

COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 18 th December 2019
Report Subject	Rough Sleepers Briefing Paper
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rough sleeping is often seen as a major issue only witnessed in our major towns and cities and presents these areas with their unique challenges particularly around the provision of appropriate facilities to deal with numbers of rough sleepers which are often high, however, rough sleeping is no longer an issue in these conurbations, it is now a fairly common sight to see rough sleepers in the communities of Flintshire albeit numbers are low.

Each council has developed its own local homeless action plan based on the themes within the regional homeless strategy but which reflect local priorities. The local plan in Flintshire has identified priority actions to tackle and prevent homelessness in the County.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members consider the report and provide feedback and comments on the issues covered within.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND
1.01	Rough sleeping is often seen as a major issue only witnessed in our major towns and cities and presents these areas with their unique challenges particularly around the provision of appropriate facilities to deal with numbers of rough sleepers which are often high, however, rough sleeping is no longer an issue in these conurbations, it is now a fairly common sight to see rough sleepers in the communities of Flintshire.
1.02	The issues surrounding our rough sleepers are often complex with a number of reasons set out in table 1 which explain why people find themselves homeless. In addition to this there are clear correlations and linkages with austerity, increasing mental health and the reduction in corresponding support services, drug and alcohol issues (and a wider availability of drugs through County Lines), the bedroom tax and Universal Credit. As noted above these provide a complex layer of reasons which can eventually lead to rough sleeping.
1.03	<p>The Local Homelessness Action Plan for Flintshire follows the Regional Homelessness Strategy with three main themes People, Homes and Services.</p> <p>This briefing paper concentrates on the theme 'People' and its priority of Rough Sleepers.</p>
1.04	<u>People</u>
1.05	<p>Rough Sleepers</p> <p>In December 2018 Flintshire County Council piloted an Emergency Bed provision to help those who were rough sleeping. This pilot proved to be successful and established a demand for this type of provision in the County.</p>
1.06	There is currently no emergency bed provision in Flintshire, this was withdrawn at short notice by our service provider. Since the provision ended at the end of September we have been working through options for replacement premises even on the basis that this may be relatively short term (up to two years). In relation to this we have identified a building in Shotton which would present the most appropriate accommodation unit and work is underway to understand what we would need to do to fit approximately 50% of this out. Having been recently decanted this work would be relatively minimal. This is a good location as it is in a geographical area where the vast majority of our service users are.
1.07	Moving the model of provision here also enables us to develop a more holistic service and test out other modes of partnership working by engaging more effectively with partner agencies such as drug and alcohol services, medical support (redressing open wounds), housing services and the signposting and support for rehabilitation.

1.08	<p>The National Rough Sleeper Count was undertaken on 7th November 2019 between 11pm and 3am the following morning. Four rough sleepers were identified on the count; two of whom were already known to services and two who were not known but refused assistance on the night. The outreach worker has continued to engage with these individuals.</p> <p>It is important to note that although the service only located four people on the night, there are further individuals who are known to be rough sleeping in the County that were not found and therefore not included in the return. The weather on the night of the count was not good and it is assumed that some individuals had sought shelter in new places or areas deemed unsafe for employees to check (Woodlands etc).</p> <p>What we are able to note in relation to the above is that we regularly saw between five and eight people regularly presenting at our emergency bed provision pilot.</p>
1.09	<p>Flintshire's commissioned Outreach Worker remains in place and is contracted until March 2020. This role works with those who are street homeless to try and engage and assist them to access services. The Outreach workers key objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a more flexible service with support being available outside of normal working hours including weekends. • Link in with residents who are accessing the emergency term provision to offer support and assistance to reintegrate into mainstream services. • Conduct regular welfare checks where rough sleepers have refused assistance. • Monitor and conduct regular reviews of hot spots to enable to service to provide assistance at the earliest point.
1.10	<p>Flintshire's outreach worker is signed up to Streetlink. This service enables members of the public to report people rough sleeping to local services that can support them. If a person is concerned about someone they have seen rough sleeping they can use Streetlink to make the initial report. The details provided are sent direct to Flintshire Outreach worker to help them find the individual and connect them to support.</p> <p>When a report is made the person reporting will receive confirmation that the report has been received and information on what will happen next and a further update if possible/appropriate.</p> <p>https://www.streetlink.org.uk/</p>
1.11	<p>One of the actions in the local action plan was to gain a better understanding of why tenancies are ending and the reasons behind homelessness in our County. The statistics at table 1 show that the reasons behind homelessness or risk of homelessness for cases closed were as follows:</p>

Table 1

Reasons for homelessness	2018/19	2019/20 (Q1 & Q2)
Parent no longer willing or able to accommodate	14.49%	18.89%
Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	7.25%	6.49%
Breakdown of relationship with partner - Non Violent	9.14%	9.73%
Breakdown of relationship with partner - Violent	11.59%	11.83%
Violence or harassment	2.56%	3.63%
Mortgage arrears (repossession or other loss of home)	2.34%	1.15%
Rent arrears on Social Sector Dwellings	2.79%	3.24%
Rent arrears on Private Sector Dwellings	4.79%	4.77%
Loss of rented or tied accommodation	23.19%	18.70%
Current property unaffordable	1.00%	1.34%
Current property unsuitable	3.68%	2.48%
Prison Leaver	8.70%	7.44%
In institution or care (e.g. hospital, residential home, army etc.)	1.67%	1.72%
Other (including homeless in emergency, returned from abroad, sleeping rough or in hostel)	6.80%	8.59%

As you can see from the table above the largest proportion of homelessness relates to loss of rented or tied accommodation in the Private Rented Sector and parents being unwilling or unable to continue to accommodate.

1.12 **Housing First**

1.13 Housing First is a model of service provision that is considered to be effective for homeless people who have high, multiple complex needs, it is normally targeted specifically at those who no other housing approach has worked, as such number of these people to which this model could be applied are low but support provided is intensive, of a long duration and highly flexible.

1.14	The Housing First model and ethos on which it is based is relatively simple yet radical; it works precisely because it hands choice and control, rights and responsibilities back to homeless people. It is in its simplest form a relationship based approach to change, yet its success also depends on access to stable and affordable housing and the ability to draw in a wide range of services and the personalised support that the individual needs, as far as possible when and in a format in which they choose.
1.15	Welsh Government has made available funding to commence a pilot of Housing First in Flintshire.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Areas of this service are supported through Supporting People, and this would not change, however, Welsh Government are reviewing the quantum of funding allocated through its Supporting People budget as part of its work relating to funding flexibilities.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT										
3.01	<p>Risk - That our emergency bed provision fails and street homeless are deprived of such facilities.</p> <p>Mitigation – we have researched the area and considered the building and are confident that this will provide a workable and effective solution in the short term.</p>										
3.02	<p>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td>Positive –Increase in targeted support and alternative delivery methods to ensure services are inclusive for all</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> <td>Prevention - Preventing homelessness through ensuring there is adequate support and accommodation to cater for a range of needs</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration</td> <td>Positive – Increased integration between services and partner organisations</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Collaboration</td> <td>Positive – Increased collaboration between services and partner organisations</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Involvement</td> <td>Positive – Service user involvement to help shape effective services so that support is timely and person centred</td> </tr> </table>	Long-term	Positive –Increase in targeted support and alternative delivery methods to ensure services are inclusive for all	Prevention	Prevention - Preventing homelessness through ensuring there is adequate support and accommodation to cater for a range of needs	Integration	Positive – Increased integration between services and partner organisations	Collaboration	Positive – Increased collaboration between services and partner organisations	Involvement	Positive – Service user involvement to help shape effective services so that support is timely and person centred
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Well-being Goals Impact	
Prosperous Wales	Again these could be positive, negative or neutral. If neutral, there is no need to put any explanation other than 'no impact'. If positive or negative impacts, then provide a brief statement indicating what this is.
Resilient Wales	Positive – Creating services that are prevention focused and build resilience to avoid households becoming homeless specifically young persons
Healthier Wales	Positive – Reduction in rough sleeping and increase in targeted support for mental health
More equal Wales	Services accessed delivered in a way that are inclusive for all
Cohesive Wales	No Impact
Vibrant Wales	No impact
Globally responsible Wales	No impact

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Previous update reports have been submitted to Scrutiny and Cabinet.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Jenni Griffiths, Homeless and Advice Manager Telephone: 01352 702415 E-mail: jenni.griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Housing Solutions</p> <p>This is the service that carried out the statutory homeless functions and supports customers facing homelessness.</p>
8.02	<p>Housing First</p> <p>Housing First is an approach that offers permanent, affordable housing as quickly as possible for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and then provides the supportive services and connections to the community-based supports people need to keep their housing and avoid returning to homelessness.</p>
8.03	<p>Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMO)</p> <p>House in Multiple Occupation: Houses in Multiple Occupation (including self-contained flats where relevant) provide small, affordable, flexible and safe accommodation for a wide variety of people including single people, students, low paid and seasonal workers, those on short term contracts and are an essential part of the housing market. They can also offer temporary accommodation for people who are saving to purchase a home. Houses that provide accommodation for at least 3 people who are not all members of the same family are known as 'Houses in Multiple Occupation' (HMOs).</p>
8.04	<p>Private Rented Sector (PRS)</p> <p>The Private Rented Sector (PRS) is a classification of housing in the UK. The basic Private Rented Sector definition is: property owned by a landlord and leased to a tenant. The landlord, in this case, could be an individual, a property company or an institutional investor.</p>