

SUBJECT:	HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING
DIRECTORATE:	HOUSING
REPORT AUTHOR:	YVONNE FOX – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee with information relating to Homelessness and rough sleeping issues within the City.

2. Current position

- 2.1 Both locally and nationally, preventing homelessness and rough sleeping are key priorities. The Council receives significant funding from MHCLG to address the issues of rough sleeping and annual funding to fund initiatives to assist the Council with the delivery of its statutory functions outlined in legislation and the Code of Guidance.
- 2.2 The Council delivers statutory homelessness services via the Council's Homelessness Team and provides a 24/7 service, 365 days per year service. All policies and procedures fully comply with the relevant legislation, (Housing Act 1985, Homelessness Act 2002, Localism Act 2011 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) the code of Guidance, Statutory guidance and advice and Case Law.
- 2.3 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 was the most significant change in legislation since the 1985 Act. What it did was strengthen the requirements on local authorities to prevent homelessness and to develop personal housing plans in order to relieve homelessness.
- 2.4 With respect to the prevention and response to rough sleeping in the City, the Council have received significant funding from the MHCLG's Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding (RSI). The City was one first 11 to receive funding and year on year we have received additional funding to fund the Councils Rough Sleeper Team and support services such as the Cornerhouse Project, specialist support workers and move-on accommodation.

3. Homelessness Team

- 3.1 At present, the Homelessness team continue to work primarily from home providing a telephone service, and providing a full prevention and relief service in line with the provisions of the relevant Acts and statutory guidance.
- 3.2 The number of applications to the team are slightly lower than previous years but this is primarily down to the no eviction ruling made by the Government at the start of lockdown in March 2020, however the cases dealt with have tended to be much more complex and in a number of instances have been from those feeling violence.

- 3.3 As of the 30th September 2020 there are currently 75 households being supported by the homelessness Team at either prevention or relief stage.
- 3.4 Between April and September 2020, the Council prevented 54 cases of homelessness and relieved 116 cases

4. Rough Sleeping Team

- 4.1 The team was established in October 2018 with funding from The MHCLG's Rough Sleeping Initiative funding. Since then the Council has been successful in securing funding until April 2021 and we will be starting discussion with MHCLG to continue funding for a further 3 years.
- 4.2 The team are based at City Hall and have continued working from CH throughout lockdown. The team members work in bubbles to minimise any opportunity for Covid-19 affecting the entire team.
- 4.3 As of the 30th September 2020 there were 23 people sleeping out in Lincoln. On the most recent count (19th October) this figure had dropped to 9.
- 4.4 Attached at Appendix A is details of key management information relating to homelessness and rough sleeping.

5. Temporary Accommodation

- 5.1 As per legislation and guidance, the Council has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation for certain groups of people who are vulnerable.
- 5.2 Although there are several accommodation providers who provide accommodation for single people who are homeless, the Council does not control access to these properties and therefore in some cases, we have to provide TA in B+B accommodation.
- 5.3 As of the 23rd October 2020, there are the following households in temporary accommodation
- **13 single person households in B+B**
 - **No families in B+B**
 - **24 singles in temporary accommodation properties**
 - **Of those 24, 14 are former rough sleepers**
 - **7 families are in temporary accommodation properties**

- 5.4 With respect to expenditure on b+b, although we are still placing single people in b+b, expenditure is lower than in 2019 and housing benefit payments have increased resulting in a current cost of £29,920 to the General Fund which is within parameters set.

April- Sept 20-21 Costs

B&B Cost	HB Subsidy	Variance	% HB received
109,113.99	-79,193.55	29,920.44	72.58%

6. Challenges

- 6.1 Homelessness prevention and addressing rough sleeping continue to be key priorities both locally and nationally. Senior officers are in weekly contact with our MHCLG advisors and the Homelessness Cell chaired by Daren Turner has seen some excellent joint working develop over the last 6 months.
- 6.2 There is however, a shortage of affordable housing in the City both in the private sector and as a result of lower turnover in our own stock. As move on accommodation becomes difficult to source, temporary accommodation units quickly 'silt up' resulting in more people being placed in b+b.
- 6.3 The new Lincolnshire CC Housing Related Support service has seen a reduction in provision for the most vulnerable and the courts will be recommencing eviction hearings shortly.
- 6.4 We are anticipating homelessness applications will rise over the next 6 months and we will need to ensure that accommodation is available to those who we have a statutory duty to accommodate.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 For Members to note the contents of the report

Is this a key decision? 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? one

List of Background Papers: None

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