

## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday, 17 <sup>th</sup> December 2019
<b>Report Subject</b>	Homeless Update on Regional Homeless Strategy and Local Action Plan
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Strategic

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North Wales' councils have together developed a regional strategy and action plan.

The Homelessness Strategy objectives are to prevent homelessness and ensure suitable accommodation and satisfactory support is available for those who are homeless. The region has agreed to the common themes of People, Homes and Services.

Each council has developed its own local action plan based on the themes within the regional strategy but which reflect local priorities. The local plan in Flintshire has identified priority actions to tackle and prevent homelessness in the County.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet supports the updates provided against the Local Action Plan for Homelessness.
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## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>BACKGROUND</b>
1.01	<p>The Local Action Plan for Flintshire follows the Regional Homelessness Strategy with three main themes People, Homes and Services. Each theme is broken down further into priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>People</b> - Youth Homelessness, Rough Sleepers, Complex Needs and Prison Leavers</li> <li>• <b>Homes</b> - Housing First, Improved access to accommodation supply and Temporary accommodation</li> <li>• <b>Services</b> – Prevention / Intervention, welfare reform and health</li> </ul>
1.02	<b><u>People</u></b>
1.03	<p><b>Youth Homelessness</b></p> <p>During the first two quarters of this financial year 109 young people (aged 16-24) approached the Housing Solutions Service for assistance due to be homeless or being threatened with homelessness.</p> <p>There were 244 young person presentations during the previous year so a slight reduction at a half year position of approximately 10%.</p> <p>The breakdown in the cause of the presentations are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents no longer willing 62</li> <li>• Friends/relatives no longer willing 6</li> <li>• Relationship breakdown 8</li> <li>• Loss of rented or tied accommodation 8</li> <li>• Current property unsuitable 2</li> <li>• Prison leaver 7</li> <li>• Rent arrears in PRS 4</li> <li>• Sofa Surfing 2</li> <li>• Sleeping Rough 1</li> <li>• Violence and harassment 2</li> <li>• Other 8</li> </ul>
1.04	<p>Work is progressing with colleagues in Youth Services to develop a theatre production for schools to raise the profile of the risks associated with homelessness. The production will be aimed at Year 9 (13-14 year olds) to raise awareness of homelessness and housing issues faced by young people who experience homelessness. The production is planned for delivery in April 2020.</p>
1.05	<p>Flintshire's Housing Solutions Team currently have a Youth provision within the service consisting of a dedicated Housing Solutions Officer and a Children's Services worker. A Youth Worker was appointed in September 2019 to enable wider support to youth's that are faced with homelessness and to enable a more joined up service that is seamless for the young</p>

	<p>person with one point of access and a wide range of support options available to them.</p>
1.06	<p><b>Rough Sleepers</b></p> <p>In December 2018 Flintshire County Council piloted an Emergency Bed provision to help those who were rough sleeping. This pilot proved to be successful and established a demand for this type of provision in the County.</p>
1.07	<p>There is currently no emergency bed provision in Flintshire, this was withdrawn at short notice by our service provider. Since the provision ended in September we have been considering options for replacement premises even on the basis that this may be relatively short term (up to two years). In relation to this we have identified a facility in Shotton which would present the most appropriate accommodation unit and work is underway to understand what we would need to do to fit approximately 50% of this out. Having been recently decanted this work would be relatively minimal. This is a good location as it is in a geographical area where the vast majority of our service users are located.</p>
1.08	<p>Work is currently underway to deliver the emergency bed provision as a priority. A planning application has been submitted for the change in use of the proposed building and a specialist provider has been engaged to run the provision and provide the vital support to residents that access the facility. The service is working towards a full implementation date of January 2020.</p>
1.09	<p>The service recognises that in the interim we do need a plan for any adverse weather and as such have developed a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) that will enable us to bring rough sleepers inside and provide night time shelter in these circumstances. (Please see Appendix One)</p>
1.10	<p>Moving the model of provision here enables the Council and partners to develop a more holistic service and test out other modes of partnership working by engaging more effectively with drug and alcohol services, medical support and interventions and the signposting and support for rehabilitation.</p>
1.11	<p>The National Rough Sleeper Count was undertaken on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019 between 11pm and 3am the following morning. Four rough sleepers were identified on the count; two of whom were already known to services and two who were not known but refused assistance on the night. The outreach worker has continued to engage with these individuals.</p> <p>It is important to note that although the service only located four people on the night, there are further individuals who are known to be rough sleeping in the County that were not found and therefore not included in the return. The weather on the night of the count was poor and it is assumed that some individuals had sought shelter in new places or areas deemed unsafe for employees to check (Woodlands etc).</p>

1.12	<p>Flintshire’s commissioned Outreach Worker remains in place and is contracted until March 2020. This role works with those who are street homeless to try and engage and assist them to access services. The Outreach workers key objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a more flexible service with support being available outside of normal working hours including weekends.</li> <li>• Link in with residents who are accessing the emergency provision to offer support and assistance to reintegrate into mainstream services.</li> <li>• Conduct regular welfare checks where rough sleepers have refused assistance.</li> <li>• Monitor and conduct regular reviews of hot spots to enable the service to provide assistance at the earliest point.</li> </ul>																								
1.13	<p>Flintshire’s outreach worker is also signed up to Streetlink. This service enables members of the public to report people rough sleeping to local services that can support them. If a person is concerned about someone they have seen rough sleeping they can use Streetlink to make the initial report. The details provided are sent direct to Flintshire Outreach worker to help them find the individual and connect them to support.</p> <p>When a report is made the person reporting will receive confirmation that the report has been received and information on what will happen next and a further update if possible/appropriate.</p> <p><a href="https://www.streetlink.org.uk/">https://www.streetlink.org.uk/</a></p>																								
1.14	<p>One of the actions in the local action plan was to gain a better understanding of why tenancies are ending and the reasons behind homelessness in our County. The statistics show that the reasons behind homelessness or risk of homelessness for cases closed were as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><b>Reasons for homelessness</b></th> <th><b>2018/19</b></th> <th><b>2019/20 (Q1 &amp; Q2)</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Parent no longer willing or able to accommodate</td> <td>14.49%</td> <td>18.89%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate</td> <td>7.25%</td> <td>6.49%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Breakdown of relationship with partner - Non Violent</td> <td>9.14%</td> <td>9.73%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Breakdown of relationship with partner - Violent</td> <td>11.59%</td> <td>11.83%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Violence or harassment</td> <td>2.56%</td> <td>3.63%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mortgage arrears (repossession or other loss of home)</td> <td>2.34%</td> <td>1.15%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rent arrears on Social Sector Dwellings</td> <td>2.79%</td> <td>3.24%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<b>Reasons for homelessness</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20 (Q1 &amp; Q2)</b>	Parent no longer willing or able to accommodate	14.49%	18.89%	Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	7.25%	6.49%	Breakdown of relationship with partner - Non Violent	9.14%	9.73%	Breakdown of relationship with partner - Violent	11.59%	11.83%	Violence or harassment	2.56%	3.63%	Mortgage arrears (repossession or other loss of home)	2.34%	1.15%	Rent arrears on Social Sector Dwellings	2.79%	3.24%
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1.15	<p><b>Prison Leavers</b></p> <p>As you can see from the table above 7.44% of homelessness was directly linked to prison leavers which is slightly lower than the previous full year figures.</p>																					
1.16	<p>The Regional Homelessness Strategy Group have increased resource across the region and created a Regional Prisoner Pathway which aims to relieve homelessness for prison leavers. Flintshire has a dedicated worker that works with prisoners before their release to reduce the risk of them becoming homeless on release. There are many barriers to finding suitable accommodation for this client group but figures are showing that this work is providing some good outcomes.</p>																					
1.17	<p>In Quarter 1 and 2 of 2019/20 Flintshire worked with 20 applicants in prison that would otherwise be homeless on their release without intervention, of these 20:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Clients went straight from custody directly into their own tenancy</li> <li>• 3 Clients went from custody to approved premises or family then onto their own accommodation</li> </ul> <p>The remaining 14 would have been opened to the Housing Solutions Team for assistance under the Homeless Legislation to source accommodation.</p>																					
1.18	<p>In Quarter 1 and 2 of 2019 the statistics for ex-offenders is as follows:</p>																					

	<p>41.50 % Homelessness successfully prevented 38.00 % Homelessness successfully relived (suitable accommodation has been identified and customer has been successfully rehoused)</p> <p>It is important to note the complexities and difficulties in rehousing ex-offenders. Depending on the nature of the offence approval from North Wales Police Protection of Vulnerable People Unit may be required in relation to certain properties and locations, and there may be restrictions on individuals that again hamper the services ability to source suitable accommodation.</p>
1.19	<p><b>Complex Needs</b></p> <p>One of the main areas of focus in this area has been with clients who have mental health issues. In 2018/19, just over 41% of triages completed indicated the applicant had mental health concerns.</p> <p>In quarter's 1 and 2 of 2019/20 this figure has risen to 52% which is an increase of 11%. The service is working with colleagues in Adult Social Care Services to secure the provision of a Mental Health Worker in the Housing Solutions Team. This will help the service to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better understand the issues our customers face;</li> <li>• Understand how this may impact the way we deliver our services;</li> <li>• Provide better support to those suffering from a mental health issue and are faced with homelessness;</li> <li>• Create better integration with Health and primary care services where required.</li> </ul> <p>The service aims to have this provision in place during quarter 3 this current financial year.</p>
1.20	<p><b><u>Homes</u></b></p>
1.21	<p><b>Housing First</b></p> <p>Funding for a Housing First approach for Young People was awarded to Flintshire in late August 2019.</p> <p>The main principles of Housing First are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People should move straight into their own self-contained accommodation which is not conditional upon engagement with support and that flexible, intensive community support should be offered around the needs of the person.</li> <li>• They should have normal security of tenure.</li> <li>• The individual should be central to the service, exercising as much choice and control as possible.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support should be based around a person’s strengths rather than their problems, with services working proactively to encourage engagement.</li> <li>• Individual budgets are also an important element which can be used to engage and incentivise the client to help them take ownership of their own progress.</li> <li>• There is a distinction between Housing First and generic floating support. Housing First is designed specifically to help people who have high and complex needs, but are unable to benefit from a hostel or other temporary shared setting.</li> </ul> <p>Recruitment work is underway with an aim for project commencement in quarter four of this financial year.</p> <p>This work will link into the emergency bed provision to identify individuals with complex needs where this model is more likely to provide a sustainable outcome.</p>
1.22	<p><b>Temporary Accommodation</b></p> <p>This year there will be a full review of temporary accommodation used by the Housing Solutions Team for homeless applicants to include:</p> <p>Leased PRS accommodation – The Council leases a number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and individual properties from private Landlords. This review will look at each of these leases to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost effectiveness</li> <li>• Location of property</li> <li>• Terms of lease</li> <li>• Quality of accommodation</li> <li>• Outcomes for individuals accessing this accommodation</li> </ul> <p>The review of temporary accommodation is ongoing with an initial report on findings to be completed by the end of December 2019.</p>
1.23	<p><b>Private Rented Sector</b></p> <p>Demand for social housing is significant and as such access to the private rented sector is key in being able to prevent and relieve homelessness in a short timescale as possible. Unfortunately in Flintshire the PRS is very difficult to access and many private landlords are not willing to rent to applicants on Universal Credit or Legacy Benefits and the rent levels are significantly higher than Local Housing Allowance Rates making the properties unaffordable for the majority of applicants.</p>
1.24	<p>In order to start a dialogue with the private landlords in Flintshire a Landlord Event was held on 18 November 2019. The purpose of this event was to give The Council an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the challenges private landlords are facing and enable us to identify where The Council would be able to provide support and assistance to the landlords to assist in more properties being available to homeless applicants.</p>

	<p>Despite initial interest, the event itself was not well attended and we are now developing an online survey to see if we can gain better engagement this way. The feedback that was received at the event was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulties with costs of bringing properties up to required standards (through new legislation and Environmental Health inspections)</li> <li>• Impact of this on rental values required to cover mortgage payments</li> <li>• Security around receiving rental payments from those on benefits</li> </ul>
1.25	<p>Welsh Government are currently piloting a PRS scheme where there is funding available to assist landlords to bring their properties up to standard in return for a long term lease to the Council for relief of homeless duties. The service has submitted an expression of interest to be one of the pilot Authorities. (Further details of the scheme can be found in Appendix 3)</p>
1.26	<p><b><u>Services</u></b></p>
1.27	<p>The Preventing Evictions pilot was launched in November 2018 to prevent as many evictions as possible through early intervention on low level arrears and more collaborative working between rent collection and support teams to resolve rent arrears and prevent escalation via notice of possession/eviction.</p> <p>In quarter two of this financial year the service received 73 referrals and only 16 of these were escalated with the remaining 57 all having positive outcomes demonstrating a success rate of 78%.</p>
1.28	<p>As a result of this work a pilot has been agreed to provide this support upfront at the beginning of all tenancies to ensure the support is available to enable new tenants to manage and successfully sustain their new tenancies.</p> <p>This service will start in December 2019.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p>Areas of this service are supported through Supporting People, and this would not change, however, Welsh Government are reviewing the quantum of funding allocated through its Supporting People budget as part of its work relating to funding flexibilities.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	<p>A number of these workstreams are subject to medium term timescales with the overall intent that they reduce risk and create better life chances for people.</p>
3.02	<p><b>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</b></p>



Long-term	Positive –Increase in targeted support and alternative delivery methods to ensure services are inclusive for all
Prevention	Prevention - Preventing homelessness through ensuring there is adequate support and accommodation to cater for a range of needs
Integration	Positive – Increased integration between services and partner organisations
Collaboration	Positive – Increased collaboration between services and partner organisations
Involvement	Positive – Service user involvement to help shape effective services so that support is timely and person centred

### **Well-being Goals Impact**

Prosperous Wales	Again these could be positive, negative or neutral. If neutral, there is no need to put any explanation other than 'no impact'.  If positive or negative impacts, then provide a brief statement indicating what this is.
Resilient Wales	Positive – Creating services that are prevention focused and build resilience to avoid households becoming homeless specifically young persons
Healthier Wales	Positive – Reduction in rough sleeping and increase in targeted support for mental health
More equal Wales	Services accessed delivered in a way that are inclusive for all
Cohesive Wales	No Impact
Vibrant Wales	No impact
Globally responsible Wales	No impact

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	Previous update reports have been submitted to Scrutiny and Cabinet.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 - Regional Homeless Strategy
5.02	Appendix 2 – Draft Flintshire County Council Severe Weather Emergency Protocol
5.03	Appendix 3 – PRS Pilot Scheme

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	None.

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Jenni Griffiths, Homeless and Advice Manager <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702415 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:jenni.griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk">jenni.griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
	<p><b>Housing Solutions</b> - This is the service that carried out the statutory homeless functions and supports customers facing homelessness.</p> <p><b>Housing First</b> - Housing First is an approach that offers permanent, affordable housing as quickly as possible for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and then provides the supportive services and connections to the community-based supports people need to keep their housing and avoid returning to homelessness.</p> <p><b>Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMO)</b> - House in Multiple Occupation: Houses in Multiple Occupation (including self-contained flats where relevant) provide small, affordable, flexible and safe accommodation for a wide variety of people including single people, students, low paid and seasonal workers, those on short term contracts and are an essential part of the housing market. They can also offer temporary accommodation for people who are saving to purchase a home. Houses that provide accommodation for at least 3 people who are not all members of the same family are known as 'Houses in Multiple Occupation' (HMOs).</p> <p><b>Private Rented Sector (PRS)</b> - The Private Rented Sector (PRS) is a classification of housing in the UK. The basic Private Rented Sector definition</p>

	is: property owned by a landlord and leased to a tenant. The landlord, in this case, could be an individual, a property company or an institutional investor.
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