

## DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND HOUSING SERVICES	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	24 JANUARY 2023	11
<b>UPDATE FYLDE COUNCIL HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2020-2025</b>			

### PUBLIC ITEM

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

### SUMMARY

Environmental Health and Housing Committee on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020 approved Fylde Council’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025. Annually an update is provided on progress towards meeting the Action Plan of the Strategy and updating on the work of the Homelessness and Housing Advice Service, including projects underway to meet the Local Authority Requirements under the **Homeless Reduction Act 2018**. Projects underway include the Changing Futures Programme, Rough Sleeper Initiative and Ex-Offenders Accommodation Project.

**The Homeless Reduction Act 2018** 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. This broader definition of homelessness beyond priority need groups means that local authorities are able to support households that are currently considered the hidden homeless and will provide greater assistance to single person households not in a priority need category.

Fylde Council’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has a vision 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 work to ensure all our clients facing homelessness have access to expertise needed to enable clients to gain confidence in engaging with a range services that support them to resolve their housing situation, access accommodation 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.

The report updates work of the service towards meeting the new Statutory Duties under the **Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Part IV to provide support in safe accommodation** within their Local Authority Area. Fylde Council work in partnership across Wyre Council and Fylde Coast Women’s Aid (FCWA) to support victims and their children. A Housing Outreach Worker has been appointed to engage and support female and male victims and their children, employed by FCWA working across both Authorities.

Funding for year two, 2022/23 has been awarded at £33,224 from MHCLG New Duties funding to undertake new Part IV duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Fylde Council intend to continue to work in partnership with Wyre Council and Fylde Coast Women’s Aid (FCWA) and extend the project for a further 12 months.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Committee are requested to:

1. Note the contents of the report and update on progress Fylde's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 to meet the Local Authority Requirements under the Homeless Reduction Act 2018 and Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
2. Recommend to Finance and Democracy Committee approval of a fully funded revenue budget increase for the total of £33,224 to be met by MHCLG New Duties funding (£2,768 22/23 and £30,456 in 23/24 to continue Part IV duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

## SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

[Homeless Reduction Act 2018](#)

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

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

[Fylde Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 draft for consultation 03/09/2019](#)

[Fylde Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 07/01/2020](#)

[MHCLG Next Steps Funding to support homeless households 19/10/2020](#)

[Update Fylde Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Dec 2020 05/01/2021](#)

[Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021](#)

[Domestic Abuse Act 02/09/2021](#)

[Accommodation Project for Ex-Offenders and Rough Sleepers 02/11/2021](#)

[Update Fylde Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Dec 2021 05/01/2022](#)

[Lancashire Changing Futures Programme 05/01/2022](#)

## CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Economy – To create a vibrant and healthy economy	
Environment – To deliver services customers expect	√
Efficiency – By spending money in the most efficient way	√
Tourism – To create a great place to live and visit	

### Fylde Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping 2020-2025

1. Environmental Health and Housing Committee on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020 approved Fylde Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025. The Strategy covers; an overview of homelessness legislation since 1977 to present day, a picture of homelessness in the borough and achievements under the 2013-18 Homeless Strategy.
2. Annually an update is provided on progress towards meeting the Action Plan of the Strategy and updating on the work of the Homelessness and Housing Advice Service including projects underway.
3. **The Homeless Reduction Act 2018** 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. This broader definition of homelessness beyond priority need groups means that local authorities are able to support households that are currently considered the hidden homeless and will provide greater assistance to single person households not in a priority need category.

4. 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.

### **Overview of the Homeless Service**

5. Appendix 1 provides an overview of the operation of Homelessness and Housing Advice Services within Fylde during 2020/21, 2021/22 and to the end of Qtr 2. 2022/23.
6. The service deals with around 700 approaches from clients for housing advice and facing homelessness and 100 Duty to Refers from Statutory Agencies. Duty to Refers (DTR) are from agencies such as the Police, Fire Service, Social Services, Hospital discharges, Mental Health and Substance Misuse Services and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for vulnerable clients presenting to their services facing homelessness.
7. During and in the aftermath of the Covid pandemic, the ban on evictions till the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021 and extension of the notice period from 2 months to 6 months until October 2021 has impacted on service delivery with an increase in enquiries for support to Housing Services and resulting full homelessness assessments. 50% of enquiries received in 2021/22 and 2022/23 resulted in a full homelessness assessments. In 2020/21 around 25% of enquiries were resulting in a full homelessness assessment being required.
8. The effect on the housing service in 2020/21 as a result of the ban of evictions was a decrease in households to whom a Prevention Duty was owed and an increase in households approaching in Relief, as a result of being homeless. This trend in households approaching under Relief continues to increase throughout 2021/22 and into 2022/23.
9. The service continues to be successful in preventing and relieving homelessness by sourcing alternative secure accommodation. In 2021/22 the service supported into new accommodation 132 households and assisted 9 households to remain in their current accommodation. In the first 6 months of 2022/23 the service has assisted 82 clients into secure accommodation and supported 7 clients to remain in their own homes.
10. The service in 2022/23 has seen a significant increase in approaches from clients leaving the private rented sector as a result of a Section 21 or Section 8 notice to end the tenancy. The numbers of clients who declare they have No Fixed Abode has also increased and this will include clients sofa surfing and staying with friend and relatives.
11. The number of approaches from clients rough sleeping has increased since 2020 where it stood at 10 for the entire year. In the first 9 months of 2022 the service has supported to date 13 approaches from Rough Sleepers. Of note is that the Rough Sleeping Count conducted in November 2022 recorded 2 rough sleepers. Without the support of the Housing Service and provision of NSNO (No Second Night Out) accommodation this figure could have been much higher.

12. The service continues to see an increase in clients approaching the service with multiple support needs and the main recorded needs since 2022 have been drug/alcohol dependency, history of being in care, confirmed medical conditions, history of mental health and physical ill health or disability. Despite these support needs a minimal number of clients report on approach as homeless, as having support workers in place to deal with their identified support needs.
13. The service has seen a significant increase in approaches from all types of households. Taking an average over the three years from 2020, the service has seen an increase in demand for support from single persons of 35% for the first 9 months of 2022 at 262, compared with 172 and 185 for the full years in 2020 and 2021.
14. A similar situation is reflected with households with dependent children. Taking an average over the three years from 2020 the service has seen an increase in demand from single and two adult households with dependent children of 26% for the first 9 months of 2022 at 124, compared with 68 and 103 for the full years in 2020 and 2021.
15. Since the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act in 2018/19 the service has seen a steady increase in households to whom the Local Authority has a statutory housing duty to provide temporary accommodation. At the end of 2018/19 following the introduction of the Act the service had 14 households in temporary accommodation. In Qtr. 4 2020/21 and 2021/22, the service has seen a 50% increase in the need to provide temporary accommodation for homeless households. Demand for temporary accommodation provision in 2022/23 is the highest the service has experienced following the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act. In September 2022/23 the local authority had 41 households in temporary accommodation.

## **Moving On Service**

16. The Housing Service has seen an increase in approaches from, in the main, single person households with multiple disadvantage support needs. As a result, the service has had to evolve over the past three years to meet the needs of these clients.
17. A separate Moving On Service has been created within the existing structure of the Team where all current and future funded projects and initiatives are placed that enhance the statutory function under the Homeless Reduction Act 2018. Within this service sits projects where external funding has been awarded to develop the support available to clients. These projects include:

### **1. Lancashire Changing Futures Programme**

18. The Lancashire Changing Futures Programme is focussed on improving outcomes for people facing multiple disadvantage. It arose from examples of local partnerships to support vulnerable people in communities during the Covid 19 pandemic. Lancashire authorities were awarded £6.5m.
19. Fylde Council are part of the Enhanced Service Hub for Locality 1, 'Fylde Coast'. Fylde Council were awarded £62,500 to appoint a Housing Services Officer for a 25-month period as part of the enhanced service hub support offer. This role works alongside the Changing Futures Lived Experience Team (LET) to encourage eligible clients to engage with support available.
20. The role supports clients who are experiencing 2 or more multiple disadvantaged support needs. This can include mental health, drug or alcohol misuse and history of homelessness. Since the project began in March 2022 the service has supported all clients who approach the homelessness service who are presenting with multiple disadvantage support needs and 12 clients have met the threshold of multiple disadvantage support need (3 or more multiple disadvantaged support needs) to be referred into Changing Futures LET.

21. The circumstances of clients approaching will vary based on their support needs. Below are a couple examples of clients supported under the Changing Futures programme.

Example 1: Male mid-fifties, history of failed tenancies, alcohol and substance misuse and dependency. Unsupported mental health with historic suicide attempts and suicide ideation. History of rough sleeping and sofa surfing with broken down relationships with families. History of non-engagement with services such as GP, drug and alcohol support and mental health. Significant Local Authority, Police and PCSO involvement due to reoffending and ASB.

Current situation: Supported into B&B accommodation and into self-contained accommodation. Supported to engage with GP, drug and alcohol services and mental health support in place. Reduced related to anti-social behaviour and begging.

Example 2: Female early fifties historic ad enduring mental health challenges, schizophrenia and personality disorder. Unmedicated and not engaging with GP or mental health services. Significant ASB issues and community complaints resulting in Local Authority, Police and PCSO involvement over a significant length of time.

Current situation: Supported into temporary accommodation where issues became significantly highlighted and increased. Multi-Disciplinary Team approach with a range of agencies over a period of 9 months in order to get the correct support in place. She was sectioned under the Mental Health Act and detained for her own safety.

22. Additional funding has been awarded following a bid into Changing Futures Central Programme administered by Blackburn Council for funding to establish a Hub in Fylde for the programme. The Hub will act as a central point for all professionals to meet and support Changing Futures Clients in Fylde. This will include mental health, drug and alcohol services, adult social care, CAB and Fylde Housing Service. A Hub has been identified and a lease secured with the YMCA on St Albans Road.

## **2. Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding**

23. In response to Government's commitment under the Rough Sleeping Strategy to end rough sleeping by 2027 funding was secured under the Rough Sleeping Initiative to employ a Navigator and Supported Lettings Officer. The roles undertake support for clients presenting with multiple complex support needs who are at risk of homelessness or are rough sleeping or sofa surfing.
24. Following the introduction of the Changing Futures Programme in March 2022 this role now supports clients who sit below the threshold for the Changing Futures Lived Experience Support.
25. During 2021, 25 clients were supported under this service and the first 9 months of 2022 this role has supported 35 clients, jointly with the Changing Futures Officer.
26. The role assists clients to access support and accommodation with ongoing Tenancy Support to assist vulnerable tenants to settle and manage accommodation. The initial tenancy support lasts for a period of 12 weeks however, if ongoing additional support is required, the service will review this dependent on the needs of the individual.
27. As with the Changing Futures cohort of client, circumstances that clients approach will vary depending on their support needs. Below are a couple of examples of clients supported under the Navigator and Supported Officer role.

Example 1: Male mid-forties, entrenched homelessness for over 4 years with a history of sofa surfing and rough sleeping. History of non-engagement with support service and threatening towards Council staff. None engagement with substance misuse services and GP. Local Authority, Police and PCSO involvement over a significant length of time due to ASB, begging and threatening behaviour.

Current situation: Supported into B&B which led onto temporary accommodation. Referrals into substance mis-use and engagement with GP. Supported to bid for accommodation and move into social

housing tenancy where continuing to receive and engaging with support. Provision of carpets, white goods and furniture.

Example 2: Female early fifties, broken down relationship with family, historic tenancy failures with social landlords, rent arrears and ASB. Alcohol and substance misuse dependency. Period in rehab prior to presenting as homeless.

Current situation: Supported into B&B accommodation to continue to engage with drug and alcohol treatments services, debt management and improve benefit situation. Moved in to private rented sector and receiving ongoing support in regard to issues developing within the first 6 months of the tenancy. Prevention works to be undertaken.

### 3. Ex-Offenders and Rough Sleeper Accommodation Project

- 28. In April 2021 MHCLG launched a new scheme to provide additional funding to local authorities to support ex-offenders into their own Private Rented Sector (PRS) Tenancies. The scheme aims to build a pathway from prison into the PRS and is supported by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). The funding is to enable the introduction of new schemes specifically focused at supporting ex-offenders, increasing their access and sustainment of PRS tenancies.
- 29. Funding was approved to support 20 service users totalling £68,345, split between Wyre and Fylde. Fylde Council received £34,172. This funding was merged with Committee approval in November 2021 with the Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding to create the Ex-Offenders and Routh Sleeping accommodation project, which after a formal procurement exercise was awarded to Empowerment. The combining of this funding has enabled this project to run from July 2022 to July 2024.
- 30. In 2022 the MoJ project has been awarded a further funding allocation of £23,061, each authority receiving £11,530. This additional funding will be used to offset the cost of additional temporary accommodation provision for Ex-offenders.

	Year 1		Year 1	
<b>MOJ Reporting requirements</b>		<b>RSI Reporting requirements</b>		
<b>Record of funding secured</b>	0	<b>Staffing resource in place</b>	Yes	
<b>Creation of tenancies</b>	3	<b>Tenancies sustained</b>	3	
<b>Tenancy sustainment 3 months and 6 months</b>	2	<b>Benefit assessment to maximise income</b>	5	
<b>Tenancy management issues</b>	0	<b>Clients referred to appropriate agencies</b>	7	
<b>Prison recalls</b>	0	<b>Tenancies enabled</b>	2	
<b>Move on into social rented sector</b>	1	<b>Liaison with Statutory agencies</b>	6	
<b>Access to education, employment or volunteering</b>	1			
<b>Clients engaging with support mechanisms from project</b>	7			

- 31. Splitting the two funding streams, Ex-Offenders Ministry of Justice (MofJ) and Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI), the service in the first 6 months of the project have achieved the outcomes as detailed above. Outcomes are based on the reporting requirements for the funding. The service also works alongside the Changing Futures (LET) Programme for Fylde, based at Empowerment.

#### **4. Domestic Abuse Outreach Worker**

32. Local Authorities have new Statutory Duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The four main objectives of the Act are to promote awareness of domestic abuse, protect and support victims, transform the justice process and improve performance from agencies in the response to domestic abuse. Tier 2 Authorities have new Part IV duties to provide support in safe accommodation within their local authority area.
33. Fylde Council, in order to take forward the new Part 4 duties work in partnership across Wyre Council and FCWA to support victims and their children.
34. A Housing Outreach Worker has been appointed to engage and support female and male victims and their children, employed by FCWA from November 2021. This enables signposting to support services and work jointly with each local authority housing service for re-housing options.
35. Fylde Council have a commissioned Sanctuary Scheme to support households experiencing domestic violence. The service enables victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes, where it is safe for them to do so and where it is their choice. The service also ensures that when clients move into their new home security measures can be installed.
36. Fylde Council were awarded funding for 2021/2022 totalling £33,196. Funding is paid on an annual basis in the form of un-ringfenced grants under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 by MHCLG for a period of three years.
37. Funding covers 50% of the Housing Outreach role and a contribution towards legal costs totalling £18,500. The current project will be extended till the end of February 2023, due to a delay in the project being established and the project being suspended following the original worker leaving and waiting for the new Outreach Worker to be appointed.
38. Clients who approach the service as homeless as a result of Domestic Violence are referred to the Housing Outreach Worker for support. Since the project began in November 2021 a total of 34 clients to the end of September 2022 have received support.
39. The remaining funding £14,696, is placed in a separate fund, Domestic Abuse Act Initiatives, to support clients into accommodation. To date this funding has been used for storage and removals, Sanctuary Scheme measures, white goods, carpets and rent bond or rent in advance.
40. Funding for year two, 2022/23 has been awarded at £33,224 from MHCLG New Duties funding to undertake new Part IV duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
41. Fylde Council intend to continue to work in partnership with Wyre Council and FCWA to support victims and their children and commission a Housing Outreach Worker to engage and support female and male victims and their children, employed by FCWA with the remaining funding being used to enhance other support services in place, for example assistance with legal costs, above that budgeted in the project and financial support for victims to move into new accommodation.
42. The 2022/23 funding will enable the extension of the project for a further 12 months. At the time of writing this report we are awaiting confirmation of costs for the Housing Outreach Worker and contribution to legal costs from FCWA, however a fully funded budget increase is requested to continue the Domestic Abuse Act initiatives and Housing Outreach role.

#### **Action Plan Update December 2022**

43. Appendix 2 contains an update of progress towards the action plan in place to take forward Fylde Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy as of December 2022. Overall the service is making good progress towards the actions identified around priorities one and two of the Strategy, these are focused on actions the service has in place to prevent and relieve homelessness.
44. There are a number of priorities for the service to focus on for 2023 and these include:
  - a. Re-establishing the Fylde Homeless Forum that brings together all Registered Providers, Statutory and Non Statutory Support Agencies working to support clients in Fylde.

- b. To encourage customers to become self-sufficient with robust and updated personal housing plans to ensure all opportunities for accessing accommodation are maximized and provide Self Help pages on Fylde Council’s website.
- c. Ensure the HMO Inspection Programme currently underway is picking up any safeguarding concerns when inspecting accommodation under the HHSRS (Housing, Health and Safety Rating System) and making the appropriate referrals to relevant Agencies.
- d. Continue to identify opportunities to secure additional temporary units of accommodation in Fylde to avoid the need to place clients in B&B within Fylde and Out of Area.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	Fully funded revenue budget increase for the total of £33,224 to be met by MHCLG New Duties funding (£2,768 22/23 and £30,456 in 23/24).
Legal	Statutory duties under the Homeless Reduction Act 2018 and Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
Community Safety	None
Human Rights and Equalities	None
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 Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025	January 2020	<a href="#">Fylde Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025</a>
Fylde Council Tenancy Support Policy	January 2020	<a href="#">Fylde Council Tenancy Support Policy</a>
MHCLG Rough Sleeping Strategy	August 2018	<a href="#">MHCLG The Rough Sleeping Strategy</a>
Lancashire Changing Futures Programme	September 2022	<a href="#">Lancashire Changing Futures Programme</a>
Domestic Abuse Act 2021	September 2022	<a href="#">Domestic Abuse Act 2021</a>
Domestic Abuse Act Duty	February 2022	<a href="#">2022 to 2023 Allocations</a>

**Attached documents**

**Appendix 1 – Overview of Homelessness and Housing Advice Service at Fylde Council December 2022**

**Appendix 2 – Fylde Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan update December 2022**



