
**Decision Session Executive Member Housing &
Community Safety**

31st October 2019

Report of the Assistant Director – Housing & Community Safety

Homeless Review 2018/19

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Summary

1. This report looks at the activity governed by the Housing Act 1996, the Homelessness Act 2002, The Localism Act 2011 and the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and the City of York Council’s Homelessness Strategy 2018-2023 in respect of the financial year 2018/19. The primary focus is to report on prevention and relief work, main duty decisions and rough sleeping.

2. The report identifies the new duties placed on the Local Authority under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 which came into effect on 3/4/18
3. The report identifies targets and priorities for 2019/20.
4. The report incorporates the work and contribution of partner agencies in delivery of a comprehensive service to homeless households across York, many of whom are the most socially excluded people in society. Each agency contributes to this success and is a vital part of the homeless service delivery.

Recommendations

5. The Executive Member is asked to:
 - a. Note the progress made by the service;
 - b. Agree the priorities and targets for 2019/20 as set out in paragraph 31

Reason – To ensure the council continues to meet the statutory duties under Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and Homeless Reduction Act 2017, reduces rough sleeping in the city and supports the most vulnerable in society.

Background and overview of service

6. There is a duty on all Local Authorities to provide an advice service to all homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. In addition the Local Authority has a duty to provide temporary accommodation for certain households in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 and more recently The Homeless Reduction Act 2017
7. The remit of the work carried out by the Homeless Service (which incorporates Housing Options, Housing Registrations, Resettlement Services and Temporary Accommodation) is set out in legislation and in the City's Homelessness Strategy 2018-23 '*Preventing homelessness together*'. The current action plan identifies actions to tackle homelessness and develop services.
8. Under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, the statutory duty placed on the Local Authority for anyone who is at risk of homelessness within 56 days and eligible for assistance, is to help prevent homelessness. No account is taken of local connection, priority need or intentionality at this stage. All customers must have a personal housing plan.

9. If unsuccessful, the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 places a statutory duty to relieve homelessness (assist in finding alternative accommodation) for a further 56 days. Local connection criteria apply at this stage. No account is taken of priority need or intentionality at this stage. All customers must have a personal housing plan
10. The Local Authority cannot make a decision under s.193 (Main duty), s.191 (Intentionally Homeless) or s.192 (No Priority Need) until the 56 day relief duty has been met.
11. Statutory decisions under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 are made by the council's Housing Options Team, the Youth Homeless Workers and the Specialist Housing adviser (frail elderly and physically disabled) which are based at West Offices.
12. The Salvation Army, Early Intervention and Prevention Team provide specialist advice to single homeless (18+).
13. The Complex Needs Rough Sleeper Team works to reduce rough sleeping in the city.
14. The Homeless Strategy 2018-23 was adopted on 21/6/18 and sets out 5 strategic aims in the Action Plan to:
 - **Strategic aim 1.** Reduce Rough Sleeping
 - **Strategic aim 2.** Prevent Homelessness
 - **Strategic aim 3.** Ensure appropriate accommodation for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
 - **Strategic aim 4.** Ensure appropriate support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
 - **Strategic Aim 5.** Maintain and develop partnership working and strategic direction

Targets

15. The council's targets for the service are based upon The Ministry of Housing and Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) priorities and our local priorities as set out in the Homeless Strategy.
16. Statistics are no longer directly comparable with previous years due to the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 (HRA17). These statistics are not compiled and submitted by CYC but downloaded directly

by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). MHCLG refer to these stats as 'experimental' and there have been changes throughout 2018/19. There is a time delay in publication of final statistics, (as of 16.09.18 statistics up to end March 19 are publically available <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness> (select York)

17. 2018/19 also include historic statistical reporting (P1e) when customers approached the council before 3/4/18 and were assessed under Housing Act 1996

18. Performance Targets – 2018/19

- A Local Authority has a statutory duty to give advice to anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness. In conjunction with partner agencies the focus is to prevent homelessness / re-house in a planned way. In 2018/19 there were 235 successful prevention duty cases and 139 successful relief duty cases. Reported statistics are now only by the Local Authority following a statutory decision.
- There were 61 homeless acceptances main duty (HRA17 and Housing Act 1996 historic cases) which is below the target of 100. Target achieved.
- The target for reducing the number of households placed in temporary accommodation for 2018/19 was 57. The actual outturn was 66. Keeping this at a low figure despite being slightly over target is a significant achievement in light of ongoing housing and welfare benefit pressures and in particular the introduction of the HRA17.
- B&B for families should only be used in emergencies and then for no more than 6 weeks. As of 31/3/19 there were no families in B&B for over 6 weeks. Target achieved but following the introduction of HRA17 we have seen an increase in the use of B&B increase significantly since 2017/18. This is mainly due to the HRA 17 elongating the process from that which York had in place prior. Temporary accommodation is therefore in use for longer and with no additional housing options to offer this has meant an increase in the use of B&B. This has also been further exacerbated by the decommissioning of rooms at Ordnance Lane due to the intended relocation of hostel provision to James House. Many of these decommissioned rooms have had to be brought back into use. Regardless, use of B&B remains low and very short term.
- To reduce rough sleepers to 15. Target achieved. In November 2018 the official submission was 9. The securing of additional resources

(Rough Sleepers Initiative) for 2018/19 was instrumental in achieving this.

- To achieve housing performance targets within departmental service plan around voids and rent arrears. Rent arrears within the service have reduced overall, although there was a slight rise at Howe Hill for Young People. This reduction is due to Universal Credit rules no longer applying to temporary accommodation and the reintroduction of direct payments of housing benefits.
- Deliver action points set out within Homelessness Strategy 2018-23 'Preventing Homelessness Together' action plan within identified time scales

Key Points 2018/19

19. That the new legislation Homeless Reduction Act 2017 took effect on 3/4/18
20. That the new Homeless Strategy 2018-23 '*Preventing homelessness together*' was agreed on 21/6/18 and work commenced on completing the relevant action points
21. The details of the activity and performance of the service are contained in appendix 1 and set out a comprehensive picture of the excellent services provided across York. An updated Homeless Strategy action plan is in progress and when completed will be published on CYC website.
22. The key points of this report are:
 - That the majority of the data in the performance report 2018-19 is related to Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and is not directly comparable to previous statistics reported under Housing Act 1996
 - That only Local Authority statutory decisions are submitted to MHCLG but CYC and partner agencies continue to work to prevent homelessness and have recorded 201 statutory prevention cases under HRA17 and 34 historic prevention cases (total 235)
 - That only Local Authority statutory decisions are submitted to MHCLG but CYC and partner agencies work to relieve homelessness (find alternative accommodation) if prevention is not achieved and have recorded 136 statutory relief cases under HRA17 and historic 3 relief cases (total 139)

- Only if prevention and relief is unsuccessful is there a (historic) main duty decision. In 2018/19 there were 61 accepted homeless households in 2018/19 (HRA17 main duty and historic cases).
- Housing Options remains busy with an increased number of detailed cases (818 plus historic cases). This increase was anticipated as a result of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and additional New Burdens Money is used to increase capacity. This service will continue to evolve as the legislation settles in.
- Due to ongoing work, and commitment of agencies, Rough Sleeping Initiative funding and new flexible methods of working the number of rough sleepers in York has decreased to 9 (Nov 2018).

In Year Service Improvement

23. A number of significant service improvements were achieved in 2018/19 (further details in appendix 1):
24. Homeless Strategy 'Preventing Homelessness Together' 2018-23 (agreed 21 June 2018)
25. Throughout 2018/19 significant work has continued both internally and with partner agencies to improve the direct service to customers and the overall provision, in particular
26. A decision about the allocation policy and delivery of housing registrations service (North Yorkshire Home Choice) was made July 2018 and it was agreed to leave North Yorkshire Home Choice and adopt a CYC allocations policy in conjunction with new CYC IT system due for full implementation in October 2020.
27. Regular updating of website and leaflets following the implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017.
28. Reduce rough sleeping in York. The Formal Street Count figure has evidenced a significant reduction in the amount of people sleeping rough in York on a typical night from 29 to 9 which is due to a number of factors:
 - a) The capacity of the severe weather provision (now referred to as winter weather provision) has increased, including Yes Below Zero (YB0), a partnership service with One Voice York and The Salvation Army.

- b) Expansion of NSNO (No Second Night Out) provision throughout the rest of the year, implementation of 2 emergency beds in Union Terrace Hostel and 4 beds in flat 2 at Howe Hill (used during winter weather provision as YB0)
- c) Employing 2 new workers with New Burdens money (Housing Options Worker, and Housing Options Support Worker) to meet the extra demands of HRA 2017. The Housing Options Support Worker offers practical assistance and support to customers undertaking actions within personal housing plans
- d) The employment of a Private Rented Sector Worker with New Burdens money for rough sleepers and single homeless people.
- e) The confirmation in June 2018 of £193k additional funding from MHCLG to reduce rough sleeping in the city. 6 additional front line workers (see details below) and additional personalisation monies have been used to assist this complex client group into accommodation and reduce rough sleeping in the city. York has been awarded a further grant of £251k for 2019/20.
- f) Making Every Adult matter (MEAM) employed 2 additional staff through the MHCLG funding to reduce rough sleeping, this means we have been able to double the capacity of people with complex needs who are homeless and are able to offer a more personalised support package to them.
- g) Reintroduction of a mental health worker to work with rough sleepers through the MHCLG funding this means we have more insight into people with poor mental health, how this impacts on an individual and how best we might be able to work with them to a better outcomes.
- h) 3 additional outreach support workers within the Salvation Army early intervention and prevention Service. Again funded through MHCLG. Reintroducing assertive outreach support for rough sleepers due to more appropriate levels of staff. Ensuring a targeted approach to working with non-engaging rough sleepers to encourage them to engage with support and accommodation services. Drop-in facilities extended to Care cent on Wednesdays to further access non engaging rough sleepers
- i) A rough sleeper's coordinator part time post to coordinate agencies funded through MHCLG to take a joint/targeted approach to reducing rough sleeping.

- j) Next Steps initiative – A Peasholme Charity new project with funding from Nationwide Building Society and Police & Crime Commissioner. This worker takes on a navigator role for people who may be complex in their issues but don't for example fit the criteria of MEAM.
29. Work continues on the new temporary accommodation (57 units) at James House with a current completion, furnishing and final preparations getting the building ready for people to move in mid November 2019.
30. Decant of current tenants of Lincoln Court (independent living community to modernise/upgrade existing provision) utilising the Specialist Housing Options Worker.

Forthcoming projects and priorities – 2019/20

31. The following work is identified in the Homeless Strategy action plan 2018-23
- a) 2018-23 Homeless Strategy 'Preventing Homelessness Together' adopted and signed off in June 2018, continued work in progress and monitoring of associated actions within this plan. While the content of the Homeless strategy will remain the same, it has been requested by MHCLG that we re-brand it due to the Rough Sleepers Initiative to Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Together. This is a requirement nationally.
 - b) To further embed and develop service to meet statutory duties under Homeless Reduction Act 2017. York is working with MHCLG and other Local Authorities to make practical improvements to HRA17.
 - c) To evaluate the impact of HRA17 and make recommendation for future resources within Housing Options Team.
 - d) A decision to leave NYHC and adopt a CYC allocations policy was made in July 2018. This will be implemented following the completion of The Housing ICT project.
 - e) Review the use and consider investment / re-design opportunities of existing social housing stock to meet the needs of complex / vulnerable customers in particular to mitigate medium and long term impact of welfare benefit reform. The opening of James House will provide a number of opportunities.
 - f) To continue to reduce rough sleeping in York and develop services to meet the needs of an ever increasing number of people with complex needs.

- g) To complete and relocate people living in current hostels under Homeless Reduction Act 2017 (relief duty) or Housing Act 1996 (full duty) to James House by end November 2019.
- h) To develop a Homelessness support Hub / day centre provision. This will provide a structured, safe and secure environment for informal food services to operate from, alongside outreach team (RSI and RRP workers) to actively engage hard to reach vulnerable people both homeless and or in tenuous accommodation scenarios, offering support, prevention and meaningful activity.
- i) Inform the public on how to aid and assist rough sleepers using social media, media and websites, leaflets etc.
- j) Agree targets for 2019/20

	2017/18	2018/19 target	2019/20 target	Reason
No of households in temporary accommodation	62 (actual 49)	57(actual 66)	65	HRA has resulted in elongated applications and numbers in temporary accommodation.
No of households accepted as priority need (main duty HRA17)	100 (actual 90)	100 (actual 61)	80	Do not know long term impact of Homeless Reduction Act

No of rough sleepers	18 (actual 29)	15(actual 9)	6	National target to reduce rough sleepers by 50% by 2022. Additional funding awarded to York will allow us to provide increased services.
Not to use B&B for 16 or 17 year olds	0 (actual 0)	0(actual 0)	0	
Not to use B&B for families, other than in emergencies and then for no longer than 6 weeks	0 (actual 0)	0(actual 0)	0	HRA17 has brought about a necessity to place some families in B&B but not for more than 6 weeks

Consultation

32. There has been consultation with staff and customers about the design and operation of James House and with partners on the Homelessness Strategy.

Options

33. Option 1

Note the contents of the report and agree the priorities and targets for 2019/20 as set out in paragraph 31, including renaming the Preventing Homelessness Together ' to 'Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Together'..

34. Option 2

Note the contents of the report but recommend alternative priorities and targets for 2019/20 but agree to renaming the Preventing Homelessness Together ' to 'Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Together' as in Option 1 (MHCLG have made this a statutory requirement).

Analysis

35. The report and appendix identifies current strategic aims (documented in the City's Homelessness Strategy 2018-23 *Preventing Homelessness Together*'.
36. The report and appendix identifies future targets and action in line with Homelessness Strategy 2018-23 'Preventing Homelessness Together' to identify the priorities for the forthcoming year
37. The work and services provided by the Local Authority and partner agencies within the homeless sector are designed to both prevent homelessness and assist those who are homeless. The targets and priorities are practical actions to assist in meeting this target.
38. To agree to the MHCLG request to change the name of the Homeless Strategy 2018-23 from 'Preventing Homelessness Together ' to 'Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Together'

Council Objectives

39. The Homeless Strategy is closely linked to priorities within the Council Plan 2015-19:
 - A prosperous city for all where local businesses can thrive and residents have good quality jobs, housing and opportunities
 - A focus on frontline services to ensure all residents, particularly the least advantaged can access services and community facilities

Implications

Financial Implications

40. There are no direct financial implications to this report, although there is evidence that by not investing in preventative measures there is a greater

cost to the city and the people that live in it in the long-term through failure to meet targets, prevent homelessness with the potential for an increase in homelessness and rough sleeping.

41. In 2017-18 York received £9,000 IT grant and £68,367 new burdens money over 3 years to implement the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 funding an additional Housing Options Worker and Housing Options Support Worker.
42. City of York Council was awarded £189k (2018-19) and a further £251k (2019-20) RSI funding to continue and expand the work with rough sleepers. This included money from the Rapid Re-housing fund

Equalities Implications

43. A community impact assessment (CIA). Individual CIAs will be completed for major pieces of work outlined in this report.

Legal Implications

44. The provision of a homeless service is a statutory requirement under Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002 and Homeless Reduction Act 2017.
45. Services must adhere to national Guidance on “Provision of Accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who maybe homeless and/or require accommodation”.
46. National good practice states that no young person 16 or 17 should be in B&B, that no family should be placed in B&B unless in an emergency and then for no more than 6 weeks
47. There are financial risks via judicial challenge if the service does not meet its statutory duty and as a result of Ombudsmen complaints if CYC fails to act within its statutory duties regarding homelessness.

Risk Management

48. There is a continued risk that due to current economic climate, the continuing impact of welfare reform and austerity on public services along with changes at a national level, unless mitigation can be put in place to support the most vulnerable, we will see an increase in homelessness within the city. York has still has a number of people rough sleeping despite the commitment of agencies who work to reduce this as a priority. Shelter has predicted national increases in rough sleeping over the next

decade. And while 2018/19 has seen a 6% reduction nationally the situation regarding rough sleeping remains uncertain with much work to do on this issue.

- a. The risk/s associated with the recommendation of this report are assessed at a net level below 16. The risks have been assessed as moderate at 14; the strategy will be regularly monitored at the Homeless Strategy Executive Steering Group.

b. Contact Details

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**Report
Approved**

Date 31.10.19

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Appendix 1

Homeless Review Appendix1 2018/19

Appendix 2

Updated Homeless Strategy Action Plan

Background Papers:(provided upon request):

2018-2023 Tackling Homelessness Together HL Strategy

Glossary:

ABA – A Bed A Head

B&B - Bed and Breakfast

EIP – Early intervention and Prevention Team HHASC – Health, Housing and
Adult Social Care (Directorate)

CBL - Choice Based Lettings (North Yorkshire Home Choice)

CIA – Community Impact Assessment

CRC – Community Rehabilitation Company

CYC - City of York Council

DHP – Discretionary Housing Payments

HRA17 - Homeless Reduction Act 2017

IDAS – Independent Domestic Abuse Service

MEAM – Making Every Adult Matter

MHCLG - Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government

MHCLG Ministry of Housing and Communities and Local Government NPS –
National Probation Service
NSNO- No Second Night Out
NYHC - North Yorkshire Home Choice
NYP- North Yorkshire Police
RSI – Rough Sleepers Initiative
RSL - Registered Social Landlord
RRP – Rapid Re-housing Pathway
SAP – Single Access Point
TEWV - Tees, Esk, Wear Valley NHS Trust
YB0 -Yes Below Zero
YOT - Youth Offending Team