongside the health and safety of staff working in each of the three hostels. It is unlikely that any of the providers will have the capacity to increase the number of available bed spaces.

#### 4.32 Recommendation 11

The council's 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.

The Housing Options and advice service works closely with the supported accommodation providers and specifically those that cater for customers with an alcohol dependency as well as treatment services and commissioners. Alcohol dependency represents a significant challenge to services across the city and should any opportunities arise to increase this provision we would look to capitalise upon. It is, however, unlikely that any additional resources will become available to fund additional bed spaces.

#### 4.33 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.

Derby City Council and specifically the Housing Options team try to work with education providers, businesses and homeless providers to develop EET schemes for customers living in supported accommodation. Work is being done currently with 'Working Links' who work with customers who have suffered a relationship breakdown, domestic violence or offending behaviour as examples to get back into work. This is also evidence of meeting the 'local challenges' as set out in the Gold Standard. The Housing Options service will sign post all eligible customers to schemes such as this and any other initiatives that are available. This is an essential piece of the jigsaw if the service is to achieve sustainability of tenancies and accommodation but equally it is a real challenge with the resources available. There is not the capacity within Housing Options service to commence direct work with businesses which is the responsibility of DWP and Job Centre plus.

#### 4.34 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.

For many customers the transition from supported accommodation to independent living is a step too far. At the present moment there is not the financial capacity to fund this sort of support as there has been previously. Any opportunities to obtain additional funding for these types of services will be explored as and when opportunities arise.

Derventio Housing Trust has successfully applied for Department of Health funding for hospital discharges into housing. This new project is about to be launched and will offer limited floating support to 10 customers who would potentially be discharged from hospital with nowhere to live. Providing support and assistance to these hospital discharge customers will hopefully prevent any re-admissions into hospital. If successful, there could be an opportunity for further funding from the Derby Hospital NHS Foundation Trust in Derby. There is little scope to develop any further floating support with homeless service providers given budget constraints and budget pressures within health.

#### 4.35 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.

This activity already takes place on a regular basis and complements the work being undertaken towards the Gold standard challenge: Derby Advice provides money advice and welfare rights advice to homeless customers at the Council House. Housing advisors have a working knowledge of money advice and welfare rights advice which they advise on wherever possible and / or signpost to specific services that have expertise in these areas. It would be beneficial to extend these offers of service across the city as the board suggest, though the reality is often money advice and welfare rights advice officers are already working at capacity. The service is exploring the opportunity afforded through the new partnership agreement with Derby Homes to see if advice can be offered outside of the Council House.

#### 4.36 Final Proposals

In view of the ten “local challenges” in the Gold Standard, supplemented by the PHL report recommendations, there are a series of proposals for further action that should be considered.

These proposals are as follows:

1. The provision of a high quality housing and advice service should be further enhanced by a collaborative approach with colleagues in Derbyshire to standardise advice, letters and information provided to customers including a pocket sized guide to services in Derby. In addition to this a focus should be placed on promoting the channel shift towards a self-service model where advice is obtained through the HOAMS portal embedded with Derby City Councils website.
2. A representative from Housing Options should work in close partnership with the No Second Night Out service to ensure anyone faced with rough sleeping is helped off the streets and afforded every opportunity to prevent a re-occurrence of this happening again. In addition the identified person should ensure that an exit strategy provides provision for the service to be continued which may be through a team of volunteers.
3. Clear pathways should be developed that informs all how to access services including out of hours, with information displayed at various locations across the city including the Council House.
4. A new Homeless strategy should be written at the earliest opportunity in 2014. Consultation should be wide ranging and include education, training and employment providers as well as private landlords.
5. A Nightstop service should be developed as outlined in the HRS tender specifications for young people.
6. The re-structure of Housing Options services should consider all aspects of work undertaken within the service. This must have consideration for self service through the channel shift strategy and consider whether there are enough financial resources available to enhance the work undertaken within the private rented sector.

#### **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 No other options were relevant to be considered.

**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>	Lisa Callow: head of Service – Housing Options and Advice services
<b>For more information contact:</b> <b>Background papers:</b> <b>List of appendices:</b>	Cath Roff 01332 643550 cath.roff@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications

## IMPLICATIONS

### Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The Council takes a preventative approach to homelessness and, as a result, over the years has steadily reduced its expenditure on bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation. Although homelessness acceptances have increased, through the proactive management of the Housing Options service, there has not been a commensurate rise in the use of bed and breakfast facilities and temporary accommodation and the consequential budget pressure. The Housing Options service represents good value for money for the Council.

### Legal

- 2.1 Local authorities have a range of duties to people who are homeless, and this always includes advice and assistance and often the provision of temporary accommodation. There is also an ongoing duty to some homeless people. The main housing duty is to accommodate those who are vulnerable, unintentionally homeless and in priority need.

At one level, the definition of homelessness can be divided into two main groups: statutory and non statutory, or single homelessness. As a result of this divide, many agencies in the voluntary sector tend to support those who are non-statutory or single homeless. However, in practice, the division between the two groups is becoming increasingly blurred.

The legal provisions for statutory homelessness are contained in the [1996 Housing Act](#), the [Homelessness Act 2002](#) and [The Homelessness \(Priority Need for Accommodation\) \(England\) Order 2002](#). There is also a Code of Guidance which sets out how a local authority should interpret the legislation.

### Personnel

- 3.1 None specific

### Equalities Impact

- 4.1 None specific

### Health and Safety

- 5.1 None specific

### Environmental Sustainability

6.1 None specific

### **Property and Asset Management**

7.1 None specific

### **Risk Management**

8.1

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

9.1 Addressing homelessness is a key priority of the Council and ensuring Derby's homeless are treated with dignity and respect is an explicit commitment of the administration.