

Name of meeting: Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel

Date: 10th October 2019

Title of report: Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-23 - Update

Purpose of report: To provide an update on the approach being taken with key partners to develop and implement action plans which support the achievement of outcomes as set out in the Strategy.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Not Applicable
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u>	No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not Applicable
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Karl Battersby - 30.09.19
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?	Not Applicable
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	Not Applicable
Cabinet Member: Housing and Democracy	Cllr Cathy Scott

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: None

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes. There is no information in the report which would identify any individual person

1. Summary

1.1 The Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 – 2023 was approved by full Council on 17th July 2019. In creating the strategy, a number of stakeholders including partners from both the statutory and third sector were engaged, and their views helped to shape the end product. As required by the Government in its Rough Sleeping Strategy, the Council's updated strategy has been published on the Kirklees website.

1.2 The Council requested that an initial action plan be created to focus on the first 3 years of the strategy. It is understood that whilst the strategy was approved by Council, to be successfully implemented, the actions need to be created and owned by a range of partners. Progress developing the shared action plan is outlined in the report.

1.3 The Council has been successful in a number of bids it has submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for:

- Funding to develop and further enhance the work on preventing homelessness and tackling rough sleeping. As at May 2019, the total amount awarded from MHCLG Rough Sleeping pot was £248,421.
- Funding to improve access to the private rented sector for those homeless with low housing need. The Council was awarded £10,000 from the Private Rented Sector Access Fund.

A more detailed breakdown of this funding, and how it is being used in Kirklees is given at 2.2 of this report.

1.4 Information on the key indicators and outcomes for people who are threatened with or who are homeless or rough sleeping is given at 2.3 of this report.

1.5 Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) arrangements for the 2019-20 winter period are in place and from 1st October 2019 can be activated.

2. Information required to take a decision

No decision is required. However, the following information sets out in more detail the approach being taken to develop the action plan and progress to date on implementing new initiatives and outcomes for people.

2.1 Action Planning

2.1.1 Working particularly with the Kirklees Homelessness Forum, and with our housing colleagues we have collated the shared commitments to action that are already set out in the Strategy and are now working on collectively developing the detail of this as a Partnership. A Task and finish group has been set up as a subgroup of the Kirklees Homelessness Forum to develop and drive forward the Strategy Action Plan.

2.1.2 The Safer Kirklees Partnership is developing a suggested framework for how, as a partnership, we respond to concerns around people on the streets including people who are begging, street drinking, and or rough sleeping. This will then be tabled as a draft discussion paper with Elected Members and agreed approaches in relation to rough sleepers woven into the action plan.

2.2 New Proactive Outreach Approach (£248,421 MHCLG Funding)

To support people who are homeless and or sleeping rough in Kirklees, a new proactive approach is being established, with staffing resources being funded through our successful bids to MHCLG. This more outreach focussed service and the progress we are making has been well received; we have a joined-up approach of working with our partners including internal, voluntary and charitable organisations and the Police.

2.2.1 Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) and Rapid Rehousing Pathway (RRP)

The RSI funding of £131, 250 and RRP funding of £117,171 is being used to fund a new temporary Rough Sleeping Team within the Housing Solutions Service. The team comprising a Team Manager and 5 Housing Solutions Officers was established between May and September this year. The focus of the team is very much on a holistic approach to working with rough sleepers, based on developing relationships and building trust and formulating plans based on the individual's own circumstances. The team aim to provide ongoing and consistent contact to minimise the individual having to deal with a range of different people and will offer support with finding and keeping accommodation and accessing support services.

The new team and proactive approach has been well received and is already working closely with partners, co-working cases in some instances. To date, the team is actively working with 21 people (19 male and 2 female) 14 are still on the street but others have accepted either temporary accommodation or have been placed in long term accommodation and are still being supported. Of the 21 people 15 have substance issues and 8 have an offending history.

It is anticipated that as a result of closer partnership working and the now monthly Multi Agency Partnership meetings held in north and south Kirklees that the number of rough sleepers to be reported in November 2019 will be higher. This is due in part to the fact that we have greater confidence in capturing information and data of actual rough sleepers across all of the Kirklees area.

At the monthly meetings intelligence is shared and personalised plans for people formulated. The aim is to provide a holistic approach to the person and not just focus on accommodation as we know accommodation alone cannot tackle these issues. These plans are reviewed regularly.

The agencies in attendance are:

- KC Housing Solutions Rough Sleeper Team
- Police
- Chart (Drug and Mental Health),
- The Mission,
- One Big Family,
- Simon on the Streets,
- NHS (Mental Health)
- Safer Kirklees.

The Council contributed to the development of the "Good Practice in Street Outreach" Guide, produced and recently published by a range of third sector and statutory partners under the overall Kirklees Homelessness Forum. The aim of the guide is to bring together in one place a common set of standards of good practice in street outreach for people who are homeless and rough sleeping, and other groups of people on the streets in Kirklees who are vulnerable. (Attached to this report for information)

2.2.2 Other Partnership Working - Sex Workers

Part of our scope is to identify and support the 'hidden homeless' specifically women involved in sex work. Links have now been made with the partnership approach already established in the SWEET Project run by Locala. This work aims to improve how we engage with, and support sex workers, into settled accommodation.

2.2.3 Other Partnership Working - Hospitals and Prisons

Initial discussions have been had with Accident and Emergency Departments to discuss the effectiveness of the Hospital Discharge Protocol. This includes the processes around people who are at risk of being homeless and are being discharged from hospital. A similar approach is being taken with prisons, where ex-offenders are to be released into Kirklees. This work is in its early stages but it is expected that robust procedures will be in place by May 2020.

2.2.4 Other Partnership Working - Police Liaison & Diversion

A solid working partnership with this team based within the Police has been established. They work with the prolific offenders who have substance misuse, homelessness and mental health issues. They are a team dedicated to get to the underlying issues of the individual.

2.2.5 Access to the private rented sector

In March 2019, the Council was awarded £10,000 by MHCLG following our successful bid to the Private Rented Sector Access Fund. This money was made available by MHCLG, to enable local authorities to provide support to people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, to access and sustain tenancies specifically in the private rented sector.

Through this funding, we commissioned Fusion to develop and provide the Tenant Finder Plus scheme. This scheme is aimed at single homeless households who do not have additional significant support needs and who can manage their tenancy independently, once help has been provided to find appropriate accommodation. Where Tenant Finder Plus is identified as a suitable option to meet someone's housing need, and this is agreed as part of the individual's Housing Action Plan, Housing Solutions will refer onto Fusion and the scheme.

The service has been commissioned on a "payment by results" basis. This means that Fusion are paid where they evidence the successful completion of agreed outcomes. The first agreed outcome is that Fusion will work with both the individual and private landlords to secure a suitable private tenancy. Wherever possible, this will be an assured shorthold tenancy for a minimum period of 12 months.

Fusion Housing Tenant Finder Plus staff maintain regular contact with the individual over the 12 months, in order to ensure that the tenancy is being successfully maintained, and that at the end of the 12-month period, the individual remains in settled and secure accommodation. This is the second agreed outcome, and again, Fusion will provide evidence that the outcome has been met.

Tenant Finder plus has been operating since 1st April 2019 during which time 91 people who were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless have been referred. The scheme will continue to accept referrals up until March 2020, in line with the funding timetable.

2.3 Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

SWEP procedures are in place and will be activated as and when necessary from the 1st of October.

SWEP provides a safety net for those people sleeping rough or in danger of rough sleeping to minimise the risk of death or significant harm caused by extremely cold weather conditions. Access to a bed is made easier for individuals when temperatures are forecast to fall to zero degrees centigrade or below for three consecutive nights. In addition to a bed for the night, those referred by our Rough Sleeper team will have access to shower facilities and TV/computer from 5pm until the next morning. Each person will be provided a meal voucher for breakfast at the Huddersfield Mission where they will be met by a member of our Rough Sleeping team who will support the individual with their longer-term solution.

The Figures for SWEP last year was 43 people that were placed in accommodation and actively worked with.

This winter, we can apply for further Cold Weather Funding from the Government. For Kirklees Council this could be up to £50,000. Housing Solutions are currently exploring the possibility of providing a 'night shelter' facility for those sleeping out.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with people.

The priorities within the Action Plan are centred on working with people affected by homelessness, including where they are sleeping rough, enabling and empowering them to develop the skills, resilience and improvements in their health and wellbeing that they need to move on to a more settled, happy and stable situation. It recognises people's strengths and capacities for change, as well as identifying how their support needs can best be met.

3.2 Working with Partners

The strategy and action plan have been developed in close partnership with the multi-agency Kirklees Homelessness Forum. It is recognised that ownership of the preventing homelessness agenda must be partnership based, across the Council and its partners. The Council cannot prevent homelessness on its own, partners play a vital role in preventing and responding to homelessness.

3.3 Place Based Working

In addressing issues of homelessness and rough sleeping, a Place Based approach is needed. This includes consideration of peoples support networks and where and how they access services.

Historically, an individual has always had to present as homeless at the Council's Customer Service Centre. This can often create barriers. Our Outreach workers now carry out regular drop in's with our partners at their premises, encouraging engagement from individuals at a place they may feel more comfortable. This has worked well as we have been able to provide advice and guidance flexibly at that crucial time.

3.4 Improving outcomes for children

The strategy's focus on early intervention and prevention of homelessness will lead to improved outcomes for all households who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness, including households with children, and young people.

3.5 Other (e.g. Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

Not Applicable

4. Consultees and their opinions

Not Applicable

5. Next steps and timelines

To continue to develop the action plans and partnership working which support efforts to prevent and tackle homelessness and achieve the outcomes set out in the Preventing and Homelessness Strategy.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

The comments of the Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel on the approach and progress made to date in developing and implementing actions to address homelessness and tackle rough sleeping are noted. Such comments and suggestions for enhancing the action plans will be explored further with partners and used to shape future actions aimed at achieving the outcomes for people set out in the Strategy.

7. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

The comments and views of the Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel are welcome in helping to strengthen and inform the actions that will help us achieve our overall strategic vision which is that 'Kirklees is a place where no one sleeps rough on our streets, where no one is excluded, and where the support to prevent homelessness, or end it as quickly as possible, is available for people for as long as they need it.'

8. Contact officer

Helen Geldart, Head of Housing Services
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Email: helen.geldart@kirklees.gov.uk

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel 17.1.19 - Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-23
<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=572&MId=5711>

Kirklees Cabinet 19.3.19 - Draft Kirklees Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=5613>

Kirklees Council 17.7.19 - Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-19
(reference from Cabinet)

<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=138&MId=6024>

10. **Service Director responsible**
Naz Parkar, Growth and Housing