

DECISION ITEM



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	FINANCE AND DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE	20 MARCH 2017	9
FYLDE COAST HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION TRAILBLAZER			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

In December 2016 Fylde BC, working jointly with Blackpool Council and Wyre Council were awarded two year Homeless Trailblazer funding from DCLG. This report details how the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer project will be managed across the Fylde local authorities and within Fylde Borough Council.

The aim of the funding is to develop innovative approaches to preventing homelessness by carrying out prevention activity earlier and work with a wider group of people and reduce the number of people who face a homelessness crisis in the first place.

According to the Financial Procedurals set out in the Constitution this item was considered by the Environmental Health and Housing Committee on at an additional meeting on the 14th March 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended:

1. To note the contents of the report and proposals to undertake the Fylde Coast Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer project across the Fylde Coast Authorities; and
2. To approve a fully- funded revenue budget increase for the total sum of £120,000 (£60,000 in 2017/18 and £60,000 in 2018/19) in line with the recommendation from the Environment, Health and Housing Committee of the 14th March 2017.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

This item was considered by the Environment, Health and Housing Committee on at an additional meeting on the 14th March 2017.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	√
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	√
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	√
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	√
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	

FYLDE COAST HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION TRAILBLAZER PROJECT

'TURNING THE TIDE'

BACKGROUND

1. In December 2016 Fylde BC, working jointly with Blackpool Council and Wyre Council were awarded two year Homeless Trailblazer funding from DCLG. The aim of the funding is to develop innovative approaches to preventing homelessness by carrying out prevention activity earlier and work with a wider group of people and reduce the number of people who face a homelessness crisis in the first place.
2. The bidding prospectus was announced in October 2016. Government is committed to helping the most vulnerable in our society and over the next four years they will invest £139million in central programmes to prevent and reduce homelessness in England. Government has also protected and maintained homelessness prevention funding for councils, reaching £315 million by 2019/20, to ensure that they can provide advice to all those who approach them for help. Fylde BC homelessness prevention funding for 2016/17 was £49,263.
3. The Trailblazer local authorities will work with DCLG to build an evidence base on what works to prevent homelessness, and work with other local authorities to share best practice. The funding is to inform the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Bill. The Bill seeks to ensure a greater focus on the prevention of homelessness and offers some increased protection for single homeless people and childless couples. The Bill has reached Committee Stage in the House of Lords and it is expected receive Royal Assent in the summer of 2017.

HOMELESS WITHIN FYLDE AND THE WIDER FYLDE COAST

4. In 2015/16 Fylde BC completed 92 Homeless Applications and all of these households were found to be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days. Prior to taking a Homeless Application households would have worked with the Authority through the preventative housing advice route, prior to a need for a homeless application. In 2015/16 we dealt with 392 cases for housing advice.
5. Homeless legislation requires that temporary accommodation is provided for all households who appear to be in priority need. Of those 92 homeless presentations; 24 were from families (6 couple with dependent children and 18 lone parent with dependent children), 61 single person households and 7 other households. Fylde BC currently leases 10 units of Homeless Interim accommodation from Progress Housing Group. Table 1 below details the situation with homelessness across the Fylde Coast in 2015/16.

Table 1: Homelessness in Fylde Coast authorities 2015/16

Authority	Total cases of Housing Options advice and support	Prevention and Relief	Homeless apps assessed	Found to be Homeless	Full Duty Accepted *	Total Rough sleepers (Ave per night)
Blackpool	2886	1053	978	687	86	124 (10-15)
Fylde	392	63	92	92	6	5 (2)
Wyre	459	301	29	25	9	15 (2)
Fylde Coast	3737	1417	1099	804	101	144 (14-19)

* Full Duty Accepted - A 'main homelessness duty' is owed where the authority is satisfied that the applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a specified priority need group. Such statutorily homeless households are referred to as 'acceptances'

6. Annually local authorities are requested by Government to submit a figure for the number of rough sleepers within their authority either as a physical count or estimate. The Government's definition of a rough sleeper is people sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations or "bashes").

Rough Sleeper estimate Fylde Borough

2014	6
2015	1
2016	5

7. Within Fylde there has been an increase in vulnerable single households applying to the Authority as Homeless and we rely on B&B accommodation. The single homeless households we support often present with a range of issues including drug and alcohol misuse and mental health illnesses. Accessing supported accommodation and/or support can be difficult. There are often barriers to sourcing permanent accommodation for individuals due to previous tenancies, for example tenancies lost through ASB or rent arrears, and lack of affordable one person accommodation in the private and social rented sectors in Fylde.

FYLDE COAST HOMELESS TRAILBLAZER PROJECT

8. Across the Fylde Coast our planned new holistic approach "Turning the Tide", will seek to strengthen services aimed at homelessness prevention by:
 1. Strengthen public understanding of the risks of homelessness by raising awareness among all public sector workers and combining tenancy training programmes across the Fylde Coast to reduce the numbers at risk of homelessness.
 2. Identify and resolve housing issues for vulnerable people known to other public services across the Fylde Coast earlier. This will be achieved by strengthening engagement in social services cases, and dedicated housing support at local hospitals. We will establish better information sharing to track individuals' progress, inform the development of services, and direct the use of resources between agencies across the Fylde Coast. This will prevent homelessness in more cases and set up more sustainable accommodation and support than would otherwise have been achieved.
 3. Further develop access to the private rented sector in Fylde and Wyre to provide a wider range of alternative housing options for anyone at risk of homelessness.
 4. Establish strengthened arrangements for temporary accommodation that is combined with holistic support for other vulnerable individuals who are not owed the full homelessness duty.
 5. Help people with multiple and complex needs by addressing underlying issues to achieve sustained positive outcomes, including bringing intensive support to people through a new Housing First project linked to the Blackpool Fulfilling Lives programme.
9. The project will offer help with training and employment for all individuals who present as homeless through a new More Positive Together programme provided by local social landlords. Outcomes will include more people engaging with training programmes, finding employment, and more sustainable housing.
10. Tenancy Support Workers will be employed across the three authorities to work with complex needs households and a Trailblazer Champion and Hospital Link Worker post will be based within Blackpool BC. The Trailblazer Champion will act as Project Team Leader and facilitate networking and sharing of information between the Tenancy Support Worker posts.

11. Table 2 details the expected outcomes for the full two years of the project across the Fylde Coast authorities.

Table 2 - Expected outcomes from the Fylde Coast Homeless Prevention Trailblazer project

Homelessness prevented	100
Evictions prevented	50
Reduced requirement for Temporary Accommodation	25
Reduced rough sleeping	20
Clients find employment	25
TOTAL	

ACCOUNTABILITY

12. A Terms of Reference for the Homeless Prevention Trailblazer Project will be entered into between the Fylde Coast Local Authorities and each organisation will agree to; work towards the aims of the project as detailed in Section 8 that formed the funding bid; report on the expected outcomes as detailed in Table 2 above; work with DCLG to build an evidence base on what works to prevent homelessness; and, work with other local authorities to share best practice.
13. Partnership meetings will be held monthly for the first 6 months and then quarterly when:
- Suite of job descriptions for the project have been agreed within each organisation's HR procedures
 - Complex needs posts will all be based on a generic job description for a Tenancy Support Worker and amended to reflect each local authority's service needs
 - Posts are in place or work has begun to recruit to posts
 - Project funding has been confirmed and Year 1 funding has been received
14. Fylde Coast Homeless Forum will be arranged by each local authority in turn, being begun by Fylde BC in April 2017. The hosting local authority will Chair the meetings and take minutes. These meetings will be held quarterly and will be attended by all Charities and Statutory Agencies that work across the Fylde Coast to support vulnerable households. Membership of the group shall not be exclusive to these agencies and is therefore open to others.
15. The profile of the bid across the Fylde Coast Authorities is detailed below.

Table 3: Fylde Coast Homeless Prevention Trailblazer

	Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre		Fylde	
	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19
Support	£20,000	£10,000	£0	£0
Staff Costs	£273,000	£274,000	£60,000	£60,000
Other	£30,000	£0	£0	£0
Total	£323,000	£284,000	£60,000	£60,000

FYLDE BC HOMELESS TRAILBLAZER PROJECT

16. Within Fylde BC the funding will be used to bring in new services that will engage with households threatened with homelessness earlier and signpost them to agencies for additional support and maximising opportunities that will lead to more stable lifestyles. An overarching aim of the funding is to be in a different approach to preventing homelessness in the longer term and picking up households at risk of becoming homeless sooner rather than at crisis point.

1. Tenancy Support Worker

To support a case load of vulnerable tenants across all client groups who are at high risk of tenancy failure to maximise their independence and minimise the risk of tenancy breakdown within both the social and rented sectors and the homeless. Deliver a support service and co-ordinating packages of support for customers with complex needs such as mental health, drug or alcohol misuse issues, offenders and rough sleepers. The job description for this post is at Appendix 1.

2. Housing Options Customer Services Specialist

Provide a first point of contact, information and advice on Housing Options in respect of Fylde BC Homelessness, Housing Advice and Private Sector services, in a professional and courteous manner. Aiming to deal with 80% of customers at the first point of contact. The job description for this post is at Appendix 2.

3. Smile Mediation

12 month trial of Smile Mediation Services across Community Safety, Environmental Health Services and Housing Services with a purpose to prevent the causes of homelessness, for example landlord disputes and anti-social behaviour and provide individual mediation where individuals or households are struggling to engage with support services available to understand the barriers preventing engagement. An application has been submitted to the Community Safety Partnership for a contribution of £3,000 towards the total costs of £6,000 for 100 units of mediation support.

4. Tenancy Training

12 month continuation of Tenancy Training courses established under the Lancashire Single Homeless funding 2014 - 2016. Course referrals are through Fylde BC Housing Services and will run weekly for a fortnight every month. Within Fylde the Tenancy Training has worked well with over the length of the project with over 50% of referrals made (148) beginning the course, 61 households completing the course and 22 households sourcing accommodation, with 16 of those households sustaining their tenancies for over 6 months.

17. Within Fylde the funding will be allocated as follows:

	2017/18	2018/19	Total	Note
Tenancy Support Worker	£30,000	£30,000	£60,000	Scale 5 awarded by Job Evaluation Panel
Housing Options Customer Services Specialist	£21,000	£21,000	£42,000	Scale 3 awarded by Job Evaluation Panel
Smile Mediation	£3,000	£3,000	£6,000	Awaiting confirmation from Community Safety for contribution of £3,000
Tenancy Training	£4,000	£4,000	£8,000	
Contingency	£2,000	£2,000	£4,000	
TOTAL	£60,000	£60,000	£120,000	

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	This report proposes a fully-funded revenue budget increase for the total sum of £120,000 (£60,000 in 2017/18 and £60,000 in 2018/19).
Legal	Blackpool BC are taking the Lead on the Project and a Terms of Reference will be entered into between all the Fylde Coast Authorities to work towards the aims and outcomes of the project
Community Safety	Funding of £3,000 from the Community safety Partnership will support SMILE mediation services to be available within the Borough for a trail period of 12 months.
Human Rights and Equalities	None
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

LEAD AUTHOR	TEL	DATE	DOC ID
Kirstine Riding	01253 658569	28/02/2017	

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection

Attached documents

1. Appendix 1: Job Description tenancy Support Worker
2. Appendix 2: Housing Options Customer Services Specialist