

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 4 November 2013

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Title: Homelessness Update

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Item for decision
No

Summary

1. This report is to brief members on the homelessness figures for the first two quarters of 2013/14

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board notes this report

Financial Implications

3. The council has a Hardship Fund of £100,000 and Homelessness Fund of £81,000 (+ further £20,000 in this year's budget) which are available to meet the increasing costs and/or invest in homelessness-reducing measures.

Background Papers

4. Housing Performance Indicator Report 2013/14

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	N/A
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	N/A
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

	Qrt 1 2012/13	Qrt 2 2012/13	Qrt1 2013/14	Qrt 2 2013/14
Homelessness Presentations	16	11	24	29
Homelessness Acceptances	11	15	15	17
Homelessness Preventions	44	30	13	23
Numbers in Temporary Accommodation	18	18	14	19
Priority accepted homeless families time spent in Bed and Breakfast	0.9 weeks	0.7 weeks	0.8 weeks	4.5 weeks
Customers receiving in-depth housing advice	2012/13 first 6 months = 152		2012/14 first 6 months = 197	

6. The above table gives the homelessness statistics for the first two quarters of 2013/14 compared to the first two quarters of 2012/13.
7. As can be seen the levels of homelessness are still increasing, having significantly increased in 2012/13 over the previous 12 months.
8. The effect of the recession continues to put individuals and families under pressure that in some instances has led to homelessness.
9. There was a slight drop in the numbers in Temporary Accommodation (TA) in the first quarter as we had some new build housing available through HomeOption and consequently more clients were successful in moving on. The figure has now risen again and currently all the council's TA is occupied.
10. To reduce the need to use bed and breakfast an additional council property was converted into 2 units of furnished temporary accommodation in August. Planning permission has been gained to convert a further property providing 8 temporary units of this type in the district. Building work at Mead court is due

to commence in November which will provide a further 4 units of furnished temporary accommodation.

11. 8 of the empty flats at Mead Court are also currently being used as temporary accommodation. This accommodation is due to be demolished in July 2014 and officers are currently identifying other sites/properties to develop more temporary accommodation. The cost of any necessary furnishings and equipment needed can be met from the Hardship/Homelessness fund.
12. Despite the increase in available temporary accommodation in the district the need to use bed and breakfast has continued, with the length of time it is taking us to move families into alternative accommodation also lengthening. In the last quarter there have been 4 families in B&B, with an average stay of 4.5 weeks, an increase in previous years.
13. We do now however have an alternative to bed and breakfast with nightly let accommodation provide by a company called Supportworks. They are able to provide immediate access to rooms in shared houses. This is preferable to bed and breakfast as people have access to cooking and laundry facilities.
14. The housing options team have seen a total of 197 clients for in-depth housing in the first 6 months of this financial year compared to 152 for the same period in the last financial year, this figure does not include clients who come in for more generic advice.
15. Although the team have continued to prevent homelessness, the figures show that it is becoming increasingly difficult, with families more reluctant to keep adult children at home and with many private landlords unwilling to consider applicants on benefits and with Local Housing Allowance rates well below market rents in this area. There has also been an increase in the numbers of people needing emergency accommodation because of domestic violence from 2 in Q1 to 5 in Q2.
16. The picture for the rest of the year is that the situation is likely to remain difficult, with the welfare reform changes having an increased effect on peoples' incomes and the lack of affordable properties within the private rented sector.

Risk Analysis

17.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Cost of dealing with homelessness increases	2. The PI's show that homelessness still is on an upward trend	2. There may be a need to increase the amount of money available to	Careful monitoring of the homelessness budget allows for early notification of any potential overspend. The Housing Options

		spend on homelessness	team continue to try to prevent homelessness where ever possible and keep the time that clients have to spend in nightly let accommodation to a minimum.
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.