

Meeting: Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Date: Monday 28th November 2016

Title: North Tyneside Council's Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2013 – 2018

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Service: Strategic Housing

Wards affected: All Wards

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is:

- 1) To update Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee on the delivery of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2013 – 2018;
- 2) To inform Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee of emerging Government Homelessness Policy; and
- 3) To provide a timetable for the planned review of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee note the contents of this report.

3. Details

3.1 Background

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on all local housing authorities to carry out a homelessness review for their area and, in consultation with local partners and stakeholders, formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of that review, at least every five years.

North Tyneside Council's current Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2013 – 2018 received Cabinet approval on 14 October 2013. It has four priorities that set out how we will, in partnership, aim to prevent people becoming homeless by addressing the causes of homelessness. These priorities are to:

- Widen housing choice;
- Support people to secure and sustain a home;
- Provide timely and accessible housing and homelessness information; and
- Deliver excellent housing advice and homelessness services.

3.2 Delivery

The Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2013 – 2018 is supported by an Action Plan to ensure its priorities are delivered. Lead officers have been identified to oversee and drive the objectives that sit within each priority with quarterly reporting to the North Tyneside Homelessness Prevention Forum. The Action Plan is reviewed on an annual basis to monitor performance and to ensure that emerging issues are addressed.

Time focused task and finish groups are also established for specific pieces of work. These include:

- The annual rough sleeper estimate that was recently carried out with partners;
- The review of the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEPE); and
- The completion of a health needs audit for single homeless people using the Homeless Link toolkit.

3.3 Achievements

Working with our partners we have been able to deliver a number of outcomes and successes towards achieving the objectives of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2013 – 2018. They include:

- Reducing the number of households presenting to the Housing Advice Team. In 2013/14 a total of 2790 households presented to the team, this reduced to 2139 households for 2015/16;
- Reducing the number of homelessness priority cases accepted from 177 to 119 in the same period;
- Successfully attracting funding to deliver a range of homelessness prevention initiatives in North Tyneside (Appendix 1);
- Delivering new housing schemes to support those at risk of homelessness (Appendix 2);
- Holding a homelessness prevention and awareness session to young people in schools;
- Commissioning the provision of supported housing and housing support for over 25s.

3.4 Emerging Policy

On 28th October 2016 the Homelessness Reduction Bill received its Second Reading in Parliament. The Bill seeks to reduce homelessness and reforms homelessness duties placed on Local Authorities to ensure that all households at risk receive advice and help more quickly. To date the Bill has received cross-party support in Parliament. Should this continue it is expected that it will receive Royal Assent in April 2017 and would be implemented approximately 9 to 12 months later.

The draft Housing Strategy 2016 – 2021 sets out the intention to extend the Specialist Housing Market Position Statement to include other vulnerable groups with specific housing needs and as a result are often at greater risk of homelessness. These groups include people with mental health problems, people with chaotic lifestyles, vulnerable veterans and vulnerable ex-offenders. By extending the Market Position Statement we will be able to better understand the needs of these groups and ensure that they have access to suitable housing and services which meet their needs.

3.5 Strategy Review

As the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2013 – 2018 is due to expire in 2018 North Tyneside Council will need to produce a new strategy to outline its strategic objectives for the provision of services and the prevention of homelessness in the borough.

The Strategic Housing team intend to start the review of the existing Homelessness Prevention Strategy in February 2017. This review will provide stakeholders with opportunities for engagement and consultation to ensure that the emerging strategy is representative of their views. The first of which will be a strategy review event.

Following consultation a new homelessness strategy will be developed with an intended implementation from April 2018. The renewed strategy will continue to have the aim of supporting the reduction of homelessness in North Tyneside and complementing Government legislation.

4. Background Information

The following documents have been used in the compilation of this report and may be inspected at the offices of the author.

[North Tyneside Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2013-2018 and Action Plan](#)

5. Appendices

Appendix 1 – External Funding Attracted

- £48,000 from the regional homelessness fund for the creation of the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) pilot. This post has since been successfully mainstreamed;
- £81,000 between North and South Tyneside for a two year assertive Outreach and Engagement Service. Delivered through Changing Lives worked with those who were rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping to re-engage with services and access appropriate move on accommodation;
- £1.9m between 7 local authorities for Fair Chance Fund. This has enabled Life Coaches to work with 18 – 24 year olds who are not in settled accommodation, training, education or employment to access accommodation and services;
- £203,000 between three local authorities from Help the Single Homeless Fund for a two year In-Reach Project. Changing Lives provided services into the bed and breakfast accommodation that accept non-statutory placements to support residents to achieve meaningful independence;
- Home Group securing Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Affordable Homes Programme funding to purchase 10 homes for vulnerable ex-offenders;
- Depaul UK securing additional funding for the conversion of their supported housing scheme to provide 14 en-suite bedrooms with shared living facilities;
- YMCA North Tyneside securing £78,000 from the HCA Homelessness Change programme to create 3 emergency bed spaces for under 25 year olds;
- £4,000 from the regional homelessness fund to support strategic homelessness initiatives; and
- Homelessness Prevention Fund secured until 2020.

Appendix 2 – New housing schemes for homelessness provision

- YMCA North Tyneside converted some of their North Shields building to provide 15 x 1 bed supported housing flats for under 25 year olds;
- YMCA North Tyneside purchased a community house to provide 5 bedrooms with shared living facilities for under 25 year olds;
- Changing Lives converted a property to provide 5 homes for ex-armed forces;
- Trainer flats identified in the private rented sector for care leavers; and
- Delivery of new affordable homes.