

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 16 th July 2019
Report Subject	Homelessness Update on Local Action Plan
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North Wales' councils have together developed a regional strategy and action plan.

The Homelessness Strategy objectives are to prevent homelessness and ensure suitable accommodation and satisfactory support is available for those who are homeless. The region has agreed to the common themes of People, Homes and Services.

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

The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on progress on our Local Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet supports the updates provided against the Local Action Plan for Homelessness.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND
1.01	<p>The Local Action Plan for Flintshire follows the Regional Homelessness Strategy with three main themes People, Homes and Services. Each theme is broken down further into priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People - Youth Homelessness, Rough Sleepers, Complex Needs and Prison Leavers• Homes - Housing First, Improved access to accommodation supply and Temporary accommodation• Services – Prevention / Intervention, welfare reform and health
1.02	<u>People</u>
1.03	<p>Youth Homelessness In 2018/19, 244 young people (age 16 to 24) presented to Flintshire’s Housing Solutions Service either homeless or threatened with homelessness. Work is currently underway to further analyse this data to understand the reasons behind these presentations.</p>
1.04	<p>Work is also underway with colleagues in Youth Services to develop a theatre production for schools so as to raise the profile of the risks of homelessness for young people.</p>
1.05	<p>Flintshire’s Housing Solutions Team currently have a Youth provision within the service consisting of a dedicated Housing Solutions Officer and a Children’s Services worker. Working with colleagues in Education, a joint funding bid has been submitted to also include a Youth Worker to the team. This will enable us to create a more integrated youth provision to enable wider support to youth’s that are faced with homelessness and enable a more joined up service that is seamless for the young person with one point of access and a wide range of support options available to them.</p>
1.06	<p>Rough Sleepers In December 2018 Flintshire County Council piloted an Emergency Bed provision to help those who were rough sleeping. This pilot has been successful and provision was extended until March 2020. Work is underway to evaluate all the findings from this project to inform a more permanent provision in terms of both support needs and premises.</p>
1.07	<p>Flintshire has also commissioned an Outreach Worker to work with those who are street homeless or accessing the Emergency Bed Provision and this is working well. 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 bed provision to offer support and assistance to reintegrate into mainstream services.• Conduct regular welfare checks where rough sleepers have refused assistance.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and conduct regular reviews of hot spots to enable to service to provide assistance at the earliest point. 																												
1.08	<p>Flintshire's outreach worker is now 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>																												
1.08	<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 show that the reasons behind homelessness or risk of homelessness for cases closed in 2018/19 were as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Parent no longer willing or able to accommodate</td> <td>14.49%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate</td> <td>7.25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Breakdown of relationship with partner - Non Violent</td> <td>9.14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Breakdown of relationship with partner - Violent</td> <td>11.59%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Violence or harassment</td> <td>2.56%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mortgage arrears (repossession or other loss of home)</td> <td>2.34%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rent arrears on Social Sector Dwellings</td> <td>2.79%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rent arrears on Private Sector Dwellings</td> <td>4.79%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Loss of rented or tied accommodation</td> <td>23.19%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Current property unaffordable</td> <td>1.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Current property unsuitable</td> <td>3.68%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prison Leaver</td> <td>8.70%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In institution or care (e.g. hospital, residential home, army etc.)</td> <td>1.67%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other (including homeless in emergency, returned from abroad, sleeping rough or in hostel)</td> <td>6.80%</td> </tr> </table>	Parent no longer willing or able to accommodate	14.49%	Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	7.25%	Breakdown of relationship with partner - Non Violent	9.14%	Breakdown of relationship with partner - Violent	11.59%	Violence or harassment	2.56%	Mortgage arrears (repossession or other loss of home)	2.34%	Rent arrears on Social Sector Dwellings	2.79%	Rent arrears on Private Sector Dwellings	4.79%	Loss of rented or tied accommodation	23.19%	Current property unaffordable	1.00%	Current property unsuitable	3.68%	Prison Leaver	8.70%	In institution or care (e.g. hospital, residential home, army etc.)	1.67%	Other (including homeless in emergency, returned from abroad, sleeping rough or in hostel)	6.80%
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1.09	<p>Prison Leavers</p> <p>As you can see from the above, last year 8.70% of homelessness was directly linked to prison leavers.</p>																												
1.10	<p>The Regional Homelessness Strategy Group have increased resource across the region and created a Regional Prisoner Pathway which aims to relieve homelessness for prison leavers. Flintshire has a dedicated worker that works with Prisoners before their release to reduce the risk of them becoming</p>																												

	<p>homeless on release. There are many barriers to finding suitable accommodation for this client group but figures are showing that this work is providing some good outcomes.</p> <p>In 2018/19 Flintshire worked with 42 applicants that would otherwise be homeless on their release without intervention, of these 42:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Clients went straight from custody directly into their own tenancy • 10 Clients went from custody to approved premises or family then onto their own accommodation
1.11	<p>Complex Needs</p> <p>One of the main areas of focus in this area has been on clients with mental health. In 2018/19, just over 41% of triages completed indicated the applicant had mental health concerns. The service is working with colleagues in Adult Social Services to secure the provision of a Mental Health Worker in the Housing Solutions Team. This will help the service to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understand the issues our customers are faced with; • Understand how this may impact the way we deliver our services; • Provide better support to those suffering a mental health issue and faced with homelessness; • Create better integration with Health and primary care services where required.
1.12	<p><u>Homes</u></p>
1.13	<p>Housing First</p> <p>Work has commenced on securing funding for a Housing First Pilot in Flintshire and a bid for additional funding has also been submitted to enhance this.</p>
1.14	<p>There are many good practice projects across Wales and The Homeless and Advice Team Manager and Housing Strategy Manager will be visiting some of these in the coming months to identify good practice and where strategic partners have contributed. This will enable the completion of a draft business model for Flintshire's Housing First pilot.</p>
1.15	<p>Improved access to accommodation</p> <p>This covers a wide spectrum of work including the Council's commitment to building more social housing, and in doing so, increasing the availability in the private rented sector.</p>
1.16	<p>One of main areas to update on for this area is that the contract with HAWS commenced in May 2019. HAWS will be working with The Housing Solutions Team on a number of key areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of applicants currently in temporary accommodation and assistance to move onto suitable accommodation;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Landlord drop in sessions for Flintshire's Private Landlords to understand what the reasons behind the barriers our clients face in accessing Private Rented Sector (PRS) accommodation; • Develop a PRS policy and suite of incentives to encourage buy in from this sector; • Increase access to PRS in Flintshire.
1.17	<p>Temporary Accommodation</p> <p>This year there will be a full review of temporary accommodation used by the Housing Solutions Team for homeless applicants to include:</p> <p>Leased PRS accommodation – The Council leases a number of Houses in Multiple Occupation's (HMO) and individual properties from private Landlords. This review will look at each of these leases to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost effectiveness • Location of property • Terms of lease • Quality of accommodation • Outcomes for individuals accessing this accommodation
1.18	<p><u>Services</u></p>
1.19	<p>Prevention / Intervention, Welfare Reform and Health</p> <p>To be able to improve the outcomes for clients who become homeless or are at risk of homelessness through the breakdown of relationships with parents/family (21.75% in 2018/19) mediation services can prove very effective as a prevention tool. Training is being arranged for The Housing Solutions Team to ensure staff are skilled in this area for all cases where this is appropriate.</p>
1.20	<p>The Preventing Evictions pilot was launched in November 2018 to prevent as many evictions as possible through early intervention on low level arrears and more collaborative working between rent collection and support teams to resolve rent arrears and prevent escalation via notice of possession/eviction. This has proven very successful and of the 93 cases reviewed last financial year only 21.50% were escalated within the collection teams processes. The remaining 78.50 were all resolved through a combination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed repayment plan • Payment in full • Benefit awards • DHP applications • Third party deductions • Ongoing support where necessary
1.21	<p>As a result of this successful work, this way of working will now be rolled out to all of the Income Team and Supporting People Team to ensure the success of the pilot is shared across services and becomes an established way of working.</p>

1.22	As described previously in this report, steps are being made to bridge gaps between Housing Services and Social Care services such as the collaborative working to provide a Mental Health Worker based within Housing Solutions.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None at this time.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Report presented to Community and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny on 26 June 2019, report supported.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	N/A.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Contact Officer: Jenni Griffiths Job Title: Homeless and Advice Team Manager Telephone: 01352 702415 E-mail: jenni.griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Housing Solutions: This is the service that carried out the statutory homeless functions and supports customers facing homelessness.</p> <p>Housing First: 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> <p>Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMO): 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</p>

who are not all members of the same family are known as 'Houses in Multiple Occupation' (HMOs).

Private Rented Sector (PRS): 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.