

**SUBJECT:** LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY  
2017-2021

**DIRECTORATE:** HOUSING AND REGENERATION

**REPORT AUTHOR:** ALISON TIMMINS, HOUSING SOLUTIONS AND SUPPORT  
MANAGER

## **1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- provide an overview of the Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy 2017-2021; and
- seek approval of the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2017-2021

## **2. Executive Summary**

2.1 The Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy Group has worked together to undertake a review of homelessness within the area and to produce the third countywide strategy. A range of stakeholders have been consulted throughout the process.

2.2 In line with the national picture, homelessness in Lincolnshire is increasing.

2.3 Five key themes have emerged:

- Partnership – developing and maintaining strategic partnerships
- Prevent – preventing homelessness wherever possible
- Protect – the most vulnerable from homelessness including rough sleeping
- Place – ensuring the right housing solutions for households
- Possibility – working towards a sustainable future for supported housing

2.4 A county wide delivery plan, which requires work from each local authority both individually and as a partnership, is under development to address the above themes. Progress against the action plan will be co-ordinated and monitored through the Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy Group and District Housing Network.

## **3. Background**

3.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires that all Housing Authorities carry out a review of homelessness in their areas, formulate and publish a strategy based on the findings of this review, keep this strategy under review and consult with other local or public authorities and voluntary organisations before modifying or adopting a strategy.

- 3.2 The Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy Group (LCHSG) consists of members from each local authority in Lincolnshire together with other statutory and voluntary organisations. The partnership basis of the Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy Group has been recognised as an example of best practice. This has enabled the successful development of two previous countywide Homelessness Strategies and given the group access to additional funding to support service provision across the county. The Strategy sets the direction for homelessness activity across Lincolnshire between 2017 and 2021 and has been developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and service users through a variety of consultation events and methods.
- 3.3 In line with the national picture, homelessness in Lincolnshire is increasing. It is predicted that increased unemployment combined with higher levels of personal debt, will lead to many more people in our area becoming at risk of losing their home. Compounded by welfare reform and policy change, limited supply of social housing and limited development of affordable housing, there has never been more need to work as a partnership in Lincolnshire. The complexity of homelessness requires innovative partnership working - sharing skills, expertise and supporting one another - to prevent and tackle homelessness for each person in need of our services.

#### **4. Review**

- 4.1 A homelessness review has been carried out by LCHSG across the seven local authority areas in Lincolnshire (Boston, Lincoln, East Lindsey, South Kesteven, North Kesteven, South Holland and West Lindsey). The purpose of the review is to:
- establish the current level of homelessness across the county,
  - project its likely growth (or decline) in future years,
  - identify what is currently being done and by whom, and
  - identify what level of resources are available to prevent and tackle homelessness in the future

#### **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 A range of stakeholders have been involved and consulted throughout the lifetime of the previous strategy. This level of consultation and engagement has continued throughout the review and preparation of this new draft strategy. Multi-agency workshops started in July 2015 and culminated in an action planning event held in March 2016. The events included Elected Members, Housing Advice Teams, voluntary and statutory agencies and current service providers, and will continue until final version.

#### **6. Developing the Strategy**

- 6.1 The Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2017-21 is a framework for all seven Lincolnshire authorities. It encourages partnership working with all stakeholders to deliver our priorities to prevent and tackle homelessness during a changing policy environment and challenging economic climate. Aligned with national and regional strategies, this document sets out our key priorities to ensure appropriate access

and support to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness across Lincolnshire.

## **7. Key Priorities**

7.1 The following key themes have emerged:

- Partnership – developing and maintaining strategic partnerships
- Prevent – preventing homelessness wherever possible
- Protect – the most vulnerable from homelessness including rough sleeping
- Place – ensuring the right housing solutions for households
- Possibility – working towards a sustainable future for supported housing

7.2 The implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, has additional duties that will see a significant increase in case work, particularly for those previously considered non-priority, and in terms of general case management. The Government recognises there are additional burdens for local housing authorities as a result of this Act and their anticipated reporting requirements. We are already developing a specific response for the City of Lincoln to implement this Act.

7.3 A countywide delivery plan, which requires work from each local authority both individually and as a partnership, is under development to address the above themes. Progress against the action plan will be co-ordinated and monitored through the Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy Group and District Housing Network.

## **8. Funding**

8.1 Local Authorities receive an annual grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to assist with the delivery of homelessness prevention services and it has been implied that this will continue to 2019/2020. The Council has also been awarded two more sets of short term funding, the Flexible Homeless Support Grant and New Burdens Funding, both of which are ring-fenced for homelessness activities and will be used to help implement the Homelessness Reduction Act.

8.2 Over the course of the previous strategy LCHSG successfully accessed other funding opportunities for specific activities including additional refuge provision, youth homelessness and rough sleeping. The group is looking to build on this and has recently been successful in its bid for Social Impact Bond funding (payments by results), where the partnership has commissioned P3 to work with entrenched rough sleepers or those at risk of returning to the street, with key health, training and employment outcomes. A further bid is proposed to access funding to work with Migrants who have no recourse to public funds.

## **9. Monitoring the Strategy**

9.1 The Lincolnshire County Homelessness Strategy Group (LCHSG) is the body that brings together agencies across Lincolnshire supporting homeless and vulnerable people, and will deliver and monitor the actions of the strategy. This includes actions for the county as a whole to work together to enable the delivery of and

actions where each authority must play its part to enable the successful delivery of the priorities. An annual review of the progress will be produced. The District Housing Network will receive regular updates and help inform future delivery.

## **10. City of Lincoln**

10.1 There are many benefits to a joint strategy to address the common themes and challenges faced by all in Lincolnshire, but it is important that we maintain a local perspective for those issues specific to City of Lincoln and requiring a local solution. We will therefore continue to work with our partners to identify local issues and shape/improve our services at a district level.

10.2 The table below provides a summary of statutory homelessness in Lincoln, over recent years and in context of Lincolnshire as a whole:

| <b>Year</b> | <b>BBC</b> | <b>ELDC</b> | <b>COLC</b> | <b>NKDC</b> | <b>SHDC</b> | <b>SKDC</b> | <b>WLDC</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| 2010/11     | 79         | 151         | 95          | 34          | 59          | 198         | 60          | 676          |
| 2011/12     | 84         | 159         | 156         | 51          | 63          | 245         | 36          | 795          |
| 2012/13     | 71         | 204         | 240         | 42          | 53          | 219         | 31          | 860          |
| 2013/14     | 82         | 175         | 251         | 68          | 80          | 219         | 44          | 923          |
| 2014/15     | 98         | 134         | 347         | 80          | 78          | 263         | 62          | 1062         |
| 2015/16     | 91         | 103         | 242         | 99          | 76          | 238         | 33          | 929          |
| 2016/2017   | 94         | 127         | 242         | 89          | 95          | 268         | 101         | 1078         |

10.3 These figures are a measure of those formally seeking the assistance of the local authorities under homelessness legislation. To that extent they are not a measure of many of those homeless but not in priority categories (as assessed by legislation and the national code of guidance) e.g. rough sleepers not seeking assistance would not be counted in these statistics.

10.4 Emerging challenges for City of Lincoln are:

- access to affordable housing options for all client groups but especially single persons aged under 35, reliant on Housing Benefit or Local Housing Allowance
- increase in rough sleeping
- general private sector housing access
- implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act

## **11. Strategic Priorities**

### **11.1 Let's Reduce Inequality**

The County Homelessness Strategy will have a positive impact on this strategic priority by working some of the most disadvantaged households across the county.

## **12. Organisational Impacts**

### **12.1 Finance**

None as a direct result of this report. Majority of the content will be met within the

DCLG homelessness grant received direct to individual local authorities and the recent Partnership Funding that was awarded to Lincolnshire as a whole. It should be noted that there are tasks within the action plan that may have financial implications but this will be considered as and when required. As with all partnership arrangements, there is an element of risk based upon co-operation and contribution to the strategy, however the LCHSG is an established group with proven success from three previous homelessness strategies and effective funding bids.

## 12.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

As set out in the report, the Homelessness Act 2002 requires all local authorities to complete a homelessness review and have a Homelessness Strategy

## 12.3 Human Resources

It is anticipated that commitment to progressing the strategy and action plan can be met within existing resources. Each Local Authority currently contributes to the post of Lincolnshire Homelessness Prevention Manager, which is hosted by West Lindsey District Council on behalf of the LCHSG as a whole, City of Lincoln's contribution is met from the DCLG Homelessness Grant.

## 12.4 Equality, Diversity & Human Rights

An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced. There is no evidence to show that this Strategy will have a detrimental impact on any group, rather the Strategy will positively impact disadvantaged groups.

# **13. Risk Implications**

## 13.1 None identified.

# **14. Recommendation**

## 14.1 It is recommended that Executive endorses the Lincolnshire Homelessness Strategy 2017 – 2021, and the intention to develop a detailed action plan.

**Is this a key decision?** Yes/No

**Do the exempt information categories apply?** No

**Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?** No

**How many appendices does the report contain?**

**List of Background Papers:** None

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