

# **FOR PUBLICATION**

## **HOMELESSNESS - INTERIM STATEMENT 2015/16**

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MEETING:	1. CABINET 2. EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING
DATE:	1. 13 <sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2015 2. 22 DECEMBER 2014
REPORT BY:	SERVICE MANAGER – HOUSING CUSTOMER DIVISION
WARD:	ALL
COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY:	ALL
KEY DECISION REFERENCE (IF APPLICABLE):	483

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### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of the report is report to Members the Council's Homelessness Interim Statement for 2015/16, which sets out our approach to dealing with homelessness in the Borough pending the drafting of a joint North Derbyshire Homelessness Strategy for 2015-2020.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That Cabinet approve the Interim Homelessness Statement 2015/16 and that a further report is brought to Cabinet when the North Derbyshire Homelessness Strategy has been drafted.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Homelessness Act 2002, placed on local authorities a duty to review homelessness in their area and to produce and publish a five

year strategy and action plan to tackle the issue.

- 3.2 The interim Statement sets out our approach for 2015/16, the challenges we face and our priorities.
- 3.3 In establishing the current position, we have assessed performance, evaluated the services currently in place and established any gaps in service delivery.

#### **4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 The Statement sets out the framework in which we will develop and deliver homelessness prevention, advice and support services. A copy of the Statement is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 4.2 The Council and its partners have made considerable progress in improving services and reducing homelessness in the Borough since the Council published its first homelessness strategy in 2003. Through strong partnership working with local agencies we have:
  - Increased the number of households year on year, from becoming homeless through prevention activities with 483 households assisted in 2013/14
  - Reduced the number of households in temporary accommodation
  - Participated in the Derbyshire and Derby City 'No Second Night Out' initiative which helped 41 people from Chesterfield last year
  - Worked in partnership with Action Housing and our neighbouring local authorities, NEDDC and BDC to provide a Private Rented Access Scheme for non-priority homeless households
  - Provided funding for the Derbyshire Law Centre Court Desk Service to provide legal help and advice to households at risk of eviction
  - Continued to work in partnership with the Chesterfield Credit Union to encourage saving and planned expenditure

- Ensured the continued viability of Newbold Court (supported accommodation for young people)
- Provided funding to the Pathways Day Centre and YMCA Furniture Project to continue to provide services within the borough

4.3 We face significant challenges posed by the benefit reforms, prolonged economic uncertainty and reduced resources for support services. We aim to build on existing achievements to continue to prevent households from becoming homeless and support those who find themselves homeless. These challenges have considerable implications for homelessness and therefore we will regularly review and update our approach to addressing and preventing homelessness in the Borough.

4.4 This interim statement builds on the original aims of the Council's Homelessness Strategy, revisits key themes and identifies new and emerging issues and priorities in order to ensure that local services are as efficient and effective as possible in order to meet local needs.

## **5.0 PRIORITIES**

5.1 The Interim Statement identifies 5 key priorities, as set out below and identifies our key objectives in addressing these priorities and how we will measure our success in respect of each of them.

- Prevention of homelessness
- Understanding and addressing the root causes of homelessness
- Addressing the housing needs of young people and families
- Addressing the needs of vulnerable adults
- Working together with our partners

## **6.0 A JOINT NORTH DERBYSHIRE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2015 -2020**

6.1 In order to build and capitalise on the solid foundation of joint working, Chesterfield Borough Council, Bolsover District Council and North East Derbyshire District Council are currently working on a comprehensive review of homelessness across North Derbyshire and intend to issue a joint Homelessness Strategy for 2015 – 2020.

- 6.2 Many of the issues faced by the three local authorities with regard to homelessness are the same, and the majority of the services and support for homeless people are common throughout the three authorities. It therefore makes sense to look at a shared overarching strategy and to make use of pooled resources to facilitate this.
- 6.3 However, in order to address any issues which are specific to each of the respective authorities each one will issue their individual action plans and individual Homelessness Statements.
- 6.4 It is clear that by working together and having a joint strategic vision and aims that we can make the best use of our resources and maximise the opportunities to bring additional funding in to this area.
- 6.5 This joint approach has already proven successful. We placed a joint bid for funding with NEDDC and Bolsover DC from the DCLG Single Homelessness Fund to provide specialist housing advice for young people in receipt of benefits (working in partnership with the Ambition project funded by Sheffield City Region). We received notification on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2014 that our bid has been successful.
- 6.6 The funding will be spent in a very innovative way and we are confident that the project will deliver good outcomes for young people.
- 6.7 Two specialist housing advice and support workers will also be recruited to work alongside DWP colleagues to prevent homelessness amongst young people age 18-24 who are in receipt of benefits. The aim of the project is to ensure that young people are fully aware of the implications of managing a tenancy and are equipped with the skills to do so. The aim of the project is to identify and address any employment and training gaps and housing options suitable for the needs of each individual will be identified and progressed
- 6.8 In addition, the funding will also be used to employ a 'No Second Night Out' worker based in Chesterfield and employed by Riverside, an organisation who are contracted by Derbyshire Districts and Derby City to provide advice and help to rough sleepers.

## **7.0 RISK MANAGEMENT**

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
Failure to address homelessness issues	High	High	To deliver the actions set out in the Councils' Homelessness Statement 2015/16, against the key priorities and objectives.	Medium	Low
Increase in homelessness presentations	High	Medium	To deliver the actions set out in the Councils' Homelessness Statement 2015/16, against the key priorities and objectives.	Medium	Medium

## **8.0 EQUALITIES**

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached at **Appendix B**.

## **9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 All the proposals will be met from existing budgets or from bids for specific funding.

## **10.0 RECOMMENDATION**

10.1 That Cabinet approve the Interim Homelessness Statement 2015/16 and that a further report is brought to Cabinet when the North Derbyshire Homelessness Strategy has been drafted.

## **11.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

11.1 To ensure we comply with our statutory obligations in having a strategy in place to deal with homelessness in the Borough.

**JULIE MCGROGAN**  
**HOUSING SERVICE MANAGER – CUSTOMER DIVISION**

(Further information on this matter can be obtained from Julie McGrogan on extension 5135/5325).

Officer recommendation supported.



Signed

Executive Member

Date 22.12.2014

Consultee Executive Member/Support Member comments (if applicable)