



DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	3 SEPTEMBER 2019	4
FYLDE COUNCIL HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2019-2024			

PUBLIC ITEM

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

SUMMARY

There is a legal requirement for Local Authorities to have a five year homelessness and rough sleeping strategy that sets out information about; the scale and causes of homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough; how the local authority will prevent and tackle homelessness and rough sleeping; and the National and Local context.

Fylde Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 had three main priorities focussed on improving homelessness services within Fylde based on the **Making Every Contact Count – Gold Standard** 10 'local challenges' set out by the National Practitioner Support Services (NPSS). The introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2018 and changes to service delivery in 2018/19 has delayed the publication of the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024 for consultation.

This report presents a draft for consultation of Fylde Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024. The new Strategy continues the work of the service to meet the NPSS 10 local challenges. The Strategy covers; an overview of homelessness legislation since The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 to current day and the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2018; picture of homelessness in the borough and information on the make-up and needs of clients accessing the service; achievements under the 2013-18 Strategy; and funding programmes the service has accessed to develop in order to manage service changes under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018.

The new Strategy has three strategic priorities that are focussed on continuing to develop a service focussed on prevention and relief of homelessness and working in partnership with agencies in Fylde to achieve our vision and values for homelessness services. These values will ensure all clients facing homelessness have access to expertise needed to enable them to engage with a range of support service to resolve their housing situation and clients are empowered with the confidence to access and maintain tenancies with the skills required to ensure their home is affordable, settled and if they are facing difficulties who to approach for help.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended Committee:

1. Note the contents of the report;
2. Approve the attached draft for consultation with partner organisation, with a final report to come back to this Committee for final approval in November 2019.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

[Policies on the Procurement and Allocation of Temporary Accommodation 23/02/2016](#)

[Lancashire Single Homelessness Initiative evaluation 06/09/2016](#)

[Fylde Coast Homeless Prevention Trailblazer 14/03/17](#)

[Fylde Coast Homelessness Trailblazer Evaluation 05/06/18](#)

[Final update on Fylde Homelessness Strategy 2013-18 06/11/2018](#)

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)	

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. **Appendix 1 contains Fylde Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24 Draft for Consultation**
2. A household is considered homeless if the local authority deems that they do not have a legal right to occupy accommodation that is accessible, physically available, which it would be reasonable for the household to continue to live in.
3. **The Housing (Homeless persons) Act 1977, Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Act 2002** gave local authorities a statutory duty to provide advice and assistance to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. For households which are unintentionally homeless and in a **priority need** category (such as having dependent children) the local authority has a **main duty** to secure settled accommodation under Part 7 of the Homeless Act 1996.
4. **The Homeless Reduction Act 2018 (HRA)** fundamentally changed the way local authorities support homeless people in their areas. From April 2018 **prevention and relief statutory duties** are available to any household vulnerable to homelessness in 56 rather than 28 days.
5. **Making Every Contact Count – Gold Standard.** As a follow up report to, 'Vision to end rough sleeping' the Government's Ministerial working group for homelessness introduced a range of challenges as set out in the report, 'Making Every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness', published in August 2012.
6. Fylde Council's Homelessness strategy 2013-18 was focussed on meeting the 10 Local Authority Challenges and this approach has been adopted for the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024.

Fylde Housing Service 2018/19

7. Within Fylde homeless presentations has increased by 155% from 89 in 2017/18, to 227 in 2018/19. However, the number of households to whom a statutory main duty has increased only slightly from 27 in 2018 from 89 presentations, to 30 in 2019 with 227 presentations. This is higher than previous years, but an explanation would be the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act and customers facing homelessness being encouraged to approach local authorities for advice and assistance under prevention and relief duties.
8. Overall the service has seen a 170% increase in requests for housing assistance from 326 in 2017/18 to 802 in 2018/19. This has resulted in an overall increase in homeless presentations to the authority to whom either a prevention, relief duty or main housing duty is owed. Numbers of households assisted to remain in their own home has remained fairly static since 2016/17, but we have seen an increase in households being assisted into alternative accommodation during both prevention and relief duty stages.

Funding accessed to support service provision

9. Fylde Housing service has faced a number of challenges following the introduction of the new prevention and relief duties under the HRA 2018. In order to undertake this work and manage the increase in requests for housing assistance the local authority has been fortunate to access funding from a number of initiatives implemented by MHCLG by working in partnership with neighbouring authorities. This funding has enabled the service to improve and develop in order to meet the challenges placed.
10. The following is a brief summary of funding accessed and the changes brought about to the service.
 - a. MHCLG awarded a total sum of £504,000 across all Lancashire authorities in respect of the Lancashire Single Homeless Project. Local authorities were arranged in Clusters to take responsibility for delivery of the programme – East, Central and North. The North Cluster had a total initially of £102,517 to pilot approaches to support single households across Lancashire for a period of 12 months.
 - b. In December 2016 Fylde BC, working jointly with Blackpool Council and Wyre Council were awarded two year Homeless Trailblazer funding from MHCLG. The aim of the funding was 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. Fylde were awarded £120,000 (£60,000 2017/18 and £60,000 2018/19).
 - c. In December 2018 Fylde BC, working jointly with Lancaster City and Wyre Council were awarded one year Rapid Re-housing funding from MHCLG. The funding was launched as part of MHCLG Rough Sleeping Strategy in August 2018 and the commitment under the Rough Sleeping Strategy August 2018, to half rough sleeping in the UK by 2022 and to end it by 2027. The pathway brings together 4 policy elements – somewhere safe to stay, supported lettings, navigators and local lettings agencies. The authorities were successful in the supported lettings and navigator policy elements. Fylde Council were awarded £30,000.

Achievements under the Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018

Priority one – maximise existing partnerships to effectively use current resources (both internally and externally).

11. Corporate commitment to prevent homelessness with regular updates to Environmental, Health and Housing Committee on the Homelessness Strategy, implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act and approval for grant funding awarded to improve homelessness services.
12. We work actively in partnership with the voluntary and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs. We run a Homeless Partnership group where agencies within Fylde who provide homeless services in partnership with the local authority meet regularly to review services and case load within Fylde.
13. The Trailblazer initiative, merged the three Homeless Forums in Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde into a single Fylde Coast Homeless Forum where all agencies involved in supporting homeless households met to discuss emerging policy and service impact.

Priority two – Developing a service that is focussed on preventing homelessness

14. Fylde Council operates No Second Night Out provision for new rough sleepers and entrenched rough sleepers to encourage engagement with support and services available.
15. In partnership with Lancashire Local Authorities via the Lancashire Homeless Forum and the Lancashire Reducing Reoffending Board¹ a protocol has been developed for prison discharges.
16. Lancashire Local Authorities working with Children's Social Services have developed a 16/17 year old and care leavers protocol across Lancashire that ensures all young people are supported immediately and a joint

¹ <https://www.lancashire-pcc.gov.uk/the-police-and-crime-plan/tackling-crime-and-reoffending/lancashire-reducing-reoffending-boards/>

assessment is completed within 5 days of a young person being placed into supported accommodation². As a result no young person is placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

Priority three – Increasing the supply of settled accommodation including access into the private rented sector

17. Fylde Council work in partnership with Face to Face YMCA to deliver a Bond Guarantee Scheme. The Bond replaces the cash bond normally required by a private landlord before he/she will grant a tenancy³.
18. To support access into the private and social rented sectors we have worked with Human Kind to run classroom and an e-learning Tenancy Ready Training on behalf of Fylde Council⁴. The course provides information on the different housing options available and assists clients to consider the most appropriate and affordable option. The course over covers types of tenancy, moving in and how to effectively manage a tenancy.
19. We have also worked with Fylde Coast YMCA to develop a Tenancy Ready Training Course specifically for young people 16-25⁵. The course is accessible via computer or portable device. The focus is on preventing homelessness, however if a young person does find themselves in that situation it enables customers to consider their housing options and suitability and affordability of accommodation.
20. We have developed a tenancy support service within Fylde, predominately for clients with complex needs. Support includes access welfare benefits, support to access tenancy set up funding (Bond, Rent in Advance, Furniture and white goods) and on-going support at a 1 month, 3 month and 6 month basis to ensure the tenancy is sustaining and flag up emerging issues that could result in repeat homelessness for clients.

Fylde Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24

21. **Our vision** is to work to prevent and relieve homelessness in Fylde and provide homelessness services with our partners that are accessible, professional and make a difference. We will work to ensure all our clients facing homelessness have:
 - a. Access to expertise needed to enable clients to engage with a range services that will support them to resolve their housing situation and improve their health and well-being.
 - b. The confidence to access and maintain a tenancy with the skills required to ensure their home is affordable, settled and if they are facing difficulties know who to approach for help.
22. The Strategy has three strategic aims for Fylde Housing Services in order to achieve this vision and Appendix 1 contains an action plan that comments on how we will deliver these aims. Then action plan has been developed in partnership with Fylde Homeless Partnership group.
 - a. **Priority One – Developing a service that is focussed on preventing homelessness**
 - b. **Priority two – Developing a service that is focussed on relieving homelessness**
 - c. **Priority three – Partnership working to achieve our vision and values**
23. The consultation period will run during September and October and will include:
 - a. Links to document on website sent to all partner agencies – Home Start, Police, Probation, DWP, Key Floating support, Registered Providers, neighbouring local authorities, YMCA, Lancashire County Council, Supported Housing Providers, CAB, Community Mental Health Teams, drug and alcohol services, Children's Social Care and Hospital Link Worker.
 - b. Fylde Homeless Forum Consultation event on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24.

² <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/youthzone/need-to-know/leaving-home/help-if-you-are-16-or-17-and-homeless-or-at-risk-of-becoming-homeless/>

³ <https://ymcahousing.org.uk/our-services/rented-accommodation/>

⁴ <https://humankindcharity.org.uk/area-of-work/housing-related-support>

⁵ <https://ymcahousing.org.uk/tenancy-ready-training/>

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	There are no financial implications arising from this report.
Legal	Legal requirement for local authorities to have a five year homelessness and rough sleeping strategy in place.
Community Safety	None
Human Rights and Equalities	Equality Impact Assessment on the 8 main characteristics required
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Fylde Homeless Strategy 2013-18	2013	www.fylde.gov.uk

Attached documents

Appendix 1 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24 – Draft for consultation September 2019